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Mapping of national human rights structures in Croatia

Prepared by the Office of the Ombudswoman of Croatia



REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA
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1. INTRODUCTION

This analysis maps the national human rights structures, giving an overview of a broad institutional framework of a number of state-related bodies, which are foreseen to play a role in strengthening enforcement of human rights nationally or fostering human rights.

For the purposes of this mapping, we have focused on several types of structures that exist in national context – first, governmental bodies focusing on fundamental rights have been identified, including those that are standing inter-sectoral bodies set up to cover specific issue. Secondly, parliamentary bodies focusing on fundamental rights were mapped and thirdly statutory human rights bodies were identified.

Hence, the map of the human rights structure in Croatia presented in this analysis has followed the proposed division of relevant bodies in three categories, e.g. governmental or parliamentary bodies, independent bodies with a wide fundamental rights remit, and other actors relevant for specific fundamental rights. When it comes to the first category, with regard to governmental bodies or parliamentary bodies, it has been limited only to those bodies, which function within the structure of government or parliament.

2. GOVERNMENTAL BODIES FOCUSING ON FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

The Government of the Republic of Croatia exercises and is responsible for executive power. The structure of executive power in the Republic of Croatia contains a diverse system of bodies whose purpose is to protect and/or promote human rights. Additionally, within the Government a **Deputy Prime Minister**, stemming from national minority coalition partners, is responsible for protection and promotion of human rights.

The Government has set up governmental offices to support its expert work on fundamental rights:

- Governmental Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities
- Governmental Office for Gender Equality
- Governmental Office for Cooperation with NGOs
- Governmental Legislation office

2.1 GOVERNMENTAL OFFICE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND RIGHTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES

The Regulation on the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities (Official Gazette 6/2019) regulates the mandate and organization of the Office. Accordingly, within its mandate, the Office, among other issues:

- performs professional, analytical, advisory and administrative tasks in connection with the implementation of the national policies on protection and promotion of human rights and the rights of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia and monitors their effectiveness
- considers the state of individual human rights and the rights of national minorities in the Republic of Croatia as well as the compliance of domestic legislation with the provisions of the

Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and the Constitutional Act on the Rights of National Minorities, as well as with international instruments in the field of human and minority rights, and proposes measures for the realization of these rights

- suggests needed improvements and harmonization of legal and other regulations and acts regulating issues related to the protection and promotion of human rights and the rights of national minorities with appropriate national and international documents and other regulations, and participates in their drafting
- coordinates the drafting, monitors and reports on the implementation of national documents and strategies, action and operational plans and programs in the areas of: protection and promotion of human rights, suppression of human trafficking, integration of persons granted international protection, fight against discrimination and in the area of protection and promotion of the rights of national minority with a special emphasis on the integration of members of the Roma national minority and the implementation of operational programs for national minorities
- follows up the recommendations of the Ombudswoman in order to strengthen the human rights protection system
- works with competent ministries and other competent bodies and institutions, local and regional self-government bodies and with international bodies for the purpose of improving national standards for the protection and promotion of human rights and the rights of national minorities, with a special emphasis on the integration of members of the Roma national minority and the integration of persons who has been granted international protection
- cooperates with civil society organizations through consultations with representatives of the civil sector during the preparation of national programs of the Government of the Republic of Croatia in various areas of human rights and the rights of national minorities and the adoption of new or amendments to existing laws
- designs preventive activities and carries out public campaigns, organizes educational activities such as seminars and round tables with the aim of encouraging and promoting the protection of human rights and the rights of national minorities
- monitors documents of the competent bodies of the European Union and international documents, prepares opinions and expert analyzes regarding the application of European and international standards in the protection and promotion of human rights and the rights of members of national minorities
- provides expert opinions and participates in the drafting of state stands on proposals of the European Union acts within its mandate; monitors and proposes the harmonization of regulations in the areas within the mandate of the Office with the legal acquis of the European Union
- promotes European values and policies for the protection and promotion of human rights and the rights of national minorities
- programs, implements and reports on the financial and substantive implementation of projects and programs, within its scope, financed from the funds of the European Union and other domestic and international donors

The Office is designated as a National Focal Point for the Charter of Fundamental Rights and a staff member of the Office is appointed as FRA NLO. The Office supports the work of the following structures (inter-sectoral bodies):

- Hate Crimes Monitoring Working Group - Protocol on the procedure in cases of hate crimes¹
- Permanent Commission for the Implementation of the Integration of Foreigners into Croatian Society - Article 76 of the Act on International and Temporary Protection.²
- National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings - Decision on the establishment of the National Trafficking Committee for Combating Human
- Commission for monitoring the implementation of the National Plan for Roma inclusion 2021-2027
- Human Rights Council

2.2. GOVERNMENTAL OFFICE FOR GENDER EQUALITY

The mandate of the Office for Gender Equality is prescribed by the Article 18, Paragraph 2 of the Gender Equality Law while its organization and structure are further elaborated by the Regulation of the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the Office for Gender Equality (Official Gazette 39/12, 28/16).

According to the Gender Equality Law the Government of the Republic of Croatia establishes by regulation the Office for Gender Equality as a professional service for carrying out work related to the realization of gender equality. The Office performs expert and other tasks in such a way that it:

- coordinates all activities aimed at establishing gender equality, creates a complete system of protection and promotion of gender equality in the Republic of Croatia and monitors its effectiveness,
- approves action plans for bodies and legal entities referred to in Article 11 of the Gender Equality Act,
- proposes to the Government of the Republic of Croatia and state bodies the adoption or amendment of laws and other regulations, as well as the adoption of other measures,
- creates a national policy for the promotion of gender equality and supervises its implementation,
- conducts research, prepares analyzes and reports to the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the implementation of national policy every two years,

¹ Croatia. Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Vlada Republike Hrvatske*). Protocol for procedure in cases of hate crimes (*Protokol o postupanju u slučaju zločina iz mržnje*). Official Gazette (*Narodne novine*) NN 43/2021.

² Croatia. Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*). Act on International and Temporary Protection (*Zakon o međunarodnoj i privremenoj zaštiti*). Official Gazette (*Narodne novine*) NN 70/2015.

- monitors compliance and application of laws and other regulations related to gender equality in relation to international documents,
- prepares national reports on the fulfillment of international obligations in the field of gender equality,
- cooperates with non-governmental organizations that are active in the field of gender equality,
- promotes knowledge and awareness of gender equality,
- receives petitions from parties about violations of the provisions of this Act and other regulations and forwards them to the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality and other competent state bodies,
- coordinates the work of county commissions for gender equality,
- reports to the Government of the Republic of Croatia every year, at the latest at the end of April for the previous year, about its activities.

2.3 GOVERNMENTAL OFFICE FOR COOPERATION WITH NGOS

Office for Cooperation with NGOs was established by the Regulation on the Office for Cooperation with NGOs in 1998 to perform professional activities within the scope of the Croatian Government in connection with the creation of conditions for cooperation and partnership with non-profit sector, especially with associations in Croatia.

A detailed scope of the Office defined by the Regulation on the Office for Cooperation with NGOs (Official Gazette 34/12) on the basis of which the Office carries out activities:

- drafting, systematic monitoring, analysis and evaluation of the implementation of strategic programs for the creation of an enabling environment for civil society and the preparation and implementation of measures of other strategic documents covering the activities of cooperation with associations;
- participation in the development, monitoring, analysis and evaluation of the normative framework for the operation of NGOs and other civil society organizations in the Republic of Croatia;
- coordination of work of state administration bodies and other public institutions in the field of harmonization of policies, criteria and standards of financing projects of NGOs and other civil society organizations from the state budget and other public sources;
- provision, and if necessary, expert assistance to national authorities in the preparation and implementation of tenders for financing projects and programs from the state budget for NGOS;
- cooperation in the preparation of programs supporting the development of civil society carried out by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development and financed from the state budget funds available to the budget of the Office;

- development and management of effective monitoring and evaluation of projects and programs of organizations financed from the state budget and other public sources and EU funds;
- preparing analyzes and reports for the Croatian government on expenditure of funds, to support program activities, provided the associations paid from the state budget, other public sources and EU funds;
- designing and conducting a public database on allocated grants for projects and programs of civil society organizations from the state budget and other public sources;
- coordination of work of state administration bodies in the field of consultation with the interested public in procedures of adopting laws, other regulations and acts and involvement of associations and other civil society organizations in the adoption, implementation and evaluation of public policies;
- professional and administrative support to the work of individual advisory bodies of the Croatian Government;
- provision, if necessary, expert assistance to the Office of the President of the Croatian Government on the issues from its scope;
- preparation and implementation of professional development and training of civil servants and other users in the area of development cooperation with civil society in shaping of public policies;
- providing information and providing technical assistance to citizens and representatives of civil society organizations within the competence of the Office;
- establishment, implementation and development of international cooperation with the bodies of the European Union, other international bodies and related institutions in accordance with the competence of the Office;
- preparation and implementation of activities of international development cooperation in support of development of civil society;
- preparation, coordination and implementation of projects and programs of the European Union and other international organizations to support the development of civil society;
- implementation of the activities of financial management and quality control of projects and programs for the civil society sector that are financed from European Union funds;
- co-financing projects of NGOs and other civil society organizations who receive support from EU funds.

Also, since 2007 the Office is contact point for the Europe for Citizens programme which opened new options for funding of civil society organizations, and local governments in Croatia in order to encourage active involvement of citizens in decision-making processes at European level.

Office for cooperation with NGOs is the intermediate body of the first level in the OP Efficient Human Resources Programme, ie it is part of the operating structure for the use of the ESF+ .

The Office supports the work of the following structures (inter-sectoral bodies):

- Council for Civil Society Development

2.4 GOVERNMENTAL OFFICE FOR LEGISLATION

The detailed scope of the Office is determined by the Regulation on the Office for Legislation (Official Gazette, 63/19). For the purpose of this analysis, the following tasks of the Office have been highlighted:

- gives opinions on the compliance of proposed laws, regulations and acts from the scope of the Government with the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and the legal order of the Republic of Croatia, respecting the legal regulations and the legal system of the European Union
- gives opinions on decrees and other regulations, administrative acts, business acts and other acts passed by the Government, that is, which the Government proposes to the Croatian Parliament, and in connection with their compliance with the law and the Croatian legal system
- coordinates the **regulatory impact assessment system** with central state administration bodies
- supervises the implementation of the Impact – Assessment Law
- gives expert opinions on the application of regulations in the area of the assessment of the effects of regulations and performs the tasks of analysis of forms of preliminary assessment, reports on assessment of the effects of regulations and subsequent assessment of the effects of regulations

2.5 OFFICE OF THE AGENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA BEFORE THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Office is a professional service of the Croatian Government, established by the Regulation on the Office of the Croatian representative at the European Court of Human Rights (Official Gazette, 18/12, 84/18). The same Regulation stipulate that the Office is managed by the representative appointed by the Government, at the proposal of the Prime Minister.

The Office mandate includes the following:

- preparing all statements of the Republic of Croatia in proceedings before the European Court of Human Rights and participating in oral hearings before the European Court of Human Rights, tasks of considering, preparing and interfering in cases against other states before the European Court of Human Rights, tasks of cooperation with judicial bodies, the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia, ministries and other bodies of state administration and other bodies for the purpose of representation, and cooperation with the European Court of Human Rights;
- coordinating the execution of judgments and decisions of the European Court of Human Rights with bodies of all branches of government, tasks of cooperation with judicial bodies, ministries and other bodies of state administration and other bodies, as well as with the

Secretariat of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe for the purpose of executing judgments and decisions of the European Court of Human Rights;

- preparation and participation in meetings of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the execution of judgments of the European Court of Human Rights, as well as in other activities of the Council of Europe related to the execution of judgments and decisions of the European Court of Human Rights;
- analyzing the judicial practice of the European Court of Human Rights, the Court of the European Union, other international courts and bodies in the field of international protection of human rights, and the practice of other bodies for the purposes of work within the competence of the Office;
- analysis of the regulations of the Republic of Croatia for the purpose of giving an opinion on their compliance with the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights, and giving an opinion on other documents at the request of competent authorities;
- monitoring the convention system for the protection of human rights and the development of human rights;
- cooperation with representatives of other countries/governments before the European Court of Human Rights;
- coordination of translation and legal editing and proofreading, and tasks of translating documents into Croatian and English for the needs of the Office;
- familiarizing judicial bodies, state administration bodies and other bodies, as well as experts and the general public with the Convention, the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights and the convention system for the protection of human rights, as well as communication with the media regarding matters within the competence of the Office;
- collecting, analyzing and systematizing data for the preparation of statistics, reports and other documents within the competence of the Office.

The Office supports the work of the following structures (inter-sectoral bodies):

- Expert Council for the enforcement of judgments and decisions of the European Court of Human Rights

2.6 DIFFERENT MINISTRIES WITH HUMAN RIGHTS REMIT

Within the government, structures there are different ministries, which have fundamental rights within their mandate. These include:

2.6.1 Ministry of Justice and Administration within its structure has a specific Directorate for human rights, national minorities and ethic. Directorate is tasked with the implementation of state policy and other administrative and professional tasks related to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the field of justice and administration, including the protection of personal data and the right to access information. Additionally, the Directorate prepares drafts of

proposed laws, other regulations, general acts and strategic and planning documents, and monitors and ensures compliance of national legislation with assumed international obligations in the area of protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms within its mandate. Finally, it implements state policy and laws, promotes and contributes to improvement of the rights of national minorities. Additionally, the Ministry within its organizational structure has Service for Victim and Witness Support.

2.6.2 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration within its structure has a Directorate for Multilateral and Global Issues, which participates in proposing and implementing the foreign policy of the Republic of Croatia in the EU and international organizations in the areas of human rights. For this purposes it has a Sector for the UN and international organizations, which also includes the Department for Human Rights.

2.6.3 Ministry of Science and Education within its structure has a Directorate for National Minorities. Directorate for National Minorities performs administrative and professional tasks of planning, monitoring and improving pre-school, primary, and secondary and higher education, adult education and education in the language and script of national minorities. It has two administrative units: Sector for education in the language and script of national minorities and Sector for national programs, action plans and projects.

Apart from this, other ministries also play an important role in human rights protection, namely Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets, Ministry of Culture and Media.

Additionally in the context of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and EU funds important role is played by the Ministry of Regional Developments and EU funds and Ministry of Labour, Pension System, Family and Social Policy.

3. PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES DEALING WITH FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

Parliament has a number of Committees whose work is closely related to fundamental rights.

3.1 COMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION, STANDING ORDERS AND POLITICAL SYSTEM

The Committee monitors and considers the implementation of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia. It also:

- considers matters of principle pertaining to the alignment of legislation with the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia
- considers positions and proposals of a constitutional nature submitted to Parliament prepares the relevant draft legislation in procedures to amend the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia
- conducts the procedure to nominate the judges of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Croatia and to propose to Parliament their election

- conducts the procedure to nominate the Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia and to propose to Parliament his/her election
- conducts the procedure to nominate the Information commissioner and to propose to Parliament his/her election
- prepares the relevant draft legislation in procedures to hold referenda, if this is sought by the number of voters stipulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia
- settles disputes on the competence of working bodies of Parliament monitors the implementation of these Standing Orders
- proposes the adoption and amendment of these Standing Orders considers matters of principle on issues pertaining to the protection and exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms and national minority rights, stipulated by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia.

Additionally, during the procedure of enactment of laws and other regulations it has the rights and duties of a competent working body in fields pertaining to:

- association, public assemblies and peaceful protests by citizens voting franchise, the election of Members of Parliament, the election of the President of the Republic, the election of Croatian Members of the European Parliament, elections for local and regional self-government units and referenda,
- the legal position of religious communities.
- the use and protection of the coat of arms, flag and national anthem of the Republic of Croatia and other national symbols, national holidays, awards and other forms of recognition,
- general matters of constitutionality and legality,
- public information,
- general matters in the functioning of the political system -matters pertaining to the structure and authority of state bodies, the structure, authority and operating procedures of state administration bodies,
- matters and relations in the field of state administration and issues concerning the fulfilment of legality in the work of state administration bodies,
- reports from state administration bodies on the application of laws and on general problems of state administration fundamental property rights issues,
- the structure, mandate and operating procedures of the Ombudswoman,
- The Committee shall also perform other activities stipulated by these Standing Orders and law.

The Committee has external members, 6 of them, who are all members of academia and who participate in its work.

Additionally, as the Croatian Parliament adopted Ethical Code of Conduct for members of the Parliament, the Committee monitors its implementation.

3.2 COMMITTEE ON HUMAN AND NATIONAL MINORITY RIGHTS

The Committee on Human and National Minority Rights has a mandate relating to the establishment and monitoring of policies, the enactment of the legislation, and the implementation of international treaties related to human and ethnic rights. The committee also focuses on the constitutional provisions concerning human rights, ensures the rights and measures for the protection of national minorities, and engages in international cooperation beneficial to minorities. Additionally, it oversees the financial support for national minorities' specific needs and collaborates with a range of domestic and international organisations, in the realm of human and ethnic rights.³

The Committee on Human and National Minority Rights is tasked to cooperate with scholarly and professional, governmental and non-governmental organisations that operate in the field of the protection of human and ethnic rights.

The Committee on Human and National Minority Rights is tasked to cooperate with the relevant working bodies of parliaments in other countries and with foreign and international bodies that operate in the field of the protection of human and ethnic rights.

The Committee also takes part in the election of the Ombudswoman and discusses Ombudswoman Report regularly. In previous session the Committee has organized thematic sessions on the implementation of recommendations by the Ombudswoman.

Additionally, the Committee is tasked with conducting election of members of the Commission for Working on the Complaints – Police Sector.

The Committee has 4 external members representing NGOs and religious communities.

3.3 GENDER EQUALITY COMMITTEE

The Gender Equality Committee fosters and oversees the implementation of gender equality principles within the legislative framework of the Republic of Croatia. Its mandate encompasses a broad spectrum of activities aimed at ensuring gender equality across various sectors of society. Key responsibilities include promoting the adoption of international gender equality documents, actively participating in the creation, execution, and evaluation of Croatia's National Gender Equality Policy, and working collaboratively to establish measures that enhance gender equality. The Committee is also tasked with proposing initiatives to eliminate sex-based discrimination, advocating for balanced gender representation in parliamentary working bodies and delegations, and contributing to the harmonisation of Croatian laws and executive actions with EU standards for gender equality. Additionally, it is involved in drafting legislation related to gender equality and integrating gender equality principles into diverse areas such as education, healthcare, media, social policy, employment, entrepreneurship, decision-making processes, and family relations.

³ Croatia. Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*). [Committee on Human and National Minority Rights](#).

The committee is a working body for the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality.

The Committee has 3 external members representing NGOs and academia members who are active in the area of gender equality.

3.4 COMMITTEE ON THE FAMILY, YOUTH AND SPORTS

The Committee on the Family, Youth and Sports establishes and monitors the implementation of policies, and in procedures to enact legislation and other regulations, it has the rights and duties of a competent working body in matters pertaining to:

- marriage, the family and guardianship, and special protection of children, motherhood and young people
- the quality of life of young people and their participation in all societal activities
the protection of children and adolescents from all forms of addiction
family planning and demographic renewal
- sports

The Committee also conducts the election of the Ombudswoman for Children and proposes the candidates to the Croatian Parliament.

Committee has 3 external members stemming from public and academia and who are deemed experts on the matters.

3.5 HEALTH AND SOCIAL POLICY COMMITTEE

The Health and Social Policy Committee establishes and monitors the implementation of policies, and in procedures to enact legislation and other regulations, it has the rights and duties of a competent working body in matters pertaining to

- health protection and the organisation of healthcare services
- combating addiction
- social welfare
- the rights of disabled persons
- the protection of displaced persons
- the protection of elderly and indigent persons and other matters of social policy and healthcare

The committee is a working body for the Ombudswoman for Persons with Disabilities.

Additionally, the Committee is tasked with conducting election of members of the Commission for Working on the Complaints – Social Welfare Sector.

The Committee includes 6 external members, one representative of Croatian Medical Chamber, one representative of Croatian Medical Nurses Chamber, 3 experts in the field of health and one expert in the field of social welfare.

Apart from these, other committees also discuss issues relevant and important for human rights protection and promotion, and the Ombudswoman regularly takes part in these sessions.

3.6 COUNCIL FOR CIVILIAN OVERSIGHT OF SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES

Apart from the committees, there are other bodies by the Croatian Parliament which have human rights remit.

Namely, this is the **Council for Civilian Oversight of Security and Intelligence Agencies** whose mandate stems from the Security and Intelligence System Act of the Republic of Croatia,⁴ Decision on the Council for Civilian Oversight of Security-Intelligence Agencies.

The Council consists of a chairperson and six members, all of whom are appointed by the Croatian Parliament.

The Council is tasked with an oversight role concerning the operation of security agencies and the protection of constitutional rights within its jurisdiction. Its responsibilities include monitoring the legality of security agencies' activities, and ensuring that the application of confidential data-gathering measures does not unjustly infringe upon constitutionally guaranteed human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Council is also responsible for reporting its findings and information related to these duties to key stakeholders, including the National Security Council, the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, the chairperson of the parliamentary committee responsible for national security, and the directors of the security and intelligence agencies themselves. Additionally, the Council plays important role in transparency and accountability by informing citizens, governmental bodies, and legal entities on how to lodge complaints regarding any illegal or improper conduct they encounter from security and intelligence agencies, particularly focusing on actions that violate constitutionally protected human rights and fundamental freedoms. This framework is designed to ensure a balance between national security interests and the preservation of individual liberties, providing a mechanism for oversight and redress where necessary.

4. STATUTORY, INDEPENDENT BODIES WITH A WIDE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS REMIT

4.1 Ombudswoman

The Croatian Ombudswoman was established in 1992 by the *Constitution of the Republic of Croatia*, which includes detailed constitutional provisions on the status and mandate of the institution.

⁴ Croatia. Croatian Parliament (*Hrvatski sabor*). Security and Intelligence System Act of the Republic of Croatia ([Zakon o sigurnosno-obavještajnom sustavu Republike Hrvatske](#)). Official Gazette (*Narodne novine*) NN 79/2006.

Article 93 of the Constitution stipulates that the Ombudswoman is a commissioner of the Croatian Parliament responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution, laws and international legal instruments on human rights and freedoms ratified by the Republic of Croatia. Everyone may lodge a complaint to the Ombudswoman if he/she deems that his/her constitutional or legal rights have been threatened or violated as a result of any illegal or irregular act by governmental bodies and the civil service, local and regional self-governmental bodies and bodies vested with public authority.

The Croatian Parliament elects the Ombudswoman for a term of eight years. The Ombudswoman is autonomous and independent in his/her work. Conditions for the election and dismissal of the Ombudswoman and his/her Deputies, their authority, and the method of their work is further regulated by law. By law, the Ombudswoman may also be vested with certain powers with regard to legal and natural persons in order to protect the fundamental constitutional rights. The Ombudswoman and other commissioners of the Croatian Parliament responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms enjoy the same immunity as Members in the Croatian Parliament.

Mandates of the institution are further established and regulated in the Ombudswoman Act (Official Gazette no. 76/12), the Antidiscrimination Act (Official Gazette no. 85/08, 112/12), the Act on the National Preventive Mechanism (Official Gazette no. 18/2011, 33/15) and the Act on the Protection of the Persons Reporting Irregularities (Official Gazette no. 46/22). Hence, the Ombudswoman has five mandates: Ombud mandate, NHRI, national equality body – NEB, national preventive mechanism – NPM and whistle blowers' protection.

Jurisdiction of the institution is on the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia. The *Ombudswoman Act* under Article 4 further elaborates in relation to which bodies the Ombudswoman can act. Accordingly, the Ombudswoman shall promote and protect human rights and freedoms and the rule of law by examining the complaints of the existence of unlawful practices and irregularities with respect to the work of government bodies, bodies of local and regional self-government units, legal persons vested with public authority, as well as legal and natural persons in accordance with special laws as is the case in the context of anti-discrimination and whistle-blower's protection. As a central body for suppression of anti-discrimination and body for external reporting of irregularities (whistle-blowers protection) the Ombudswoman can intervene in judicial cases.

Additionally, the Ombudswoman has been very active in legislative procedures, making numerous recommendations on legislative and administrative provisions, covering a wide range of areas. Implementation of national policies and legislation, as well as international and regional human rights instruments is closely monitored, including by preparing alternative reports.

Finally, the Annual Report to the Croatian Parliament provides an analysis and assessment of the situation with regard to the protection of rights and freedoms, including certain occurrences of violations of the rights of individuals or groups, as well as recommendations intended to produce systematic changes in order to prevent future violations of citizens' rights. Additionally, the Ombudswoman may submit special reports to the Croatian Parliament, as for example in 2021 when the Ombudswoman submitted a Report on impact of COVID-19 on Human Rights and Equality in Croatia.

In order to increase its accessibility to citizens, the Ombudswoman, apart from the HQ office in Zagreb, has opened 3 regional offices, in Rijeka, Split and Osijek. The public can access Ombudswoman offices

in person, by email, phone or by sending in their documentation via regular mail. All the contact information is available in the public telephone registry, as well as on the Office website.

In order to ensure further plurality, the *Ombudswoman Act* introduced the Ombudswoman's Council for Human Rights, as an advisory body that considers and proposes strategic guidelines and ensures permanent cooperation between the Ombudswoman, civil society, academic community and the media and considers other issues of importance for the work of the Ombudswoman in the field of promotion of human rights and freedoms. Members of the Council are appointed by the Ombudswoman for a term of 4 years and represent academia, civil society organizations, media and national minorities.

Additionally, the Ombudswoman has set up a network of anti-discrimination contact points, by signing cooperation agreements with 11 organizations of civil society working on anti-discrimination and equality issues, coming from all regions of Croatia.

Finally, within NPM mandate, Ombudswoman cooperates with experts and representatives of NGOs registered for the performance of activities in the area of protection of human rights.

4.1.1 INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION STATUS AND SCA RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ombudswoman of the Republic of Croatia was last re-accredited with A-status in March 2019¹. Among the recommendations, the SCA encouraged the Croatian NHRI to advocate for broad consultation and participation of civil society in the selection process for the position of the Ombudswoman. The SCA also noted that the Croatian NHRI had recently been mandated with additional responsibilities under the whistle-blower legislation, but that no new funding had been allocated to allow it to carry out these new responsibilities. Therefore, the SCA encouraged the Croatian NHRI to continue to advocate for the funding necessary to ensure that it can effectively carry out the full extent of its mandate, including its newly mandated responsibilities. Additionally, the SCA noted that the term of office of the Ombudswoman is of 8 years and that the enabling law does not limit the number of re-appointments. The SCA took the view that it would be preferable for this to be limited to one re-appointment. Finally, the SCA acknowledged that the regional offices in Rijeka was not accessible to persons with disabilities at the time. It encouraged the NHRI to continue to seek a solution of this situation, including by advocating for additional funds to ensure that all its offices are accessible.

4.1.2 FOLLOW-UP TO SCA RECOMMENDATIONS AND RELEVANT DEVELOPMENTS

As for the SCA recommendation regarding the Whistleblower protection mandate, the institution has been strengthened in staff by the employment of 5 advisers. However, this has not been done with regard to Deputies and the number of Deputies has remained the same regardless of the increase of mandate. It should be emphasized that this is a very demanding mandate, among others, because of the obligation to protect the identity of the whistleblowers and the confidentiality of the data, which requires extra attention when acting on whistleblowers' complaints. Therefore, in order to ensure effective and timely action in all the mentioned mandates the institution should be strengthened by another Deputy.

As regards enabling broad consultation and participation of civil society in the selection process for the position of the Ombudswoman, under Article 10, paragraph 3 of the Ombudswoman Act (Official Gazette no. 76/12), “) [t]he Committee for the Constitution, Standing Orders and Political System, with prior opinion of the Committee for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities of the Croatian

Parliament, shall propose at least two candidates for Ombudswoman according to the received applications from the public call and it shall be submitted to the Croatian Parliament. « Prior to deciding on the two candidates to propose, the two committees hold an interview with all of the candidates whose candidatures fulfill the conditions regulated by the Act. The interview is public, and questions asked to the candidates come from Parliament members, but also CSOs and academia representatives, who are external members of the Committees.

In the context of the Rijeka office, based on the recommendation of SCA, the office moved its premises and is now accessible.

Finally, European Commission in its 2022 Rule of Law Report recommended Croatia to ensure a more systematic follow-up to recommendations and information requests of the Ombudswoman. This recommendation was repeated in 2023 Rule of Law Report.

4.1.3 ECRI ON OMBUDSWOMAN

ECRI noted that the Ombudswoman has all the powers recommended in ECRI's GPR No. 7 § 24 and conforms with the recommendations under ECRI's GPR No. 2 on national specialised bodies to combat racism, xenophobia, antisemitism and intolerance at national level. Its competences include, inter alia, dealing with complaints of discrimination, providing information to persons who complain of discrimination about their rights and remedies, increasing public awareness, conducting surveys and collecting and analysing data on discrimination. Although the Ombudswoman cannot issue binding decisions or impose sanctions, it can give warnings, proposals, opinions and recommendations. The Ombudswoman has the right to file criminal charges to the state attorney's office, join proceedings before civil courts as an intervener sui generis and initiate cases before misdemeanour courts, and it can initiate cases before civil courts for cases of discrimination concerning the collective interests of a certain group, but not individual ones.

ECRI also noted that the Ombudswoman is obliged to submit her/his annual reports to the Parliament where the latter casts a vote for their approval. Hence, ECRI recommended the authorities to amend the legislation so that the reports of the Ombudswoman are not voted on.

4.1.4 UN COMMITTEE ON ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION – CERD ON OMBUDSWOMAN

The Committee recommends that the State party continue to strengthen the independence of the Office of the Ombudswoman and enable it to carry out its mandate fully, effectively and independently, in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), by taking effective measures, particularly legal measures, to implement the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Accreditation of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions.

4.2 OMBUDSWOMAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Gender equality is one of the fundamental values of the constitutional order of the Republic of Croatia. In 2003, upon the proposal of the Croatian Government, the first Ombudswoman for Gender Equality was appointed by the Croatian Parliament in accordance to the Gender Equality Act adopted in 2003.

In 2008, Croatian Parliament adopted a new Gender Equality Act (Official Gazette 82/08) according to which the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality performs the tasks of an independent body in charge of combating discrimination in the field of gender equality.

The responsibilities of the Ombudswoman for gender equality include:

- receiving complaints from any natural persons or legal entities regarding discrimination in the area of gender equality;
- providing assistance to natural and legal persons who filed a complaint of sexual discrimination when instituting legal proceedings;
- taking steps to investigate individual complaints prior to the legal proceedings;
- conducting, with the consent of the parties involved, a mediation process with a possibility to reach an out-of court settlement;
- collecting and analyzing statistical data on cases of sexual discrimination;
- conducting independent surveys concerning discrimination, publishing independent reports and exchanging available information with corresponding European bodies.

The Ombudswoman for Gender Equality acts should in an independent manner, monitor the enforcement of the Gender Equality Act and other regulations on gender equality and report to the Croatian Parliament at least once a year.

The Ombudswoman for Gender Equality investigates cases of infringement of the principle of gender equality, cases of discrimination against individuals or groups of individuals by public bodies, units of local or regional self-government or other bodies with public authority, by employees of these bodies or other legal or natural persons.

Anybody has the right to address the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality on the account of any infringements of the Gender Equality Act regardless of whether he or she has suffered direct injury from such infringement, or is filing a complaint in somebody's name.

Furthermore, in line with Anti-discrimination Act the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality is tasked with the following in relation to the discrimination on the rounds of sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation and family status:

- receiving reports of all the natural and legal persons referred to in Article 10 of this Act;
- providing necessary information to natural and legal persons that have filed a complaint on account of discrimination with regard to their rights and obligations and to possibilities of court and other protection;
- if the court proceedings have not yet been initiated, examining individual reports and take actions falling within his/her competence required for elimination of discrimination and protection of rights of discriminated persons;
- warning the public about the occurrence of discrimination;
- with the parties' consent, conducting mediation with a possibility of reaching an out-of-court settlement;

- filing criminal charges related to discrimination cases to the competent state attorney's office;

Ombudswoman for Gender Equality established Observing Body for Comprehensive Monitoring, Data Collection and Analysis of Cases of Murder of Women and Reporting - Femicide Watch⁵ which gathers representatives from ministries, courts, institutions and organizations whose work is aimed at combating gender-based violence. The aim is to monitor the incidence of murders of women from a gender perspective and collect and analyse data to identify key omissions that lead to the murders of women by their husbands, former and current partners, and men in general.

However, the institution does not have full independence - the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality is appointed by the Croatian Parliament but on the proposal by the Government for a period of eight years. Furthermore, the non-adoption of the annual reports by the Croatian Parliament results in the dismissal of the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality.

4.2.1 ECRI ON THE OMBUDSWOMAN FOR GENDER EQUALITY

In the last round of monitoring ECRI noted that the two specialised Ombudswoman (the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality and the Ombudswoman for Children) have similar powers as the Ombudswoman in connection with discrimination based on grounds covered by them. This is also true for Ombudswoman for Persons with Disability (which is outside of the mandate of ECRI).

All specialised ombud's institutions are obliged to submit their annual reports to the Parliament where the latter casts a vote for their approval. However, additional legal provisions in founding regulation of all three specialized bodies (Ombudswoman for Children, for Gender Equality and Persons with Disabilities) provide that the specialised Ombudswomen are to be dismissed if the Parliament does not approve/adopt their annual report. Such situation occurred when in 2016 the 2015 Annual Report of the Ombudswoman for Children was rejected by the Croatian Parliament. In 2017 the new founding legislation for the Ombudswoman for Children was adopted in the Parliament still keeping this provision and subsequently the the Ombudswoman at the time was dismissed.

ECRI considers that such regulations, the vote as such and the dismissal, are serious impediments to the independence of these institutions.

Hence, the ECRI recommended that the authorities amend the legislation so that the reports of the Ombudswoman and specialised Ombudswomen are not voted on as well as the legislation concerning the dismissal of the specialised Ombudswomen upon rejection of their annual reports by the Parliament to fully ensure their independence.

4.3 OMBUDSWOMAN FOR CHILDREN

The institution of the Ombudswoman for Children was established in 2003 as the first specialised institution of its kind in the Republic of Croatia, with the aim of protecting and promoting the rights and interests of children. The impetus for establishing the institution came from the 1996 recommendations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, which, upon considering the report of the Government of the Republic of Croatia on implementing the Convention on the Rights of the

⁵ Croatia. Ombudswoman for Gender Equality (*Pravobraniteljica za ravnopravnost spolova*). Observing Body - Femicide Watch ([Promatračko tijelo - Femicide Watch](#)).

Child, recommended the establishment of an independent watchdog body. In considering the type of model most appropriate, the Republic of Croatia selected an independent body, which would monitor individual violations of children's rights and act both preventively and in general.

The scope and means of operation of the Ombudswoman for Children is laid down in the Ombudswoman for Children Act (Official Gazette 73/2017), in accordance with which the Ombudswoman for Children safeguards, monitors and promotes the rights and interests of children in the Republic of Croatia, based on the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, other international documents and the legislation of the Republic of Croatia.

The Ombudswoman for Children acts on the basis of complaints received, or on his or her own initiative, whether in responding to individual violations of children's rights and interests, or in general.

The Ombudswoman for children is authorized to:

- warn, give proposals and recommendations in respect to promoting and protecting children's rights and interests. State administration bodies, local and regional administration units, as well as corporation and natural persons, have the obligation to cooperate with the Ombudswoman for Children and submit reports upon his/her demand, give answers to his/her inquiries, and report immediately, latest within 15 days period, to the Ombudswoman for Children on performed activities concerning his/her warning, proposal or recommendation;
- should the bodies fail to act in accordance with his/her demand within prescribed period of time, the Ombudswoman for Children will inform the body in charge of monitoring their work about it;
- access and insight into all data, information and files concerned with the rights and protection of children, disregarding their level of secrecy, and is entitled to the right of entering the premises and of getting the insight into the manner of the performance of care for children who are placed or are temporarily, i.e. permanently accommodated with government institutions, natural and corporation persons, religious communities and other legal entities on the basis of specific regulations;
- if during the performance of his/her duties, find out that a child is being subject to physical or mental violence, sexual abuse, maltreatment or exploitation, negligence or careless treatment, he/she will immediately lodge a report about it to the competent General Attorney Office, and warn competent center for social welfare and suggest the measures for the protection of the rights and interests of the child.

The Ombudswoman for Children is an independent body and cannot be called to account, put into custody or be punished for the expression of an opinion or performed activities within the competence of his/her work, except in case of committing the violation of law which in its extent equals to a criminal offence.

Furthermore, in line with Anti-discrimination Act the Ombudswoman for Children is tasked with the following in relation to the discrimination of children:

- receiving reports of all the natural and legal persons referred to in Article 10 of this Act;

- providing necessary information to natural and legal persons that have filed a complaint on account of discrimination with regard to their rights and obligations and to possibilities of court and other protection;
- if the court proceedings have not yet been initiated, examining individual reports and take actions falling within his/her competence required for elimination of discrimination and protection of rights of discriminated persons;
- warning the public about the occurrence of discrimination;
- with the parties' consent, conducting mediation with a possibility of reaching an out-of-court settlement;
- filing criminal charges related to discrimination cases to the competent state attorney's office.

The Ombudswoman for Children submits annual report about his work to the Croatian Parliament, but is also entitled to the right to submit special reports to the Croatian Parliament in cases when he/she considers it to be necessary, with the goal of implementation of important measures for the protection of the rights and interests of children.

The Ombudswoman for Children is appointed by the Croatian Parliament for a period of eight years, and should act independently and autonomously, adhering to the principles of equity and morals, and no-one may instruct or order him or her in his or her work.

However, the institution does not have full independence since the non-adoption of the annual reports by the Croatian Parliament results in the dismissal of the Ombudsperson for Children. Additionally, Ombudsperson's independence is curtailed by the requirement to submit its annual work plan for the approval of the Croatian Parliament Committee on the Family, Youth and Sports.

4.3.1 ECRI ON THE OMBUDSWOMAN FOR CHILDREN

In the last round of monitoring ECRI noted that the two specialised Ombudswoman (the Ombudswoman for Gender Equality and the Ombudswoman for Children) have similar powers as the Ombudswoman in connection with discrimination based on grounds covered by them. This is also true for Ombudswoman for Persons with Disability (which is outside of the mandate of ECRI).

All specialised ombud's institutions are obliged to submit their annual reports to the Parliament where the latter casts a vote for their approval. However, additional legal provisions in founding regulation of all three specialized bodies (Ombudswoman for Children, for Gender Equality and Persons with Disabilities) provide that the specialised Ombudswomen are to be dismissed if the Parliament does not approve/adopt their annual report. Such situation occurred when in 2016 the 2015 Annual Report of the Ombudswoman for Children was rejected by the Croatian Parliament. In 2017 the new founding legislation for the Ombudswoman for Children was adopted in the Parliament still keeping this provision and subsequently the the Ombudswoman at the time was dismissed.

ECRI considers that such regulations, the vote as such and the dismissal, are serious impediments to the independence of these institutions.

Hence, the ECRI recommended that the authorities amend the legislation so that the reports of the Ombudswoman and specialised Ombudswomen are not voted on as well as the legislation concerning the dismissal of the specialised Ombudswomen upon rejection of their annual reports by the Parliament to fully ensure their independence.

4.3.2 COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF A CHILD ON THE OMBUDSWOMAN FOR CHILDREN

In 2022 the Committee recalled its general comment No. 2 (2002) on the role of independent national human rights institutions and recommended to Croatia to:

(a) Strengthen the legislative framework governing the Ombudswoman for Children including with a focus on its independence, in particular by amending the 2017 Ombudswoman for Children Act, which stipulates that the rejection by Parliament of the annual report of the Ombudswoman for Children may result in the early impeachment of the Ombudswoman for Children;

(b) Ensure adequate monitoring, implementation and follow-up of the recommendations issued by the Ombudsman for Children.

4.4 OMBUDSWOMAN FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which came into force on 3 May 2008 is a key document on the rights of persons with disabilities and all Croatian laws must be in compliance with it.

On the basis of the Convention, the National Strategy of Equalization of Possibilities for Persons with Disabilities from the year 2007 to 2015 was developed. One of the measures in the Strategy was the introduction of the Ombudswoman for Persons with Disabilities with the aim of improving legal protection of persons with disabilities.

The mandate of the Institution is based on the Act on the Ombudswoman for Persons with Disabilities. Priority tasks of the Office are protecting, promoting and monitoring the rights of persons with disabilities in Croatia. It deals with complaints on administration by central and local governments. The institution also monitors compliance of acts and regulations with legally binding international documents in the field of protection of rights of persons with disabilities primarily the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities and proposes amendments to acts and regulations pertaining to the rights of persons with disabilities.

In line with the Anti-discrimination Law, the Institution acts as an equality body combating discrimination on the ground of disability. In line with Anti-discrimination Act the Ombudswoman for Persons with Disability is tasked with the following in relation to the discrimination on the ground of disability:

- receiving reports of all the natural and legal persons referred to in Article 10 of this Act;
- providing necessary information to natural and legal persons that have filed a complaint on account of discrimination with regard to their rights and obligations and to possibilities of court and other protection;
- if the court proceedings have not yet been initiated, examining individual reports and take actions falling within his/her competence required for elimination of discrimination and protection of rights of discriminated persons;
- warning the public about the occurrence of discrimination;

- with the parties' consent, conducting mediation with a possibility of reaching an out-of-court settlement;
- filing criminal charges related to discrimination cases to the competent state attorney's office;

In 2015 the Institution was mandated with checking placements in psychiatric hospitals where the consent has been given by a guardian pursuant to the article 26 of the Act on the protection of persons with mental disorders (OG, 76/14).

The Ombudswoman for Persons with Disability submits annual report about his work to the Croatian Parliament, but is also entitled to the right to submit special reports to the Croatian Parliament in cases when he/she considers it to be necessary.

The institution does not have full independence since the non-adoption of the annual reports by the Croatian Parliament results in the dismissal of the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disability. Additionally, the election process is also problematic since the Croatian Parliament elects the Ombudsperson on the proposal of the Government for a period of eight years.

Furthermore, the Ombudsperson for Persons with Disability is not designated a National Independent Body under CRPD.

4.4.1 COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ON OMBUDSWOMAN FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In 2015 the Committee recommended that Croatia ensures that it has an independent monitoring body in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles) by adopting appropriate legislation on the Office of the Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities. It also recommends that the State party provide organizations of persons with disabilities and other civil society organizations with adequate resources to enable them to participate fully and effectively in the national implementation and monitoring process.

4.5 INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

The Information Commissioner protects, monitors and promotes the right to access to information and reuse of information guaranteed by Constitution of the Republic of Croatia.

The Commissioner, based on a public call, is elected by the Croatian Parliament for a period of five years with the possibility of re-election.

The Commissioner's basic duties relate to the implementation of second-instance proceedings in matters of access to information and re-use of information, inspection supervision, law enforcement, establishment of international cooperation and cooperation with EU bodies and domestic expert cooperation and cooperation with public authorities, informing the public and promoting the right to information access, proposing measures and training programs in the area of access to information.

Subsequently, the Information Commissioner is a second-instance body to deal with appeals of users on the decisions of public authorities bodies. An appeal may be submitted by the user to the Information Commissioner within 15 days from the date of delivery of the decision, through the first-instance body that issued the decision. Also, the appeal to the Commissioner can be filed if public

authority did not decide on the request for information application within the legal deadline (so-called silence of administration). In this case, the appeal can also be filed directly to the Commissioner.

An administrative dispute may be initiated against the decision of the Commissioner before the High Administrative Court of the Republic of Croatia. The dispute can be initiated by the body of public authority that has solved the request or by the user who filed an appeal with the Commissioner. The administrative dispute can be initiated even if the Commissioner has not decided on the appeal within prescribed deadlines. The High Administrative Court of the Republic of Croatia must make a decision on the lawsuit within 90 days. The lawsuit has a delaying effect if the solution provides access to the information.

The inspection supervision of implementation of the Right of Access to Information Act is performed by inspectors and other authorized officials of the Information Commissioner's Office. It can be initiated by the remonstrance, at the proposal of a third party or ex officio. Inspection supervision may be carried out as direct or indirect inspection. The direct inspection is carried out in the body of public authority, by direct insight to the data and documentation, and to conditions and manner of the work of supervised public authority. Indirect inspection is carried out by reviewing the data and documentation submitted to Information Commissioner by the public authority.

In carrying out inspection supervision, inspectors supervise whether the public authorities publish information on their websites (proactive publication), conduct public consultation procedures, and ensure the publicity of their work in accordance with the law. Also, inspectors determine whether an information officer is appointed in the body of public authority, whether he or she acts in compliance with the law and whether the public authority maintains a special official record of requests, procedures and decisions related to right of access to information and re-use of information.

In addition, in the implementation of inspection supervision, inspectors monitor the proper application of the provisions of the Act regarding requests for access to information and requests for reuse of information, as well as the actions public authorities are taking upon requests for access to information and requests for reuse. Finally, the inspectors supervise whether the public authority discloses information on the collection of costs for access to and use of information and conditions for reuse of information, and whether it submits an annual report on the implementation of the Right of Access to Information Act to the Information Commissioner.

The inspector may take appropriate measures to remedy the identified violations, irregularities and deficiencies in the work of the supervised body of public authority, to prohibit the performance of actions taken contrary to the law or other regulations, taking measures to eliminate irregularities or shortcomings in the work or with the aim of improving the work of the supervised body of public authority. As a rule, the inspector usually performs controlling of the execution of the imposed measures imposed indirectly, by obtaining reports and evidence on the implementation of the measures, but the control may also be done through direct inspection.

The Information Commissioner conducts research and expert analysis of the area of the right of access to information and the right to re-use information, including the analysis of international practice. The Commissioner also promotes and maintains a continuous co-operation with information officers in public authorities and establishes and maintains a register of information officers (list of public authorities) and keeps records of exclusive rights to reuse information.

Important part of the Commissioner's work is actively promoting the right of access to information and the re-use of information, primarily involving education and awareness-raising among

information officers and public authorities, as well as among users of the right of access to information (citizens, media, associations, private sector).

The Information Commissioner participates in the work of the Council for Suppression of Corruption,⁶ the Council for the Partnership for Open Government Initiative,⁷ the Coordination body for the implementation of the Public Administration Development Strategy and the Action Plan for the implementation of the Public Administration Development Strategy,⁸ and the Coordination body for the implementation of the Open Data Policy.^{9 10}

5. OTHER ACTORS RELEVANT FOR SELECTED FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS APPOINTED BY THE CROATIAN PARLIAMENT

5.1 PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION AGENCY

The Agency is the independent public supervisory authority in the Republic of Croatia within the meaning of the provision of Article 51 of the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) and the Act on the Implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (Official Gazette, No. 44/2018) which was enacted on 25th May 2018 to ensure full implementation of the GDPR in Croatia.

Article 37 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia prescribes that “everyone shall be guaranteed the safety and secrecy of personal data. Without consent from the person concerned, personal data may be collected, processed and used only under conditions specified by law. Protection of data and supervision of the work of information systems in the Republic shall be regulated by law.”

Agency was established in 2004 by the Act on Personal Data Protection. The Agency is a supervisory body in the Republic of Croatia, responsible for monitoring the application of the GDPR and the Act on the Implementation of the GDPR, in order to protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons in relation to processing and to facilitate the free flow of personal data within the EU. The Agency as a supervisory authority has investigative, corrective and advisory powers.

⁶ Croatia. Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Vlada Republike Hrvatske*). Council for Suppression of Corruption ([Nacionalno vijeće za praćenje provedbe strategije suzbijanja korupcije](#)).

⁷ Croatia. Government of the Republic of Croatia (*Vlada Republike Hrvatske*). Open Government Partnership ([Partnerstvo za otvorenu vlast](#)).

⁸ Croatia. Ministry of Justice and Public Administration (*Ministarstvo pravosuđa i uprave*). National public administration development plan for the period from 2022 to 2027 ([Nacionalni plan razvoja javne uprave za razdoblje od 2022. do 2027. godine](#)).

⁹ Croatia. Central State Office for the Development of the Digital Society (*Središnji državni ured za razvoj digitalnog društva*). Coordination body for the implementation of the Open Data Policy ([Kordinacija za provedbu mjera Politike otvorenih podataka](#)).

¹⁰ Croatia. Information Commissioner (*Povjerenik za informiranje*). [Inter-institutional cooperation](#).

Director of Agency is appointed by the Croatian Parliament on the proposal of the Government for the period of four years and can be re-elected.

The Agency as national supervisory authority actively participates in the work of the following Supervision Coordination Groups: Schengen Information System (SIS II), Visa Information System (VIS), Customs Information System (CIS), European Asylum Dactyloscopy Database (EURODAC), as well as in the work of the Europol Cooperation Board (ECB).

Anyone who considers that any of his or her rights guaranteed by the GDPR and the Act on the Implementation of the GDPR have been violated, may submit to the Agency a request for determination of a violation of a right. The Agency decides on the violation of rights by a ruling. The ruling of the Agency is an administrative act. No appeal is allowed against the ruling of the Agency, but an administrative dispute may be instituted by lodging a complaint before a competent administrative court.

The Agency imposes administrative fines for breaches of provisions of this Act and the GDPR. Administrative fines is imposed by a decision. No appeal is allowed against the decision, but an administrative dispute may be initiated before a competent administrative court.

Also, the Agency issues recommendations and expert opinions regarding personal data protection and also provides training sessions and consultations to the private and the public bodies.

The Agency submits an annual report on its work to the Croatian Parliament. The annual report contains information such as number of requests of data subjects and number of complaints, rulings issued on complaints of data subjects and ex officio, including the number of supervisory activities carried out, number of received reports from controllers on personal data breaches, supervisory activities, number of actions with respect to the code of conduct and certification, etc.

5.2 COUNCIL FOR ELECTRONIC MEDIA (VEM)

The Council for Electronic Media is foreseen to be an independent regulatory body in the field of electronic media in the Republic of Croatia.

The basic tasks of the Council for Electronic Media as an independent regulatory body are prescribed by the Law on Electronic Media and the Law on Croatian Radio and Television, and include, among other things: use of funds from the Media Pluralism and Diversity Fund and consideration of citizens' complaints.

It should be noted that Article 14 paragraph 2 of the Law on Electronic Media forbids encouragement favoring, inciting and spreading of hatred or discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity or skin color, sex, language, religion, political or other belief, national or social origin and anti-Semitism and xenophobia or ideas of fascist and other totalitarian regimes.

In its work, the Council should contribute to the development of society by protecting the pluralism of electronic media and the diversity of content by ensuring equal conditions for market competition to all media service providers, and by encouraging the production and publication of content of public value in such a way that it is available to as many people as possible.

The Council has seven members. The president and members of the Council for Electronic Media are appointed and dismissed by the Croatian Parliament on the proposal of the Government of the

Republic of Croatia. The President of the Council is also the Director of the Agency. The mandate of Council members is 5 years and they can be reappointed.

During the last amendments of the Law on Media, a number of human rights CSOs pointed out that the election procedure for the Council members did not guarantee independence of the Council and its members. Additionally, they pointed to the necessary increase in the transparency of the Council's decisions.

6. OTHER BODIES – COMMISSIONS AND INTER-SECTORAL BODIES

6.1 COMMISSION FOR WORKING ON THE COMPLAINTS – POLICE SECTOR

In line with the Article 5 of the Law on Police any natural or legal person who believes that his/her rights or freedoms have been violated by the action or failure to act by a police officer in the exercise of police powers, has the right to file a complaint with the Ministry of the Interior within 30 days of becoming aware of the violation.

Handling of complaints is a three-stage procedure, in which the first stage of verification is carried out by police departments or other organizational units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs at the headquarters, the second stage of verification is carried out by the Ministry of Internal Affairs - Internal Control Service, and the third stage by the Commission for Working on Complaints.

Article 5c paragraph 2 of the Law on Police prescribes that the Commission has nine members who are appointed and dismissed by the Croatian Parliament on the proposal of the Committee for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities of the Croatian Parliament.

Article 5 c. Paragraph 3 stipulates that the members of the Commission, at the constituent session, elect the president and vice president. Croatian citizens who enjoy a professional and personal reputation in the public and who are not members of a political party can be appointed to the Commission. The mandate of the members of the Commission is four years and members can be re-elected

The members of the Commission are responsible for their work to the Croatian Parliament. The competent Parliamentary Committee for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities issues a preliminary opinion on the Rules of Procedure on the Commission's working and decision-making methods.

Professional and administrative assistance to the Commission is provided by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in accordance with Article 5.c paragraph 5 of the Law on Police.

The commission submits a report on its work to the Croatian Parliament once a year.

6.2 INDEPENDENT MECHANISM OF MONITORING THE ACTIONS OF POLICE OFFICERS OF THE MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR IN THE AREA OF ILLEGAL MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

The Independent mechanism of monitoring the actions of police officers of the Ministry of the Interior in the area of illegal migration and international protection (the Mechanism) was established by the "Cooperation Agreement to implement an Independent mechanism of monitoring the actions of

police officers of the Ministry of the Interior in the area of illegal migration and international protection” of 8 June 2021. The Agreement was signed by the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia on one side and the Croatian Academy of Medical Sciences, Croatian Academy of Legal Sciences, Centre for Cultural Dialogue, Croatian Red Cross and prof. dr. sc. Iris Goldner Lang on the other side.

The implementation period of the Agreement was one year (with the possibility of extension). With that Agreement, the activities of the Mechanism were defined as observing the actions of police officers at border crossings and police stations and administrations, announced visits to the green border and inspection of legally finalized files according to filed complaints about alleged illegal treatment of irregular migrants and to applicants for international protection (who became legal within a year before signing Agreement).

The Mechanism consists of the Coordination Board (5 members) , which independently from the MoI decides on the implementation of activities of direct activity providers (8 members, two each from CAMS, CALS, CCD and CRC) who, based on the decision of the Coordination Board implement observations in the field (police stations, border crossing points, green border, reception centres for aliens, etc.).

The Ombudswoman emphasised that the Mechanism, as it is established based on an agreement, cannot replace or assume the duties of competent institutions to investigate allegations of illegality or irregularities in the work of the police.

An Advisory Board was established to the Mechanism as an informal body with a task to issue recommendations to contribute to increasing the efficiency and independence of the work of the Mechanism, whose members are the Ombudswoman, the EC, FRA, FRONTEX, IOM, UNHCR and the Ombudswoman for Children.

In November 2022, a new Cooperation Agreement was concluded and adopted by the Government. The Agreement continues the work of the Mechanism for further 18 months, between the same stakeholders.

Even though the Ombudswoman welcomed the fact that the new Agreement contains certain positive changes, but emphasized that it is not foreseen that the Mechanism will observe all actions of the police, recorded or unrecorded, especially those related to access to the international protection system and the prohibition of collective expulsion. It is also not clear what the inspection of data and files includes, ie the method of data collection is not clear enough. Likewise, although unannounced green border visits are foreseen, they still require prior written notification. Finally, the Ombudswoman noted that in order for the oversight mechanism to be truly purposeful, it must respond to the complex requirements of independence and efficiency.

Additionally, there was a number of question raised on the election of members of the mechanism and its independence by the CSOs working in the area of migration.

6.3 COMMISSION FOR WORKING COMPLAINTS – SOCIAL WELFARE

The Social Welfare Act from 2022 introduces for the first time a Commission, which is to be established to decide on the merits of the complaint of the applicant who is not satisfied with the response of the Ministry.

Handling of complaints is a three-stage procedure, in which the first stage is carried out by institution within Social Welfare system which breached the rights, the second stage is carried out by the Ministry of Labor, Pension, Family and Social Policy, and the third stage by the Commission for Working on Complaints.

The commission consists of five representatives of citizens who, upon public invitation, are proposed by civil society organizations or who personally responded to the public invitation.

The members of the Commission are appointed and dismissed by the Croatian Parliament on the proposal of the Committee for Health and Social Policy of the Croatian Parliament. They are appointed for a period of four years, with the possibility of re-appointment.

As the members of the Commission were only appointed at the end of 2022, the time will show how accessible to citizens this mechanism is.

6.4 COUNCIL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS – INTER-SECTORAL BODY

At the end of 2021 the Government established the Human Rights Council, an inter-setoral advisory body.

The tasks of the Council include:

- participation in continuous monitoring and analysis of public policies related to and/or affecting the development of human rights in the Republic of Croatia,
- participation in giving opinions to the Government of the Republic of Croatia on draft regulations that relate to and/or affect the state of human rights in the Republic of Croatia and proposing to the Government measures to solve certain problems, as well as measures to improve the state of human rights,
- participation in programming and determining priorities for the use of European Union funds that are open to the Republic of Croatia in the area of human rights protection, as well as other European Union funds that may include human rights or have an impact on their realisation,
- monitoring the implementation of the National Plan for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights and Combating Discrimination,
- consideration of reports and periodic reports of international organizations on the state of human rights in the Republic of Croatia,
- monitoring the application of international instruments related to the protection and promotion of human rights and studying the experiences of other countries in the realization of human rights,
- proposing to the Government of the Republic of Croatia the establishment of temporary auxiliary bodies, ad hoc working groups for the purpose of processing certain topics of national importance or solving certain issues in the field of human rights,
- cooperation with national committees and commissions for individual areas of human rights, human rights bodies of the Croatian Parliament, the Ombudsperson and other representatives of the Croatian Parliament for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental

freedoms, and associations for the protection and promotion of human rights registered in the Republic of Croatia and

- cooperation with the county coordination for human rights and the coordination for human rights of the City of Zagreb.

The Council's members are:

- Vice Prime Minister of the Government of the Republic of Croatia responsible for human rights, who presides over the Council President
- 14 representatives of public authorities - competent bodies of state administration and offices of the Government of the Republic of Croatia
- 3 representatives of civil society organizations dedicated to the protection and promotion of human rights in the Republic of Croatia

In addition to the members of the Council, representatives of other competent bodies and institutions, as well as external experts, may be invited by the Council members to participate in the work of the expert or working group. The external members do not have a right to vote in the Council.

The council held its first session in March 2022ⁱⁱ at which the Ombudswoman provided an overview of the state of human rights and equality in Croatia, whereas at its session in April 2022 the Ombudswoman presented the recommendations from the 2021 Annual Report. Following a constructive discussion on the Ombudswoman's report, in particular on the recommendations, the Council adopted a conclusion calling on the public authorities to take appropriate measures and activities to implement the Ombudswoman's recommendations or to provide her with the appropriate justification of their inability to implement them. In September 2022, the Council met again and discussed recommendations the Ombudswoman issued in relation to the rights of older persons.

The work of the Council is public and on the dedicated sub-page of the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, minutes from the Council meetings are foreseen to be published. In that way, the public can be informed of the concrete measures and steps taken to monitor the state of human rights in the Republic of Croatia.

As set out in Art. 12 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council for Human Rights, the Council may establish an expert or working group to monitor specific areas of human rights or to prepare and process certain topics for discussion on an issue at a Council session.

The Council submits a report on its work to the Government of the Republic of Croatia at the end of its mandate, as proscribed by the Art. 7 of the Decision on the Establishment of the Council for Human Rights from 10 December 2022.

6.5 HUMAN RIGHTS COUNTY COORDINATORS

Human Rights Coordination are voluntary bodies set up at the regional level – they function either as Committees of County Assembly or as Inter-sectoral Bodies established by the County Assemblies.

Some of the activities of county coordination include collection of data on the state of human rights and freedoms and rights of national minorities in the territory of the county. Furthermore, they should warn the competent administrative bodies of the county about certain cases of violations of the human rights and freedoms in the county area and proposes solutions, and if necessary the Coordination may form a narrower group of experts from certain areas that are not members of the coordination if necessary to solve a particular problem.

The Coordination should report the Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia or work closely with Human Rights Council.

6.6 GENDER EQUALITY COORDINATOR

In line with the Art 27 of the Gender Equality Act Heads of public bodies have to appoint an official or a civil servant in a managing position to perform the duties of a gender equality coordinator.

The coordinator, pursuant to the remit and the scope of activities of the public body, coordinates the enforcement of the Gender Equality Act and the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality and cooperate with the Office for Gender Equality.

Additionally, the coordinator needs to prepare reports on the implementation of the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality which need to be submitted by public bodies to the Office for Gender Equality every two years.

6.7 COMMISSIONS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

In line with the Gender Equality Act units of local and regional self-government and the City of Zagreb are obliged to establish and, pursuant to the proposed programme of activities, provide the conditions and funds for the activity of County commissions for gender equality and the commission for gender equality of the City of Zagreb with a view to promoting gender equality at a local and regional level.

Commissions for Gender Equality are envisaged as working and consultative bodies of County assemblies and the assembly of the City of Zagreb that are composed of members of County assemblies, that is of the Assembly of the City of Zagreb, coordinators from the public bodies, representatives of NGOs and independent experts.

Units of local self-government may establish city and municipal commissions for gender equality pursuant to the National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality.

It should be noted that National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality expired in 2015, and the new one was only adopted in 2023. Previously, there was a tradition of organizing a meeting of all county coordinations every two years – however, the last such coordination meeting took place in 2015.

The Ombudswoman for Gender Equality collected data and analysed the work and status of commissions during 2022. The analysis found that as of December 31, 2022, 20 commissions were appointed, which had 196 members (of which 66.33% were women and 33.67% were men).

Representatives of county assemblies make up about a quarter of all commissions members, while representatives of associations, independent experts, representatives of county executive and administrative bodies and other make up the remaining members. As of December 31, 2022, the appointment procedure in one county was being conducted.

6.8 COUNCIL FOR CIVIL SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT

The Council for Civil Society Development is an advisory body of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, which works on the development of cooperation between the Government and associations and other civil society organizations on the implementation of strategic planning acts to create a stimulating environment for the development of civil society, strategic planning acts of the Government and other strategic planning acts on the development of philanthropy, social capital and intersectoral cooperation in the Republic of Croatia.

The tasks of the Council are:

- participation in the continuous monitoring and analysis of public policy related to and/or influencing the development and activities of civil society and intersectoral cooperation,
- participation in providing opinions to the Government on draft regulations that affect the development of civil society and in the organisation of an appropriate way of including and participating associations and other civil society organisations in discussions on regulations, strategies and programs that have an impact on the level of the Republic of Croatia, as well as on the EU-level on the development and operation of civil society, and cooperation with the public and private sector,
- cooperation in planning the priorities of national programs for the allocation of financial support to projects and programs of associations and other civil society organisations from the state budget, and analysis of annual reports of state administration bodies, government offices and other public bodies on funded projects and programs of civil society organisations,
- participation in programming and establishing priorities for the use of EU funds and other international financial instruments and mechanisms that are open to the Republic of Croatia, based on an effective system of consultation with civil society organisations,
- execution of tasks that fulfil the basic purpose of the Council's activities, and are included in the objectives of strategic planning acts for creating a stimulating environment for the development of civil society, strategic planning acts of the Government and other strategic planning acts,
- cooperation with Croatian representatives of associations and other civil society organisations in the European Economic and Social Committee in formulating civil society positions at the level of the EU and
- nomination and election of representatives of associations and other civil society organisations to commissions, advisory or working bodies at the request of state administration bodies, government offices and other public authorities.

The council has 37 members, namely:

- 17 representatives of public authorities - competent state administration bodies, Government offices and the National Foundation for the Development of Civil Society
- 14 representatives of associations and other civil society organizations from different fields of activity
- three representatives of civil society from the ranks of foundations, trade unions and employers' associations i
- three representatives of national associations of local and regional self-government units.

The Council can establish and appoint permanent and temporary working groups in the course of implementing its tasks. The Council reports to the Government about its work once every year.

The Council has a president, elected by the Council members representing civil society from their own ranks while the vice-president is elected by the members of the Council representing the state institutions. The president and the members of the Council are elected for a mandate of 3 years and can be re-elected. The functioning of the Council is based on the Decision on the Establishment of the Council for Civil society Development, which regulates its work through its rules of procedure.

The logistic and administrative work for the Council is done by the Office for Cooperation with NGOs of the Croatian government. The work of the Council is public and on the dedicated sub-page of the Office for Cooperation with NGOs, minutes from the Council meetings are published.¹¹

Although the last National Strategy for the Creation of Favorable Conditions for the Functioning of the Civil Society expired in 2016 and the drafting of the new one began in 2021, it has not been adopted yet.

Additionally, the civil society sector has been rating the cooperation with the Council for the Development of the Civil Society as stalling.

6.9 WORKING GROUP FOR MONITORING HATE CRIMES

The Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities coordinates the work of the Working Group for Monitoring Hate Crimes, and promotes international and intersectorial cooperation in the hate-crime monitoring system.

The Working Group for Monitoring Hate Crimes consists of representatives of bodies in charge of combatting hate crimes, representatives of academia, and representatives of civil society from the ranks of NGOs active in the field of monitoring and combatting hate crimes, as elected by the Council for Civil Society Development. It also includes representatives of Ombudswoman.

The Working Group for Monitoring Hate Crimes is tasked with coordinating the collection of data on hate crimes, monitoring and analysing the manifestation of hate crimes, coordination of intersectorial cooperation in combatting hate crime, and developing recommendations for improving the system of combatting hate crime.

¹¹ Minutes from the sessions of the Council ([Zapisnici sa sjednica Savjeta](#)).

The meet twice a year, and more frequently should the need arise.

The implementation of this Protocol for procedure in cases of hate crime is based on the assumption of cooperation among the competent bodies participating in the identification, processing and monitoring of the results of proceedings conducted for hate crimes, with the aim of improving the hate-crime monitoring system.

On the basis of the data collected by the competent bodies, the Office for Human Rights and the Rights of National Minorities monitors the course of procedure in each single case, consolidates statistical data relating to hate crime, and publishes them on its web page. The published statistical data includes the motive (indication of the protected characteristic) and legal qualification of the criminal offence or misdemeanour by all the competent bodies that have taken part in the case.

6.10 COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL MINORITIES

The Council for National Minorities is a collegiate consultative and advisory body to the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

Council for National Minorities is established at the national level and was established to ensure the participation of national minorities in the public life of the Republic of Croatia, particularly to consider and propose the regulation and settlement of matters pertaining to the exercise and protection of national minority rights and freedoms.

The members of the Council are appointed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia for a period of four years: seven from among the ranks of persons proposed by councils of national minority, and 5 from among the ranks of distinguished persons in public life proposed by minority associations, citizens, minority representatives, religious communities and legal entities. National minority representatives to the Croatian Parliament are also simultaneously members of the Council.

The Council has a President and two Vice-Presidents appointed by the Government of Croatia from among the members of the Council. One of them is a mandatory member of the Council from the national minority, which represents more than 1.5% of the total population, i.e. the Serb national minority.

The Council for National Minorities proposes the criteria for financing and contracting the programmes of cultural autonomy for national minorities and the allocation of state funds allocated for their implementation.

According to the Advisory Committee monitoring the implementation of the Framework convention on the Rights of National Minorities stated that persons belonging to national minorities are overall satisfied with the fact that their representatives in the Council for National Minorities are able to advise and take part in the decision-making process, but the Committee heard, during its visit, some criticism concerning the lack of transparency in the work of the Council. Hence, the Advisory Committee encourages the authorities to ensure gender balance in the composition of the Council for National Minorities and improve the transparency of its work.

6.11 NATIONAL MINORITY COUNCILS AND REPRESENTATIVES

With the aim of improving, preserving and protecting the position of national minorities in society, the Constitutional Law on Rights of National Minorities regulates the right of members of national minorities to elect councils and representatives of national minorities in local and regional self-government units.

Councils and representatives of national minorities are elected in order to achieve the participation of members of national minorities in public life and management of local affairs in municipalities and cities and counties for the areas where they are elected.

The elected council has the status of a non-profit legal entity, which it acquires by registering in the Register of Councils, coordination of councils and representatives of national minorities in accordance with the Act on the Register of Councils, coordination of councils and representatives of national minorities. The elected representative of the national minority is also registered in the Register, but does not acquire the status of a legal entity.

Article 31 of the Constitutional Law on the Rights of National Minorities prescribes the following specific rights of councils and representatives of national minorities in self-government units:

- the right to propose measures to the authorities of the self-governing unit to improve the position of the national minority in the state or in one of its areas, including proposing general acts that regulate issues of importance for the national minority to the bodies that adopt them;
- the right to nominate candidates for positions in state administration bodies and bodies of self-government units;
- the right to be informed about every issue that will be discussed by the working bodies of the representative bodies of the self-governing unit, concerning the position of the national minority; you
- the right to give opinions and suggestions on programs of radio and television stations at the local and regional level intended for national minorities or on programs related to minority issues

Advisory Committee of the Framework Convention on the Rights of National Minorities noted numerous complaints about the lack of effective influence in decision-making of local or regional minority councils. Accordingly, representatives of these minority councils feel that they are insufficiently informed, can only intervene orally if being asked. Advisory committee noted that competences of councils are largely ignored and not implemented in practice and decisions about the national minorities are often taken without consulting them. Even when the councils of national minorities deliver opinions to the representative units of the local and regional self-government on matters concerning their own national minorities, they are often not taken into consideration.

Additionally, as local and regional self-government units provide funding and secure workspace for the functioning of minority councils and representatives in accordance with the law, the Ombudswoman notes that such supports differs.

Furthermore, during 2017, as part of the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities project 'Support to National Minorities at Local Level' funded by the IPA 2012 programme, extensive

research was conducted and published, so called 'GAP analysis' of the capacities and needs of councils and representatives of national minorities, held numerous training, developed a Handbook for Councils and Representatives of National Minorities and established a web portal through which councils and representatives can report on the implementation of the Constitutional Law in the coming period at local level.

The Advisory Committee underlined that consultation alone does not constitute a sufficient mechanism for ensuring effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities. The Advisory Committee also observed that the role, and mandate of minority councils at regional and local level and the support provided to them are not identical in all regional or local councils.

6.12 OTHER

Finally, the government has a number of inter-sectoral bodies, mostly focused on specific groups, such as:

- Interdepartmental working groups for the implementation of the activities of acceptance and care of the refugee population from Ukraine
- Permanent council for the implementation of the integration of foreigners into Croatian society
- Advisory Group of Third-Country Nationals and Persons of Migrant Origin
- Commission of the Government of the Republic of Croatia for Disabled People, whose members are also representatives of national alliances of persons with disabilities, which also monitors the implementation of the commitments undertaken in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Council for Youth
- Interdepartmental Commission for the Protection of Unaccompanied Children
- National team for the prevention and fight against violence against women and violence in the family
- National Council of Experts for the Execution of the Court's judgments
- Network of support and cooperation for victims and witnesses of criminal acts
- Committee for Combating Human Trafficking

These are developed to ensure better cooperation between various responsible bodies.

ⁱ [SCA Report March 2019](#)

ⁱⁱ [Sessions of the Human Rights Council of the Government of the Republic of Croatia](#)