

**2021**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**



Институт за човекови права

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## INTRODUCTION

The Institute for Human Rights 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 of the situation, advocacy and organization of expert discussions within the legal profession and discussions for the general public.

In 2021, despite the challenges caused by the global pandemic, the Institute for Human Rights has successfully implemented project activities in constant communication with the Management Board, while adapting to the current circumstances related to the health crisis. The strategic priorities continued to focus on the judiciary and human rights, legal certainty, the promotion of human rights and freedoms, equality and non-discrimination, the fight against corruption and participation in the EU accession negotiation process. Monitoring the work of the Constitutional Court, the Judicial Council, the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption and other state institutions remained in the focus of the work of the Institute for Human Rights

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

- follows the situation regarding the enjoyment of human rights and freedoms by monitoring and analyzing all relevant processes in the country;
- raises awareness among relevant institutions, organizations and other stakeholders about the need to establish and build an effective mechanism for the promotion, guarantee and protection of human rights and freedoms;
- informs the citizens about their rights in cases of discrimination;
- initiates discussions on relevant issues and problems that directly affect the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms of man and citizens in RSM, both in the professional and general public.

This annual report refers to the work of the Institute for Human Rights, which over the past year has worked tirelessly to improve the human rights situation, promote equality and non-discrimination, recognize corruption and show transparency and accountability of state institutions and bodies whose work the Institute for Human Rights continuously monitors it. This report aims to present the overall activities of the Institute for Human Rights through the implementation of activities in each individual project, providing free legal aid, the Institute's contribution to the promotion of science through the publication of the professional journal Legal Dialogue, publishing educational courses on IHR Academy for e-learning, 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

## MANAGEMENT BOARD OF THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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

Kosta Petrovski - member

Filip Medarski - member

## ADVISORY BOARD OF THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Advisory Board of IHR is consisted of 13 members as follows:

1. Margarita Tsatsa Nikolovska
2. Agim Miftari
3. Vera Koco
4. Vanja Mihajlova
5. Mersel Biljali
6. Milojka Kalkashlieva
7. Konstantin Hadji Lega
8. Irena Cuculoska
9. Sahe 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 2021 was comprised of 7 employees. Despite the challenges imposed as a result of the global pandemic, the Executive Office successfully implements the planned activities of all projects in constant communication with the Management Board.

In 2021, the Institute for Human Rights continued the tradition of cooperation, support and training through the volunteer program. The volunteer program of the Institute for Human Rights aims to introduce young people to its work through education, training and research. Volunteers gain new knowledge and the opportunity to get acquainted with the work of the Institute so that in the future they can fight for the promotion and respect of human rights. In 2021, 2 volunteers will be involved in the work of the IHR.

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In the period from April to June 2021, the student on master studies Pyke Haans from the Radboud University in the Netherlands joined the Executive Office of IHR and made an active contribution to research conducted by the Institute in that period. As part of its work, Pyke conducted research on detecting weaknesses in the implementation of the human rights-based approach during the Covid-19 crisis in the Netherlands and how consociational systems facilitate corruption. In the period from October to December 2021, Armina Sinani joined the Executive Office and as a volunteer helped the team of the Institute in providing primary legal aid.

## INSTITUTE THROUGH NUMBERS



**821**

REGISTERED USERS ON IHR  
ACADEMY FOR E-LEARNING



**5**

PUBLISHED COURSES ON IHR  
ACADEMY FOR E-LEARNING



**7**

PUBLICATIONS



**98,500**  
VIDEO VIEWS



**8**

VIDEOS



**5**

MONITORING REPORTS



**1**

HYBRID CONFERENCE



**11**

WORKSHOPS  
AND TRAININGS



**5**

LIVE  
CONFERENCES



**24**

MENTOR'S MEETINGS  
WITH TEACHERS



**2**

SIGNED MEMORANDUM  
OF UNDERSTANDING



**9**

HELD MEETINGS WITH  
REPRESENTATIVES FROM STATE  
INSTITUTIONS

## ACADEMY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The concept for the creation of the Academy for Human Rights stems from the vision of the Institute for Human Rights for education in order to promote and protect human rights. Because education is key to securing, promotion, advancement and protection of human rights, the Academy will offer free courses on a variety of topics to help registered users enrich their human rights knowledge.

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 at the Academy is divided into a number of chapters and lessons within the chapter, after which the user answers questions so that he/she can move on to the next chapter. In this way, users, in addition to gaining certain knowledge, have the chance to check and determine its knowledge through questions at the end of each chapter.

In 2021, the following courses were published at the IHR Academy for Human Rights:

- **The course on accountability, efficiency and transparency of the judiciary** consists of 7 chapters. The course was prepared within the project "Joint Commitment for better Ainvovement in the Judiciary" funded by the EU through the Sector for Central Financing and Contracting, at the Ministry of Finance (hereinafter: CFSD), within the IPA II program.
- **The digital course for teaching controversial issues** is a product prepared within the project "Controversial issues in the school curriculum - developing effective practices and approaches in teaching and learning", funded by the European Union and the Council of Europe. The digital course is a resource for professional development of teachers, based on the experiences from teaching trainings on controversial issues, successfully piloted with teachers from four different schools and realized practical activities with students, using methods and strategies that promote open and dignified dialogue.
- **The course for implementation of the human rights-based approach during the health crisis** was prepared within the project "Implementation of the human rights-based approach during the COVID-19 crisis" financially supported by the Balkan Trust for Democracy, a project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States and USAID. The course consists of 4 chapters that deal with topics related to the principles on which human rights-basd approach is founded such as: the right to health and health care, the importance of implementing the approach based on human rights in creating strategies and policies on health crisis and the prohibition of discrimination and restrictions in dealing with health crises.
- **The course for teachers on discrimination, bullying and hate speech** was prepared within the project "Protection against discrimination, bullying and hate speech" financially supported by the German Embassy in Skopje. The course consists of 3 chapters and is intended for teachers and professionals and aims to introduce them to discrimination, bullying and hate speech in schools. With the course, teachers and professionals will gain basic skills for: recognizing and dealing with stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination in school and protection mechanisms, recognizing and dealing with bullying and acting in cases of bullying and recognizing and dealing with school hate speech and protection mechanisms.

- **The course for students - discrimination, bullying and hate speech** in schools is prepared within the project "Protection against discrimination, bullying and hate speech. This course is intended for students and aims to introduce discrimination, peer violence (bullying) and hate speech in schools.

Until the preparation of this report, on the Academy for Human Rights are registered 821 users and issued 868 certificates for successfully completed courses. Upon successful completion of each course, a certificate is generated for the user.

## HUMAN RIGHTS PLATFORM

The Human Rights Platform is another tool developed by the Institute for Human Rights. This complex tool has a comprehensive approach to human rights, i.e. 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 website of the Institute for Human Rights.

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 national and international level, relevant law and international documents.

The second segment focuses on the **Human Rights-Based Approach**, i.e. what it covers, 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. How much do you know about your rights is a quiz within the Human Rights Platform. 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. In 2021, 4 blog posts were published on current topics in the field of human rights.

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 2021, the Institute for Human Rights, as a registered association for the provision of primary legal aid, continued to provide free 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 which consists 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 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 2021, a total of 45 people requested primary legal aid from the Institute for Human Rights. 27 people received general legal information, while 18 people were given general legal advice. At the same time, 2 requests for secondary legal aid were submitted to the regional units of the Ministry of Justice by persons who came to the Institute and asked for help in completing the requests for secondary legal aid. One of these requests was approved by the Ministry of Justice and a lawyer was assigned to the person to represent him in court proceeding.

From the analysis of the received requests for primary legal aid, it can be concluded that the requests addressed for exercising social protection rights (what are the conditions for achieving guaranteed minimum assistance, child allowance, etc.) and labor relations (conditions for termination of employment, payment of arrears of wages, etc.) continue to prevail.

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 concluded that the number of people asking what constitutes free legal aid has decreased. This points to the fact that people are gradually getting acquainted with the Law on Free Legal Aid, the campaigns additionally have a successful impact in elaborating the citizens what constitutes the primary and secondary legal aid and how and where they can request it.

## LEGAL DIALOGUE

The professional law journal "Legal Dialogue" is published in order to develop, promote and exchange legal thought between theorists and practitioners in the field of rule of law and human rights. For that purpose, the law journal publishes:

1. Scientific papers that will reflect the theoretical aspects of topics related to human rights and rule of law that apply to the Republic of Northern Macedonia, but also in general to other countries in Europe and beyond and
2. Scientific papers that will analyse from a practical aspect the specific judgments of the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights.

The scientific papers published in the Legal Dialogue are expected to have an impact on resolving dilemmas regarding specific issues at the national level, while above all the analysis of the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights will enable the correct application of the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights in the national legislation of the Republic of North Macedonia.

The Editorial Board of Legal Dialogue is consisted of 5 members including:

- Mancho Mitevski – Editor in Chief
- Vesna Stefanovska, PhD - Associate Editor
- Bepa Kocjo – (member of the Management of IHR)
- Kosta Petrovski (member of the Management Board of IHR)
- Angelina Stanojoska, PhD – (Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law “St. Kliment Ohridski” University - Bitola)

The purpose of the Editorial Board is in each issue to be dominated by different topics written by a wide range of experts in their fields whose papers will initiate dialogue and exchange of views. Papers by masters 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 2021, two issues of the professional law journal "Legal Dialogue" were published, issue 23 in June and issue 24 in December. These two editions, like the previous ones, continue the tradition of the professional law journal "Legal Dialogue" to be more recognizable by the variety of topics, segments that analyze human rights and the rule of law provided and guaranteed by state institutions. The published papers were written by current and former judges of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Court, professors, assistant professors, postgraduates, doctoral students and experts from civil society organizations. This actually fulfills the goal of the Editorial Board in the professional law journal to prevail various topics written by a wide range of experts in their fields

In both issues of Legal Dialogue for 2021, 19 papers have been published written by 27 authors (and co-authors).

## CONTRIBUTION OF THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

In 2021, the Institute for Human Rights actively participated and contributed in working groups and coordination bodies on various topics related to human rights, as follows:

### National Coordinative Body for Free Legal Aid

In 2021, the National Coordinative Body held several meetings to discuss the challenges related to the implementation of the Law on Free Legal Aid, the current situation with the Referral Protocol, as well as a debate on the legal basis and practical issues related to filing complaints through regional offices instead of directly to the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) in order to speed up the procedure. These meetings were organized with the support of the Council of Europe in the framework of the Support for Better Access to Better Free Legal Aid Services in North Macedonia, project, which is part of the programme Horizontal Instrument for the Western Balkans and Turkey II, a joint project 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 related to providing primary legal aid in practice as well as the dilemmas related to filling out applications for secondary legal aid.

### Working group for the Law on protection from workplace harassment (mobbing)

Members of the Management Board and the Executive Office of the Institute for Human Rights actively participated in the working group for preparation of the new Law on Protection from Harassment at Work in order to harmonize with the regulations of the European Union, to remove or reformulate provisions that could not be implemented in practice as well as to harmonize the new text of the law with other laws such as the Law on Labor Relations, the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination and the Law on Misdemeanors. The meetings of the working group will continue in the next 2022 in order to finalize the draft law. This working group was initiated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy and includes representatives of civil society organizations, the Federation of Trade Unions of RNM and other concerned organizations and state bodies.

### Membership in the Management Board of the Project for Promotion of Diversity and Equality in North Macedonia

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 actors to better address issues related to anti-discrimination, the fight against hate speech and the protection of the rights of LGBTI people in line with the standards and recommendations set by the Council of Europe. The main goal of the Board of Directors is to monitor the implementation of the project as well as to provide guidance for the implementation of activities. Representatives of the Institute for Human Rights attended the meetings of the Management Board of the Project for Promotion of Diversity and Equality in North Macedonia, which were held in 2021.

### **Membership to the Platform of Civic Organizations for Fight against Corruption**

In November 2021, the Institute for Human Rights became a member of the Platform of Civic Organizations for the Fight against Corruption. The platform 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 North Macedonia. As the Institute for Human Rights has experience in implementing projects related to the detection of corruption and corrupt practices, a logical step was to join the Platform in order to share experiences, but also joint action in the field of anti-corruption

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

The Blueprint Group for Judicial Reforms is an informal network of civil society organizations working and operating in the field of justice in recent years. The Institute for Human Rights together with the Institute for European Policy, the Coalition for Fair Trials, the Macedonian Young Lawyers Association, the Center for Legal Research and Analysis, the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and the Open Society Foundation-Macedonia within its activities during 2021, among other things, came out with reactions and their views on several current events, happenings or statements that referred to deviations from the principles of the rule of law. Announcements are available at <http://blueprint.org.mk/%d0%b0nouncements/>

## PROJECTS WHICH WERE IMPLEMENTED IN 2021 YEAR

### TOGETHER FOR COMBATTING CORRUPTION

Duration of the project: 01.01.2018-30.04.2021 година  
Funded by the European Union

The project "Together for combating corruption" is implemented by SCOOP, as the project leader, and the Institute for Human Rights (IHR) and Medium, as partners, in order to improve the capacity of the civil society sector to fulfill the role of controllers of the work of state bodies, purpose of lawful and transparent performance of the function and prevention of risks of corruption and abuse of office.

In 2021, the **final activities** were implemented within the fourth year of project implementation.

In April 2021, the **Analysis of the National and Comparative Legal Framework relevant for prevention of corruption was finalized**. The analysis addressed the national legal framework for the prevention of corruption with a focus on the civil legal aspects that define and regulate corruption. The comparative aspect addressed the relevant international instruments that exist in the fight against corruption of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Union and the OECD. At the same time, a review of the legal framework of the neighboring Balkan countries in the fight against corruption was made, highlighting the positive experiences and detected mechanisms of Montenegro and Slovenia. The purpose of this analysis is to detect weaknesses in the Macedonian legal system in the fight against corruption and to identify the positive experiences of neighboring Balkan countries that could be incorporated in the form of changes in existing legislation. At the same time, it is necessary to work on recognizing corruption, which is in fact the basic precondition for successful fight against corruption. A key factor in this fight is the readiness of each individual to respond appropriately when faced with an act of corruption.

On 22 April 2021, **the Final Conference** for presenting the realized project activities was held on the ZOOM platform. More than 40 participants attended the conference. 14 speakers addressed the conference, which was divided into three panels: (1) The challenges of investigative journalism in the fight against corruption in a pandemic; (2) The level of cooperation between NGOs and investigative journalists and (3) Presentation of the Analysis of the national and comparative legal framework relevant for prevention of corruption.

The project completed its implementation on April 30, 2021.

## CONSTITUTIONAL COURT - GUARANTOR OF THE RULE OF LAW

Duration of the project: 01.09.2020 - 30.09.2021

Funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Skopje.

The Constitutional Court as a *sui generis* institution stands out in the way it safeguards the values of constitutionalism through the use of checks and by means of the right of individual appeals for human rights protection and initiatives for determination of constitutionality and legality of legal acts. The Court is a guarantor of the Constitution and one of the key actors ensuring compliance with the norms and values enshrined in the constitutional text. However, in recent years the Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia has shown numerous weaknesses in its functioning, due to the fact that it does not provide full protection of guaranteed human rights and fundamental freedoms of the person and citizen in proceedings before the Constitutional Court and moreover in delivering some decisions upon submitted initiatives for determination of constitutionality and legality of legal acts that were questionable to the general public.

The aim of the project is to strengthen the visibility of the work of the Constitutional Court and to enhance the protection of human rights and freedoms and the same time to monitor the Constitutional Court's performance in respect of submitted initiatives for determination of constitutionality and legality of legal acts and other issues which fall within the scope of the Constitutional Court's jurisdiction.

The Institute for Human Rights within the Project in 2021 implemented the following activities:

Based on the pre-developed Methodology, three monitoring reports regarding the work of the Constitutional Court were prepared. After the end of each session of the Constitutional Court, the observer that followed the session wrote a short report on the course of the session and adopted decisions, after which the data from the report were analyzed, together with the other relevant findings and were incorporated in the quarterly report which was published on the IHR's website of the in Macedonian, English, and Albanian. The reports provided greater access to data, and the stakeholders, media, legal professionals, and the general public could use a new source of relevant information for the monitored sessions and the work of the Constitutional Court. Also, the reports have been incorporated into the In-depth analysis as a basis in assessment of the work of the Constitutional court and recommendations that arose from the main findings.

Additional information about the quartal reports can be found on the following links:

- [Report on the work of the Constitutional Court October 2020 - January 2021](#)
- [Report on the work of the Constitutional Court February - April 2021](#)
- [Report on the work of the Constitutional Court May – July 2021](#)

The project team during the implementation period monitored 35 sessions of the Constitutional Court in person. Out of these total number of sessions, 27 were public sessions 7 were preparatory sessions and 1 was a public hearing.

Four official meetings were held with the representatives of the Constitutional court. Tangible data and information for the functioning (positive aspects and shortcomings) of the Institution were collected during the held meetings with the representatives of the Constitutional Court.

**Functional analysis** of the organizational structure of the Constitutional Court was prepared by prof. Temelko Risteski. The analysis identifies the challenges and problems from the organizational and functional point of view of the Constitutional Court, with a focus on staff issues (human resources), administrative and budgetary independence, normative compliance, premises and logistics, IT - technical possibilities for greater

transparency. With the functional analysis, concrete conclusions and recommendations were provided to improve the functioning and achievement of the goals of the institution.

For the needs of the Project and the In-Depth Analysis, three events (round tables) were organized with the presence of the participants in person and remotely via ZOOM, live-streamed on IHR's Facebook page. The aim of the round tables was to enable an expert discussion among judges of the Constitutional Court with the relevant stakeholders with regard to appropriate conclusions and recommendations to be drafted.

- The first meeting was organized with the judges and professional staff of the Constitutional Court and members of the academic community and relevant authorities in order to be discussed current issues and challenges of the work of the Court and suggestions were drafted for improvement of the situation.
- The second and third round table were organized jointly as a one-day event, with the judges and the professional staff of the Constitutional Court and journalists, as well as representatives of civil society organizations and lawyers. Two main topics have been discussed at both meetings: the current situation and challenges related to the transparency of the Constitutional Court and cooperation with journalists; and requests for protection of human rights submitted by civil society organizations and lawyers, the effectiveness of the legal remedy and the willingness and openness for the cooperation of the Court with them.

**In-depth analysis of the Constitutional Court** has been prepared. The main purpose of the analysis is to provide answers to the legal dilemmas that exist in theory and practice, and are related to the position and function of the Constitutional Court, the requirements for initiating proceedings, the legal outcome of its decisions, as well as their execution and the need for increased protection of human rights and freedoms before the Court. The analysis envisages the specific institutes that identify the challenges facing the Constitutional Court, and as a result, concrete measures are proposed to improve the situation and to fully exercise the competencies of the Court.

The awareness-raising campaign was conducted, as products of the campaign 5 infographics on the work of the Constitutional Court were created, as well as a **promotional video** on the procedure for submitting requests for protection of constitutional human rights.

**Final conference** for a presentation of the project's achievements and main outputs was organized. The main findings and recommendations from the In-depth analysis "Constitutional Court of the Republic of North Macedonia - experiences and perspectives" were presented, as well as the data and conclusions from the monitoring reports.

The implementation of the project was completed in September 2021.

## JOINT INVOLVEMENT FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE OF THE JUDICIARY

Duration of the project: 22.12.2018 - 21.09.2021

Funded by the Sector for Central Financing and Contracting at the Ministry of Finance and the British Embassy in Skopje

The aim of the project is to jointly contribute to increasing the influence of civil society organizations in judicial reform through the joint involvement of civil society organizations and professional associations in evaluating the work of the legal sector, as well as effective cooperation with all stakeholders in the judiciary. Specific goals within the project are:

- Increasing the joint commitment and active participation towards better results in the judiciary;
- Strengthening the cooperation and capacity of judicial professionals for a more effective, accountable and transparent judiciary and
- Raising awareness of the achievements of the judiciary in order to increase trust in the judiciary.

In 2021, the Institute for Human Rights implemented the following activities:

**Meetings of the Advisory Working Group that operates within the project "Joint Commitment to Better Performance of the Judiciary"**. In 2021, the fifth, sixth and seventh meetings of the Advisory Group were held. These meetings functioned on the basis of the developed Methodology for monitoring the changes in the legislation and their impact on the judiciary. The recommendations and minutes were shared with all stakeholders.

**Prepared Joint Protocol for unified implementation and operation in the sector "Justice" (with a focus on the judicial administration)**. The protocol is available in Macedonian and Albanian and in printed form.

**Prepared Policy Paper on the transparency, accountability and effectiveness of the judiciary with a special focus on courts and judicial administration**. The Policy Paper on Transparency, Accountability and Effectiveness of the Judiciary seeks to answer the question of whether the first framework in the Republic of North Macedonia, which regulates the principles of transparency, accountability and effectiveness in the judiciary, is in line with international standards and recommendations and aims to suggested recommendations for its improvement.

**Course on accountability, efficiency and transparency of the judiciary**. The course is available at the following link by logging in to the Academy for Human Rights: <https://ihracademy.org.mk/>

**Workshops on accountability, effectiveness and transparency in the judiciary**. In 2021, the fifth and sixth workshops on accountability, effectiveness and transparency in the judiciary were held for participants from the area of the Appellate Court in Skopje. During the two-day events, the present judges and the court administration had the opportunity to share their experiences from the daily practice of the courts.

**Prepared materials and products for wider public information:**

**Video** – The court official in the service of the citizens

**Poster** – The court official in the service of citizens

**Video** - The judiciary in times of pandemic



## FOR JUSTICE – MONITORING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY FOR REFORM OF THE JUSTICE SECTOR 2021

Duration of the project: 1 March 2021 – 31 December 2021

Funded by the Foundation Open Society Macedonia

This project is realized within the Blueprint platform which through the current monitoring of the Judicial Reform Strategy (2017-2022) has strengthened its professional expertise and has positioned itself as a key player in the civil sector that participates in reforms in this sector. The purpose of this project is to increase the influence of civil society organizations in the process of judicial reform as a precondition for the protection of human rights and the provision of social justice.

### Short-term goals:

- Strengthen the process of monitoring the implementation of the Strategy for Judicial Sector Reform (2017-2022) with a focus on its impact on the protection of human rights and the provision of social justice
- Promoting participatory policy making in the field of justice through cooperation with thematic networks.
- Strengthening evidence-based advocacy activities in the field of justice by civil society organizations.

The Institute for Human Rights within the Project in 2021 implemented the following activities:

Participation in an objective and comprehensive assessment of the judicial reform process and its impact on human rights and social justice by developing:

- Three quarterly monitoring briefs;
- Annual shadow report for implementation of judicial reforms in 2021;
- Strengthened cooperation between civil society organizations and thematic networks that enables the identification and articulation of their needs and requirements in the process of judicial reform by establishing cooperation between the Blueprint platform and other networks working on health, education and social protection and
- Two policy papers have been prepared, namely the Criminal Law Protection of the Environment and the Crimes against health.

## SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND TEACHING CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES – DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING APPROACHES

Duration of the project: 3 March 2021 – 20 November 2021

Funded by: European Union & Council of Europe / Democratic and Inclusive School Culture in Operation (DISCO)

The overall aim of this project was to contribute to the strengthening of democracy in schools through the build-up of teachers' confidence and competences to effectively teach controversial issues.

The specific objectives of the project:

1. To raise the awareness of education stakeholders and students on the importance of providing opportunities for student to engage with controversial issues; and
2. To empower teachers and education professionals to use a range of teaching and learning approaches to teach controversial issues.

The following project activities were realized in 2021:

**Four pilot schools were chosen from the Skopje region, two elementary and two high schools.** They chose schools were:

1. OOU "Vera Tziriviri – Trena" Skopje
2. OOU "Joakim Krchovski" Volkovo
3. SUGS "Georgi Dimitrov" Skopje
4. SUGS "Rade Jovchevski – Korchagin" Skopje

Each school was represented by one school team composed of teachers and school staff. Each team was composed of five to six members.

**Two coordination meetings were conducted** with the school teams, the IHR team and the project experts that were focused on exchanging experiences and peer to peer learning in order to achieve the project objectives, discuss common problems in the implementation of the proposed activities and identify possible strategies for addressing the problems that need additional actions and improvement.

**Four online workshops were conducted with the members of the school teams** in order to build their capacities in using the student-centered learning and inquiry-based approaches to teaching and learning about controversial issues and developing student competences for democratic culture.

After the realization of the workshops, **the school teams conducted school-based trainings in each of the pilot schools**, with the support of the project facilitators, in order to disseminate successful practices to all teachers on a school level. The role of school team was to help the staff to make a connection between controversial issues and the subject they teach in order to bring more systemic changes in the schools.

**Follow-up/mentoring activities were conducted on a school basis throughout the implementation of the project** in order to support and mentor the members of the school teams for the successful implementation of the teaching and learning approaches on controversial issues and the development of the students' competences on democratic culture. As part of the mentoring activities, each teacher implemented a lesson plan focused on controversial issues with their students.

**A self-evaluation tool** was created whose purpose is to allow teachers to systematically reflect on their status and progress in their knowledge development, and the process of understanding and planning the activities with their students and the implementation of the teaching and learning approaches on controversial issues.

**A handbook for teachers with good practices on controversial issues was developed**, titled "[Methods and approaches for teaching controversial issues in primary and secondary education](#)". The handbook is composed of three parts: (1) theoretical background, (2) methods and activities for teaching controversial issues, and (3) lesson plans created by teachers from the four pilot schools that were implemented with students and that represent good practices on teaching controversial.

**An Online course for teaching controversial issues was created**, which is available on the [Academy of the Institute for Human Rights](#) in Macedonian and Albanian. The online course aims to guide the reader through the process of self-learning in a way that encourages them to think about a number of aspects of teaching controversial issues and it offers practical approaches and activities that they can use with their students.

**Three infographics, three visual guides, two videos, and four GIFs were created** in order to promote the project and raise awareness of the importance of including controversial issues in teaching. The [infographics](#) and the [visual guides](#) were focused more on the theoretical aspects of controversial issues, while the videos and the GIFs were more focused on the experiences of teachers and students with controversial issues in the [classroom](#) and their recommendations.

Video: [Talking with students on the topic of "Controversial Issues"](#) (available in MKD, ALB and ENG)

Video: [What topic can be controversial?](#) (available in MKD, ALB and ENG)

**A final conference was organized, titled "Controversial topics in the classroom: To avoid or to discuss?"**, in collaboration with the Association Leaders for Education, Activism and Development (LEAD), with the aim of presenting the outputs realized within the projects implemented by IHR and LEAD. The conference was attended by primary and secondary school teachers from all over the country, representatives of the Ministry for Education and Science and the Bureau for Development of Education, the experts who were part of the projects, as well as international and non-governmental organizations working to promote education for democratic citizenship and human rights.

## HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO COVID-19 CRISIS

Duration of the project: 01.04.2021-31.03.2022 година

Funded by: Balkan Trust for Democracy, project financed by German Marshall Fund of US and USAID

The project "Human Rights-Based Approach to COVID-19 Crisis" financially supported by Balkan Trust for Democracy, project financed by German Marshall Fund of US and USAID began with implementation on 1 April 2021 year.

The implementation of human rights-based approach (HRBA) in realization of health policies should contribute towards greater protection of human rights related to health crisis such as: freedom of movement, right to education, free access to information, prohibition of discrimination etc.

In the past period, the Government measures related to Covid-19 were continuously monitored and several project activities were implemented.

In May 2021 **matrix methodology has been finalized** for monitoring the restrictions introduced in times of pandemic through the most important pillars for HRBA.

During the same period, **two focus groups were held with 30 representatives of civil society organizations** working in the field of human rights in order to convey through their experiences and examples the implementation of HRBA during the COVID-19 crisis. At the same time, the focus groups discussed the challenges and problems detected in the implementation of the HRBA in our country in conditions of global pandemic, human rights violations and discriminatory procedures.

In September 2021, **the First Monitoring Report on the application of the HRBA during the health crisis was published.** The report analyzes the three most affected rights in the past period: the right to health, the right to education and freedom of movement. In the analyzed period it can be concluded that the measures adopted by the Government and the competent institutions are necessary and proportionate. However, policy-making and decision-making do not take into account the specific conditions in which persons with disabilities, women, children and especially victims of domestic and gender-based violence find themselves, as well as the realization of their right to health and health care.

In November 2021, the **Course for implementation of the human rights-based approach** was finalized, which contains 4 chapters that talk about the importance of implementing the human rights-based approach during a health crisis, realization of the right to health and health care and prohibition of discrimination and restrictions.

In December 2021, **the research on the challenges and problems in the realization of the right to education during the global pandemic was completed.** Electronic distribution of questionnaires intended for teachers and students in high schools of the City of Skopje was performed in order to share their experiences in the realization of the right to education, i.e. from their perspective how the pandemic affected the quality of education, conditions for teaching activities and the whole process of distance learning. 15 high schools, 1699 students and 241 teachers participated in the research.

## PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION, BULLYING AND HATE SPEECH

Duration of the project: 15 May 2021 – 15 May 2022

Funded by the German Embassy in Skopje

The aim of the project is to emphasize the importance of preventing and protecting against discrimination (with a special focus on the following grounds: sexual orientation, gender identity, social and gender inequality), hate speech and "bullying" among high school students.

Specific objectives within the framework of the project are the following:

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 with 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 2021, the Institute for Human Rights implemented the following activities:

**Monitoring of the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination.** In monitoring the work of the Commission, emphasis is placed on the following evaluation criteria: effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

In 2021, two monitoring reports were prepared from the monitoring of the work of the Commission:

- **Monitoring report for the period July-September 2021;**
- **Monitoring report for the period October-December 2021.**

At the same time, two infographics were prepared with the data obtained from the monitoring reports.

### **Published research results on the impact of social and mass media.**

The main goal of the **research** is to assess the influence of the media in creating public opinion among high school students and the possibility of building stereotypes, discrimination, bullying and hate speech. The data for this analysis were obtained through descriptive empirical research, using a predominantly qualitative analysis.

**Online courses for teachers and students on discrimination, peer bullying and hate speech in schools.** The courses are available by registering at the IHL Academy for Human Rights available through registration at the following link: <https://ihracademy.org.mk/>.

### **Awareness-raising campaign to combat discrimination, bullying and hate speech in schools.**

Posters and stickers were made to raise awareness against discrimination, bullying and hate speech in schools. They are shared in high schools in the City of Skopje. Three short videos on discrimination, bullying and hate speech have been prepared. Visualizations have been made for what constitutes discrimination, bullying and hate speech.

## MONITORING OF NATIONAL ACTIONS FOR COMBATING CORRUPTION

Duration of the project: 16 August 2021 - 15 August 2022

Funded by: US Embassy in Skopje

The goal of the project is to monitor the implementation of the Anticorruption Strategy, through the fulfilment of the Government measures and initiatives envisaged in the anticorruption plan "Action 21".

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

1. To assess the successfulness and promptness of the taken Government steps towards combating corruption, according to 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 by the usage of the national mechanisms and the negative consequences of corruption among the general public.

The Institute for Human Rights within the Project in 2021 implemented the following activities:

**Monitoring of national activities in the fight against corruption and gathering of materials and information in order to prepare the first monitoring report** that will be published in February 2022 together along with the infographic that will summarize the most important segments of this monitoring period. Institutions in focus are the Government of the Republic of North Macedonia and the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption - SCPC together with the Anti-Corruption Plan "Action 21" and the National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption and Conflict of Interest. The purpose of the monitoring report is to assess the success and timeliness of the government steps taken in the fight against corruption in accordance with the Anti-Corruption Strategy and the Government Action Plan "Action 21". The monitoring report is divided into three basic areas: (i) legislative changes; (ii) digitalization of administrative processes and technical equipment; (iii) increase of staff and strengthening the capacities of the institutions, as well as additional activities that are not foreseen in the two documents, but were undertaken in order to combat corruption.

**Two meetings were held with representatives of the Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister for Anti-Corruption, Sustainable Development, and Human Resources** in order to discuss the implementation of the Government Plan "Action 21". Moreover, it was discussed to deepen our cooperation and for that purpose, the Cabinet of the Deputy Prime Minister has appointed a person with whom we could be in constant communication in order to share all information relevant to the implementation of the government plan and the achieved measures.

**Meetings were held with the Public Prosecutor of the Republic of North Macedonia Mr. Ljubomir Joveski and the President of the State Commission for Prevention of Corruption Ms. Biljana Ivanovska** where we discussed sharing information and furthering our collaboration regarding the implementation of the Government Plan "Action 21" and the National Strategy for Prevention of Corruption. Additionally, at both meetings with we agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the relevant institutions.