

A 11 - INITIATIVE FOR ECONOMIC AND

SOCIAL RIGHTS



2020 ANNUAL
REPORT



INTRODUCTION

The A 11 – Initiative for Economic and Social Rights (hereinafter: A 11 Initiative) is a non-profit, non-partisan and non-governmental organisation which promotes and protects the rights of individuals from vulnerable, marginalised and discriminated groups, with a particular focus on economic and social rights. In its work, the organisation is guided by principles such as equality, dignity, solidarity, social justice, inclusiveness and gender equality.

The A 11 Initiative has nine members of the staff which strive to govern the organisation through horizontal decision-making processes.

The A 11 Initiative was established in 2018 and has since contributed to the better protection of economic and social rights of vulnerable population, and to the improved understanding of the state's obligation to protect, promote and fulfil economic and social rights. Since its inception, the A 11 Initiative implemented **18 projects**, of which some are still in implementation. Since its establishment, the A 11 Initiative has provided counselling to over **1900 individuals**, initiated over **140 proceedings** in front of courts and administrative bodies as well as **8 strategic cases** (6 in front of the Constitutional Court), assisted over **30 secondary raw materials collectors** in their work via servicing their cargo bicycles, implemented at least **10 campaigns** aimed at raising public awareness, published **16 manuals and reports** related to the protection and promotion of economic and social rights or human rights in general and written 6 submissions to international mechanisms for the protection of human rights.

Furthermore, the A 11 Initiative has become part of various networks, both national and international, including but not limited to the [Movement for Housing Equality](#), [Platform of Organisations for Cooperation with United Nations Human Rights Mechanisms](#) (national), [Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Network](#) (pre-eminent international network of organizations focusing on the protection and promotion of said rights), the International Alliance for the Right to Housing, while we have also been granted ECOSOC accreditation by the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

ACTIVITIES AND IMPACT

We achieve our goals through five complementary activities:

- Legal aid and strategic litigation;
- Education and awareness-raising;
- Public advocacy;
- Monitoring and reporting;
- Coalition building, cooperation, partnership.

Also, in 2020, the A 11 Initiative launched its **Solidarity programme**, through which it supports individuals, groups and other organisations that need legal representation in their fights for social justice, equality and that are seeking to stop the impunity for human rights violations. Issues supported through this programme are not necessarily related to economic and social rights, but more broadly to human rights violations.

LEGAL AID AND STRATEGIC LITIGATION

Through strategic litigation the A 11 Initiative points out significant legal issues and obstacles in regard to access to socio-economic rights and discrimination and, relying on relevant international standards and examples of good practice from other countries, strives to ensure a more favourable interpretation of law and easier access to economic and social rights for individuals coming from vulnerable groups.

What we achieved in 2020:

The Commissioner for the Protection of Equality established that Belgrade Bus Station discriminated against Roma baggage porters.

Acting upon the A 11 Initiative's complaint, in February 2020 the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality established that Belgrade Bus Station discriminated against Roma baggage porters who used to work at Station's arrival platform. The complaint was lodged after several Roma baggage porters that have been working at the station for years were prevented from accessing the arrivals platform and from performing their work with explanation that „Roma cannot work here anymore“. The Commissioner issued a recommendation to the Belgrade Bus Station to address a written apology to Roma who were discriminated and to provide training and education on the prohibition of discrimination to its staff. Also, the Commissioner recommended the Belgrade Bus Station to consider application of affirmative measures in the process of organizing station services, and particularly during issuance of permissions for baggage porters.

The Press Council adopted the complaint regarding the article in “Večernje novosti” submitted by the Initiative A 11.

In March 2020, A 11 submitted complaint to the Commissioner for Complaints of the Press Council against Večernje Novosti Daily, regarding the article entitled “It is difficult to beg Roma for a job“. The controversial text with misleading subtitle “Social assistance is safer than a workbook, no big response is expected” is overflowed with stereotypes and prejudices against Roma, while the author did not distinguish between facts, comments and speculations nor paid attention to whether the rights and dignity of the persons he is writing about are being violated, thus completely neglecting journalistic responsibility.

Acting upon A 11 Initiative's complaint the Press Council found that Večernje Novosti violated the Code of Journalist of Serbia and section which deals with obligation to oppose anyone who violates human rights or advocates any kind of discrimination, hate speech or incitement to violence. Sensationalist title and insulting text contributed to the spread of already existing stereotypes about Roma as non-workers, thus violating the obligation of journalists to oppose all those who advocate discrimination. In the explanation of the decision, the Press Council emphasizes that it considers this violation more serious since the Council has already warned the editorial board of "Večernji novosti" several times about the articles, and especially the headlines that spread stereotypes about Roma. The Press Council ordered Večernje Novosti to publish its decision establishing violation of the Code of Journalist of Serbia.

Following the request for interim measures submitted to the ECtHR, water tanks provided for the settlement Čukarica Forest.

In April 2020, the A 11 Initiative addressed the European Court of Human Rights with a request that interim measures be indicated to the Government of Serbia with an aim to undertake COVID-19 preventive measures in an informal Roma settlement *Čukarička šuma*. Approximately 70 families of internally displaced Roma in the settlement *Čukarička šuma* live without access to electricity, potable water and sewer and in highly unhygienic conditions, surrounded with piles of garbage and waste permeating through the settlement. Described conditions additionally created the risk of the virus spreading among inhabitants of the settlement. The application was submitted on two internally displaced Roma with pre-existing illness that makes them particularly vulnerable to complication from COVID-19.



The ECtHR acted promptly on this request and initiated the procedure against Serbia, clearly confirming that the situation in this settlement and the lack of reaction by the authorities presented a serious and real risk of inhuman and degrading treatment of Roma living in this settlement.

On 24th April 2020, the Court dropped an interim measure against Serbia and instructed the applicants to undertake additional efforts to obtain protection of applicants' rights before the local government. In line with the Court's instruction, the A 11 Initiative addressed the local government and sought urgent humanitarian support, the provision of potable water and the deployment of measures for the purpose of preventing the spread of the coronavirus in the *Čukarička šuma* informal settlement.

As a result, **on 27 April 2020, water tank with potable water was placed the settlement *Čukarička šuma***. This was the first A 11 Initiative's strategic case for 2020 with potential impact not only on the applicants, but also on approximately 200 IDPs living in this settlement, as well as on the Roma living in similar conditions in other informal settlements in Serbia.

The Order imposing restriction of movement to migrants, refugees and asylum seekers repealed after several CSOs challenged these restrictions before the Constitutional Court.

In May 2020, the A 11 Initiative and the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights, with partners, submitted the initiative for constitutional review of The Order Restricting Movement on Roads Leading to Asylum and Reception Centre Facilities and Ground, since the provisions of the Order deprived of liberty approximately 9,000 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants. Several days after the submission of the initiative, the Order was revoked.

Additional activities regarding restriction of movement of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the domain of legal advice, legal assistance and strategic litigation included:

- Submission of initiative to the Constitutional Court for constitutional review of Article 3 of the Decree on Emergency Measures, due to arbitrary and discriminatory deprivation of liberty of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants and for its contravention of Art. 21, 22, 27, 29 para. 2 and 200 paras 1 and 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia (in April 2020);
- Filing one general and two individual complaints to the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality against the Republic of Serbia for the discriminatory treatment of refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in Serbia on the basis of the Decree on Emergency Measures (in April 2020);
- Submission of three constitutional appeals to the Constitutional Court regarding unlawful deprivation of liberty of refugees in the asylum and reception centres during the state of emergency declared upon the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Complaint to REM against Studio B television due to racist statements of the morning-show host.

In October 2020, the A 11 Initiative filed a complaint to the Regulatory Body for Electronic Media (REM) against Studio B television, due to inappropriate and racist attitudes of its morning-show host, aimed at the members of Roma national minority. The statements of the host encouraged discrimination against Roma national minority, which is already largely marginalized due to the stereotypes that they face every day. Spreading these stereotypes contributed to the creation of prejudice and discrimination against the community that is already vulnerable on multiple levels, especially having in mind that this is done publicly, in a popular program with a national frequency, followed by a large number of viewers, who may conclude that such attitudes are “normal” or even desirable.

Submitted complaint to the Independent Project Accountability Mechanism of the EBRD on behalf of Roma evicted from the Vinča landfill.

The A 11 Initiative represented Roma collectors of secondary raw materials who were previously evicted from informal Roma settlement on the Vinča landfill, because of City of Belgrade projects and building of a waste incinerator, with the financial support of the EBRD. Roma who lived and worked at the landfill, lost their only source of income after the resettlement, and several families were left without any alternative form of housing, or forms of alternative housing which cannot be considered adequate. Therefore, in November 2020, the A 11 Initiative submitted a complaint to the IPAM (Independent Project Accountability Mechanism - an internal and independent complaint mechanism of the EBRD), requesting that mechanism to determine whether the measures taken were implemented in line with the social and environmental policies of the EBRD.

Commissioner for the Protection of Equality established that City of Smederevo discriminated against internally displaced persons.

Acting upon the complaint filed by the A 11 Initiative, in December 2020 the Commissioner for Protection of Equality issued opinion establishing that the City of Smederevo discriminated internally displaced persons in the procedures of realization of the right for financial support for pregnant women and new mothers on the territory of Smederevo.

Namely, based on the Decision on Financial Assistance to Pregnant Women and Mothers in the City of Smederevo, the right to financial assistance for pregnant women is conditioned by the registration of permanent residence in Smederevo for at least one year, and for new mothers, the condition is to have registered permanent residence in Smederevo on the day of child's birth. Thus, pregnant women and mothers who are internally displaced persons and who have registered temporary residence on the territory of the city of Smederevo are placed in an unequal position. The Commissioner stated that this apparently neutral condition – having registered permanent residence on the territory of the City of Smederevo – excluded pregnant women and mothers with the status of internally displaced persons who could not fulfil the condition regarding residence. The Commissioner recommended the Assembly of the City of Smederevo to take all measures within its competence so that the Decision would be applicable to internally displaced persons residing in Smederevo. The impact of these activities on the position of the most vulnerable IDPs becomes more evident if we consider the data that 8031 IDPs live in Smederevo.

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING

The A 11 Initiative contributes to the improvement of the position of vulnerable groups as well as to the realization of its organizational goals via implementation of campaigns and educational programs aimed at awareness-raising and human rights education.

What we achieved in 2020:

Implemented first annual School for Economic and Social Rights.

From 7 November until 19 December 2020 the A 11 Initiative implemented its first annual School of Economic and Social Rights. This annual educational program addresses various issues related to economic and social rights, such as the place of economic and social rights in the human rights protection framework, States' obligations to respect, protect and fulfil economic and social rights, and how one can seek protection of these rights in front of judicial and quasi-judicial bodies. The program aims to increase the knowledge about individual rights from the body of economic and social rights and to open discussions about the effects of economic policies on poverty and the realization of aforementioned rights, with special reference to the position of particularly vulnerable groups, focusing especially on women, persons with disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers.

Some of the sessions involved guest lecturers, including former members of the human rights supervisory bodies, members of academia and researchers and activists from several countries.

There was great interest in participation at the School, and ultimately 34 applicants were accepted, out of which 29 completed the course successfully and received a certificate of completion. The participants' demonstrated interest in the subject of economic and social rights and their feedback compels us to continue organizing the School in the future, as well as continuously improve it.

Impressions:

"It is very important to give attention to economic and social rights – rights that are necessary if citizens are to live quality lives. In order to understand these rights and how they are to be given effect, it is necessary to inform and educate ourselves about them [and this is] wherein the value of this program lies." (Valentina Lepojević, from FemPlatz, Pančevo, participant at the first School of Economic and Social Rights)

"The A 11 team and guest lecturers led us through this experience with great enthusiasm, sharing theoretical and legal knowledge, but also ample experience from practice, strengthening our motivation to work on the protection and promotion of human right, which is sorely needed in these strange times," (Sara Lalić from the Center for Peace Studies from Zagreb (Croatia), participant at the first School of Economic and Social Rights)

Blog on human rights during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In order to keep the public informed about the international tendencies of dealing with the COVID-19 crisis related to socio-economic issues, and to inform vulnerable groups about available forms of support and about ways to obtain it, in May 2020, A 11 Initiative established a COVID-19 related [blog](#) on human rights. Its additional purpose is to share useful resources and innovative approaches by others who work on the protection of the vulnerable groups, particularly in the context of the pandemic or similar disaster or emergency situations. It serves as a place where important decisions, updates, information, and opinions of by relevant bodies are published (translated in Serbian language), mostly related to the protection of rights of vulnerable groups.

A 11 Initiative warns about problems and risk of forced evictions among residents of social housing in Kamendin.

The A 11 Initiative published a press release pointing to an unsustainable situation of social housing beneficiaries in Kamendin, Zemun, who have been on the brink of survival for months, faced with accumulated debts for utility bills, electricity cut offs and risk of forced evictions. Also, the A 11 Initiative team participated in the preparation of the show recorded by the "Marka Žvaka" team depicting the problems and devastating situations of Kamendin residents. More details available [here](#) and the show recorded by "Marka Žvaka" is available [here](#).

Launched campaign on social rights of most vulnerable groups in crisis situations – #stanjevanredno #siromaštvooredovno.

In September 2020, the A 11 launched campaign on the protection of economic and social rights during emergency situation and in the context of COVID-19 crisis. The campaign increased availability of information of economic and social rights of the most vulnerable population during and in the aftermath of the first wave of the coronavirus crisis. The main messages in social media campaign were the examples collected through direct work with affected population.



Demanding urgent protection to the homeless during the pandemic.

In the week marking the International Human Rights Day, group of CSOs draw attention to the catastrophic situation the homeless people in Belgrade are facing during the coronavirus pandemic. In their joint [press release](#), CSOs warned that the situation of homeless persons was additionally aggravated by the fact that the Shelter for Adults and the Elderly did not accept homeless people referred to them by the centres for social work in Belgrade in the period from March 15 to November 16, 2020.



A 11 Initiative urged the authorities to take prompt actions on violent incident in Obrenovac Reception Centre

On 7 May 2020, the A 11 Initiative published press release and condemned violent incident in Obrenovac Reception Centre, when F.R. unlawfully entered with its vehicle in the Centre's premises. The A 11 Initiative called on competent authorities to take firm and appropriate actions on this incident, including criminal prosecution, in order to send clear message that incision of hatred and attacks towards people of different race, ethnicity or religion cannot be tolerated.

Dissemination of information in relation to payment of social benefits and pensions

In cooperation with the UNHCR and other UNHCR partners, in March 2020 the A 11 Initiative prepared and shared [leaflet](#) with information regarding payment of pensions and social benefits to persons older than 65 during emergency situation and prohibition of movement for this group. Leaflet also contained basic information on work of social welfare centres during emergency situation and other important local services.

Press release on the occasion of World Day of Social Justice

The A 11 Initiative published press release on the occasion of World Day of Social Justice with the purpose to remind about worrying data on poverty, inefficient social justice system and absence of comprehensive anti-poverty strategy. The A 11 Initiative warned that existing social benefits are inadequate while the access to health insurance remains unavailable precisely to those who are the most vulnerable, i.e., to undocumented persons and Roma without residence. Additional details and press release are available [here](#).

Internship

During 2020, our intern Katarina Kovačević successfully completed her internship at the A 11 Initiative, where she conducted research on measures that various states introduced with the purpose to protect the most vulnerable groups from the effects of the pandemic, as well as research on access to the Internet and electricity in Serbia, among the vulnerable population.

ADVOCACY

The A 11 Initiatives' recommendations for the improvement of regulations and policies relevant to the protection of human rights are based on analyses of relevant practices and their effect on vulnerable groups. The Initiative identifies deviations from relevant international standards and points out the observed inadequacies to the competent government bodies and institutions, as well as to the wider public. The A 11 Initiative uses procedures that are related to Serbia's membership in international organizations and that are enshrined in relevant international contracts so as to contribute to the alignment of domestic regulations with international standards and the creation of conditions that would allow full access to social and economic rights to all.

What we achieved in 2020:

Proposal for measures to prevent and mitigate the effects of coronavirus on socially excluded categories of population.

Together with the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and several CSOs and independent experts, the A 11 Initiative drafted [proposal of measures](#) specifically tailored to protect the most vulnerable groups during the pandemic. As groups especially vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19 and related policy measures document recognizes Roma men and women living in the informal (substandard) settlements, homeless persons, refugees and displaced persons living in informal collective centres, persons with chronic diseases and the elderly, beneficiaries of social assistance (financial social assistance, child allowance...), soup kitchen users, persons with disabilities, undocumented persons (legally invisible persons) and asylum seekers residing in asylum centres and reception centres, as well as multiply discriminated women. The proposal of measures for protection of the socially excluded categories of population includes measures in the field of health, education, social protection and housing. The document was sent to the cabinet of Prime Minister through the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit. The absence of any response from competent authorities was widely criticized in numerous advocacy activities through the whole year.

Demanding urgent action needed to protect the most vulnerable while fighting the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

On the March 17 2020, the A 11 Initiative published [press release](#) calling on Government of the Republic of Serbia to take immediate action to protect the most vulnerable citizens during the emergency situation caused by the COVID-19 virus. The A 11 Initiative pointed to the problems of Roma who live in substandard settlements, without access to water and in overcrowded facilities, with majority of them depending on income from informal economy, which means that emergency situation additionally affected their already insecure and insufficient income. Furthermore, the A11 Initiative expressed its concern that the effects of the precautionary measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus will most likely hit the poorest and those who were on the side lines of social exclusion even before the crisis.

Online discussion – presentation of analysis and recommendations concerning the most vulnerable population during COVID-19 pandemic.

Detailed set of [recommendations](#) for the protection of the most vulnerable groups during and in the aftermath of the emergency situation was presented in the online conference on 29 September together with the [analysis](#) of the human rights during the first wave of the coronavirus in Serbia. The set of recommendations, divided in five parts, was accompanied by a [public statement](#) by which recommendations were put in a broader context of the impact of the Coronavirus on economic and social rights of the most vulnerable population. Media outlets [N1](#), [O21](#), [Nova Ekonomija](#), [Danas](#), [Istinomer](#) and [Nova S](#), reported on the event.

Demanding initiation of the procedure for the election of a new Commissioner for the Protection of Equality.

The A 11 Initiative and FemPlatz gathered a group of 50 civil society organisations in order to jointly bring to light the non-functioning of the anti-discrimination system in Serbia, in the period when the Institution of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality was completely inoperative due to the failure to timely elect a new Commissioner. The aforementioned CSOs called relevant actors to initiate the procedure of electing a new Commissioner for the Protection of Equality without delay.

The A 11 Initiative urged the Ministry of Education to enable access to education for vulnerable Roma children.

The A 11 addressed the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development with a request to facilitate the access to education and distant learning to vulnerable children whose problem in the access to education during pandemic were neglected. Namely, after the outbreak of coronavirus regular school attendance was replaced with distance learning and school program running on RTS (national broadcasting service) channels, and State failed to find the way to ensure access to teaching to Roma children from informal Roma settlements and other vulnerable Roma children who do not have access to television programs, internet or electricity. The A 11 urged the Ministry with to ensure unhindered access to education for Roma children.

International advocacy

Participation in preparation of joint UPR mid-term submission to the UN Human Rights Council for Period 2018-2018.

In connection with mid-term reporting of the Republic of Serbia on the implementation of the 2018 UPR recommendations (second cycle), in November 2020, the A 11 Initiative participated in the preparation of joint [mid-term UPR submission](#) of CSOs rallied in the [Platform](#) of Organization for Cooperation with UN Human Rights Mechanisms. The A 11 Initiative covered the topic of economic, social and cultural rights, with special reference to the recommendation regarding effective integration of Roma people into Serbian society. This recommendation was assessed through the lens of discriminatory provisions of the Law on Financial Support to Family with Children and State's attitude towards Roma during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The A 11 Initiative submitted comments to the Draft General Comment no. 25 on children's rights in relation to the digital environment to the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

As part of the call for comments on the Draft general comment no. 25 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on children's rights in relation to the digital environment, the A 11 Initiative prepared and sent a submission. A 11 Initiative's comments focused on guarantees related to the child's right to privacy in the context of the digital environment – the right to protection of personal data, and the right to access, amend and seek the erasure of their personal data from all parties that collect and process personal data in the digital environment; and the protection of privacy of children in conflict with the law, and in the context of the digital environment, paying particular attention to privacy of correspondence, as well as the right to protection of privacy of children victims of rights violations. Additionally, the A 11 Initiative addressed the issue of the right to education in relation to the digital environment, specifically from the standpoint of emergency and disaster situations, emphasizing that the General Comment ought to remind States parties to the Convention of their obligation to ensure

equal access to education without discrimination to each child, especially during times of emergency or disaster.

Granted A 11 Initiative`s input on position of Roma during coronavirus outbreak sent to the Secretariat of Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of the Council of Europe.

In cooperation with Goran Bašić, member of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, the A 11 Initiative prepared a short paper presenting its views on situation of Roma in Serbia during COVID-19 pandemic and measures undertaken by the State regarding protection of Roma in this context. This document was sent to the Secretariat of Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and should be used as a reference for the forthcoming report on the position of minorities during pandemic.

Media advocacy:

The A 11 published more than 8 individual and a number of collective press releases, shared or covered by more than 12 media. Also, the A 11 Initiative`s staff was regularly featured in TV, radio and newspaper articles.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

Reporting on economic and social rights constitutes an important part of the A11 Initiative`s activities. In that avail, we strive to document cases of economic and social rights violations, but also to provide analyses and recommendations for the improvement of the realization of these rights, especially taking into account the relevant international standards that guarantee them.

What we achieved in 2020:

Policy monitoring, legal analyses and resources

- ***Precondition for Integration*** – *The Right to Work of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the Republic of Serbia*
- ***Human Rights in Serbia during the First Wave of Coronavirus***: *from denial of danger to state of emergency*
- ***Recommendations*** *for Better Protection of Economic and Social Rights during and Immediately after the Crisis Caused by the Pandemic*
- ***What life looks like in informal collective centres in Serbia***
- ***Second-Class Rights*** – *Social Rights in the Light of Austerity Measures (Serbia 2012-2020)*

- *Analysis of Measures Derogating from Human and Minority Rights during the State of Emergency in the Republic of Serbia caused by the Epidemic of Infectious Disease COVID-19*
- *Deprivation of liberty of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in the Republic of Serbia*
- *The A 11 Initiative Newsletter, 3 Volumes, distributed via mailing list*

Collaborative work on monitoring and reporting

Establishment of online platform for documentation of privacy violations cases in Serbia.

In 2020, Partners for Democratic Changes Serbia, Share Foundation, the A 11 Initiative, Atina, Belgrade Open School and Da se zna! created [online monitoring database](#) to document gross human rights and privacy violations in Serbia. The monitoring database contains cases of human rights and privacy violations, together with case descriptions and appropriate sources. Database has both a public and confidential component (protected with encryption) and cases are categorized by types of abuses, means and legal consequences. Pre-determined anonymized statistical data will be made publicly available to ensure privacy.

- Belgrade Center for Human Rights and the A 11 Initiative had jointly collected data on the use of excessive force by the police during protests in July in Belgrade and filled a total of **39 criminal charges against police officers**. The A 11 Initiative documented medical injuries, collected video and photo materials and testimonies, and filed 7 criminal complaints against police officers involved in the incidents during the July protests in Belgrade, while the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights submitted the rest of the criminal complaints. The engagement with the issue of the police brutality was a part of the newly established Solidarity programme.
- **Guide on data protection during pandemic:** Share Foundation, in cooperation with Partners for Democratic Changes, A 11 Initiative, Atina, Belgrade Open School and Da se zna! prepared guide on the protection of personal data during pandemic. Additional information available [here](#) and the Guide is available [here](#).
- As a part of its monitoring and documenting activities, the A 11 Initiative together with representatives of the Ombudsperson visited Roma settlements and reception centres during the state of emergency, resulting in two separate reports published by the Ombudsperson, with our inputs ([on the position of Roma](#) and [on the position of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers](#)).

COALITION BUILDING, COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Membership in ESCR-Net

In April 2020, the A 11 Initiative became a member organization of the [International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \(ESCR-Net\)](#) – the most active and widely reaching member-led global network for the advancement and protection of economic, social and cultural rights.

ESCR-Net is a collaborative initiative of groups and individuals from around the world working to secure economic and social justice through human rights. Participation in the Network allows members to collectively act in situations they find appropriate, as well as to, through the exchange of information and experiences, improve their work and the state of economic, social and cultural rights in their local surroundings and globally.

The ESCR-Net gathers over 280 organizations – including grassroots movements, NGOs, academic and research centres, advocates and experts – from across 75 countries. The A 11 Initiative is a member of the monitoring working group and the strategic litigation working group of this network.

Special Consultative Status by the United Nations Economic and Social Council

In October 2020, the United Nations Economic and Social Council granted Special Consultative Status to the A 11 – Initiative for Economic and Social Rights. This opens up various additional possibilities for advocating for the advancement of economic and social rights of individuals subject to the jurisdiction of the Republic of Serbia.

Having received the Special Consultative Status, the A 11 Initiative will now be able to participate not only in the sessions of the Economic and Social Rights Council and its functional committees and subsidiary bodies, but also in regular and thematic sessions of the Human Rights Council – a political body consisting of 47 member States of the United Nations five-year rotating mandates – whereby it would be able to present to the Council the numerous obstacles individuals and/or groups in Serbia face in the enjoyment of their rights.

This form of participation presents a possibility for increasing the visibility in the international arena of the various obstacles individuals and groups in Serbia face in the enjoyment of economic and social rights. It also provides the A 11 Initiative with the opportunity to inform other member States of the United Nations and Council members about the state of human rights in Serbia so that they could encourage Serbia to take steps towards ensuring the advancement of human rights.

Additionally, having been granted the Status, the A 11 Initiative places itself at the disposal of the Human Rights Council and the Economic and Social Rights Council for any form of inquiries or consultations related to the topics the A 11 Initiative specializes in.

The Alert (Dojavi) - Information Sharing Platform and Application

Based on the previous experience in work with most vulnerable groups, the A 11 Initiative has recognized the need for establishing a tool which would enable decentralisation of data and knowledge about the needs of the most vulnerable communities - information collecting and information sharing about the state and needs of most vulnerable groups members in Serbia. In May 2020 the A 11 Initiative launched a platform called “The Alert” (Serbian: Dojavi) which provides a possibility for the information to be gathered so the help for the most vulnerable could be delivered as soon as possible.

“The Alert” platform will serve as a tool for communication and information exchange between CSOs, volunteers, donor community and individuals who are informed about the specific needs and problems which the most vulnerable are facing ‘on field’, so help for those in need could be timely and efficient.

Its purpose is to contribute to overall effectiveness of attempts to minimize impact of coronavirus outbreak among vulnerable populations by helping avoidance of overlap and duplication and, above all, by helping to identify the most urgent needs, on the one side, and stakeholders that are best placed to respond to these needs, on the other side.

Our collaborative work and partnerships in 2020 were also marked by the following activities:

In May 2020, the A 11 Initiative **signed the Regional Declaration on the Protection of the Workers' Rights**. Text of the Declaration and list of signatories available [here](#).

In 2020, the A 11 Initiative **continued cooperation with Liceulice magazine** within a column "99 percent" devoted to human rights and authored articles on the topics such as solidarity in the context of homelessness, International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, COVID-19 crisis, etc.

In 2020, the A 11 **continued to collaborate in publishing joint monthly newsletter „Pojačalo“** by [Zajedničko](#), Center for Politics of Emancipation - [CPE](#), the A 11 Initiative, [Institute for Urban Politics/Ministry of Space](#) and [Serbian Green Youth](#).

In April 2020, the A 11 Initiative **supported the joint request of CSOs demanding respect for the freedom of the press** during the outbreak of coronavirus. More details available [here](#).

In 2020, the A 11 Initiative **continued cooperation with the Center for Economic and Social Rights (CESR)** regarding a collaborative project examining the degree to which the Serbian Government's economic policies comply with its international human right obligations.

In 2020, the A 11 continued to regularly participate in meetings and activities of the **Platform of Organization for Cooperation with UN Human Rights Mechanisms**.

OTHER WORK

Humanitarian relief

With the support of the **British Embassy in Belgrade**, after the outbreak of the pandemic COVID-19, we delivered **97 aid packages** to Roma from informal settlements, internally displaced persons and the homeless in Belgrade and Požarevac.

With the support of the **UNHCR**, we delivered **230 packages** with food, water and hygiene products to internally displaced persons in Belgrade (distributed with assistance of 10 volunteers) **and 80 packages** to internally displaced in Šabac (delivered in cooperation with local Roma NGO).

Packages were distributed with the purpose to provide immediate humanitarian relief and to directly address the most urgent needs of vulnerable households that were left without means for subsistence after the outbreak of coronavirus, due to the inability to perform work or because of dependence on the informal economy.

PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED IN 2020

1. Improved Local Integration of Internally Displaced Persons Through Enhanced Access to Social Rights

Donor: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees / Project duration: January 2020 – December 2020

2. Improving Social and Economic and Economic Rights of Marginalized Groups

Donor: Olof Palme International Center / Project duration: January 2020 – December 2024

3. Improving Communication on Economic and Social Rights in Serbia

Donor: CRTA / Project duration: July 2020 – December 2020

4. British Embassy Belgrade <Humanitarian Relief Grant>

Donor: British Embassy in Belgrade / Project duration: June 2020 – March 2021

5. Support for Most Vulnerable Communities during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Serbia

Donor: British Embassy in Belgrade / Project duration: September 2020 – February 2021

6. Citizens in Action for Social and Economic Rights

Donor: Open Society Foundation / Project duration: October 2019 – December 2020

7. Open Society Foundations <Emergency Grant>

Donor: Open Society Foundation / Project duration: July 2020 – October 2020

8. Reclaiming Privacy: A Tool to Fight Oppression

Donor: Republic of Serbia European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)

Project duration. January 2020 – December 2021

9. Improving Human Rights of Most Vulnerable Groups during Covid-19 Crisis

Donor: Royal Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade / Project duration: April 2020 – September 2020

10. Improving institutional practices in preventing discrimination against women in the labour market in Serbia

Donor: Kosovo Women's Network / Project duration: January 2020 – April 2021

11. Support to the Parents of the Babies Missing from Maternity Wards in Serbia <Emergency Grant>

Donor: Reconstruction Women's Fund / Project duration: March 2020 – August 2020



INITIATIVE FOR
ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL RIGHTS

2020 IN NUMBERS

nearly 650

INDIVIDUALS
PROVIDED WITH
LEGAL SUPPORT
AND ASSISTANCE



3,265 **2,232**

FACEBOOK
COMMUNITY

TWITTER
FOLLOWERS

AND 61,069 WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS

94%

OF PARTICIPANTS
EXPRESSING
"ABSOLUTE
SATISFACTION"
WITH THE SCHOOL
OF ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL RIGHT AND
ITS PROGRAMME.



NINE

DONORS
SUPPORTED US IN
11 DIFFERENT
PROJECT

405 humanitarian aid packages, **75** tablets distributed to Roma children, more than **20** field visits to Roma settlements, informal collective centers and reception centers for migrants, **3** strategic cases, and **7** focus group discussions with representatives from vulnerable groups