

Joint Submission to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights for its 71st session and the review of the Republic of Serbia

Prepared by



INITIATIVE FOR
ECONOMIC AND
SOCIAL RIGHTS



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INTRODUCTION

1. An informal group of civil society organizations and trade unions submits this joint report in order to provide additional information about the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (hereinafter: Covenant, CESCR), for the occasion of the 71st session of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the review of the Republic of Serbia.
2. This reports mostly follows the structure and the issues from the List of Issues adopted by Pre-Sessional Working Group in November 2019,¹ but provides also additional information, given the change of context since the adoption of the List of Issues. The report focuses on justiciability of economic, social and cultural rights, and particularly the role of the Constitutional Court in that regard. Also, the report provides the information about the work of the National Human Rights Institutions in regards economic and social rights protection, access to free legal aid system, and the discussions about the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in Serbia. In the section dealing with general provisions relevant for the Covenant, the report provides brief information about the improvement in Serbian Anti-Discrimination legislation. Moreover, in the part of the report dealing with specific provisions of the Covenant, the report focuses on the right to work and just and favourable conditions at work, right to social protection and the right to adequate housing.

¹ UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, List of issues in relation to the third periodic report of Serbia, E/C.12/SRB/Q/3.

² Response of Serbia to the list of issues in relation to its third periodic report, 29 June 2020, E/C.12/SRB/RQ/3, available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=E%2fC.12%2fSRB%2fRQ%2f3&Lang=en, para. 88, p. 1.

³ A 11 – Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, Second Class Rights, Social Rights in the Light of Austerity Measures, SERBIA 2012 - 2020, nP. 8. available at: https://www.a11initiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Second-Class-Rights_Social-Rights-in-the-Light-of-Austerity-Measures-SERBIA-2012-%E2%80%93-2020.pdf.

⁴ Information from Centre LIVING UPRIGHTS, June 2019 – January 2022.

⁵ Official Gazette of RS, No. 57/11.

⁶ Milijana Trifković, Justiciability of economic and social rights in Serbia, pp. 43-44, A 11 – Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, online, available at: <https://www.a11initiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ENG-Utu%C5%BEivost-ekonomskih-i-socijalnih-prava-u-Srbiji-2.pdf>.

GENERAL INFORMATION

JUSTICIABILITY OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

3. In addition to the information provided by the State in the response to the list of issues that in court cases and decisions “direct reference to the provisions of the Pact is very rare”,² it is also pertinent to say that the State was not able to cite even one decision based on the provisions of the Covenant in its report to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.³ It was also identified that administrative bodies were not even aware of international human rights standards and their position in legal system. For example, organisations working with social care institutions providing support to persons with disabilities evidenced that social protection professionals from Belgrade, Novi Sad, Subotica and Sombor have never even heard of General Comments adopted by different UN Treaty Bodies.⁴ This example demonstrates that, in addition to normative work, more efforts are needed for training of the professionals working in public sector in areas important for the protection and enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights.
4. Although the Constitutional Court is in the position to provide guidance and interpretation in cases of violations of economic and social rights to other judicial and administrative bodies, it oftentimes fails to do so, even in cases when it finds violations of economic and social rights. For example, the Law on Amendments to the Law on Health Insurance,⁵ adopted in 2011, was declared unconstitutional because it was not in compliance with the Convention of the International Labour Organisation no. 121. This decision does not mention the Covenant, not the obligations that, according to the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, states have if they resort to the adoption of retrogressive measures.⁶
5. In addition to that, Constitutional Court also avoids participating in the assessment of regulations related to economic and social rights, at least as long as these regulations are in force.⁷ There are several examples for this statement, all listed in the table below.

⁷ CEPRIS, Odnos Ustavnog suda i sudske vlasti, stanje i perspective, Belgrade 2019, online, available at: <https://www.cepris.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CEPRIS-Odnos-Ustavnog-suda-i-sudske-vlasti2.pdf>.

⁸ CEPRIS, Normativna kontrola ustavnosti kao osnovna (?) nadležnost Ustavnog suda Srbije (2009 – 2019), Belgrade 2021, p. 7, online, available at: <https://www.cepris.org/istrazivanja-i-analize/-studija-normativna-kontrola-ustavnosti-kao-osnovna-nadleznost-ustavnog-suda-srbije/>.

⁹ *ibid.*

6. In the period 2014 – 2018, there had been 58,615 new cases at the Constitutional Court,⁸ out of which 95% were constitutional appeals, thus normative control of legislation presents only 5% of overall work of the Constitutional Court.⁹ However, even without the backlog of cases, the Constitutional Court fails to deliver decisions affecting most vulnerable population, for years.

Table 1: List of initiatives for constitutional assessment relevant for the protection of economic and social rights

LEGISLATION	DATE OF THE SUBMISSION OF INITIATIVES FOR CONSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT	NUMBER OF INITIATIVES SUBMITTED	KEY LEGAL ISSUE	DECISION OF THE COURT	OVERALL DURATION
Law on Amendments to the Law on Health Insurance	August 2011.	One initiative submitted	Reduction of the protection in connection with injuries at work – accidents and occupational diseases not considered injuries at work	Unconstitutional, not in compliance with ILO Convention 121, October 2012 (Constitutional Court of Serbia, Iuz-314/2011)	14 months
Law on Temporary Regulation of the Method of Payment of Pensions	November 2014.	Unidentified number of different initiatives for constitutional assessment	Progressive reduction of pensions for all pensioners whose pensions exceeded EUR 208	Dismissed, October 2015 (Constitutional Court, Decision on dismissing the initiative, IUz-531/2014)	11 months
Law on Temporary Regulation of the Method of Payment of Pensions	New initiatives submitted in 2015	Dozens of different initiatives for constitutional assessment	Progressive reduction of pensions for all pensioners whose pensions exceeded EUR 208	Suspension of the constitutionality assessment, April 2019 (Constitutional Court, Decision on the suspension of the constitutionality assessment procedure, IUz-351/2015)	Almost three and half years

				adopted after the implementation of the Law discontinued)	
Decree on Social Inclusion Measures for Recipients of Financial Welfare Assistance	November 2014.	Four (2 submitted by groups of NGOs, one submitted by Parliamentary party, one submitted by the Ombudsman's Office)	Introduction of compulsory, unpaid work for beneficiaries of financial social assistance	Decision pending	Seven years and two months
Property Tax Law	May 2015.	One (NGO submitted the initiative)	Tax on the lease of social housing	Decision pending	Six years and eight months
Law on Financial Support to Families with Children, Art. 25, 1-6	October 2018.	One (NGO submitted initiative)	Abolition of the right to parental allowance if at least one of the children in the family is not up to date with mandatory immunization schedule or does not attend regular primary school, or preschool preparatory program – negatively disproportionate effect on Roma children from informal settlements	Decision pending	Three years and three months

7. There is no publicly available data on the measures implemented by the State to raise awareness of judicial officials of Covenant rights and their enforceability.

RATIFICATION OF THE OPTIONAL PROTOCOL

8. Following repeated initiatives to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,¹⁰ the competent Ministry for Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue organised meetings with interested NGOs and other competent ministries, and in December 2021 informed the public that it proposed the ratification of the Optional Protocol in the Annual Plan of the Government of the Republic of Serbia.¹¹ Further steps and discussions are needed in that regard, but this initiative presents a progress in comparison to previous period when the competent ministry dismissed the initiative for ratification of the Optional Protocol without a single word of justification.¹²

EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF FREE LEGAL AID

9. Since the adoption of the Law on Free Legal Aid,¹³ local self-government have the obligation to establish free legal aid units, and to earmark the funds for its operation. However, not all local self-government units have sufficient capacity, i.e. human resources for provision of legal aid, and even the free legal aid service provided to citizens.¹⁴

¹⁰ More information about this initiative submitted in December 2018: Platform of Organizations for Cooperation with UN Human Rights Mechanisms - Contribution of the Platform of Organizations for Cooperation with UN Human Rights Mechanisms for the occasion of the adoption of the list of issues for the third reporting cycle of the Republic of Serbia, para. 12.

¹¹ Information from the conference organized by the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue on 10 December 2021.

¹² Contribution of the Platform of Organizations for Cooperation with UN Human Rights Mechanisms for the occasion of the adoption of the List of issues for the Third reporting cycle of the Republic of Serbia, p. 4.

¹³ Official Gazette of RS, No. 87/18.

¹⁴ Praxis, Law on Free Legal Aid – The First Year of Implementation: Have the Goals Been Achieved?, 2020, available at: https://www.praxis.org.rs/images/praxis_downloads/RE-PORT_LAW_ON_FREE_LEGAL_AID_THE_FIRST_YEAR.pdf, p. 24. EHO, Report on the Implementation of Local Policies relating to the Status of Returnees under the Readmission Agreements in Vojvodina in 2018, p. 2.

This is illustrated by the fact that 96 cities and municipalities (55% of total number of cities and municipalities in Serbia) have not fulfilled their legal obligation to establish a free legal aid service.¹⁵ For example, the City of Niš, third biggest city in Serbia have significant limitations in its legal aid services – even the website of the City or City Municipality does not provide information to citizens about their right to free legal aid.¹⁶ Other outreach activities for the promotion of the free legal aid to citizens were not identified since the adoption of the Law. In addition to that, Serbia also failed to allocate all available resources in this matter. Despite the fact that there is a limitation in the number of free legal aid providers, the Free Legal Aid Law has significantly limited the possibilities of CSOs to provide legal aid.¹⁷

10. Law on Free Legal Aid was adopted with significant shortcomings, imprecise and contradictory provisions which increase the risk of legal uncertainty and problems in practice.¹⁸ The authorities responsible for implementing the Law often violate its provisions, while vulnerable citizens are generally unaware of the possibility of receiving free legal aid.¹⁹ For example, applications for free legal aid from persons who are not registered in the register of births are often rejected on the grounds that they have no documents or registered residence in the municipality where they apply for free legal aid, although they apply for free legal aid specifically to obtain personal documents.²⁰

¹⁵ Praxis, Law on Free Legal Aid – The First Year of Implementation: Have the Goals Been Achieved?, op. cit., p. 14.

¹⁶ Information received from Niš Human Rights Committee.

¹⁷ Ibid. EHO, Report on the Implementation of Local Policies relating to the Status of Returnees under the Readmission Agreements in Vojvodina in 2018, p. 2.

¹⁸ Ibid, p. 28.

¹⁹ Ibid; A 11 – Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, The Application of the Law on Free Legal Aid from the Perspective of Internally Displaced Persons, p. 31.

²⁰ Ibid.

ISSUES RELATING TO THE GENERAL PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT (ARTS. 1–5)

DISCRIMINATION

11. Serbia adopted the Law on the Amendments to the Anti-Discrimination Act²¹ in May 2021. The amendments improved the existing legislative framework and introduced specific forms of discrimination, such as discrimination in housing (Art. 27a), and segregation (Art. 5(4)) and amended the definition of indirect discrimination. These amendments also clarified the procedure for the appointment of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality. Most importantly, the Law stipulated that law and policy makers have socio-economic duty when preparing and adopting laws and public policies that could impact vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals. (Art. 14(4)). However, since May 2021, there were no identified cases of implementation of socio-economic duty, even though there was a number of relevant public policies prepared and adopted. In that period, Serbia prepared following public policies: Anti-Discrimination Strategy,²² Revised Strategy on the Social Inclusion of Roma in Serbia,²³ and the National Housing Policy.²⁴ In addition to that, in the period since May 2021, different pieces of legislation relevant for the enjoyment of economic and social rights were adopted – the Law on the Amendments to the Law on Financial Support to Families with Children, Property Tax Law, The Law on Ombudsperson, the Law on the Rights of Beneficiaries of Temporary Accommodation in Social Protection, set of laws governing education, etc.

²¹ Official Gazette of the RS, Nos. 22/2009 and 52/2021.

²² Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, Information about the Consultations on the Baseline for Drafting the Anti-Discrimination Strategy for the 2021 – 2030 Period, held between 26 October 2021 and 1 November 2021.

²³ Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, Report on Public Consultations on the Draft Revised Strategy on the Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia for the 2022 – 2030 Period.

²⁴ Ministry of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure, javna rasprava o Predlogu Nacionalne stambene strategije za period 2022 – 2032. godine sa Akcionim planom za sprovođenje za period 2022 – 2024. godine, online, available at: <https://www.mgsi.gov.rs/cir/aktuelnosti/javna-rasprava-o-predlogu-nacionalne-stambene-strategije-za-period-od-2022-2032-godine>.

12. It should be noted that the adoption of national public policies relevant for the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights lacks participation of affected groups, civil society organizations and interested public. For example, draft National Housing Strategy was on online public consultations for twenty days, in the middle of holiday season;²⁵ Roma National Strategy was on online public consultations for only seven days;²⁶ while the baseline Anti-Discrimination Strategy was on public consultations between 26 October and 1 November 2021.²⁷

ISSUES RELATING TO THE SPECIFIC PROVISIONS OF THE COVENANT (ARTS. 6–15)

ARTICLE 6 – RIGHT TO WORK

Lack of protection mechanisms for victims of labour exploitation - case of 400 Vietnamese workers hired for the construction of Linglong tire factory

13. In November 2021, the public received the information about at least 400 Vietnamese workers potential victims of human trafficking with an aim of labour exploitation.²⁸ Immediately after the media reported about this case, the representatives of the A 11 - Initiative for Economic and Social Rights and ASTRA - Action against Trafficking in Human Beings visited workers in order to examine their position and possible problems related to their employment status.²⁹

²⁵

²⁶ Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, Report on Public Consultations on the Draft Revised Strategy on the Social Inclusion of Roma in the Republic of Serbia for the 2022 – 2030 Period, online, available at: <https://www.minljpdd.gov.rs/doc/konsultacije/Izvestaj-sa-Javnih-konsultacija-Strategija.doc>.

²⁷ Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, Baseline, Anti-Discrimination Strategy for the 2021-2030 Period, online, available at: <https://www.minljpdd.gov.rs/doc/konsultacije/Polazne-osnove261021.pdf>.

²⁸ VOICE, VIŠE OD 750 VIJETNAMACA I KINEZA U INDUSTRIJSKOJ ZONI ZRENJANIN: BEZNAĐE NEVIDLJIVIH, online, available at: <https://voice.org.rs/vise-od-750-vijetnamaca-i-kineza-u-industrijskoj-zoni-zrenjanin-beznade-nevidljivih/>.

²⁹ For more information about the living and working conditions of Vietnamese workers, please see: A 11 – Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, ASTRA, Living and labor conditions of the Linglong factory construction workers from Vietnam, online, available at: https://www.a11initiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Report_Ling-Long_ENG.pdf.

14. At the moment of the interviews, none of the workers had their passport with them; passports were “kept” in the company that employed them - Linglong International Europe, doo.³⁰ These workers are hired, through subcontractors of the Linglong International Europe, doo to construct the tire factory in Zrenjanin, Serbia, and they had to pay 2000 – 4000 USD to recruitment agencies in Viet Nam in order to get hired in Serbia. Their work takes place in shifts lasting 9 hours, with one lunch break lasting one hour, 26 days a month, which is against the Labor Law standards in Serbia. The employer did not provide them personal protective equipment, and deducted the costs of this equipment from their salaries. Their contracts stipulate that they are not allowed to engage in trade union activities, and that in case of contract cancellation due to their liability, they have to pay the tickets back home on their own.³¹ Also, in cases they leave the employer, their relatives and/or friends are obliged to pay for their escape.³²
15. The camp where they were accommodated was not provided with heating, it had bunk beds in the overcrowded rooms, without sufficient ventilation and natural light. Workers also had only two toilets, with no safe and steady electricity plug and with no safe drinking water. In addition to that, there were only 2 water heaters (120 litres each), for more than 400 workers. Also, their accommodation did not have a dining room or any other facility for free time. The workers had to wash their clothes by hand, since there was no washing machines. Also, they were not getting their salaries regularly, and there was no access to healthcare or COVID-19 prevention measures.

³⁰ Interviews with the workers, 14 November 2021, information on file with the A 11 – Initiative for Economic and Social Rights and ASTRA.

³¹ Employment Contract with Vietnamese workers, online, available at: <https://pescanik.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/ugovor-o-radu.pdf>.

³² Commitment “Not to Escape”, signed by the workers, online, available at: <https://pescanik.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/izjava-da-nece-pobeci.pdf>.

³³ The letters were sent to the following institutions: Republic Public Prosecutor’s Office, Higher Public Prosecutor’s Office in Zrenjanin, Office for Coordination of Activities in Combating Human Trafficking, Police Department in Zrenjanin, Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs / Sector for Social Protection / Center for Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking, Labor Inspectorate, Labor Inspectorate in Zrenjanin, Ministry of Health – Department of Sanitary Inspection and the Ombudsman office.

³⁴ Audio recording of the attempted visit to the workers, A 11 – Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, 21 November 2021.

16. On 17 November, the abovementioned organisations have sent an official letter and the report on the situation of Vietnamese workers, potential victims of human trafficking for the purpose of labor exploitation and a request for the reaction of the competent authorities.³³ Shortly after that, the Emergency Management Sector of the Ministry of Interior issued an order declaring the workers' barracks as dangerous and not suitable accommodation, due to gas leaks. Because of that, majority of the workers were relocated to several other locations, while part of them remained living at the original facilities that had been declared dangerous. According to available information, this new accommodation is to some extent better than the one in which they were before. However, even in these locations, they are under constant surveillance by private security, and threatened by their employers.³⁴

17. It is important to note that different Government officials cited that this company (Linglong International Europe, doo) as one of the largest investors in the country, and even though the evidence of labor exploitation have been made public, there was strong pressure to portray them as irrelevant.³⁵ Finally, it was stated that since the start of the construction, the company was inspected 18 times by the inspections working under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs³⁶ and "more than 50 times" by inspections working under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure.³⁷ However, none of the reports from these inspections were made public, even after the access to information of public importance were submitted to relevant ministries.³⁸

³⁵ Balkan Insight, Documents Reveal Extent of Exploitation at Chinese Tire Site in Serbia, 29 November 2021, available at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2021/11/29/documents-reveal-extent-of-exploitation-at-chinese-tire-site-in-serbia>.

³⁶ Euronews, Ministarstvo: Radnici iz Vijetnama koji su angažovani na gradnji fabrike Linglong premešteni na drugu lokaciju, online, available at: <https://www.euronews.rs/srbija/politika/25578/ministarstvo-radnici-iz-vijetnama-koji-su-angazovani-na-gradnji-fabrike-linglong-premesteni-na-drugu-lokaciju/vest>.

³⁷ Ministry of Construction, Transportation and infrastructure, Momirović: Fabrika Linglong najkontrolisanije gradilište u Srbiji, izvršeno do sada pedeset inspekcijskih nadzora, online, available at: <https://www.mgsi.gov.rs/cir/aktuelnosti/momirovitsh-fabrika-linglong-najkontrolisanije-gradilishte-u-srbiji-izvrsheno-do-sada>.

³⁸ A 11 – Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, freedom of information requests submitted to the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs and Ministry of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure submitted on 25 November 2021 and 10 January 2022.

18. In December, the A 11 Initiative filed criminal charges against the responsible persons at legal entities related to the engagement and work of 400 Vietnamese workers, based on reasonable doubt that they committed a criminal offense, that is, violation of the right to strike and arbitrary deprivation of liberty. On 16 December 2021 the European Parliament adopted the Resolution on forced labour in the Linglong factory.³⁹ Social and any other protection to these workers, potential victims of human trafficking and labor exploitation is still not provided to them by the authorities, and they still work for the company, while at least 30 workers wishing to return home cannot do so, since the company does not allow them to leave.
19. The authorities' responses in this situation explicitly violated a series of provisions of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, such as: the right to just and favourable conditions of work; the right to form trade unions; the right to strike; the right to social security, including social insurance; the right to adequate standard of living; the right to be free from hunger; the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and demonstrated that there is a lack of capacities to deal with high-profile cases of labor exploitation.

Youth employment

20. There is a high unemployment rate among youth⁴⁰ in Serbia and youth employment is determined with a number of challenges – from unsecure jobs, to unpaid overtime work, low salaries, etc. With the aim to improve youth employment, the Government of Serbia introduced the “My First Salary” program, which provides individuals younger of 30 years with the opportunity to get hired and to gain skills and experiences necessary for their future employment on the job market.⁴¹ The program is implemented by the National Employment Service but lacks basic

³⁹ European Parliament, Resolution of 16 December 2021 on forced labor in the Linglong factory and environmental protests in Serbia, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0511_EN.html.

⁴⁰ Unemployment rate among youth, 15-24 years, is 23.1% in 3rd quarter of 2021. More information available at: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, <https://www.stat.gov.rs/sr-Latn/oblasti/trziste-rada/anketa-o-radnoj-snazi>.

⁴¹ National Employment Service, Public Call, online, available at: <https://mojapravaplata.gov.rs/Dokumentacija/JavniPoziv.pdf>.

⁴² For more information, please see: <https://fren.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Youth-situation-in-Serbia-Employment-skills-and-social-inclusion.pdf>.

safeguards for the protection of the right of work of young employees. For instance, the program envisages that young employees are remunerated from 20,000 - 24,000 RSD (170 – 203 EUR) for their work, which is significantly lower than the minimum wage in the country. Also, it is still unclear if individuals included in this program have full healthcare and social benefits, or only limited healthcare, as prescribed by the program.

21. Analysis and the statistics collected by CSOs and state institutions⁴² confirm that youth are particularly vulnerable group at the job market. Young women, and particularly young women from rural areas and women coming from national minorities are hard-to-employ population. Official data from the National Employment Service and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia for the period 2018 – 2021 demonstrate that the number of employed among young population decreased for 6%. Example of the City of Zrenjanin and the statistics of the National Employment Service branch in this city demonstrate that the majority of unemployed persons are without qualifications. One fourth of unemployed are beneficiaries of financial social assistance, and every sixth unemployed person belongs to Roma national minority.⁴³

ARTICLE 7 – JUST AND FAVORABLE CONDITIONS AT WORK

Minimum wage

22. Minimum wage in the Republic of Serbia is regulated by Articles 111 – 113 of the Labor Law,⁴⁴ and is determined on the basis of the minimum price of labor, time spent at work and taxes and contributions paid from salary. Minimum price of labor is determined by a decision of the Social and Economic Council of the Republic of Serbia, and in cases when Social and Economic Council fails to render a decision within 15 days from the day of commencement of bargaining, the decision on the amount of minimum price of labor is made by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. This is regularly the case, the minimum wage is not determined in the tripartite dialogue, but by the Government of the Republic of Serbia. Criteria for determination of the minimum price of labor are not clear enough, and they entail: existential and social needs of the employee and his family expressed

⁴³ Data and Analysis provided by ROZA - Association for Women`s Labor Rights.

⁴⁴ Official Gazette of the RS, Nos. 24/2005, 61/2005, 54/2009, 32/2013, 75/2014, 13/2017-Decision of the CC, 113/2017 and 95/2018 - authentic interpretation.

⁴⁵ Usually the value relevant in March or April is used as the basis for determination of the minimum price of labor in August and September, when tripartite dialogue is held.

through the value of the minimum consumer basket, movement of the employment rate in the labor market, growth of the rate of gross domestic product, consumer price trends, trends in productivity and movement of the average salary in the Republic.

23. It is pertinent to state that minimum wage does not reach a threshold for decent standard of living in Serbia. Minimum consumer basket is the most important statistical benchmark which in practice illustrates the amount of money necessary for the maintenance of life and work capacity of the members of one household. However, the value of minimum consumer basket used for determining the minimum price of labor, is not the value at the moment of bargaining, but the last value reported by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia.⁴⁵ The average minimum wage (based on the average number of working hours per month) of 35,012 RSD covers only 85.9% of the minimum consumer basket at the moment.

Table 2: Minimum wage in comparison to average salary in Serbia

YEAR	MINIMUM WAGE	AVERAGE SALARY	Proportion MW:AG
2017	22.620 РСД	47.888 РСД	47,24%
2018	24.882 РСД	49.6432 РСД	50,12%
2019	27.022 РСД	54.908 РСД	49,21%
2020 ⁴⁶	30.022 РСД	60.057 РСД	49,99%

ARTICLE 9 – SOCIAL SECURITY

24. Personal assistance service is crucially important to persons with disabilities since it is one of the support services for independent living, firstly introduced by the Law of Social Protection⁴⁷. The importance of this service for independent life outside of institutions is pointed out by the Strategy for the improvement of the position of persons with disabilities⁴⁸ and by the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ There is no data available for average salary for the whole year of 2021.

⁴⁷ Official Gazette of the RS, no. 24/2011.

⁴⁸ Official Gazette of the RS, no. 44/2020-176.

⁴⁹ Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Concluding observations on the initial report of Serbia, 2016.

25. However, there is evident lack of strategic deinstitutionalization policies in Serbia, and one of the indicators is the fact that personal assistance services are highly inaccessible to persons with disabilities. Based on the experiences of organizations working in this field, the majority of persons with disabilities in genuine need of personal assistance are being redirected to more available home care services that are cheaper, but that are not providing conditions for more independent life of persons with disabilities. Moreover, many of them are not provided with any kind of services. This is due to a series of reasons. Firstly, only 12% of local self-government units in Serbia are financing these services.⁵⁰ Total number of beneficiaries is thus very low – 284⁵¹ and unevenly distributed (according to latest available data in 2018 91% of them lived in urban areas).⁵² For comparison, the total number of persons with disabilities that are registered by social welfare centers is 539,452.⁵³ Secondly, criteria for qualifying for personal assistance are highly restrictive. This service is only for adults with disabilities with assessed I or II level of support, who are entitled to an increased allowance for care and assistance, have the ability to make independent decisions, are employed or actively involved in various citizens' associations, sports associations, political parties and others forms of social engagement, or they are included in a regular or individual educational program. This leaves the vast majority of persons in direct need out of scope of this service.

⁵⁰ The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Mapping of social protection and material support services under the jurisdiction of local self-government units in the Republic of Serbia, 2020, available at: http://www.cilsrbija.org/ebib/202112010903510.Mapiranje_usluga_socijalne_zastite_i_materijalne_podrske_u_nadleznosti_JLS_u_RS-2020_opt.pdf (Serbian only).

⁵¹ For more information, please see: <http://www.zavodsz.gov.rs/media/2163/punoletni-u-sistemu-socijalne-zastite-u-2020.pdf>.

⁵² The Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, Mapping of social protection and material support services under the jurisdiction of local self-government units in the Republic of Serbia.

⁵³ For more information, please see: <http://www.zavodsz.gov.rs/media/2163/punoletni-u-sistemu-socijalne-zastite-u-2020.pdf>.

ARTICLE 11 – RIGHT TO ADEQUATE HOUSING

Forced evictions and access to social housing

26. The adoption of the Law on Housing and Building Maintenance⁵⁴ improved the legal framework relevant for evictions and resettlements of informal settlements by introducing specific procedure for resettlement of informal settlements. However, the implementation of this piece of legislation is still lacking. For example, only two cases of implementation of the new provisions for resettlements were identified so far, one in the case of the eviction of Roma waste pickers living at Vinča landfill,⁵⁵ and other in the case of development-based eviction in the City of Smederevo. Coordination between different local and national authorities in resettlement procedures is still challenging, and in some cases leaves persons affected by the eviction homeless, or without sufficient support of the institutions for social protection. For example, Roma community of waste pickers living at the Vinča landfill in Belgrade were resettled in winter,⁵⁶ without prior consultations and without the compensation for damaged or destroyed property. In addition to that, out of 17 Roma families evicted from the location, only eight were provided with accommodation in unaffordable housing units in Belgrade. The rest of the families slept rough and with their relatives until the end of 2020, when they were provided with housing allowance by local self-governments where their residence is registered. Most of these families are still without adequate accommodation and without the support for livelihood restoration after the eviction.

27. In addition to that, Serbia lacks effective system of social housing, and the social housing sector is fragmented, unaffordable and insecure for the most vulnerable population. For example, in Belgrade, in the biggest complex of social housing, more than 60 families live without electricity supply because they cannot pay their utility bills, while the City of Belgrade initiated enforcement proceedings against more than 200 families, for the collection of their rent and other utility bills.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Official Gazette of the RS, Nos. 104/2016 and 9/2020.

⁵⁵ More information about this case could be found here: European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Belgrade Solid Waste PPP (Request #2), online, available at: <https://www.ebrd.com/work-with-us/projects/ipam/2021/01.html>.

⁵⁶ Resettlement took place on 28 December 2018.

⁵⁷ For more information, please see: A 11 – Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, More than 60 Families Are Without Electricity Supply, while the City Administration is Preparing for the Forced Evictions of the Socially Endangered, online, available at: <https://www.a11initiative.org/en/more-than-60-families-are-without-electricity-supply-while-the-city-administration-is-preparing-for-the-forced-evictions-of-the-socially-endangered/>.

Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing after her mission in 2015 recommended, among other things, to Serbia to: “put greater emphasis on the development of social housing, and ensure its availability for those in need”, and to “regulate and subsidize housing-related costs, including utilities and taxes for low-income individuals and households, in order to address affordability levels and to ensure that no one is made homeless by arrear”.⁵⁸ However, these recommendations were not implemented since 2016. Additionally, Serbia also failed to adopt the rights-based National Housing Strategy, more than four years after the legal deadline for its adoption.⁵⁹ In the meantime, there is no systemic approach for living conditions in more than 700 informal Roma settlements.⁶⁰ However, “considerable resources have been invested to address the housing needs of some population categories”.⁶¹ The Law on Special Conditions for the Implementation of the Housing Construction Project for Members of Security Forces prescribes special conditions under which members of the Ministry of Defense, the Serbian Armed Forces;⁶² the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Security Information Agency, and the Ministry of Justice - Directorate for the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions, and former members of the security forces who have acquired the pension right in one of these agencies can buy apartments at preferential rates. The amount of public spending for this housing program is considerably higher than the overall budget for social housing in Serbia, and the last information was that the Government earmarked 64 million EUR for its implementation.⁶³

⁵⁸ Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing as a component of the right to an adequate standard of living, and on the right to non-discrimination in this context on her mission to Serbia and Kosovo, 26 February 2016. UN Doc no. A/HRC/31/54/Add.2.

⁵⁹ Article 136, paragraph 2 of the Law on Housing and Building Maintenance.

⁶⁰ Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Unit of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the United Nations Human Rights Team, Mapping of Substandard Roma Settlements According to Risks and Access to Rights in the Republic Of Serbia with Particular Attention to the COVID-19 Epidemic, online, available at: <http://socijalnoukljucivanje.gov.rs/en/mapping-of-substandard-roma-settlements-according-to-risks-and-access-to-rights-in-the-republic-of-serbia-with-particular-attention-to-the-covid-19-epidemic-published/>.

⁶¹ A 11 – Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, Second-Class Rights, Social Rights in the Light of Austerity Measures, SERBIA, 2012 – 2020, pp. 35-36, online, available at: https://www.a11initiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Second-Class-Rights_Social-Rights-in-the-Light-of-Austerity-Measures-SERBIA-2012-%E2%80%93-2020.pdf

⁶² Official Gazette of the RS, Nos. 41/2018 and 54/2019.

⁶³ A 11 – Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, Second-Class Rights, Social Rights in the Light of Austerity Measures, SERBIA, 2012 – 2020, p. 36, online, available at: https://www.a11initiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Second-Class-Rights_Social-Rights-in-the-Light-of-Austerity-Measures-SERBIA-2012-%E2%80%93-2020.pdf.

Situation of persons experiencing homelessness

A . Lack of data

28. There is no reliable data on number of people experiencing homelessness in Serbia. National census conducted in 2011 for the first time noted “primary homeless people”, labeling them as the ones sleeping rough, living directly on the streets, in the parks, under the bridges, etc. Second group of homeless people that the census methodology recognized were “secondary homeless people” – persons living in emergency accommodation, such as sheds, barracks, trailers, wagons, basements, tents. The census registered total of 445 primary and 17842 secondary homeless people.⁶⁴ The majority of them were located in Belgrade. However, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia in its reports states that these statistics are not gathered in completely reliable manner, that many people experiencing homelessness were not reached, and that the numbers are not representing the real-life situation.⁶⁵
29. Since there is no reliable data, there is also no adequate policies addressing this issue. More precisely, there are no national, regional or local strategies for specifically targeting the complexity of homelessness, but only sporadic interventions on municipal/cities level, such as opening day centers during winter. As noted by Special Rapporteur on adequate housing - there is no statutory obligation for any public authority to act to address or to prevent homelessness.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2011 Census in the Republic of Serbia – People experiencing homelessness, 2014, available at: <http://publikacije.stat.gov.rs/G2014/Pdf/G20144011.pdf> (Serbian only).

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Report of the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing as a Component of the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living, and on the Right to Non-Discrimination in This Context, on her mission to Serbia and Kosovo, 2016, available at: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/831292>.

30. The national census is to be held in October 2022, and even though thus far there are no indications that the methodology will be modified to better address homelessness, this as an opportunity to intervene and make homeless people more visible as a step forward in incorporating this severe social issue in future public policies. By more rigorously applying European Typology of Homelessness (ETHOS) the complexity and scope of this severe social problem would be better recognized. Hence, this could help in drafting the policies which would tackle structural causes of homelessness in Serbia: increasing risk of poverty and social exclusion, housing market characteristics and lack of social housing, inadequate capacities of social welfare system.⁶⁷ Applying ETHOS was recommended in National Social Housing Strategy⁶⁸ in 2012, however no actions in this direction have been undertaken.

B. Access to personal documents

31. One of the most prevalent problems of homeless people in Serbia are systemic obstacles in obtaining personal documents. In 2011 Article 11 of the Law on Permanent and Temporary Residence⁶⁹ introduced the possibility for registration of residence at the address of social welfare center for persons who do not have home, that is persons without any legal proof of housing. However, even though it has been 10 years, in practice all the organizations submitting this report are still encountering numerous obstacles while assisting their beneficiaries in trying to register residence in accordance with these legal provisions.

32. This is primary due to uncoordinated, inconsistent and discriminatory practices of individual social welfare centers and police stations,⁷⁰ who are oftentimes arbitrarily deciding about persons right to register at the SWCs address. Social welfare centers are systematically lacking personnel and professional capacities to operate and one of the consequences is their unwillingness to “burden” themselves by registering persons without legal proof of housing at their addresses.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Čikić J, Rajačić A, Homelessness - theory, prevention, intervention, 2021, available at: <https://digitalna.ff.uns.ac.rs/sadrzaj/2021/978-86-6065-647-8> (Serbian only).

⁶⁸ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia no. 13/2012.

⁶⁹ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia no. 87/2011.

⁷⁰ For more information about access to residence registration, please see: Platform of Organizations for Cooperation with UN Human Rights Mechanisms, Alternative Report for the 71st Session of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Review of Serbia's third periodic, pp. 2-5.

As the grounds for refusing to do so they are citing rather inconvincible reasons – for instance that a homeless person has reported staying in an abandoned building, which the center estimates will collapse and that the person will therefore at one moment in future have to change the municipality in which he resides, thus leaving the jurisdiction of that particular social welfare center.

33. Registration of residence is a precondition for obtaining personal documents, and they are precondition for exercising a series of economic and social rights, such as the access to different kinds of social protection and social services (meals in soup kitchens, financial social assistance, accommodation at social protection institutions), the access to health system, the possibility of legal employment, etc. CSOs active in this field, report that the procedure for residence registration within the SWC lasts from 3 to more than 12 months – leaving homeless individuals without the support of the social welfare centers, and with no possibility to meet their basic needs.

C. Accommodation in social welfare institutions

34. Both Belgrade and Novi Sad, two biggest cities in Serbia, lack adequate and permanent accommodation capacities for people experiencing homelessness. Shelter for Adults and the Elderly is the only institution of this kind in Belgrade, providing temporary accommodation for persons in situation of homelessness for up to 6 months. The access to the Shelter has a series of obstacles, namely: 1. insufficient number of bed units in isolation department (obligatory to enter the Shelter since March 2020); 2. inadequate conditions in the isolation department (inability to use backyard or any kind of isolated open space, dehumanizing behavior of the staff, restrictions of hot water, lack of any kind of entertainment content, etc.); 3. complicated administrative procedures and criteria for entering the Shelter, which makes persons with impaired health and persons with mental and physical disabilities especially unable to do this without the assistance of CSOs; 4. inability of people without personal documents to qualify for the Shelter, and difficulties for

⁷¹ According to the latest report of the Institute for Social Protection only 1671 social protection professionals with permanent employment were working in all social welfare center across Serbia in 2020. Out of them, 1037 were in charge of managing beneficiaries' cases. At the same year, the report notes total of 727.087 beneficiaries of social welfare centers. Source: Republic Institute for Social Protection, Report on social welfare centers in 2020, July 2021, available at: <http://www.zavodsz.gov.rs/media/2159/izvestaj-o-radu-csr-2020.pdf> (Serbian only).

persons residing outside of Belgrade to be admitted, even though the vast majority of other local self-governments in Serbia does not have these kinds of social welfare institutions providing accommodation.

35. Due to the listed reasons, many homeless people are outside of the Shelter, even though according to the latest media statements⁷² of Secretariat for Social Protection representatives, only a half of bed units are occupied, out of total 124 bed units available in two facilities.
36. Since this lack of adequate and accessible accommodation is especially problematic during winter months, Secretariat for Social Protection of the City of Belgrade started establishing temporary day centers. Usually there are approximately two to three open day centers, but their working hours are very limited to just several hours per day. Moreover, the crucial accommodation service in Belgrade that is missing in the current social protection system are accessible night centers where homeless people can sleep, especially during winter.
37. On the other hand, City of Novi Sad has night centers/sleeping containers, but their capacity is only 21 bed units. Aside from that there is a Shelter for Adults and the Elderly, with 60 bed units, and day center open during the whole year, but with no accommodation options. All the listed institutions are unable to respond fully to the needs of people experiencing homelessness in Novi Sad. This has been particularly challenging during COVID-19 pandemic, since there is a need for isolation units that are not provided in night centers, that is sleeping containers. Moreover, day center in Novi Sad is not accessible to homeless people with physical disabilities, since there is no wheelchair ramp, nor adequate toilets and shower units.
38. One of the examples of violations of the right to adequate housing of people experiencing homelessness is Chinese Quarter, former industrial complex in the City of Novi Sad, currently being reconstructed within the project "Novi Sad – European Capital of Culture".⁷³

⁷² City Secretary for Social Welfare's public statement available at: <http://www.begrad.rs/lat/beoinfo/1787859-novi-objekat-za-smestaj-lica-bez-krova-na-vracaru/> (Serbian only).

⁷³ Detailed information about the project available at: <https://novisad2022.rs/en/what-is-ecoc/>.

Homeless people have found shelter in these facilities, and they have been living in them for years, but the City Administration for Construction Land and Investments, in charge of the reconstruction of Chinese Quarter refuses to provide information about the eviction of homeless individuals from there.

39. Since the support of public institution is inadequate in their scope and quality, majority of support networks for homeless people are built by CSOs. Even though this lack of support is also noted by the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, stating that shelters are not a widespread social service in Serbia and that day centers are predominantly provided by the civic sector,⁷⁴ the capacities are still very limited, and there were no cases of human rights-based approach towards this issue.
40. These are not only problems of Belgrade and Novi Sad. In PIN's research⁷⁵ covering the municipalities Sjenica, Priboj, Užice, Plandište, Ruma, Mionica, Lajkovac, Šid, Prijepolje, Arilje, Krupanj, Kosjerić, Loznica, Sremska Mitrovica, and Pećinci is noted that the primary challenge regarding homelessness in most municipalities remains access to temporary and permanent accommodation and access to documents.

D. Mental health and homelessness

41. According to the official Census data, 44% of primary homeless people have mental health issues.⁷⁶ Through the work of CSOs, it was documented that some of the most common psychological difficulties that people experiencing homelessness in Serbia face are: symptoms of depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder, sleeplessness and alcohol and drug dependence. In this context, the improvement of mental health is relevant both from the aspect of prevention and reduction of homelessness, as well as the improvement of the quality of life of people experiencing homelessness and exercising their right to a dignified life.

⁷⁴ Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, Management of human and social resources in the centers for social work in the Republic of Serbia, 16 July 2018, available at: https://www.minrzs.gov.rs/arhiva-internet-prezentacije-2019/files/upravljanje_ljudskim_i_socijalnim_resursima_u_centrima_za_socijalni_rad_u_republici_srbiji.pdf (Serbian only).

⁷⁵ Psychosocial Innovation Network, Report on mapping local services focused on mental health, 2022. (The report is in the process of preparation - data and additional information are available upon request).

⁷⁶ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2011 Census in the Republic of Serbia – People experiencing homelessness.

42. However, there are numerous indicators showing lack of proper mental health protection for people experiencing homelessness in Serbia: 1. lack of integrated policy regarding the issue of protection of mental health of people experiencing homelessness; 2. mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS) mainly being provided by the CSO sector, either on a voluntary bases or on a short-term project bases, thus the continuity and sustainability of MHPSS are at question; 3. no previous studies assessing and documenting: mental health difficulties of people experiencing homelessness in Serbia, risk factors leading to and out of the homelessness from the perspective of those with lived experience, nor effectiveness of MHPSS interventions for people experiencing homelessness in Serbia; 4. people with lived experience are not involved in the design process and implementation of the MHPSS programs.
43. Preliminary results of a study conducted in 2022 by NGO PIN⁷⁷ showed that social services for people experiencing homelessness in Serbia, including MHPSS, are neither recognized as a priority by the local municipalities, nor by the SWCs.
44. Also, it should be noted that even in the domain of harm reduction, Serbia fails to provide support to persons experiencing homelessness. According to official Census data, almost one third (27%) of primary homeless people have addiction issues.⁷⁸ In case they do not have personal documents they are unable to be admitted to public health care institutions, such as Special Hospital for Addiction Diseases. In some cases, homeless individuals encountering this problem are directed to rehabilitation centers run by different CSOs. Field work also showed that homeless people with mental disabilities are often not diagnosed, thus many of them are not in a position to exercise the social rights based on their health condition.

⁷⁷ Psychosocial Innovation Network (2022). Report on mapping local services focused on mental health. The municipalities included in this mapping were Sjenica, Priboj, Užice, Plandište, Ruma, Mionica, Lajkovac, Šid, Prijepolje, Arilje, Krupanj, Kosjerić, Loznica, Sremska Mitrovica, and Pećinci. (The report is in the process of preparation - data and additional information are available upon request).

⁷⁸ Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2011 Census in the Republic of Serbia – People experiencing homelessness.

45. MHPSS for people experiencing homelessness in Serbia is limited due to the number of reasons. First of all, there is insufficient number of MHPSS professionals in the healthcare system. In addition to that, even though the general legal framework for the provision of psychosocial support services exists within the state social protection system, the standards that would cater for official licensing of counselling and therapeutic services and their accessibility to the citizens in need of social protection, including people experiencing homelessness, have not been established yet. There is also insufficient achievement of the established goals defined by the National Program on the Protection of Mental Health in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2019-2026,⁷⁹ particularly aspects impacting protection of people experiencing homelessness: a) lack of programs focused on prevention and early interventions; b) lack of community-based centers for mental health and outreach MHPSS services; c) lack of beneficiaries' involvement in the work of decision-making bodies or decision-making processes; d) insufficient cooperation between health and welfare systems in Serbia; e) lack of intersectoral cooperation between the competent government and local self-government bodies in order to create comprehensive models of assistance and support; f) lack of efforts aimed at moving from a traditional medical-based disability approach to a human rights-based approach.

⁷⁹ Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia no. 84/2019.

ANNEX

ORGANISATIONS CONTRIBUTED TO THIS REPORT

A 11 - Initiative for Economic and Social Rights is a non-profit, non-partisan and non-governmental organization which promotes and protects the rights of individuals from vulnerable, marginalized and discriminated groups, with the focus on economic and social rights. A 11 monitors the implementation of public policies, national and international regulations and recommendations of UN Treaty and Charter-based bodies, and also documents, reports and litigates cases of human rights violation. A 11 – Initiative has ECOSOC Consultative status.

ADRA (the global humanitarian organization of the Christian Adventist Church) helps individuals and communities in more than 120 countries with its humanitarian and development programs, regardless of ethnic, political or religious affiliation. Through partnerships with local communities, organizations and governments, ADRA manages to change the quality of life of many through work in the following areas: disaster response, social justice, education, economic empowerment and prevention of gender-based violence.

Centre LIVING UPRIGHT was founded in 2002. It developed from the counselling centre, which was opened by the French organization Handicap International in September 2000. It provides personal assistance service and peer support, mediates for people's interests in the fields of education and employment, carries out research and co-publishes in the domain of independent living, equality in public speech, education, etc.

Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Vojvodina is a part of the Union of Independent Trade Unions of Serbia, as one of the two representative trade union headquarters in the Republic of Serbia. The Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of Vojvodina brings together around 100,000 members of the independent trade unions of Serbia, i.e. their representative offices operating in the Autonomous Province Vojvodina.

Civic organization 'Youth Center CK13' is a polyvalent social and cultural center aiming at strengthening political self-consciousness, self-organizing and social engagement of citizens, youth in particular, through organizing continuous multifaceted program of political, activist, educational, cultural, and artistic activities

designed towards personal and social emancipation. Youth Center CK13 has been working for 14 years in its local community and stands as one of the few remaining independent public spaces in Novi Sad.

Group B1 is an association of citizens founded with the aim of contributing to building a responsible civil society for living with dignity, empowering individuals. Group B1 conducts activities through education, research, information and empowerment, thus contributing to active participation and cooperation of citizens, and building and developing democratic culture, social justice, educational policies and practices, security, good governance, sustainable development and human rights.

Association Izlazak is a Christian charitable association that was founded to provide support in the prevention, resocialization and rehabilitation of people with addiction, and promotes protection of human health and healthy living. The association was registered in 2009 at the initiative of a group of recovered addicts who wanted to pass on the personal experience and help they received to those who were discriminated against and abandoned due to the specifics of this problem.

Organization Liceulice launched in 2010, operates on the principle of economic and social inclusion of members of marginalized groups. Liceulice apply the "hand up, not a handout" approach and they do not stop at the humanitarian aspect, they are already working to create conditions in which people from the margins of society itself will be able to generate revenue and achieve independence. The core activity is publishing the street magazine LICEULICE. Liceulice vendors are people experiencing poverty, exclusion and homelessness.

Niš Human Rights Committee is a non-profit, non-partisan and non-governmental organization established in 1999, with the focus on provision of free legal aid to citizens whose human rights have been violated. Niš Human Rights Committee implements its activities within two strategic programs: strengthening the rule of law and protection against discrimination.

PIN - Psychosocial Innovation Network is a non-governmental, non-political and non-profit organization, founded with the aim of achieving various goals in the field of psychological practice. Through its mission, PIN strives to establish and promote multisectoral, evidence based, comprehensive and efficient model of psychosocial support which engages beneficiaries, service providers, local communities and policy makers in creation of systemic and sustainable solutions for mental health

protection and improvement. PIN's main activities are divided into four programme areas: Psychological counselling and psychotherapy, Psychosocial support and preventive activities, Research, Advocacy work.

ROZA - Association for Women`s Labor Rights is non-profit organization which empowers women to prevent violations of their labor rights or to speak out when their labor rights are violated. ROZA's core activity is the Support Group, a mechanism through which women can share their stories with us and receive different types of help. They also actively participate in public discussions and events, disseminate stories about labor rights, and use tools such as documentary performance to make this field more approachable. The activists of ROZA were brought together by the fact that all of them have been or still are precarious workers who have experienced labor rights violations, as well as by the desire to actively contribute to better working conditions for women.