



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

FLASH REPORT

Country: Serbia
Title: Perception of citizens towards discrimination in Serbia
Date: 6 December 2019
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Update of flash report: [Serbia - Perception of citizens towards discrimination in Serbia \(PDF 109 kB\)](#)

Context

Issue at stake: Perception of discrimination in Serbia
Grounds of discrimination: All grounds
Field of application: All fields
Source: Policy development
Applicable law: N/A

Content

The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality (CPE) ordered a report on the Perception of citizens towards discrimination. This is the sixth research of its kind since 2009, the last one being from 2016. The research was carried out by an independent research agency in August 2019, using a sample population of 1200 citizens and covering the whole territory of the Republic of Serbia.¹ The report was published and presented to the public on 18 November 2019, and shows some positive and some negative developments.

Almost half of citizens (48%) believe that the presence of discrimination is at the same level as in 2016, when this answer was given by 43.5% in relation to 2013. While 62% in 2016 believed that it is very much present or mostly present, 69% of respondents share that view in 2019. This perception is the least present in the group aged 15 to 19 years, and the highest in the group aged 20 to 29 years. Also, the majority of those with high school education (74%) share this opinion. The great majority of citizens believe that discrimination is very much present in the workforce (74%), while the perceived levels of discrimination are lower in other areas such as social protection (30%), health care (29%), education (20%), judiciary (17%), and the media (11%).

Around 69 % of citizens are aware that discrimination is prohibited by law (67% in 2016) and this perception is the highest in the group of respondents aged 30 to 39 years, with high school diploma and among those from western and central Serbia. Around 41% of the respondents believe that sanctions are effective in cases of discrimination and this opinion is mostly shared by those aged 20 to 29 years (55%), with high school diploma (42%) and living in the capital - Belgrade (47%). Only 7% of the respondents believe that sanctions are totally effective (3,7% in 2016). Also, there is an increase of persons believing that discrimination cannot be tolerated (79% compared to 73,3% in 2016), and decrease of

¹ Commissioner for Protection of Equality, Report on public perception: the Attitude of Citizens towards Discrimination in Serbia, (*Poverenik za zaštitu ravnopravnosti, Izveštaj o istraživanju javnog mnjenja: Odnos građana i građanki prema diskriminaciji u Srbiji*), Belgrade, November 2019.

those thinking that discrimination can be tolerated towards certain groups (12% compared to 15% in 2016).

A majority of the respondents believe that media (59%), political parties (54%) and citizens (53%) generate discrimination, while 84% believe that media is so powerful that it can also influence to diminish discrimination in a society, together with the family (78%), school (76%), and the Commissioner for Protection of Equality (65%). Citizens are of the opinion that media in general does not pay enough attention to issues that relate to discrimination. At the same time, 28% of the respondents believe that discrimination is an extremely significant problem in a society and must be prioritized, while 60% is of the opinion that it is a significant problem but there are some other, more important problems in Serbia.

Compared to 2012, when 16% of citizens answered that they believe to be victims of discrimination, that number was reduced to 13% in 2016, but increased in 2019 to 20%. At the same time, only 13% of the respondents believe that some of their family members, or persons close to them, were exposed to discrimination. However, the number of citizens ready to report the case of discrimination significantly decreased as 41% of the respondents answered that they will not report the case (59% due to distrust in public institutions). Only 22% said that they will report the case to the CPE. The greatest distrust has been identified among elders, aged 70+.

There is an increase of citizens that are aware that there is a specialized institution dealing with discrimination (56% compared to 50,8% in 2016). Among these 56% of respondents, 65% know the exact name of the institution (41% in 2016), and 24% know the name of the current Commissioner (18% in 2016), which demonstrates better visibility of the institution in society in 2019.

Respondents believe that the most discriminated groups in Serbia are: Roma (51%), women (42%), LGBTIQ+ (33%), persons with mental disability (33%) and the poor (31%). When respondents are offered the list of 17 groups, the order is slightly different: the poor (27%), Roma (25%), persons with mental disability (24%), elderly (21%), LGBTIQ+ (21%), persons with HIV/AIDS (20%), women (16%). Also, social distance is still very much present towards the same groups in a society, with an increase of social distance towards migrants. Therefore, the greatest social distance exists towards the following groups: migrants, LGBTIQ+ and Albanians, persons with HIV/AIDS, Roma, and persons with mental disability.

The same number of citizens as in 2016 believe that all public institutions must be accessible for persons with disabilities (96%). Positive measures in employment are supported by 46% of the respondents, 38% in secondary education and 34% at the university level. Also, 37% supports allocations in the budget to secure the right of national minorities to have media in their own languages. Moreover, 34% of the respondents support spendings to secure the right of national minorities to use their own languages while addressing public institutions, and having education in their own languages. However, citizens from Vojvodina (the most multicultural province in Serbia) oppose positive measures the most.

The report contains some recommendations that serve as a guide for the CPE in shaping future activities.

Internet link source: <http://ravnopravnost.gov.rs/izvestaji-i-publikacije/istrazivanja/>.