



European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination

NEWS REPORT

Country:	Serbia
Title:	Regional conference of equality bodies in South East Europe
Date:	2 December 2016
Expert:	Ivana Krstic
<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	Regional cooperation established by equality bodies in South East Europe
Ground of discrimination:	All grounds, including gender
Source:	Statement on cooperation between South East Europe equality bodies
Field:	All fields
Applicable law:	n/a

Content

The Serbia Commissioner for the Protection of Equality organized “The First regional Forum of South-East Europe Equality Bodies”, on the occasion of the International Tolerance Day, on 16 November 2016. The aim of this event was to establish an effective model of regional cooperation between equality bodies of SEE countries, in order to promote activities aimed at human rights protection and equality. Anna Gaspard, the executive director of Equinet, emphasized that equality bodies provide a very complex role in each society, which is not always popular. She added that political support plays a key role in establishing independent bodies, and that regional cooperation strengthens their capacities.

A Statement on cooperation was signed during the conference between the following independent bodies: the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality (Serbia), the Commissioner for the protection from Discrimination (Albania), Ombudsman for Human Rights (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Ombudsperson for Gender Equality (Croatia), Ombudsperson for Children (Croatia), Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (Croatia), Ombudsman (Croatia), Commission for Protection against Discrimination (FYR of Macedonia), and the Protector of Human Rights and Freedoms (Montenegro). They all agreed that better regional cooperation among equality bodies is necessary in order to build more tolerant societies and more efficient mechanisms for protection from discrimination in SEE.

The representatives of equality bodies particularly emphasised that it is necessary to work on better visibility of equality bodies and on further strengthening of their capacities, through dialogue and exchange of experiences. They agreed that priorities in joint actions and cooperation will be given to suppression of discrimination and promotion of and support to equality of all people. The Statement contains principles of future work, which are recognized as: coordination, mutual respect, partnership, equality and equity, joint planning, harmonization of activities and continuous communication.

Each equality body will appoint a representative who will be in charge to regularly and timely communicate with other representatives in order to implement joint projects. Each year, results of joint cooperation will be presented at the regional conference, which will be held on rotational basis. Among the conference, regional equality bodies will organize joint seminars, and they will exchange publications, surveys and other literature on discrimination. They will also encourage cooperation with non-governmental organizations dealing with human rights and protection from discrimination.

Internet link source with available Statement of cooperation:

<http://www.equineteurope.org/The-First-Regional-Forum-of-South-East-Europe-Equality-Bodies>.