

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022

[WWW.HCABL.ORG](http://WWW.HCABL.ORG)

**ANNUAL**

**REPORT**

**2022**



## ***Introduction***

The year already traditionally begins with tensions on the occasion of celebrating January 9. Every year, this event increasingly affects the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, so at the beginning of the year we had several incidents in Bijeljina, Zvornik, Prijedor, that is, in places where there are larger returnee communities.

2022 was followed by a surprise war in Ukraine. After that, the attention of the international community returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Political tensions continued through topics such as the transfer of jurisdiction, the announcement of parallel institutions and laws at the RS level, and attempts to amend the Election Law of BiH, blacklists and imposition of laws by the High Representative.

The campaign for the General Elections started already in May, when 11 opposition parties at the FBiH level united around a common candidate for president.

The General Elections were held in October and everything remained as it was, except that the most thefts took place in these elections, and in some places the elections were repeated. The High Representative imposed the Election Law on Election Day itself. This only says that BiH does not have the capacity to ensure the legality of elections, as a basic institution of every normal democratic country.

However, the year did not end so badly, especially for us at hCa. In December, we awarded the Srđan Aleksić Regional Journalist Award for the first time through the Srđan Aleksić Days event in Banja Luka, where journalists and activists from the region gathered.

Probably the most important event in 2022 took place on December 15, when Bosnia and Herzegovina was officially granted candidate status for the European Union.

## ABOUT US

Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka (hCa) was registered on August 16<sup>th</sup>, 1996, as a local NGO in Republic of Srpska/Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since that time, hCa Banja Luka has been actively involved in promoting, strengthening and networking civil initiatives at local and regional level, and it has been working on reconciliation and empowerment of marginalized social groups for political activism.

**Our mission:** Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka is an organization that supports and encourages autonomy, equality and freedom for all citizens by initiating and supporting different democratic and peace initiatives and by including marginalized social groups in democratic processes.

Our vision: **A society of equal opportunities for all**

### **Priorities of activism of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka:**

- Empowerment of marginalized groups, especially women, youth and minority groups for political activities and improvement of their position in society;
- Influencing the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to improve legislation and public policy towards these groups;
- Increased representation and better presentation of women, youth and minorities in the media;
- Raising awareness of citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina on discrimination of marginalized groups and mechanisms to protect their rights;
- Strengthening cooperation with other organizations and institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also at international level;
- Convergence of educational programs, literature, knowledge and skills related to peace-building by developing civil society and human rights of BH citizens;
- Continuous training of the staff of Helsinki Citizens' Assembly and efforts to maintain sustainability of the organization.

In 2021 HCA Banja Luka has been conducting its activities in four program areas:

- Strengthening Civil Society and the Transformation of Public Authorities into Citizens' Service
- Advocating for Gender Equality
- Culture of Dialogue and Building Trust in the Society
- Strengthening Capacities of the Organization

**Educational programs** – HCA Banja Luka gathers trainers that for its own and other organizations' needs conduct training sessions in the following areas: strengthening the capacities of nongovernmental organizations (strategic planning, fundraising, campaigns, public relations, etc.), non-violent communication, conflict resolution, human rights and gender equality. In this way, HCA Banja Luka promotes its goals and policies to other social groups that are not directly covered by the projects, and contributes to its financial sustainability.

## **ACHIEVEMENTS**

or

### ***THE MOST SIGNIFICANT RESULTS OF HELSINKI CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY BANJA LUKA 1996 – 2022***

Since its establishment in 1996 to this date, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly implemented more than 60 projects at a local and regional level targeted at empowerment of various marginalized groups for more active engagement in public and political life. We would like to stress out our most significant achievements:

1. Organizing the first post-war youth gathering in BiH and establishing Youth Network of BiH which is still active with over 1000 members, youth organizations and individuals;
2. Establishing an Academy for Young Political Leaders, men and women (the Academy is nowadays in charge of “Perpetuum Mobile”, a Banjaluka-based NGO);
3. Supporting registration of Alliance of National Minorities of Republic of Srpska and successful advocating for the Law on the Rights of National Minorities in RS;
4. Initiating special shows on RTRS public broadcaster (we had initiated show called Bono Home which is not broadcasted anymore on RTRS while the show “Korijeni”, dedicated to national minorities issues, is still broadcasted once a month on Radio of Republic of Srpska);
5. Raising an issue and discussion about discriminatory item “Others” in the Constitution of BiH;
6. Advocating and supporting the establishment of Alliance of National Minorities as a special advisory body of National Assembly of Republic of Srpska;
7. Initiating and signing the Memorandum on cooperation between Banja Luka and Pula (Memorandum was signed on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011) with the aim of promoting multiculturalism, intercultural dialogue and improvement of trans-border cooperation between national minorities);
8. Youth campaign “Give Us Back our Spaces” in which we took an active participation and which resulted in allocating the space to youth organizations in 11 municipalities in BiH (2000);
9. In cooperation with City Administration of Banja Luka, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka set up a Bulletin of City of Banja Luka which is nowadays printed once a month.
10. Participation in advocating actions regarding the adoption of the Law on Gender Equality 2003;
11. Analysis of enforcement of the Law on Gender Equality from the aspect of court practice and initiation of changes and amendments to the Law on Gender Equality based on analysis in 2009 ( our most important amendment that was adopted and fitted into changes and amendments of the Law refers to obligatory of state bodies at all levels of authorities and bodies of local self-management to ensure the representation of 40% of less represented gender in management, decision-making and representation);
12. Participating in preparation of Gender Action Plan for BiH;
13. Coordination and creation of the Alternative Report on CEDAW Implementation and the state of women's human rights in BiH for the year 2010 (the report was presented to CEDAW Committee in Geneva in July 2013);
14. Initiating and creating (in cooperation with women's NGOs in BiH) the Platform of Women’s Priorities for constitutional changes with amendments to the BiH Constitution from gender perspective

- (2013). Amendments were sent to the Board of the House of Representation of Parliamentary Assembly of BiH for consideration;
15. Delivery of amendments to the RS Family Law with the aim of defining the category single “parent” in legal text in accordance with real situation on ground and needs of single parents; initiating the foundation of Alimony Fund in RS (changes and amendments to the Family Law have not been on agenda of parliament's procedure);
  16. Signing the Memorandum on Cooperating with RS Employment Bureau aimed to empower position of single mothers at market of labour (signed in June 2012);
  17. Participation in “Global Media Monitoring 2005 (GMMP)”; BiH was one of the 75 countries that took part in;
  18. As a member of BH Coalition of NGOs “Working and Succeeding Together” we worked on creating the Agreement on Cooperation between the Council of Ministers of BiH and NGO sector in BiH“, “Strategy of BiH NGO Sector Development“, “Code for BiH NGO Sector“ and “Standards of Service Quality between the Council of Ministers of BiH and NGO sector in BiH“.
  19. Establishing the Journalist Award “Srđan Aleksić” for professional and engaged reporting on marginalized groups in BiH (since 2011 we organized three awarding ceremonies and since September 2013 this Award is the “ownership” of Network for Peace Building of BiH);
  20. Establishing the Women's Political Academy for young women from political parties and civil society organizations (in the beginning of 2014 the second generation of the Academy's attendees was enrolled);
  21. Initiating and establishing the Women's Alternative Government of BiH as an informal body on political scene of BiH (the Government was officially promoted in autumn 2012);
  22. Nominating Slađana Ujić, a member of the BH Women's Alternative Government and president of the SNOP association, for “Award for Women's Creativity in Rural Life“ (Slađana Ujić is the first woman from BiH who received this important award and recognition);
  23. Networking and strengthening capacities of at the least 100 civil society organizations in BiH through education and small grants allocation;
  24. Selection to perform the function of Network for Building Peace Secretariat;
  25. We were the Coordinating Organization of the Initiative “Women Citizens for Constitutional Reform” 2014-2018 which gathers 36 organizations and individuals
  26. As our achievements we would also like to mention many researches and analysis we have conducted resulting in 35 publications available at our web site. According to available server data, the greatest number of visits refers to section Publications and downloading available publications.
  27. Owning a library with over 2000 books in fields of women's human rights, violence/non-violence, philosophy, political sciences, LGBT, human rights, which all can be borrowed and served as resources for analysis and writing scientific papers in humanities.
  28. Through informal coalition of NGOs, we supported the preparation and writing of Shadow Report on BiH Progress for 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.
  29. Established a web platform [www.ukljucci.in](http://www.ukljucci.in) dedicated to persons with disabilities which was later redesigned into <https://ravnopravnorazliciti.org/>.

30. Established a web site <http://ukljuciseu.org/> regarding process of EU integration from the perspective of gender.
31. The Srđan Aleksić Regional Journalism Award has been launched
32. The Initiative for Humans Rights House in Banjaluka has been initiated

## **Program Area:**

### **Strengthening Civil Society and the Transformation of Public Authorities into Citizens' Service**

*The objectives of this program area are building civil society and strengthening democracy through raising public awareness about democratic principles and processes, encouraging citizens to run various initiatives and participate in decision making at all levels of government. Through various activities under this program area we strive to establish better cooperation between citizens and government institutions.*

*Within the program area in 2022, we worked on projects: "Support to Civic Activism", "Profiling of Journalists for Reporting on Environmental Protection Topics", "Strengthening of Legal Aid Providers to Fight against Gender-Based Discrimination in the Field of Labour in BiH", " Pay Your Workers - Respect Labour Rights" and the creation of an online training program on fundraising.*

## **SUPPORT TO CIVIC ACTIVISM**

### **The Initiative for establishing Humans Rights House Banjaluka**

During the year, we intensified activities to strengthen the Human Rights House in Banja Luka. In addition to Strategic Planning, a core group with five organizations was established, we held a series of meetings with the international Human Rights Houses Network on admission to membership and support regarding structural issues within our initiative. We also had a series of meetings with the City of Banjaluka, which concerned support and finding space for the House.

### **Strategic Planning for Human Rights House Banjaluka**

On March 24 and 25, Strategic Planning for the future Human Rights House was held in Banja Luka, attended by 10 organizations from Banja Luka that supported this initiative. At the two-day meeting, we determined the principles and values of action, mission and vision, and strategic directions of action. We talked about the context, did a swot analysis, did an actor analysis.

### **Profiling of Journalists for Reporting on Environmental Protection Topics**

As part of the project "Profiling of Journalists for Reporting on Environmental Protection Topics", supported by Journalismfund.eu, we worked and socialized with a great journalist teams from Banjaluka, Sarajevo, Mostar and Šipovo. The project was implemented in the second half of 2022 through two multi-day workshops, one was held in the Visitor Center in Pecka, and the other in Banja Luka, and through the recording of video clips in which journalists and activists talk about why is important role of the media in protecting life environment. We later combined the clips into one short informative and educational video that had more than 20,000 views.





At the workshops we organized, various topics were discussed, from waste disposal, river protection, energy efficiency, to the mining of heavy metals and sustainable urban mobility, which, among other things, includes reducing the use of motor vehicles, improving the public transport system and giving priority to alternative and ecological justified means of transportation, which for Bosnia and Herzegovina is still an imaginary noun.

For example, the total capacity of public parking lots for cars in Banja Luka is 4,826 spaces, compared to 279 spaces for functional bicycle parking. The length of bicycle paths in Banja Luka is 31 km, of which only 15 km are usable. For the sake of comparison, the length of bicycle paths in Novi Sad is 100 km, in Ljubljana 300 km, and in Vienna even 1400 km. These are just some of the data presented to journalists at the workshop in Banja Luka by Dragan Kabić, coordinator of the Transport program at CzzS.

Zoran Poljašević, an environmental protection engineer, directed us to current attempts to exploit nickel and cobalt on Mount Ozren and the town of Jezero. He explained that the processing of heavy metals is extremely dangerous and can permanently destroy habitats, i.e. nature. Although geological research on Ozren has been stopped, Poljašević suspects that it is only temporary, because the demand for nickel and other heavy metals is huge, as this metal is used to produce batteries for electric cars, which production and use in Europe is constantly increasing.

The project was jointly implemented by the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly and the Center for Environment.

You can watch the short video "The Importance and Role of the Media in Environmental Protection" at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jtt6CljtDDI>

## **CCC CLEAN CLOTHES CAMPAIGN PAY YOUR WORKERS – RESPECT LABOUR RIGHTS**

In January 2022 hCa became part of the regional coalition BiH - HR within the Clean Clothes Campaign, an international organization that fights for the rights of workers in the textile industry, as well as a partner organization in the implementation of the project called "PayYourWorkers - Respect Labour

Rights" (PYW-RLR) which main goal is to strengthen the capacity of unions and document violations of workers' rights, advocate the goals of the PYW-RLR campaign, negotiate, develop a strong international coalition, secure unpaid wages and severance pay for textile workers and create public pressure on brands to sign an agreement on securing wages, severance pay and basic labor rights. The project "PayYourWorkers - Respect Labor Rights" is implemented by the New Union (HR), as the project leader in cooperation with the organizations RIS (HR), Zora (BiH) and the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly BL (BiH), and the project lasts until December 31, 2023.

### **The activities implemented within this project during 2022 are:**

Throughout the year, an online campaign was carried out on hCa's Facebook page, which goal was to call on global brands such as Adidas, Nike and OLYMP to pay off their debts to workers around the world, improve working conditions and sign collective agreements that would protect workers' rights.



On September 22, 2022 representatives of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly held a **meeting** with Danko Ružić, the Vice President of the **Trade Union of RS for Economic Branches**. At the meeting were discussed current problems and the position of workers, with a special focus on the textile industry. Also, the terms of the work and manner of union organization in factories from Republic of Srpska produced for the brand Adidas were discussed.



Protests in front of Adidas stores, July 2022, Zagreb

Also, the representatives of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka participated in the **Zagreb Forum 2022** - a global conference called Living Wage is Possible! which took place from 4 to 7 July 2022, which gathered more than a hundred participants from all over the world. Within this conference were held the protests in front of Adidas store in the center of Zagreb called ADIDAS PAY YOUR WORKERS, as well as the press conference called 'Support Workers Who Sew Your Clothes' and thus were supported the workers of the Orjava factory which OLYMP owes 450,000 euros severance pay. You can see more about these activities in the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ucgk-po8rng>

As part of the European Advocacy and Lobbying Coalition (ELAC), HCA has taken part in several online meetings of the coalition where guidelines are agreed for further advocacy for the amendments to EU legislation on prohibition of forced labor as well as legislation that determine the rules on the obligations of large companies in terms of real and potential negative impacts on human rights and ecology in relation to their own business, the business of their branches and the business of their business partners (EU Due Diligence Directive).

## **Strengthening of Legal Aid Providers to Fight against Gender-Based Discrimination in the Field of Labour in BiH**

The project under title *“Strengthening of Legal Aid Providers to Fight against Gender-Based Discrimination in the Field of Labour in BiH”* is implemented with financial support of the Embassy of the United States in BiH.

The project aims to increase the capacities of institutional and non-institutional providers in resolving cases that have gender-based discrimination (GBD) in the field of labour and employment, and at the end of 2022, the first (of three planned) specialized training for providers for free legal aid providers in the field of labor rights and gender-based discrimination was implemented. The plan and program of training implementation was developed by experienced lawyers Dejan Lučka, from the Banja Luka Center for Human Rights and Predrag Raosavljević, from the Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman of BiH.



The first specialized training held on Trebević, Sarajevo, December 8-9, 2022

Also, as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, the #redbision campaign was implemented to raise the awareness of the workers on GBD as well as getting acquainted with legal aid providers they can turn to; and meetings were held to network relevant actors and free legal aid providers.



Billboard campaign for #radbeznasilja

## Program area:

### Culture of Dialogue and Building Trust in the Society

*Since its establishment, HCA Banja Luka has been working on reconciliation through active involvement in the promotion of trust and strengthening and connecting peace initiatives at the local and regional level. The goal of this program area is to work on building peace and a culture of dialogue within and between communities in BiH. Special focus is on young people, women, marginalized groups and the media, through involvement in trainings, peace camps, conferences and other events, in order to empower them to initiate social change and create lasting peace.*

*Within this program area, in 2022, we implemented activities within the project "**PRO Future II**", training for the staff of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH, and organized **Srđan Aleksić Days**.*

### Srđan Aleksić Days and announcing regional journalist award

After 10 years of the continuous announcing of the Journalist Award Srđan Aleksić in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly with its regional partners in Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, announced a Competition for the Regional Journalist Award Srđan Aleksić, which is awarded to journalists in the region in the categories: "**For courage**" and "**For Community Contribution**" and "**For the media**". At the first regional competition, 83 nominations for 52 journalists and 13 media were received. And the five-member jury decided to get the awards: Tamara Skrozza from Serbia, in the category "For Courage", Viktor Ivančić from Croatia in the category "For Community Contribution" and the portal Krik from Serbia in the category "For Media".

The official ceremony of the announcing of the Regional Award Srđan Aleksić was organized on December 10 in Banja Luka, through an event called "**Srđan Aleksić Days**".

The event gathered journalists and activists from the region, the winners of the award and members of the jury, the experts in the field of media. Through the Srđan Aleksić Days, which took place during the 9th and 10th of December, we organized a number of events, where a few hundred participants were attended.

Srđan Aleksić Days were opened with announcing the **Peace Award "Goran Bubalo"**, which is awarded to peacekeepers and activists.

Two book promotions were organized: "**Rivers Filled with Stories**" by Vanja Lazić and Jasmine Čaušević, and "**New End**" by Đurđica Čilić.

A **Living Library** was organized for students of the Faculty of Philosophy and citizens.



Living Library, Srđan Aleksić Days, Banjaluka, December 2022

During the regional conference, we held four interesting panels, entitled: **"Who Creates Our Attitudes and Values?"** - The impact of new media and new information and communication technologies on information awareness, creation of attitudes and value systems", **"How to Recognize a Lie? - Media literacy, fight against hate speech, fake news and fake portals"**, **"Sexist Speech in Public Space"** and **"Autonomy - freedom means responsibility"**.



Regional conference, Banjaluka-December 2022

Srđan Aleksić Days ended with the ceremonial awarding of the first regional awards. The organizers and award winners spoke at the ceremony. About 70 officials gathered at the ceremony in the Jewish Cultural Center.



Formal award ceremony, Banja Luka, December 2022

## **PRO-FUTURE – Reconciliation, Understanding, Responsibility for the Future**

PRO-Future (Trust, Understanding, Responsibility for the Future) is a USAID project of building peace and trust among citizens of all ethnic and religious groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Activities are implemented in over 70 municipalities/cities in BiH, and the project is continuously working with youth, NGOs, women's associations, religious communities and leaders, political actors, media and various levels of government institutions, which will jointly contribute to better understanding of citizens and the people of BiH.

During 2022, HCA BL, as part of the project, organized a total of 12 Living Libraries. Of these, 8 sessions were organized online for 34 schools and one faculty, in which about 550 students from 16 different cities participated.

We also did four live Live Libraries - two sessions for students of the Faculty of Philosophy in Banja Luka, and for 6 high schools in Sarajevo, where we were hosted by the First Gymnasium and in East Sarajevo, where we organized a Live Library for students of high school "June 28 ". There were about 160 participants in these sessions.

The Living Library aims to reduce prejudice against victims from other nations and to develop dialogue, tolerance and empathy. This is a relatively new methodology (since 2001) for the fight against prejudice, xenophobia, hatred and is the official methodology of the Council of Europe. Our organization has a license to organize Living Libraries and in the past 6 years we have done over 70 Living Libraries with about 3000 participants, mostly high school students and university students.



Living Library, Sarajevo, November 2022

### **A Living Library for the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council**

During the month of December, we organized a special Living Library for the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council (HJPC), as one of the trainings for the staff of the Department for Improving the Efficiency and Quality of Work in the Courts. HJPC representatives had the opportunity to talk with a blind person who was a victim of domestic violence, a person with a disability, a member of the Roma national minority, a member of LGBTIQ+, a victim of sexual harassment and a victim of peer violence.



Living Library HJPC, Vlašić, December 2022



## Program area:

### Advocacy for Gender Equality

*The overall goal of the program area is to reduce all forms of gender discrimination and create an environment in which women and men have equal opportunities. We implement it through networking and support for initiatives related to gender issues, empowerment of women who are currently the largest marginalized group for participation in public and political life, education of women and men on gender equality issues, training for women in developing various skills, campaigns, research and public policy analysis.*

*Within the program area in 2022 we have been working on the projects: “Engendering Constitutional Reform IV”, “Women’s Human Rights in BiH and EU Integrations IV”, “Improving Women’s Labour Rights”, “Academy for Women”, “For the Life of Women” and “Gender Equality Takes Two, by Selma Selman!”. We also continued cooperation on the partner project “Peace with Women’s Face”.*

### ENGENDERING CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

During 2022, the Initiative Women Citizens for Constitutional Reform actively continued its work on spreading the idea of the importance of engendering the Constitution of BiH, focusing on increasing the visibility of the Platform of Women's Priorities with Amendments to the Constitution from a Gender Perspective. All activities were aimed at citizens of BiH, but also representatives of domestic and international institutions and organizations, to whom we pointed out the importance of constitutional changes from a gender perspective at numerous meetings.

### Activities we implemented in 2022:

In accordance with the Communication Strategy and Action Plan of the Initiative 2021-2022, **the working groups of the Initiative** implemented 25 activities during 2022, namely: Working Group for Advocacy and Lobbying implemented 7 activities, Working Group for Media Presentation 6 activities, and Working Group for Public Presentation of 12 activities. Through presentations at faculties (Eastern Sarajevo and Sarajevo), round tables, street actions, meetings with initiatives dealing with constitutional issues, the presentation of research, the Initiative promoted its work and the priorities it stands for.

In cooperation with the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH, three **Online Master Class** modules were implemented "**Engendering the Constitution in the Light of International and EU Obligations**", where 24 representatives of political parties, students and leaders of civil society organizations had the opportunity to listen to lectures by 15 lecturers who are eminent professors of law, legal experts, prominent domestic and international activists, representatives of relevant bodies (Directorate for European Integration, Agency for Gender Equality, Commission for Achieving Gender Equality HRPABiH), international organizations for protection of human rights and the appellant before the European Court of Human Rights. Based on the results of the PRE and POST tests that were conducted on each module, the knowledge of the participants regarding the topics of the module was significantly improved. The Online Master Class received positive feedback from numerous participants and lecturers, of which we mention only a few:

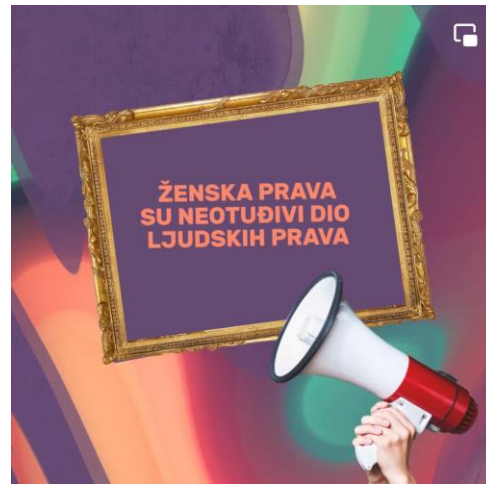
*"Thank you for the invitation to participate and the excellent organization and choice of topics. I really enjoyed today, especially since all these are very important issues for the future of BiH", Dejan Lučka, legal expert, lecturer at the Online Master Class*

*"Thank you all immensely! I really learned a lot of useful information and things I did not know, and you motivated me as a student to passionately and decisively fight for a better future and gender equality!", Layla Jusko, law student, participant of the Online Master Class*

Published and promoted research **"What Do Citizens Think about the Constitution of BiH?"** in which 1,931 people participated who had the opportunity to answer questions about the Constitution of BiH and express their opinion on constitutional issues by filling out an online questionnaire. The research was presented online via the Zoom platform, and this event had more than 2,200 views. We also promoted the results of the research through graphics/posts published on the Initiative's Facebook page and delivered to the addresses of all 57 representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH in order to acquaint them with the opinions and attitudes of the citizens of BiH on constitutional issues, among other things 91.2% of respondents believe that the politicians' negotiations on changing the Constitution serve to maintain political instability in the country, 41.2% believe that the current Constitution completely hinders and slows the progress of BiH, and 57.1% of people believe that the current Constitution should be changed or supplemented. In this way, we wanted to point out to parliamentarians the fact that citizens have an interest in changing the Constitution and that this issue should not be viewed only through the prism of defending nationalistic interests, but should include questions and solutions that come from citizens interested in participating in the process of changing the constitution - 72% of respondents believe that citizens should have the possibility that individuals and groups can initiate an initiative to change the Constitution.



With the online campaign **"What Is the Gender of the Constitution?"** a total of 30 contents were created for the Facebook page, the goal of which was to introduce the general public with the work and priorities of the Initiative, how the lack of a gender component in the Constitution of BiH affects the lives of citizens and why it is important that the Constitution of BiH be engendered. As part of the campaign, a short video about the Initiative and gender priorities was recorded, and the campaign also received support from BH influencers, actors, singers, TV personalities who promoted gender equality and priorities of the Initiative through videos. The total reach of the campaign that lasted one month (July-August) was more than 500,000.



The importance of introducing gender-responsive language in the Constitution and pointing out the problem brought to citizens by the lack of health, social and family protection in the Constitution of BiH were the subject of two **animated video contents** that had a total of 37,000 views and a reach of more than 400,000. The animated video contents were one of the ways to get young people interested in constitutional issues, and according to Facebook statistics, we can say that we succeeded in that.

**A meeting was held with the representative of the Gender Center of the Federation of BiH**, where the proposal for amendments to the Constitution of the Federation of BiH (FBiH), which was initiated by the Gender Center of FBiH, was discussed, and many of the proposals contained in the [Platform of Women's Priorities Initiatives with Amendments to the Constitution from a Gender Perspective](#) are largely "embedded" in the proposal to change the Constitution of FBiH proposed by the Gender Center of FBiH.

Established **cooperation with two initiatives** advocating for the change of the Constitution of BiH - the Initiative had the opportunity to officially meet with the initiator of the Youth Constituent Assembly/Youth Initiative to Change the Constitution, Enna Zone Đonlić, who gathers 15 young people from BiH who wrote amendments to the Constitution of BiH and from the perspective of young people offered new solutions for the organization of the state. Among other demands, this initiative advocates the introduction of gender-responsive language and affirmative measures in the Constitution, as well as gender equality as a constitutional category. Also, another initiative originating from the citizens is the [Citizens' Assembly](#), a project of the EU Delegation to BiH, which, through the random selection of 57 citizens of BiH who discussed constitutional solutions during a moderated process by experts, as a result received the Recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly for Changing the Constitution of BiH which were presented in the Parliamentary Assembly. With Senda Hadžić, one of the more active members of the Citizens' Assembly, we exchanged experiences and discussed the possibilities of future cooperation.



Meeting of members of the Initiative with Enna Zone Đonlić, representative of the Youth Initiative to Change the Constitution, Sarajevo, May 2022.

**Two meetings of the Coordination Committee** (online) were held, which were extremely productive and where the members of the Coordination Committee made proposals for the implementation of the Initiative's activities, evaluated the work done so far and what should be improved. Besides the official meetings, the Coordinating Organization was in regular communication with the members of the Coordination Committee regarding various issues concerning the work of the Initiative.

And during 2022, we pointed out the lack of a gender component in the Constitution of BiH by providing input for the EU Report on the Progress of BiH, the National Implementation Plan of GAP (CLIP) and the Alternative Report on BiH's Application for EU Membership in 2022.

[The Initiative's blog](#) is still the only one in BiH that deals with constitutional topics, and in 2022 a total of 59 different contents (texts, interviews, analysis) were published. [The Initiative's Facebook page](#) had a reach of over 2 million, and a total of 102 posts were published.

## **WOMEN'S HUMAN RIGHTS AND EU INTEGRATIONS**

The main goal of the project "Women's Human Rights and EU Integrations IV" is to integrate women's rights and gender equality in the process of Bosnia and Herzegovina's accession to the European Union. The project is funded by the Swedish Foundation Kvinna Till Kvinna.

During 2022, numerous activities were implemented, and these are some of them: hCa representatives participated in more than 30 consultative meetings, mainly with representatives of the EU and international institutions and organizations, where we presented the situation, needs and priorities of women in BiH, as well as the situation related to political crises and the conditions in which non-governmental organizations operate. Through these meetings, more than 45 representatives of the EU and the international community were directly informed about the situation on the ground.



In addition to this, during the reporting period, HCA sent written contributions/comments to 14 different EU, UN and local and political documents. Some of the comments have been incorporated to a certain extent in documents such as, for example, the Report of the European Commission on BiH (*BiH Country Report*). For the first time, the report mentions obstetric violence (violence against women that occurs before, during and after childbirth) and recommends a ban on this type of violence. That was literally our recommendation in the written submission that we submitted as a proposal for this report, which also contained our recommendation calling for the recognition of paternity leave, in addition to maternity and parental leave.

The preparation of a new alternative CEDAW report is underway and brings together numerous organizations and activists in joint work to present the state of women's rights in BiH on the ground. Great cooperation with universities throughout BiH resulted in further capacity building for students to understand and monitor gender equality in BiH. During 2022, an additional four student papers/analyses were published with a focus on the status of women in BiH in the process of European Integration, and three presentations were organized: one in Banja Luka and two in Sarajevo. Students covered a number of topics related to gender equality and EU accession in their analyses and presentations. Through Facebook, those analyses reached over 6,200 people.



Work on integrating the gender perspective into green policies continued.

For the participants of the Urban Mobility Summer School, organized by the Center for Environment, on July 21 in Banja Luka, we held a workshop on "Gender and Urban Mobility", where we drew the participants' attention to the fact that transport is not gender neutral, and that various research conducted in Europe and the world show that women and men have different mobility needs and patterns. Also, in order to check the "travel" habits of women and men in Banja Luka, we organized a pilot count of road users on the City Bridge near Kastel. The 15-minute count included drivers of bicycles, cars and small delivery vehicles and showed that men were the dominant road users.

On the initiative of activists from Tuzla, the eco-feminist platform EkoFem was formed, in which HCA also participates. So far, the platform gathers more than 20 CSOs and was officially formed in the fall of 2022 in Tuzla, during a conference organized by "Freedom Front".

Additionally, the informal ecofeminist group was strengthened and had three meetings in 2022. The group currently has 9 female activists who are willing and motivated to exchange information and cooperate.

HCA also continued to include a gender perspective in the field of crisis management. The activities are based on the research "Gender Analysis of the Response to the Crisis in BiH" conducted in 2021. In the first half of 2022, hCa distributed research to various addresses with the intention of developing further cooperation with institutions such as Civil Protection at entity and cantonal levels, as well as important organizations dealing with crises such as the Red Cross. In March, the first meeting was held with the National Society of the Red Cross of BiH, which is very willing to learn more about the gender perspective in a crisis situation. Later, in November and December, two additional meetings were held with the Cantonal Civil Protection of Una-Sana Canton and Tuzla Canton. The conclusions of all the meetings held so far are that the organizations of Civil Protection or the Red Cross do not have gender-processed data, they do not have any specific measures or activities that help in evaluating the situation from a gender point of view, and they all expressed their will for additional educational workshops.

The Gender Barometer 2022 was published as an advocacy tool created for the purpose of efficient and reasoned monitoring of the extent to which the key political parties in BiH are committed to the advancement of the principle of gender equality in BiH. The results of the second Barometer show that the gender sensitivity of political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2022 remained unchanged compared to 2021. "Our side" won the most points, followed by SDP BiH, SNSD and SDS. Compared to last year, the work of Naša stranka and SDP BiH, as well as SDS, improved, while the engagement of SNSD is somewhat weaker. What is worrying is the continuation of weak cooperation and interest of political parties in gender issues, as well as the low response rate to the questions from the Barometer. This clearly shows that gender equality issues are being marginalized and are not part of the agenda of key political parties in BiH, with a few exceptions.

The results of the Barometer were already used during the preparation of important presentations for the advocacy week in Brussels, as well as for other public advocacy meetings during the fall and winter of 2022.

The year 2022 was marked in HCA as the year in which the number of advocacy meetings increased tremendously, while the number of EU officials with whom we negotiated - doubled compared to previous years of project implementation.

## Strengthening civil society organizations in the fight against discrimination and improving women's labor rights

As part of the regional project "Strengthening Civil Society Organizations in the Fight against Discrimination and Improving Women's Labor Rights", the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka conducted a second survey on the presence of gender-based discrimination in the labor market and officially presented the results of the report "Gender-Based Discrimination in the Field of Labour in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2020" on March 7, 2022 in Sarajevo. The research includes information on deficiencies in the relevant legal framework, the prevalence and nature of work-based and work-related discrimination, and data on how informed and ready people are to file claims if they perceive discrimination, how institutions have so far treated such cases, as well as recommendations for each relevant actor. This topic was discussed on the panel by Svjetlana Ramić Marković, author of the research, Branislava Crnčević, Agency for Gender Equality of BiH, Jasminka Džumhur, Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Darko Pandurević, Sarajevo Open Center, Mersiha Beširović, Trade and Service Union BiH and Gentiana Murati Kapo, Kosovo Women's Network (coordinator of the regional project).



Presentation of research results, Sarajevo, March 7, 2022

The same research was presented to the audience in Banja Luka, as part of the month dedicated to women "Women's Life" and a panel discussion on the topic "Labour Rights and Discrimination in the Field of Labour". The presented research was attended by Gorica Ivić in front of the Foundation United Women, who spoke on this occasion about the presence of sexual harassment in a public place; Predrag Raosavljević from the Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman spoke about the role of the Ombudsman in better protection of women's labor rights, and Ante Jurić-Marjanović about the importance of introducing a decent wage, i.e. a living wage, as a basic human right, bearing in mind that citizens in BiH receive only 27% of the calculated dignified salary, which allows them to cover only the most basic living expenses.

Also, in Brussels, on May 20, the results of the second regional survey **Gender-Based Discrimination in the Field of Labour in the Western Balkans** were presented within the framework of the regional Coalition for the Suppression of Gender-Based Discrimination in the Field of Labour in the Western

Balkans (WB). The research was conducted in six WB countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo and Serbia).



Presentation of the results of the regional report in Brussels, May 20, 2022

The research was conducted within the framework of the regional project "Strengthening Civil Society Organizations in the Fight against Discrimination and Improving Women's Labor Rights", supported by the European Union (EU) and the Swedish Development and Cooperation Agency (Sida).

Within the project "Gender-Based Discrimination and Improvement of Women's Labor Rights", other activities were implemented: advocacy based on the recommendations from the report "Gender-Based Discrimination and Work in the Countries of the Western Balkans", second edition; online campaign against gender discrimination at work, animating the media to engage more on these issues; as well as other activities related to improving the position of women on the labor market and raising awareness about the existence of gender-based discrimination.

As part of advocacy activities and as part of the Women's Advocacy Group of Activists, the HCA representative took part in a meeting with the Ambassador of the EU Delegation to BiH, Johann Sattler, and the staff of the delegation, in order to present the recommendations for the next annual report of the European Commission. On that occasion, the importance of women's participation in the labor market and the main references related to economic and social rights were highlighted, such as the establishment of a regular system of collecting detailed statistical data classified by gender and the harmonization of laws with the EU directive on balancing private and business life.





Meeting of the Women's Advocacy Group with Ambassador Sattler,  
September 5, 2022

A meeting was also held with the representative of the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH, Branislava Crnčević, and joint advocacy activities were agreed upon in connection with the harmonization of domestic legislation with the EU Directive on Work-Life Balance (2019/1158).

In November 2022, in cooperation with the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees of BiH and the Agency for Gender Equality of BiH, a joint activity entitled "The Role of Men in Achieving Gender Equality" was organized in order to mark International Men's Day. Introductory remarks were made by Ingrid Macdonald, resident coordinator of the UN in Bosnia and Herzegovina, OSCE ambassador Mr. Brian Aggeler; Stephen Kinloch Pichat, acting resident representative of UNDP in BiH, as well as the second secretary of the Embassy of Sweden in BiH, Mrs. Lisa Curman, and the HCA activist presented the EU Directive on the balance of work and private life of parents and care providers.



Celebrating Men's Day in the Parliamentary Assembly of BiH,  
November 18, 2022

On November 22, HCA responded to the invitation of the non-governmental organization Perpetuum Mobile - Institute for Youth and Community Development, and in cooperation with the Faculty of Political Sciences in Banja Luka to contribute to the celebration of Orange Day. We took the opportunity to discuss gender discrimination: from education to the labor market.

At the invitation of the Foundation United Women, the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly held several additional presentations on the Guidelines for the Prevention of Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment to students and staff of the University of Banja Luka on October 28 at the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Banja Luka; November 4 at the Faculty of Law; November 5 at the Faculty of Philosophy in Banja Luka and on November 15 at the Academy of Arts in Banja Luka.



Talking about sexual and gender-based harassment with students  
Academy of Arts in Banja Luka

At the beginning of December, as part of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign, female activists of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly responded to the invitation of the Student Organization of the Faculty of Law of the University of Banja Luka and held a workshop on the topic "Destroying Stereotypes about the Role of Women in Our Society".

## **GENDER EQUALITY TAKES TWO, BY SELMA SELMAN**

In 2022, as part of **the online campaign #AštoNeBiMogla?** and the project "Gender Equality Takes Two, by Selma Selman", **six workshops were held in six countries of the Western Balkans**. The project aimed to encourage and motivate children and young people to discuss topics of gender diversity, in order to encourage the reduction of gender differences in school enrollment, advancement and retention at all levels of education and lifelong learning for girls and boys, women and men. See what the workshops looked like on our [YouTube channel](#).

The first in a series of workshops called "For Gender Equality with Artist Selma Selman" was held **in Bihać on January 29 and 30, 2022**. Renowned BH artist Selma Selman held two motivational

workshops for children and young people aged 7-18, called "*gender = (she+he)*". After the workshops, Selma together with the children performed the performance Letter to Omer, the aimed to send a message to the general public about the presence of these topics among children and young people, and that equality between the sexes can exist without prejudice.

From April 7 to 8, the HCA team stayed in **Tuzi, Montenegro**, where it is in partnership with AC "Safe Life Tuzi" and schools [JU OŠ „Mahmut Lekić”/ IP SHF “Mahmut Lekiq”](#) and [JU SMŠ “25. maj” Tuzi / IP SHMP “25 maji”](#), Selma held workshops for 30 children and young people.

After Montenegro, on June 5, 2022, two workshops were held in **Skopje, North Macedonia**. The workshops brought together 25 children and young people from Skopje, and the project partner was the feminist organization Tiiit!inc. which deals with organizing conceptual events in the field of independent culture and art, as well as various events for the promotion and improvement of women's human rights. The host of the workshop was the Museum of Contemporary Art Skopje.



Workshop in Skopje, June 5, 2022

After Skopje, educational and creative workshops were held in **Niš, Serbia, in the period from 7-8. June, 2022**. Renowned visual, media and performance art artist, Selma Selman, socialized with about 40 children and young people from Niš, and shared with them knowledge and personal experiences of gender-based discrimination at school, the environment in which she grew up, as well as later in life. The partner in Serbia was the Youth Empowerment Club 018.

After the summer break, on **October 2 we hung out in Pristina, Kosovo**, in cooperation with Artpolis - Center for Art and Community. A total of 33 children and young people attended the workshop, and due to unforeseen circumstances, the artist Selma Selman addressed the children online, via the Zoom platform. The group of children and young people included communities of Albanians and Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians. After Pristina, on **October 4 and 5**, Selma Selman and the production team held two one-day workshops in **Tirana, Albania**, in partnership with the [Liburnetic](#) organization.

Through a discussion and drawing and painting workshop, children and young people once again had the opportunity to learn about gender stereotypes and occupations, as well as about online and gender-based violence that is also present in schools.

The campaign #AštoNeBiMogla? had a reach of over 3,000,000 users on social networks.

The project "**Gender Equality Takes Two, by Selma Selman!**" is financially supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH office in BiH.

## **ACADEMY FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

The main goal of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the new generation of male and female students from different cities of BiH to analyze, monitor and advocate for women's human rights in the process of accession to the European Union. The project is supported by the *Heinrich Böll Foundation*. With the participation of 16 students and activists of the online academy for gender equality and European Integration, the project strengthened the capacities of the new generation of students. In this project, hCa worked with students primarily from the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Political Sciences of the university, but also from all other interested faculties and organizations throughout BiH.

After the online academy, seven of them decided to write student papers and further contribute to the promotion of gender equality, and hCa published 7 papers/analyses on its online platforms<sup>1</sup>. It is important to emphasize that the topics of the papers are something that women's civil society organizations need for argumentative advocacy, because these topics are not part of the political dialogue in BiH, nor can they be heard regularly in the media.

As another result, students improved their knowledge on the topics of gender equality and EU Integration during the online academy by 38% (hCa measured the knowledge that students acquire during education and we organized a test before and after the academy).

During the project, one of the central activities is the formation of the Alumni Club, where students work together in the direction of gender equality and joint advocacy activities. The goal of the club is to establish and maintain a connection between hCa and former participants of the online academy, as well as encouraging mutual cooperation in order to have a stronger impact on issues of gender equality and EU Integration through joint action. hCa wants to establish a permanent relationship with its participants, and to inform them about its activities, its development plans and educational programs. Former participants can influence the creation of the development strategy of our online academy, joint activities in the field of gender equality, and help in advocacy and research work. Also, after a series of zoom sessions, we wanted to meet in person, invite our lecturers and spend a pleasant time together, exchanging experiences and ideas.

This event brought together 20 participants in Sarajevo, and 2 academics joined (Prof. Midhat Izmirlija from the Faculty of Law in Sarajevo and senior assistant Veldin Kadić from the Faculty of Political Sciences). This event served as a powerful platform and team building to strengthen the students' ability to act together and continue to advocate more strongly for women's rights. The alumni group will serve as a platform for all future cooperation, actions and student initiatives, as well as for personal development. In addition, by including students and activists in this project, we will provide certain resources that can significantly contribute to the understanding of the challenging process of EU Integration and the creation of high-quality political documents on this specific issue, which is also lacking in BiH.

---

<sup>1</sup> The topics covered by the students were: Gender inequality in the labor market; The impact of the Istanbul Convention on the creation of new and changes to existing criminal offenses in Republic of Srpska; Criminological aspect of domestic violence; The phenomenon of feminization of the teaching profession; Gender equality in the EU Integration process; Gender equality in the peace building process; Gender equality in the media space.



## **FOR THE LIFE OF WOMEN**

On the initiative of the city of Banjaluka, the campaign "For the Life of Women" lasted throughout the month of March, in which several civil society organizations and individuals participated.

As part of the campaign, HCA organized two events: a panel discussion on famous women of Banjaluka and a feminist tour through Banjaluka.

Biljana Kesić, the daughter-in-law of Mira Kesić, a woman who is remembered for the numerous children's homes for war orphans that she worked on establishing after World War II, Velid Maglajlić, the cousin of Vahide Maglajlić, the national heroine, and Milena Karapetrović, professor, and one of the authors of the book "Banja Luka - FAMOUS WOMEN IN THE HISTORY OF THE CITY" spoke about notable women from the city's past at the Faculty of Philosophy in Banja Luka. The goal of the event was to remember the numerous women who lived, worked and created in Banja Luka, but who are rarely talked about and who are not part of our culture of memory.



Panel discussion on famous women of Banja Luka, March 24, 2022

The feminist tour, which we organized on March 25, was attended by 8 women, mostly from the Department of Social Activities of the city, who expressed their gratitude for having the opportunity to participate in the tour and learn more about the famous women of Banja Luka.

## **PARTNER'S PROJECTS:**

### **PEACE WITH WOMEN'S FACE – WOMEN'S INITIATIVE FOR FACING PAST**

As part of the Peace with Women's Face Initiative, in November we held a **round table** in Banja Luka entitled "**Women's Priorities in Transitional Justice Policies in BiH**". The aim of the round table, which was attended by 17 participants (representatives of civil society organizations, political parties, the Association of Psychologists of RS, the media and a representative of the Ombudsman institution) was to update the Platform of Women's Priorities in Transitional Justice Policies in BiH and based on the current challenges of integrated security faced by women in BiH from 2016 until today.

Also, as in previous years, we were at Trg Krajina in Banja Luka on December 8, 2022 marking this date as the **Day of Remembrance of Women Killed in War**. In addition to the representatives of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly and the Foundation United Women, volunteers from the Faculty of Medicine in Banja Luka, as well as members of the Committee for the International Exchange of Medical Students of Republic of Srpska joined the street action to promote the Day of Women Killed in War and talked with the citizens about the need to establish a Day of Remembrance, and pointed out the unfair attitude of society towards women who are victims of war, and who do not have an adequate place in the collective memory, without a monument or a day when we would remember them and tear them from oblivion.



Commemoration of the Day of Remembrance of Women Killed in War,  
12/08/2022, Banja Luka

## Program area:

### Strengthening Capacities of the Organization

*The goal is to continuously invest in organizational development and strengthen the capacity of employees, which will create the foundations for further growth and development of the association.*

### Team building

At the beginning of June (3rd and 4th) we organized Team building for all employees in the organization. It was also an opportunity to go through the organization's Strategic Plan 2021-2025, evaluate how much has been implemented and to revise the Action Plan for the implementation of the set goals. This team building will also be remembered for the fact that colleague Bojana broke her wrist due to a clumsy fall.



Teambuilding of the organization, June 3 and 4, 2022

## Trainer training

On December 22 and 23, hCa representatives attended a training for trainers entitled "Gender Equality and Discrimination Based on Gender", where they improved their knowledge about discrimination as a special form of illegal treatment, forms of discrimination based on sex and gender, as well as international and domestic legal standards of protection against discrimination.

## INFO CORNER

---

### Alternative report on progress

As in previous years, we actively participated in the preparation of the Alternative Report on the Progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Path to Membership in the European Union for 2021: Political Criteria. The presentation of the most important findings from the Report was organized in Sarajevo on May 26, 2022. Dragana Dardić presented parts of the Report related to freedom of association and assembly, the state of human rights and dealing with the past in the context of the application of amendments to the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which prohibits and punishes denial of genocide and glorification of war criminals in BiH. The process of creating the Alternative Report is coordinated by the EU Monitoring Initiative.





## UN conference on civil society in BiH

Aleksandra Žolja, Executive Director of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly participated in the UN Conference entitled: "**Space for Civil Society Action in BiH: Overview of the Situation and Next Steps**", which was held in Sarajevo on June 15-16, 2022.

At the session entitled **Protection of Civil Society Actors**, we discussed the current situation in the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly throughout BiH.



UN conference, Sarajevo – June 2022

---

## On the occasion of White Ribbon Day

On the occasion of information that on White Ribbon Day, May 31, a birthday celebration of Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and the owner of TV Pink Željko Mitrović is planned to be organized in Prijedor, we have sent a request to the Police Department and the Prijedor Municipal Assembly not to allow this gathering to take place.

Namely, the media reported that the youth organization Princip submitted a request to hold a public celebration of the birthdays of Orban and Mitrović on May 31. In the request sent to the competent authorities of the city of Prijedor, we pointed out that on the same day, May 31, in Prijedor, but also throughout BiH and the entire region, the White Ribbon Day is celebrated with a symbolic peaceful protest walk in memory of 3,176 men and women of Prijedor, civilians of non-Serbian nationalities that were killed in the last war. 11 people were convicted of crimes committed in the camps in the area of Prijedor at the International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, and four more people before the Court of BiH. In the request, we pointed out that the mere announcement of a public birthday celebration on the day that marked the beginning of the crime and killing of more than 3,000 people from Prijedor and its surroundings represents a gross and public denial of the crimes committed and an attempt to revise the past.

---

## Appeal to the House of Peoples of the Federation of BiH

In mid-June 2022, we directed Appeal to adopt the Law on Amendments to the Law on Electricity in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which prescribes a ban on future small hydropower plants. Previously, the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Federation adopted amendments to the Law, and it remains to be passed by the House of Peoples.

The main amendment to the Law refers to the prohibition of issuing energy permits for the construction of new small hydropower plants, except for MHPs on gravity water mains. In the appeal, we recalled the harmful effects of small hydropower plants, whose contribution to the total amount of electricity produced is negligible (2.54% in 2021). With this appeal, the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly supported the requests and appeals of the locals and activists gathered in the Coalition for the Protection of the Rivers of BiH, which have been fighting for more than 10 years to stop the destruction of our rivers by the construction of MHP.



---

## Forum on gender equality

HCA BL representative Dragana Dardić participated in the two-day "Forum on Gender Equality" held in Brussels on October 24 and 25, organized by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). The forum brought together a large number of experts, activists and decision-makers from the European Union, as well as candidate countries and potential candidates for EU membership.

Helena Dalli, Commissioner for Equality of the European Commission, announced at the Forum three measures that the EC will work on: pay transparency measures in order to overcome the gender gap that exists between women's and men's salaries; the initiative to criminalize cyber violence and the Women on Boards Directive, which should soon be put into practice, and which introduces a mandatory quota of 40% for women on corporate boards.



Dalli added that 7.7 million women in the EU are unemployed because they have to take care of children or elderly and sick family members.

The results of the Gender Index, which measures progress in achieving gender equality in various areas in EU member states, were also presented at the conference.

---

### **Support for river guardians**

In October, HCA BL joined a number of organizations from BiH and the world and signed an Open Letter that went to the diplomatic representatives of Belgium, the head of the EU Delegation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and other relevant international institutions. The letter was signed by 140 organizations to express their concern about the activities of the Belgian company Green Invest and the company in Bosnia and Herzegovina owned by it, BUK d.o.o., which manages the hydroelectric power plant on the Kasindolska River, and which filed SLAP lawsuits against the river guardians Sunčica Kovačević and Sara Tuševljak.

They spoke publicly about the harmful impact that the construction of mini-hydroelectric power plants has on the Kasindolska River and its environment, including deforestation and soil erosion. These are SLAPP lawsuits (Strategic Lawsuits against Public Participation), which are increasingly used in the region by politicians and big businesses to intimidate activists and silence critical voices.

---

### **University - gender - social engagement**

Representatives of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Svjetlana Ramić Marković and Dragana Dardić took part in the two-day regional conference "Gender Equality in Universities: Theoretical Perspectives, Institutional Action and Social Engagement", organized by the Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences of the Faculty of Philosophy in the period from 26 to 27 May. On that occasion, they presented the results of research on the prevalence of gender-based discrimination in the labor market in BiH and the "feminist tour" initiative, which talks about famous women in the history of the city of Banjaluka.

Representatives of universities, scientific institutes and non-governmental organizations from Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in the work of this scientific and professional meeting.

---

## Atomic gathering

In cooperation with the Association of Independent Creators and Activists Ghetto, we organized the "Atomic Gathering" event at "Građa".

The gathering was organized in order to once again draw attention to the area that has been waiting to be transformed into a children's playground for several years.

05/18/2022



Atomic gathering, Banjaluka May 2022

---

## HCA participated in the conference on gender equality at universities

Representatives of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly took part in the two-day regional conference "Gender Equality at Universities: Theoretical Perspectives, Institutional Action and Social Engagement", organized by the Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences of the Faculty of Philosophy on May 26 and 27. Representatives of universities, scientific institutes and non-governmental organizations from Serbia, Croatia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina participated in the work of this scientific and professional meeting.



"Gender Equality at Universities: Theoretical Perspectives, Institutional Action and Social Engagement",  
Banja Luka, May 26-27, 2022

---

## Stop femicide!

On October 14, we joined a spontaneous gathering in Banja Luka for the murder of another woman in BiH. The meeting repeated the demands to recognize femicide as a separate criminal offense, to continue the urgent harmonization of laws with the Istanbul Convention, and to strengthen the prevention and protection of violence against women.

Protest gatherings were also organized in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bihać and many other cities throughout BiH.



---

## Marked 80 years since the founding of WAF

On December 6, in Bosanski Petrovac was marked the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Women's Antifascist Front - WAF, which was attended by female delegates, activists, artists, scientists, and politicians from all the former Yugoslav republics. The event started with the Ceremonial Academy in Petrovac, and ended a day later with a conference in Bihać.

Sonja Lokar, an activist from Slovenia, emphasized that "acquired rights of women must be defended, because fascism changes a hair, but the temper never", while Nađa Bobičić, a delegate from Serbia, as part of the formal academy, asked "what will we do in the next twenty years to make sure that we celebrate the centennial jubilee in a society worthy of the legacy of the organization that was the Women's Antifascist Front of Yugoslavia".



Yugoslavia lost 1,700,000 inhabitants during the Second World War, of which around 600,000 were women. 91 women were awarded the Order of National Hero.

HCA representative Dragana Dardić also participated in the celebration of this significant anniversary.

On November 23, a meeting was held with Dubravka Šimonović, former United Nations special rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, and the HCA representative spoke about other forms of gender-based violence, such as sexual harassment at the workplace, violence during childbirth, and violence in the form of SLAP lawsuits against environmental activists.

---

## PUBLICATIONS IN 2022



The Initiative Women Citizens for Constitutional Reform and the author of the research, Srđan Puhalo, asked the citizens of BiH what they think about the Constitution of BiH, whether they had ever referred to any constitutional provision, whether the existing Constitution of BiH hinders and slows down the progress of BiH, whether the Constitution of BiH contains provisions that precisely define the equality of women and men, which is the first word that citizens think of when they hear the word constitution...

The research was conducted in December 2021 on a sample of 1,931 adult residents of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The largest percentage of respondents believe that the existing Constitution of BiH completely hinders and slows down the progress of BiH, while every third person believes that it hinders it to some extent. Also, the largest number of respondents (as much as 91.2%) believes that the negotiations on changing the Constitution of BiH serve domestic politicians to maintain political instability in the country. Slightly more than half of the respondents believe that the current Constitution of BiH needs to be changed and improved, while a third believes that it is time to write a new Constitution.

The most important reasons for changing or writing a new Constitution of BiH are the need for a precise definition of all human rights that are protected, for the inhabitants of BiH to have equal health and social protection throughout the territory of BiH, to eliminate discrimination during the election of members of the Presidency of BiH, to the state of BiH would be given more powers, to eliminate discrimination during the elections to the House of Peoples of BiH, to precisely define how men and women are equal and to incorporate gender-sensitive language into it.



**Natural disasters and crises affect women and men differently. Therefore, the specific vulnerabilities and needs of people during and after the crisis should be addressed more carefully. This is exactly why this guide was created - to show how crises and disasters affect vulnerable groups of the population and how to improve the work of civil protection and integrate a gender perspective into their work.**





# Rodno zasnovana diskriminacija u oblasti rada u BiH

Svjetlana Ramić Marković



Implemented by:



*The report on gender-based discrimination (GBD) in the field of labor in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the second report published within the framework of a regional initiative aimed at addressing the existence of gender discrimination in the labor market in six countries of the Western Balkans.*

*Similar to the report from 2019, the repeated research shows that awareness of the existence of GBD is extremely low, and that poor knowledge of the laws and regulations regulating this area applies to both employees and employers.*

*An extremely complicated system of competences and a huge number of laws at different levels make the legal framework in BiH related to gender discrimination in employment quite fragmented and inconsistent. The majority of court proceedings in this area are conducted in accordance with entity labor laws, which indicates insufficient understanding and implementation of the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination of BiH and the Law on Gender Equality of BiH. In addition, long and exhausting processes further discourage victims from reporting gender-based discrimination in the workplace.*

*The COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated the position of women in the labor market, especially in the sectors where women are most represented (the service sector and the textile and footwear sector). The report applauds the efforts of civil society organizations that have provided legal assistance in their communities to women whose labor rights have been violated during the pandemic, and there has been a significant increase of organizations that have increased their capacity for these purposes.*

## EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN OFFER

### **Civil society and human rights**

#### Basic trainings

##### **Training title**

##### **Topics**

##### **Civil society and activism**

The term of the civil society, the term of non-government organization, role, status and legal framework in BiH, establishment and registration of non-government organization, the term activism, etc.

##### **Human rights in my community**

Human rights, history, the term discrimination, mechanism of human right protection, endangered groups, modalities of impact to government regarding human rights protection, etc.

##### **Gender equality**

The term of sex and gender, the term of gender based discrimination, gender stereotypes and prejudices, sexuality, position of women and men in BH society, legal framework for gender equality in BiH, etc.

### **Advanced trainings/trainings for professional groups**

##### **Training title**

##### **Topics**

##### **Gender sensitive policies**

The term of gender analysis, gender sensitive and gender responsive practical policy, etc.

##### **Reporting on the differences in media**

The role of media in modern society, stereotypes and prejudices in media, socially marginalized groups and their presentation in media, discrimination in media (possible focus on specific topics), etc.

##### **Gender based reporting in media**

The role of media in modern society, portraits of men and women in media, discrimination in media, legal framework for work of media in BiH, gender analysis of media contents (possible focus on specific topics)

##### **Development of volunteerism**

The term of volunteerism, ways of including and engaging volunteers in the work of organization, legal framework, development of the volunteer's network,

etc.

### ***Building capacities of organization***

#### ***Training title***

#### ***Topics***

**Managing the non-government organization and procurement of sources for work**

The term of non-government organization, legal framework for non-government activities, structure of non-government organization and decision making, missions, visions and program activities of non-government organizations, financing the non-government organizations, etc.

**Creation of the strategic plan**

Strategic planning and importance of planning, mission and vision, problem analysis, program planning, goals and results, analysis of interior and exterior assumptions for plan implementation, allies and opponents, etc.

**Creation of the project proposals**

The term of project proposal, analysis of problems, goals and results, logical framework matrix, filling the form of project proposal, financial aspect of the project and project budget, contract with donors, etc.

**Basics of the financial managing of non-government organizations**

Specifics of the non-government organization activities and legal framework, financial obligations of non-government organizations towards state and donors, harmonizing requests between donors and domestic financial institutions, organizing financial management in NGOs, etc.

### ***Building personal capacities***

#### ***Training title***

#### ***Topics***

**Public advocacy, campaign management, lobbying**

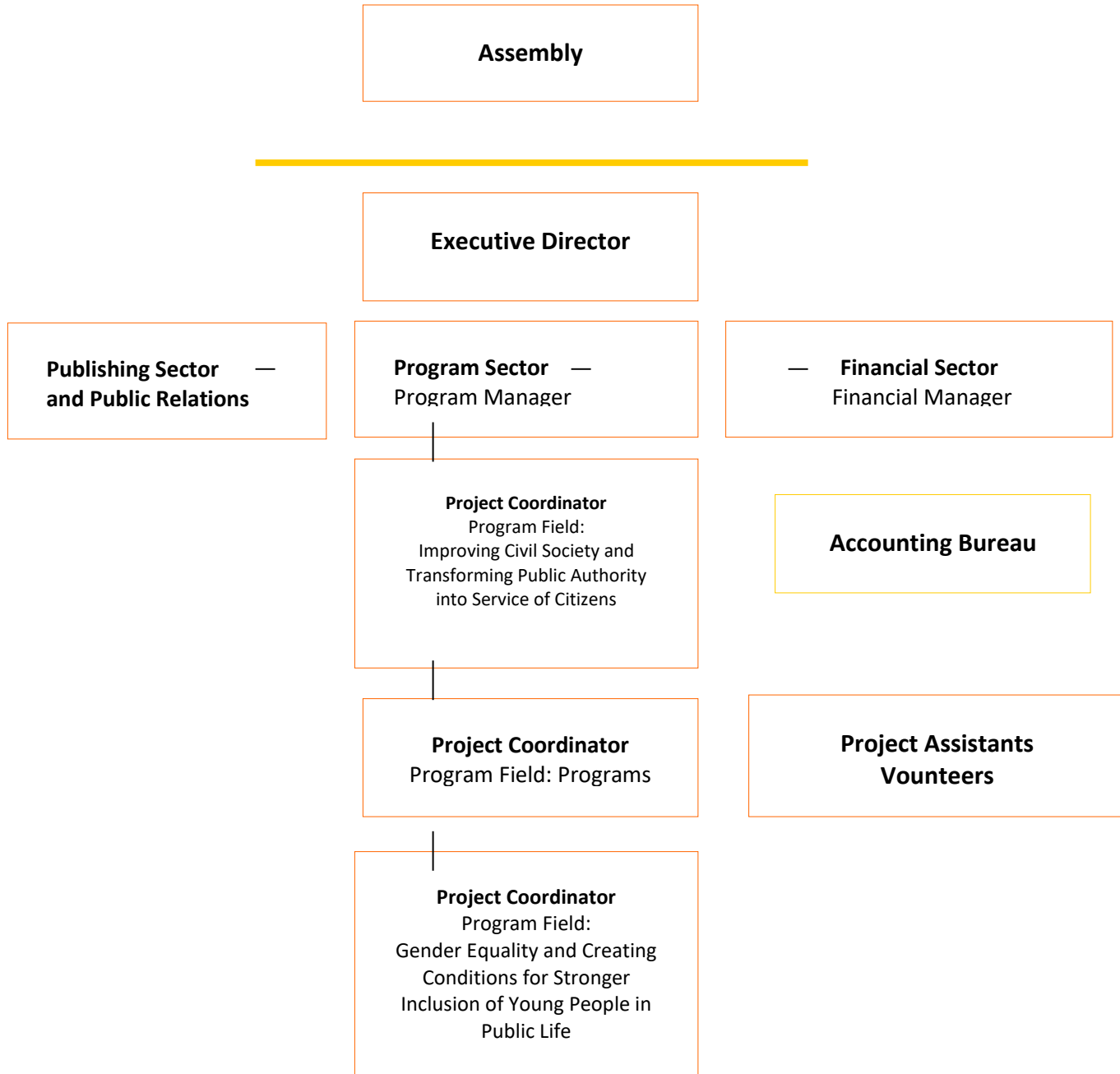
The term of public advocacy, planning the activity of public advocacy, target groups of public advocacy, the term campaign, the term lobbying, etc.

**Public relations and media presentations**

The term public relations, communication methods in public relations, media relations, how to become the news, ways of communicating with media, media announcement, press conference, specifics of TV and radio presentation, etc.

<b>Conflict solutions, negotiations and non-violent communication</b>	The term of conflict, ways of solving conflict, interest based solutions of the conflict, positions and interests in conflict, reconciliation and mediation, communication skills – non-violent communication, etc.
<b>Negotiations</b>	The term of negotiation, interest based negotiation, positions and interests, negotiation obstacles and path towards agreement, phases in negotiation approach, option analysis and determining proposals, etc.
<b>Facilitation and decision making</b>	The term of facilitation, decision making in group, communication skills, compromise and consensus, how to achieve consensus, voting, etc.
<b>Integral security</b>	The term of integral security, recognizing challenges and threats, context analysis, creating the secure space for work and activities, development of the strategy for implementation of the integral security concept, etc.

# Organization structure of the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Banja Luka



<b>OVERVIEW OF AVAILIABLE FUNDS AND EXPENDITURES IN 2022</b>	<b>AMOUNT IN BAM</b>	<b>AMOUNT IN EUR</b>
<b>Funds available in 2022</b>		
Unspent funds from 2021	141551.65	72374.21
Donations per grants from project partners/donors	499889.21	255589.29
Donations from individuals	1419.79	725.93
Membership fees	0.00	0.00
VAT refund	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR 2022</b>	<b>642860.65</b>	<b>328689.43</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES FOR 2022</b>		
Gross salaries	256937.00	131369.80
Office costs (rent, electricity, water, heating etc.)	8669.66	4432.73
Communication costs (phone and internet)	1712.95	875.82
Accounting and auditing costs	3740.00	1912.23
Bank charges	4209.00	2152.03
Costs of project activities	318330.04	162759.56
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES FOR 2022</b>	<b>593598.65</b>	<b>303502.17</b>
Total funds available for 2022	642860.65	328689.43
Total expenditures for 2022	593598.65	303502.17
<b>Unspent funds from 2022</b>	<b>49262.00</b>	<b>25187.26</b>

**Staff of the Helsinki Citizens’  
Assembly:**

Dragana Dardić

Aleksandar Žolja

Željka Umićević

Jelena Vukelić

Milica Marković

Bojana Ilić

Dragan Adamović

Svjetlana Ramić Marković

**Members of the Advisory Board:**

Lidija Živanović

Srđan Puhalo

Gordana Katana

Vladimir Turjačanin

Sandra Dukić

Siniša Marčić

**Donors who supported our work in 2022:**

Foundation “Kvinna Till Kvinna” Sweden

USAID

Heinrich Böll Stiftung

European Union

CCFD – Terre Solidaire

GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit) GmbH

American Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Austrian Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina

European fund for the Balkans

Journalism fund

City of Banja Luka