



ANNUAL REPORT

for 2022

Institute for Human Rights



Institute for human rights

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INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Human Rights (IHR) is a citizens association that through its work is committed to the promotion, advancement and protection of human rights and freedoms. The IHR realizes its commitments through continuous education, analysis and research, advocacy and organization of expert discussions within the legal profession and discussions for the general public.

In 2022, the Institute for Human Rights successfully implemented project activities in constant communication with the Management Board. Strategic priorities continued to be oriented towards justice and human rights, legal certainty, promotion of human freedoms and rights, equality and non-discrimination, fight against corruption and participation in the process of negotiations for accession to the European Union. Monitoring the work of the Constitutional Court, the Judicial Council, the Council of Public Prosecutors, the Commission for the Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption and other state institutions continued to be the focus of the work of the Institute for Human Rights.

Within its strategic commitments and beliefs, the IHR operates in several key segments:

- following the situation regarding the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms by monitoring and analyzing all relevant processes in the country;
- raising awareness among relevant institutions, organizations and other stakeholders about the need to establish and build an effective mechanism for the promotion, assurance and protection of human rights and freedoms;
- informing the citizens about their rights in cases of discrimination;
- initiating discussions on relevant issues and problems that directly affect the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens in RNM and of all people, both with the professional and general public.

This annual report refers to the work of the Institute for Human Rights, which during the past year has worked tirelessly to improve the state of the human rights, promote equality and non-discrimination, recognize corruption and display the transparency and accountability of state institutions and bodies, whose work is continuously monitored by the Institute for Human Rights. This report aims to present the overall activities of the Institute for Human Rights through the implementation of each individual project, the free legal aid program, the Institute's contribution to the promotion of science through the publication of the professional journal "Legal Dialogue", the publication of educational courses on the IHR Academy for Human Rights, the promotion of activities published on the Human Rights Platform, and the scientific and practical contribution of the Institute through participation in working groups and coordination bodies on topics related to human rights.

ACTIVITIES OF THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

In 2022, representatives from the Management Board and the Executive Office of the Institute for Human Rights took on an active role through guest appearances in different television programs, participation in workshops, working groups, round tables, trainings and conferences on topics related to the rule of law and human rights and topics that represent the Institute's strategic priorities. In addition, scientific lectures were held on topics related to human rights and the activities carried out by the Institute for Human Rights, the online IHR Academy for Human Rights, and the Human Rights Platform.

In the past year, through various appearances and participation in events and conferences, the project activities were promoted on topics related to access to justice, prevention of discrimination, bullying and hate speech, detection of corruption and corrupt practices, monitoring of the sessions of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors, as well as the implementation of the measures of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy 2017-2022.

THE INSTITUTE THROUGH NUMBERS



13 Publications



9 Monitoring reports



**6 Courses on the
online IHR Academy**



**7 Workshops, trainings
and focus groups**



**1 Accepted initiatives for
legislative changes before
Constitutional Court**



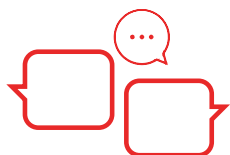
**20 Held meetings with
representatives from
state institutions**



**1 Participation on
working groups for
legislative changes**



**3 Concluded
Memorandum of
Understanding**



**2 Published issues of
Legal Dialogue**



**3 In-person
conferences**



1 Hybrid conferences



7 Videos



17 Infographics

ACADEMY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The concept for the creation of the Academy for Human Rights stems from the vision of the Institute to promote and protect human rights through education. The Academy offers free courses on a variety of topics to help registered users enrich their human rights knowledge, since education is key to securing, promoting, advancing and protecting human rights.

The Academy for Human Rights is a tool that aims to educate its users in a safe and simple way on various human rights issues. Each course available on the Academy is divided into a number of chapters and lessons, after which the user answers questions to test their knowledge and to move on to the next chapter.

In 2022, the IHR Academy continued publishing new courses related to the protection of human rights, which deal with topics that are interesting and for which there is always a need for education and clarification of relevant issues.

The following courses were published on the IHR Academy in 2022:

- **The course on gender equality** was prepared within the programme “Access to justice for all”, financially supported by the European Union. This course is composed of 2 chapters in which users are introduced to the basic terms related to gender-based violence, the different forms of gender-based violence, why women are more susceptible to gender-based violence and which groups of women are more susceptible to this type of violence. In addition, through this course the users will become familiar with the legal frameworks for protection against this type of violence through the international and national legal framework, with which they will know where and how they can report gender-based violence.
- **The course on integrating equality into programs and policies** consists of 3 chapters. The course has been prepared within the program “Access to justice for all”, financed by the EU. This course is intended for those who wish to educate themselves on the topic of equality and non-discrimination within the policy-making process. Through this course, they will acquire theoretical and practical knowledge related to: potential social changes and improvements that occur as a result of the advancement of equality; intersectional discrimination, its meaning, legal regulation, both in the state and in a wider context, and with the guidelines for recognizing this type of discrimination, direct guidelines and practical examples for the inclusion of equality in policies and programs through the policy-making cycle consisting of four stages and much more.
- **The course on the right to privacy** has been prepared within the program “Access to justice for all”, financially supported by the European Union. Personal data can be used for purposes that we are not always aware of or agree to. The progress of technology offers new, modern, but also invasive monitoring methods, which is why the protection of the right to privacy is becoming more and more important and relevant.
- **The course on the basics for the fight against corruption in the Republic of North Macedonia** is intended for those who are interested in getting to know the legal framework for the fight against corruption in the Republic of North Macedonia, including the main international and European legal instruments and mechanisms for the fight against corruption. Also, the course provides an overview of the institutions to which cases of corruption can be reported and their jurisdiction, as well as practical examples for recognizing corruption. The course can be of particular benefit to lawyers, law students, journalism and civil activists, regardless of whether they are members of civil society organizations or act independently.

At the time of the preparation of this report, 1016 users have been registered at the Academy for Human Rights. Since last year, 195 new users created a profile on the Academy, which notes an increasing trend in the number of new users. Moreover, the number of issued certificates for completed courses has more than doubled compared to last year and it amounts to a total of 1750 issued certificates.

HUMAN RIGHTS PLATFORM

The Human Rights Platform has a comprehensive approach to human rights, that is, it contains all the information on how human rights can be protected. The Human Rights Platform is divided into 6 segments, each containing a different type of information that is useful to the visitor of the IHR website.

The first segment of the Platform is called **Human Rights and their protection**. This section provides information on how human rights can be protected and where violations can be reported, which are the bodies that protect human rights at a national and international level, relevant law and international documents.

The second segment focuses on the **Human Rights-Based Approach**, i.e., what it entails, the standards and principles on which it is based, the basic characteristics that apply to it and the values it adds to development concepts and processes.

Online trainings are the third segment of the Human Rights Platform, i.e., it is a list of bodies and platforms that allow website visitors to access a variety of human rights trainings.

The platform also entails a **quiz** titled “How much do you know about your rights”. It is intended for all those who want to test their knowledge in the field of human rights.

Perhaps one of the most important segments of the Platform is the **Blog**, which aims to give space to various authors to express their views on current human rights issues.

The last segment of the Platform are the **Documents** where you can find a multitude of reports, manuals and guides that refer on the human rights situation in the Republic of North Macedonia

FREE LEGAL AID

In 2022, the Institute for Human Rights, as a registered association for providing primary legal aid, continued providing primary legal aid to all interested citizens.

According to the Law on Free Legal Aid, the Institute for Human Rights as an authorized association provides primary legal aid consisting of:

- initial legal advice on the right to use free legal aid,
- general legal information,
- general legal advice,
- assistance in completing the request for secondary legal aid,
- assistance in filling out forms, forms issued by an administrative body in an administrative procedure for social protection and protection of children's rights; pension, disability and health insurance; protection of victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence; procedure for registration in the birth register; acquisition of identity documents and citizenship,
- compilation of complaints to the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination and to the Ombudsman and requests for protection of freedoms and rights to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia

In 2022, a total of 45 people requested primary legal aid from the Institute for Human Rights. 19 people received general legal information, while 26 people were given general legal advice. At the same time, 2 requests for secondary legal assistance were submitted to the regional units of the Ministry of Justice by persons who approached the Institute and asked for help in completing the requests for secondary legal assistance in order to initiate legal proceedings before competent courts. Both requests were positively

approved by the regional departments of the Ministry of Justice and the persons were appointed lawyers for representation in court proceedings.

From the analysis of the received requests for primary legal aid, it can be concluded that requests regarding the exercise of the social protection rights are most common (which are the conditions for receiving guaranteed minimum assistance, child allowance, etc.) and labor relations (conditions for termination of employment, payment of unpaid wages, etc.) and property disputes.

In the past year, the Institute received several requests regarding the explanation of the enforcement procedure, issues in the field of family and inheritance law, regulation of rights arising from health and pension insurance, as well as the procedure and deadlines for submitting an application to the European Court of Human Rights.

It can be observed that the number of people who ask what free legal aid is significantly reduced. This points to the fact that people are already familiar with the Law on Free Legal Aid, and, additionally, the campaigns have a successful impact in elaborating to citizens what primary and secondary legal aid is and how and where they can request it.

LEGAL DIALOGUE

The social function of the “Legal Dialogue” Journal is to present for discussion topics, dialogues and new approaches in order to develop, improve and exchange knowledge on legal matter between theorists and practitioners in relation to the rule of law and human rights, and to make them more accessible to the wider scientific and professional public. For that purpose, the Journal publishes:

1. Scientific papers that reflect the theoretical aspects of topics related to human rights and the rule of law in the Republic of North Macedonia, but also in general in other countries in Europe and beyond, and
2. Scientific papers that address and analyze the practical aspects of specific judgments of the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice.

In 2022, the professional journal “Legal Dialogue» had the privilege of being published within the programme «Access to Justice for All”, financed by the European Union. The idea of incorporating Legal Dialogue within this programme was motivated by the will to raise awareness and promote education on issues related to human rights and initiate a debate on improving access to justice for all citizens with a particular focus on marginalized groups of citizens through monitoring of relevant institutions using evidence-based analysis. In this way, an opportunity is created for all legal practitioners and theorists to research and write on topics related to the rule of law and respect for human rights.

In 2022, a change was made in the composition of the Editorial Board of the journal “Legal Dialogue”, which is comprised of five members including:

- Mancho Mitevski – Editor-in-Chief
- Vesna Stefanovska – Associate Editor
- Mersel Bilalli – member
- Slavica Dimitrievska - member
- Angelina Stanojoska – member

The goal of the Editorial Board is for different topics to prevail in each issue, written by a wide profile of experts in their fields who will initiate dialogue and exchange of opinions. Papers from master’s and doctoral students who wish to research and prepare their own paper on a topic related to human rights and the rule of law are especially welcome.

In 2022, two issues of the journal «Legal Dialogue» were published, number 25 in June and number 26 in December. These two issues, like the previous ones, continue the tradition of the journal of being recognizable by the variety of topics, the segments that analyze human rights and the rule of law provided and guaranteed by the institutions of the state. The published papers are written by current and former judges of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court, professors, assistant professors, postgraduates, doctoral students as well as experts from civil society organizations. For the first time, in the December issue of Legal Dialogue, a paper by authors from Republika Srpska was published, written in English and translated into Macedonian. This fulfills the vision of the Editorial Board, in addition to Macedonian, to publish papers in English and Albanian. In the two editions of “Legal Dialogue” for 2022, 13 papers by 15 authors/co-authors were published.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

* Decision regarding initiative U.no.289/2020 by the Constitutional Court

On December 1, 2022, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia ruled on an initiative submitted by the Institute for Human Rights and delivered a decision by which it repealed Article 44 paragraph 2 in the part: “up to 65 years of age at the latest” of the Law on Social Protection.

Namely, in 2020 the Institute for Human Rights submitted an initiative to the Constitutional Court, prepared by the attorney Igor Spirovski, challenging Article 44 paragraph 2 in the section «up to 65 years of age at the latest» of the Law on Social Protection. The provision creates differences between citizens based on age and causes unequal opportunities to access the sphere of social protection, specifically the right to monetary compensation due to disability, and creates unequal opportunities in terms of using the compensation itself, regardless of whether the person has a disability as stated in Article 44 paragraph 1 of the Law, on the basis on which the monetary compensation is awarded, and regardless of whether that disability occurred before the age of 65 or after reaching the age of 65.

The Constitutional Court decided to start a procedure for evaluating the constitutionality of the abovementioned condition in article 44 paragraph 2 of the Law, because the question of its compatibility with the Constitution was raised before the Court. This is due to the fact that from the content of the contested legal provision it follows that only persons under 65 years of age can have the capacity of claimants in a procedure for exercising the right to monetary compensation due to disability, and thus the opportunity to use it, whereas persons over 65 years of age cannot have this status as claimants. Persons over 65 years of age are excluded in advance from access to the right to compensation itself, and consequently from the possibility of using the compensation, regardless of at what age they found themselves in a state of disability. Therefore, age is the limiting condition for access to the right to monetary compensation due to disability, and thus also a limiting condition for its use. Precisely for that reason, the Constitutional Court determined that the challenged provision is contrary to the Constitution, discriminatory and does not follow the principles of equal and equitable treatment of citizens.

* Preparation and realization of trainings related to antidiscrimination and equality

Representatives from the Executive Office of the Institute for Human Rights were engaged to prepare and conduct trainings for the needs of the project “Strengthening of the rule of law and human rights in North Macedonia”, financially supported by the OSCE Mission in Skopje, to support to the work of the Department for equal opportunities in the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in order to strengthen the culture and capacities of the administration for promotion of the principles of equality, antidiscrimination and acceptance of differences in the public sector and worldwide.

For the purposes of the above project, 4 three-day trainings on the topic “Principle of non-discrimination” and 3 two-day trainings on the topic “Enforcement of the duty of equality in the public sector” were prepared and implemented.

*** Conducting research and preparing an analysis related to voting rights of persons with disabilities**

The President of the Institute for Human Rights together with representatives from the Executive Office of the Institute, for the needs of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) within the Program for the Support of Electoral Activities in Macedonia, conducted research and prepared an analysis on the topic “Ethics and integrity of the electoral process for persons with disabilities”.

The analysis deals with the right to political participation of persons with disabilities, and their direct participation in decision-making and policies is directly related to the enjoyment of voting rights, non-discrimination and other human rights. Exclusion from the electoral process means that the interests of the excluded group are not heard and are not acted upon. Without the right and opportunity to participate as a voter and candidate, people with disabilities are at risk of being further marginalized in society. The analysis provides an overview of the relevant national legal framework, which should be in accordance with international conventions on political participation of persons with disabilities, including the possibility to run for office, to participate in electoral bodies, to be active in political parties, as well as the right to vote and the possibility of using an effective legal remedy if their rights are violated.

*** Judgment of the European Court of Human Rights against North Macedonia for segregation of Roma students**

The European Court of Human Rights delivered an important judgment in the case of Elmazova and others against North Macedonia (applications 11811/20 and 13550/20) in which it was determined that two elementary schools, «Gjorgi Sugarev» in Bitola and “Goce Delchev” in Shtip, violated the right of non-discrimination of children (Article 14) in relation to their right to education (Article 2 of Protocol No. 1). This judgment was delivered after several years of commitment by the European Roma Rights Center to solve the problem of segregation in these two municipalities and provide quality education to the Roma children living in these communities.

The judgment is also based on the research that the Institute for Human Rights conducted in 2016, in cooperation with ERRC, which determined the segregation of Roma students in the two schools in Bitola and Shtip.

In 2022, the Institute for Human Rights actively participated in and contributed to working groups and coordination bodies on various topics related to human rights, namely:

*** National Coordinative Body for Free Legal Aid**

In 2022, the National Coordinating Body held three meetings where the challenges related to the implementation of the Law on Free Legal Aid and the feasibility of establishing a single body to manage the system of free legal aid in the Republic of North Macedonia were discussed, the analysis of the implementation of the Law on Free Legal Aid and the need for its amendment were presented, including a discussion on identifying legal provisions in the Law on Free Legal Aid that cause problems with implementation in practice, identifying legal shortcomings, and potential challenges that require legal intervention. These meetings were organized with the support of the Council of Europe within the project “Support for better access to better quality services for free legal aid in North Macedonia”, which is part of the program “Horizontal Instrument for the Western Balkans and Turkey II” – a joint program of the EU and the Council of Europe, implemented by the Council of Europe. The Institute for Human Rights, through its representatives, shared the challenges associated with providing primary legal aid in practice, as well as the dilemmas associated with filling out requests for secondary legal aid.

*** National Coordinative Body for non-discrimination**

The Institute for Human Rights, through its representatives, participated in the meetings organized by the National Coordinative Body for Non-Discrimination, the purpose of which is to monitor the situation and the implementation of laws, by-laws and strategic documents. This body exists to coordinate and monitor the situations with non-discrimination, primarily for the purpose of increasing the transparency in the work of state institutions in this area, coordination of activities between institutions and organizations (citizens' associations and international organizations), joint establishment of yearly priorities in this area based on international and other reports and analyses, as well as continuous monitoring of the conditions in this area and joint proposal of measures to improve the conditions.

*** Membership in the Platform of Civic Organizations for Fight Against Corruption**

The Institute for Human Rights is a member of the Platform which aims at a proactive, dynamic and empowered civil society that respects, promotes and advocates the principles of good governance. The Platform connects civil society organizations and is an open place for cooperation, networking and democratic debate in order to strengthen the role of civil society organizations in the fight against corruption in the Republic of Macedonia. In September 2022, a representative of the Institute for Human Rights participated in the Annual Assembly of the Platform, where the next steps that should be taken by the members in the fight against corruption, intensification of mutual cooperation and other issues related to joint action were discussed.

*** Membership in the Blueprint Group for Judicial Reforms**

The Blueprint Group for Judicial Reforms is an informal network of civil organizations that have been working and operating in the field of justice in recent years. The Institute for Human Rights together with the European Policy Institute, Coalition All for Fair Trials, Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, the Center for Legal Research and Analysis, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and the Open Society Foundation-Macedonia, within the framework of its activities during 2022, among other things, came out with reactions and their assessments on several current events, developments or statements that deviated from the principles of the rule of law.

*** Membership in the Council for Open Judiciary**

The Council for Open Judiciary is an advisory body for the courts and judicial authorities, for coordination and monitoring of the development and implementation of action plans, with a key advisory and decision-making role in all phases of the open court process, throughout the planning cycle, in the development of action plans and in their implementation, monitoring and reporting. The Council was established to encourage the transparency and openness of the work of courts and judicial institutions and to encourage the participation of civil society in the implementation and monitoring of the Open Judiciary initiative in the Republic of North Macedonia, to ensure inter-sectoral cooperation and to establish clear, structured and permanent mechanisms for constant dialogue between the judiciary and civil society; to increase the participation of civil society in the preparation of action plans for open judiciary and to support, encourage and monitor the implementation of the current action plan. In 2022, two meetings of the Council were held at which the Action Plan was adopted, among other ongoing activities.

*** Membership in the Management Board of the Project for Promotion of Diversity and Equality in North Macedonia realized by the Council of Europe and the European Union**

The Institute for Human Rights is part of the Management Board of the Project for the Promotion of Diversity and Equality in North Macedonia, a project of the Council of Europe and the European Union. The aim of the project is to strengthen the capacity of national and local stakeholders to better address issues related to anti-discrimination, combating hate speech and protecting the rights of LGBTI persons in accordance with the standards and recommendations set by the Council of Europe. The main goal of the Management Board is to monitor the implementation of the project as well as to provide guidelines

for the implementation of the activities. Representatives from the Institute for Human Rights attended the meetings of the Management Board which were held in 2022.

*** Working group for the Law on Protection from Harassment at the Workplace**

Members of the Management Board and the Executive Office of the Institute for Human Rights actively participated in the working group for the preparation of the new Law on Protection from Harassment at the Workplace to harmonize it with the regulations of the European Union, as well as harmonization of the new text of the law with other laws such as the Law on Labor Relations, the Law on Prevention and Protection from Discrimination and the Law on Misdemeanors. The meetings of the working group continued in 2022 in order to finalize the draft Law. This working group was initiated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and it includes representatives from civil society organizations, the North Macedonia Trade Unions and other concerned organizations and state authorities.

*** Participation in roundtables organized by the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption**

Representatives of the Executive Office of the Institute for Human Rights, in the period from 7-11 March 2022, participated in round tables organized by the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption (SCPC) regarding the implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest 2021-2025. The reports submitted by the relevant institutions were reviewed during the roundtables. Representatives of the Institute for Human Rights participated in the following round tables: Justice, Economy and Business, Public Procurement and Employment.

*** Participation on meetings organized by the Ministry of Justice in relation to providing free legal aid**

In 2022, the Institute for Human Rights, as an authorized and registered association for the provision of primary legal aid, participated in two working meetings held with representatives from the Ministry of Justice - Department for Free Legal Aid, where the implementation of the Law on Free Legal Aid was discussed, as well as the need to hold trainings for primary legal aid providers in certain segments. The representatives of the Ministry of Justice - Department for free legal aid praised the registered civil society organization for the promptness in delivering the monthly reports on the primary legal aid, the elaboration of the legal problem and the advice or information given..

MARGARITA TSACA NIKOLOWSKA AWARDED WITH THE HIGH FRENCH DECORATION – KNIGHT OF THE LEGION OF HONOR

The decoration was presented in the name of the President of the Republic of France, Emmanuel Macron, by the ambassador, H.E. Cyrille Baumgartner.

On November 18, 2022, at a formal ceremony in the residence of the Embassy of the Republic of France in the Republic of North Macedonia, the Ambassador, H.E. Cyrille Baumgartner, presented the President of the Institute for Human Rights, Margarita Tsatsa Nikolovska, with the high French decoration – Knight of the Legion of Honor, which was awarded by the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron.

In his address, H.E. Ambassador Baumgartner emphasized that the President of the Institute for Human Rights is one of those knights that the Republic of France wants to reward by awarding the highest decoration of the French Republic, taking into account her rich career as a judge in the European Court of Human Rights, an international judge in the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and then as an activist and founder of the Institute for Human Rights.

In her address, Margarita Tsatsa Nikolovska expressed her gratitude for this high recognition granted by the President of the Republic of France, Mr. Macron. At the same time, she emphasized that her activities in the field of human rights and rule of law will continue in the same direction, among other things, in order to fulfill the conditions for the entry of the Republic of North Macedonia into the European Union.



PROJECTS THAT WERE IMPLEMENTED IN 2022

HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO COVID-19 CRISIS

Duration of the project: 01.04.2021 – 31.03.2022

Financed by the Balkan Trust for Democracy, a project of the German Marshall Fund of the US and USAID

The project «Human Rights-Based approach during the Covid-19 crisis» aimed to contribute to the protection of basic human rights related to the health crisis, such as freedom of movement, the right to education, the right to access information, the prohibition of discrimination and others, through the application of the human rights-based approach in the implementation of health policies.

In the last 3 months of the project implementation, all project activities were carried out. In January 2022, a [video](#) explaining the role of a human rights-based approach during a health crisis was created and published.

In March 2022, the [Second Monitoring Report on the implementation of the human rights-based approach and the restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 crisis](#) was published. The report covers the period from September 2021 until February 2022 and focuses on the right to health and health care and the right to education. Freedom of movement is not covered in this report because there were no measures limiting the freedom of movement in the specified period. The report emphasized that the health policies applied during the pandemic caused by Covid-19 need to be proportionate, justified and adopted on the basis of previous research and prepared strategies. In order to graphically present the findings of this monitoring report, an [infographic](#) was prepared.

In March 2022, the [policy paper](#) “The importance of a human rights-based approach to the response to the health crisis caused by Covid-19 in the Republic of North Macedonia” was prepared and published. The purpose of this policy paper was to analyze the RNM Government’s response (strategies, decisions and the full approach of the institutions) to the health crisis, as well as its consequences for marginalized citizens, and thus to indicate why the principle based on human rights is the most effective solution for creating inclusive public policies, especially in times of a crisis. The document refers to the period of 2020 and 2021, and provides conclusions and recommendations, in order to improve government measures in the future, and the restrictions to respect the human rights of all citizens, especially of the vulnerable groups. In order to graphically present the findings of this document, an [infographic](#) was prepared.

On March 24, 2022, the [Final \(hybrid\) conference](#) was held on the platform ZOOM, where the implemented project activities and prepared products were presented.

PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION, BULLYING AND HATE SPEECH

Duration of the project: 15.05.2021 – 15.05.2022

Financed by the German Embassy in Skopje

The goal of the project was to highlight the importance of prevention and protection against discrimination (with special focus on the following bases: sexual orientation, gender identity, social and gender inequality), hate speech and bullying among high school students.

The project has three specific objectives:

1. To raise awareness among the students and teachers about discrimination (special focus on the grounds: SOGI, social and gender inequality) hate speech and bullying and combating these issues through an inclusive process with the students;

2. To increase the knowledge of the teachers, pedagogues and students for prevention and protection of discrimination, bullying and hate speech and the importance of respecting human rights and promoting tolerance and acceptance;
3. To support national authorities in the creation of sustainable measures for addressing discrimination bullying and hate speech in order to have better and more tolerant and inclusive secondary education.

In January 2022, a [video](#) was created and published that defined bullying. In the same month, the [Second Monitoring Report](#) on the work of the Commission for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination was published, as well as an [infographic](#) showing the findings of the monitoring report.

In February 2022, the [results of research](#) were presented - the influence of social and mass media in the creation of public opinion. The data from this research were obtained through descriptive empirical research, using predominantly qualitative analysis. The main goal of the research was to assess the influence of the media in the creation of the public opinion among high school students and the possibility of building stereotypes, discrimination, peer harassment and hate speech. An [infographic](#) was also prepared in order to graphically present the results of the research

In March 2022, the following visualizations and videos were promoted and published: [Defining Hate Speech, Bullying and Discrimination, Video – What is Discrimination, Video – What is Hate Speech, Infographic: “Bullying”, Hate Speech and Discrimination in Secondary schools and Video: research - hate speech, bullying and discrimination, Infographic: recommendations for dealing with “bullying”, hate speech and discrimination in secondary schools.](#)

In April 2022, [online courses on discrimination, bullying and hate speech in schools](#) were published on the IHR Human Rights Academy. Two versions of this course were created – one was intended for teachers and professional staff, and the other one was intended for students whose aim is to familiarize themselves with the concepts of discrimination, bullying and hate speech in schools.

In May 2022, the [Third Monitoring Report](#) on the work of the Commission for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination was prepared and published. The report covers the period January-March 2022, and in order to graphically present the findings, an [infographic](#) was also prepared.

In May 2022, the [policy paper](#) titled as “Bullying, discrimination and hate speech among high school students” was prepared and published. The document offers an overview of the legal framework in this country, as well as the findings of the comprehensive research on the topics of ‘peer violence/ bullying, discrimination and hate speech’, with a focus on students in secondary schools in Skopje. In addition, the document provides recommendations for the main stakeholders and decision makers in North Macedonia, in order to raise awareness of the need for protective mechanisms to deal with peer violence, discrimination and hate speech among students.

On May 10, 2022, the [final conference](#) was held in order to present the realized project activities and prepared products.

FOR JUSTICE – MONITORING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR REFORM OF THE JUSTICE SECTOR 2022

Duration of the project: 01.06.2022 – 31.12.2022

Financed by the Foundation Open Society - Macedonia

The goal of the project was to increase the influence of civil society organizations in the process of judicial reforms, as a prerequisite for the protection of human rights and ensuring social justice

Specific goals within the project were the following:

1. Strengthening the process of monitoring the implementation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy (2017-2022) with a focus on its impact on the protection of human rights and the provision of social justice, as well as a contribution to the preparation of the future Strategy for the Justice Sector;
2. Promotion of participatory policy-making in the area of justice by using an inter-sectoral approach and cooperation with thematic networks and other civil society organizations;
3. Strengthening of advocacy activities based on evidence in the field of justice by civil society organizations.

In September 2022, the [Second Semi-Annual Monitoring Brief](#) was prepared and published, which contains the findings from the monitoring of the implementation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy 2017-2022. An [infographic](#) was prepared in order to graphically present the findings of the monitoring.

In November 2022, the [Analysis: Comprehensive Assessment of the Implementation of the Justice Sector Reform Strategy \(2017-2022\)](#) was published. The analysis aims to provide a comprehensive and independent assessment of this process and offer recommendations based on the findings, which could be incorporated into the next Justice Sector Reform Strategy.

During the implementation period of the project, the Blueprint group came out with reactions regarding several events in the judiciary, namely:

- [Reaction after the use of violence and hate speech at yesterday's protest;](#)
- [Insufficient transparency and oversights during the election of the Basic Public Prosecutor of the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption;](#)
- [Reaction regarding the discussion at the session of the Council of Public Prosecutors in relation to a publicly shared position by the Blueprint group on the election of Basic Public Prosecutor of the Basic Public Prosecutor's Office for Prosecuting Organized Crime and Corruption.](#)

MONITORING OF NATIONAL ACTIONS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

Duration of the project: 16.08.2021 – 15.08.2022

Financed by the Embassy of the United States in Skopje

The goal of the project was to monitor the implementation of the National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest (Anticorruption Strategy), through the realization of the Government measures and initiatives envisaged in the plan "Action 21".

In the auspices of the overall goal there were two specific objectives:

1. to assess the successfulness and promptness of the Government's steps towards combating corruption, in accordance with the Strategy and Action 21 and to provide conclusions and recommendations;
2. to raise awareness and knowledge about the importance of taking an active involvement in the elimination of corruption through the use of the national mechanisms and to raise awareness about the negative consequences of corruption among the general public.

In January 2022, the Institute for Human Rights signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) with the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption (SCPC). This memorandum solidified the already established successful cooperation and will for further joint contribution in securing and promoting human rights, recognizing corrupt actions, preventing corruption, detecting corrupt practices, sharing data and organizing joint activities.

In February 2022, the [First Monitoring Report](#) was prepared and published on the fulfillment of the Anti-Corruption Plan “Action 21” and the National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest for the period from March to December 2021, which measured the level of implementation of these documents and presentation of the open issues, gaps and shortcomings in the implementation of the planned steps. In order to graphically present the findings of the report, an infographic was prepared.

In April 2022, the [Second Monitoring Report](#) on the fulfillment of the Anti-Corruption Plan «Action 21» and the National Strategy for the Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest for the period from January to March 2022 was prepared and published. The focus in this report is on the results of the first year (2021) of the implementation of the National Strategy. In order to graphically present the findings of the report, an [infographic](#) was prepared.

In July 2022, a [video](#) titled “What is corruption?” was prepared and published.

In July 2022, the online [course](#) “Basics for the fight against corruption in the Republic of North Macedonia (RNM)” was published on the IHR Human Rights Academy. The course is intended for those who are interested in getting to know the legal framework for fighting corruption in the RNM, with the main international and European legal instruments and mechanisms for fighting corruption. Also, the course provides an overview of the institutions to which cases of corruption can be reported and their jurisdiction, as well as practical examples for recognizing corruption.

In August, the [Third Monitoring Report](#) on the fulfillment of the “Policy Plan for Good Governance” was published, which refers to the period from April to June 2022, in order to measure the level of implementation of the document and display the open issues, gaps and shortcomings in the implementation of the planned steps. In order to graphically present the findings of the report, an [infographic](#) was prepared.

In August, an [Analysis of national documents relevant to the fight against corruption](#) was published. The subject of the analysis is the monitoring of the implementation of the proposed measures and the activities undertaken in the fight against corruption, foreseen in the plan to fight against corruption of the Government “Action 21” and the National Strategy for the prevention of corruption and the conflict of interests of the State Commission for the Prevention of Corruption.

On September 29, 2022, a [final conference](#) was held to present and promote the implemented project activities and products.

Duration of the project: 01.05.2022 – 31.12.2022

Financed by the French Embassy in Skopje

The aim of the project was to increase the transparency of the Council of public prosecutors to the public and improve the effectiveness and accountability of the institution through evidence-based policy recommendations.

Within the framework of the project, two specific goals have been realized, namely:

1. To increase the transparency and accountability of the Council of Public Prosecutors; and
2. To initiate debate on the issues and challenges of the legal framework and policies and find appropriate solutions for the functioning of the Council for Public Prosecutors.

In September 2022, the [Quarterly Report on the work of the Council of Public Prosecutors](#) was published, which covers the period May-July 2022 and results from the continuous monitoring of the sessions of the Council of Public Prosecutors with the aim of increasing transparency and improving the efficiency and accountability of the institution.

In November 2022, a [workshop](#) on “Increasing the transparency of the public prosecution system of the Republic of North Macedonia” was held with representatives from the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Higher Public Prosecutor’s Office Skopje and the Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office Skopje with the aim of developing communication skills for the sake of greater transparency of the public prosecutor’s system, and in the direction of fulfilling the recommendations given in the Report of the European Commission on North Macedonia for 2022 and the Strategy for Reforms in the Justice Sector 2017-2022. The workshop discussed the possibilities for better development of communication skills in order to proactively publish information, openness and transparency in the work of the public prosecutor’s institutions.

In December 2022, an [expert debate](#) was organized, attended by the Ambassador of the Republic of France, H.E. Cyrille Baumgartner, representatives from the Council of Public Prosecutors, the Public Prosecutor’s Office of the Republic of North Macedonia, the Higher Public Prosecutor’s Offices Skopje, Shtip and Gostivar, representatives from the Basic Public Prosecutor’s Office Skopje, the Ministry of Justice, international and civic organizations, lawyers and academics. The expert debate aimed to initiate a discussion about the challenges faced by the public prosecutor’s system, as well as the need for possible amendments to the Law on Public Prosecution and the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors in order to better and more efficiently function public prosecutor institutions, familiarization and bringing the public closer to their scope of action.

In December 2022, a [policy paper](#) was prepared and published “Transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia”. The document offers an overview of the legal framework for transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the Council of Public Prosecutors of the Republic of North Macedonia, through an analysis of the Law on the Council of Public Prosecutors and the Law on Public Prosecution. The policy paper is based on previously implemented activities, such as continuous monitoring of the sessions of the Council of Public Prosecutors, the workshop and the expert debate, with the aim of better and more efficient functioning of the public prosecutor’s institutions and getting to know and bring the public closer to their scope of action.

Duration of the project: 01.01.2022 – 31.12.2022

Financed by the Delegation of the European Union in the Republic of North Macedonia

The main objective of the programme was to improve the access to justice for all, especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups of citizens in North Macedonia.

Within the framework of the programme several specific objectives were realized, such as:

- 1.** To facilitate protection against discrimination of marginalized groups of people by providing free legal aid;
- 2.** To raise awareness and promote education on human rights issues;
- 3.** To enhance the access to justice of citizens through monitoring relevant institutions using evidence-based analysis;
- 4.** To advocate proper legislation and policies regarding the human rights protection and rule of law in line with the EU acquis;
- 5.** To strengthen the capacities of the organization in policy monitoring, advocacy and achieving greater organization accountability and competence;

In 2022, the journal Legal Dialogue was published within the framework of this programme. In June 2022, the issue no. 25 of the journal Legal Dialogue was published, in which 5 papers were published that deal with various topics related to human rights and the rule of law in the Republic of North Macedonia, but also beyond.

On June 15, 2022, the Institute for Human Rights held a [focus group](#) with citizens from the area of the City of Skopje, where citizens shared problems in accessing justice and realization of their rights. The purpose of the focus group was to learn about the challenges faced by the largest number of citizens during daily administrative procedures, access to court and other state bodies, but also trust in the judiciary and the possibility of obtaining free legal aid.

On July 4 and 5, 2022, a [workshop](#) was held for the preparation of an organizational plan for advocacy of the Institute for Human Rights. The aim of the workshop was to strengthen the capacities of the Institute for Human Rights. The members of the Executive Office of the IHR, the members of the Management Board and some of the members of the IHR were present at the workshop.

In July 2022, [recommendations](#) were published for the improvement of legislation and practice in relation to the fulfillment of the obligation for equality.

On September 7, 2022, the Institute for Human Rights held a [focus group with citizens from the Polog region](#) where citizens shared problems in achieving access to justice and realization of their rights. The purpose of the focus group was to learn about the challenges faced by the largest number of citizens during daily administrative procedures, access to court and other state bodies, trust in the judiciary and the possibility of obtaining free legal aid.

On September 15 and 16, a second [workshop was held for the preparation of an organizational plan](#) for advocacy of the Institute for Human Rights. This activity is a continuation of the first workshop where the objectives of the organizational advocacy plan were identified. In addition, the workshop discussed the Action Plan of the Institute for Human Rights for 2023, as well as which activities will be an integral part of it.

In September 2022, the [First Semi-Annual Report of the monitoring of the work of the Judicial Council](#) for the period January-June 2022 was published. The report is divided into three main parts that refer to the transparency, effectiveness and efficiency of the Judicial Council.

In September 2022, the [Analysis - Legal subjectivity and exercise of rights from marital and extra-marital union](#) was published. The purpose of this legal analysis was to show the meaning and role of legal subjectivity, which the parties have, specifically in disputes for the protection of rights, legally provided for partners in the extramarital union as opposed to the same provided for the marital union and the problems that arise after the termination of the union or the divorce of the marriage, in the light of the legal regulation on this issue and the attitude of the judicial practice in the resolution of disputed relations.

In September 2022, the online [course on the Right to Privacy](#) was published on the IHR Human Rights Academy. This course offers opportunities to gain knowledge about why the right to privacy is important, what your rights are and how to protect yourself, the national and international legal framework for the right to privacy.

In November 2022, the [Survey Report - Access to Justice in North Macedonia](#) was published. The report was prepared on the basis of a conducted telephone survey regarding the citizens' public opinion and perception of access to justice in the Republic of North Macedonia. The purpose of the survey was to investigate the awareness and experiences of citizens with access to justice in the country, as well as problems and challenges in exercising rights before state authorities.

On November 23, 2022, the Institute for Human Rights held a [focus group with civil society organizations](#) at which CSO representatives shared experiences about the problems that citizens most often face when exercising their rights in administrative procedures.

In December 2022, the new issue no. 26 of the journal Legal Dialogue was published, which contains 8 papers dealing with various topics related to human rights and the rule of law.

In December 2022, a new online course was published at the IHR Academy titled: [Course on Integrating Equality into Programs and Policies](#). This course is intended for those who wish to educate themselves on the topic of equality and non-discrimination within the policy-making process.

In December 2022, the [Access to Justice Report for 2022](#) was prepared and published. The report contains data on free legal aid, collected data from held focus groups with citizens and civil society organizations on access to justice, especially regarding administrative justice, as well as data from a survey of a representative sample regarding the perception of citizens for access to justice.

In December 2022, the [Second Monitoring Report of the monitoring of the work of the Judicial Council](#) for the period July-December 2022 was published.

In December 2022, the online [Gender Equality Course](#) was published on the IHR Human Rights Academy. This course is intended for those who want to familiarize themselves with the basic concepts related to gender-based violence, the different forms of gender-based violence, why women are more susceptible to gender-based violence and which groups of women are more susceptible to gender-based violence.

Визуелизации:

[Infographic – Free legal aid](#)

[Video – Access to justice in the Republic of North Macedonia](#)

[Infographic – Access to justice in the Republic of North Macedonia](#)

[Infographic- Conclusions from the conducted focus groups with citizens on the topic access to justice](#)

MANAGEMENT BOARD OF THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The President of the Institute for Human Rights is Margarita Tsatsa Nikolovska. The Management Board is consisted of 7 members as follows:

Margarita Tsatsa Nikolovska – President of IHR

Agim Miftari – Vice-President of IHR

Vera Koco – member

Vanja Mihajlova – member

Igor Spirovski – member

Momir Maricik – member

Filip Medarski – member

ADVISORY BOARD OF THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Advisory Board of IHR consists of 13 members as follows:

1. Margarita Tsatsa Nikolovska
2. Agim Miftari
3. Vera Koco
4. Vanja Mihajlova
5. Mersel Bilalli
6. Milojka Kalkashlieva
7. Konstantin Hadji Lega
8. Irena Cuculoska
9. Sashe Dimovski
10. Macedonian Young Lawyers Association
11. Zharko Hadji Zafirov
12. Tatijana Temelkoska
13. Slavica Dimitrievska

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The executive office of IHR in 2022 was composed of 5 members who successfully implemented the planned activities of all projects in constant communication with the Management Board.

In 2022, the Institute for Human Rights continued the tradition of cooperation, support and training through the internship program. The internship program of the Institute aims to introduce young people to its work through education, training and research in the field of protection and promotion of human rights and the rule of law. The interns gain new knowledge and have the opportunity to get to know the work of the Institute up close so that in the future they can fight for the advancement and respect of human rights. In 2022, 3 interns were involved in the work of the IHR and actively contributed to the daily activities carried out by the Institute. As part of their work assignments, the interns participated in the free legal aid program, monitored sessions of the Judicial Council and the Council of Public Prosecutors, and conducted research on human rights-related topics.

