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NEWS REPORT

Country:	Croatia
Title:	National Gender Equality Policy
Date:	30 October 2018
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<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	Preparation of the new National Gender Equality Policy
Ground of discrimination:	Sex
Source:	Policy development
Field:	Gender mainstreaming

Content

Policy development: The subject-matter of this flash report is not the policy development, but rather the lack of policy development. Namely, three years after the expiration of the previous National Gender Equality Policy for the period 2011 to 2015, the new national policy is still not prepared and adopted.

Key points of analysis: Three years after the end of the period of validity of the previous National Gender Equality Policy (2011 to 2015), the new Policy is still not in sight. The Government's Office for Gender Equality is in charge of coordinating the work for the preparation of the new Policy, and the only official explanation as to why the new Policy is still not prepared is that the process of forming the working group and including various stakeholders (non-governmental organisations) took longer than anticipated. Meanwhile, Croatia is left without a coherent strategic policy document for the promotion of gender equality. The only existing policy guidelines in the field of gender equality are included in the Government's Programme for the Mandate 2016 to 2020, which identifies two specific priorities for the Government. The first priority is gender equality in the labour market, political and public life. This includes adopting positive action measures to support women in the field of politics and economics, promoting women as entrepreneurs, favouring the re-integration of women in the labour market, as well supporting work-life balance for both genders. The second priority is the protection of victims of domestic violence. This includes improving the system of protection against domestic violence, increasing the number of shelters, as well as facilitating legal and financial aid. However, there are no clearly identifiable entities in charge of the above-mentioned measures, nor deadlines for their implementation.

The **first National Policy for the Promotion of Equality, adopted in 1997**, contained an assessment of facts, goals and measures to be achieved in the following

crucial areas: women's human rights, institutional mechanisms for the promotion of the position of women, women in decision-making positions, women and health, education and vocational training of women, women as victims of violence, women in economic life and women in war. It was strongly rooted in the idea of women empowerment, and it served as a model for the development of future national policies, but it failed to produce any significant effects.

The **second National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality for the period 2001-2005** was adopted in December 2001 and represented a turning point in terms of inclusion, cooperation and consultation with NGOs active in the promotion of gender equality and human rights. Its proclaimed goals included the promotion of women's rights in all spheres of activities, raising the awareness of women in all areas on their real position and on the need to harmonise it with basic human standards, creating preconditions for an efficient solution of identified problems, and providing support to women in enforcing their rights. The Policy identified three priority areas in which women needed to be guaranteed full enforcement of their rights: family, working environment and society. Priority tasks included: gathering data on the situation of women's rights in Croatia, education of women in all areas and all levels of society, forming a network of commissions and fostering their cooperation, ensuring financial means for implementation of the programme tasks, planning the promotional activities on all levels, designing the legal framework for enforcement of women's rights, and encouraging media activity with the goal of raising awareness in public on women's rights.

The **third National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality covered the period from 2006 to 2010** and it relied on the positive outcomes of two prior policies, addressing the observed difficulties and shortcomings in their implementation and concentrating on the actual possibilities of application of measures and activities, both in terms of content and the necessary timeframe. General objectives of this Policy included the promotion and protection of women's human rights, the creation of equal opportunities in the labour market, the introduction of gender sensitive education, achieving a balanced participation of men and women in decision-making, eradicating all forms of violence against women, improving healthcare for women, and enhancing further the institutional mechanisms and methods aimed at enforcing the equal opportunities policy.

The **fourth National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality was adopted in 2011, for the period from 2011 to 2015**. It redefined the national priorities and modes of implementation, focusing on special measures in line with the altered social and political circumstances and the progress achieved. In addition to the general objectives identified in the previous policy, it contained a chapter on international affairs, which was included not only to meet existing commitments but also to facilitate the implementation of numerous activities aimed at establishing and developing cooperation with the most important international and regional mechanisms and organisations, including the UN WOMEN – the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women. The aim was also to promote knowledge about the policies of the EU and the Council of Europe in this area. Unfortunately, it excluded the chapter on Women and Health which was part of the previous strategy, because it was claimed that this issue was already part of other strategic plans and programmes of the Ministry of Health.

The work on the **drafting of the Fifth National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality** started with the formation of the Working Group in 2015. However, due to a political and governmental crisis throughout 2016 and the first half of 2017, the composition of the Working Group changed several times and the work is still in progress. Given the delay, it is decided that the Fifth National Policy will cover the period from 2017 to 2020, instead of the previously planned 2016. However, as the end of 2018 is approaching there is still no policy or any public consultation about the priorities for its elaboration.

Internet link source:

- Office for Gender Equality: <https://ravnopravnost.gov.hr/>.
- Programme of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the mandate 2016 to 2020:
https://vlada.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//ZPPI/Dokumenti%20Vlada//Program_Vlada_RH_2016_2020.pdf.