

Fragnet National contribution to the Fundamental Rights Report 2023

Croatia

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Contents

Franet country study: policy and legal highlights 2022	3
- 1 Equality and non-discrimination	5
o 1.1 Legal and policy developments or measures relevant to fostering equality and combating discrimination focusing on LGBTIQ people and combating discrimination on the grounds of socio-economic status, health status and physical appearance	5
o 1.2. Findings and methodology of research, studies, or surveys on experiences of discrimination against LGBTIQ people and on the grounds of socio-economic status, health status and physical appearance.....	7
- 2. Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance	15
o 2.1 Data, research findings, studies, or surveys on experiences of ethnic discrimination, racism and hate crime	15
o 2.2. Legal and policy developments or measures relating to the application of the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia and the Racial Equality Directive	17
- 3. Roma equality and inclusion	19
o 3.1. Policy developments in regards to the implementation of national action plans	19
o 3.2. Legal and policy developments or measures directly or indirectly addressing Roma/Travellers equality and inclusion	21
- 4. Asylum, borders, visas, migration and integration	26
o 4.1. National legal framework on criminalisation of 'humanitarian assistance' and domestic transposition of sanctions	26
o 4.2. Use of the large-scale IT Systems in the area of asylum, migration and border control	27
- 5. Information society, privacy and data protection	29
o 5.1. Initiatives in the use of artificial intelligence in both private and public sectors.....	29
o 5.2. Legal and policy initiatives on data protection and private life.....	42
- 6. Rights of the child	47
o 6.1. Measures addressing vulnerabilities of children living in poverty and developments regarding the national implementation of the EU Child Guarantee	47
o 6.2. Legal and policy developments or measures in relation to child-friendly procedures for children as victims, witnesses or suspects/accused in criminal proceedings.	51

- 7. Access to justice – Victims’ Rights and Judicial Independence. 55
 - o 7.1. Legal and policy developments or measures relevant to the implementation of the Victims’ Rights Directive and the EU strategy for Victims’ Rights 2020-2025 55
 - o 7.2. Measures addressing violence against women 56
- **8. Developments in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 60**
 - o 8.1. CRPD policy and legal developments & implementation of the European Accessibility Act 60
 - o 8.2. CRPD monitoring at national level 69
- Annex 1 – Promising Practices 72**
- Annex 2 – Case Law 87**

Policy and legal highlights 2022

Franet country study: policy and legal highlights 2022	
Issues in the fundamental rights institutional landscape	In Croatia in 2022, fundamental rights policy plan and plan for creation of enabling environment for civil society development were not adopted since 2016 and gender equality policy since 2015.
EU Charter of Fundamental Rights	The Charter focal point role was assigned to the Government Office for Human Rights and Rights of the National Minorities. Its role is to coordinate and facilitate information and good practices exchange concerning promotion and application of the Charter in Croatia among state administration bodies, ombuds institutions and CSOs.
Equality and non-discrimination	In Croatia, <u>a strategic framework for the protection and promotion of human rights and combating discrimination</u> for the upcoming seven-year period is planned to be adopted by the end of 2022.
Racism, xenophobia & Roma Equality and Inclusion	In 2022, the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Croatian Government <u>commenced</u> the drafting of the 2023-2025 Action Plan corresponding to the <u>National Roma Inclusion Plan 2021 – 2027</u> .
Asylum & migration	In 2022, the City of Zagreb adopted the <u>Action Plan of the City of Zagreb for the integration of applicants for international protection and persons granted international protection for the year 2022</u> , and thus became the first local self-government unit in Croatia to adopt such a document. Since June 2022, asylum seekers, foreigners under temporary protection and foreigners under subsidiary protection and their families are included in the new <u>Act on Recognition and Evaluation of Foreign Educational Qualifications</u> .
Data protection and digital society	In May 2022, the Croatian Government adopted the <u>Action plan for strengthening the efficiency of the Croatian system of preventing money laundering and terrorist financing</u> . In July 2022, new <u>Electronic Communications Act</u> entered into force, transposing the Directive (EU) 2018/1972 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 establishing the European Electronic Communications Code. In June 2022, the Government sent to the parliamentary procedure <u>Proposal of the Act on Facilitating the Use of Financial and Other</u>

	<u>Information for the Purpose of Preventing, Detecting, Investigating or Prosecuting Serious Criminal Offences.</u>
Rights of the child	In 2022, the Croatian government issued a decision adopting the <u>National Plan for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia 2022–2026</u> and the <u>Action Plan for the Rights of the Child 2022–2024</u> .
Access to justice, including victims of crime	In 2022, the Croatian Parliament adopted amendments to the <u>Criminal Procedure Act</u> , supplementing the catalogue of rights of victims of crime with guaranteeing all crime victims the right to easily accessible, confidential and free access to support services and the right of the victim to propose to be questioned via audio-video device.
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability	In 2022, the Croatian Parliament adopted the <u>Social Welfare Act</u> that stipulates an increase in the amount of personal disability allowance and eliminates the threshold for exercising the right to personal disability allowance, among other novelties.

- 1. Equality and non-discrimination

- **1.1 Legal and policy developments or measures relevant to fostering equality and combating discrimination focusing on LGBTIQ people and combating discrimination on the grounds of socio-economic status, health status and physical appearance**

In Croatia, a strategic framework for the protection and promotion of human rights and combating discrimination for the upcoming seven-year period was planned to be adopted by the end of 2022.¹ The content of the new National Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and Combating Discrimination 2022–2027² will rely on EU policies fostering equal opportunities, social protection and inclusion, and in particular on the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025.³ The national plan has two accompanying action plans for the period of one year (2022): Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights for 2022 and the Action Plan for Combating Discrimination 2022. The national plan and the accompanying action plans were available in public consultation via the e-counselling platform from 2 December to 9 January 2023.⁴ The national plan and the accompanying Action Plan for Combating Discrimination 2022 will both particularly focus on the protection of groups covered by the Anti-Discrimination Act,⁵ including LGBTIQ people. The National Plan for Combating Discrimination 2017–2022⁶, in force until the end of 2022, already provides the framework for

¹ Information provided by the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), email correspondence, 5 September 2022.

² Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), National Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and Combating Discrimination 2021–2027 ([Nacionalni plan zaštite i promicanja ljudskih prava i suzbijanja diskriminacije za razdoblje od 2021. do 2027. godine](#)), press release.

³ European Commission (2020), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions [A Union of equality – EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025](#), COM(2020) 565 final, Brussels, 18 September 2020.

⁴ Croatia, E-counselling platform (*E-savjetovanje*), National Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and Combating Discrimination 2021–2027 ([Nacionalni plan zaštite i promicanja ljudskih prava i suzbijanja diskriminacije za razdoblje od 2021. do 2027. godine](#)); Action Plan for Combating Discrimination 2022–2023 ([Akcijski plan suzbijanja diskriminacije 2022. do 2023. godine](#)); Action Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2022–2023 ([Akcijski plan zaštite i promicanja ljudskih prava 2022. do 2023. godine](#)).

⁵ Croatia, Anti-Discrimination Act ([Zakon o suzbijanju diskriminacije](#)), 15 July 2008.

⁶ Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*) (2017), National Plan for Combating Discrimination 2017–2022 ([Nacionalni plan za suzbijanje diskriminacije za razdoblje od 2017. do 2022. godine](#)).

measures which are being implemented and which include LGBTIQ persons among the target groups. The measures include training sessions for employers about the Anti-Discrimination Act and the Gender Equality Act⁷ and about groups at risk of discrimination on the labour market. The Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (Office for Human Rights) organised a virtual training which is available online to interested participants until the end of 2022.⁸ Regarding manifest forms of discrimination, expert seminars on the provisions of the Criminal Code⁹ pertaining to hate crime and hate speech have been held for judges, lawyers, state attorneys, the police and representatives of civil society, with a particular focus on hate crime against national minorities and those based on sexual orientation and gender expression.¹⁰ These measures were implemented in the period from 2017 to 2022, and they continue to be implemented within the framework of new implementing acts, i.e. the Action Plan for Combating Discrimination 2022 to be adopted by the end of 2022.

Due to findings published in FRA's report on its 2019 survey on LGBTI people in the EU and North Macedonia and Serbia¹¹ which identifies issues regarding access to healthcare and the COVID-19 pandemic which further deepened existing difficulties and led to some new ones in realising that right, a working group coordinated by the Office for Human Rights and the Ministry of Health will be established in 2023 with the aim of removing obstacles and improving the realisation of transgender persons' rights in that respect. The working group will analyse obstacles transgender persons come across and provide recommendations and measures to improve the situation. In addition, training on the right to equal treatment and professional ethics for healthcare workers will be held in 2023 in order to better prepare healthcare workers for extraordinary circumstances and inform them about the right to equal treatment and non-discrimination legislation.

The Draft National Plan for Gender Equality 2022–2027 was submitted to online public consultation¹² from 22 September 2022 until 22 October 2022. There are three measures focusing on LGBTIQ persons:

⁷ Croatia, Gender Equality Act ([Zakon o ravnopravnosti spolova](#)), 15 July 2008.

⁸ Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), Notice on the implementation of online training on non-discrimination ([Obavijest o provedbi online edukacija o nediskriminaciji](#)), press release, 17 January 2022.

⁹ Croatia, Criminal Code ([Kazneni zakon](#)), 26 October 2012.

¹⁰ Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), Hate crime seminar held in Vukovar ([U Vukovaru održan seminar "Zločin iz mržnje"](#)), press release, 31 May 2022.

¹¹ FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights), [A long way to go for LGBTI equality](#), Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2020.

¹² Croatia, Office for Gender Equality of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ravnopravnost spolova Vlade RH*), Draft National Plan for Gender Equality 2022–2027 ([Nacrt](#)

- improving administrative processes and making healthcare services more accessible to LGBTIQ people;
- increasing the level of knowledge of police officers regarding principles and methods of combating multiple discrimination thus creating more equal and safer environment for vulnerable groups, such as women and LGBTIQ persons; and
- organising public events that raise awareness about gender equality with an emphasis on vulnerable groups, such as women and LGBTIQ persons.

○ **1.2. Findings and methodology of research, studies, or surveys on experiences of discrimination against LGBTIQ people and on the grounds of socio-economic status, health status and physical appearance**

In the absence of comprehensive research on experiences of discrimination among the LGBTIQ community in Croatia, the key source of information at the national level are the reports of the Office of the Ombudsperson and special ombuds' offices, which, based on multiple sources of data (administrative data, received complaints, information received from relevant stakeholders), provide analyses and evaluations of the state of human rights and equality. Civil society organisations are another important actor that contributes by researching experiences of discrimination among LGBTIQ people in Croatia.

According to 2021 annual report¹³ by the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality, this institution registered 610 complaints. Of those, 40 cases or 6.6 % refer to discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation, and eight cases or 1.3 % to discrimination on grounds of gender identity and gender expression. Available statistical data for 2021 provided by the Ministry of the Interior show an increase in hate crimes based on sexual orientation. Of 101 hate crimes, 13 were committed on grounds of sexual orientation and one on grounds of the victim's gender identity. The most frequently committed crime on grounds of sexual orientation is public incitement to violence and hatred, which the police recorded five times. This is followed by violent behaviour (three cases), serious bodily injury (two cases) and other criminal acts. One recorded hate crime based on gender identity included a threat. The Ministry of the Interior reported to the Ombudsperson a total of 315 misdemeanours motivated by prejudice or hatred based on sexual orientation in 2021: 14 misdemeanours referred to in Article 31 (harassment) and 17 offences referred to in Article 32 (sexual harassment) of the Gender Equality Act,¹⁴ 253 offences referred to in Article 25 (harassment) and

[Nacionalnog plana za ravnopravnost spolova za razdoblje 2022. do 2027. godine](#)), September 2022.

¹³ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Gender Equality (*Pravobraniteljica za ravnopravnost spolova*), 2021 annual report ([Izvješće o radu za 2021. godinu](#)), 31 March 2022.

¹⁴ Croatia, Gender Equality Act ([Zakon o ravnopravnosti spolova](#)), 15 July 2008.

13 offences referred to in Article 26 (sexual harassment) of the Anti-Discrimination Act,¹⁵ and 18 offences referred to in Article 39a of the Act on the Prevention of Disorder at Sports Competitions.¹⁶

In 2022, Lesbian Organisation Rijeka LORI (*Lezbijska organizacija Rijeka LORI*) published a research report *Experiences and needs of young LGBTIQ persons in Croatia*.¹⁷ The research examined experiences and needs of young LGBTIQ persons in Croatia in two areas of life: (1) experiences of openness in expressing one's own LGBTIQ identity, representation of LGBTIQ topics in classrooms, and violence and harassment during education period; and (2) experiences of using the services provided by non-governmental organisations to LGBTIQ youth, and the needs and requirements related to these services. To achieve the set goals, the research was conducted in two stages. The first stage involved carrying out quantitative research using an online survey, and the second part involved qualitative research with focus groups. A total of 373 persons aged 15 to 30 participated in the quantitative part of the research, with an average age of 23. A total of 17 participants took part in focus groups conducted in the cities of Zagreb, Rijeka and Split. On average, they were 23 years old, with an age range from 18 to 28 years. The results of the research have been organised into three sections according to research objectives:

1. Openness in expressing one's own LGBTIQ identity

Close friends and partners most often know about the participants' LGBTIQ identity. In the family circle, more participants outed to their mothers and brothers/sisters than to fathers and wider family. Teachers and professional associates (pedagogues, psychologists, etc.) at school or university rarely know about the participants' LGBTIQ identity. In contact with new acquaintances, more than half of participants state that they partially hide their LGBTIQ identity (203 or 54 %). They more often feel safe and experience respect and appreciation regarding their LGBTIQ identity during their university studies than in high school. Accordingly, they feel more free to openly express their LGBTIQ identity and talk about it at university than in high school, but at both levels of education they are more open with their peers (students) than with the official personnel (teachers and professional associates). Finally, as participants report less freedom and openness in expressing LGBTIQ identity in high school than during higher education, the degree of avoiding participation in some curricular and extracurricular content/activities and avoiding gender-specific spaces due to discomfort or insecurity was higher in high school than during university studies.

2. Experiences of young LGBTIQ persons in the education system

¹⁵ Croatia, Anti-Discrimination Act ([Zakon o suzbijanju diskriminacije](#)), 15 July 2008.

¹⁶ Croatia, Act on the Prevention of Disorder at Sports Competitions ([Zakon o sprječavanju nereda na športskim natjecanjima](#)), 18 July 2003.

¹⁷ Croatia, Lesbian Organisation Rijeka LORI (*Lezbijska organizacija Rijeka LORI*), *Experiences and needs of young LGBTIQ persons in Croatia (Iskustva i potrebe mladih LGBTIQ osoba u Hrvatskoj)*, Zagreb/Rijeka, 2022.

LGBTIQ topics appear in a positive context more often at university level than in high school. Most of the high schools and universities participants attend do not participate in any programmes, education or activities related to LGBTIQ topics.

Most participants never encountered any mention of LGBTIQ topics in a negative context during their university studies. In high school, more than half of the participants were at least once exposed to the mention of LGBTIQ topics in a negative context in classrooms and in teaching materials, with about one third of them being exposed to such comments more than once or often during high school education.

Positive reactions to participants' LGBTIQ identity during their education come more often from their peers than the teaching and professional staff. At the same time, their peers also show negative reactions more frequently than the teaching and professional staff. Participants are more often exposed to negative and less often to positive reactions to their LGBTIQ identity from the environment in high school than at university.

Again, participants are more often exposed to homo/transphobic comments in high school than at university, and the comments come more often from their peers than from the school/university teaching and professional staff. It is important to point out that three quarters of participants (265 or 77 %) are repeatedly or often exposed to such comments from their peers during high school education.

When it comes to directly experienced peer violence, physical violence is less frequent than online and verbal violence, and all forms of violence are more prevalent in high school than at university. Directly experienced violence perpetrated by teachers, professional assistants or other staff in high school and university is less prevalent compared to directly experienced peer violence. None of the participants experienced physical violence perpetrated by the teaching and professional staff during their university studies, while a smaller number of them experienced this type of violence during their high school education. Almost none of the participants experienced verbal violence due to their LGBTIQ identity at university, while 20 % (46) of them experienced this type of violence at least once from the teaching and professional staff in high school.

Witnessing violence is more frequent than directly experiencing violence and it occurs more often in high school than at university. Most participants did not witness any event of violence by teaching and professional staff in high school or university. Nevertheless, the results show that almost half of participants witnessed at least one event in which another LGBTIQ person experienced peer violence in high school.

In relation to witnessing and directly experiencing violence, an even greater number of participants heard that some other LGBTIQ person experienced violence. Learning that physical or verbal violence happened to another LGBTIQ person is more common in high school than at university. Participants hear more often about cases of peer violence than about violence by teaching and professional staff.

Participants have less knowledge about whom to report violence in high school compared to university. Only 23 % (84) of them state that they know to whom they can report homophobic or transphobic violence in high school, while slightly more of them (36 % or 99) know this at university.

They evaluated as most helpful the following sources of desired support during their education: for high school, sexual education as part of the curriculum in which LGBTIQ topics would be discussed, and during their university studies, the faculty's clear position on the unacceptability of discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

3. Experiences and needs of young LGBTIQ persons related to non-governmental organisations

Participants relatively rarely use the services and activities offered by non-governmental organisations dealing with LGBTIQ topics. They most often participate in social, entertainment and cultural activities and use information services, and they least frequently use psychological, peer or legal counselling services. They say that social and entertainment activities and information are most accessible to them in the place they live. Comparison of results on the accessibility and importance of different activities and services revealed that health-related information and services have been rated as the most important and relatively accessible. Psychological counselling and support groups were assessed as important, but somewhat less accessible, while legal counselling and representation were assessed as important, but relatively unavailable to participants.

In May 2022, organisation Rainbow Families (*Dugine obitelji*) initiated a survey on mental health of LGBTIQ persons "Are we OK?".¹⁸ The results are yet to be published.

As part of the National Plan for Enhancing the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the Republic of Croatia 2019–2021,¹⁹ an accompanying document called *Underrepresented and Vulnerable Groups in Higher Education in the Republic of Croatia*²⁰ was prepared, which recognises LGBTIQ persons as a vulnerable group.

One of the measures in the national plan included conducting analyses and research in order to identify underrepresented and vulnerable groups and to improve currently very limited knowledge about the educational experiences of male and female students from vulnerable groups. As part of this measure,

¹⁸ Croatia, Rainbow Families (*Dugine obitelji*), *Are we OK? - research on mental health and minority stress of LGBTIQ persons ("Jesmo li dobro?" - istraživanje o mentalnom zdravlju i manjinskom stresu LGBTIQ osoba)*, 2022.

¹⁹ Croatia, Ministry of Science and Education (*Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja*), National Plan for Enhancing the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the Republic of Croatia 2019–2021 (*Nacionalni plan za unaprjeđenje socijalne dimenzije visokog obrazovanja u Republici Hrvatskoj 2019. – 2021.*), December 2018.

²⁰ Croatia, Ministry of Science and Education (*Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja*), *Underrepresented and Vulnerable Groups in Higher Education in the Republic of Croatia (Podzastupljene i ranjive skupine u visokom obrazovanju u Republici Hrvatskoj)*, 2021.

financed under Erasmus+ project SIDERAL – Social and International Dimension of Education and Recognition of Acquired Learning, the Ministry of Science and Education published a Study on underrepresented and vulnerable groups of students – contributions to the enhancement of the social dimension of higher education in Croatia.²¹ One of the studied groups included LGBTIQ students. The study is qualitative, research was conducted on a limited sample, and it serves as a basis for further research on this topic within the broader framework of the policy of inclusive higher education. The study provides analyses of the social dimension of higher education in Croatia, an overview of previous studies on underrepresented and vulnerable groups of students, an analysis of existing national policies and strategic documents of higher education institutions, and an insight into the student experience in order to identify obstacles arising from their belonging to a vulnerable group. It identifies aspects of vulnerability and underrepresentation that have not been addressed by existing measures, and for which new solutions need to be proposed. The study offers proposals for improving institutional policies at the level of higher education institutions, as well as national policies that pertain to education.

Regarding discrimination based on physical appearance, no research, studies or surveys have been conducted in 2022. The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality publicly reacted to discriminatory social media post published by a beauty salon in June 2022.²² The post invited the followers of the beauty salon's Instagram profile to take photos of women in public areas whose physical appearance evidently shows they are not going to a beauty salon, and according to the salon's standards they 'should'. The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality criticised the post as degrading, humiliating and insulting to women and representing the crudest form of objectification of women. She added that the practice of advertising services and products by shaming other people is deeply worrying and cannot be considered as freedom of expression or entrepreneurial freedom. The post unequivocally called for a violation of women's privacy and represented incitement to harassment in public space. The Ombudsperson's press release was further quoted and amplified by the media.²³ The disputed post was removed from Instagram.

²¹ Croatia, Ministry of Science and Education (*Ministarstvo znanosti i obrazovanja*), Study on underrepresented and vulnerable groups of students – contributions to the enhancement of the social dimension of higher education in Croatia ([Studija o podzastupljenim i ranjivim skupinama studenata – prilozi unaprjeđivanju socijalne dimenzije visokog obrazovanja u Republici Hrvatskoj](#)), 2021.

²² Croatia, Ombudsperson for Gender Equality (*Pravobraniteljica za ravnopravnost spolova*), Ombudsperson's statement regarding the social media post by Beauty Lab salon on Instagram ([Izjava Pravobraniteljice vezano uz objavu salona Beauty Lab na društvenoj mreži Instagram](#)), press release, 29 June 2022.

²³ Portal Danas.hr, article "The scandalous move of the beauty salon outraged Croatian women: The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality reacts" ([Skandalozan potez kozmetičkog salona digao Hrvatice na noge: Nakon niza napada javila im se pravobraniteljica](#)), 28 June 2022.

Portal 24sata.hr, article "The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality on the 'prize game': 'It is harassment and incitement to shaming of women'" ([Pravobraniteljica o 'nagradnoj igri': 'Riječ je o uznemiravanju i poticanju na sramoćenje žena'](#)), 29 June 2022.

Concerning discrimination on the grounds of socio-economic status, the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality conducted a survey on occurrence of violence and harassment in the workplace.²⁴ The survey is part of the project *Preventing and eradicating workplace violence and harassment in Croatia* implemented by the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality and two trade unions: Independent Road Workers' Union and Independent Croatian Trade Union.²⁵ It included 2,340 respondents from seven different job sectors. Results showed that 26.2 % of men and 36.6 % of women participating in the survey experienced workplace abuse, harassment or mobbing. Over 90 % of respondents who experienced some form of violence and harassment never reported it, because, among other things, they did not believe that it would change anything or that the perpetrators would eventually be punished. On the other hand, those who report violence are dissatisfied with the speed and outcome of the procedure, and it often happens that they are exposed to further violence or ultimately leave the workplace where they experienced violence.

Based on the results, the Independent Road Workers' Union published guidelines *For a workplace without violence and harassment: guidelines for collective agreements and regulations for protecting the dignity of workers*, intended for representatives of workers and employers.²⁶ The guidelines include a number of

Portal Telegram.hr, article "The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality on beauty salon prize game: 'It's harassment and misogyny. The police should get involved'" ([Pravobraniteljica o nagradnoj igri salona ljepote: 'To je uznemiravanje i mizoginija. Trebala bi se uključiti policija'](#)), 29 June 2022.

Portal Ženeimediji.hr, article "The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality reacted to an offensive post on the beauty salon's Instagram profile" ([Pravobraniteljica reagirala na uvredljivu objavu na Instagram profilu salona za uljepšavanje](#)), 29 June 2022.

Portal Danas.hr, article "The beauty salon continues to justify the prize game, they say it's a 'little joke': The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality publicly reacted" ([Kozmetički salon i dalje pravda nagradnu igru, kažu da se radi o 'maloj šali': Oglasila se i pravobraniteljica](#)), 29 June 2022.

Portal Dalmatinskiportal.hr, article "Photos of women's behinds at the beaches: The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality on 'prize game': This is about body-shaming" ([Slikanje ženskih stražnjica na plaži: Pravobraniteljica o 'nagradnoj igri': Ovdje se radi o bodyshamingu](#)), 29 June 2022.

Portal Demosmedia.hr, article "The beauty salon continues to justify the prize game, they say it's a 'little joke': The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality also came forward" ([Kozmetički salon i dalje pravda nagradnu igru, kažu da se radi o 'maloj šali': Oglasila se i pravobraniteljica](#)), 30 June 2022.

Portal Aktualno.hr, article "The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality on the sexist prize game that shocked the public: The post represents the crudest form of objectification of women!" ([Pravobraniteljica za ravnopravnost spolova o seksističkoj nagradnoj igri koja je uzdrmala javnost: Objava predstavlja najgrublji oblik objektivizacije žena!](#)), 30 June 2022.

Portal Voxfeminae.hr, article "The Ombudsperson for gender Equality condemned the humiliating post of the beauty salon in Zagreb" ([Pravobraniteljica osudila ponižavajuću objavu zagrebačkog salona za uljepšavanje](#)), 30 June 2022.

²⁴ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Gender Equality (*Pravobraniteljica za ravnopravnost spolova*), How to prevent violence and harassment in the workplace? ([Kako suzbiti nasilje i uznemiravanje na radnom mjestu?](#)), 23 August 2022.

²⁵ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Gender Equality (*Pravobraniteljica za ravnopravnost spolova*), Ombudsperson for Gender Equality established a partnership for a new international project against workplace violence and harassment ([Partnerstvo Pravobraniteljice na novom međunarodnom projektu protiv nasilja i uznemiravanja na radnom mjestu](#)), press release, 17 March 2022.

²⁶ Croatia, Independent Road Workers' Union (*Nezavisni cestarski sindikat*), For a workplace without violence and harassment: guidelines for collective agreements and regulations for

measures that employers and unions can introduce in their workplaces and thus contribute to eliminating workplace violence and harassment – through collective agreements, regulations for protecting workers' dignity and safety at work measures. In the context of the grounds of SOGIESC, socio-economic status, health status and physical appearance, the Guidelines in the section "Definition of terms"²⁷ refer to different types of violence, including:

- violence and harassment – isolated or series of incidents with a goal of violation of a person's dignity or violation of physical, psychological, sexual or economic nature. This also includes physical and psychological violence or general harassment, gender based violence and harassment, discrimination, sexual harassment and sexism.

- psychological violence or harassment - use of power with the intention of causing negative psychological consequences to the victim. It includes wide range of verbal and non-verbal harassment (mobbing, bullying) - gossiping, spreading rumours, ignoring, verbally insulting, threatening, intimidating, ridiculing, mocking, not assigning or excessively assigning work tasks that harm health or impair self-confidence, preventing advancement, inappropriately commenting on physical appearance and manifesting other harmful forms of behaviour.

- gender-based violence and harassment – every unwanted behaviour directed towards persons on the grounds of their sex and/or gender or one that disproportionately affects persons of a certain sex and/or gender. Gender-based harassment includes: offensive or patronizing behaviour or comments, humiliating and belittling criticism, publication of offensive comments via electronic media, threats to reveal sexual orientation or gender identity without permission, intentional use of the wrong personal name or pronoun in relation to a transgender person or reference to gender identity personal history.

- sexual harassment - every unwanted behaviour of sexual nature with the goal of violation of a person's dignity, especially if it creates intimidating, hostile, humiliating, belittling or offensive surroundings. The Guidelines state different forms of sexual harassment: physical, verbal, non-verbal, quid-pro-quo, sexism and discrimination where the last refers to the definition of discrimination from the Anti-Discrimination Act²⁸, Article 1 naming all grounds on which discrimination is prohibited: "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

protecting the dignity of workers ([Za radna mjesta bez nasilja i uznemiravanja: smjernice za kolektivne ugovore i pravilnike za zaštitu dostojanstva radnika i radnica](#)), August 2022.

²⁷ Croatia, Independent Road Workers' Union (*Nezavisni cestarski sindikat*), For a workplace without violence and harassment: guidelines for collective agreements and regulations for protecting the dignity of workers ([Za radna mjesta bez nasilja i uznemiravanja: smjernice za kolektivne ugovore i pravilnike za zaštitu dostojanstva radnika i radnica](#)), pages 13-14, August 2022.

²⁸ Croatia, Anti-Discrimination Act ([Zakon o suzbijanju diskriminacije](#)), 15 July 2008.

condition, disability, genetic heritage, native identity, expression or sexual orientation.”²⁹

²⁹ Croatia, Anti-Discrimination Act ([Zakon o suzbijanju diskriminacije](#)), Article 1, Paragraph 1, 15 July 2008.

- 2. Racism, xenophobia and related intolerance

○ 2.1 Data, research findings, studies, or surveys on experiences of ethnic discrimination, racism and hate crime

In the absence of comprehensive research on experiences of ethnic discrimination, racism and hate crime in Croatia, the key source of information at the national level are the reports of the Office of the Ombudsperson and special ombuds' offices, which, based on multiple sources of data (administrative data, received complaints, information received from relevant stakeholders), provide analyses and evaluations of the state of human rights and equality. Civil society organisations are another important actor that contributes by researching experiences of ethnic discrimination, racism and hate crime in Croatia.

Ombuds' offices will publish 2022 annual reports in March 2023. However, reports containing data for 2021 have been published in 2022.

In 2021, as reported by the Office of the Ombudsperson, this institution received 469 new complaints. As in previous years, most complaints refer to discrimination based on race, ethnicity, skin colour and national origin (15 % or 69 complaints). This represents an increase in the number of reported cases based on these grounds as in 2020, there was 31 case out of 266 reported cases to the Ombudsperson office (11,65%). In addition, 9 % or 44 complaints containing multiple grounds also cited the abovementioned grounds. According to available statistical data provided in the annual report, in 2021, the Ministry of the Interior dealt with 101 hate-motivated criminal offences – criminal offences with elements of hate crime and a criminal offence of public incitement to violence and hatred referred to in Article 325 of the Criminal Code. This represents the increase in the number of recorded cases in regards to previous year, as in 2020, there were 87 hate-motivated criminal offences recorded.³⁰ According to unofficial data the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration provided to the Office of the Ombudsperson, in 2021, in total 39 court proceedings initiated regarding criminal offences referred to in Article 87 (21), that is, hate crimes and a criminal offence of incitement to violence and hatred in connection to Article 325 of the Criminal Code.³¹

³⁰ Croatia, Ombudsperson's Office (*Ured pučke pravobraniteljice*), Ombudsperson's 2020 Annual Report ([Izvješće pučke pravobraniteljice za 2020. godinu](#)), page 91, February 2021.

³¹ Croatia, Ombudsperson's Office (*Ured pučke pravobraniteljice*), Ombudsperson's 2021 Annual Report ([Izvješće pučke pravobraniteljice za 2021. godinu](#)), March 2022.

The Serb National Council published a report *Serb National Council Bulletin – Historical revisionism, hate speech and violence against Serbs in 2021*.³² The bulletin gives an overview of events in 2021 that were motivated by prejudice, intolerance and hatred towards Serbs in Croatia. The purpose of this periodical publication is to provide an overview of the circumstances of the Serb community in Croatia gathered in one place, with special emphasis on adverse phenomena. The bulletin includes examples of many processes and events which require public attention in the context of attempts to improve interethnic relations in Croatia and the wider region, in order to achieve full realisation of minority rights. It describes and analyses instances of physical violence, property damage, hate speech, discrimination and historical revisionism. The data presented in the report have largely been collected from the media, but also from reports filed to the Serb National Council. The number of collected cases does not represent the exact state of affairs, but points to trends so they could be studied and compared over a longer period.

Cases have been divided into following categories:

- graffiti and symbols containing hate speech and ethnic intolerance – 297 cases
- hate speech and ethnic intolerance in sporting venues – seven cases
- hate speech and ethnic intolerance in the media – 37 cases
- public conduct with characteristics of intolerance towards Serbs – 22 cases
- ethnic intolerance and historical revisionism in statements by public figures – 28 cases
- insults and threats directed against Serbs and Serb institutions in the Republic of Croatia – 61 cases
- physical assaults (number of people assaulted) – 26 cases
- damaged, destroyed and stolen property – 15 cases
- antifascist monuments damaged or destroyed – 10 cases
- bilingual signs damaged or destroyed – three cases.

On 6 April 2022, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted a final resolution³³ that closed the supervision of the execution of two judgments of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) against Croatia in the cases *Šečić*³⁴ and *Škorjanec*.³⁵ With the final resolution in these two cases, the Committee of Ministers confirmed that the individual and general measures taken by the

³² Croatia, Serb National Council (*Srpsko narodno vijeće*), *Historic revisionism, Hate Speech and Violence Against Serbs in 2021* ([Historijski revizionizam, govor mržnje i nasilje prema Srbima u 2021.](#)), 2022.

³³ European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), [Resolution CM/ResDH\(2022\)81](#), 6 April 2022.

³⁴ European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), [Šečić v. Croatia](#), No. 40116/02, 31 May 2007.

³⁵ European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), [Škorjanec v. Croatia](#), No. 25536/14, 28 March 2017.

competent Croatian authorities in relation to the judgments are adequate and sufficient to achieve the purpose of the enforcement procedure.

- **2.2. Legal and policy developments or measures relating to the application of the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia and the Racial Equality Directive**

As previously mentioned, the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (Office for Human Rights) is responsible for drafting the National Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and Combating Discrimination 2022–2027.³⁶ It is a medium-term strategic planning act based on which the government will define and set goals for the realisation of human rights and equality in Croatia. The document builds on previous national strategic documents that planned action in the area of protection and promotion of human rights, whereby the last document in this area, the National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights, was valid in the period from 2013 to 2016.³⁷ The national plan also builds on the strategic document for combating discrimination, for which the last document was adopted for the period from 2017 to 2022.³⁸ Regarding the application of the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia, the Office for Human Rights points out that one of the goals of the National Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and Combating Discrimination 2022–2027, will be to improve the mechanisms for combating racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance through raising awareness about hate crime and hate speech, and the accompanying action plan will contain a series of measures aimed at combating hate crime and hate speech.³⁹

³⁶ Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), National Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and Combating Discrimination 2021–2027 ([Nacionalni plan zaštite i promicanja ljudskih prava i suzbijanja diskriminacije za razdoblje od 2021. do 2027. godine](#)).

³⁷ Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), National Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013–2016 ([Nacionalni program zaštite i promicanja ljudskih prava za razdoblje od 2013. do 2016.](#)), April 2013.

³⁸ Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), National Plan for Combating Discrimination 2017–2022 ([Nacionalni plan za suzbijanje diskriminacije za razdoblje od 2017. do 2022. godine](#)).

³⁹ Information provided by the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), email correspondence, 5 September 2022.

The Office for Human Rights, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Science and Education will be in charge of implementing measures within which the following activities are planned in the period from 2022 to 2023:

- marking important dates with the aim of raising awareness among the professional and general public about hate crime and hate speech;
- implementation of national preventive programmes by the Ministry of the Interior;
- introduction of topics related to the protection of human rights and hate crime in the implementation plans of two study programmes (Tertiary study of Criminalistics and Specialist graduate tertiary study of Criminalistics) at the Police College;
- introduction of topics related to the protection of human rights and non-discrimination in the adult education programme for the profession of police officer carried out in Josip Jović Police School, and in the professional curriculum of the third or fourth grade of regular high school education for the profession of police officer carried out in Josip Jović Police School;
- implementation of regional multisectoral workshops on hate crime and providing support to victims of hate crime in cooperation with the Judicial Academy and the Police Academy;
- assessment of training needs for judges, state attorneys, police officers, civil servants and employees of social welfare institutions on non-discrimination, hate crime and hate speech; and
- implementation of educational training for students on the topic of prevention of violence motivated by prejudice or hatred.

In the period from the end of 2022 to 2023, activities ensuring the coordination of interdepartmental cooperation, monitoring and analysis of the incidence of hate crimes will continue to be implemented. They include:

- continuous meetings of the Hate Crime Working Group;⁴⁰ and
- publication of semi-annual data on cases of hate crime committed on the grounds of race, skin colour, religion, national or ethnic origin, language, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other characteristics.

⁴⁰ Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), Combating hate crimes ([Suzbijanje zločina iz mržnje](#)), press release.

- 3. Roma equality and inclusion

o 3.1. Policy developments in regards to the implementation of national action plans

Developments regarding the implementation of action plans	
Has the Member State adopted one or several action plan(s) for the implementation of the strategy (separately from the strategic framework? If yes, please provide a hyperlink	Yes On 23 June 2021, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the first of three planned action plans for the implementation of the National Plan for Roma Inclusion 2021–2027 ⁴¹ . On 30 September 2022, the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities commenced the drafting process of the new Action Plan 2023 – 2025. ⁴²
How were Roma and Traveller civil society organizations consulted for the development of the action plan (please check with the competent	A working group comprising 46 members and 43 alternate members was formed to draw up the National Plan for Roma Inclusion 2021–2027. ⁴³ It includes representatives of state administration bodies,

⁴¹ Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), National Plan for Roma Inclusion 2021–2027 ([Nacionalni plan za uključivanje Roma 2021.-2027.](#)), 2021.

⁴² Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), Notification on the Launch of the Process of Drafting Up the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Plan for Roma Inclusion for the Period from 2021 to 2027, for 2023-2025 ([Obavijest o pokretanju postupka izrade Akcijskog plana za provedbu Nacionalnog plana za uključivanje Roma za razdoblje od 2021. do 2027. godine, za 2023.-2025.](#)), press release, 30 September 2022.

⁴³ Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), Decision On the Establishment of the Working Group on Drafting the National Roma Inclusion Plan for the Period 2021 to 2027 And the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Plan for the Period 2021 to 2027, For the Period 2021 to 2021 ([Odluka o osnivanju Radne skupine za izradu Nacrta Nacionalnog plana za uključivanje Roma za razdoblje od 2021. do 2027. godine i Nacrta Akcijskog plana za provedbu Nacionalnog plana za uključivanje Roma za razdoblje od 2021. do 2027. godine za razdoblje od 2021. do 2022. godine](#)), 23 October 2020; Decision On Supplementing the Decision On the Establishment of the Working Group on Drafting the National Roma Inclusion Plan for the Period 2021 to 2027 And the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Plan for the Period 2021 to 2027, For the Period 2021 to 2021 ([Odluka](#)

national authorities and the most significant Roma organizations)?	representatives of the Roma national minority, civil society organisations, academia, the Ombudsperson and special Ombudspersons (for children, persons with disabilities, and gender equality). Civil society representatives were selected through a public call, and all interested parties were involved in the work of the working group and smaller working groups in order to elaborate the national strategic framework. ⁴⁴
Was the Equality Body and the NHRI and the Ombuds institution in your country consulted in the development of the action plan (please check with the competent national authority, the Equality body, NHRI and Ombuds institution)?	Representatives of the Ombudsperson, the Ombudsperson for Children, the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities and the Ombudsman for Gender Equality participated in elaborating the strategic framework. ⁴⁵
Does the national strategic framework and the action plan foresee a regular monitoring and review? If yes, who will conduct this.	Yes. The Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia is in charge of annual reporting on the implementation of the action plan, and the

[o dopuni odluke o osnivanju Radne skupine za izradu Nacrta Nacionalnog plana za uključivanje Roma za razdoblje od 2021. do 2027. godine i Nacrta Akcijskog plana za provedbu Nacionalnog plana za uključivanje Roma za razdoblje od 2021. do 2027. godine, za razdoblje od 2021. do 2022. godine](#)), 4 November 2021; Decision On Supplementing the Decision On the Establishment of the Working Group on Drafting the National Roma Inclusion Plan for the Period 2021 to 2027 And the Action Plan for the Implementation of the National Roma Inclusion Plan for the Period 2021 to 2027, For the Period 2021 to 2021 ([Odluka o dopuni odluke o osnivanju Radne skupine za izradu Nacrta Nacionalnog plana za uključivanje Roma za razdoblje od 2021. do 2027. godine i Nacrta Akcijskog plana za provedbu Nacionalnog plana za uključivanje Roma, za razdoblje od 2021. do 2027. godine, za razdoblje od 2021. do 2022. godine](#)), 13 November 2021.

⁴⁴ Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), email correspondence, 5 September 2022.

⁴⁵ Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), email correspondence, 5 September 2022.

	evaluation of the National Plan for Roma Inclusion is planned for 2024 ⁴⁶ .
Implications of the war in Ukraine on the situation of Roma	
Have Roma from Ukraine entered your country?	N/A
If Roma from Ukraine entered your country how was this communicated in the media?	N/A
Is there any evidence (articles, reports, analyses) of the impact of the economic implications of the war (inflation, food or energy prices etc.) on Roma? If yes, provide reference	N/A

○ **3.2. Legal and policy developments or measures directly or indirectly addressing Roma/Travellers equality and inclusion**

According to available data, Roma are significantly more frequent beneficiaries of the social welfare system than the rest of the population.⁴⁷ Thus, changes in the social welfare system, whether legislative changes or adoption of new public policies have a significant indirect and direct impact on the lives of the Roma national minority members.⁴⁸ Despite the legislative changes do not target members of the Roma national minority specifically respectively explicitly, e.g. the Croatian Ombudsperson in her annual reports proposed recommendations aiming at eliminating indirectly discriminatory provisions that negatively affect members of the Roma and other national minorities, e.g. living in remote areas insufficiently covered by

⁴⁶ Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), email correspondence, 5 September 2022.

⁴⁷ Kunac, S., Klasnić, K., Lalić, S. (2018), *Roma Inclusion in the Croatian Society: a Baseline Data Study*, Zagreb, Centre for Peace Studies.

⁴⁸ Information provided by the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), email correspondence, 5 September 2022.

public transport.⁴⁹ Therefore, the changes in the social welfare system are a consequence of the Ombudsperson's efforts to effectuate positive changes in the social protection of members of the Roma national minority.

On 28 January 2022, the Croatian Parliament passed the Social Welfare Act,⁵⁰ the Foster Care Act⁵¹ and five chamber acts regulating professions within the social welfare system. These are seven acts which are part of the social welfare system reform and relate to three national plans adopted by the Croatian government at its December sessions. As a result, over HRK 500 million (approx. € 66,427,126.95) more will be allocated for the set of acts in 2022 compared to 2021.

With the introduction of these laws, significant improvements are expected both for the beneficiaries and the system itself. The acts have been elaborated in cooperation with civil society organisations, academia and associations.⁵²

The Social Welfare Act is the basic regulation governing social welfare activity, beneficiaries, rights and services, and procedures for their realisation, the manner of conducting activities and other issues vital for social welfare. The act increases the guaranteed minimum income from HRK 800 (approx. € 106.28) to HRK 1000 (approx. € 132.85) and the amount of personal disability allowance from HRK 1500 (approx. € 199.28) to HRK 1750 (approx. € 232.49), and eliminates means testing for exercising the right to personal disability allowance.

In addition, it redefines the housing allowance, increases the allowance for beneficiary's personal needs and rights to accommodation or organised housing services. It expands the circle of persons who can be recognised as carers in order to enable children with developmental disabilities and persons with disabilities to stay in their homes and prevent their

⁴⁹ Croatia, Ombudsperson's Office (*Ured pučke pravobraniteljice*), Ombudsperson's 2021 Annual Report ([Izvešće pučke pravobraniteljice za 2021.](#)), March 2022.

⁵⁰ Croatia, Social Welfare Act ([Zakon o socijalnoj skrbi](#)), 17 February 2022.

⁵¹ Croatia, Foster Care Act ([Zakon o udomiteljstvu](#)), 3 February 2022.

⁵² Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), email correspondence, 5 September 2022.

institutionalisation. It stipulates new services such as comprehensive assessment and planning, prior expert evaluation, social mentoring and psychosocial treatment for the prevention of violent behaviour.

The new way of contracting social services will simplify the public call procedure for tenders and conclusion of contracts. Moreover, it will provide a unified access to the network for providing services and enable standardisation of processes and the quality of services, equality and transparency in financing.

The act stipulates establishing three new public institutions: Croatian Institute for Social Work as a public institution that will perform tasks from its area of activities in central and regional services, Family Centre as an independent institution to implement activities and programmes aimed at prevention and treatment for children, youth, and families, and Social Welfare Academy as a public institution to organise and conduct professional training for specialists and other workers in the social welfare system. Finally, a committee will be established to decide on the merits of complaints, which shall contribute to opening up the social welfare system to beneficiaries.

The act aims to improve the structure and quality of social welfare centres by establishing the Croatian Institute for Social Work, relieving and reducing public authority, enhancing expertise, developing and separating family centres as independent institutions, and expanding services at the local community level and making them more accessible.

Amendments to the draft Social Welfare Act have been accepted, extending the dormant period of the right to personal disability allowance or the attendance allowance from two to six months if the beneficiary, for instance, resides abroad. Another accepted amendment eliminates overlapping conditions for recognising different rights in the social welfare system.

The new Social Welfare Act also put in place some reforms, by abolishing the total ban on ownership/possession of a car for beneficiaries of guaranteed minimum income and introducing the possibility of ownership/ possession of a car worth up to HRK 20,000 (approx. € 2,657.09). This is particularly relevant for people living in remote areas or for Roma living in settlements.⁵³

⁵³ Croatia, Office of the Ombudsperson (*Ured pučke pravobraniteljice*), email correspondence, 12 September 2022.

It also stipulates that persons with disabilities be allowed to choose a career on their own and that persons granted the right to personal disability allowance be subject to the provisions of the new, more favourable act, without reviewing their rights.⁵⁴

Another adopted amendment stipulates increasing the fine for illegal provision of services and illegal conclusion of contracts from HRK 100,000 (approx. € 13,285.43) to HRK 200,000 (approx. € 26,570.85) and reducing the fine for improper record keeping and documentation to a maximum of HRK 30,000 (approx. € 3,985.63).

The Foster Care Act redefines special conditions for performing specialised foster care for children by enabling the performance of specialised foster care to caregivers who already serve as foster caregivers and have three years of experience in providing accommodation services to children or young adults.

By making conditions more flexible and increasing benefits, the act aims to increase the number of foster caregivers, ensure a certain number of specialised foster caregivers for children, achieve a regional balance of foster caregivers, improve the quality of care in foster families and increase the number of children in foster families in order to prevent their institutionalisation.

In addition, Croatia is among the seven EU Member States in which the pilot project *Child Guarantee* is being implemented. Within the scope of the project, UNICEF Croatia, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, other bodies, Međimurje County and local self-government units, develops practices to ensure access to quality and timely healthcare, education, care services, adequate housing conditions and quality nutrition for the most vulnerable children in Croatia (including Roma children).

The plan is to continue to implement and improve the developed successful practices. To ensure this process, a Child Guarantee Action Plan is intended to be adopted. The implementation of the action plan should directly impact the lives of Roma children, identified as one of the key target groups of children by the European Commission's initiative, i.e., the Child Guarantee.

⁵⁴ Croatia, Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade RH*), email correspondence, 5 September 2022.

On 22 September 2022, the 2021 Census was published.⁵⁵ According to the published figures, the count of the Roma population in Croatia is 17,980.⁵⁶ In comparison to the 2011 Census, the Roma population increased from 16,975 to 17,980.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Croatia, Croatian Bureau of Statistics (*Državni zavod za statistiku*), Final results of the 2021 Census published ([Objavljeni konačni rezultati Popisa 2021.](#)), 22 September 2022.

⁵⁶ Croatia, Croatian Bureau of Statistics (*Državni zavod za statistiku*), Population by ethnicity, by towns/municipalities, 2021 Census ([Stanovništvo prema narodnosti po gradovima/općinama, Popis 2021.](#)), 07 October 2022.

⁵⁷ Croatia, Croatian Bureau of Statistics (*Državni zavod za statistiku*), Final results ([Konačni rezultati](#)), 22 September 2022.

- 4. Asylum, borders, visas, migration and integration

- **4.1. National legal framework on criminalisation of 'humanitarian assistance' and domestic transposition of sanctions**

EUMS	Implementation of Article 3 of Directive 2002/90/EC	
	<p>How has your EUMS implemented Article 3 of Directive 2002/90/EU</p> <p>The Republic of Croatia has implemented Article 3 of Directive 2002/90/EU in the Article 249 (8) of the Aliens Act, Official Gazette No. 133/2020</p>	<p>Hyperlinked legal provision in EN and national language</p> <p>Aliens Act, Official Gazette No. 133/2020</p> <p>Zakon o strancima, Narodne Novine 133/2020</p>
	Cases [incident numbers] of criminalisation of humanitarian assistance	
	No information available on cases reported in 2022.	
	Number of cases recorded by the police in 2022	Number and details of cases (if available)
		No information available.

	No information available.	
	Number of investigations initiated in 2022 No information available.	Number and details of cases (if available) No information available.
	Number of court decisions taken in 2022 No information available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number and type of court decisions, information if decision is final. • Type of penalties imposed according to Article 1 2002/946/JHA: Council framework Decision of 28 November 2002 on the strengthening of the penal framework to prevent the facilitation of unauthorised entry, transit and residence • Describe in max three-four sentences the key court decisions in 2022 and add hyperlink to decision (if available)

○ **4.2. Use of the large-scale IT Systems in the area of asylum, migration and border control**

No information available on DPAs or National Human Rights Institutions' guidance, complaints, recommendations, and opinions on the use of large-scale IT systems in the area of asylum, migration and border control published or planned in 2022. However, in the public consultation process regarding the Proposal of the Act on Amendments to the International and Temporary Protection Act, the Ombudsperson's Office requested correction of amendments to the Article 13. Namely, in the Article 13 (3), after the words "undergo verification and identity verification" the Proposal adds the words: "and country of origin, with the possibility of using software technologies, with full respect for the protection of personal data", justified by the need to comply

with Article 4, Paragraph 3 of Directive 2011/95/EU. The Ombudsperson requested for this clause to be defined more clearly, and suggested that in the explanation of the legal proposal, the purpose and legal basis of the encroachment on the right to privacy by collecting a larger volume of data than that relevant to the assessment of the validity of the request for international protection, as defined by Directive 2011/95/EU, should be stated in detail.⁵⁸

According to the national law, Croatia uses biometric technology for migration purposes. Third-country national requesting a short or long term stay (visa) needs to give biometric data, which is then entered into Croatian Visa Information System. Biometric data is also taken from third country nationals residing in Croatia irregularly, for the purposes of identification, as well as prevention, detection and investigation of terrorism or other criminal acts.⁵⁹

According to available data, Croatia uses online systems to process residence permits, but not citizenship applications. Furthermore, in 2019, Croatia introduced appointments via email for managing residence permit applications.⁶⁰

No case law available concerning the right to information, and access and rectification with respect to the use of the large-scale EU IT systems (Eurodac, SIS and VIS) in 2022 was found.

⁵⁸ Croatia, Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*), Proposal of the Act on Amendments to the International and Temporary Protection Act ([Prijedlog Zakona o izmjenama i dopunama Zakona o međunarodnoj i privremenoj zaštiti](#)), 29 November 2022.

⁵⁹ Croatia, Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*), Act on Foreigners ([Zakon o strancima](#)), Official Gazette (*Narodne novine*) Nos [133/20](#), [114/22](#), Articles 22, 37, 170, and 217,

⁶⁰ European Commission, European Migration Network, [The use of digitalisation and artificial intelligence in migration management](#), February 2022.

- 5. Information society, privacy and data protection

o 5.1. Initiatives in the use of artificial intelligence in both private and public sectors

Actor	Type	Description	Are Human Rights issues mentioned? (yes/no)	Reference
Government	Analysis preceding to national draft act, process of the adoption of the Digital Croatia Strategy 2032	<p>Presentation of the analysis of the situation for purposes of drafting the Digital Croatia Strategy 2030 was held in July 2022.</p> <p>According to the information received from the Central State Office for Digital Society Development, the adoption of the Digital Croatia Strategy for the period until 2032 is in progress. This Strategy assumes the application of advanced technologies such as 5G/6G, artificial</p>	No.	<p>Central State Office for Digital Society Development, Presentation of analysis of situation for the development of the Digital Croatia Strategy 2030 (Predstavljena analiza stanja za potrebe razvoja Strategije digitalna Hrvatska 2030.), July 2022.</p> <p>Information received through correspondence with the Central State Office for Digital Society Development in November 2022.</p> <p>Croatian Parliament, Proposal of the Digital Croatia Strategy for the period until 2032 (Prijedlog Strategije digitalne</p>

		<p>intelligence, machine learning, cloud computing and block chain technology in the public and private sectors, but also remains open to the implementation of some future disruptive technologies that will appear in the upcoming period.</p> <p>The strategy emphasizes the importance of collecting data in standardized formats (structured and unstructured data), advanced analytics and visualization of collected data that would then be available through a platform that would serve as an open data warehouse, with implemented analytical tools and elements of</p>		<p><u>Hrvatske za razdoblje do 2032. godine</u>), December 2022.</p>
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	<p>artificial intelligence, available to the private and public sector for the development of new, innovative services. As part of the mentioned digitization, the introduction of advanced digital technologies in the work of public administration will be encouraged, such as block chain technology and artificial intelligence, which at its core contains integrated elements of machine and deep learning, computer vision, speech recognition and robotics.</p> <p>In the next 10 years, it is expected that the development and application of artificial intelligence will result in a global transformation of society, therefore</p>		
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	<p>special emphasis will be placed on monitoring good practices in the application of artificial intelligence in the public sector, and based on this, on the preparation and implementation of similar projects in the Croatian environment. In order for that to be achieved, amendments to laws and by-laws necessary to enable and encourage electronic communication and digitization of administrative and other procedures and business processes of public law bodies will be initiated.</p> <p>Croatian Government adopted the Digital Croatia Strategy for the period until 2032 in December 2022. Its</p>		
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		implementation period is 2022-2032.		
NHRI Ombudsperson of the Republic of Croatia	Lecture	<p>The Ombudsperson of the Republic of Croatia held a lecture to students of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing on the connection between artificial intelligence and human rights and equality.</p> <p>The lecture was held in June within the course Introduction to AI.</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>The lecture included the basics of the legal concept of human rights and combating discrimination, as well as possibilities and practical examples of different ways in which the use of new technologies and AI can lead to violation of individual human rights and discrimination on different grounds, such as racial or ethnic origin, gender and others.</p> <p>Practical examples were used to demonstrate how discrimination can occur in algorithmic decision-making in different phases (development, testing or use of such systems), including through biases that are built into the algorithm itself, whether consciously or not.</p>	<p>Ombudsperson of the Republic of Croatia, Lecture to students of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing on the connection between artificial intelligence and human rights and equality (Predavanje studenticama i studentima FER-a o povezanosti umjetne inteligencije s ljudskim pravima i jednakosti), June 2022</p>
Other	Project	<p>Project 'Untitled' by Tomo Savić-Gecan (Croatian Pavilion, Venice Biennale of Art): every day for the duration of 59th edition of the Venice Biennale of Art, the lead story from</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Artificial intelligence programmed to recognise and classify a given set of topics (from climate change, migration, cryptocurrencies to military action, human rights violations, etc.) produces a set of algorithmically derived instructions intended for a group of five performers who will be given a start</p>	<p>Croatian Ministry of Culture and the Media, Announcement of the project 'Untitled (Croatian Pavilion)', 2022 by Tomo Savić-Gecan (Predstavljen projekt Bez naziva (Hrvatski paviljon)).</p>

		different, randomly selected global news sources provided data that feeds an artificial intelligence algorithm, which in turn prescribes the time, location, duration, movements and thoughts of five performers in Venice.	time, the exact location in Venice and choreographic details of each performance.	2022. Tome Savića-Gecana), 14 March 2022
Academia	Project	<p>Project AgroSPARC – Smart and predictive agriculture for resilience to climate change.</p> <p>The project is implemented by Nikola Tesla Innovation Centre in cooperation with the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Zagreb and Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing of the University of Zagreb.</p> <p>The project goal is to develop mathematical</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>Human rights issues are not directly mentioned. However, the project focus is on predictive agriculture and use of artificial intelligence for prediction of crop development and harvest in relation to climate change, which is a topic of social relevance and consequently reflects on a series of human rights, including economic and social rights.</p>	<p>Project AgroSPARC, Smart and predictive agriculture for resilience to climate change (Napredna i prediktivna poljoprivreda za otpornost klimatskim promjenama), Nikola Tesla Innovation Centre</p>

	<p>models for different growth stages of wheat by applying artificial intelligence, and to use it to predict crop development and harvest.</p> <p>Big data will be analysed with respect to various climate conditions, artificially created and permuted in the prototyping chambers, and correlated with plant development identifiers in different growth stages.</p> <p>The models will be publicly and interactively used through a portal for prediction of plant development in real and hypothetical climate conditions, with accumulated and archived feedback from farmers as additional</p>		
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		data for tuning of the developed models.		
Other	Other	AI Centre Lipik	<p>AI Centre Lipik was founded in 2021 and comprises the Artificial Intelligence Education Centre which conducts education and training, and the Artificial Intelligence Start-up Incubator and Accelerator which provides space and mentoring support to companies dealing with programming and artificial intelligence.</p> <p>As of June 2022, there are 14 start-ups in the AI centre Lipik which employ more than 30 people. They are offered free infrastructure, work equipment and initial financial incentive of HRK 4,000–5,000 (approx. € 535–665) as well as other forms of support to launch their activity.</p>	<p>AI Centre Lipik website (Centar umjetne inteligencije Lipik)</p> <p><i>Jutarnji list</i>, At AI centre Lipik currently 14 start-ups employing more than 30 people (U AI centru Lipik trenutno postoji 14 startupova, koji zapošljavaju više od 30 ljudi), newspaper article, 3 June 2022</p>
CSOs	Workshop "Drawing in the Air with AI"	Workshop represented the activity of the Partners in Learning NGO held in October 2022 on the occasion of marking the European Programming Week. The workshop was attended by the seventh grade students of the First	No.	Partners in Learning, Workshop "Drawing in the Air with AI" (Crtanje po zraku uz umjetnu inteligenciju)

		<p>Elementary School in Ogulin.</p> <p>The outcomes of the workshop were: understanding the concept of intelligence, distinguishing between human and artificial intelligence, learning the examples of the use of artificial intelligence, as well as writing the program using the human body recognition extension to recognize finger movements in front of the camera and transfer the finger movements to the program stage.</p>		
Academia/ other	Artificial intelligence for smart healthcare and medicine	Not-for-profit public-private consortium AI4HEALTH.Cro was established with the aim to create a hub to help the efficient transfer of technologies and	Yes - the initiative concerns the right to health in general, aiming to address the existing burden on the healthcare system and introduce innovative ideas and effective solutions for both patients and experts in the future.	AI4Health.Cro website

	<p>- AI4Health.Cro</p>	<p>potential solutions by technology companies, innovators and start-ups into health and medical practice.</p> <p>They will establish a kind of hub for the application of artificial intelligence in healthcare, where they will be able to screen candidates, enabling them to test their technology before major investments. This includes various assessments and simulations of innovation and digital maturity of technology, support in the development and adaptation of technology to the needs of users and, ultimately, assistance in technology transfer.</p> <p>In June 2022, the initiative was granted</p>		
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		<p>funds within the European Union EDIH call (European Digital Innovation Hubs). Implementation of the activities starts with 1 January 2023, whereas in 2022 a series of preparatory and promotional activities were carried out, popularising AI in healthcare and medicine.</p>		
Government / academia	Project	<p>The National Language Technology Platform (NLTP) project is being implemented by the Central State Office for Digital Society Development in partnership with the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Zagreb. The goal of the project is combined use of the most advanced tools and solutions for</p>	<p>Yes, by focusing part of the activities on the promotion of rights of persons with disabilities. The project goals include: ensuring multilingual access and access for persons with disabilities to the contents and e-services of public authorities.</p>	<p>NLTP project website</p> <p>Central State Office for the Digital Society Development, (National Language Technology Platform)</p> <p>Central State Office for the Digital Society Development, The Government of the Republic of Croatia is a major sponsor of the 45th MIPRO</p>

		<p>language technologies (LT) in order to launch a modern platform for language technologies based on artificial intelligence (AI). The expected benefits are the introduction of language technologies based on artificial intelligence in the state administration, multilingual access to public content and services for domestic and foreign users, easier access to public content and services for people with disabilities, and standardization of the language of public administration.</p> <p>The National Language Technology Platform is a 2020 CEF Telecom project that foresees the establishment of a portal for the latest language</p>		<p>2022 meeting, where the project "National Platform for Language Technologies" was presented (<i>Vlada Republike Hrvatske visoki je pokrovitelj 45. skupa MIPRO 2022 na kojem je predstavljen projekt "Nacionalna platforma za jezične tehnologije"</i>), May 2022</p>
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	<p>technologies in Croatia, Latvia, Estonia, Malta and Iceland. The National Platforms will be connected to the CEF eTranslation service of the European Commission and will enable multilingual access to public content and e-services in involved countries. It is also planned to establish modules that would make the contents and e-services of public authorities more accessible for use by people with disabilities.</p> <p>In 2022, the NLTP was presented on a number of conferences, seminars and events focusing on digital society and e-infrastructure.</p> <p>They also conducted a survey on the use of</p>		
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		language technologies in public administration in the Republic of Croatia conducted on a sample of 308 public authorities. Results were presented at the 45th international meeting for information, communication and electronic technology (MIPRO) in May 2022 as a part of the consultations on the AI systems.		
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○ **5.2. Legal and policy initiatives on data protection and private life**

In May 2022, the Croatian government adopted the Action plan for strengthening the efficiency of the Croatian system of preventing money laundering and terrorist financing.⁶¹ The action plan ensures the implementation of the policy of prevention of money laundering, financing of terrorism and proliferation, including regular updating of the risk assessment of money laundering and financing of terrorism in Croatia. The action plan comprises the following groups of measures and activities: inter-institutional cooperation and risk assessment of money laundering and terrorist financing; criminal prosecution of money laundering and terrorist financing and confiscation of illicit proceeds; establishment of a mechanism for the implementation of targeted financial sanctions of the United Nations in connection with the financing of terrorism and proliferation; collection and analysis of intelligence data for the investigation of money laundering, related predicate offences and terrorist financing;

⁶¹ Croatia, Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Vlada Republike Hrvatske*), Decision to uphold the Action plan for strengthening the efficiency of the Croatian system of preventing money laundering and terrorist financing ([Zaključak o prihvatanju Akcijskog plana za jačanje učinkovitosti hrvatskog sustava sprječavanja pranja novca i financiranja terorizma](#)), 12 May 2022.

prevention of misuse of legal entities for illegal purposes and transparency of information on legal entities; supervision and education related to the implementation of measures to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing; preventive measures; and measures to further harmonise national legislation with Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards in relation to key recommendations 6 and 10. In November 2022, the Government submitted a proposal to the Parliament for amendments to the Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism Act,⁶² which, among other things, prescribes a reduction in the threshold for notifying the competent office about cash transactions from HRK 200,000 to EUR 10,000. According to the Minister of Finance, legal changes are being made for two key reasons - the first is to fulfil the measures from the Action Plan to strengthen the effectiveness of the Croatian system of preventing money laundering and terrorist financing, and the second is the introduction of Euro as the official currency in the Republic of Croatia

In July 2022, new Electronic Communications Act⁶³ was adopted and entered into force. It transposes the Directive (EU) 2018/1972 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 establishing the European Electronic Communications Code. The new act will enable accelerated development of electronic communications networks that will ensure the necessary connectivity and availability of very high capacity networks, including fixed, mobile and wireless networks, and their use by all citizens and entrepreneurs. The Croatian Regulatory Authority for Network Industries (HAKOM) expects that the new act will foster the development of market competition, both in infrastructure and service provision, by ensuring conditions for new investments in electronic communications networks and services.⁶⁴

Operators of public electronic communication networks and services as well as networks supporting critical infrastructure systems shall take appropriate technical and organisational measures to protect the security of their networks and services. The measures must ensure a level of security that corresponds to the existing level of danger for the security of the network and services, taking into account the available technical and technological solutions. This includes measures, together with

⁶² Croatia, Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Vlada Republike Hrvatske*), Proposal of the Act on Amendments to the Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism Act, with the Final Proposal ([Prijedlog Zakona o izmjenama i dopunama Zakona o sprječavanju pranja novca i financiranja terorizma](#)), 15 November 2022.

⁶³ Croatia, Electronic Communications Act ([Zakon o elektroničkim komunikacijama](#)), 1 July 2022.

⁶⁴ Croatia, Croatian Regulatory Authority for Network Industries (*Hrvatska regulatorna agencija za mrežne djelatnosti, HAKOM*), The new Electronic Communications Act entered into force ([Na snagu stupio novi Zakon o elektroničkim komunikacijama](#)), press release, 12 July 2022.

coding (encryption) when appropriate, which prevent and reduce the impact of security incidents on users and on other electronic communication networks and services.⁶⁵

The Act on Certain Aspects concerning Contracts for the Supply of Digital Content and Digital Services⁶⁶ entered into force on 1 January 2022. It sets out common rules on certain requirements regarding contracts between traders and consumers for the supply of digital content or digital services and transposes into Croatian legislation the Directive (EU) 2019/770 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2019 on certain aspects concerning contracts for the supply of digital content and digital services.

The Act on Implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/784 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online⁶⁷ was adopted and entered into force in July 2022.

In June 2022, the Government sent to the parliamentary procedure Proposal of the Act on Facilitating the Use of Financial and Other Information for the Purpose of Preventing, Detecting, Investigating or Prosecuting Serious Criminal Offences.⁶⁸ This Act is foreseen to transpose the Directive (EU) 2019/1153 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 laying down rules facilitating the use of financial and other information for the prevention, detection, investigation or prosecution of certain criminal offences, and repealing Council Decision 2000/642/JHA. This Act will aim to establish measures to facilitate access to financial information and information about bank accounts to competent authorities for the purpose of preventing, detecting, investigation or prosecution of serious criminal offences, use of this information by competent authorities, facilitating

⁶⁵ Croatia, Act on Certain Aspects concerning Contracts for the Supply of Digital Content and Digital Services ([Zakon o određenim aspektima ugovora o isporuci digitalnog sadržaja i digitalnih usluga](#)), 1 July 2022.

⁶⁶ Croatia, Act on Certain Aspects concerning Contracts for the Supply of Digital Content and Digital Services ([Zakon o određenim aspektima ugovora o isporuci digitalnog sadržaja i digitalnih usluga](#)), 1 July 2022.

⁶⁷ Croatia, Act on Implementation of Regulation (EU) 2021/784 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online ([Zakon o provedbi Uredbe \(EU\) 2021/784 Europskog parlamenta i vijeća od 29. travnja 2021. o borbi protiv širenja terorističkog sadržaja na internetu](#)), 13 July 2022.

⁶⁸ Croatia, Proposal of Act on Facilitating the Use of Financial and Other Information for the Purpose of Preventing, Detecting, Investigating or Prosecuting Serious Crimes ([Prijedlog zakona o olakšavanju uporabe financijskih i drugih informacija u svrhu sprječavanja, otkrivanja, istraživanja ili progona teških kaznenih djela](#)), June 2022.

access to information on the implementation of legislation by financial intelligence units in the field of money laundering prevention, related predicate criminal offenses and financing of terrorism.

The Croatian Data Protection Agency (AZOP) published an informative brochure *How to protect your personal data online*.⁶⁹ which provides practical, easy-to-read and comprehensive information to citizens about online threats related to personal data and ways to protect them.

The Croatian Data Protection Agency published educational materials prepared within the EU funded project ARC - Awareness Raising Campaigns for SMEs, aimed at improving knowledge and understanding about data protection among SMEs.⁷⁰ The publications include guides on topics such as body worn cameras, CCTV for data controllers and for individuals, cookies and other tracking technologies, data protection basics and impact assessments, phishing and social engineering attacks for organisations, quick guide to GDPR breach notifications, transfers of personal data to third countries or international organisations, etc.⁷¹

The Central State Office for the Development of Digital Society set up a platform for e/m-Signature and e/m-Seal⁷² as a unique solution that will enable state and public administration bodies to electronically sign and certify documents. This platform is intended primarily for state and public administration bodies, which will use it to digitise business processes that require the use of electronic signatures and seals. By using e-Signature and e-Seal, civil servants will be able to communicate with citizens in a simple, safe and fast way. This platform enables digitisation and transformation of procedures into an electronic service, which will no longer require paper form or arriving at the counter as before. The platform fosters the development of services that citizens can use regardless of working hours and provides them with additional security when using services from their own home or from their mobile devices.

⁶⁹ Croatia, Croatian Data Protection Agency (*Agencija za zaštitu osobnih podataka, AZOP*), *How to protect your personal data online?* ([Kako zaštititi svoje osobne podatke online?](#)), February 2022.

⁷⁰ Awareness Raising Campaigns for SMEs, [ARC project website](#).

⁷¹ Awareness Raising Campaigns for SMEs, [Educational materials](#).

⁷² Croatia, Central State Office for Digital Society Development (*Središnji državni ured za razvoj digitalnog društva*), *Introduction of e/m-Signatures and e/m-Seals will digitise the operations of state and public administration* ([Uvođenje e/m-Potpisa i e/m-Pečata digitalizirat će poslovanje državne i javne uprave](#)), press release, 8 February 2022.

The Central State Office for Digital Society Development in cooperation with the Commissioner for Information, umbrella national organisations of persons with disabilities and the State School of Public Administration organised the 3rd virtual round table 'Digital accessibility from law to practice' in September 2022.⁷³ The round table offered numerous examples of promising practices, projects and digital solutions that enable people with disabilities to participate in everyday life. One of them was the presentation of the platform 'Slavica Web VRI'⁷⁴ for remote translation/interpretation into Croatian sign language, which provides online video interpretation services when on-the-spot services of a translator/interpreter are not available.

Participants were able to learn about examples, tools and solutions that can be used to raise the level of digital accessibility (e.g., laboratory for assistive technologies and assisted communication, ICT-AAC applications, quiz for educating software solutions programmers and designers, adaptation of teaching for students with disabilities, prototype of an accessible website, methodology for the development of an accessible website etc.). According to the experiences of users – persons with disabilities, and those responsible for ensuring digital accessibility, the biggest challenges connected to provision and improvement of already created solutions include lack of financial resources, lack of staff with relevant knowledge and skills, and insufficient education of employees. Therefore, the conference emphasised the need to continue with ongoing education, upgrade the existing education with advanced content, and stressed the importance of continuous communication and cooperation between public bodies and experts and representatives of persons with disabilities of all types of impairments.

In April 2022, the Personal Data Protection Agency issued a statement concerning the Proposal of the position of the Republic of Croatia on the Proposal for a Regulation on the Single Market for Digital Services (DSA) and on the amendment of Directive 2000/31/EC.⁷⁵

⁷³ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Pravobraniteljica za osobe s invaliditetom*). The 3rd virtual round table "Digital accessibility from law to practice" (*Održan 3. virtualni okrugli stol „Digitalna pristupačnost od zakona do prakse”*), press release, 22 September 2022.

⁷⁴ Remote translation into Croatian sign language (*Prevođenje na hrvatski znakovni jezik na daljinu*), [Slavica Web VRI website](#).

⁷⁵ Information received through correspondence with the Croatian Personal Data Protection Agency.

- 6. Rights of the child

- **6.1. Measures addressing vulnerabilities of children living in poverty and developments regarding the national implementation of the EU Child Guarantee**

Measures addressing vulnerabilities of children living in poverty and developments regarding the national implementation of the [EU Child Guarantee](#).

Legislative changes	<p><i>e.g., any legislative development having an impact on children accessing health, education, social protection or other services</i></p> <p>The amount of the guaranteed minimum income for socially vulnerable groups of citizens at risk of poverty has been increased with the adoption of the new Social Welfare Act, which entered into force in January 2022.⁷⁶ Guaranteed minimum income is a social right intended for a single person or a household that does not have enough resources to meet basic living expenses. This right is exercised in the form of monetary benefit in the amount of a percentage of the basis for calculation prescribed by law. The new act significantly increases the basis for calculating the amount of the guaranteed minimum income: from 40 % to 70 % for a child in dual-parental household, from 55 % to 80 % for a child in a mono-parental household and from 55 % to 90 % for a child of a single parent.⁷⁷ Such an increase in the guaranteed minimum income is part of the implementation</p>
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⁷⁶ Croatia, Social Welfare Act ([Zakon o socijalnoj skrbi](#)), 3 February 2022.

⁷⁷ Croatia, Social Welfare Act ([Zakon o socijalnoj skrbi](#)), Art. 27, 3 February 2022.

	<p>programme of the National Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion 2021–2027.⁷⁸ On 1 April The Regulation on the monthly amount of compensation for endangered energy buyers⁷⁹ entered into force granting the monthly compensation of 400,00 HRK (53.00 EUR) per month. On 1 October 2022, the Amendments of The Regulation entered into force increasing the compensation for the amount of 100,00 HRK (13.27 EUR).⁸⁰ No specific measures concerning children in that respect were adopted. On 8 September 2022, the Government brought the Decision on the payment of a one-time cash payment to children's allowance beneficiaries in order to mitigate the consequences of the rise in energy prices⁸¹ covering about 130,000 beneficiaries. The Government of the Republic of Croatia has provided nearly 62 million HRK (approx. 8,211,449.14 EUR) for this measure.⁸² On 18 October 2022, the Government of Croatia has announced that as of the next year the State will plan to finance one meal per day for each child attending the elementary school.⁸³</p>
Policy changes	<p><i>e.g., development of national action plan for the Child Guarantee, appointment of National Coordinator, etc</i></p>

⁷⁸ Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*), National Plan to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion 2021–2027 ([Nacionalni plan borbe protiv siromaštva i socijalne isključenosti za razdoblje od 2021. do 2027. godine](#)), December 2021.

⁷⁹ Croatia, Regulation on the monthly amount of compensation for endangered energy buyers ([Uredba o mjesečnom iznosu naknade za ugroženog kupca energenata, načinu sudjelovanja u podmirenju troškova energenata korisnika naknade i postupanju Hrvatskog zavoda za socijalni rad](#)), 1 April 2022

⁸⁰ Croatia, The Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Vlada Republike Hrvatske*), Regulation amending the Regulation on the monthly amount of compensation for endangered energy buyers ([Uredba o izmjeni Uredbe o mjesečnom iznosu naknade za ugroženog kupca energenata, načinu sudjelovanja u podmirenju troškova energenata korisnika naknade i postupanju Hrvatskog zavoda za socijalni rad](#)), 1 October 2022.

⁸¹ Croatia, The Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Vlada Republike Hrvatske*), Decision on the payment of a one-time cash payment to children's allowance beneficiaries in order to mitigate the consequences of the rise in energy prices ([Odluka o isplati jednokratnog novčanog primanja korisnicima doplatka za djecu radi ublažavanja posljedica porasta cijena energenata](#)), 8 September 2022.

⁸² Croatia, Croatian Pension Insurance Institute (*Hrvatski zavod za mirovinsko osiguranje*), Government adopts a decision to mitigate the consequences of the increase in prices (of energy) for beneficiaries of pensions and child allowances ([Vlada donijela odluke radi ublažavanja posljedica porasta cijena \(energenata\) za korisnike mirovina i doplatka za djecu](#)), 8 September 2022.

⁸³ Croatia, The Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Vlada Republike Hrvatske*), With courageous and responsible leadership, Croatia achieves all its strategic and development goals ([Uz odvažno i odgovorno vodstvo, Hrvatska ostvaruje sve svoje strateške i razvojne ciljeve](#)), 18 October 2022.

	<p>On 12 May 2022, the Croatian government issued a decision adopting the National Plan for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia 2022–2026 and the Action Plan for the Rights of the Child 2022–2024.⁸⁴</p> <p>The purpose of the national plan is to effectively protect the rights of the child in Croatia, by promoting an integrative approach to the rights of the child through interdepartmental cooperation, primarily in the areas of social policy and family, justice, health, education, sports and culture.⁸⁵</p> <p>One of priority areas regulated by the national plan is the development of public policies fostering equal opportunities for children at risk of poverty or social exclusion by ensuring systematic support in improving the quality of life of children and their safety.</p> <p>In order to achieve special goals defined by the national plan, the competent ministry adopted the Action Plan for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia 2022–2024.⁸⁶ The action plan regulates in detail specific activities, sources of financing and deadlines for implementing and achieving prescribed measures. Within the priority area of combating social exclusion of children, it is planned to take measures to support parenting in families at risk, to include children in sports and recreational programmes and activities and to improve the quality of life of children through sports activities.</p>
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⁸⁴ Croatia, Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Vlada Republike Hrvatske*), Decision adopting the National Plan for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia 2022–2026 and the Action Plan for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia 2022–2024 ([Odluka o donošenju Nacionalnog plana za prava djece u Republici Hrvatskoj za razdoblje od 2022. do 2026. godine i Akcijskog plana za prava djece u Republici Hrvatskoj za razdoblje od 2022. do 2024. godine](#)), 12 May 2022.

⁸⁵ Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*), National Plan for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia 2022–2026 ([Nacionalni plan za prava djece u Republici Hrvatskoj za razdoblje od 2022. do 2026. godine](#)), April 2022.

⁸⁶ Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*), Action Plan for for the Rights of the Child 2022–2024 ([Akcijski plan za prava djece u Republici Hrvatskoj za razdoblje od 2022. do 2024. godine](#)), April 2022.

	The Republic of Croatia has submitted national action plan for the Child Guarantee to the European Commission ⁸⁷ as well as the Annex to the plan ⁸⁸ and appointed the national coordinator. ⁸⁹
Other measures or initiatives	<p><i>e.g., income support to single-headed families or based on number of children in the household; meals for children provided for free; other actions or measures linked to the implementation of the EU Child Guarantee.</i></p> <p>In April 2022, the Ministry of Labour, Pension, Family and Social Policy launched a permanent call for proposals <i>Ensuring school meals for children at risk of poverty (school year 2022–2023)</i>, worth a total of HRK 30,000,000, to be co-financed under the Operational Programme for Food and/or Basic Material Assistance for the period 2014–2020 from the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived. The call aims to alleviate the most significant forms of child poverty by distributing meals in primary schools to make them available to more children.⁹⁰</p> <p>On 20 June 2022, the ministry adopted the first decision on the financing of 17 projects under the call for ensuring school meals for children at risk of poverty, worth the total of HRK 14,640.138,08 (approx. € 1,928.018,41), and on 18 July 2022 it adopted the second decision on the financing of 16 projects worth the total of HRK 12,781.022,05 (approx. € 1,704,136.27).</p> <p>In 2022, UNICEF Office for Croatia, in cooperation with 11 partner organisations, has conducted a pilot programme <i>Testing the European Child Guarantee</i> in Međimurje County. The aim is to increase</p>

⁸⁷ Croatia, Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Vlada Republike Hrvatske*), Draft National Action Plan to implement the EU Council recommendation on establishing a European Child Guarantee ([Nacionalni akcijski plan za provedbu preporuke Vijeća EU o uspostavi Europskog jamstva za djecu - nacrt](#)), 2022.

⁸⁸ Croatia, Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Vlada Republike Hrvatske*), Measures and Activities according to the general and specific objectives of the National Action Plan to implement the EU Council recommendation on establishing a European Child Guarantee ([Mjere i aktivnosti prema općim i posebnim ciljevima Nacionalnog akcijskog plana za provedbu preporuke Vijeća EU o uspostavi Europskog jamstva za djecu](#)), 2022.

⁸⁹ European Commission, European Child Guarantee, [list of Child Guarantee Coordinators](#), 2022.

⁹⁰ Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*), Launching of a permanent call for proposals *Ensuring school meals for children at risk of poverty (school year 2022–2023)* (*Otvoreni poziv na dostavu projektnih prijedloga Osiguravanje školske prehrane za djecu u riziku od siromaštva, školska godina 2022. – 2023.*).

	<p>the number of children involved in early and preschool education, provide better access to early intervention services for children with disabilities and their families, empower parents and help them develop necessary skills, and provide access to comprehensive child and family protection services. One of the main goals of the programme in Croatia is to develop a National Plan to Combat Child Poverty and Social Exclusion based on comprehensive policies and detailed analyses, and to develop innovative models of services and interventions. In connection to this, UNICEF issued a Deep Dive Analysis of Policies, Programs, Services, Sources of Financing and Mechanisms Aimed at Preventing Poverty and Social Exclusion of Children in Croatia as the basis for the development of the National Action Plan for the Implementation of the European Child Guarantee in Croatia.⁹¹</p>
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○ **6.2. Legal and policy developments or measures in relation to child-friendly procedures for children as victims, witnesses or suspects/accused in criminal proceedings.**

<p>Legislative changes</p>	<p><i>e.g., reform of the criminal code, new law on violence against children with procedural safeguards.</i></p> <p>In March 2022, the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration adopted amendments to the Ordinance on the amount of fee for the work of an attorney providing defence ex officio, defence at the expense of state budget, or acting as authorised representative of a child victim of a crime by which the fees for attorneys defending or representing child victims have been increased.⁹² It added Article 2a to the ordinance, stipulating that an attorney exercises the right</p>
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⁹¹ Croatia, UNICEF Office for Croatia. [Deep Dive Analysis of Policies, Programs, Services, Sources of Financing and Mechanisms Aimed at Preventing Poverty and Social Exclusion of Children in Croatia](#), January 2022.

⁹² Croatia, Ministry of Justice and Public Administration (*Ministarstvo pravosuđa i uprave*), Amendments to the Ordinance on the amount of fee for the work of an attorney providing defence ex officio, defence at the expense of state budget, or acting as authorised representative of a child victim of a crime ([Pravilnik o dopuni Pravilnika o visini nagrade za rad odvjetnika prilikom obrana po službenoj dužnosti, obrana na teret proračunskih sredstava i odvjetnika kao opunomoćenika djeteta žrtve kaznenog djela](#)), 17 August 2022.

	<p>to a fee, among others, in cases where they act as an authorised representative of the child, in the amount determined by the regulations applicable at the time of undertaking the action for which the fee is calculated.</p> <p>In July 2022, the Croatian Parliament adopted amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act, among others, in the part concerning general rights of victims of crime, which also include child victims.⁹³ Article 43 of the act which contains a catalogue of rights of victims of crime was supplemented with provisions guaranteeing them the right to easily accessible, confidential and free access to support services and the right of the victim to propose to be questioned via audio-video device.⁹⁴</p>
Policy developments	<p><i>e.g., guidance or training for law enforcement officers on the treatment of child suspects or victims; amendment of police academy curriculum; training of judges; developing indicators to monitor the situation of child suspects and improve data collection.</i></p> <p>On 12 May 2022, the Croatian government issued a decision adopting the National Plan for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia 2022–2026 and the Action Plan for the Rights of the Child 2022–2024.⁹⁵</p> <p>The purpose of the national plan is to effectively protect the rights of the child in Croatia, by promoting an integrative approach to the rights of the child through interdepartmental cooperation, primarily in the areas of social policy and family, justice, health, education, sports and culture. As one of priority areas, the national plan regulates child-friendly justice – systematic protection of the rights of vulnerable groups of children in judicial authorities and</p>

⁹³ Croatia, Act on Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act ([Zakon o izmjenama i dopunama Zakona o kaznenom postupku](#)), 19 July 2022.

⁹⁴ Croatia, Criminal Procedure Act ([Zakon o kaznenom postupku](#)), Art. 43, 19 July 2022.

⁹⁵ Croatia, Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Vlada Republike Hrvatske*), Decision adopting the National Plan for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia 2022–2026 and the Action Plan for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia 2022–2024 ([Odluka o donošenju Nacionalnog plana za prava djece u Republici Hrvatskoj za razdoblje od 2022. do 2026. godine i Akcijskog plana za prava djece u Republici Hrvatskoj za razdoblje od 2022. do 2024. godine](#)), 12 May 2022.

	<p>court proceedings and in all contacts with the law, and emphasises the importance of an individualised approach to children within the justice system, which should be accessible to every child, without any discrimination.⁹⁶</p> <p>In order to achieve special objectives defined by the national plan, the ministry adopted the Action Plan for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia 2022–2024.⁹⁷ The action plan prescribes in detail specific activities, sources of financing and deadlines for implementing and achieving prescribed measures. Within the priority area of child-friendly justice, it is planned to take measures and activities aimed at improving the work of specialised court divisions for family matters, the training of employees of social welfare centres who deal with cases involving children, and the training of special representatives for children in court proceedings. The Action plan provides measure of professional support to every child in every procedure where the child is involved either as victims of violence or witness of criminal act. Every child is granted the right to be notified of the proceedings, to be heard and to freely express their views and opinions in their own words, right to protection of privacy and safety (such as avoiding direct contact with the perpetrator, a court restraining order, detention of the perpetrator, ensuring police protection of the child, etc.). The Action Plan specifically provides support for children victims and perpetrators of peer violence. As to the court divisions it provides that only judges who meet the special requirements of professional development and who have a strong preference for well-being of children, will be able to be assigned to these departments. It also provides that a certain number of expert associates will be assigned to these court departments.</p>
Other measures or initiatives	<i>e.g., relevant activities to promote alternatives to detention; set-up of Barnahus houses or other specific programmes for children in the criminal system.</i>

⁹⁶ Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*), National Plan for the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Croatia 2022–2026 ([Nacionalni plan za prava djece u Republici Hrvatskoj za razdoblje od 2022. do 2026. godine](#)), April 2022.

⁹⁷ Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*). Action Plan for for the Rights of the Child 2022–2024 ([Akcijski plan za prava djece u Republici Hrvatskoj za razdoblje od 2022. do 2024. godine](#)), April 2022.

	No other measures or initiatives were detected.
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- 7. Access to justice – Victims’ Rights and Judicial Independence

○ 7.1. Legal and policy developments or measures relevant to the implementation of the Victims’ Rights Directive and the EU strategy for Victims’ Rights 2020-2025

In July 2022, the Croatian Parliament adopted amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act relating to the rights of victims of crime.⁹⁸ Article 43 of the act which contains a catalogue of rights of victims of crime was supplemented with provisions guaranteeing them the right to easily accessible, confidential and free access to support services and the right of the victim to propose to be questioned via audio-video device.⁹⁹ The right to be questioned via audio-video device was previously regulated as a special right of victims of sexual violence, human trafficking and victims for whom special measures of protection were established. The amendments gave this right the status of a general right for all victims of crime.

As to further legal developments, at the beginning of October, the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration has established a working group for drafting proposals of possible amendments to the Criminal Code¹⁰⁰, the Criminal Procedure Act¹⁰¹, the Act on Protection from Domestic Violence¹⁰² and the Act on Courts¹⁰³ with the aim of improving the legislative framework for protection women, victims of violence. So far, several meetings of the working group have been held in which, in addition to other experts, representatives of CSOs are largely represented.¹⁰⁴

According to the initial plan, it was foreseen that the working group will compile the final draft of the proposed legislative amendments by the end of December

⁹⁸ Croatia, Act on Amendments to the Criminal Procedure Act ([Zakon o izmjenama i dopunama Zakona o kaznenom postupku](#)), 19 July 2022.

⁹⁹ Croatia, Criminal Procedure Act ([Zakon o kaznenom postupku](#)), Art. 43, 19 July 2022.

¹⁰⁰ Croatia, Criminal Code ([Kazneni zakon](#)), 26 October 2012.

¹⁰¹ Croatia, Criminal Procedure Act ([Zakon o kaznenom postupku](#)), 19 July 2022.

¹⁰² Croatia, Act on Protection from Domestic Violence ([Zakon o zaštiti od nasilja u obitelji](#)), 13 July 2017.

¹⁰³ Croatia, Act on Courts ([Zakon o sudovima](#)), 28 February 2013.

¹⁰⁴ Croatia, Ministry of Justice and Public Administration (*Ministarstvo pravosuđa i uprave*), The first meeting of the working group for the improvement of the legislative framework for protection against violence against women and domestic violence was held ([Održan prvi sastanak radne skupine za unaprjeđenje zakonodavnog okvira zaštite od nasilja nad ženama i nasilja u obitelji](#)), press release, 3 October 2022.

2022, after which proposals will be referred to further legislative procedure. However, the process of drafting of the legislative amendments is still in progress.

The task of the working group is to further strengthen the position of victims through possible changes of the relevant law and ensure effective exercise of victim's rights and victim's protection at all levels and in every phase of the proceedings. Particular attention is paid to the issue of individual victim assessment, that is, risk assessment for the purpose of timely determination of measures intended to protect the victim's physical integrity especially in the initial stages of the proceedings after the criminal complaint has been submitted. The possible introduction of mechanisms and legal means that would enable more effective participation of victims in the criminal proceedings is also being discussed, for example, allowing the victim the right to file an appeal in proceedings in which the court decides on protective measures, investigative prison etc.

Given that the process of drafting proposals is ongoing and a consensus of all stakeholders has yet to be reached regarding certain legislative changes and solutions to problems encountered in practice, it is not yet possible to talk concretely about the specific legislative amendments.

CSOs represented in the working group are association "B.a.B.e. – Be Active. Be Emancipated!", association "Women's Room"¹⁰⁵, association "Autonomous Women's House"¹⁰⁶, Organization for the support of victims and witnesses¹⁰⁷, initiative "Save me"¹⁰⁸ and association "Domine"¹⁰⁹.

○ **7.2. Measures addressing violence against women**

In 2022, there were no relevant legal and policy developments adopted or measures taken that would specifically address violence against women.

In February 2022, the government's Office for Gender Equality announced setting up a working group to draft a new protocol of procedure in cases of sexual violence that would address certain shortcomings of the current protocol that had been

¹⁰⁵ Association "Women's Room" ([Ženska soba](#)).

¹⁰⁶ Association "Autonomous Women's House" ([Autonomna ženska kuća](#)).

¹⁰⁷ Organization for the support of victims and witnesses ([Udruga za podršku žrtvama i svjedocima](#)).

¹⁰⁸ Initiative "Save me" ([Inicijativa "Spasi me"](#)).

¹⁰⁹ Association "Domine" ([Udruga "Domine"](#)).

observed during its application so far and which will be in line with the legislative changes that came into force after the adoption of the last protocol in 2018.¹¹⁰

After several cases of violence against women which were subject of intense media reporting, one case resulting in the death of a woman who had previously reported her husband for several criminal offences and who was murdered while a restraining order against her husband was in force, the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration announced comprehensive changes targeting the national system of protection against domestic violence in order to improve it. More specifically, it announced amendments to the Domestic Violence Protection Act, Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Act as well as introduction of mechanisms for their more effective implementation on all levels, including the police, state attorney's office and courts.¹¹¹

As previously mentioned, working group has been established by the Ministry and the process of drafting of legal amendments of the relevant legislation targeting the issue of domestic violence is in progress. The aim is to provide more effective support and protection of victims in a timely manner in all stages of criminal proceedings, with special attention dedicated to risk assessment in early stages of proceedings in order to ensure effective protection of victims immediately after the violence is reported. In addition, possible amendments of the Criminal Code regarding the definition of the criminal offense of domestic violence are also discussed since certain difficulties have been observed in practice regarding the distinction of a misdemeanour and a criminal offense of domestic violence which is an ongoing problem.

Revision of the Protocol of conduct in cases of domestic violence is also planned as well as establishment of mechanisms for mutual cooperation of all stakeholders through regular and obligatory multidisciplinary educations and trainings which would particularly apply to state attorneys and judges. The Ministry of Justice and Public Administration expressed its strong intent for representatives of the CSO's to participate in such educations and trainings to transfer their experiences and knowledge acquired through their work with victims to the relevant stakeholders.

The government is in the process of adopting a new National Plan for Gender Equality 2022–2027, which highlights violence against women as one of the priority areas in achieving a more equal society. Draft National Plan was under

¹¹⁰ Croatia, Office for Gender Equality of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ravnopravnost spolova Vlade Republike Hrvatske*), Drafting new protocol of procedure in cases of sexual violence under way ([Ured započeo proces izrade novog Protokola o postupanju u slučaju seksualnog nasilja](#)), press release, 10 February 2022.

¹¹¹ Croatia, Ministry of Justice and Public Administration (*Ministarstvo pravosuđa i uprave*), Working group set up to amend legislation on improving support systems for victims of domestic violence and violence against women ([Osniva se radna skupina za izmjenu zakona o unaprjeđenju sustava podrške žrtvama nasilja u obitelji i nasilja nad ženama](#)), press release, 9 September 2022.

public consultation which lasted until 22 October 2022.¹¹² Although the adoption of the new Plan was expected by the end of the 2022, there is no exact information on current status of the proceedings for the adoption.

The parts of the National Plan relevant to violence against women according to the draft that was under public consultation, concern measures prescribed for the achievement of the special goal determined by the National Plan in the area of violence against women which is defined as creation of conditions for the elimination of gender-based violence. These measures include: establishment of a system of statistical monitoring of gender-based violence in court proceedings, improving the competences of experts working in the field of protection from violence, raising the level of awareness of the public and victims about the reasons and means of combating all types of gender-based violence, raising the level of expertise and awareness of stakeholders in the justice system and police officers about gender-based violence, sexism and stereotypes, and ensuring appropriate action by institutions in cases of sexual violence.

At the session held on December 29 2022, the Government adopted the Decision on the adoption of the National Plan for the Suppression of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment for the period until 2027 and the Action Plan for the Suppression of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment for the period until 2024.¹¹³

The National Plan is presented as the first national document aimed at protecting victims of sexual violence and sexual harassment in the Republic of Croatia, and as an additional step forward in the systematic fight against violence.¹¹⁴

The purpose of the national plan is to achieve a harmonized social reaction to sexual violence and sexual harassment, to ensure effective action to protect victims and to promote their rights and develop public awareness of the unacceptability and harmfulness of such behaviour. The plan envisages the implementation of measures within the three specific goals - prevention of sexual violence and sexual harassment, improvement of care and availability of support services for victims of sexual offenses and achievement of a deterrent effect on

¹¹² Croatia, Office for Gender Equality of the Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Ured za ravnopravnost spolova Vlade Republike Hrvatske*), Draft National Plan for Gender Equality 2022–2027 ([Nacrt Nacionalnog plana za ravnopravnost spolova za razdoblje 2022. do 2027. godine](#)), public consultation procedure.

¹¹³ Croatia, The Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Vlada Republike Hrvatske*), Decision on the adoption of the National Plan for the Suppression of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment for the period until 2027 and the Action Plan for the Suppression of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment for the period until 2024 ([Odluka o donošenju Nacionalnog plana za suzbijanje seksualnog nasilja i seksualnog uznemiravanja za razdoblje do 2027. godine i Akcijskog plana za suzbijanje seksualnog nasilja i seksualnog uznemiravanja za razdoblje do 2024. godine](#)), 30 December 2022.

¹¹⁴ Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*), National Plan for the Suppression of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment for the period until 2027 ([Nacionalni plan za suzbijanje seksualnog nasilja i seksualnog uznemiravanja za razdoblje do 2027. godine](#)), 2022.

perpetrators. On the basis of the National Plan, the implementation document - Action Plan for Suppression of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment for the period from 2022 to 2024 - was also adopted, which defines specific measures in the area of suppression of sexual violence.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*), Action Plan for Suppression of Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment for the period from 2022 to 2024 ([Akcijski plan za suzbijanje seksualnog nasilja i seksualnog uznemiravanja do 2024. godine](#)), 2022.

- 8. Developments in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

o 8.1. CRPD policy and legal developments & implementation of the European Accessibility Act

In 2022, the Croatian Parliament adopted the new Social Welfare Act.¹¹⁶ The act stipulates an increase in the amount of personal disability allowance from HRK 1,500 (approx. € 199.28) to HRK 1,750 (approx. € 232.49) and eliminates the threshold for exercising the right to personal disability allowance.

The act also redefines the housing allowance, increases the allowance for beneficiary's personal needs and rights to accommodation or organised housing services. It expands the circle of persons who can be recognised as carers in order to enable children with developmental disabilities and persons with disabilities to stay in their homes and prevent their institutionalisation.

The Croatian Parliament adopted the Act on Amendments to the Labour Market Act¹¹⁷ in February 2022 in order to harmonise it with the new Social Welfare Act, which transfers the jurisdiction in procedures for recognising the right to compensation until employment from social welfare centres to the Croatian Employment Service. The act will, among others, enable unemployed persons with disabilities to receive at the same place professional support in looking for employment and certain material assistance.

In 2022, new Act on the Register of Persons with Disabilities¹¹⁸ was adopted. The Register is managed by the Croatian Institute for Public Health and is a source of epidemiological data for national and international needs and a basis for checking the status of persons with disabilities. The new Act ensures a better coverage of data on persons with disabilities in the Registry database,

¹¹⁶ Croatia, Social Welfare Act ([Zakon o socijalnoj skrbi](#)), 17 February 2022.

¹¹⁷ Croatia, Act on Amendments to the Labour Market Act ([Zakon o izmjenama i dopunama Zakona o tržištu rada](#)), 3 February 2022.

¹¹⁸ Croatia, Act on the Register of Persons with Disabilities ([Zakon o Registru osoba s invaliditetom](#)), May 2022.

better quality of epidemiological data and improved speed of electronic data exchange from official records and registers of data sources, with the intention of omitting the unnecessary administrative procedures. Reports from the Register of Persons with Disabilities are published by the Croatian Institute of Public Health on their website. For the purposes of improving policies aimed at women with disabilities, the Croatian Institute of Public Health has published a special report on data on women with disabilities in Croatia¹¹⁹, based on the data from the Register of Persons with Disabilities.

During 2022, the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities gave comments and suggestions regarding several laws and strategies concerning persons with disabilities in order to improve the position of persons with disabilities and achieve compliance with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Ombudsperson, however, noted that most of the comments were only noted and not accepted by the decision makers.¹²⁰

In December, a new Act on Maternity and Parental Benefits¹²¹ was adopted, which entered into force on 1 January 2023, and which increases the financial compensation for beneficiaries of leave for the care of a child with severe developmental disabilities from the current 70% of the budget base (2,328.20 HRK or 309.14 EUR) to 125% of the budget base (4,157.50 HRK or 552.03 EUR).

On 24 November 2022, the Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted the Strategic Framework for the Development of Mental Health until 2030.¹²² The Strategic Framework states that the foundations of quality care are raising awareness of mental health problems, timely detection of mental disorders, and appropriate treatment and rehabilitation. The Ombudswoman for Persons with Disabilities notes that from this description it is evident that it is a highly medical model of approach to psychosocial disability and mental health difficulties whose main and often only interventions are aimed at prevention and treatment, rather than leading a quality and healthy life despite the difficulties. As highly concerning, the Ombudsperson states the fact that the funds needed for the implementation of the Strategic Framework are provided within

¹¹⁹ Croatia, Croatian Institute of Public Health (*Hrvatski zavod za javno zdravstvo*), Report on data on women with disabilities in Croatia ([Izvešće o ženama s invaliditetom u Republici Hrvatskoj](#)), January 2022.

¹²⁰ Croatia, Office of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Ured pravobraniteljice za osobe s invaliditetom*), email correspondence, December 2022.

¹²¹ Croatia, Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*), Act on Maternity and Parental Benefits ([Zakon o roditeljskim i roditeljskim potporama](#)), December 2022.

¹²² Croatia, Ministry of Health (*Ministarstvo zdravstva*), Strategic Framework for the Development of Mental Health until 2030 ([Strateški okvir razvoja mentalnog zdravlja do 2030. godine](#)), November 2022.

the state budget allocated to the Ministry of Health and competent state administration bodies. The Croatian Psychological Society warned that the already overburdened and under-capacitated healthcare system will be responsible for the implementation of the entire set of measures provided for in the Strategic Framework, without the possibility of additional budgeting for implementation in the next three years. Furthermore, the Ombudsperson notices that even though it is stated in the Strategic Framework that it is aligned with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the definition of disability according to the Convention is conveyed incorrectly and incomprehensible.¹²³

In the light of the adoption of the amendments to the Labour Act¹²⁴ in 2022, the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities proposed measures aimed at improving the position of persons with disabilities during their working life, primarily at defining the possibility of working from home and flexible working hours, which for many persons with disabilities represents a reasonable adjustment of the workplace or the very possibility of working on an equal basis. In addition, in accordance with the Directive of the European Parliament and the Council on the balance between the work and private life of parents and care providers, the Ombudsperson also emphasized the need to harmonize business and family obligations, which is necessary when we talk about care for family members who are persons with disabilities and the specifics arising from disability of the worker. Some of the solutions contained in the new Labour Law are in line with the Ombudsperson's proposals and represent a wider range of opportunities for persons with disabilities during their working life.¹²⁵

In October 2022, the Law on Higher Education and Scientific Activity¹²⁶ was adopted, in which the Ombudsperson's proposal to introduce a definition of students with disabilities and the obligation to ensure reasonable accommodation, which would bring the Law in line with the CRPD, was not accepted,. Instead, the universities are only left with the option to ensure that

¹²³ Croatia, Office of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Ured pravobraniteljice za osobe s invaliditetom*), email correspondence, December 2022.

¹²⁴ Croatia, Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*), Act on Amendments to the Labour Law ([*Zakon o izmjenama i dopunama Zakona o radu*](#)), December 2022.

¹²⁵ Croatia, Office of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Ured pravobraniteljice za osobe s invaliditetom*), email correspondence, December 2022.

¹²⁶ Croatia, Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*), Law on Higher Education and Scientific Activity ([*Zakon o visokom obrazovanju i znanstvenoj djelatnosti*](#)), October 2022.

the adapted study attendance conditions are applied to students with disabilities in accordance with the general acts of higher education institutions.

Regarding displaced persons with disabilities from Ukraine, from the beginning of March to the end of May 2022, an inter-sectoral government group coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior met once a week. The Office of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities participated in weekly meetings where activities were coordinated. The Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities has still not received the data on the number of persons with disabilities displaced from Ukraine who are located in Croatia. However, the Ombudsperson visited people located in the centres Stančić and Jaškovo. Even though the facility in Jaškovo is not fully adapted for the residence of persons with reduced mobility, in both facilities persons live in appropriate conditions with a sufficient number of staff for whose employment the Ministry promptly issued approvals.¹²⁷

In July 2022, new Electronic Communications Act¹²⁸ introduced an obligation for operators to enable the end users with disabilities equal access to emergency services through their communication channels as the access available to other end users. This enables the introduction of new technologies for receiving emergency calls to the unique European number for emergency services 112.

Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds, within the scope of its function as the managing authority for the Operational Program Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014-2020 and for the Operational Program Competitiveness and Cohesion and the Integrated Territorial Program 2021-2027, has the role of ensuring the application of horizontal principles, which include the promotion and improvement of the rights of persons with disabilities. To ensure the correct implementation of European Union legislation on non-discrimination, gender equality and respect for the rights of persons with disabilities in the area of EU Funds, during the entire program period, education program entitled "Anti-discrimination, gender equality and application of the UN Convention on rights of persons with disabilities in EU Funds" was being conducted. There is also a Network of Coordinators for Non-Discrimination that is active as a support to authorities in the management and control system in the application of horizontal principles in the preparation and implementation of operations. Activities to strengthen the capacity of non-discrimination coordinators are continuously carried out, which include training on specific topics related to accessibility and

¹²⁷ Croatia, Office of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Ured pravobraniteljice za osobe s invaliditetom*), email correspondence, December 2022.

¹²⁸ Croatia, Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*), Electronic Communications Act ([*Zakon o elektroničkim komunikacijama*](#)), 1 July 2022.

the rights of persons with disabilities. In order to fulfil the conditions that enable the implementation of EU funds in the new financial period from 2021 to 2027, systematic support is being prepared through the redefinition of the Network of Coordinators for Non-Discrimination and additional training for coordinators for non-discrimination, employees in the EU funds system and potential users, as well as new instructions for the application and implementation of horizontal principles, which includes the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Compliance with the UN Convention must be ensured during all phases of the program, i.e. during the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the program and reporting. During the preparation of the program, mechanisms are provided that take into account the accessibility policy and respect the legislation and standards related to accessibility.¹²⁹

The Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds is responsible for fulfilling two horizontal conditions: number 3. Effective application and implementation of the EU Charter on fundamental rights and number 4. Implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC 8. In fulfilling these conditions, bodies in the management and control system for each Operational Program will include procedures related to the assessment of the calls for grants compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC.

On 19 February 2022, the Liner Shipping and Occasional Coastal Maritime Traffic Act¹³⁰ came into force, which prescribes privileges for persons with disabilities. Users are issued ID cards for persons with disabilities and children with developmental difficulties, which entitle them to preferential transportation on state ferry lines, and each trip is recorded in the central IT system. The Agency for Coastal Liner Maritime Transport has published on its website an information leaflet¹³¹ in Croatian and English on the rights of passengers, which includes the rights of persons with disabilities and persons with limited mobility.

¹²⁹ Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*), email correspondence, December 2022.

¹³⁰ Croatia, Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*), Liner Shipping and Occasional Coastal Maritime Traffic Act ([Zakon o prijevozu u linijskom i povremenom obalnom pomorskom prometu](#)), February 2022.

¹³¹ Croatia, Agency for coastal liner shipping (*Agencija za obalni linijski pomorski promet*), Summary of provisions concerning the rights of passengers when travelling by sea and inland waterway ([Letak Prava putnika u pomorskom prijevozu i unutarnjoj plovidbi](#)).

With regards to the railway transport, 40 new wheelchair-accessible low-floor trains are currently in operation. As part of the project co-financed from the Operational Program Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014-2020, procurement of 21 electric trains for urban-suburban and regional transport is underway, and the trains will become operation by the end of 2023. The trains are produced by KONČAR - Električna vozila, and the first one was schedule to be delivered in December 2022. By mid-2025, 70 new low-floor trains are foreseen to operate in Croatia. Also related to the railway transport, free transportation of Ukrainian citizens to their final destinations in the Republic of Croatia was provided by the Croatian Railways Passenger Transport company.¹³²

Through the EU project "Establishment of Veterans' Centres in the Republic of Croatia",¹³³ the Ministry of Croatian Veterans is building, adapting, reconstructing and equipping four veterans' centres which provide services and programs for psychosocial empowerment, physical recreation and rehabilitation, education, occupational therapy, etc. Along with other users, the centres are intended for the disabled Croatian Homeland War veterans and disabled civilians from the Homeland War. All centres were built according to high architectural and construction standards and are completely adapted to persons with reduced mobility and persons with disabilities. Veteran centres are a social innovation in Croatian society since they enable the provision of comprehensive care in one place and represent an upgrade and added value to the existing system of care for veterans and victims of the Homeland War. Same activities are additionally implemented through the Home of Croatian Veterans, which was launched as a pilot project for the establishment of veterans' centres.¹³⁴

The Ministry of the Interior organized multiple trainings for police officers during 2022, which covered the topics of effective access to justice for persons with disabilities and their protection from exploitation, violence and abuse. In addition, as part of several courses at the Police College, a total of six hours was devoted to the rights of persons with disabilities in the context

¹³² Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*), email correspondence, December 2022.

¹³³ Croatia, Ministry of War Veterans (*Ministarstvo hrvatskih branitelja*), Establishment of Veterans' Centers in the Republic of Croatia ([Uspostava veteranskih centara u Republici Hrvatskoj](#)).

¹³⁴ Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*), email correspondence, December 2022.

of the specificity of their needs during investigation and criminal procedure and adequate reactions of police officers, and during 2022, a total of 123 students were included in the education.¹³⁵

On 23 March 2022, the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities and the Union of Associations of Persons with Disabilities in Croatia – SOIH organised an online working meeting to discuss ways to provide support and assistance to displaced persons with disabilities from Ukraine.¹³⁶ The meeting was held to establish joint structured coordination between representatives of state institutions, the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities, UNHCR and unions and associations of persons with disabilities.

On 12 July 2022, the Parliamentary Committee for Gender Equality and Committee for Family, Youth and Sports held a joint thematic session dedicated to mental health of children and youth.¹³⁷ The session was organised to stress the effects of the pandemic on the mental health of children and young people, and the impact of school pressure and other challenges young people are facing today. The participants included Members of Parliament, doctors, mental health experts, representatives of competent ministries, representatives of civil society and representatives of ombuds' offices.

In January 2022, Croatian Paralympic Committee adopted the Parasport Development Strategy 2022–2030 together with the action plan¹³⁸ for its implementation as a key strategic document in the field of parasport. The strategy is based on a large amount of quantitative data, attitudes and opinions of parasport coaches, and in-depth interviews with all key stakeholders. According to the strategy, a total of 33 strategic goals will be achieved by 2030, which are divided into six areas with precisely

¹³⁵ Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*), email correspondence, December 2022.

¹³⁶ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Pravobraniteljica za osobe s invaliditetom*), Working meeting on providing support and assistance to people with disabilities from Ukraine ([Radni sastanak o pružanju podrške i pomoći osobama s invaliditetom iz Ukrajine](#)), press release, 23 March 2022.

¹³⁷ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Pravobraniteljica za osobe s invaliditetom*), Thematic session on mental health of children and youth held in the Croatian Parliament ([U Hrvatskom saboru je održana tematska sjednica o mentalnom zdravlju djece i mladih](#)), press release, 12 July 2022.

¹³⁸ Croatia, Croatian Paralympic Committee (*Hrvatski paraolimpijski odbor*), Parasport Development Strategy in the Republic of Croatia 2022–2030 ([Strategija razvoja parasporta u Republici Hrvatskoj 2022.-2030.](#)), January 2022.

defined indicators of the current and desired state. On 7 June 2022, the Paralympic Committee presented the strategy in the Office of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities.¹³⁹

On 16 March 2022, the Judicial Academy organised a workshop for legal practitioners called *Communication skills, prejudice and stereotypes*. One of the facilitators was the adviser to the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities who presented the role of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities in protecting the rights of persons with disabilities and combating disability-based discrimination. Through theoretical presentation and interaction judicial officials and employees learned about the CRPD and the rights of persons with disabilities were explained in more detail. Practical examples were used in an attempt to make them aware of the importance of accepting and acting in accordance with the principles of reasonable adaptation and universal design in all areas of everyday life. Facilitators stressed the importance of using appropriate terminology, the application of appropriate models during communication and the obligations that arise from the CRPD as the most significant international legal document for persons with disabilities. They also placed special emphasis on the appropriate way of communicating and relating to people with different types of impairments.¹⁴⁰

In September 2022, preliminary results of three studies concerning persons with disabilities were presented. The studies were conducted as part of the Platform 50+ project, implemented by the Union of Associations of Persons with Disabilities in Croatia in cooperation with 11 associations of persons with disabilities and the Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation of the University of Zagreb. The project encourages full application of all 50 articles of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in order to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities. The Faculty of Education and Rehabilitation conducted the studies on the following topics: Harmonisation of national legislation with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; Mapping the components of independent living; and Assistive technologies in the 21st century.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Pravobraniteljica za osobe s invaliditetom*), Parasport Development Strategies in the Republic of Croatia 2022–2030 ([Strategije razvoja parasporta u Republici Hrvatskoj 2022.-2030.](#)), press release, 7 June 2022.

¹⁴⁰ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Pravobraniteljica za osobe s invaliditetom*), Workshop for legal practitioners *Communication skills, prejudices and stereotypes* held in Osijek ([U Osijeku održana radionica za pravosudne djelatnike na temu "Komunikacijske vještine, predrasude i stereotipi"](#)), press release, 16 March 2022.

¹⁴¹ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Pravobraniteljica za osobe s invaliditetom*), Presentation of preliminary results of three research studies as part of the Platform 50+ project ([Predstavljeni preliminarni rezultati tri istraživanja u sklopu projekta Platforma50+](#)), press release, 20 September 2022.

The Central State Office for Digital Society Development in cooperation with the Commissioner for Information, umbrella national organisations of persons with disabilities and the State School of Public Administration organised the 3rd virtual round table 'Digital accessibility from law to practice' in September 2022.¹⁴² The round table offered numerous examples of promising practices, projects and digital solutions that enable people with disabilities to participate in everyday life. One of them was the presentation of the platform 'Slavica Web VRI'¹⁴³ for remote translation/interpretation into Croatian sign language, which provides online video interpretation services when on-the-spot services of a translator/interpreter are not available.

Participants were able to learn about examples, tools and solutions that can be used to raise the level of digital accessibility (e.g., laboratory for assistive technologies and assisted communication, ICT-AAC applications, quiz for educating software solutions programmers and designers, adaptation of teaching for students with disabilities, prototype of an accessible website, methodology for the development of an accessible website etc.).

According to the experiences of users – persons with disabilities, and those responsible for ensuring digital accessibility, the biggest challenges connected to provision and improvement of already created solutions include lack of financial resources, lack of staff with relevant knowledge and skills, and insufficient education of employees. Therefore, the conference emphasised the need to continue with ongoing education, upgrade the existing education with advanced content, and the importance of continuous communication and cooperation between public bodies and experts and representatives of persons with disabilities of all types of impairments.

In November 2022, the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia held a media conference¹⁴⁴ where the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, presented the plan of the Ministry to fill 139 new job positions and encouraged persons with disabilities to equally participate in the upcoming vacancies for employment in the Ministry of the Interior. On this occasion, the Ombudswoman for Persons with Disabilities invited all interested persons with disabilities to submit an application and to

¹⁴² Croatia, Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Pravobraniteljica za osobe s invaliditetom*). The 3rd virtual round table 'Digital accessibility from law to practice' (*Održan 3. virtualni okrugli stol „Digitalna pristupačnost od zakona do prakse“*), press release, 22 September 2022.

¹⁴³ Remote translation into Croatian sign language (*Prevođenje na hrvatski znakovni jezik na daljinu*), [Slavica Web VRI website](#).

¹⁴⁴ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Pravobraniteljica za osobe s invaliditetom*). The Ministry of the Interior invites persons with disabilities to participate equally in the upcoming employment calls (*Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova poziva osobe s invaliditetom na ravnopravno sudjelovanje u predstojećim natječajima za zapošljavanje*), press release, 2022.

invoke their right of priority in employment. It was especially emphasised and specifically indicated in the text of the vacancies that reasonable adjustment will be ensured during the implementation of the written part of the test and the interview. The Minister of the Interior emphasized that there are currently 674 persons with disabilities working in the Ministry of Interior and that its goal is to achieve that persons with disabilities participate equally in the selection process for new openings. He further stressed that this is not a competition designed specifically for persons with disabilities, but it is rather a competition in which persons with disabilities will be treated equally. He added that this will not be a one-time action, but rather an initiative that the Ministry wants to turn into a permanent practice.

○ **8.2. CRPD monitoring at national level**

The Committee for Persons with Disabilities, an advisory and expert body of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, held three sessions until the beginning of December 2022.¹⁴⁵ Its members had the opportunity to present proposals, opinions and expert explanations in the field of protection of persons with disabilities and their families. The Committee members were familiarised with new legal regulations passed in 2022 referring to persons with disabilities and the regulations whose drafting is underway. They were also acquainted with the activities aimed at stronger inclusion of persons with disabilities in the labour market, as well as all other intentions of state administration bodies aimed at strengthening and improving all levels of support for persons with disabilities and children with developmental difficulties. Draft Act on Personal Assistance and draft Act on Inclusive Allowance were considered and discussed in particular. On 24 February 2022, members of the Committee participated in a round table organized by the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities as a part of the study visit of the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination of the Republic of Albania (within the project "Exchange Program on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities between Albanian and Croatian Institutions of Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination"). The roundtable was the

¹⁴⁵ Croatia, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy (*Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike*) as the body in charge of coordinating the work of the Committee, email correspondence, December 2022.

opportunity to present the activities and role of the Committee of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Persons with Disabilities.

At the beginning of 2022, new members of the 5th convocation of the Expert Council of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities were elected for a two-year term. Meetings of the Expert Council will be held every three months or more often if necessary. Other persons besides the elected members can also attend the meetings, who can use their knowledge and experience to help in discussions, forming positions and making proposals. The Expert Council consists of 15 members and 15 deputy members from academic institutions and civil society (organisations, associations and initiatives of persons with disabilities and parents of children with developmental disabilities).¹⁴⁶

This convocation of the Expert Council includes members from Zagreb, Zaprrešić, Osijek, Vukovar, Slavonski Brod, Split and Dubrovnik. The constitutive meeting was held in February 2022. Members of the Expert Council were presented with their duties and with the plan and programmes of their work. A promotional video "Accessibility as a human right" jointly produced by the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities and the 8th Centre of Knowledge was presented to the newly elected members on this occasion.¹⁴⁷ The second meeting of the Expert Council was held in April 2022. The agenda included discussing the Ombudsperson Annual Report for 2021 and current challenges of persons with disabilities and children with developmental disabilities in the field of education, inaccessibility of cultural institutions, lack of sanctions for non-compliance with obligations to ensure accessibility according to the current Ordinance on ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities and reduced mobility, etc.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Pravobraniteljica za osobe s invaliditetom*). Elected members of the new Expert Council of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities ([Izabrani članovi novog Stručnog savjeta pravobraniteljice za osobe s invaliditetom](#)), press release, 2022.

¹⁴⁷ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Pravobraniteljica za osobe s invaliditetom*). Constitutive meeting of the 5th convocation of the Expert Council of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities was held ([Održan osnivački sastanak V. saziva Stručnog savjeta pravobraniteljice za osobe s invaliditetom](#)), press release, February 2022.

¹⁴⁸ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Pravobraniteljica za osobe s invaliditetom*). 2nd Expert Council Meeting ([2. sastanak Stručnog savjeta](#)), press release, 12 April 2022.

On 15 July 2022, a meeting of the Coordination for Support in Higher Education of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities was held on the premises of the University of Zadar.¹⁴⁹ The Coordination consists of representatives of the Office of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities, offices and similar support services for students with disabilities at eight Croatian universities, representatives (coordinators) of polytechnic schools and higher education institutions, student representatives, representatives of the Ministry of Science and Education and student associations. The goals of the Coordination are promoting the principles of inclusivity of education, non-discrimination, universal design and reasonable adaptation, ensuring the conditions for quality and equally accessible higher education at all levels, as well as harmonizing practices in providing support for students with disabilities in institutions of higher education in Croatia. The meeting discussed how to improve support for students with disabilities in order to overcome the current situation in which universities take on the roles of social and health systems in order to enable students with disabilities to study at those universities. This includes provision of basic support services, transportation and assistance in the student dormitory, even though these features are not within the domain of higher education institutions.

¹⁴⁹ Croatia, Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities (*Pravobraniteljica za osobe s invaliditetom*). Meeting of the Coordination of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities for Support in Higher Education held on 15 July on the premises of the University of Zadar ([U prostorima Sveučilišta u Zadru održan je 15. srpnja sastanak Koordinacije pravobraniteljice za osobe s invaliditetom za podršku u visokom obrazovanju](#)), press release, July 2022.

Annex 1 – Promising Practices

Thematic area	EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION Please provide one example of a promising practice to tackle discrimination against LGBTIQ people or discrimination on the grounds of socio-economic status, health status and physical appearance, such as awareness raising campaigns or training for relevant professionals. Where no such examples are available, please provide an example of an awareness raising campaign held in your country in 2022 relevant to equality and non-discrimination of LGBTIQ people or on the other above-mentioned grounds, preferably one conducted by a national equality body.
Title (original language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pravilnik o zaštiti studentica i studenata od seksualnog uznemiravanja i drugih oblika rodne diskriminacije
Title (EN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordinance on the protection of students from sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based discrimination
Organisation (original language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pravni fakultet Sveučilišta u Zagrebu
Organisation (EN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb
Government / Civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academia / Civil society
Funding body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academia / Civil society
Reference (incl. URL, where available)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ordinance on the protection of students from sexual harassment and other forms of gender-based discrimination
Indicate the start date of the promising practice and the finishing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 23 February 2022 - ongoing

date if it has ceased to exist	
Type of initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legislative initiative
Main target group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faculty students and faculty staff
Indicate level of implementation: Local/Regional/National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local
Brief description (max. 1000 chars)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ordinance organizes the protection of students against sexual harassment and other forms of gender discrimination committed by teachers, other employees, Faculty associates or students. As defined in Article 2, paragraph 4 of the Ordinance, gender discrimination is defined as: placing (someone) in a disadvantageous position on the basis of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression of gender identity in accordance with the Gender Equality Act and the Anti-Discrimination Act. The Ordinance is one of the most significant legal documents that the Faculty of Law has adopted in recent times, and which represents a turning point in responsibility, prosecution and sanctioning of the most serious violations of academic ethics, human dignity and the prohibition of gender discrimination not only at the Faculty of Law, but also at the University of Zagreb and its components.
Highlight any element of the actions that is transferable (max. 500 chars)	The Ordinance is completely transferable to other universities. As the principle of non-discrimination in EU-wide recognised, this rulebook is of universal application.
Give reasons why you consider the practice as sustainable (as opposed to 'one off activities')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This practice is sustainable as it can't be undone and the non-discrimination standard set by this practice cannot be lowered.
Give reasons why you consider the practice as having concrete measurable impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This practice's concrete measurable impact is the number of complaints started according to the Ordinance.
Give reasons why you consider the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The practice is transferable to other MS as the principle of non-discrimination is EU-wide recognized concept.

<p>practice as transferable to other settings and/or Member States?</p>	
<p>Explain, if applicable, how the practice involves beneficiaries and stakeholders in the design, planning, evaluation, review assessment and implementation of the practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Explain, if applicable, how the practice provides for review and assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As set in the Art. 13, para. 1, the Faculty will monitor the implementation of the Ordinance and, if necessary, amend it. • In addition, as set in the Art. 13, para. 2, the Student Protection Commissioner and the Student Protection Commission are obliged to submit a report on their work to the Faculty Council once a year. • The work report of the Student Protection Commissioner will in particular present data on the number of consultations held with students related to sexual harassment or other forms of gender discrimination, the number of notifications received about such harassment or discrimination from third parties, the number of anonymous reports, the number of cases, as well as the type of harassment or discrimination that the Commissioner was informed about. • In its work report, the Student Protection Commission will in particular present data on the number of procedures implemented to protect students from sexual harassment or other forms of gender discrimination, the number of decisions in which the application was rejected, the number of decisions in which the request for student protection was accepted, the number of decisions in which the request for the protection of the student was rejected, as well as the types of harassment or discrimination on which it decided.

Thematic area	RACISM, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE Please provide one example of a promising practice to address racism and xenophobia. Please give preference to a promising practice about participation and engagement of Equality bodies and CSOs in addressing racism and hate crime. Where no such practice exists, please provide one example of a promising practice related more generally to combating racism, xenophobia, and related intolerances.
Title (original language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Savjet za ljudska prava Vlade Republike Hrvatske
Title (EN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council for Human Rights to the Government of the Republic of Croatia
Organisation (original language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ured za ljudska prava i prava nacionalnih manjina Vlade Republike Hrvatske
Organisation (EN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia
Government / Civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government
Funding body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government
Reference (incl. URL, where available)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council for Human Rights dedicated sub-webpage
Indicate the start date of the promising practice and the finishing date if it has ceased to exist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10 December 2021 - ongoing
Type of initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> advisory body
Main target group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All citizens of the Republic of Croatia
Indicate level of implementation: Local/Regional/National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National
Brief description (max. 1000 chars)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council is an interdepartmental and advisory body of the Government for human rights issues. The main tasks of the Council are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participation in continuous monitoring and analysis of public policies related to and/or affecting the development of human rights in the RoC.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - participation in providing opinions to the Government on draft regulations that relate to and/or affect the state of human rights in the RoC; and proposing measures to the Government to solve certain problems, as well as measures to improve the state of human rights. - participation in programming and establishing priorities for the use of EU funds that are open to the RoC in the area of human rights protection, as well as other EU funds that may include human rights or have an impact on their realization, monitoring the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and combating discrimination. - consideration of reports and periodic reports of international organizations on the state of human rights in the RoC.
Highlight any element of the actions that is transferable (max. 500 chars)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structure and tasks of the Council are transferable to all environments.
Give reasons why you consider the practice as sustainable (as opposed to 'one off activities')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council was established on the ground of Article 24, paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Act on the Government of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette, no. 150/11, 119/14, 93/16 and 116/18), and the election of new Council members is prescribed every third year. Such a structure indicates sustainability.
Give reasons why you consider the practice as having concrete measurable impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work of the Council is public and on the dedicated sub-page of the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, minutes from the Council meetings are foreseen to be published. In that way, the public can be informed of the concrete measure and steps taken in monitoring of the state of human rights in the RoC.
Give reasons why you consider the practice as transferable to other settings and/or Member States?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
Explain, if applicable, how the practice involves	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As set out in the Art. 12 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council for Human Rights, the Council may establish an expert or working group to monitor specific area of human rights or for the purpose of preparing and processing certain topics for discussion on an issue at a Council session.

beneficiaries and stakeholders in the design, planning, evaluation, review assessment and implementation of the practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to the members of the Council, representatives of other competent bodies and institutions, as well as external experts, may be invited by the Council members to participate in the work of the expert or working group. The external members do not have a right to vote in the Council.
Explain, if applicable, how the practice provides for review and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council submits a report on its work to the Government of the Republic of Croatia at the end of its mandate, as proscribed by the Art. 7 of the Decision on the establishment of the Council for Human Rights from 10 December 2022.

Thematic area	ROMA EQUALITY AND INCLUSION Please provide one example of promising practice in relation to the two topics addressed in the chapter: regarding the implementation of national action plans and regarding the legal or policy developments addressing Roma/Travellers equality and inclusion.
Title (original language)	No promising practice has been identified for this thematic area.

Thematic area	INFORMATION SOCIETY, PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION Please, provide one example of a promising practice related to the topics addressed in the chapter, i.e., in relation to data protection, and/or artificial intelligence systems.
Title (original language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Umjetna inteligencija za pametno zdravstvo i medicinu - AI4Health.Cro
Title (EN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artificial intelligence for smart healthcare and medicine - AI4Health.Cro
Organisation (original language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institut Ruđer Bošković
Organisation (EN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ruđer Bošković Institute
Government / Civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The leading coordinator of the consortium is Ruđer Bošković Institute, and partners include representatives from: technological companies, health organisations, academic community, public sector, development and funding and associations

Funding body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is currently being funded by project partners. However, the project team is preparing for the contracting of the project, which was positively evaluated by the European Commission. The contracting of the project will provide a budget worth around three million euros for a period of three years, which is the projected duration of the project.
Reference (incl. URL, where available)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI4Health.Cro website
Indicate the start date of the promising practice and the finishing date if it has ceased to exist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The European EDIH call was announced in the period 11/2021-02/2022, and in June 2022 the project was positively evaluated and became one of the four national EDIHs, provided with almost 3 million euros to work according to the activity plan. The initiative was assessed positively by the European Commission as being worthy of financing in accordance with the legal, regulatory and ethical principles emphasised in the application submitted to the European Commission in February 2022. Implementation of the activities starts with 1 January 2023.
Type of initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> not-for-profit public-private consortium
Main target group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> European AI startups and innovators
Indicate level of implementation: Local/Regional/National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National
Brief description (max. 1000 chars)	<p>The idea of AI4HEALTH.Cro is to create a hub to help in the efficient transfer of technologies and potential solutions by technology companies, innovators and startups into health and medical practice. They will establish a kind of hub for the application of artificial intelligence in healthcare, where they will be able to screen candidates, enabling them to test their technology before major investments. This includes various assessments and simulations of innovation and digital maturity of technology, support in the development and adaptation of technology to the needs of users and, ultimately, assistance in technology transfer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2022, AI4Health.Cro was positively evaluated and became one of the four national European Commission's European Digital Innovation HUB EDIHs, provided with almost 3 million euros to work according to the activity plan. In 2022, a series of preparatory and promotional activities were carried out, popularising AI in healthcare and medicine.
Highlight any element of the actions that is transferable (max. 500 chars)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AI can be deployed in just about any facet or activity of the health industry, from clinical decision-making, public health, biomedical research to health system administration. The most important aspect of the project is that it brings an opportunity for all interested innovators who have solutions for health systems problems, or are currently working on developing them, and need help in developing their technology from the testing phase to marketing them.

<p>Give reasons why you consider the practice as sustainable (as opposed to 'one off activities')</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The population is getting older, chronic disease statistics are getting worse, there is a shortage of medical staff and the consequences of COVID-19 are still not explicitly known to medical professionals. All of these problems are and are going to be a burden for the healthcare system, which faces many more challenges. This generates the need for artificial intelligence which offers the possibility of effective and successful solutions for both patients and experts in the future ahead of us.
<p>Give reasons why you consider the practice as having concrete measurable impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project enables innovators to test their technology before major investments. This includes various assessments and simulations of innovation and digital maturity of technology, support in the development and adaptation of technology to the needs of users and, ultimately, assistance in technology transfer. Concrete measurable impact is generated through these assessments and simulations, but also the amount of money invested in innovations and the number of innovations generated by this project.
<p>Give reasons why you consider the practice as transferable to other settings and/or Member States?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The practice is transferable because of the common issue of healthcare systems in Europe. Health systems in Europe are increasingly burdened with a shortage in medical staff, long waiting periods and a rising demand for services in need for an ageing population. These problems present a substantial financial constraint. A solution to these financial constraints could be the integration of AI technologies. Even within the EU, the integration of AI technologies is recognized as crucial in controlling and reducing the costs of health services and the long-term sustainability of health systems.
<p>Explain, if applicable, how the practice involves beneficiaries and stakeholders in the design, planning, evaluation, review assessment and implementation of the practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both beneficiaries and stakeholders are involved in all project cycle stages as they are project partners. AI4HEalth.Cro is a not-for-profit public-private consortium which gathers a wide network of industrial, academic and public sector partners. As the project is being funded by project partners and is being implemented by project partners, it is hard not to be involved in decision making activities and not to be involved in all project cycle stages. The vision of the project is to connect and build a network where innovators have the resources to test their products and fund their innovations, and be supported all the time during this process by different project partners of the consortium, who are the stakeholders as well.
<p>Explain, if applicable, how the practice provides for review and assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

Thematic area	RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Please provide a promising practice for the related topics addressed in the chapter (i.e., the impact of poverty and exclusion on children and children and justice).
Title (original language)	Neno Alarm sustav za potragu nestale djece
Title (EN)	NENO Alarm alert system for missing children
Organisation (original language)	Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova
Organisation (EN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ministry of the Interior
Government / Civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government
Funding body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government
Reference (incl. URL, where available)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Press release, 30 November 2022: Video: Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with the Meta, launched the Amber Alert service in Croatia called NENO Alarm (VIDEO: Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova je, u suradnji s Metom, pokrenulo uslugu Amber Alert u Hrvatskoj pod nazivom NENO Alarm)
Indicate the start date of the promising practice and the finishing date if it has ceased to exist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 November 2022
Type of initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public-private cooperation
Main target group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizens – social media Facebook and Instagram users
Indicate level of implementation: Local/Regional/National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National
Brief description (max. 1000 chars)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a child goes missing, the Ministry of the Interior notifies the Meta company which then initiates the alert, the so-called NENO Alarm, with the citizens - social network users on Facebook and Instagram - within a 160-kilometre radius from the location where the child was last seen. The alert will contain basic information on the missing child and a link to the child's online profile in the National records of missing persons. Users can revisit the alert for details that they might have missed, and more importantly, they can share the alert with their friends and reach a larger audience thus helping identify and locate the missing child within a short period of time.

Highlight any element of the actions that is transferable (max. 500 chars)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principles and methods of functioning of NENO Alarm are transferable and universally applicable since the basic condition for its functioning is availability of internet and social media.
Give reasons why you consider the practice as sustainable (as opposed to 'one off activities')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project is carried out by the Ministry of Interior in cooperation with the Meta company which is established company with great number of users and available financial means to carry out this practice in the long term.
Give reasons why you consider the practice as having concrete measurable impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having in mind the great number of Instagram and Facebook users, it is expected that Neno Alarm will have concrete impact on citizens who are social media users in a sense that they will become more aware of the issue in question and also provide help to the authorities in missing children cases.
Give reasons why you consider the practice as transferable to other settings and/or Member States?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Having in mind that Instagram and Facebook have a great number of users all over the world and that the large number of population use social media, this practice is easily transferable to other settings and Member States which is supported by the fact that Croatia is the thirtieth country to launch this kind of alert system for missing children.
Explain, if applicable, how the practice involves beneficiaries and stakeholders in the design, planning, evaluation, review assessment and implementation of the practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Explain, if applicable, how the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A

practice provides for review and assessment.	
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Thematic area	ACCESS TO JUSTICE – Victim’s Rights and Judicial Independence Please provide one example of a promising practice in relation to the topic address in the chapter: i.e. Victim’s Rights Directive, the EU Strategy for Victim’s Rights and violence against women.
Title (original language)	Javni poziv za iskazivanje interesa vođenje radionica/mrežnih seminara u okviru aktivnosti stručnog usavršavanja Pravosudne akademije za programe stručnog usavršavanja Pravosudne akademije za 2023. godinu •
Title (EN)	Public call for expression of interest in conducting workshops/network seminars as part of the professional training activities of the Judicial Academy for the professional training programs of the Judicial Academy for 2023
Organisation (original language)	• Pravosudna akademija
Organisation (EN)	• Judicial Academy
Government / Civil society	• Government
Funding body	• Government
Reference (incl. URL, where available)	• Public call published at the Judicial Academy web-page
Indicate the start date of the promising practice and the finishing date if it has ceased to exist	• Start of the initiative is the public call for expression of interest published in November 2022 and the start of educational activities is planned for 2023 with no end date foreseen yet
Type of initiative	• Educational - Professional Development
Main target group	• Judicial officials (judges, state attorneys)

Indicate level of implementation: Local/Regional/National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National
Brief description (max. 1000 chars)	<p>In November 2022, the Judicial Academy issued a public call for a set of trainings to be held in the coming period, among other, on topics related to more effective processing of domestic violence and distinction of misdemeanors and criminal acts of domestic violence, protection of victims during the criminal and misdemeanor proceedings and more effective implementation of the individual assessment of the victim. It is a form of interdisciplinary cooperation and training of judicial officials as well as raising the awareness of judicial officials about the issue of gender-based violence and the protection of victims. The judicial academy expressed its intention for the representatives of civil society organizations to submit their applications to public call in order to be included as experts in training activities for judicial officials.</p>
Highlight any element of the actions that is transferable (max. 500 chars)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multidisciplinary trainings that include mutual transfer of knowledge between judicial officials with the participation of experts outside the system - representatives of civil society organizations who work directly with women victims of violence.
Give reasons why you consider the practice as sustainable (as opposed to 'one off activities')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educational activities of a similar type are regularly provided and are already established as a well known practice of training of judicial officials. Therefore, expansion of educational topics to the issues of violence against women, protection of victims etc. within the activities of judicial academy with the inclusion of representatives of civil society organizations as experts represents a new added value to the already existing forms of education and training and is expected for these kind of trainings to become part of the regular training program of Judicial Academy.
Give reasons why you consider the practice as having concrete measurable impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The measurable impact of this practice relates to the number of judicial officials who will be included in this type of education and training.
Give reasons why you consider the practice as transferable to other settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The mechanisms of education include interdisciplinary approach to relevant topics and problem areas in the form of mutual cooperation of judicial officials and civil society organizations and mutual transfer of knowledge. These mechanisms of collaboration are easily transferrable and applicable to other member states.

and/or Member States?	
Explain, if applicable, how the practice involves beneficiaries and stakeholders in the design, planning, evaluation, review assessment and implementation of the practice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educations and training will be conducted by stakeholders who have the obligation to design and plan their activities, educational materials etc. Therefore, all stakeholders are directly included in design and planning of the practice.
Explain, if applicable, how the practice provides for review and assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A

Thematic area	<p>Developments in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)</p> <p>Please provide one example of a promising practice of national monitoring bodies (e.g., a well-run outreach campaign, an inclusive survey, a successful effort or initiative to improve legislation, etc.) in relation to projects or programmes implementing the CRPD or promoting the rights of persons with disabilities. Where no such practice exists, please provide one example of a promising practice in relation to projects or programmes implementing the CRPD or promoting the rights of persons with disabilities, focussing on projects and programmes implemented with EU funding.</p>
Title (original language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rasvijetli mi Konvenciju
Title (EN)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlighten the Convention to me
Organisation (original language)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hrvatski savez gluhih i nagluhih (HSGN)
Organisation (EN)	The Croatian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

Government / Civil society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Civil society
Funding body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hrvatska Elektroprivreda d.d. (Croatian Electricity Company)
Reference (incl. URL, where available)	The Croatian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing web-page
Indicate the start date of the promising practice and the finishing date if it has ceased to exist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A
Type of initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translation into sign language
Main target group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaf persons and persons hard of hearing
Indicate level of implementation: Local/Regional/National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National
Brief description (max. 1000 chars)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Croatian Association of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (HSGN) translated the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into Croatian sign language. This translation is one of only a few national sign language translations in the world.
Highlight any element of the actions that is transferable (max. 500 chars)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Convention itself is a powerful tool to help people with disabilities, local communities and governments find ways to respect the rights of people with disabilities through the development and implementation of legal, policy and practical measures. This practice makes the CRPD accessible to certain groups of persons with disabilities, provides them with knowledge about their rights but also empowers and encourages them to act on these rights.
Give reasons why you consider the practice as sustainable (as opposed to 'one off activities')	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Even though the translation itself can be seen as a "one off activity", the implications of this translation are building a long-term, sustainable institutional system where persons with disabilities are supported to overcome physical, attitudinal and institutional barriers they face in our societies. This practice is an important step towards an inclusive society, especially when talking about deaf and hard of hearing and considering the lack of audio-visual adjustments for them in everyday life.
Give reasons why you consider the practice as having	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication is the pinnacle of the human race, which enables the exchange of messages between people, using different methods and visual and/or audio signs. Sign language communication is just another way of communicating that focuses on the visual and is necessarily accompanied by facial expressions,

<p>concrete measurable impact</p>	<p>position and body movements. For deaf and hard of hearing, sign language is important for their ability to understand the world. The CRPD gives responsibility to governments and society to ensure a political, legal, social and physical environment that supports full inclusion of all persons with disabilities into our society. By translation into sign language, the CRPD becomes understandable and more accessible to certain groups with disabilities. This creates prerequisites for raising their awareness of their rights and encouraging them for a more active participation in advocating for implementation of their rights and holding the government and other stakeholders accountable for their actions.</p>
<p>Give reasons why you consider the practice as transferable to other settings and/or Member States?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This translation of the CRPD is one of only a few national sign language translations in the world. The experience of translating the CRPD can be shared amongst Member States, as well as other organisations that work with deaf or hard of hearing. The translation is a long process of agreeing, thinking, preparing, adapting, translating and, in the end, recording the Convention. In addition to all that, the process might call for a sophisticated studio and equipment which enables recording such demanding material. Sharing these challenges amongst Member States makes it easier for others to prepare similar initiatives in the future and avoid possible mistakes which would prolong the translation of the CRPD.
<p>Explain, if applicable, how the practice involves beneficiaries and stakeholders in the design, planning, evaluation, review assessment and implementation of the practice.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • N/A
<p>Explain, if applicable, how the practice provides for review and assessment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HSGN distributed the translation of the CRPD among its members, users of their activities, and different stakeholders, like the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disabilities. The HSGN also asked for feedback from deaf and hard of hearing by answering a short questionnaire.

Annex 2 – Case Law

Thematic area	EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION Please provide one high court decision addressing discrimination against LGBTIQ people or on the grounds of socio-economic status, health status and physical appearance (not related to health or disability or to other grounds like ethnic origin, religion). Where relevant, always highlight any relevance or reference to multiple or intersectional discrimination in the case you report.
Decision date	20 April 2022
Reference details	Usž-2402/21-4
Key facts of the case (max. 500 chars)	The verdict of the High Administrative Court, rejected the appeal of the Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy against the verdict of the Administrative Court in Zagreb from April 2021, by which life partners Mladen Kožić and Iva Šegota should have been given access to the adoption assessment procedure. The court's conclusion means that same-sex couples in Croatia can go through the assessment for adoptive parents together and must not be discriminated against based on their sexual orientation.
Main reasoning/argumentation (max. 500 chars)	The court rejected the Ministry's argument that same-sex couples should not be allowed to access the assessment for adoptive parents due to the goal of "protecting the interests of the child". The judgment repeatedly mentions previous judgments of the European Court of Human Rights which guarantee the protection of family life for same-sex couples and the application of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
Key issues (concepts, interpretations) clarified by the case (max. 500 chars)	The court gave an answer to the Ministry's argument that same-sex couples should not access the assessment for adoptive parents due to the goal of "protecting the interests of the child": during the assessment there is no child that should be protected, but possibly only after a positive opinion from the Center for Social Welfare, so adoptive parents can proceed with child adoption - for which the Center again decides whether it is in his best interest to be adopted by a same-sex couple.
Results (sanctions) and key consequences or implications of the case (max. 500 chars)	This verdict is of immense symbolic importance for all LGBTIQ people in Croatia. The right of LGBTIQ persons to family life is confirmed, and that one's sexual orientation cannot be the basis for discrimination.
Key quotation in original language and translated into	<i>"Ovaj Sud smatra, ..., da ne postoje opravdani razlozi za uskratu pristupa tužitelja postupku posvojenja. Također s obzirom na stadij postupka ne postoje razlozi za zaštitu javnog interesa koji</i>

English with reference details (max. 500 chars)	<p><i>bi mogao biti povrijeđen i zbog čije zaštite bi postojali razlozi za ograničenje konvencijskih prava tužitelja, uskraćivanjem pristupku postupku posvojenja.”</i></p> <p>“This Court considers, ..., that there are no justified reasons for denying the plaintiff access to the adoption procedure. Also, considering the stage of the procedure, there are no reasons to protect the public interest that could be violated and for the protection of which there would be reasons to limit the plaintiff’s convention rights, by denying access to the adoption procedure.”</p> <p>Usž-2402/21-4, Para. 31, 20 April 2022</p>
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Thematic area	<p>RACISM, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE Please provide the most relevant high court decision concerning the application of either the Racial Equality Directive or the Framework Decision on racism and xenophobia, addressing racism, xenophobia, and other forms of intolerance more generally.</p>
Decision date	No case law has been identified for this thematic area.

Thematic area	<p>ROMA EQUALITY AND INCLUSION Please provide the most relevant high court decision addressing violations of fundamental rights of Roma and Travellers.</p>
Decision date	No case law has been identified for this thematic area.

Thematic area	<p>ASYLUM, VISAS, MIGRATION, BORDERS AND INTEGRATION Please provide the most relevant high court decision – or any court ruling – relating to the processing of personal data by new technologies in asylum, migration and border management delivered in 2022 (on Eurodac, SIS and VIS).</p>
Decision date	No case law has been identified for this thematic area.

Thematic area	INFORMATION SOCIETY, PRIVACY AND DATA PROTECTION Please provide the most relevant high court decision related to the topics addressed in the chapter (i.e. data protection, and/or artificial intelligence systems).
Decision date	No case law has been identified for this thematic area.

Thematic area	RIGHTS OF THE CHILD Please provide the most relevant high court decision for the related topics addressed in the chapter.
Decision date	12 April 2022
Reference details	UIIIBi-5910/2021
Key facts of the case (max. 500 chars)	In the specific case, the mother of two children in 2015 filed a criminal complaint against the children's father, her former partner, claiming that during their extramarital partnership, he abused the children and after the end of the partnership, during his contacts with children he acted in an inappropriate manner neglecting the children. In December 2016, an indictment was filed against the father for having committed lewd acts in relation to one child and grossly neglecting his duty to care and raise both children. In February 2022, the proceedings were still ongoing.
Main reasoning/argumentation (max. 500 chars)	Taking into account the circumstances of the specific case, in which the first hearing before the court of first instance was held and the evidentiary proceedings began three years and six months after the perpetrator was accused, as well as the fact that in total more than six and a half years have passed since the time when criminal complaint was submitted, in the opinion of the Constitutional Court, such delays are not in accordance with the procedural requirement of promptness established by Article 35 of the Constitution and Article 8 of the Convention.

Key issues (concepts, interpretations) clarified by the case (max. 500 chars)	The duty of the state to apply the relevant criminal law mechanisms in practice through effective investigation and prosecution, taking into account the special vulnerability of minor victims, their dignity and rights as children and victims.
Results (sanctions) and key consequences or implications of the case (max. 500 chars)	In order for the minor applicants stop being victims of the violation of Article 35 of the Constitution and Article 8 of the Convention, the Constitutional Court stated that in addition to the determination of the violation of the applicant's rights, it is necessary to award appropriate compensation, so that each of the applicants was awarded compensation in the amount of HRK 25,000.00 (approx. 3.300 EUR).
Key quotation in original language and translated into English with reference details (max. 500 chars)	<p>"Kako bi država ispunila obveze prema članku 35. Ustava i članku 8. Konvencije, nadležna su tijela mjerodavne kaznenopravne mehanizme dužna primijeniti u praksi kroz učinkovitu istragu i kazneni progon, vodeći pritom računa o posebnoj ranjivosti maloljetnih oštećenika, njihovom dostojanstvu i pravima kao djeteta i kao žrtve."</p> <p>"In order for the state to fulfil its obligations under Article 35 of the Constitution and Article 8 of the Convention, competent authorities are obliged to apply the relevant criminal law mechanisms in practice through effective investigation and prosecution, taking into account the special vulnerability of minor victims, their dignity and rights as children and as victims." (decision of the Constitutional Court, no. UIIBi-5910/2021, 12 April 2021, para. 7.7.)</p>

Thematic area	ACCESS TO JUSTICE – Victim’s Rights and Judicial Independence Please provide the most relevant high court decision related topics addressed in the chapter (i.e the Victim’s Rights Directive, the EU Strategy for Victim’s Rights and violence against women).
Decision date	12 April 2022
Reference details	U-IIIIBi-2808/2021
Key facts of the case (max. 500 chars)	A woman who was physically and verbally assaulted in a public place in 2018 filed a constitutional complaint because of the excessive duration of the misdemeanour proceedings against the perpetrators. After the incident occurred the perpetrators were arrested and a precautionary

	measure- restraining order was imposed on them, and the police submitted an indictment against them to the misdemeanour court for misdemeanour against public order and peace. In 2021, the applicant submitted a request for protection of her right to a trial within a reasonable time since the court proceedings were still ongoing three years later. The applicant's request was rejected with the explanation that she was not a party to the proceedings but a witness, after which the applicant filed a constitutional complaint.
Main reasoning/argumentation (max. 500 chars)	The Constitutional Court found that in the specific case misdemeanour proceedings lasted excessively long, while neither the complexity of the case nor the behaviour of the parties and participants in the proceedings could justify the first-instance court not having completed the case for three years. The Constitutional Court determined the duration of the proceedings in question does not meet the requirement of promptness, that is, that the judicial authorities did not meet the requirement of reasonable time as a part of procedural obligation to prosecute violence contained in Article 35 of the Constitution and Article 8 of the Convention.
Key issues (concepts, interpretations) clarified by the case (max. 500 chars)	The state's obligation to protect physical and psychological integrity includes not only the existence of an appropriate legal framework that protects a person's physical and psychological psychological integrity from acts of violence committed by private individuals, but also its effective implementation in each individual case. The Constitutional Court assessed that the applicant did not receive an adequate and timely judicial response in accordance with the state's procedural obligations in protecting the right to physical integrity which was sufficient to determine a violation of the rights guaranteed by Article 35 of the Constitution and Article 8 of the Convention in the procedural aspect. With this decision the Constitutional Court for the first time recognized standing for a victim in cases related to the length of proceedings in relation to procedural rights (effective investigation) guaranteed by the Article 35 of the Constitution and Article 8 of the European Convention.
Results (sanctions) and key consequences or implications of the case (max. 500 chars)	The Constitutional Court determined that in order that the applicant stops being a victim of the violation of Article 35 of the Constitution, i.e. Article 8 of the Convention, it is necessary that, in addition to the determination of a violation of rights, the applicant also receives appropriate compensation for the determined violations. The applicant was awarded compensation in the amount of 20,000.00 HRK (approx. 2.600 EUR) and the Constitutional Court ordered that the court of first instance is obliged to make a decision in the applicant's case in the shortest possible time, but not longer than 60 days.
Key quotation in original language and translated into	„Ustavni sud utvrđuje da prekršajni postupak traje prekomjerno dugo, pri čemu niti složenost predmeta niti ponašanje stranaka i sudionika tog postupka ne mogu pružiti opravdanje prvostupanjskom sudu da još nije dovršio predmet. Takvo razdoblje ne udovoljava zahtjevu

<p>English with reference details (max. 500 chars)</p>	<p>razumnoga vremenskog roka, odnosno pravosudna tijela nisu ispunila zahtjev pravodobnosti sadržan u postupovnoj obvezi progona nasilnih činova na temelju članka 35. Ustava i članka 8. Konvencije. Slijedom navedenog, Ustavni sud ocjenjuje da podnositeljica nije dobila odgovarajući i pravodobni pravosudni odgovor u skladu s postupovnim obvezama države u zaštiti prava na fizički integritet. Navedeno je dovoljno da se utvrdi povreda prava zajamčenih člankom 35. Ustava i člankom 8. Konvencije u postupovnom aspektu..”</p> <p>”The Constitutional Court determines that the misdemeanour proceedings are taking an excessively long time, and neither the complexity of the case nor the behaviour of the parties and participants in the proceedings can justify the first-instance court not having completed the case yet. Duration of the proceedings in question does not meet the requirement of a reasonable time limit, that is, the judicial authorities did not meet the requirement of promptness contained in the procedural obligation to prosecute violence based on Article 35 of the Constitution and Article 8 of the Convention. As a result of the above, the Constitutional Court assesses that the applicant did not receive an adequate and timely judicial response in accordance with the state's procedural obligations in protecting the right to physical integrity. The above is sufficient to establish a violation of the rights guaranteed by Article 35 of the Constitution and Article 8 of the Convention in the procedural aspect. ” (Decision of the Constitutional Court, no. U-IIIBi-2808/2021, 12 April 2022, para. 6.4., 6.5.).</p>
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<p>Thematic area</p>	<p>DEVELOPMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (CRPD) Please provide the most relevant High Court decision, which quoted the CRPD or prominently referred to the CRPD in the reasoning.</p>
<p>Decision date</p>	<p>No case law has been identified for this thematic area.</p>