

OSCE, OHR, EUD/EUSR, Council of Europe and UN call for implementation of BiH Law on Prohibition of Discrimination



Ahead of 10 December, International Human Rights Day, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Office of High Representative, the Delegation of the European Union to BiH/EU Special Representative in BiH, the Council of Europe Office in BiH, United Nations Office of the Resident Coordinator wish to express their strong support to the institutions of BiH in implementing the BiH Law on Prohibition of Discrimination (LPD).

“We call for greater efforts from authorities at both entity and State levels to ensure that the LPD continues to move from paper into practice, in the interests of all citizens of BiH,” said Fletcher M. Burton, Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH. “The explicit prohibition of discrimination sends out a clear signal – any and all forms of discrimination have no place in contemporary BiH society.”

Ambassador Peter Sorensen, Head of the EU Delegation to BiH/EUSR, said that “One of the biggest human rights challenges in BiH remains the discrimination and the inclusion of vulnerable groups – Roma and minorities – but also women and children, persons with disabilities, returnees as well as LGBTI communities. For the EU, the existence and functioning of an independent and accountable Institution of Human Rights Ombudsman/Ombudsmen of BiH is crucial in tackling discrimination. All relevant parties should support BiH authorities to meet the obligations from the Law.”

Currently, the number of recommendations by the BiH Ombudsman for Human Rights, implemented by the authorities at the local, entity and state levels remains low.

“The elimination of discrimination in all fields is a central goal of the Dayton Peace Accords. The enjoyment of human rights and freedoms recognised under the Constitution and international agreements must be secured to all citizens of BiH without discrimination on any grounds. It is the starting point upon which all else rests”, said Valentin Inzko, the High Representative.

Florence Bauer, Acting Resident Coordinator in BiH said that prohibition of discrimination on all grounds is embedded in all core UN and regional human rights treaties that BiH is signatory to. “We pledge to see these international provisions translated into local policies and practices of all office holders in BiH, particularly service providers at the very local level of authorities”.

Mary Ann Hennessey, Head of the Council of Europe Office in BiH, said that the role of an independent and efficient judiciary, and timely enforcement of judgments, is particularly important for the implementation in practice of the admirable values of LPD. “The European Convention on Human Rights, in Article 14 and Protocol 12 and the case law of the European Court of Human Rights, provide guidance for the LPD”.