



REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA  
PUČKI PRAVOBRANITELJ  
PPR – 6-08-503/18-16-2  
Zagreb, December 28, 2018

OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
NIRMS – NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AND REGIONAL MECHANISMS SECTION  
FIELD OPERATIONS AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION DIVISION  
Leselle Panuncillo, Team Assistant

Dear Mrs. Panuncillo,

Following up to the request for contribution to the research and report that the OHCHR is preparing in accordance with the HRC Resolution A/HRC/38/4 entitled “Human Rights and Climate Change”, here is the contribution of the Croatian Ombudswoman, Mrs. Lora Vidović.

First of all, we would like to inform you that the Republic of Croatia has the main Ombudsman institution, that is Ombudsman of the Republic of Croatia with the A status of NHRI, but as well it has three special ombudspersons; Ombudsperson for Gender Equality, Ombudsperson for Children and Ombudsperson for People with Disabilities. Therefore, regarding a gender-responsive approach into climate action, for which you asked to be specifically addressed in this contribution, we have to inform you that it is not in our mandate as a specific focus, since it belongs to the mandate of the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality. Nevertheless, human rights of women and girls are the rights of vulnerable groups, which we do address in our work with special emphasis.

Regarding the Environmental protection and Human Rights, Croatian Ombudswoman actively works in this filed since 2013, when Environmental Protection in a form of a specific Chapter, became an integral part of Annual Report of the Croatian Ombudswoman to the Croatian Parliament. Until now, five annual reports with this specific chapter have been submitted, 2013-2017, and the sixth is currently under preparation.

Furthermore, in relation to the climate change, “*Special Report of the Ombudswoman on the Human Rights during the Catastrophe caused by Flood in Eastern Croatia*” was submitted to the Croatian Parliament in 2014.

Also, Annual Report to the Croatian Parliament for the year 2017, besides the Chapter on the Environmental protection (Chapter 3.29. THE RIGHT TO HEALTHY LIVING: ENVIRONMENT AND NATURE, PUBLIC HEALTH, WASTE) contains the specific Chapter on the climate change, civil protection and firefighting systems in relation to human rights through the case study of the huge fire that has entered the second largest Croatian city of Split in the summer 2017 (Chapter 3.30. CLIMATE CHANGE, CIVIL PROTECTION SYSTEM, FIRE-FIGHTING AND PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS – THE FIRE IN SPLIT). For more info you can visit <http://ombudsman.hr/en/all-news/news-article/1499-the-ombudswoman-report-on-human-rights-for-2017-now-available-in-english>.

The Concept of our work in environmental protection and climate change relies on the application of human rights based approach (HRBA) in variety of topics/aspects (protection of environment, protection of nature and natural resources, sustainable development, pollution of the air, water and soil, noise pollution, electromagnetic pollution (non-ionizing radiation), waste management) and in recognition of interrelation and interdependence of environmental protection, climate change and other fields (health/health ecology, civil protection/defense and climate change (floods, fires, other natural disasters), spatial planning and construction, economy, transport, education, etc.

Types of activities that we conduct include: monitoring the status of environmental protection in relation to HR and other fields, participation in national environmental decision making processes (environmental policies and other interrelated policies), investigation of complaints received by citizens, citizens' initiatives, NGOs, investigation of cases on our own initiative, field visits, cooperation with stakeholders, reporting to the Parliament, the UN bodies, promotional activities (round table discussions, lectures, etc.), research and analysis.

Mechanisms that we use are: recommendations, warnings, opinions, suggestions to the authorities at the national, regional and local level, annual and specific reports to the Parliament, informing the government and Parliament on mal administration, participation in decision making processes.

Recommendations, warnings, opinions and suggestions are given to the authorities at the national, regional and local level within or at the closure the investigation processes and are related to the specific cases. General recommendations are given in Annual Reports to the Croatian Parliament and refer to the general situation, such as the adoption of the New Public Health Strategy, with further investments into the Health Ecology and regulation of the Health Impact Assessment (HIA).

Complaints that we receive from citizens and citizens' initiatives are not big in numbers comparing to other fields and human rights issues, but they increase each year. Last year we started to receive more complaints from NGOs, which is result of direct contacts that were established during various occasions, mainly promotional and educational events. Complaints refer to the pollution of air, water or soil caused by industrial plants, waste management,

electromagnetic and noise pollution, small hydro plants that degrade areas of Natura 2000, while all have in common citizens' concerns for their health and health of their families.

We believe that our contribution to your research and report could be useful for the further improvement of human rights protection system and we remain at your disposal for future cooperation.

Sincerely,

  
DEPUTY OMBUDSWOMAN  
  
Lidija Lukina Kezić

