



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

NEWS REPORT

Country:	Serbia
Title:	Free It course for women
Date:	01 May 2018
Expert:	Ivana Krstic
<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	Positive discrimination
Ground of discrimination:	Sex
Source:	The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality (national equality body)
Field:	Goods and services, education
Applicable law:	The Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination (LPD)

Content

Case development: This case concerns a complaint concerning the Junior Front End (Web) developer course offered by NGO 'Z', which was offered free of charge only to female candidates. The Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications financed this initiative. The applicant claimed that this practise discriminated against male candidates interested in taking part in the course.

The Ministry announced a Public Invitation for allocation of funds for programmes in the field of information society development in the Republic of Serbia in 2017, with the aim to promote Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) among women, as well as to increase their number in ICT occupations. Current analysis shows that only 3 % of the women interested in training have sufficient financial resources to independently finance it. Therefore, the course was designed with the aim to qualify for a position of Junior Front End (Web) Developer and was open to all adult citizens who have completed at least secondary education and wanted qualification in the field of ICT. Female citizens of the Republic of Serbia who have at least secondary education and do not have formal education in the field of ICT could participate free of charge.

On 5 November 2017, the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality assessed the relevant anti-discrimination legal framework. It concluded that the Constitution (Article 21, Par. 4),¹ the Law on the Prohibition of discrimination (Article 14)² and the Law on Gender Equality (Article 7)³ allow the introduction of special measures in order to eliminate and prevent unequal position of women and men, and those measures are not considered as discrimination. The Commissioner further considered that the National

¹ The Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No. 98/2006.

² The Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination, *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No. 22/2009.

³ The Law on Gender Equality, *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No. 104/2009.

Strategy for Gender Equality (2016-2020)⁴ sets the following goals; the improvement of the economic position of women in the labour market; encouragement and support of the participation of girls and women in engineering and new technologies; an increase of the engagement of women in areas such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics, the removal of discrimination against women in these areas and provision of measures for the advancement of women in science. In addition, the National Action Plan for Employment for 2017,⁵ adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia, states that women are harder to employ and it is foreseen that they should be included in programmes and measures of active employment policy.

The Commissioner found that women make up only 20 % of the employees in the field of ICT, and that supporting programmes for their training and qualification in this area represents an affirmative measure to improve their position in the field of ICT. Therefore, the Commissioner was of the opinion that by providing free training for women in ICT, the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, as well as the Association of Citizens 'Z', which conducted the training, did not violate the provisions of the Law on the Prohibition of Discrimination.

Internet link source: <http://ravnopravnost.gov.rs/rs/prituzba-a-c-potiv-ug-z-i-ministarstva-ttt-zbog-diskriminacije-po-osnovu-pola-u-oblasti-rada-i-zaposljavanja/>.

⁴ The National Strategy for Gender Equality, *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No. 04/2016.

⁵ The National Action Plan for Employment for 2017, *The Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia*, No. 92/2016.