



Republic of Croatia
Ministry of the Interior
State Secretary

Zagreb, 2 June 2022

**UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (UNDRR)
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE**
Mr Octavian Bivol, Director

Dear Mr Bivol,

On 3 May 2022, the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia received from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) a request of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to report on the United Nations General Assembly resolution on "Women in Development" (A/RES/74/235).

More specifically, we were requested to provide information on the examples of measures taken at the national level, as well as the results achieved, lessons learned and opportunities for promoting the role of women in certain areas, especially in the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In accordance with the requested, please find enclosed the contribution from the Republic of Croatia consisting of the information provided by the relevant ministries.

Yours sincerely,

STATE SECRETARY


Terezija Grac

Information related to the implementation of the General Assembly Resolution on “Women in Development” (A/RES/74/235)

- **Strengthening and implementing gender-responsive poverty eradication strategies, including social protection systems, to help ensure an adequate standard of living for women and girls, especially in response to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic (paragraph 10)**

Within the pension system of the Republic of Croatia, a longer stay in the labor market is continuously encouraged, given the unfavorable demographic conditions and aging population, it is important to enable greater inclusion of older people and thus retirees in the labor market. With enabling pension beneficiaries to simultaneously receive full pension payments and work up to half of the full-time, pensioners are given the opportunity to earn extra income and contribute to reducing the risk of poverty and increasing their social inclusion, while providing additional labor in the labor market affected by the COVID pandemic.

To reduce the poverty of the elderly, a new institute of national benefit for the elderly was introduced from 1 January 2021, this cash benefit is intended for Croatian citizens over 65 years of age with permanent residence in the Republic of Croatia for a continuous period of 20 years, in the amount of HRK 800.00 per month. Within the framework of economic possibilities, this institute provides income to elderly people who could not provide it in any other way, i.e., are not covered by social welfare measures, nor have a right to a pension based on previous work. According to statistical data from the Croatian Pension Insurance Institute, by May 2022, 5,889 beneficiaries (64.77% of women and 35.23% of men) had received national benefits for the elderly. Starting from 1 January 2022, the amount of the national benefit for the elderly is adjusted every calendar year according to the rate of change of the consumer price index, and from 1 January 2022 it amounts to HRK 820.80 per month.

To mitigate the consequences caused by the epidemic of COVID-19 disease, in April 2021, the Government of the Republic of Croatia passed a Decision on the payment of one-time cash benefits, the so-called Covid supplement. Covid supplement was received by more than 720 thousand pensioners from Croatian insurance, who are not employed and whose total pension income is lower than HRK 4,000.00, in the amount of HRK 400.00 to 1,200.00, depending on the amount of the pension.

To strategic action in the field of poverty and social exclusion, in December 2021 the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted *National Plan for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion for the period 2021 to 2027* (hereinafter: the National Plan) and the *Action Plan poverty and social exclusion for the period from 2021 to 2024* (hereinafter: the Action Plan).

The National Plan sets the main goals related to ensuring the conditions for successful fight against poverty and reduction of inequalities in society, while establishing a coordinated support system for all groups at risk, including women and girls.

The National Plan defines in more detail the implementation of the goals from the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030, which envisages a reduction of persons at risk of poverty and social exclusion from 23.3% - 2019 initial value,

to the target value by 2030 of <15% in as part of the general objective of combating poverty and social exclusion of all vulnerable groups (including women and girls). Areas of intervention of this national plan include measures in the field of social welfare, health care, education, pension system, housing, regional development, civil society development. In addition to the above, the measures and activities also cover the areas of culture, sports and informatization. Measures / activities that will be implemented through Action Plans aimed at combating poverty and social exclusion are aimed at all members of society, regardless of gender.

- **Increasing investments in and implementation of gender-responsive policies and programmes for full and productive employment and decent work for all women, including their participation in and access to labour markets, and addressing women’s disproportionate job losses during the COVID-19 crisis (paragraphs 31 and 32)**

The Implementing measures of active labour market policy within the competence of the Croatian Employment Service (CES) are based on Articles 34 – 36 of the Labour Market Act (Official Gazette No: 118/2018, 32/2020, 18/2022) and based on relevant European and Croatian strategic documents and recommendations of the Council of the European Union. The importance of active labour market policy measures is emphasized in the “Programme of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for the period 2020 – 2024”, within Objective 1.1. Job preservation and social security, the “National Reform Programme for 2020” within the measures for achieving Europe 2020 goals, and the “Implementation Programme of the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy” for the period 2021 to 2024. Active labour market policy measures implemented by the CES are in line with the priorities and objectives set out in the *National plan for labour, health and safety at work and employment 2021-2027*.

Persons of both genders may participate in the ALMP measures on an equal footing and under the same conditions. However, given that certain groups of the unemployed are at a disadvantage in the labour market, participation in the measures has been facilitated for these groups by applying more favourable participation criteria. In this sense, the activities are mostly aimed at increasing the inclusion rates of young people, women, the long-term unemployed, older workers, and people with disabilities.

To preserve jobs with employers whose economic activity has been disrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, the measure “**Job Preservation in Activities Affected by COVID**” has been implemented since March 2020. The job preservation subsidy in the activities affected by the COVID-19 virus has contributed to the retention of workers in employment, as well as to the mitigation of consequences of the disrupted economic activity of the affected activities. Since the beginning of the implementation of the measure for job preservation (March 2020) in the activities affected by coronavirus, the total of 115.272 employers and 707.123 workers (56% men and 44% women) participated in the measure, for which HRK 11.5 million was paid out.

As regards the position of women in the judiciary in general, during the COVID-19 pandemic, women were provided with equal opportunities and complete equality in terms of access to recruitment procedures, both in public administration and senior judiciary positions.

Positive discrimination has also been present in favour of women since those employed in judicial authorities and in judicial office are predominantly women. They are guaranteed the same salary in line with the valid legislation, and there has been no discrimination in this regard. They are also guaranteed all rights related to motherhood and child protection.

Women are also involved at all levels of decision-making, starting from municipal courts and state attorney offices to the Supreme Court and the State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia.

- **Promoting the transition of women from informal employment to formal employment, including access to decent work, improved wages, social protection and quality childcare (paragraph 11)**

In February 2021 Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted a *National programme for suppression of undeclared work 2021 – 2024* with the Action plan for implementation. The reduction of undeclared work, especially regarding partially declared work, will contribute to creation of positive conditions for salary growth. It is proposed to create a special legislation comprehensively dealing with undeclared work that will create positive legal framework for entrepreneurs and suppress activities of unfair competition outside of declared work. Promotion of declared work will ensure decent working conditions for workers. The new legislation will provide a new definition of undeclared work and coordinated approach of all state bodies dealing with grey economy.

Improved legislative framework for minimum wages has aim to provide social and economic protection for most vulnerable workers. Additional goal is to ensure gradual increase of the share of minimum wage in the average wage. Consequently, social, and economic interest of workers with the lowest incomes will be protected and at the same time employers will have predictable legislative framework enabling them to prepare more precise business plans.

The social partners are involved in the implementation of all proposed measures. Their role is to promote advantages of declared work and to indicate dangers of undeclared work.

Having in mind that majority of minimum wage workers are women and that women present a significant share of undeclared workers, especially in care economy, National programme for suppression of undeclared work 2021 – 2024 with the Action plan for implementation will have positive effect on women in the labour market.

In addition, in December 2021 the Government of the Republic of Croatia has adopted the *National Plan for Labour, Safety at Work and Employment for the period from 2021 to 2027*. It is highlighted that this document would contribute to the establishment of a harmonized and promising labour market as well as safe and healthy workplaces. This applies equally to women and men.

Safety at work is especially important in preserving human resources and achieving success for each person as well as work organizations. A responsible attitude and investment in safety at work, as well as the development of a culture of risk prevention in the workplace, contribute to the well-being of workers. The emphasis on the culture of risk prevention and

the implementation of protection measures empowers employed women in achieving a balance between business and private life.

- **Prohibiting all forms of discrimination against women, including in the world of work, including against women facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, such as migrant women and women with disabilities (paragraphs 16, 43, 44, 47)**

The Republic of Croatia has very strong anti-discrimination legislation. Pursuant to the provisions of the Labour Act (Official Gazette, Nos. 93/14, 127/17 and 98/19) any direct or indirect discrimination in the area of labour and working conditions is prohibited, including the selection criteria and requirements for employment, advance in employment, professional guidance, education, training and retraining. The employer is obliged to protect the worker's dignity during the work in case of acts of superiors, collaborators, and persons with whom the worker contacts on a regular basis while performing his tasks.

Furthermore, according to Article 134 Paragraph 2 of the Labour Act any employer employing at least 20 workers shall be obliged to appoint a person who would, in addition to him/her, be authorised to receive and deal with complaints related to the protection of the workers' dignity. The employer or appointed shall, within the time limit prescribed by the collective agreement, the agreement between the works council and the employer or working regulations, and within a maximum of eight days from the day of filing the complaint, examine the complaint and take all the necessary measures appropriate for a particular case, to stop the harassment or sexual harassment, if he has established that harassment has taken place. Where the employer fails to take measures for the prevention of harassment or sexual harassment, or if the measures taken are clearly inappropriate, the worker who is a victim of harassment or sexual harassment shall have the right to stop working until he is ensured protection, provided that he sought protection in the court that has jurisdiction, within the following eight days. If there are circumstances under which it is not reasonable to expect that the employer will protect a worker's dignity, the worker shall not be obliged to file a complaint with the employer and shall have the right to stop working, provided that he sought protection before the competent court and notified the employer thereof, within eight days of the date of work interruption.

Besides the Labour Act discrimination is prohibited by Anti-Discrimination Act (Official Gazette, Nos. 85/08 and 112/12). The Anti-Discrimination Act provides for the protection and promotion of equality as the highest value of the constitutional order of the Republic of Croatia, creates prerequisites for the realisation of equal opportunities and regulates protection against discrimination on the grounds of race or ethnic affiliation or colour, gender, language, religion, political or other belief, national or social origin, property, trade union membership, education, social status, marital or family status, age, health condition, disability, genetic heritage, native identity, expression or sexual orientation.

This Anti-Discrimination Act applies to the conduct of all state bodies, bodies of local and regional self-government units, legal persons vested with public authority, and to the conduct of all legal and natural persons, especially in the area of work and working conditions, access to self-employment and occupation, including selection criteria, recruiting and promotion conditions, access to all types of vocational guidance, vocational training, professional improvement and retraining.

Special attention is given to more serious forms of discrimination. Namely, discrimination against a certain person on more than one of the discrimination grounds (multiple discrimination), discrimination committed several times (repeated discrimination), discrimination which lasted a longer period (continued discrimination), or discrimination whose consequences are particularly harmful for the victim shall be deemed to be a more serious form of discrimination. In case of serious forms of discrimination, the court shall take into consideration the circumstances when determining the amount of the compensation for non-proprietary damage and when deciding about the fine for misdemeanours.

In the context of anti-discrimination, the Croatian Employment Service (CES) applies Labour Market Act (Official Gazette, No: 118/2018, 32/2020, 18/2022), Anti-discrimination Act (Official Gazette, No: 85/08, 112/12) and Gender Equality Act (Official Gazette, No: 82/08, 69/17). The main task of the CES is employment mediation, where its professional role is neutral and impartial in relation to unemployed persons and employers. In this sense, the CES conducts activities that strengthen the competitiveness and employability of vulnerable groups of unemployed people – young persons, women, persons with low levels of education, the long-term unemployed, the unemployed over 50, the Roma national minority, etc.

According to Labor Market Act, access to all activities of the Croatian Employment Service (CES) is the same for all persons, regardless of gender, age, race, or any other aspect. CES ensures this through extensive information and training of its employees, and anti-discrimination postulates have been applied in all CES activities and services. The employment mediation process also ensures anti-discrimination in treatment of all persons.

The Project **“Women’s Voice in Sports”** is being implemented since 2021. It is organised by the Croatian Olympic Committee, the Agency for Electronic Media, the Office for Gender Equality, the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality, and the Croatian Paralympic Committee under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Media and the Ministry of Tourism and Sport. This Project was preceded by many others, such as the research on commercial stereotypes, representation of women athletes in the news, and the Project “For greater visibility of women's sport in electronic media” from 2018 that also led to the adoption of Recommendations for better coverage of women’s sport in electronic media – since the research had shown that less than 5% of sports news programme on national television channels cover women’s sports.

Women in sports have multiple disadvantages characterised by a substantial lack of representation on all levels (managerial positions, sports federations, among coaches, sportswriters...), significantly lower investments into women’s sports, and gender differences in performance awards. One of the biggest obstacles to achieving gender equality in this area is the invisibility of women’s sports in the media. It is therefore necessary to launch initiatives and implement projects aimed at gradually correcting this situation.

In addition to funding promotional videos, the Project is also focused on the implementation of research about the representation of women’s sports in the media, promoting greater representation of women and women’s sports in the electronic media and social networks through the campaign for greater media visibility of women’s sports, organising workshops for female athletes and anyone interested with the aim of increasing their knowledge and skills related to public performance and cooperation with the media, organising workshops for reporters with the aim of raising their awareness about the

coverage of women's sports, organising workshops for representatives of managing authorities of national sports federations with the aim of educating them on gender equality in the media, organising international conferences about the equality of female athletes in all segments of society (with an emphasis on the media), printing materials that are necessary for achieving the objectives of the project, as well as implementing all other activities with the aim of enhancing and achieving gender equality between male and female athletes in the electronic media and beyond.

Pursuant to Labour Market Act, Article 14, an asylum-seeker and a foreign national under subsidiary or temporary protection in the Republic of Croatia, as well as members of their families, may register with the CES under the same terms as Croatian nationals. In order to achieve their successful integration into the labour market, employment counselors inform and refer them to job vacancies, include them in active employment policy measures, education and provide other CES activities. On 31st December 2021, in the CES register of unemployed persons there were 105 persons (out of which 51 were women) with asylum status, persons under subsidiary and international protection. In 2022, the number of persons registered in the register of unemployed persons has increased significantly, primarily due to the increase of number of persons displaced from Ukraine. At the end of April 2022, 682 persons under international protection were registered in the evidence of unemployed persons. Most of them are women (91%). In the first four months of 2022, 144 persons under international protection from the CES evidence were employed.

Special attention is paid to protecting women in the procedure for granting international protection, especially when their reasons for applying are related to gender-based violence or trafficking in human beings. The procedure is adjusted to personal needs and the category of vulnerability of female applicants for international protection in order to ensure that the appropriate process for assessing material facts and the merits of the application is in place. The focus is therefore on continuous education of those in charge of the procedure who work with vulnerable groups. Trainings are held within the framework of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) on the following topics: sex, sexual identity, and sexual orientation, SOGI (diverse sexual orientation and gender identity), and identification of human trafficking victims.

With regard to the activities taken by the Office for Gender Equality during the previous year, we would like to point out the 3,000 printed copies of leaflets on the protection from violence for women, as well as women migrants and asylum seekers. The leaflets were printed in 9 languages and were distributed at the beginning of 2022 to all relevant stakeholders who are involved in the reception of women migrants and asylum seekers. Their impact will be evaluated this year at the end of the 2nd quarter.

To contribute to the improvement of the position of persons with disabilities and other persons who do not have this status, but have barriers to entering the labor market, CES in cooperation with partner organizations has developed several measures and activities for their integration in the labor market. CES conducts regular activities in working with unemployed persons—persons with disabilities, such as individual counseling, individual consultations, career guidance activities, referrals to vocational rehabilitation procedures, inclusion in active labor market policy measures and work with employers to raise awareness and inform about the possibilities of persons with disabilities in the labor market. Vocational rehabilitation is a set of activities carried out to train persons with disabilities while preserving their remaining working and general abilities. According to the Labor Market

Act, the purpose of vocational rehabilitation is to increase employability and social inclusion of persons with disabilities.

In the period from January to March 2022, a total of 30,430 persons were employed, out of which 573 persons with disabilities, which is 20.1% more than in the same period last year. By the end of March 2022, a total of 325 men (56.7%) and 248 women (43.3%) were employed from the CES evidence.

The competent organisational units of the Ministry of the Interior systematically implement the prevention project “**A Day Like a Dream**”. This project aims to raise the awareness of the elderly and persons with disabilities, especially women, in order to reduce the probability that they become victims of crimes and in order to raise their subjective feeling of safety, thus improving the quality of their lives. This project is also educational and it sensitizes various social groups to problems that the elderly and persons with disabilities face in their everyday life. A large number of persons have already participated in this prevention project, and especially in 2021 when 11 events were organised in compliance with all the epidemiological measures imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which were attended by over 440 persons.

Furthermore, recommendations about the treatment and communication with persons with disabilities were drafted in 2021 for the entire Ministry of the Interior in the form of flyers entitled “Communication Guidelines” and “Terminology Used in Communication with Persons with Disabilities”, and videos entitled “Guidelines for Communicating with Persons with Disabilities”.

On the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Office for Gender Equality held a round table “**Let’s prevent violence against women with disabilities!**” with the aim of raising the public’s awareness about violence against women with disabilities. The discussion centred around the issues faced by experts and civil society organisations, the efforts taken by the state authorities to reduce violence against women with disabilities and implement the relevant recommendations, and the challenges in the upcoming period. The round table discussion addressed several areas with regard to improving the position of women with disabilities, such as enhancing the legal framework and procedures in combating gender based violence against women with disabilities, the importance and the role of experts from social welfare centres in the prevention of violence against this population, the importance of raising awareness in the environment where these women live, and the role of the local community.

Within the pension system of the Republic of Croatia, there are no discriminatory elements in relation to women, and according to the current legislation, on January 1, 2030, the age requirement for exercising the right to old-age and early old-age pension for women and men will be fully equalized. The current method of calculating pensions does not put women at a disadvantage. Lower women’s pensions are related to the fact that women on average have shorter retirement years and lower wages. Within the pension policy, the gap in the number of pensions caused by shorter retirement years is reduced by a gradual increase of age conditions for women to receive old-age and early old-age pensions. This means that women stay longer in the world of work and thus achieve longer retirement periods.

The institute of the minimum pension ‘within the pension system protects those who had lower income during their working life, which includes a significant number of women.

In this way institute of minimum pension also contributes to reducing the gap in the number of pensions between women and men. The minimum pension was increased on 1 July 2019 by 3.13%, and in the following period, in addition to regular adjustment, it is planned to further increase the minimum pension by about 3%.

- **Promoting and protecting women's labour and human rights in the workplace through targeted measures, including universal minimum wage, social protection and equal pay for work of equal value, reducing occupational segregation and gender pay gaps and ensuring collective bargaining and recruitment, retention and promotion of women (paragraph 28)**

Since 2008, the minimum wage system in the Republic of Croatia is regulated through the minimum wage legislation. Initially, the minimum wage for some low-productivity activities was set at a lower level, but since 2013 it has been set at the same amount for all workers in all industries, regardless of education level, age, and similar. For each calendar year, the Government of Republic of Croatia issues a decree determining the amount of the minimum wage for the following calendar year. Every worker is entitled to a minimum wage for full-time work. The Minister of Labour proposes to the Government the amount of the minimum wage with prior consultation with the social partners.

Pursuant to last amendments of the Minimum Wage Act (Official Gazette, Nos. 118/18 and 120/21) additional protection of workers is provided. The amount of the minimum wage does not include salary increases based on overtime work, difficult working conditions, night work and work on Sundays, holidays, or any other day for which the law stipulates that no work is done. In case of such circumstances, the employer is obliged to pay salary increases in addition to minimum salary.

In 2009, the minimum wage was €383 gross, and due to the economic crisis, it rose only to €395 gross by 2014. With the economic recovery, it amounted to €625 gross in 2022. Supervision over the application of the minimum wage system is carried out by the State Inspectorate and the Ministry of Finance. The State Inspectorate monitors whether the employer pays the statutory minimum wage and whether it delivers a salary statement to the workers. Supervision is also performed by other inspections of state administration bodies which, according to special regulations, are authorised to supervise in connection with work and employment.

The Labour Act explicitly stipulates that the employer is obliged to pay equal remuneration to female and male workers for the same work or for work to which equal value is attributed. Any provision of an employment contract, collective agreement, rulebook, or other legal act contrary to the provisions of the Labour Act is null and void.

According to Eurostat data for 2019, women in the Republic of Croatia earn on average 11.5% less than men. The pay gap between women and men in Croatia is lower than the EU average and then the average of most countries in the world. Croatia's results on the Gender Equality Index have improved in all areas in recent years, and the goal of the Republic of Croatia is to continuously work on gender equality in all areas, not only to reach a certain average, but to achieve gender equality as one of the core values of our society.

Gender equality is one of the fundamental values both in the European Union and in the Republic of Croatia, but for decades complete equality between men and women has not

been achieved. Aware of the complexity of the situation, the Government of the Republic of Croatia has decided to comprehensively approach this issue in the coming period. The Government of the Republic of Croatia Programme 2020-2024 clearly emphasises the importance of further promoting equality between women and men in society and in the labour market. To achieve this goal, the competent bodies have started drafting the National Plan for Promotion of Gender Equality and the associated Action Plan.

The proposal of the National Plan for Promotion of Gender Equality is the basic medium-term strategic document of the Government of the Republic of Croatia which will be adopted with the aim of eliminating all forms of gender discrimination and establishing real gender equality by implementing equal opportunities policies. It contains a vision of the development of society based on Article 5 of the Gender Equality Act (Official Gazette, Nos. 82/08 and 69/17), according to which conditions should be created for women and men to be equally present in all areas of public and private life, to have equal status, equal opportunities for exercising all rights, as well as equal benefit from the achieved results.

The proposal of the National Plan will be based on the analysis of the situation in the mentioned key areas, including the achievements so far, the identified existing obstacles and challenges, as well as on the available possibilities and opportunities for their solution. As an integral part of the National Plan, and for the purpose of its effective implementation, two separate Action Plans for Gender Equality will be adopted, the first for the period until 2024 and the second for the period until 2027, to achieve the goals defined in this strategic document through defining measures and activities, the implementing body, deadlines, and indicators of progress.

In addition, the Occupational Safety and Health Act (Official Gazette, No. 71/14, 118/14, 154/14, 94/18, 96/18) protects particularly vulnerable groups of workers. Particularly vulnerable groups to which the employer is obliged to provide special protection at work are underage workers, pregnant women, women who have recently given birth, breastfeeding women, workers suffering from occupational diseases and workers with reduced and remaining working capacity or imminent risk of reduction of working capacity. To implement special protection at work, the employer is obliged to indicate in the risk assessment jobs that are potentially risky for particularly vulnerable groups of workers mentioned above (paragraph 37).

The employer is obliged to implement special protection at work for pregnant women, women who have recently given birth and who are breastfeeding with the aim of protecting them from risks that could jeopardize the realization of motherhood and recovery from pregnancy and childbirth. Pregnant and breastfeeding women must not work when exposed to hazardous radiation.

In order to protect pregnant women, women who have recently given birth and who are breastfeeding against the risks to which they must not be exposed, the employer is obliged to adjust working conditions and organization in such a way that safety and health risks are eliminated, as well as ensure the possibility of performing other appropriate jobs, i.e. performing work tasks at another workplace if the adjustments to workplaces they previously worked at are not technically feasible or justified. Adjustment of conditions, organization of working hours and change of workplace must not result in a reduction in the salary of these workers. If it is not possible to provide special protection at work mentioned above, the said workers shall be entitled to leave with compensation of salary.

An additional measure to reduce the gap in the number of pensions for women and men is the institute of adding 6 months to qualifying period of mothers or adoptive mothers for each born or adopted child, which was introduced by legislative changes that came into force on 1 January 2019. This institute increases pensions by an average of about 2%.

As for the special protection of women underage workers, the employer is obliged to provide special protection at work to the minor in order to preserve her unhindered mental and physical development. A minor (both a woman and a man) may not perform jobs with special working conditions, except for a minor who has completed vocational secondary education for those jobs and who meets other prescribed conditions. For the safety and protection of health at work of minors, the employer is obliged to adjust the conditions and schedule of working hours in order to eliminate risks to safety and health, provide other appropriate jobs – i.e., another workplace if the adjustments to workplaces they previously worked at are not feasible or justified, and ensure the application of other rules of safety at work, in accordance with a special regulation.

If the reduced and remaining working capacity of a working woman is determined, or if working women are exposed to an immediate risk of reduced working capacity, the employer is obliged to provide special protection at work for such women to prevent further damage to health and impairment of residual working capacity. The right to special protection at work is also exercised by a woman for whom an occupational medicine specialist has determined that she is permanently incapable of working in jobs with special working conditions, when harmfulness or effort at the workplace is the cause of damage to health. This applies equally to women and men. In such cases the employer is obliged to adjust working conditions and organization of working hours to eliminate exposure to risks to safety and health, as well as enable the mentioned workers to perform other appropriate jobs, i.e., other workplaces if the adjustments to workplaces they previously worked at are not technically feasible or justified (paragraph 40).

Legislative changes within the pension system that entered into force on 1 August 2021 introduced a measure that will indirectly contribute to the economic empowerment of women in the world of work. By this changes survivor's pension beneficiaries can now simultaneously receive full pension payments and work up to half of the full-time and the majority of current beneficiaries of the survivor's pension are women. Results of this changes are continuously monitored and currently around 22.000 pensioners are using the possibility to work and receive full pension payments.

- **Supporting women's entrepreneurship, expanding existing women-owned and -led micro, small and medium enterprises and facilitating opportunities for new women entrepreneurs (paragraph 37)**

The entrepreneurship is essential for economic and overall development of all countries regardless of their development level. Therefore, Croatia has permanent mission to establish and develop competitive entrepreneurial society. This includes women entrepreneurship as an issue in a special focus since the effective development of women entrepreneurship requires a set of gender-sensitive policies covering economic, social, fiscal as well as educational and employment policies. Moreover, it is important to highlight that Croatia considers the women's entrepreneurship primarily as an economic issue, although it could be viewed as a gender issue with the impact to the social and political context.

The SME sector in Croatia accounts for 99.7% of the overall number of entrepreneurs. Micro-entrepreneurs are dominant, with 90.9% share, employing in average 4.6 employees. Regarding the topic of women owners of business and crafts, women are owners or co-owners of approximately 22% of companies and owners of 35% of craft companies. Today, women entrepreneurship is being developed in form of micro-sized and small-sized enterprises, mainly through self-employment.

The first separate project, which encouraged entrepreneurship among women, was implemented in Croatia during 2003 and since then numerous activities from the Governmental / competent ministry level have been taken aiming to provide various kinds of support to women entrepreneurs. The major step forward was the adoption of strategical documents – first Strategy of Women Entrepreneurship Development for the period 2010 – 2013 and second Strategy for the period 2014 – 2020.

Women entrepreneurs usually point out the following key issues which affect them: social conception of women as entrepreneurs; discrimination against women; the distrust of investors; constant balancing between work and family and stress in business. Such series of obstacles that are interwoven and very different demand complex requirements for their removal (time, social willingness, sources of financing, and institutional support). Obstacles can be grouped as structural, economic and “soft”.

Structural obstacles are the most demanding ones as they are the result of cultural heritage, absence of political willingness for consistent implementation of a political regulatory framework, and infrastructural insufficiency to support family life. In order for these obstacles to be remedied, the following is necessary: political consensus, long-term activities in the field of education (value system, including responsibility for family life), changes in regulatory framework (facilitating different forms of employment and performing business activities), and more significant support for development of institutions for childcare and eldercare (also including systematic financial support for women for using childcare services, if they are engaging in educational programs and training for starting a business venture). Besides this, it is of great importance to incessantly and constantly work on gender sensitization of the public (education and media), but also consistently adding in the gender dimension into the functioning of a society.

Economic obstacles – Although the banking sector in Croatia is stable and develops a large supply of financial products, there are no sufficient, or there are no alternative financing forms of entrepreneurial ventures (microcredit institutions, business angels, risk capital funds, etc.). With regard to the needs for financing women’s ventures, special incentive measures and strategic partnership of different government programs with merchant banks are necessary, with the aim to bolster women’s entrepreneurial projects with a growth potential. Tax policy can encourage alternative financing forms (business angels), and through regulatory solutions enable new forms of financing.

“Soft” obstacles – Availability of consultation, advisory service, mentorship and training for starting business ventures is still unevenly distributed region-wise, but also insufficient in the field of technology intensive ventures. Supportive infrastructure in corporation with universities should be developed for providing such services, and umbrella organizations of entrepreneurs should assist in networking of women and learning from best practice examples.

In order to address these issues the Strategy had four main goals:

1. Improvement in alignment and policies networking – regardless of the quality of an individual policy or program, only their harmonized implementation leads to successful results.
2. Improvement in systematic support of women’s entrepreneurship – continuous advice and support are vital in the early stages of starting a job, as women are more cautious and less prone to risks. For this purpose, it is necessary to organize the exchange of experiences between successful entrepreneurs and beginners, through monitoring, as well as public presentations of their own experiences.
3. Introduction of women’s entrepreneurship to the overall institutional infrastructure – encourage institutional infrastructure distributed throughout Croatia and easily accessible to women entrepreneurs to incorporate appropriate measures for the developments of women entrepreneurship in local / regional development plans.
4. Promotion of women’s entrepreneurship – encourage women to start thinking about entering into entrepreneurship through being acquainted with examples of good practice and various forms of support.

An integral part of the Strategy for the period 2014 – 2020 is the Action Plan for its implementation, which contains measures, activities, stakeholders, deadlines, success indicators and monitoring as well as evaluation mechanism.

Regarding various activities that contribute to the development of women’s entrepreneurship, it is necessary to emphasize the application of preferential scoring system and the principle of additional points for projects of women entrepreneurs in various tenders for the development of entrepreneurship as a whole. This scoring system greatly contributes to the realisation of projects implemented by women entrepreneurs. Furthermore, women entrepreneurs recognized very well special credit lines as well as favourable loans with subsidized interest rate. Other activities that have had a strong impact on the development of women’s entrepreneurship include promotional activities, exchange of experiences and examples of good practice, encouragement of networking and international cooperation.

Based on the above mentioned strategic documents, multi-year programs to encourage development of women’s entrepreneurship, credit lines for women entrepreneurs, support for networking activities of women entrepreneurs, promotional and international activities, Croatia is recognized as a country that attaches great importance to women entrepreneurship and is considered a leader among neighbourhood countries.

Croatia continues to implement policies and programs aimed at the development of entrepreneurship as a useful tool for further economic and overall development, taking into account all the specificities and issues related to women’s entrepreneurship and proactively working to address them.

Active labour market policy measures implemented by the Croatian Employment Service (CES) are in line with the priorities and objectives set out in the National plan for labour, health and safety at work and employment 2021-2027.

One of the measures adopted to encourage entrepreneurship is self-employment subsidy. Self-employment subsidy can be granted to unemployed persons registered in the unemployment registry kept by CES to cover the costs of establishing and starting a business in the following organizational forms – trades and crafts, company, self-employed activity,

and institution. CES also grants self-employment subsidies – green/ digital. The aim of the measure is financial support for unemployed people who decide to start their own business in green/digital activities.

Persons of both genders may participate in the measures on an equal footing and under the same conditions. However, given that certain groups of the unemployed are at a disadvantage in the labour market, participation in the measures has been facilitated for these groups by applying more favourable participation criteria. In this sense, the activities are mostly aimed at increasing the inclusion rates of young people, women, the long-term unemployed, older workers, and people with disabilities. The self-employment subsidy covered 8,526 persons in 2019 (3,152 women), 3,687 persons in 2020 (1,367 women), 6,061 persons in 2021 (2,290 women) and 1,149 persons in 2022 (I-IV) (461 women).

- **Preventing and eliminating all forms of violence, sexual harassment and discrimination against women and girls, including in the world of work, and addressing the increase in gender-based violence during the COVID-19 period (paragraphs 16 and 35)**

When it comes to combating violence against women and domestic violence, the Ministry of the Interior is involved in interministerial cooperation which it carries out with representatives of all competent ministries and state administration authorities, local and regional self-government, judicial authorities, civil society organisations and other institutions, as well as all experts dealing with the protection of victims, by attending joint trainings, seminars, round tables, fora, conferences and other expert gatherings. During the COVID-19 pandemic, all of these meetings were held online.

The Ministry of the Interior also cooperated with the above authorities through city/municipal teams in charge of preventing and combating violence and other threats, and the National Team for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, as well as county teams for preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence on regional levels.

With a view to preventing all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls, the General Police Directorate is implementing a number of prevention projects:

“Lily“ - a prevention project consisting of a number of mutually related activities continuously carried out throughout the Republic of Croatia with a view to networking all competent state authorities, civil society organisations, legal persons and other socially responsible entities, in order to act in a coordinated manner and find a joint solution for the prevention of all forms of violence against women. In addition, its components also contain activities aimed at men in order to raise their awareness of the issue of gender equality by dismissing all forms of violent behaviour. Over 100 public events have been held so far as part of this project in the Republic of Croatia and they have been attended by over 13,000 people. Likewise, over 5,000 copies of promotional material have been distributed to citizens so far.

“Living Life without Violence” – a prevention project that has been continuously implemented for a number of years and that is aimed at preventing violence among youth and building a culture of non-violence and tolerance. Its target group are 6th and 7th grade primary school students. This project was considered as the best primary prevention project

in the EU by the European Union, or more precisely by the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN). Within the framework of this project, an educational-preventive programme entitled **“Living Life without Violence - In Memoriam: Miroslav Tunjić”** is organised every year to commemorate the tragic death of Miroslav Tunjić who was a victim of peer violence in 2010, and all other victims of peer violence with the aim of motivating young people to personally promote a culture of non-violence. The project focuses on students of primary schools which accepted the invitation of competent police administrations and are especially involved in promoting a culture of non-violence by appointing promoters of non-violence. These are students whose behaviour was recognised by their peers as one that actively promotes a culture of dialogue, resolves conflicts in a non-violent manner, encourages their peers to get along and help those students who have learning difficulties, and who have difficulties in behaviour and in accepting responsibility.

“I Have a Choice” - a prevention project aimed at encouraging social inclusion of minority groups into the community, with an emphasis on the culture of tolerance, non-violence, non-discrimination, strengthening of gender equality, and preventing all forms of hatred. Through this project, the police have established good cooperation with Roma associations, civil society organisations and educational institutions with the aim of implementing joint activities. The target group are children between the ages of 10 and 11. A preventive-educational video entitled **“Marry When You are Ready”** was made as part of this project. It talks about the issue of early marriages and is shown to Roma girls.

“Together against Hate Speech” - a prevention project aimed at preventing all forms of hate speech and at promoting positive lifestyles, non-violence, mutual tolerance, and a culture of dialogue, as well as at preventing domestic violence and violence against women through various preventive activities and with joint action of socially involved public personalities and other prominent members of society who communicate relevant messages to the public through the media. A package of preventive and educational tools was developed as part of this project, consisting of 2 videos entitled **“Be tolerant”**. The videos show influencers who communicate educational messages on the importance of tolerance, mutual understanding, culture of differences and dialogue to students in primary and secondary schools. They also talk about preventing hate speech and include a test with which both students and adults can assess how tolerant they are. These videos were shown in primary and secondary schools throughout the Republic of Croatia, with the approval and support of the Ministry of Science and Education, and the Education and Teacher Training Agency. Thus, a large number of students were educated on this topic, in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Together We Can Do More” - a prevention programme aimed at preventing the abuse of addictive substances, especially drugs, preventing vandalism, peer violence and all other risky behaviour in children. It is intended for students of 4th, 5th and 6th grades of primary schools, including their parents. This programme is implemented by the police in cooperation with educational institutions and other socially responsible entities.

“Together” - this project aims to raise the awareness of children and youth about the risks and dangers of human trafficking so that they would not become victims of these types of crimes. The project is intended for students of final grades in primary and secondary schools. This project is carried out through joint cooperation among all relevant institutions and organisations, private sector (relevant professions), local community, civil society organisations and citizens and it is aimed at raising the awareness about preventing

trafficking in human beings and encouraging society to act responsibly in order to reduce and prevent trafficking in human beings. By raising awareness, informing, educating and proactively multiplying knowledge on trafficking in persons and identifying potential criminal hot spots, it is focused on reducing trafficking in persons at all its stages (recruiting, transport and exploitation).

A prevention programme “**Safety and Protection of Children on the Internet and on Social Networks**” - within the framework of this project, the General Police Directorate has been implementing numerous prevention projects and activities in cooperation with police administrations and other partners on the national, regional and local levels: educational lectures, interactive workshops, information campaigns, public fora, panel discussions, round tables, public events, multimedia content, educational and press publications, websites, and applications for mobile devices. Special focus is placed on the cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Education regarding the newly established model for preventive and educational work through the so-called “virtual police officers”. They raise the awareness of children about various topics in the area of security, as part of their school classes (especially during online classes). Moreover, in 2021 the General Police Directorate created a theatre play “(DIS)LIKE” in cooperation with the competent police administration, Karlovac County and “Zorin Dom” theatre. The play talks about cyberbullying and is intended for students from 5th to 8th grade. The play was held 12 times in 5 primary schools in compliance with all the epidemiological measures and was attended by a large number of students.

Likewise, this topic is also addressed through prevention programmes “**Web Detectives**” and “**Internet ABCs**” in cooperation with the Croatian Safer Internet Centre. The “**Web Detectives**” project aims to educate and enable children to learn and develop skills for recognising inappropriate and dangerous media content online. After this training, students from 5th to 8th grade receive certificates and web detective IDs that they can use to report any inappropriate content online or cyberbullying (online violence). The prevention programme “**Internet ABCs**” consists of a play for primary school students in higher grades and is aimed at raising their awareness about the dangers and advantages of the Internet, and also at encouraging them to share their online experience with school counsellors, and if necessary to seek expert help. It also consists of trainings for parents of all primary school students on the topic of protecting children from unwanted online content.

In 2020, the Ministry of the Interior launched the campaign “**Behind the Door**” in cooperation with the Zagreb Child and Youth Protection Center and the Degordian Agency. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when citizens were required to comply with social distancing and stay at home due to lockdown, Croatia launched this campaign aimed at increasing the response of the society to recognise violence against children, including sexual violence and violence in a digital environment. This campaign aims to raise the awareness of all citizens to report violence or suspicion of abuse in their surroundings.

The Croatian model of fight against domestic violence, violence against women and other vulnerable groups utilises modern technologies and digital tools and has been recognised beyond national borders, which has been confirmed with the award that the Ministry of the Interior and the Croatian police received from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2021 for the campaign “**Behind the Door**”.

When it comes to the protection of children and youth against online exploitation or abuse, the Ministry of the Interior launched the “**Red Button**” application in 2013 that is

intended for everyone but is specially designed for children. It provides for reporting online content that is suspected to be illegal. Anyone who wishes to report any form of child abuse or exploitation online can access the application on the website of the Ministry of the Interior and fill out the report which is then sent to the competent services

Regarding the topics of sexual harassment, unwelcome advances, mobbing and work-related discrimination, it should be pointed out that women are guaranteed full legal protection pursuant to the provisions of the Criminal Code (Official Gazette No 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15, 101/17, 118/18, 126/19 and 84/12), and such actions are considered to be criminal offences punishable by prison sentences.

Pursuant to Article 134 of the Labour Act the employer is obliged to protect the dignity of workers. Namely, the employer employing at least 20 workers is obliged to appoint a person who would, in addition to him/her, be authorised to receive and deal with complaints related to the protection of the workers' dignity. The procedure and measures for the protection of workers' dignity from harassment or sexual harassment is regulated by special legislation, collective agreement, agreement between the works council and the employer or working regulations.

Provisions on preventing and elimination all forms of violence, sexual harassment and discrimination against women and girls can be found in Anti-Discrimination Act and Act on Gender Equality (Official Gazette, Nos. 82/08 and 69/17).

Regardless of the situation caused by the corona virus, the Centres for Social Welfare acted promptly and without delay in the proceedings against domestic violence. The Centre for Social Welfare acts on reports from the police, citizens, victims of violence themselves, as well as anonymous reports. During the pandemic, crisis teams were formed in the Centres for Social Welfare, which even in situations of domestic violence take all necessary measures in accordance with the powers and rules of the profession to protect victims of violence. Social welfare centres are also provided with 24-hour on-call duty to deal with urgent and urgent situations such as domestic violence situations. Family centres also provide counselling and assistance to victims of domestic violence.

In June 2019, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted a new protocol updated and harmonized with new legislation regulating this area and stipulating those procedures related to domestic violence should be carried out urgently, without delay, respecting the rights of victims and with special sensitivity for women and children, people with disabilities and the elderly as victims of domestic violence.

During the lock-down, from March 2020, the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy sent instructions on the procedures and organization of work to institutions in the social welfare system: social welfare centres, social care homes, other service providers and separately for accommodation providers of victims of domestic violence. The recommendations are in line with the recommendations and decisions of the Civil Protection Headquarters of the Republic of Croatia and in consultation with them.

When it comes to the protection of children, instructions were given on conducting proceedings and taking measures of family legal protection and taking urgent measures, maintaining contacts with the parent with whom the child does not live, implementing

previously imposed measures of family legal protection, dealing with reports of domestic violence unaccompanied by foreign nationals.

Recommendations for parents in a situation of separated life of parents and recommendations for victims of domestic violence were also made. The Ministry also published on its website a Communication on dealing with the situation of increased risk of domestic violence and abuse and neglect of children due to increased isolation measures to combat the epidemic COVID-19.

An appeal was sent to the victims through the Ministry's website not to hesitate to seek help and other citizens to report violence, and we call on all those who witness the violence to inform the police, the social welfare centre and report violence.

In cooperation with the Croatian National Institute of Public Health, guidelines for the prevention and suppression of the covid-19 epidemic were developed for accommodation service providers in the social welfare system related to shelters that provide services for victims of domestic violence.

At the same time, the regional availability of accommodation services for victims of domestic violence and violence against women has been ensured. By the end of 2020, 6 new shelters have been established in counties where they did not exist before.

With the establishment of new shelters, there are now 25 shelters in the Republic of Croatia, and it covers the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia, and the Ministry of Labour, Pensions, Family and Social Policy provides funding for a total of 23, given that two shelters have secured other sources of funding. from the budget of the City of Zagreb and others directly from the state budget of the Republic of Croatia.

Financial support for the work of shelters and counselling by the Ministry was provided and continuous. The Ministry monitors the occupancy of the shelter on a biweekly basis with the aim of ensuring the availability of accommodation services.

From 2019, the Ministry will also financially support the work of counselling centres for victims of domestic violence, and from 2022, counselling centres for victims of sexual violence.

The Ministry of Labour, Pensions, Family and Social Policy is the holder of the EU project entitled "***Stop Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence - There is No Excuse for Violence***", which it is implementing in partnership with the Ministry of Justice and Administration and the Victims and Witnesses Support Association. 24-hour telephone for victims of violence.

The project includes:

- *providing a free 24-hour telephone line service* - as of November 25, 2020, the operation of the National Call Centre 116 006 - 24 hours a day, seven days a week (24/7) including weekends, holidays and public holidays is ensured. Until that date, the National Call Centre was available to users from 08:00 to 20:00.
- *raising public awareness in the fight against violence against women and domestic violence*, which is carried out through the media campaign #empatijasada - there is no

justification for violence that intensifies during June, September and November, professional and public events aimed at sensitizing the public about harmfulness and unacceptability violence.

- *strengthening the capacity of experts and improving interdepartmental cooperation* in the field of prevention and protection from violence against women and domestic violence, through professional training of county team representatives that began in March 2021 and takes place in cycles, training of civil servants to sensitize and act according to the provisions of the Istanbul Convention and experts from the social welfare system for the provision of psychosocial treatment to prevent violent behaviour.

In May 2022, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the *National Plan for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia for the period from 2022 to 2026* and the *Action Plan for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia for the period from 2022 to 2024*. The purpose of the National Plan is to further promote the rights of the child and improve the protection of children's rights in the Republic of Croatia, through the implementation of international and national standards in the field of children's rights and through a comprehensive and integrative approach to children's rights. The National Plan relies on the European Union Strategy for the Rights of the Child 2021-2024, through the objectives and related activities defined by the EU Strategy.

Medium-term development needs and potentials, as well as the goal of the National Plan for Improving Public Policies for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child, are defined through five specific goals: Combating discrimination and social exclusion of children; Protection of children from all forms of violence; Children's participation in decision-making at the local, regional and national levels; Systematic support for children in the digital environment; Effective and efficient justice in proceedings concerning children.

The drafting of the *National Plan for the Suppression of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment for the period from 2022 to 2027* is underway. The goal of the National Plan is to improve the comprehensive policy for the protection of victims of sexual violence and to achieve full gender equality. The National Plan will prescribe measures in the areas of prevention of sexual offenses, assistance, and support to victims of sexual offenses and work with perpetrators.

The National Plan is based on the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy (2018-2023), the Council of Europe's Gender Equality Strategy (2020-2025), The European Union Strategy on the Rights of the Child for the period 2021-2024 and other relevant documents of the European Union and national laws relating to the rights of victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment.

- **Providing equitable and universal access to affordable and quality health-care services, including sexual and reproductive health, for women and girls in order to achieve the realization of the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, particularly in contexts of HIV/AIDS and COVID-19 (paragraph 17-19)**

Within the healthcare system framework, with the aim of strengthening training and education programs, in 2021 activities related to education on psychosocial treatment and

resocialization of women who use drugs were carried out. Taking into consideration that according to the available data, out of the total number of persons in the treatment of drug addiction in the hospital, outpatient system and in therapeutic communities, 33.6% are women and that they facing problem such as: absence of primary family support, scarce social networks, unemployment, inability to solve the housing issues, under coordination of Croatian Institute of Public Health, activities focused at developing services for women with addiction problem as well as on strengthening cooperation in providing these services were carried out.

As part of the Drug Addiction Resocialization Project, which has been implemented since 2007, recovery and rehabilitation programs for women were implemented during the reporting period by providing service packages aimed at successfully maintaining abstinence and their social reintegration. In order to encourage the employment of socially vulnerable groups, including women treated for drug addiction, measures were implemented to encourage their education and employment through vocational guidance activities and active policy measures to co-finance and finance education and employment. With the aim of more efficient implementation of project activities, on 11 and 12 November 2021 in Osijek was held a Regional training on the Project for representatives from health, social and justice sector.

As part of the evaluation project on implementation of Guidelines for psychosocial treatment of drug addiction in health, social and prison systems, which include also interventions aimed to women with drugs addiction problems, in 2021 focus groups in Zagreb, Rijeka, Osijek and Split were held, in which also participated women being treated for drug addiction problems.

With aim of presenting Guidelines with special reference to the challenges in the implementation and adjustment of psychosocial interventions during COVID-19 and the specifics of their implementation in different environments, training for health, social and prison professionals was held on 10 June 2021 in Rijeka and 13 December 2021 in Zagreb.

Following conclusions of Round Table held on 9 December 2020 on the challenge of care and treatment of women with drugs addiction problems, which brought together representatives of health system, social welfare, Gender Equality Ombudsperson, Ombudsperson for Children and other relevant institutions, in 2021 Croatian Institute of Public Health launched activities for drafting protocols between health institutions and social welfare institutions with the aim of strengthening cooperation between the health and social system and improving the quality of services provided to women with addiction problems.

Croatian Institute of Public Health in 2021 established a multisectoral Commission for evaluation / verification of psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration programs implemented in social care homes, therapeutic communities and other social care providers for people with alcohol dependence, drugs, gambling and other forms of addiction, which includes programs for women with addiction problems. The aim is to strengthen psychosocial programs, accommodation capacities and define criteria for the establishment of therapeutic communities and other forms of accommodation capacities, among others for women who use drugs with minor children and women who use drugs and who are victims of domestic violence. Program standards for the evaluation / verification of psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration programs implemented in the above-mentioned service providers have been drafted and presented and adopted in May 2022.

In 2021, the Croatian Institute of Public Health also participated in the Pompidou project of the Council of Europe group on the topic related to development of manuals and guidelines

for working with refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons sought abroad in the field of drug use and drug addiction, within which one of the objectives is the protection of the rights of refugee and migrant women with drug addiction problems as well as Pompidou project "Children whose parents or guardians use drugs" with the aim of contributing to the future Strategy for the Rights of the Child of the Council of Europe.

Most of the data collected by the Croatian Institute of Public Health are disaggregated by gender (since 2020 including the data from primary health care). Furthermore, for the need of certain institutions, various databases and registers are regularly linked for more detailed analyzes, for example, every year the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality is provided with data on the number of parturients with disabilities (the result of linking the Register of Persons with Disabilities and Medical Birth Database).

All women in Croatia have the right to receive obstetric (childbirth) healthcare services free of charge in state-owned health facilities, regardless of whether they have health insurance or not. Furthermore, all women with compulsory health insurance policies have the right to undergo an appropriate number of examinations related to pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum period; the appropriate number of follow-up examination during pregnancy and the post-partal period has been defined by the Health Care Measures Programme of Compulsory Health Insurance, issued in November 2006 (Official Gazette 126/06). Moreover, the Ministry of Health has published a revised edition of the Healthcare Measure Plan and Programme in 2022, which contains up-to-date specifications for various gynaecological and obstetrical procedures, allowing for women's health services to be provided in a more timely and efficient manner.

In accordance with the 1979 Act on Health Care Measures to Achieve the Right to Decide Freely on Childbearing, terminations of pregnancy can be performed in Croatia up to ten weeks from the day of conception, or 12 weeks from the first day of the last menstrual period. Thereafter, terminations of pregnancy can only be performed upon the approval of the hospital abortion board.

According to the same Act, pregnancy termination costs are covered by patients themselves, except in cases where:

- it has been established, based on medical indications, that performing a pregnancy termination is the only way to preserve the patient's life or prevent significant harm to patient's health during pregnancy, childbirth or postpartum,
- based on medical indications and knowledge of medical science it can be expected that the child will be born with severe congenital physical or mental disorders,
- the conception was result of a sexual offense, such as rape, sexual abuse of a disabled person, sexual violence against a subordinate person, sexual violence against a child or incest,
- unwanted pregnancies occur in patients who use intrauterine contraceptives or
- the patient is in circumstances of socio-economic deprivation.

In all of the aforementioned cases pregnancy termination costs are covered by the state budget.

Pregnancy termination procedures can be carried out in all hospital facilities with gynaecology and obstetrics wards. If all gynecologists in the health facility have invoked a conscientious objection clause, the administration of the facility is obliged to ensure the

possibility of performing the pregnancy termination by contracting gynecologists outside the facility.

Health care related to family planning is provided through the network of all primary health care practices and in some institutions at the secondary and tertiary level of health care; furthermore, the Medically Assisted Insemination Act (OG 86/12) provides conditions for achieving the right to medically assisted fertilization, rights, obligations and responsibilities of all participants in medically assisted reproduction procedures.

In September 2012, the Curriculum of Health Education which contains the modules Living Healthy, Prevention of Violent Behavior, Prevention of Addiction and Gender Equality and Responsible Sexual Behavior was introduced in Primary and Secondary Schools. In addition, the Croatian Institute of Public Health, in order to eliminate and reduce the share of risky sexual behaviors (early sexual life, more partners and non-use of condoms) and related negative health consequences including HIV / AIDS, provides information, education and counseling on skills acquisition making decisions, behaviors and lifestyles that have a positive effect on health - including the application of protective behaviors and measures that reduce the risk of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and unwanted pregnancies. The Department has an HIV / Sexual Health Counseling Center and a Center for Voluntary HIV Counseling and Testing, which includes a team of experts who provide users with individual, free and anonymous HIV counseling and testing services (hepatitis B testing, hepatitis C and syphilis), counseling on sexually transmitted diseases (infections), distribution of educational information material (brochures and leaflets) and condoms, and help with referrals for treatment and support.

- **Promoting and protecting women's and girls' right to education and ensuring their safe and equal access to and participation in education throughout the life cycle and at all levels, given the prolonged suspension of educational activities during the COVID-19 pandemic and redressing the attrition of women and girl students (paragraph 24)**

The principle of gender equality in education is based on the Gender Equality Act, which stipulates that both sexes have equal access to education and that gender stereotypes should be removed at all levels of education.

The Act on Education in Primary and Secondary School stipulates that education in primary and secondary school should be based on equal educational opportunities for all students according to their abilities. The Vocational Education Act stipulates that one of the principles of vocational education is the establishment of gender balance of students.

The Strategy for Education, Science and Technology (2014) emphasizes that every child and every student has the right to their maximum educational development and that everyone must have equal access to education regardless of ethnicity, sex, gender and social status.

Based on *The Strategy for Education, Science and Technology*, a curricular reform was implemented, including *the Curriculum of the cross-curricular topic Civic Education*. In 2019 it was introduced into all primary and secondary schools. As one of the educational goals of learning and teaching the Curriculum states that it is necessary to develop fundamental values such as gender equality and equality in a democratic school environment and the wider democratic community.

The National Curriculum for Early and Preschool Education emphasizes that all children have the right to an education that accepts and supports the diversity of identities of each child and his or her family. This means deviating from stereotypes and prejudices of any

kind and accepting the individual characteristics of each child and ensuring an individual approach to each child.

The National Plan for Enhancing the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the Republic of Croatia 2019-2021 included measures for facilitating access to higher education to underrepresented categories of students, as well as measures for upgrading the system of financial aid to underrepresented categories of students. The background document of the National Plan entitled *Underrepresented and Vulnerable Groups in Higher Education in the Republic of Croatia* states that there are noticeable differences in the representation of male and female students in the fields of study. Female students are underrepresented in technical fields.

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan in Component C3.1. The reform of the education system emphasizes that reforms and investments will be in line with the principles of the 2nd and 3rd European Pillars of Social Rights, relating to gender equality and equal opportunities, through the inclusion of measures that contribute to the promotion of these principles. One of the important reform measures is a substantial investment into infrastructure and human resources in order to create conditions for the realization of the right of every child to be included in early and preschool education, especially in areas where access to these services is severely hampered. In this way, women's inclusion in the labour market will be positively affected, which will have a positive impact on the socio-economic equality of women and men.

The Draft National Plan for the Gender Equality in the Republic of Croatia 2022-2027 and accompanying *Action Plan* include a specific objective of increasing the sensitivity of the education system at all levels to gender equality, and securing that a choice of education programmes is not affected by stereotypes. Measures to ensure the implementation of this objective are as follows:

- motivate student population to select non-stereotypical and not gender-based education areas in primary and secondary schools;
- eliminate the digital gender divide with primary school students;
- raise awareness of employees in pre-school institutions, primary and secondary schools to recognise and avoid roles based on gender stereotypes.

In line with *the National Plan for Enhancing the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the Republic of Croatia 2019-2021*, the Ministry of Science and Education has been implementing a STEM Scholarship scheme aimed at increasing the share of students in technical fields, including a share of female students which are underrepresented in technical fields. The STEM Scholarships Scheme has been funded by the European Social Fund 2014-2020. A total of 3400 scholarships have been awarded annually.

Upon the invitation of the Department for the Development of Research Programmes and Transfer of Technology of the Ministry of Science and Education (hereinafter: MZO), the Office for Gender Equality participated in drafting of comments and opinions for The Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation that was presented during the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU. In November 2021, 37 countries accepted and supported the Declaration and the cooperation with MZO continued on the drafting of Plans for gender equality in scientific institutions.

As the state administration authority that is competent for coordinating the EU research and innovation programme Horizon Europe, the MZO also coordinates the national support system for this programme and it actively participates in the distribution of information to Croatian scientific institutions about the obligation of adopting the Plans for gender equality for all institutions of EU Member States (and related countries) who wish to be financed under the Horizon Europe programme. Since MZO requested the participation of the Office for Gender Equality, the Assistant Director participated in the presentation of the Plan for gender equality of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing, at the meeting of the Working Group for drafting the Plan of the Pedagogical Faculty. She responded to a series of inquiries from the University of Zagreb, the Faculty of Law in Zagreb, the Faculty of Philosophy in Osijek, and the Institute of physics that were related to drafting such plans. In December, she also responded to the inquiries from the Ruđer Bošković Institute.

Since the Republic of Croatia has 25 public scientific institutes, 10 universities (8 public and 2 private universities), 72 constituent units of public universities (faculties, academies, departments), 6 colleges, and 4 public polytechnic schools, the Office for Gender Equality, in cooperation with MZO, will monitor the progress of the implementation of gender equality principles in scientific institutions on the basis of the drafted plans for gender equality, which they are obligated to draft as part of their participation in the Horizon Europe Programme.

- **Improving and systematizing the collection, analysis and dissemination of high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable disaggregated data, with a focus on women's employment, informal employment, access to decent work and social protection, entrepreneurship, and unpaid care and domestic work through time-use surveys and satellite accounts to assess the contribution of such work to national income (paragraphs 49 and 50)**

As it was mentioned above, in December 2021 the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted *National Plan for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion for the period 2021 to 2027* (hereinafter: the National Plan). One of the measures of the Action Plan is the **Comprehensive Diagnosis of Poverty and Social Exclusion** by establishing a single methodology by linking different databases since the official data of the body do not use adequate and uniform codes, have different data structure, there is a parallel entry of the same data in different databases. Guarantees that this data matches, and the way the database is updated is uneven. The aim of the measure is to enable networking of state administration bodies, local / regional self-government bodies and other relevant institutions that recognize certain rights within the competence in the field of social protection systems and / or keep records of them; preparation of a comprehensive analysis of the situation with indicators and recommendations for the improvement of public policies in the social protection system, which prevents the risk of poverty and social exclusion of vulnerable user groups. In essence, this measure would introduce an indicator related to, among other things, the integration of the gender dimension when collecting data.

Moreover, the employees at the Office for Gender Equality participate in many working groups that are coordinated by other state administration authorities, where they aim to shed light on the need for **gender mainstreaming in public policies** (social policy, civil society development, implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women and peace and security and other related resolutions, fight against sexual violence and sexual harassment, Roma inclusion, implementation of the Convention of the Council of Europe on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence,

equalisation of opportunities for persons with disabilities, protection and promotion of human rights, and fight against discrimination, empowerment of youth, etc.).

In 2021, the Office assisted the Ministry of the Sea, Transport and Infrastructure (hereinafter: MMPI) in completing the questionnaire on “Transport policies that take gender into account” for the International Transport Forum that the Republic of Croatia is a member of. This questionnaire was a part of the “Gender Analysis Toolkit for Transport Policies” which should serve, after it is completed, to establish relevant indicators and data collection methods in the transport sector in relation to gender.

The Office for Gender Equality also approves action plans for promoting and establishing gender equality in state administration authorities and legal entities that are predominantly owned by the state (approximately 30 of them), in line with the Gender Equality Act. These plans cover a 4-year period and they contain statistical data on employees, as well as specific measures and activities for enhancing gender equality.