

Voluntary Pledges by Serbia

Pledge 1 - work on Roma integration

In 2022 the Republic of Serbia will take measures to combat Anti-Gypsyism, as the form of racism and discrimination against Roma men and women, as well as devise policies of integrative multiculturalism and intercultural dialogue. These measures will be implemented in all parts of the society in which inclusion and civic equality are treated as basic principles and key values.

As the national contact point for the Roma integration, the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue of the Republic of Serbia will be the bearer of the realization of this goal. The main activities under this pledge in 2022 will include:

- 1) Adopting the Strategy for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2022-2030, as well adopting the accompanying Action Plan.
- 2) Holding special seminars on the topic of combating Anti-Gypsyism, rights of the Roma women, and Roma women's activism. The workshops will be held for 100 Roma women from all over Serbia, including those older than 50 years, as well as those who have never participated in the Roma activism. The goal is to mobilize participants of these seminars to form a Roma Women's Civil Society Network, which would then become part of the Civil Society Platform within the Coordination Body for Social Inclusion of Roma Men and Women. A total of eight three-day seminars will be held, so that each participant takes part in two seminars and attends lectures of each educator. Costs for the seminar participants will be fully covered.
- 3) As part of the measures to combat Anti-Gypsyism, at least 100 highly educated Roma will be employed in public institutions, in accordance with their attained educational background. Particular focus will be put to those issue sectors where intolerance against the Roma was previously identified.
- 4) The Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue will organize a set of social dialogues on the topic of combating Anti-Gypsyism. The dialogues will cover issue areas as broad as mechanisms for combating Anti-Gypsyism, freedom of speech, hate speech as form of racism in public space, involvement of Roma and vulnerable groups in the discussions on sustainable development and environment, etc. At least 5 rounds of social dialogue will be held.
- 5) To strengthen institutional coverage of this topic, a special department dealing with the Roma issues will be formed in the Anti-Discrimination Sector of the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue of the Republic of Serbia.

Pledge 2 – The Republic of Serbia will strengthen independence of the Judiciary and autonomy of the Public Prosecution in line with European and international standards by adopting constitutional amendments in 2022.

The process for amending the constitution is a key step to strengthen the independence of the judiciary as one of the pillars of democracy, and to enhance the effectiveness and transparency of the rule of law institutions in Serbia.

This process was launched in December 2020 in order to bring our judiciary in line with European and international standards.

The constitutional amendments on the judiciary will introduce the principle of non-transferability of judges, functional immunity for judges and prosecutors, and remove probationary periods for judges and prosecutors. The High Judicial Council will no longer be dissolved if it does not render a decision within 30 days. Most importantly, the competence of the National Assembly to elect court presidents, the Republic Public Prosecutor and public prosecutors, and to decide on the termination of their office as well as to elect judges and the deputy public prosecutors will be removed.

The constitutional amendments are drafted with the involvement of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission), an advisory body of the Council of Europe on constitutional matters, in order to ensure its adherence to the European and international standards.

This process will be finished during 2022.

Pledge 3 - to be taken off the list of globally unsatisfactory countries in the Forth Evaluation Round of the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)

Bearing in mind the negative effects that corruption poses on societies, the Republic of Serbia will continue to deepen its efforts in the area of fight against corruption. This is in line with our national priorities and is an important step on our EU accession path.

We believe that the recommendations made by the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO)[1] as a part of the Fourth Evaluation Round Report for Serbia regarding corruption prevention in respect of members of parliament, judges, and prosecutors are complementary to both our national goals and aspirations for a fully-fledged EU membership.

In its Fourth Evaluation Round Report GRECO made a total of 13 recommendations for the Republic of Serbia, noting that at least 6 of the 13 set recommendations need to be implemented for the country to be taken off the list of globally unsatisfactory countries.

By undertaking all the necessary steps, including changes to its regulatory framework in the field of fight against corruption and harmonizing its normative framework with the GRECO

recommendations, the Republic of Serbia will be taken off this list of globally unsatisfactory countries in 2022.

[1] Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) was established in 1999 by the Council of Europe to monitor implementation of Council of Europe conventions, i.e. States' compliance with the organization's anti-corruption standards. The Republic of Serbia joined GRECO in 2003.

Pledge 4 - Freedom of Movement of workers under the Open Balkans initiative

The Republic of Serbia is fully committed to promoting regional cooperation. We believe that a prosperous, connected, and economically successful Western Balkans provides an adequate framework for further development and strengthening of democracy throughout the region. Guided by the ideas of creating a democratic, stable, and secure environment and with the goal of improving the quality of life of the population in the entire Western Balkans, the Republic of Serbia, together with partners in the region, launched the "Open Balkans" initiative. This initiative is supported by the regional political leaders at the highest level. It not only represents a step on our common path towards the full membership in the European Union, but also demonstrates our own responsibility and obligation to create a better and more prosperous region.

Freedom of movement of workers is a fundamental element of liberal democracies and one of the four basic freedoms that constitute the EU *acquis communautaire*. As such, in 2022 the Republic of Serbia will together with partners in the Open Balkans initiative:

- 1) Complete the work on creating a unique identification number for the citizens of the Open Balkans Initiative (Open Balkan ID), as an important precondition for creating a single labor market.
- 2) Allow free entry into its territory of citizens of the Open Balkans Initiative countries with only a valid ID; ensure their free movement: and allow the possibility for them to be employed without holding work permits (i.e. with the Open Balkan ID).
- 3) Make the Open Balkans Initiative participating countries' national eGovernment portals and services they provide available to all the citizens of the Open Balkans Initiative countries.
- 4) Institute special cards granting discounts and providing other personal and commercial services on the national eGovernment portals for the citizens of the Open Balkans Initiative countries.