



SLOVENIA

Reply of the Republic of Slovenia regarding the implementation of the General Assembly resolution 73/148 on Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls: sexual harassment, 73/146 on Trafficking in women and girls, and A/RES/73/149 on Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilation

Sexual harassment – general legislative framework

In the Republic of Slovenia, law regulations on labour market policies and non-discrimination require high level of human rights protection. Sexual harassment and gender-based harassment are prohibited in the workplace or any other private or public space, including on-line environment.

According to the Employment Relationship Act, employers are obliged to provide working environment free of workplace bullying, sexual harassment and harassment based on any personal circumstance, gender being one of them. As both forms of harassment are the issue related to occupational safety and health, the Health and Safety at Work Act obliges employers to adopt measures to prevent, eliminate and manage cases of – among others - violence, bullying, and harassment that can pose a threat to worker's health.

Criminal Code criminalizes sexual harassment, as well as unequal treatment in the workplace.

Sexual harassment, harassment and discrimination in general are prohibited by the Protection Against Discrimination Act, and an independent state institution for protection against discrimination, Advocate of the Principle of Equality, is established. Among others, the Advocate's tasks are offering recommendations to employers, economic operators, and other entities on preventing and eliminating discrimination, conducting inspections, and providing independent counselling and legal advice to parties engaged in other administrative and court procedures related to discrimination. The Advocate's mandate includes the prevention of discrimination and addressing reports and initiatives in the private and public sector.

The Republic of Slovenia signed the Declaration »Commitment on women in digital« on the Digital day 2019 (Brussels, 5. 4. 2019). Such an act led to the commitment of the Republic of Slovenia to continue with the implementation of measures that would eliminate gender stereotyping, cultural discouragement and lack of awareness and promotion of female role models hindering and negatively affecting girls' and women's opportunities in STEM studies, related careers and digital entrepreneurship, and leading to discrimination and fewer opportunities for women in the labour market.

Measures to address sexual harassment against women and girls, as per resolution 73/148:

1. Awareness raising

Several awareness-raising activities took place since 2018. Besides co-financing (please see item Support for non-governmental organisations initiatives and projects) NGOs projects, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities conducted an EU co-funded project CyberVAW – Cyber Violence and Harassment against Women and Girls (July 2017 – December 2019). Among its activities a media campaign, aimed to raise awareness, combat gender stereotypes, prevent, reduce,

and change attitudes towards cyber violence and harassment against girls and women, took place from September 2018 to November 2019. Its main outputs were TV spots (EN subtitles, can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrgm2Ve7jE&list=PLinZN0Svri_Y6v40VzS2nz41EfhYbRhg) posters presenting the four most common forms of cyber violence against women and girls (http://odklikni.enakostspolov.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ANG_MDDSZ_ODKLIKNI_plakati_A2_v6_MKL4.pdf), and a leaflet on that issue (http://odklikni.enakostspolov.si/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/ANG_MDDSZ_ODKLIKNI_brosura_A5_v5_MKL.pdf). A mobile app Click-Off (in Slovene only) was also prepared for girls, women, parents, and teachers – it contains information on various forms of cyber harassment of women and girls, on help offered etc. For teenagers (9-15) a brochure on gender based cyber violence was prepared as a part of PIL – a monthly magazine for that target group with an excellent reach.

2. Capacity building (trainings, seminars, conferences, workshops)

One of the goals of the before-mentioned CyberVAW project was also the capacity building of relevant professionals to ensure adequate prevention, prosecution, and protection against cyber violence against women and girls. Capacity-building programmes for young people, policy-makers, the media, youth workers, trainers, teachers and other school workers, social workers, NGOs, Police and Justice and preparation of methods and tools for a gender-sensitive approach on the prevention of cyber violence were the key set of project's activities. Through trainings professionals gained knowledge and skills to address the issue of cyber violence in their daily professional, prevention, and educational practices from a gender perspective and to adequately handle cases and to provide support to victims of such violence. They were equipped with tools to assure that their working practices would be less gender blind, which contributes to better working results and ensuring that both sexes can benefit from their work equally. Through workshops for young people primary school pupils and secondary school students were made aware and educated about cyber violence, its forms, consequences, ways to address and prevent it and where to turn for help and report it. Additionally, a trainers' kit containing a lesson plan and an educational module was developed and made available to school and youth workers for them to continue educating young people about these topics.

In the framework of its regular activities, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities trains support and information advisers (appointed in line with the Decree on Measures to Protect the Dignity of Employees of State Administration). State administration bodies are obliged to appoint one or more employed persons, who are trusted by employees and have concluded training, to provide support and information about measures for the protection against sexual and other harassment or bullying. At least two trainings per year are implemented.

Employers have to designate safety officers responsible for the execution of expert tasks pertaining to safety at work. Therefore, it is crucial they have the knowledge on different aspects of occupational safety and health risks, sexual harassment among them. The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities organised (October 2019) an international conference on women and men at work – the gender perspective of occupational safety and health. Among others, the issue of psychosocial risks was raised and national research on sexual harassment presented.

Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities provides trainings for various professional groups on gender stereotypes, sexism, sexual and gender-based harassment, gender mainstreaming etc. In the period August 2018 – May 2020, tailor-made trainings were provided for civil servants at the ministerial level (co-ordinators for equal opportunities within the Ministries, state officials in the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education, Science

and Sport, Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities), employees in local administration (co-ordinators for equal opportunities, local officials), basic education teachers (an international conference in October 2018 with workshops on gender-based stereotypes, tools to present the issue to children were developed and disseminated to every elementary school). Guidelines for the elimination of stereotypes, and strengthening of gender equality were prepared and disseminated as a part of the EU co-financed project Active.All (in English available here: http://mddsz.arhiv-spletisc.gov.si/fileadmin/mddsz.gov.si/pageuploads/dokumenti_pdf/enake_moznosti/AktivniVsiSmerniceEN.pdf)

Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities established regular co-operation with several Faculties and as a hosting lecturer gives in-depth view on gender equality, gender stereotypes, gender discrimination, sexual and gender-based harassment to the future social workers, sociologists, and legal experts.

We have developed many public and private sector initiatives that encourage the power of women in ICT and eliminate gender stereotyping in the digital age (EU Code week, Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs, Digital entrepreneurship for women, Girls in ICT, Women in Science, HiddenNoMore, »We will be Engineers!«, Ladies of the new Business...). At the Ministry of Public Administration we have developed a project that would empower and strengthen the role of girls in ICT titled »Girls do Code«. This will allow us to introduce girls from age 10 to 14 to the world of programming. Due to COVID – 19 the project was postponed to autumn 2020.

3. Support for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) initiatives and projects

Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities supports programs and projects of NGOs dealing with various forms of violence against women. In 2018, within the annual public tender for supporting the NGOs projects, gender stereotypes were addressed in relation to broad spectrum of their manifestation (gender stereotypes in relation to sexual consent, gender stereotypes in pop culture, awareness-raising on gender stereotypes in basic education). In 2019, the tender focused on dating violence and the role of boys and men in eliminating gender stereotypes. Co-financed projects tackled issues like awareness-raising of teenagers on unacceptability of dating violence, gender stereotypes in porn and prostitution, dating rules, and the awareness-raising of teenagers on gender stereotypes in general).

NGOs, including those specialised for violence against women, are members of the Expert Council for Gender Equality – a consulting body of the Minister, responsible for gender equality. At Council's meetings NGOs can propose legislative measures and other recommendations to improve gender equality in Slovenia.

4. Research

Two main researches on gender-based violence were conducted, on cyber violence among teen age population (12 – 19 y.o.) and on sexual and gender-based harassment (general population).

The first national survey on the prevalence and identification of cyber harassment among young people in Slovenia has shown, that the risk for cyber victimization is considerably higher for girls and young women than for boys and young men. Consequences for females are more severe and perceptions of cyber violence are gendered – male participants perceive it as funny, not severe, and not damaging.

The research on sexual harassment unveiled strong gender-based stereotypes regarding the victims (both, for female and male) and moderate degrees of victim blaming. Women report of - far more often than men - experiencing sexual and gender-based harassment themselves, the main perpetrators being male co-workers and superiors.

General information on the field of violence prevention - social protection programs

Every year, the Ministry publishes a public tender for the co-financing of social protection programs in various fields, including the field of violence prevention. With the tender, we are following the goals set in the Resolution on the National Social Protection Program 2013-2020. Programs include maternity homes, safe houses, shelters, crisis centers, information and counseling, treatment of victims of violence, treatment of victims of sexual violence and prevention programs in the field of prevention of violence against the elderly. We co-finance public and developmental social protection programs. Publicly verified social welfare programs are programs that are professionally verified according to the procedure specified in a special regulation adopted by the Social Chamber of Slovenia. They are financed from the state, municipalities and private sources. All publicly verified programs are included in the external evaluation at the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Social Welfare. Social welfare development programs are programs that develop various new methods and approaches for preventing and resolving the hardships and problems of individual vulnerable groups. They are financed from state, municipal and private sources and are expected to last a maximum of three years. The Ministry co-finances social welfare programs up to 80%, namely co-finances labor costs and indirect costs.

In 2018, the MDDSZ co-financed 38 programs intended for the prevention of violence, of which 28 were public social protection programs (included in five or seven-year co-financing at the MDDSZ) and 10 development social protection programs (included in the one-year co-financing at the MDDSZ). Among all programs for the prevention of violence, there were 22 programs that provide users with beds (accommodation programs). In this set of programs we have maternity home programs (8 programs), 13 programs of safe houses, shelters and crisis centers, as well as one counseling program that offers accommodation to users (Violence against disabled people, implemented by the Association of Disabled People of Slovenia Vision). In addition, the MDDSZ co-financed 14 counseling centers, one program aimed at the prevention of violence against the elderly and one telephone counseling program. In 2018, programs for the prevention of violence received a total of EUR 3,334,898.4 from the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

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Social protection programs during COVID-19

In the field of social welfare programs, where due to the declaration of an epidemic we limited personal contacts with users, the providers nevertheless continued to implement their programs by adapting activities and being available to users by phone or e-mail at all times. Meanwhile, the implementation of accommodation programs remained unchanged, in accordance with the instructions of the National Institute of Public Health.

The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities called on the program providers that in this exceptional situation it is necessary to provide all users with the help they can offer, as a special form of counseling (telephone, web, video call). It is also necessary to make the population aware of the issue of domestic violence, and to provide messages to victims on where to turn in the event of domestic violence. As much as possible, they should strengthen and upgrade counseling in various ways, so that they are as close as possible to the users. We encouraged them to be as proactive as possible in establishing contacts with users at a time when the hardships are even greater and they do not have adequate support. They upgrade their work by using ICT services. The call was also about posting their contacts in as many places as people have access to.

A proposal for a new public tender to help the most vulnerable groups (including victims and perpetrators of violence) during the COVID-19 epidemic and to reduce its consequences is also being prepared. The call will co-finance projects that will develop different approaches to address the emerging needs of COVID-19 with areas such as: psychosocial counseling, awareness, information, field work, providing concrete support to users, establishing new safe points, digital