

Human Rights Council - 46th Session
Outcome of the Universal Periodic Review - Croatia
Action Canada for Population and Development

Thank you, Ms. President.

Action Canada makes this statement on behalf of B.a.B.e. Be active. Be emancipated. and the Sexual Rights Initiative.

We welcome Croatia's acceptance of the recommendation on improving services and support for survivors of gender-based violence by implementing the obligations under the Istanbul Convention, including by ending the practice of prosecuting victims. However, for the full implementation of the Istanbul Convention, we expect the Government to systematically and transparently carry out all accepted recommendations on concrete and effective measures to combat discrimination against women and gender-based violence.

Since the last UPR, Croatia has enacted a number of laws and policies aligning with international standards, creating conditions for formal equality. Effective implementation of these changes is still lacking as evidenced by institutionalized and individual cases of gender inequality, gender-based violence, and barriers to the realisation of sexual and reproductive rights. During 2020, with the Covid19 pandemic lockdown aggravating existing conditions, most institutions and organizations, including ours, recorded increases of 20% to 30% of women seeking support, especially in cases of gender-based violence. Meanwhile, state representatives continue to openly promote discrimination against victims of violence on the basis of their financial status and social class; testimonials of victims of sexual violence continue to be publicly doubted; mass media is using cases of GBV for their sensationalistic articles; and, government-promised shelters for victims of domestic violence are still not fully established.

We call on the Government to strengthen measures to prevent and address gender-based violence, which includes:

- trainings for police officers, judges and lawyers,
- thorough investigations of cases of domestic violence and accountability for perpetrators,
- access to shelters, protection orders and adequate compensation for victims, and
- effective alignment of domestic legislation and policies with the Istanbul Convention.

We look forward to seeing our government take concrete steps to protect, promote and respect women's rights and gender equality in Croatia. Thank you.