



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

NEWS REPORT

Country: Serbia
Title: Perception of citizens towards discrimination in Serbia
Date: 20 February 2017
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Context
Issue at stake: Perception on Discrimination
Ground of discrimination: All
Source: Miscellaneous
Field: All fields

Content

The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality (CPE), ordered a report to be written on the Perception of citizens towards discrimination. This was the third time this type of research was performed on discrimination (the first was conducted in 2010, and the second in 2012). The research was carried out by the Agency Factor Plus in June 2016, using a sample population of 1200 citizens and covered the whole territory of the Republic of Serbia.¹ The report was presented to the public on 21 December 2016.

The research shows that only ¼ of the respondents understand the meaning of discrimination, while 6% link it to the inability to exercise some of the rights regardless of personal characteristics, and 8% link it to violence. Around 66 % of citizens are aware that discrimination is prohibited by law, while 51% are aware that there is a specialized institution dealing with discrimination. A total of 41% of the respondents know the exact name of the institution and the current Commissioner, which demonstrates a great increase in visibility of the institution which was established in 2010. However, awareness of the existence of the CPE is the lowest among citizens aged 15 to 19 (only 37%), compared to 62% for the group aged 50 to 59.

In 2012, 16% of citizens answered that they believed to be victims of discrimination, in 2016 this was only 13%. The greatest number of those that believe to be victims of discrimination are among the LGBT population (50%), and members of national minorities (36%). The number of citizens ready to report a case of discrimination increased compared to 2012 from 32% to 63% in 2016. While in 2013, only 2% were ready to report their case to the CPE and 10 % to the police, that number grew in 2016 where 18% submitted complaints to the CPE, and 21% submitted complaints to the police. Distrust of citizens in public institutions has reduced in 2016, where 29% of citizens reported this to be the reason for not taking action in 2012, in 2016 this was 21%. However, the greatest distrust has been identified among elders, who in 70% of the cases will not address their case to public institutions. Education is also a relevant factor. Higher educated citizens name more often the problem of complex procedures as

¹ Poverenik za zaštitu ravnopravnosti, Izveštaj o istraživanju javnog mnjenja: Odnos građana i građanki prema diskriminaciji u Srbiji, Beograd, decembar 2016.

a reason for not taking action, while less educated citizens tend to have a feeling of shame because of their exposure to discrimination.

The majority of citizens (43.5%) believe that the presence of discrimination is at the same level as in 2013, while even 62% believe that it is very much present or mostly present.

Respondents believe that the most discriminated groups in Serbia are: Roma (23%), LGBT (12%), women (9%), poor people (6%) and national minorities (4%). It is interesting to note that citizens with a lower income more frequently perceive women as particularly discriminated, while citizens with higher income have that perception of LGBT's.

The great majority of citizens believe that discrimination is very much present at the workforce (72.4%), in the area of social protection (30.5%), health care (25.2%), education (23.2%), judiciary (17.7%), and the media (11.5%).

While citizens recognize hate speech for statements related to nationality, just 76% recognized the following statement as hate speech: "Homosexuals are barren tree that must be cut off and thrown into the fire". Also, social distance is still very much present towards the GBT population as 27% does not want to have LGBT coworkers, 34% does not want to be friends with them, 47% do not want to have LGBT teachers and 63% LGBT partners. However, social distance is less present compared to 2012 in relation to acceptance of same sex marriage (19%) and a very close friendship with LGBT persons (12%). On the other side, social distance increases in relation to migrants. Therefore, while in 2013 almost 20% did not accept migrants as Serbian citizens, in 2016 that number increased to 31%.

Even 96% of citizens believe that all public institutions must be accessible for persons with disabilities. Nevertheless, it is interesting to mention that lower educated persons accept special measures in greater numbers (48%), than those with higher education (38%).

The report contains a very comprehensive list of conclusions and recommendations that serve as a guide for the CPE in shaping future activities, as well as a proposed list of research that should be conducted in order to cast light to some of the research results.

Internet link source:

<http://ravnopravnost.gov.rs/izvestaj-o-istrazivanju-javnog-mnjenja/>