

HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN SERBIA



IMPRESSUM

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HUMAN RIGHTS *EDUCATION* IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN SERBIA

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ABSTRACT

The democratization of society and compliance with the rule of law principle in Serbia is a long-term process, which indicates the need for strengthening citizens' awareness through education in order to facilitate their active engagement with regard to respect for human rights requirements. Although the human rights education normative framework has been developed to some extent, knowledge about the human rights education contents and effects in primary and secondary schools is limited. This survey analyzes the existing normative framework and views of relevant participants in the educational process in order to determine the status of human rights education. In addition to a review of the laws and curricula, a questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed-ended questions and a specific methodological scale were employed to assess the situation. The results indicate that the school syllabus is based on a relatively adequate normative framework. However, the lack of implementation points to the need of comprehensive changes in the education system so that respect for the values of human rights can be reflected in the daily lives of students and knowledge about the substance and importance of the respect for human rights in practice can be developed.

I. INTRODUCTION

The importance of human rights education (hereinafter referred to as: HRE) is primarily reflected in the development of society as a whole, i.e. in the realization of the rule of law principle, given that it facilitates citizens' awareness raising of how human rights can be translated into the social and political reality and how they can be protected. In 2013, Serbia opened negotiations with the European Union (EU) and adopted the Chapter 23 Action Plan: Judiciary and Fundamental Rights (AP23)¹, whose implementation should lead to the fulfillment of the interim benchmarks and EU accession. However, the performance of activities in AP23, including those in the area of fundamental rights, does not point to an efficient achievement of the objectives set in the negotiating framework². International reports suggest that the level of realization of human rights in Serbia has been deteriorating³. The Freedom House Nations in Transit Report⁴ has rated Serbia as a partially free democracy due to a regression in fundamental freedoms and democratic institutions in 2020, while in the Democracy Index report published by the UK-based Economist⁵, Serbia is among the countries rated as flawed democracies, indicating that there are flaws in the realization of fundamental rights and freedoms, media freedoms, political culture and level of political participation.

If these assessments are viewed cumulatively, it can be inferred that Serbia is going through an incomplete transition process and extremely prolonged EU accession. The transition process assessments are especially related to the principles of rule of law, democracy and compliance with human rights standards, as specific values to be achieved. However, democratization is often not straightforward and is not always a successful process. The concept of „linkage and leverage“ proposed by Levitsky and Way (2006⁶) suggests that the leverage of the West, which is reflected in different forms of government's vulnerability to externalizing pressure, has not been shown to be sufficient for efficient democratization. These authors believe that the second dimension, i.e. linkage, is more successful in inducing democracy as it constitutes the so-called soft power, i.e. the density of a transition country's different social and economic ties to the EU or the United States of America. Essentially, the concept of linkage refers to civil society, links with international actors and other societal connections whose existence increases the likelihood of internal pressure towards democratization. The civil society's position and lack of internal pressure towards democratization indicate that this approach has largely been confirmed in Serbia as well. The assessments of the state of human rights in Serbia often note that the legislative framework meets international standards, but data on the position of vulnerable groups indicate that there are numerous challenges in practice. The 2019 report of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality⁷ noted that the majority of the complaints received referred to discrimination on the basis of disability, gender and health status, while in that same year the Ombudsman⁸ acted most often upon complaints related to especially vulnerable groups: children's rights, gender equality and LGBTI+, national minorities, people with disabilities and elderly people. These data indicate the need of raising awareness of the position of vulnerable groups and fundamental human rights. Given that education is key to the realization of human rights, it seems that improvement of HRE in Serbia could contribute to internal pressure leading towards democratization.

In the past period, Serbia implemented various education reforms, however, reform processes are not isolated from the state in which society found itself, the different interests, as well as the lack of knowledge for their implementation. Although the HRE normative framework has been developed to some extent, knowledge about the contents and effects of this form of education in primary and secondary schools is limited. At the same time, there are no means through which one could assess the level of student knowledge about human rights, contents of the topics that are taught in practice and the achievement of the set outcomes. This study analyzes the existing framework by highlighting the need for comprehensive changes in the education system, which would in turn lead to democratization of society in the future.

1 AP23, available at: <https://www.mpravde.gov.rs/sr/tekst/26531/akcioni-plan-za-pregovaranje-poglavlja-23-usvojen-na-sednici-vlade-srbije-27-aprila-2016.php>; Revised AP23, available at: <https://www.mpravde.gov.rs/sr/tekst/30402/revidirani-akcioni-plan-za-poglavlje-23-i-strategija-razvoja-pravosudja-za-period-2020-2025-22072020.php>

2 The report on the implementation of AP23 before the revision in July 2020 indicates that in the subchapter Fundamental Rights about 70% of activities are fulfilled, while the most important laws in the field of human rights have not been adopted.

3 EU Progress Report (2020). Available at: <http://europa.rs/godisnji-izvestaji-o-srbiji-2020/>

4 Freedom House, Freedom in the world (2020), <https://freedomhouse.org/country/serbia/freedom-world/2020>

5 Euractiv (2019). British Economist's Index of Democracy. <http://www.euractiv.rs/posmatraci/10937-smanjena-ocena-srbije-na-indeksu-demokratije>

6 Levitsky, S. and Way, L.A. (2002). Elections without Democracy. The rise of competitive authoritarianism, Journal of Democracy, Vol. 12, Issue 2.

7 Report of the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality (2019). Available at: <http://ravnopravnost.gov.rs/rs/izvestaji/>

8 Ombudsman's Report (2019). Available at: <https://www.ombudsman.rs/index.php/izvestaji/godisnji-izvestaji>

II. HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION - CONCEPT, STANDARDS AND CONTENTS

Human rights education encompasses learning about the epistemology and philosophy of human rights in a way that is consistent with human rights principles and that empowers students to exercise their individual and collective rights⁹, i.e.: a) education *about* human rights, including the understanding of human rights principles, values and safeguards; b) education *through* human rights, i.e. learning and teaching in a way that respects the rights of teachers and students; and c) education *for* human rights, i.e. empowering individuals to exercise their rights and respect the rights of others¹⁰. The United Nations (UN) World Programme for Human Rights Education included integration of HRE in primary and secondary schools¹¹, followed by human rights higher education and training for teachers¹². Following an assessment of the effects, the UN Coordinating Committee on Human Rights recommended adoption of education policies that exclusively refer to the human rights framework; inclusion of HRE as a required teacher qualification; review of national curricula and integration of human rights in other subjects¹³. The White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue¹⁴ highlights the need to continue preparing teachers through methodology of teaching to address situations arising from diversity, discrimination, racism, xenophobia, sexism and marginalization and to resolve conflicts peacefully. General measures for implementation of children's rights¹⁵ include, *inter alia*, cooperation with civil society and independent human rights protection institutions, while the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education¹⁶ calls on member states to „foster the role of non-governmental organizations and youth organizations in education for democratic citizenship and human rights education“. These requirements and international standards constitute to a large extent an important reference point for policymakers in this area. The integration of human rights in the school syllabus is generally done through: a) a separate elective subject, b) integration of human rights topics and contents in specific subjects, or c) integration of human rights approach in the general curriculum¹⁷. An empirical study that included over fifty human rights activists has identified the key areas of HRE, namely: that it is based on the principles of human rights treaties; that the methods reflect the principles of respect for the individual and cultural diversity; that it incorporates knowledge, skills and views, as well as activism¹⁸. Small-scale studies¹⁹ highlight that the inclusion of HRE in the practice of schools has led to a significant progress of participants with regard to the understanding and application of human rights principles, whereas these effects are absent when students do not learn about human rights in practice²⁰. In this context, there is also a mention of the concept of human rights friendly school²¹, which is a school characterized by an atmosphere of non-discrimination, inclusion and participation in the development of school policies, as well as promotion of critical thinking and student

involvement in debates on social change. A review of international studies²² has shown that there are few studies focused on HRE in schools, providing only a limited insight in the format of this form of education. The authors state that surveys on schools in Australia and USA²³ and secondary schools in Japan, Australia and USA²⁴ have found that HRE has not been well integrated in the national education systems and is not required for the professional development of teachers. A similar inference has also been drawn in a survey on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 12 countries²⁵, which has indicated that aspects of human rights and children's rights have been included in school syllabi, but in an optional and unsystematic way. Tibbitts and Kirchsclaeger²⁶ state that the challenges in the implementation of HRE syllabi are the diversity of learning objectives, range of topics and teaching methods, for example, the participatory model that also involves student work on a case study on human rights violations²⁷. Also, there are no clear indicators of compliance of the existing models with international standards on human rights. One of the precise analyses of indicators for the realization of children's rights in education that links the standards with the existing educational models related to the children's rights²⁸ could be a model for the development of measurable HRE result indicators in practice. Finally, an entire segment of HRE is also implemented by civil society organizations (CSOs), through the so-called non-formal education. As stated by Flowers²⁹, government authorities often prioritize the promotion of social order through HRE, whereas non-governmental organizations focus more on the outcomes that are transformative, and not conservative³⁰, i.e. understand HRE as a means of social change. It could be argued that CSOs have, over the last two decades and through various programs on human rights in Serbia, essentially prepared the education system for the introduction of broader topics from the area of human rights. This form of non-formal education potentially has greater efficiency, given that it includes individuals who are willing to learn more about human rights, and it is delivered by experts who have experience in the area of human rights. The surveys and publications on this topic in Serbia, mainly by civil society and international organizations, advocate for transformative learning aimed at the development of an individual through critical thinking and reconsideration of existing beliefs.

9 COMPASS Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People (2020). Brander, P., De Witte, L. Ghanea, N., Gomes, R. Keen, E., Nikitina, A. and Pinkeviciute, J. 2nd edition. www.coe.int/compass

10 United Nations General Assembly (2011). United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training. General Assembly Resolution 66/137, 19 Dec. U.N.Doc. A/RES/66/137

11 United Nations (2006). World Programme for Human Rights Education First Phase. New York and Geneva: United Nations

12 United Nations (2012). World Programme for Human Rights Education Second Phase. New York and Geneva: United Nations.

13 United Nations General Assembly (2014). Plan of Action for the Third Phase (2015-2019) of the World Programme for Human Rights Education. General Assembly 4 August, U.N. Doc. A/HRC/27/28

14 White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue "Living Together as Equals in Dignity", adopted by the Council of Europe at its 118th Ministerial Session (Strasbourg, 7 May 2008) www.coe.int/dialogue

15 Committee on the Rights of the Child (2001). General comment no. 1: The right to education. Geneva: United Nations.

16 Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, available at: http://www.mpn.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Guidelines_educators_SERB.pdf adopted under Recommendation CM / Rec (2010)

17 Amnesty International (2012). Becoming a Human Rights Friendly School. A Guide for Schools Around the World, p. 52-53, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/human-rights-education/projects-initiatives/rfsp>

18 Flowers, N. (2004). How to define human rights education? A complex answer to a simple question. In V. B. Georgi and M. Seberich (Eds.), International Perspectives in Human Rights Education (p. 105-127). Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers

19 Howe, R. B., and Covell, K. (2011). Countering Disadvantage, Promoting Health: The Value of Children's Human Rights Education. The Journal of Educational Thought, 45 (1): 59-85; Magendzo, A. (2005). Pedagogy of Human Rights Education: a Latin American Perspective, Intercultural Education, 16:2, 137-143; Tibbitts, F. (2009). Impact Assessment of Rights Education Leading to Action Programme (REAP). Norway: Amnesty International

20 Emmert, S. (2011) Education in Terms of Human Rights. International Conference on Education and Educational Psychology. Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences 12 (2011) 346-361

21 Amnesty International, 2012, page 3

22 Robinson, C., Phillips, L., & Quennerstedt, A. (2020). Human Rights Education: Developing a Theoretical Understanding of -Teachers' Responsibilities, Educational Review, 72:2, 220-241.

23 Gelber, K. (2005). Beyond Australia's First Bill of Rights: Engendering public debate, Democratic Audit of Australia: <http://democratic.audit.anu.edu.au/Papers-2005/GelberBeyondBoRJuly05.pdf>

24 Lapayese, Y. (2005). National Initiatives in Human Rights Education: The Implementation of Human Rights Education Policy Reform in Schools. In: International Handbook on Globalisation, Education and Policy Research, edited by J. Zajda, 389-404. Netherlands: Springer

25 Lundy, L., U. Kilkelly, B. Byrne, & J. Kang (2012). The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child: A Study of Legal Implementation in 12 Countries. Belfast: Centre for Children's Rights, Queens University

26 Tibbitts, F. and Kirchsclaeger, P. G. (2010). Perspectives of Research on Human Rights Education. Journal of Human Rights Education 2 (1, September), p. 8-29.

27 Ang, K. (2010). Human Rights Education: A Best Practice Model for Secondary Schools, Learning and Teaching, 3, (2), p.5-20.

28 Vučković-Šahović, N., Savić, I., Cicvarić, R., Kalezić-Vigčević, A., Žunić-Cicvarić, J., Vranješević, J., Trikić, Z. i Čolić, G. (2018). Indicators of the realization of children's rights in education, Užice Center for the Rights of the Child, third edition

29 Flowers, N. (2004). How to define human rights education? A complex answer to a simple question. In V. B. Georgi and M. Seberich (Eds.), International Perspectives in Human Rights Education (p. 105-127). Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Foundation Publishers

30 Flowers (2004), str. 110

III. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The starting point of this survey is the abovementioned definition in Article 2 of the UN Declaration on Human Rights Education and Training as it examines the curricula in primary and secondary schools in Serbia (human rights education framework), contents and methods employed in teaching, with reflection on whether the purpose of this form of education can be achieved within the set framework. Initially, an analysis of the normative framework was performed, which was then complemented with the questionnaire. Key international standards, relevant normative framework in primary and secondary schools and accompanying rulebooks which closely define the curriculum relevant to the survey topics have been used as data sources, as well as available reports of CSOs. The bylaws covered by the analysis regulate the general primary school curriculum, as well as the curriculum for Civics as an elective subject, i.e. secondary school elective subjects. The purpose of the curriculum analysis is to determine which human rights are covered and in which manner, and what are the expectations from schools and teachers in reference to educating students on human rights. Civics was chosen given that it particularly pertains to individuals, views and values that are of relevance to the future life in society, while the secondary school elective subjects were chosen with regard to the subject matter related to HRE. For the purpose of this survey, three structured questionnaires were developed for three groups of participants. One questionnaire was completed by the parents of students taking the Civics elective subject and other secondary school elective subjects, the second one was intended for teachers in the first cycle of education and teachers of the Civics elective subject in the second cycle of education, while the third questionnaire was intended for secondary school teachers and parents. The questionnaire aimed at collecting data on the individual understanding and school practice experience related to HRE, in order to identify the weaknesses of the educational model that can further be improved through various activities. The questionnaires consisted of open-ended and closed-ended questions and were distributed via e-mail, namely to: nine teachers in five primary schools in Belgrade, ten parents in those schools and three teachers and three parents in secondary schools. The sample was representative in terms of gender and age of the children, geographical distribution in Belgrade and teacher experience. Based on the survey, the comprehensive HRE normative framework in Serbia was determined, as well as the concept of this type of education applied in the formal education system. Based on the defined framework, the envisaged outcomes and contents prescribed in the curricula were mapped and analyzed in relation to three human rights topics (learning *about* human rights, learning *through* and *for* human rights). The aim of the mapping of the expected outcomes is to establish a comparison point against which it would be determined to what extent HRE in Serbia covers the required topics and contributes to the set objectives. The map of outcomes and contents is provided in the tables in Section III of this survey. In order to determine the status score, a specific methodological scale was developed, containing five possible scores:

Score	Score meaning
A	The school syllabus and practice are based on an adequate human rights education approach
B	The school syllabus is based on an adequate normative framework, but implementation is lacking
C	Lack of prescribed normative solutions which would enable an adequate human rights education approach
D	Outdated human rights education approach methods
E	The human rights education approach is inadequate, lacking substance

The qualitative data that were collected through the questionnaires were used for the purposes of analyzing the normative framework and curricula with a view to assessing the situation in practice. Through the questionnaire, the participants were also offered to assess the existing human rights education model based on the methodological scale. These responses are presented below and were taken into account during the situational assessment.

IV. SURVEY FINDINGS/ RESULTS

4.1. Human rights in the normative education framework in Serbia

As the supreme legal act, the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia³¹ does not specify HRE, instead it is oriented more towards prescribing equality in education, promoting respect of diversity arising „from specific ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity of its citizens“ and developing the spirit of tolerance³². The Law on Primary Education and Upbringing³³ stipulates that staff involved in the education and upbringing of students shall especially promote equality among all students and actively fight all types of discrimination and violence³⁴. Under objectives of primary education and upbringing, this Law envisages „...development of the sense of solidarity, understanding and constructive cooperation with others...; development of positive human values; development of competencies for understanding and respect for children’s rights, human rights, civil liberties and of abilities for life in a democratic and just society; development and respect of racial, national, cultural, linguistic, religious, gender, sex and age equality, tolerance and respect of diversity“³⁵. Responsible participation in a democratic society is stipulated as one of the general interdisciplinary competencies at the end of primary education and upbringing³⁶. Education outcomes³⁷ are of particular relevance to HRE, according to which, after the completion of primary education the students will be able to collect, analyze and critically evaluate information; recognize and acknowledge human and children’s rights, actively participate in the exercise of these rights; know and respect tradition, identity and culture of other communities and cooperate with the members of these communities. *The Law on Textbooks*³⁸ does not define HRE, but it lays down detailed rules for the textbooks that are intended for the members of national minorities, essentially as a result of the amendments made to this Law over the last few years enabling the Republic of Serbia to fulfill its obligations in the EU accession process.

According to the Law on the Foundations of the Education and Upbringing System³⁹ (acronym in Serbian: ZOSOV), the general principles of education and upbringing are equality and availability of the right to education and upbringing without discrimination and with respect for human rights and the rights of every child⁴⁰, and the objectives pursued include development of competencies for understanding and respect for children’s rights, human rights, civil liberties and of abilities to live in a democratic and just society, as well as development and respect for racial, national, cultural, linguistic, religious, gender, sex and age equality, tolerance and respect for diversity.⁴¹

The relevant rulebooks on the curriculum for specific grades of primary education and upbringing⁴² as well as the rulebooks on the curriculum for the Civics elective subject and other secondary school elective subjects are also relevant to this survey, given that the curricula contents are the means for achieving the envisaged outcomes. The outcomes are defined as measurable expressions of what students are able to do based on learning the curriculum units of a specific subject, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and values which enable acquisition of the required competencies. The knowledge on human rights is developed during both cycles of education and through work on other subjects (Serbian language, history, art, geography, science and society). New teaching and learning curricula which are oriented towards the achievement of outcomes and development of competencies have been in use in the Serbian education system since 2018/2019 school year. The starting point for the development of these curricula is the need to train students on children’s rights and human rights, i.e. to prepare them for responsible participation in a democratic society. The area of human rights in the education system is addressed through: 1. *general*

31 Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 98/2006, Art. 48

32 Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 98/2006, Art. 81

33 Law on Primary Education and Upbringing, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 55/13, 101/17 and 27/18 - other law

34 Law on Primary Education and Upbringing, Art. 9, par.2

35 Law on Primary Education and Upbringing Art. 21, point 12 - 16

36 Law on Primary Education and Upbringing Art. 21a, par. 3, point 2

37 Law on Primary Education and Upbringing Art. 22

38 Law on Textbooks, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 27/2018

39 Law on the Foundations of the Education and Upbringing System, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 88/2017, 27/2018 – other law, 10/2019, 27/2018 – other law and 6/2020

40 Art.7 of the Law on the Foundations of the Education and Upbringing System

41 Art.8, par.1, point 14 and 15 of the Law on the Foundations of the Education and Upbringing System

42 Law on Primary Education and Upbringing, Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia, no. 55/13, 101/17 and 27/18 – other law and accompanying rulebooks <http://www.pravno-informacioni-sistem.rs/SlGlasnikPortal/eli/rep/sgrs/skupstina/zakon/2017/88/1/reg>

outcomes of primary and secondary education and upbringing, which are provided above in keeping with the relevant normative framework; 2. *general interdisciplinary competencies* which refer to, *inter alia*, responsible participation in a democratic society; 3. *key competencies for lifelong learning*, including student's ability to take active and democratic participation in the community; 4. *outcomes in the new curricula* for the general and elective subjects which are related to different aspects of human rights; and 5. *different forms of student participation*, through project-based instruction, extracurricular activities and student's parliament, which enable student learning through the application of skills which are relevant to the exercise of human rights (cooperation, tolerance, awareness-raising with regard to organizations which deal with the protection of student rights).

This survey has identified the outcomes and contents of the curricula that can either contribute to the knowledge or are related to the knowledge on human rights, which have been classified based on the topics of this survey in the tables below. The selection criterion that was applied is whether the content provides the knowledge and skills that contribute to HRE, in order to assess whether the subject-related contents can contribute to the achievement of the required objectives and tasks, i.e. the achievement of the outcomes.

Table 1: Primary school – Civics- outcomes and contents in 1st cycle of education

General outcome			
Development of competencies for understanding and respect for children's rights, human rights, civil liberties and of abilities for life in a democratic and just society			
Contents by topics			
PS	I Learning about human rights	II Learning through human rights	III Learning for human rights
	Identity; perceiving the differences from others; violation of the rights of the child and asking for help; free expression of opinion and statement of reasons	Absence of infringement of the rights and needs of others; identification of basic feelings; identification of violations of children's rights in the surroundings; perceiving the differences between good and bad communication	Responsibility of children and adults for operation of the community; respect for interlocutors; respect of diversity; upsides and downsides in school -action planning, performance and promotion
	Needs and wishes; rights and rules in classroom; children's rights and human rights; Convention on the Rights of the Child; types of rights; indicators of violations of children's rights; whom to contact for help in case of violation of children's rights; the role of individuals and groups in the protection of children's rights	Participation in the adoption of classroom operating rules; behaving in accordance with the rules in school; school as a community; responsibility of children and adults; voting and consensus in decision-making; assessment of one's own accountability in the violation of someone's rights; knowledge on the types of violence; conflict analysis from different angles; non-violent communication;	School safety; responsible online behavior; responsible mobile phone use; how to make school safe – action planning, performance and promotion
	Right to equality; acceptance of diversity; solidarity; the concept of discrimination and different grounds of discrimination; institutions that care about children's rights and human rights	Respect for one's own needs and needs of others; recognizing misrepresentation of someone; vulnerable social groups; stereotypes and prejudices as the grounds for discrimination; asking for help in case of violation of rights;	Identification of local community problems and proposals for improvement; services of general interest; utility services; community care for children with different characteristics; availability of required conditions for people with disabilities; Institutions and organizations in the areas of culture, health, sports, environmental preservation and security; citizens associations; humanitarian actions and volunteering; organizing solidarity action in the local community
	The third generation of human rights; right to life in a healthy natural environment; right to sustainable economic development; rational use of resources; right of access to information on the condition of the environment; coexistence of different cultures; refugees and migrants – problems faced by them and prejudices and discrimination	Cultural tradition, tangible and intangible heritage; cultural identity, multiculturalism and interculturalism; coexistence of different cultures and benefits; refugees and migrants – prejudices and discrimination	Protection of natural environment; the importance of awareness-raising on the condition of the environment; how ignorance of other cultures affects the formation of prejudices and discrimination; consumer society, overconsumption and the role of media in promotion of consumption; children in advertisements; organizing and carrying out ecological action

Table 2: Primary school – Civics- outcomes and contents in 2nd cycle of education

General outcome			
Development of competencies for understanding and respect for children's rights, human rights, civil liberties and of abilities for life in a democratic and just society			
Contents by topics			
PS	I Learning about human rights	II Learning through human rights	III Learning for human rights
	Children's rights in documents on protection of rights; Convention on the Rights of the Child; types of rights; protection of one's own rights in a manner that does not endanger others; whom to contact in case of violation of children's rights; right to equality; acceptance of diversity (race, sex, nationality, social background, religion, political beliefs, income bracket, culture, language, age, disability); voting and consensus as democratic means of decision-making	Wishes, needs and rules in classroom; participation in the adoption of group operating rules; identification of violations of the rights of others; similarities and differences (race, sex, nationality); stereotypes, prejudices, discrimination; tolerance; identification of examples of prejudices and stereotypes in media and books; types of violence (emotional, sexual, social, digital) and means of protection against violence; constructive solution of problems	Indicators of violations of human rights; the role of individuals and groups in the protection of human rights; school as a community and the importance of consensus in decision-making; problem selection and action plan development; solution-seeking; action planning and performance and analysis
	Awareness of one's own rights and obligations on an example; freedom to... protection against... and related responsibilities; right to preservation of personal, family, national, cultural, and religious identity; understands and argues quality and inclusive education; Identification of indicators of violations of children's rights in practice; democratic society – concept, citizens, government, procedures and government levels	Democratic society and citizen participation; participation in the adoption of rules; understanding how government works and collective decision are made; impact of social networks on opinion-making and individual actions; use and abuse of the Internet and social networks, responsibility and rights of others, digital violence and response to situations digital violence; seven rules for safe chatting and SMS messages	Student participation – decorative, real and symbolic; use and abuse of the Internet and social networks, responsibility and rights of others, digital violence; survey of online student attitudes and abuse of the Internet and mobile telephones
	Description of the basic characteristics of human rights and reference to right; universality, inherence, indivisibility, inalienability of human rights; law and justice, social justice; privacy – scope and boundaries	Identification of peer pressure and resistance; hazard identification; active listening and statement of reasons for opinions; group affiliation and group identity; conformity; active listening, critical thinking and analysis of information from various sources	Description in one's own words of the relationship between individual rights and common good; purpose of existence of political parties; substantiated need for limitation and control of government; steps from proposal to adoption of legislation; the National Assembly's role and procedures; citizens' impact on the National Assembly's decisions; MPs; simulation of the Assembly's work; critical thinking and use of information from various sources;
	Sex and gender – biological differences and society's expectations; gender patterns and stereotypes; gender perspective; gender equality; national minority rights; freedom of media; media literacy, understanding and critical analysis; journalists' code and pressures on journalists as a method of infringement of freedom of expression	Gender-based violence; abuse of power; safeguards; stereotype identification; patriotism, xenophobia, racism, antisemitism, anti-Gypsyism; protection of national minority rights; cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue critical and analytical adoption of media contents; identification of media manipulation and impact of media on one's own actions	The importance of gender equality for the community; barriers to gender equality; accountability of government and civil society and individuals; affirmative measures for achievement of equality; types and functions of media; disinformation and manipulations; media contribution to democracy; values of civil society – presentation through film, scenario and evaluation

Table 3: Secondary school elective subjects – outcomes and contents

	Constitution and citizens' rights	Language, media and culture	Individual, group and society
Objective	Acquisition of elementary political culture and knowledge about democratic setup, citizen position, citizen participation in the exercise of authority and political life in general	Contribution to the improvement of communication skills, development of media culture and adoption of cultural patterns which facilitate navigating the modern world, identity building and further professional development	Student capacity building to critically view the place of individuals and groups in society, their roles, rights, responsibilities and interdependencies, in order to develop knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required for constructive participation in different situations in a contemporary dynamic society
Topics	Citizens and their rights and freedoms; development of human rights and freedoms and generations of human rights and freedoms; development, protection and limitation of human rights and freedoms; personal and political rights and freedoms. Economic and social rights; cultural and minority rights	Acceptance of communication skills improvements, development of media culture and adoption of cultural workpieces which will enable students to navigate the modern world, build the identity and develop professionally	Studying role models and idols, leaders and followers; analysis of the concepts of loneliness, rejection, alienation
Outcomes	Mastery of basic knowledge about the legal order; development of abilities to take a critical view on the relations between law and government; adoption of values in keeping with the basic universal values of the society; recognizing the importance of citizen participation in a democratic society for its prosperity; substantiated expression of views; general notion of the Republic of Serbia's setup; participation in the community life, initiating actions and taking ownership of personal decisions	Critical examination of the positive and negative media impacts; assessing the importance and impact of information and information sources and relating those to one's own experience; identifying the examples of manipulation, discrimination and hate speech in media and treating them critically; responsible design of one's own media messages; communication in a constructive way; participating in actions aimed at the improvement of media culture; drawing a distinction between cultural and folk contents and making value judgements	Substantiated discussion on social phenomena with the position of individuals, groups and society in mind; perceiving and analyzing different types of interaction processes in society and interdependency between individuals, groups and society; identifying means of influencing and manipulating individuals, groups and society; mechanisms for breaking down negative social stereotypes; expressing prosocial views, values and sensibility for ethical judgement.

Table 4: Secondary school Civics – outcomes and contents

Contents by topics			
SS	I Learning about human rights	II Learning through human rights	III Learning for human rights
	Youth safety; family/school as a safe or unsafe place; social networks as a safe or unsafe space; globalization – concept, values, advantages and disadvantages.	Participation in the adoption of group rules; behavior which does not jeopardize one's own safety and safety of others; knowing whom to contact in case of jeopardized safety; identifying phenomena which jeopardize safety	Relating infringement of youth rights to safety; the role of international organizations and media in the globalization; globalization and human rights
	Discrimination, stereotypes, prejudices; vulnerable social groups; gender inequality and gender-based violence; NGOs which deal with the protection of human rights; institutions which deal with the protection of equality in Serbia and the EU; right to privacy and right to information	Tolerance for diversity; associating personal characteristics as the reasons for discrimination; effects of the separation from family on migrants; identifying manipulation;	The importance of confronting stereotypes; identifying hate speech in media; sensationalism, censorship; the role of free media in the development of a democracy
	The characteristics and development of human rights; international safeguards for human rights; international and humanitarian law	Citizens' solidarity; examples of the violent extremism and recruitment of young people; relating threats to peace to human rights; examples of civil disobedience and successful citizens' initiatives	The opportunities, importance and means of citizens' participation in a democratic society; human rights culture; antiwar civic activism; the issue of violence in sports; corruption and democracy;
	Economic and social rights; right to work; discrimination and exploitation in employment; right to life in a healthy environment	Critical examination of unemployment; identifying mobbing; social inequality; positive attitude towards affirmative measures; accountability for ecological problems; proposing activities that ensure a healthy environment	Relating poverty to the realization of human rights; education and economic development; sustainable development agenda; activism in environmental preservation

4.2. Perception of participants in human rights education

The questionnaires that were distributed included fifteen questions each, the final of which was the entry of a score on the methodological scale. The contents of the questionnaires are largely similar, with adjustments to the target group (whether it refers to primary and secondary school teachers or parents). The questionnaire was completed by nine teachers from five schools as well as six parents and all secondary school respondents. It is interesting that some parents and teachers skipped responses to specific questions, which can be the result of lack of knowledge of the topic or avoidance of a specific response. On the other hand, some of the responses are largely similar, which indicates that the practice in schools is the same in respect of the specific topics. Specific examples of the responses to the questionnaire are provided here, which contribute to the understanding of the status of HRE and point to possible expected outcomes of the process. Teachers' responses are designated with the letter T, whereas parents' responses are designated with letter P.

In respect to the question: „Do you believe that the curriculum in this area is adequate for learning about human rights?“, the respondents, for example, reported: *Based on the experience so far, I believe the problem is not that the curriculum fails to cover the broader topics of human rights. (T); It is adequate, but it lacks new topics that are either insufficiently addressed or are not addressed at all, and yet they exist in practice, such as cyberbullying⁴³ and the like (T).* In respect to the question on whether they encourage discussion, the respondents reported: *The discussion is ever-present, the child often recounts it at home (P); I base the lectures first and foremost on the dialogical method. Through discussion, students are taught the speech culture, mutual respect and respect for different views. It is important for students to develop their own opinion which is supported by facts. (T); For example, I prepare different scenarios on the basis of which students discuss and express their views. An interesting way to see how children see and comment their parents is the topic „My dad is a boss“, (T).* In respect to the question: „If students express discriminatory views on a specific group, do you explain the reasons why it constitutes discrimination?“ the respondents, for example, reported: *I think not (P); Yes, however girls have more understanding. Also, such a topic was LGBT population (P).; Yes, my son is a homophobe, but his teacher explained to him that should respect the diversity“(P); If a student expresses such views, it is of course important to point out that it is discrimination. The best would be to explain it in such a way so that the student himself/herself arrives at such a conclusion (T); Yes, for example, which color do boys wear, which color do girls wear and the like. Usually it is about prejudices, what if a boy takes dance lessons or a girl plays soccer (T); In many situations, students themselves played a major role, expressing their own views and opposing the view of others. There was a question on whether we should say Roma or Gypsy; what are derogatory and unacceptable nicknames (T). Students discriminate against Muslims, Islam and do not understand the difference (P).* With regard to the teaching methods for the following topics: awareness of one's own rights; human rights safeguards; hate speech; freedom of expression and freedom of thought, the majority of the respondents reported that they are covered: *They learn through picture books, examples and everyday situations (P); Textbook-based learning, interactive discussion (T); Through a discussion on the Constitution of our country and USA (P); I teach through project-based instruction, relying on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. To teach human rights safeguards – we have discussion on the International Human Rights Day, December 10th, on the UN Declaration on Human Rights, as well as on the role of the state and its laws which protect the dignity of all of its citizens (through specific real-life examples); Example of a discussion from social networks, where freedom of expression has been understood too broadly (insults, humiliation, gossiping...) (T); To report any situation in which they feel threatened; to identify when they are being disrespected, insulted, when they are rejected and to report such cases.* With respect to the methods applied, respondents most frequently report individual projects and research (in a group or individually), as well as presentations.

The responses concerning the instruction on vulnerable groups are interesting. It is evident that the position of people with disabilities and national minorities is addressed more broadly in classes, therefore, in the majority of cases, all three offered subareas are addressed, i.e. the notion is addressed as well as the groups covered and problems faced. A small number reported that vulnerable groups, such as women, refugees and internally displaced persons, asylum seekers or migrants, are addressed, but it is noted from the responses that generally only the notion is taught, while the substance of the vulnerability and problems faced by them are seldom addressed. A response on the position of women is also interesting: *We discussed the position of women more in the past. I have not addressed the present-day issues, such*

⁴³ Cyberbullying is bullying with the use of digital technologies, which can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile phones. It is repeated behavior, aimed at scaring, angering or shaming those who are targeted. (Unicef, <https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-to-stop-cyberbullying>).

as violence against women, because of the children's sensitivity (T). In respect to LGBTI+ community, the majority of the respondents reported that this topic is not addressed. Almost all respondents reported that hate speech, human rights defenders and wars in Yugoslavia and, by extension, social attitudes towards the peoples of the former Yugoslavia; war crimes and nationalism are not discussed in practice. Two respondents have reported addressing the topic of the importance of human rights defenders, and two have reported addressing nationalism and attitude towards the peoples of the former Yugoslavia. In respect to the three given topics, the respondents mostly reported that they find learning about human rights to be adequate for the age of their students (lower grades), but a very small number has specified the manner in which they have addressed it in practice, and there are also those who find that it is being insufficiently addressed. On the other hand, learning for human rights has been mentioned least frequently. For example, some have reported: *Very little. It often happens that students know what is the right way to behave, but different attitudes are imposed on them by their environment (T); Insufficient. The knowledge also comes from families which encourage turbulent resolution of conflicts and disrespect for others (T)*. The majority of the respondents (nine) awarded the status of HRE in Serbia score B „The school syllabus is based on an adequate normative framework, but implementation is lacking“⁴⁴, and supported such assessment with the following arguments (*The education system is a reflection of the state of society as a whole... Nowadays we have all this only on paper, but it does not substantially work in practice. Consistent implementation is lacking*).

4.3. Situational assessment and concluding considerations

Based on this survey, the score for the status of human rights education according to the given methodological scale is B „The school syllabus is based on an adequate normative framework, but implementation is lacking“. The reasons for such score are diverse and point to the specific system deficiencies. Human rights education is a complex task which entails multidimensional approach and commitment. Numerous reforms, with a new approach to the curricula and introduction of outcomes and competencies, have to some extent modernized the state of the education system, but the effects in practice yet need to be assessed. As shown above, a wide range of topics related to human rights is covered by the contents of the curricula and the defined outcomes. It is important to note, however, that the new curricula are not available on the competent ministry's website. At the same time, it is interesting to also note the activities of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development related to the improvement of the education of national minorities that have been intensively implemented over the last couple of years. In addition to providing textbooks in the languages of national minorities and improving access to learning Serbian as a non-native language, the status of teaching assistants, who provide support to children of Roma nationality and children with developmental challenges requiring additional support in education, has finally been regulated. These important activities that have been implemented arise from the commitments contained in Chapter 23 and the Action Plan for the Realization of National Minority Rights, indicating that the public authorities can relatively quickly improve the relevant regulations when there is a plan in place and accountability for its implementation. The aforementioned general human rights education normative framework in Serbia points to the formal fulfillment of the necessary international standard requirements, but the results of this survey indicate that it is accompanied to a large extent by fragmented and *ad hoc* implementation. In a broader sense, human rights-based education should entail explicit and implicit possibilities, i.e. cross-curricular presence of human rights – related topics in the different subjects, and not concentration of these issues in the curriculum of only one subject. Such more comprehensive approach would make a greater impact and illustrate better some notions so that students can understand them in a different context and to be able to identify and apply them in practice. In a narrower sense, Civics is not attributed the same value in the curriculum as the other subjects that comprise the basis of the education. Given that it is an elective subject with a limited number of hours during the school year, students are not regularly provided with an opportunity to be taught on this subject matter and the importance of this area for their further development and participation in society is not indicated.

A review of the new curricula which are outcome-oriented suggests that the content is largely adequate and that it covers various topics of relevance to HRE. However, the content is set on a broad theoretical basis, with a significant emphasis on the concepts of state, government and rules, and less on the practical understanding of human rights, forms of violations of human rights and legal and other consequences of such violations. It can be inferred from the teachers' responses to the questionnaire that more attention is paid to the practical work in the first cycle of education, where students learn through examples and real

life situations about conflict resolution, tolerance, discrimination and rights of the child. However, in the second cycle of education and secondary schools, the topics are addressed conceptually, possibly with a discussion which is dependent on the teacher's individual approach. Also, it does not seem that the new secondary school elective subjects are covered more broadly and equally represented in specific general education secondary schools (*Serbian: gymnasiums*). It is also important to note that an entire group of primary and secondary school outcomes is related to activism, but the concept and role of human rights defenders are almost not addressed at all in practice. The survey results have shown that the area of antidiscrimination is largely covered through both cycles of education and that it includes the fundamental concepts. However, it seems that in practice, apart from the identification of vulnerable groups, there is neither broader knowledge about the reasons and experience of vulnerability nor an ongoing discussion of the problems faced by the specific groups and coverage of those problems. It could be argued that the teaching contents are not sufficiently adjusted to the sensitive issues they cover, given that, apart from the conceptual determinations, there is no impression that students can achieve required outcomes through offered contents. Also, the teaching contents determine the discussion in the school and it is obvious that the controversial topics are largely skipped, almost as though if they were taboo topics (e.g., wars caused by the breakup of Yugoslavia, LGBTI+ issues, hate speech, gender equality and the like). Given the generations that have grown up in the Western Balkans region and the heavy history of conflicts which has never been properly addressed, a number of prejudices has developed among young people, which have unfortunately become deeply entrenched. The region lacks awareness of the substantive importance of the human rights principles. Although education systems could have been used to avoid such developments and contribute to an open discussion, respect of diversity and acceptance of individual differences, the Western Balkans societies have, regrettably, allowed the development of a new generation experiencing hatred, disregard for human rights of others and various forms of discrimination. Given that the study of human rights naturally takes a critical view towards government and institutional abuses, it is possibly that such sensitive topics are deliberately avoided as they may also pertain to the local community.

It is evident that a lot of this largely depends on teachers themselves, while at the same there is a gap related to their accountability for the messages they convey. They can add specific topics of their own choose, or possibly skip some other areas. The system is set up in such a manner that it is expected that teachers will on their own apply the human rights values in school, there is no question as to their attitudes or prejudices and there is no requirement for them to present various topics in a way that is adjusted to the human rights principles. At the same time, it is possible that some teachers do not have sufficient human rights knowledge and skills and do not sufficiently understand the concepts. There is a lack of more active exchange of views, application of case study and role-playing methods, through which students would get a chance to, by confronting their views, view the problem from different angles, improve their understanding of the persons whose rights have been violated and knowledge about specific topics. At the same time, this would afford an opportunity for revisiting family attitudes which have been potentially adopted but are contrary to the human rights protection principles. This is especially important given that human rights education to some extent entails youth learning in an environment in which the human rights are respected. Meeting such a requirement is challenging when there is no substantive democratization in society and when human rights are seen only as a EU requirement. Therefore, when young people do not live in an environment in which human rights are respected, but instead they live in a society in which discrimination is acceptable, adequate legislative solutions cannot be sufficiently efficient because the society is sending off differing messages.

It is evident from the parents' responses to the questionnaire that students do not discuss these topics at home, i.e. they do not ask for their parents' help when they work on assignments related to specific topics. It is possible that parents themselves do not want some topics to be mentioned, so they have assessed such approach as acceptable. Also, parents have not been trained in the area of human rights education. This, however, opens up disproportionately large potential influence of peers, media and other social groups on the formation of youth attitudes. The respondents' answers also indicate a possible lack of awareness of what children of a specific age actually already know. Children nowadays get information through social networks and are aware of the cases of discrimination against specific groups in the country and abroad. They can often identify when those groups are discriminated against by someone from their surroundings, as well as express attitudes in defense of such groups. However, the positive attitudes toward one group are not necessarily transferred to other groups, which are either less represented on social networks or less interesting to children. To that end, innovative teaching methods need to be developed, which would take into account children's real life knowledge and include them in the discussion, thereby improving children's awareness of the experience of human rights violations and importance of protecting individual rights of individuals.

⁴⁴ Two of them awarded the score A, 3 awarded the score C, 3 awarded the score D and another 3 awarded the score E.

In the light of the fact that the democratization process and compliance with the rule of law principle in Serbia is a long-term process, citizens' awareness needs to be increased through education in order to enable their active engagement with regard to respect for human rights' requirements. We have been witnessing various negative social phenomena, such as intolerance, numerous forms of discrimination, hatred towards neighboring peoples or vulnerable groups. One needs to keep in mind that students bring to school their own attitudes and prejudices, acquired at home, in society or the media, which can prevent them from impartially addressing such phenomena. To that end, future generations should have a chance to be properly educated on the importance of the concept of human rights, thus about its substance, and not because it is a concept associated with EU accession. Human rights and antidiscrimination principles need to be the foundation of teaching activities, thereby enabling children's awareness-raising of the available mechanisms for the exercise of human rights and protection of individuals and groups in case of violations, as well as the practice of defending human rights through citizens' and social initiatives and work of organizations that promote human rights.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Introduce a coordinated human rights education approach through all relevant subjects
A comprehensive human rights education needs to be incorporated in several relevant subjects in order to take advantage of both explicit and implicit knowledge improvement possibilities and in order for students to get a bigger picture of the concept, scope and importance of human rights.
- Change the concept of human rights education in the normative framework
In order to enable the acquisition of comprehensive knowledge about human rights, the concept of this form of education in the normative framework needs to be changed, since the objective is not only to learn about government, but also about individuals and relations in society.
- Provide support to schools through teacher training
Gaps in teacher training on human rights need to be identified. Teachers need to be given different opportunities to improve their human rights knowledge and skills needed to transfer such knowledge to students. The central role in this process could be played by relevant teacher associations, which could organize targeted trainings in line with teachers' commitments and needs. Teachers need to be acquainted with problems related to the exercise of human rights, but also inspired to convey the messages that mirror human rights principles.
- Introduce comprehensive information on vulnerable groups in the curriculum
The topics relating to vulnerable groups need to be specified, in order for their vulnerability position to be brought closer to young people and in order for them to be able to develop empathy and understanding of individuals who are members of the vulnerable groups. Merely stating the concepts and superficially pointing to specific groups can even encourage discrimination instead of realization of the desired objective. This topic needs to be linked to teacher training.
- Introduce controversial topics and contested human rights issues in the curriculum
The topics that are addressed need to be expanded so as to also include sensitive issues in society. One needs to keep in mind that children and young people live in communities in which there are numerous controversial topics that they are aware of and that problems are not solved by avoiding them altogether. To that end, local and national issues which are relevant to human rights should be covered so as to avoid leaving the impression that they are vague international issues.
- Introduce innovative human rights teaching methods
The teaching methods need to be brought closer to children's life, so that knowledge about human rights would not be based only on theory and passive knowledge. The methods need to be participatory, and various modalities such as role-playing, dramatization, case study, need to be included, in order to achieve positive changes in students more efficiently.
- Introduce the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in the instruction on human rights
ICT possibilities and means need to be used in order for teacher-student discussions within human rights education to be related to the topics that concern young people. Since nowadays they get their information through the social networks and reflect on numerous human rights topics arising from the information that they find on various social networks, these topics need to be incorporated in the discussions at school, in order to possibly also bring closer the topics of other vulnerable groups who are not represented on the social networks or are not of international character, but are rather of local character.
- Improve and expand cooperation with civil society organizations in the area of teacher and student training
The experience of civil society organizations in the area of promotion and protection of human rights and the wide scope of educational work they have done on the topic of human rights represent an indispensable resource in human rights training. Wider schools' awareness-raising of the range of organizations which deal with human rights and provision of support to schools are needed, in order for them to participate in the programs of CSOs and make use of the educational resources of these organizations. It would be especially important to add the CSO handbooks and other materials on human rights to the relevant reading lists.

- Improve participation of school librarians in human rights education
School librarians are a widely available resource for instruction on human rights issues and could play a key role in acquainting teachers and students with new relevant resources on human rights.
- Consider introducing human rights education outcomes with the objective of assessing effects
New outcomes in the area of civics have recently been introduced, however they lack measurability due to an overly detailed approach. To assess the effects of human rights education, the outcomes need to be set on a broader level, in order to determine the overall result of the various topics with regard to the knowledge acquired by students.

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NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN SERBIA – BEST PRACTICES

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Abstract

The importance of human rights education was first recognized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, while the non-formal aspect of this education has been defined by the Council of Europe (CoE), with the recommendation to keep working on its systematic development. Among other things, the CoE guidelines emphasize the importance of research into all forms of human rights education.

This research was designed with the idea of highlighting good practice examples of non-formal education (NFE) in the field of human rights in Serbia. The research consists of two parts. The desk research includes primary sources - the most important international, European and national documents; and secondary sources - collected from the official websites of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Serbia. The second part of the analysis is based on the questionnaires which were distributed to three groups of actors in the form of electronic questionnaires: CSOs, foundations and state institutions. The combination of these two approaches provides a broader and more diverse perspective on non-formal education in the field of human rights in the Republic of Serbia.

Recommendations based on the insights obtained from the research draw attention to the fact that it was the civil sector that, in the previous period, provided human rights education in an inclusive and sensible manner, following high standards and cutting-edge teaching methods. However, the work of CSOs in this field is hampered by an unstable and often insufficient financial and infrastructural support, which is why they need to be provided with greater support so that they could continue improving this field that is of utmost importance, both in terms of its subject matter and the target group it addresses, which is mostly made up of young persons.

I. INTRODUCTION

The subject of this practical policy proposal is an analysis of good practices in non-formal education (NFE) in the field of human rights in Serbia. This topic arises at the intersection of two areas - human rights education on the one hand, and non-formal education on the other. For this reason, it is, first of all, necessary to compare international, European and national documents, strategies and plans for the development of non-formal education, with special emphasis on the topic of human rights in those cases when they are specifically related to this field.

At the **international** level, according to the definition from the International Standard Classification of Education¹ developed by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), a defining characteristic of non-formal education is that it is “an addition, alternative and/or a complement to formal education within the process of the lifelong learning of individuals”². As for the target group, it is stated that this form of education is intended for all age groups. Regarding the continuity of these programmes, it is pointed out that they can be of varying duration, and are most commonly provided in the form of courses, workshops or seminars. It is also pointed out that the qualifications obtained are not recognised and relate to various topics such as life skills, work skills and social or cultural development.

When it comes to the second aspect - the one related to the education in the field of human rights - it is already mentioned in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).³ Since 1948, and continuously in the following decades, UN bodies were engaged in the development of this type of education, culminating in the proclamation of the Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004) in 1995. UNESCO insists on a holistic approach to human rights education, meaning that it should not be only one teaching unit within already overbooked curricula. In other words, it is designed to enable young people to develop their skills in the direction of respect for human and civil rights through education. What is particularly important is that this approach includes not only the specific content of the curriculum, but also the educational process itself, pedagogical methods, and the setting in which the educational process takes place.⁴

At the **European** level, the Council of Europe launched the Education for Democratic Citizenship (EDC) project in 1997, and in June 2000 published a report emphasizing the importance of social justice and equality in citizenship rights. A document of special importance is the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, which was adopted within the framework of the Committee of Ministers recommendations⁵. As the Republic of Serbia has been a member of the Council of Europe since 2003, this document is bounding for Serbia as well. The Charter defines non-formal education more succinctly as “any planned programme of education designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational setting.”⁶

In this Charter, education for democratic citizenship:

“...means education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to the promotion and protection of democracy and the rule of law.”⁷

While human rights education:

“...means education, training, awareness raising, information, practices and activities which aim, by equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and developing their attitudes and behaviour, to empower learners to contribute to the building and defence of a universal culture of human rights in society, with a view to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.”⁸

Among its objectives and principles the Charter especially emphasizes the valuable contribution of non-governmental organizations and youth organizations in this field of education for a democratic society and

¹ International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)

² “Non-formal education”, Glossary, UNESCO UIS, accessed on 5 February 2021, <http://uis.unesco.org/en/glossary-term/non-formal-education>.

³ According to Article 26.2.

⁴ Ibid., 4.

⁵ CM/Rec (2010) 7

⁶ Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education, Council of Europe, accessed on 1 February 2021, <https://rm.coe.int/1680487823>.

⁷ Charter 5.

⁸ Ibid.

human rights, especially in the forms of non-formal and informal education.⁹ This is why it is concluded that they need support in order to be able to provide their contribution. In addition, cooperation with these types of organizations is described in the tenth guideline, which, in addition to instructions on providing support when necessary, states that member states need to “make full use of the expertise they can contribute to all forms of education.”¹⁰ Guideline 12 is dedicated to the research on education for democratic citizenship and human rights education, so as to enable stakeholders to improve their practices. It also states that the research should, among other things, include research on the curriculum, innovative practices, teaching methods and the development of evaluation systems.¹¹ These criteria, with the exception of the one on the evaluation system, as it is not a common practice in non-formal education, were applied to this research as well.

The Council of Europe is also the publisher of the publication “Compass: A Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People”¹², which emphasizes that there is not only one definition of human rights education, but that it is rather:

“best described in terms of what it sets out to achieve: the establishment of a culture where human rights are understood, defended and respected. Therefore, anyone who works with other people having in mind this goal and taking steps to achieve it – regardless of how and where – can say that they are involved in human rights education.”¹³

In this regard, it is stated that this form of education should be student-centred, focusing on the values of personal action and change. Young people are singled out as a very important group when it comes to human rights education. According to the authors of this Manual, the development of critical thinking and the ability to resolve conflicts, as well as taking action, represent the core of human rights education¹⁴. The updated edition of the Manual from 2020 emphasizes that human rights education cannot be the responsibility of NGOs and youth organizations alone, nor can it be carried out solely by volunteers, but that states have a major responsibility in implementing these programmes, in ways that foresee a role for both the formal and non-formal education sectors.¹⁵

At the national level in Serbia, the Ministry of Youth and Sports takes care of non-formal education. This type of education is also defined in the Law on Youth¹⁶, and is included in the National Youth Strategy¹⁷ for the period 2015 - 2025. In addition, domestic legislation distinguishes between non-formal education for adults and non-formal education for the youth.

As for the second aspect - education in the field of human rights, it is regulated in the form of formal civic education, which has been introduced in all grades of primary and secondary schools since 2006/07, as a compulsory elective subject.¹⁸ When it comes to this topic in non-formal programmes, it is not specifically defined at the state level in Serbia. And when non-formal education in the field of human rights is mentioned, it is mostly focused on citing international and European standards, guidelines and plans. In the domestic context, non-formal education in the field of human rights is incidentally mentioned in broader reports and research on non-formal education of young people, such as those done by Vuletic and Stanojevic (2010)¹⁹, and the Center for Free Elections and Democracy - CeSID (2019)²⁰. CeSID's research states that, when it comes to the topic of trainings and courses they would be interested in, young people in Serbia showed interest in the topic of tolerance (7%), and human rights and democracy (6%). The answers were synthesized, as the respondents were given the option to select more than one topic.

Based on all of the above, and especially taking into account the twelfth guideline of the Council of Europe, conducting research on non-formal education in the field of human rights is of particular importance in order to gain insight into good practices in this field.

9 In the Charter, informal education is defined as “the lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from the educational influences and resources in his or her own environment and from daily experience (family, peer group, neighbours, encounters, library, mass media, work, play, etc.)”.

10 Charter, 12–13.

11 Charter, 13–14.

12 Brander, Patricia and others. *Kompas. Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People* (Podgorica: Civic Education Center, 2006)

13 Ibid, 17.

14 Compass 22.

15 Compass. *Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People*, 2nd edition, updated 2020 (Strasbourg Cedex: Council of Europe, 2020), 10, <https://rm.coe.int/compass-eng-rev-2020-web/1680a08e40>.

16 Law on Youth, Article 3.5, the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Youth and Sports, https://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Zakon_o_mladima.pdf

17 National Youth Strategy, the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Youth and Sports, https://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/nacionalna_strategija_zamlade0101_cyr.pdf

18 Civic Initiatives and Civil Rights Defenders Analysis of the civic education literature on the territory of the Republic of Serbia), accessed on 5 February 2021, <https://www.gradjanske.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Analiza-literature-gra%C4%91anskog-vaspitanja-na-teritoriji-Republike-Srbije-.pdf>.

19 Vuletić, Vladimir and Stanojević, Dragan. 2010. Non-formal education of the youth in Serbia. Research report on the position and needs of the youth in the Republic of Serbia. (Belgrade: Institute for Sociological Research of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, 2010).

20 CeSID, Position and the needs of the youth in the Republic of Serbia (cycle IV). Field research. (Belgrade: CeSID, 2019), accessed on 5 February 2021, <https://www.mos.gov.rs/public/documents/upload/sport/inspekcija/Polozaj%20i%20potrebe%20mladih%20u%20Republici%20Srbiji%202019.pdf>.

II. ANALYSIS

1. Background and methodology

In order to reach the most comprehensive conclusions and identify various examples of good practice in the field of non-formal human rights education, our research was designed to include two types of complementary analyses: desk research and questionnaire analysis. In this way, the data was collected by quantitative and qualitative research procedures.

The desk research is based on the analysis of primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources include international, European and national documents, strategies and plans for the development of non-formal education, with special emphasis on human rights in those cases when they are specifically related to this field. Secondary sources included in the analysis are publicly published reports on implemented projects, programme plans, lists of alumni and their final thesis papers, activities, etc., which are available on the official websites of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Serbia.

Questionnaires

The second type of analysis involves questionnaires distributed to three groups of actors in the form of electronic questionnaires: CSOs, foundations and state institutions. In this way, a more complete picture of non-formal education is obtained, as they take into account not only the perspectives of organizations that implement specific programmes, but also of foundations and state institutions which, in accordance with broader strategies, either give or refuse to provide financial support to such programmes. Also, this data was in conclusion compared with the data obtained by desk research.

The criteria for analysis and identification of examples of good practice were determined in relation to: topics in the field of human rights that were included in educational programmes, dynamics and continuity of held programmes, territorial areas in Serbia where educational programmes were delivered, methods of pedagogical work used by organizations in the implementation of their educational programmes, and the target groups for which educational programmes were intended.

The analysis of data obtained from the questionnaires and desk research covered the work of a total of 30 organizations and institutions in Serbia which organized or supported human rights educational programmes in the period from 2016 to 2020, out of which: 24 civil society organizations (see more under: 1.1.), 4 foundations and 2 state institutions. In order to identify good practices and programmes in the field of non-formal education and human rights, the work of CSOs was analyzed at two levels: by processing the data obtained from the questionnaires and through desk research of educational programmes, while the work of foundations and state institutions was covered by special questionnaires. The questionnaires were completed by: Heinrich Böll Foundation²¹, Reconstruction Women's Fund, Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation²², and Ana and Vlade Divac Foundation; and state institutions: the Commissioner for the Protection of Equality and the Provincial Protector of Citizens - Ombudsman. Foundations and state institutions were not covered by desk research.

The research covered the work of the following civil society organizations (a total of 24): A 11 Initiative for Economic and Social Rights, ALTERO – Association for Personal Training, Education, Development and Empowerment, BeFem Feminist Cultural Center, Belgrade Open School, Belgrade Center for Human Rights, CEDEUM, Civil Rights Defenders, Center for Community Development Link, Center for the Protection of Human Rights and Tolerance - Polimlje, Humanitarian Law Center, Group “Let's ...”, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Youth Initiative for Human Rights - Serbia (YIHR Serbia), Fine Art and Crafts Club, Lesbian Human Rights Organization - LABRIS, NGO Re Generation, Organization Providing Support to Women with Disabilities IZ KRUGA - VOJVODINA, Plavo Theatre - Theatre Laboratory, Rebellious Readers, ROZA - Association for Women's Labor Rights, SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence, Artistic Utopia (Hleb teatar), Zrenjanin Social Forum, Women in Black and Women's Center Uzice.²³

21 Heinrich Böll Stiftung

22 The Kvinna till Kvinna Foundation

23 As the research is conducted by the Center for Women's Studies in Belgrade with the support of Civil Rights Defenders, the activities of these organizations are not covered by this research in the context of examples of good practice. x

A total of 21 civil society organizations in Serbia completed the questionnaires. Of these, 14 are located in Belgrade, 2 in Zrenjanin, and one in Mosorin, Novi Sad, Sombor, Vlasotince and Uzice respectively. The desk research of educational programmes in the field of human rights and non-formal education included 97 programmes held by 9 civil society organizations on the territory of Serbia. Eight organizations from Belgrade and one from Prijepolje were included in the analysis. These organizations were established in the period that ranges from 1991 to 2018, which indicates a dynamic civil society, especially in the context of organizing non-formal educational programmes, where we can see organizations that have existed for thirty years, as well as those founded only two years ago, actively involved.

2. Topics from the human rights field

Human rights education programmes are often carried out in a specific narrow field. However, it is important to distinguish: 1) those educational programmes that relate to the so-called general knowledge, and whose goal is to introduce the basic principles, concepts and values in the field of human rights, as in the examples: *Human Rights School for Youth* – (Youth Initiative for Human Rights - Serbia, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia) and the *Human Rights School “Vojin Dimitrijevic”* (Belgrade Center for Human Rights); 2) programmes specialized in a certain topic in the field of human rights, as in the examples: *Transitional Justice School* (Humanitarian Law Center) and *School of Economic and Social Rights* (A11 - Initiative for Economic and Social Rights); and 3) a) educational programmes aimed at various types of training in the field of human rights and beyond (e.g. ecology, technology, sustainable development), as in the case of the *Future Studies* programme (Belgrade Open School), or b) those educational programmes aimed at professional development for the application of legal mechanisms, practical policies and human rights advocacy.

According to the data obtained from the questionnaires, the most represented topics in the field of human rights are women’s rights and minority rights. Violence is the third most common topic and was addressed by twelve organizations, followed by the area of LGBTI+ rights (eleven organizations). The topics of economic and social rights, as well as the rights of persons with disabilities are equally represented. The rule of law was represented in the programmes of seven organizations, while media freedom and transitional justice were addressed in the programmes of six organizations. Also, the topics of internally displaced persons, UN mechanisms for the protection of human rights, individual rights from the first and second generation, the right to asylum, the rights of persons living with HIV and other sexually communicable diseases, were each covered in the programmes by one organization respectively.

The desk research revealed that all organizations covered the areas of women’s rights and gender equality in their programmes, including the following topics: violence against women, migration and refugees, the position of women victims of war, and women’s economic and social rights. It is important to underline that women’s rights and gender equality are covered as one of the topics within the so-called broader areas of human rights education, i.e. that the programmes covered by this analysis were not narrowly focused on women’s rights. The second most common topic is the rights of minorities, which are covered in the context of: war conflicts, refugees and migrations, asylum, human trafficking, religious hatred, social and economic exclusion, nationalism, extremism, discrimination, prohibition of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment, all with the aim of education in the areas of human rights protection, multiculturalism, integration and intercultural exchange, cultural and political rights and the prevention of hate speech, including the rights of children on the move and young persons from the migrant population.

LGBTI+ persons’ rights and transitional justice are the third most represented topics (four organizations each). Same as women’s rights, LGBTI+ rights are most often addressed in the so-called broader areas of human rights education (with the exception of the organization Lesbian Human Rights Organization - LABRIS, which deals specifically with this topic), while the topic of transitional justice is addressed within more specialized educational programmes in this area. A good example of this is the Transitional Justice School organized by the Humanitarian Law Center.

Finally, the topic of violence was addressed directly or indirectly by all organizations covered by the desk research, whether in the context of women’s rights, minority rights, LGBTI+ rights, transitional justice, rule of law, rights of persons with disabilities, peer violence and youth rights, or economic and social rights. As an example of good practice we would like to single out the specialized programmes of the A11 Initiative - School of Economic and Human Rights (2020), as their programme focuses on different types and levels of economic and social inequalities of various vulnerable groups (women, persons with disabilities, asylum seekers, refugees, migrants, Roma men and women, etc.) in various socio-economic and political contexts.

Some topics are frequently represented, for example violence, and especially gender-based violence, but at the same time, in the questionnaires, the CSOs themselves recognize them as the topics which require even

more attention. Thus, one organization states, “Recent social events [reporting violence at an acting school in Belgrade] have shown that the topic of violence against any vulnerable category of persons has not been sufficiently represented, and we can surmise that this topic will be in the focus of many organizations in the upcoming period.”

In addition to individual topics, one response from the questionnaire indicates the importance of combining different perspectives in the search for alliances and shared strategies: “We need more multidisciplinary and looking for points of intersection between, for example, feminist, peace, environmental education, as well as the issues of social justice, historical revisionism and the like. We also need more programmes that combine theoretical work with activist aspirations.”

Civil society organizations, as well as foundations, are of the opinion that the topics of environmental protection, transitional justice, and dealing with Serbia’s war past and crimes from the 1990s, are not sufficiently represented in the existing non-formal education programmes, although they all point out that there are successful programmes on these topics. Another point they mention is the lack of social understanding of the topic of privacy and digital literacy. The topic of social and economic rights is represented only within a few programmes. The need to educate as many persons as possible on their labour rights has also been recognized.

Several civil society organizations mentioned the lack of sex education within the formal education system, as well as the topic of sexuality, as a topic for which there is a greater need within the non-formal human rights education programmes.

3. Spatial and temporal representation of educational programmes

The dynamics, continuity and geographical representation of the programmes are combined in the analysis as more significant insights can be gained by cross-referencing this data. One of the general conclusions is that the educational programmes which continue over multiannual periods are predominantly located in Belgrade (with the exception of 2020), and that the lowest representation and number of human rights education programmes is observed in eastern Serbia.

In relation to the time frame, the number of educational programmes covered by the questionnaires and desk research increased from year to year, with the largest number of implemented human rights education programmes being recorded in 2019.²⁴ Last year, 2020, there was a slight decline in the activities, which can be easily explained by the Covid-19 pandemic, when part of the activities were cancelled while the activities that were held were mostly organized via the Internet. It is possible, therefore, to foresee a continuous growth in the number of human rights education programmes to be held in the coming years. In terms of the needs for human rights education programmes, a question may be asked as to whether this growth is sufficient or it ought to be even faster.

In relation to the geographical distribution of the implemented programmes, although the biggest number of organizations that responded to the questionnaires and that were included in the desk research are from Belgrade (see Chapter 1.1.), it can be noted that the educational activities themselves are more evenly distributed. The desk research determined that half of the programmes were held in Belgrade, while the organizations that filled out the questionnaires had actually carried out the most activities in Vojvodina (15), then in southern Serbia and Belgrade (13 each), in central Serbia (9), in western Serbia (8), while the same number of organizations also provided programmes over the Internet. The fewest programmes were held in eastern Serbia, which is confirmed by the desk research as well. As noted in the recommendations from the questionnaires, there is a greater need to “financially support groups that run various human rights programmes in southern and south-eastern Serbia.”

For clearer systematization, it is possible to distinguish from the desk research two groups of educational activities: 1) human rights schools that are held continuously over many years, and 2) human rights education programmes that are not held continuously at annual level, or continuously over two to three years. This division is important, especially because we single out those educational programmes that are held every year as examples of good practice, because a continuous provision of human rights education programmes means greater availability and access to human rights knowledge for more people and generations, and it also allows for the monitoring of trends in non-formal education. On the other hand, the absence of continuity helps to identify challenges for the organizations that implement educational programmes on annual bases, which is discussed in more detail in section 6 of this document (Funding).

²⁴ Noting that the most up-to-date data on the websites of all organizations covered by the desk research is the data for the year 2019.

The first group consists of those programmes that are continuously provided over many years, and which were implemented by the following organizations: Youth Initiative for Human Rights – Serbia (YIHR), Belgrade Center for Human Rights (BCHR), Humanitarian Law Center, and Belgrade Open School (BOS). The names of the educational programmes are: Human Rights School for Youth (YIHR), Human Rights School “Vojin Dimitrijevic” (BCHR), Transitional Justice School (Humanitarian Law Center), and Future Studies (BOS). The duration of these programmes ranges from seven days (where the same educational programme is held once or multiple times per year) to two-semester courses. These programmes were mostly held in Belgrade, although, it is important to point out as an example of good practice the Human Rights Schools for Youth (YIHR and Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia), where the costs of travel, accommodation, food and beverages were covered by the organizers for all participants living outside Belgrade, which meant greater availability of these programmes to young people from all parts of Serbia.

The second group of programmes refers to all those educational programmes that were not held continuously from 2016-2020, where the largest number of educational programmes, almost half, was held for one to three days per programme. Unlike the programmes that are continuously held on annual basis, with these educational programmes there is a greater diversity in the territorial distribution. Half of the educational programmes covered by the desk research were held in Belgrade, while the other half were held in various places in Serbia (Pancevo, Bujanovac, Nis, Priboj, Zrenjanin, Kragujevac, Novi Sad, Vrnjacka Banja, Obrenovac, Jagodina, Becej, Novi Pazar, Leskovac, Zajecar, Dimitrovgrad and Prijepolje). In the context of the decentralization of educational programmes, one of the examples of good practices are the programmes provided by the Belgrade Center for Human Rights (BCHR): Strengthening the Capacity of Youth-led and Youth-focused Organizations to Interact with UN Mechanisms, and My City, My Rights: Human Rights and the Rule of Law Schools for Youth, which were held throughout Serbia, over a period of several years (2017, 2018 and 2019).

In addition to the duration of the various programmes, civil society organizations indicated in the questionnaires also the time required for the learning process to yield results, as one of the most important factors in the design and implementation of successful educational programmes. With regard to the development of critical thinking, it has been noted that the processes involved in gaining awareness or new knowledge and skills are very slow and time-consuming, and that it takes a lot of time and effort to conduct interventions over formally acquired education, which generally does not promote critical thinking and quite too frequently reproduces nationalist, patriarchal and other discriminatory matrices. In other words, transformative educational work requires a certain amount of time that cannot be compensated for or bypassed by creative methods.

4. Teaching methods

The most common methodological approach in non-formal education programmes is a combination of lectures and workshops, which was indicated in the questionnaires by 17 organizations (out of a total of 21). This was additionally confirmed by the desk research, which identifies different types of workshops: educational workshops, interactive workshops, skills workshops, creative or artistic workshops, group and personal reflections workshops, as well as interactive lectures.

As we can note from the questionnaires, either workshops or lectures were used exclusively by nine organizations each, while the desk research showed that lectures only were used in only 6 programmes (out of a total of 97). Six organizations covered by the questionnaire conducted study visits in Serbia or the countries of the region, while some organizations used mentoring, public presentations in the local community, advocacy campaigns, peer education, as well as forums.

In addition to the combination of workshops and lectures, artistic methods stand out as a frequently used and innovative approach, as confirmed by the desk research which revealed that five organizations used this approach. Another good practice example are those educational programmes that rely on an inclusive approach, fostering diversity and intercultural exchange, as well as the use of multiple methods, as was the case in the following examples: CoolTube Youth Workshop and the Art of Integration (BCHR, 2018 and 2019) and “Writing Instead of Fighting” training (Group “Let’s ...”, 2020). They relate to the introduction of young persons from Serbia to various vulnerable groups (refugees, migrants, persons with disabilities) where they meet and work together within various educational and creative workshops using performing arts techniques, film, animation, literature and research into local communities and contexts. The common challenge of all these programmes is dealing with the prejudices on the part of both the participants and the community in which the programmes take place.

Civil society organizations pointed out various aspects of their programmes as examples of good practice. These include primarily flexibility, i.e. the ability to adapt their methods to the needs, as well as the age,

of the participants in the educational programmes. In addition to the Q&A and discussion time that the workshop approach allows for, another important aspect of these good practice examples is the practical part of the educational process. The organizations stated that they provided the possibility for field research, support for the participants to run certain segments of the activities themselves, to help organize a conference, to use their bodies and physical space as well as other performing arts exercises, to travel and meet members of other ethnic communities.

The context of the pandemic and the transition to the Internet have had a twofold impact on the non-formal human rights education programmes. On the one hand, an opportunity has opened up for the participation of people who would otherwise be prevented from doing so due to limited financial resources for travel and accommodation, while on the other hand, the issue of adequate online education methods has opened up. Some CSOs point to an increasing number of participants in their programmes, while other organizations draw attention to the new challenges in the context of inclusion, such as the inclusion of all persons who have no regular or no internet access, or of the deaf or hard of hearing persons who are not able to follow online lectures or workshops without adequate interpretation into sign language.

5. Target groups

Non-formal education programmes can be intended for anyone, regardless of age, prior formal education or any other criteria. However, in the context of limited resources, organizations choose certain groups according to certain priorities and their own capacities. Over the past five years, the organizations that filled out the questionnaire mostly worked with young persons (19 out of 21), while 15 organizations focused on activists as the target group for their programmes, and for 12 organizations women were the target group. Nine organizations provided educational programmes for professionals, while seven organizations worked with ethnic minorities and LGBTI+ persons. Five organizations that completed the questionnaire provided educational programmes targeting persons with disabilities. Some organizations also emphasized that they had worked with students of the Faculty of Law, with women with disabilities, persons living with HIV, secondary school teachers, doctors working in prisons, persons employed in the media, the unemployed, and farmers.

The desk research also found that educational programmes conducted by civil society organizations in the field of human rights are most often intended for young persons (15-35 years). However, it is possible to identify several categories of youth. As for human rights schools that are continuously held on an annual basis (see Chapter 3), educational programmes are intended for: secondary school students, university students (undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate studies), and especially students of political, legal and social sciences, civil society activists, young journalists, young professionals in public administration, members of political parties, and other young persons.

Educational programmes that are not held continuously on an annual basis (see Chapter 3), are also intended for the aforementioned target groups, but there is a greater diversity, and these programmes are also intended for other experts in the field of human rights and other rights in general, young researchers, young persons from various vulnerable groups, artists, professionals in the field of culture, representatives of youth-led and youth focused organizations, as well as representatives of state and local institutions, managers, secondary school teachers, and others. As an interesting example of good practices involving different social (target) groups, we can single out the SOFA programme organized by the Belgrade Center for Human Rights (BCHR, 2020) whose target group are the youth (age 18-30) and the elderly (65+), with the aim of fostering intergenerational solidarity and exchange: “Participants from different vulnerable groups often participate in our programmes, and the process in which participants share their life stories is sometimes both difficult and liberating for the whole group at the same time. Careful guidance is required to maintain these processes functional.”

In the context of the challenges they face, CSOs pointed out through the questionnaires difficulties in cooperating with the employees from various state institutions. Representatives of schools, youth offices, local self-governments, health care institutions, social welfare centres and others, would announce their participation in the programmes and then cancel them at the last minute or would in some instances create difficulties in implementing the programmes, for example by not allowing the use of a previously promised space or other actions. The exact frequency of such situations could be determined by additional investigation, but these issues were indicated by more than half of the CSOs that filled out the questionnaires. One organization cited the following example: “A local priest created a problem by opposing children’s workshops, so that we were denied the use of all spaces; the priest was given support by the local municipality president and then by all the other institutions.” (quote from the questionnaire)

6. Funding

More than half of the civil society organizations pointed to the challenges in securing the funding for non-formal human rights education programmes. While some organizations describe specific obstacles such as the lack of donor understanding of the need to work with a specific target group or in a specific territory (south or east of Serbia), other organizations point to broader systemic problems: “a vicious circle, it is difficult to apply for projects if you have no proof of previous financial operation” and “demanding applications, with small grants in the end”. Even organizations that stated that they do not face major challenges in this area provide responses such as “we were lucky” and “educational programmes are side activities within the framework of much bigger projects”, which indicates the need for a different approach and support from the institutions and donor organizations when it comes to promoting non-formal human rights education.

One foundation stated in the questionnaire that it recognized the need for greater understanding and flexibility on the part of donor organizations, while most CSOs indicated the need for stable long-term funding so that the programmes could be organized and improved in accordance with the needs of various target groups.

7. Long-term effects of human rights education

Non-formal human rights education programmes can range from single lectures to several days or weeks in duration, and there is a number of programmes that last for a full year. Most CSOs that organize them conduct some form of evaluation, usually in writing or through interviews, to collect feedback from the participants. These methods are valuable and the organizations use the information gathered to tailor the choice of topics, specific methods, or decisions about hiring certain trainers. However, for more comprehensive insights into the outcomes of educational programmes, it would be desirable to collect feedback from all involved actors, coordinators in CSOs, associates, trainers, etc.

When asked about the monitoring of the effects of their own programmes on further education or work engagement, most organizations responded that they are in contact with certain participants, but not in a structured way (for example, via an alumni organization or regular activities); rather, they are in touch with persons who have shown initiative and interest in this type of communication and cooperation. The experiences are positive, and some of the participants continue to deal with the topic of education, while others lose touch. In the absence of long-term stable funding, this is not surprising. Accordingly, another recommendation related to the evaluation refers to long-term activities within the monitoring and evaluation process, which would enable contact with the participants and other programmes after three to five years and provide insights into good practice examples as well as the identification of strategies for improvement. Research, i.e. a longitudinal evaluation of this type would provide a good basis for forming a broader strategy and action plan with the aim of further developing human rights education and expanding the scope and the number of participants.

8. The notion of good practice

The purpose of this research is to identify good practice examples in non-formal human rights education. The above categories helped in the analysis of certain aspects of educational programmes, such as the choice of topics, methods, time and geographical determinants and others, through desk research of CSOs’ responses about their own work. The second level of analysis comes from the insights of civil society organizations on their perceptions - which programmes are examples of good practice in this area, as well as recommendations on factors that will improve the field of non-formal human rights education.

Regarding the question on the assessment of the quality of non-formal education on human rights in Serbia (on a scale from one to five), the average score was three. One response related to the fact that non-formal human rights education programmes are most often carried out by the civil society organizations. The benefit of this is that these organizations usually possess the expertise in a certain area, and thus provide the high quality content of the training. The drawbacks are that the programmes implemented by the civil society organizations usually do not have sufficient scope, it is more difficult for them to get participants, they cannot provide continuity, nor do they have enough resources for monitoring the progress of the participants, for follow-up or other activities. In other words, CSOs’ independent work, their knowledge in the field of human rights, as well as specialized skills and approaches in working with certain

vulnerable groups, as well as their flexibility in terms of methods, are all recognized as the strengths of these educational programmes, but the problem of scope and infrastructure remains. Another organization pointed to the risk of holding seminars and educating like-minded people who already share the same positions as them, and thus maintaining the civil society and activism in the same circle of people, without a strategy for communication with the broader community.

Civil society organizations singled out the following programmes as **examples of good practice**²⁵:

- Marriage at a Second Glance - Roma Women’s Association Nada, Aleksinac;
- Humanities in Transition - Group 484;
- Training on working on the SOS hotline for women affected by male violence - Autonomous Women’s Center, Belgrade;
- Literary Festival “Halfway”, Uzice;
- Mapping the Holocaust - Center for Public History;
- Training on the prevention of violence against women with disabilities in residential institutions, MDRI-S, Belgrade;
- Raising environmental awareness - Zrenjanin Social Forum;
- Work with young persons at risk of social exclusion - Prevent, Novi Sad;
- Regional School of Transitional Justice - Humanitarian Law Center;
- Studies of Socialism - Center for the Politics of Emancipation;
- Human Rights School for Youth - Youth Initiative for Human Rights;
- Human Rights School Vojin Dimitrijevic - Belgrade Center for Human Rights;
- School of Economic and Social Rights - A11 Initiative;
- Transitional Justice School – Humanitarian Law Center;
- Human Rights School – Heslinki Committee for Human Rights;
- Training on digital and integrated security - Alternative Girls’ Center, Krusevac;
- Living Library - SkaSka, Zrenjanin;

In addition, programmes organized by the following CSOs and foundations: Astra, BeFem, Center E8, Jelena Santic Foundation, Plavo Theatre in cooperation with the artistic-cultural association of deaf persons from Belgrade “Radivoje Popovic”, with the Belgrade City Organization of the Deaf and the students with disabilities association, Reconstruction Women’s Fund and Women in Black, are also indicated as examples of good practice.

In most of their answers in the questionnaires, civil society organizations emphasize the need for the expansion of educational programmes, and an increase in the number of people that these programmes will reach. One strategy they mention is the increase of financial assistance for this kind of work, as well as a more stable long-term support, instead of one-year projects. Another potential strategy is the cooperation with institutions, primarily schools, so that the methods and materials that the civil society is already developing might be used in the formal education system. Such cooperation includes the possibility for the CSOs to organize programmes in cooperation with schools, as well as for the teachers to have the support and autonomy to use the methods from non-formal education in schools. Finally, what matters is the context, and educational programmes can have a limited impact on social change and the rule of law. In addition to education, media support is required in order to overcome prejudices about both the notion of human rights and the specific discriminated groups.

²⁵ With the exception of the Center for Women’s Studies and Civil Rights Defenders, which are mentioned in the questionnaires.

9. The question of institutionalization and standardization of non-formal human rights education

One possible direction for the development of non-formal education could be the establishment of standards whose implementation would be supervised by a state institution or an independent body. A question about this kind of development was put to the civil society organizations and their answers are divided and seemingly contradictory. One group of CSOs opposes such a solution because they anticipate possible abuses, loss of autonomy in carrying out activities or complications in the implementation because the field of non-formal human rights education is very wide and diverse. Another group of organizations expressed cautious optimism but insisted that it is important that the process would actually be run by CSOs and that an establishment of the clear criteria for quality, efficiency of methodology and evaluation could lead to improvements in this sector.

III. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As previously mentioned, the purpose of this analysis of practical policies related to non-formal human rights education is to identify good practices and provide recommendations to various actors and decision-makers on the measures whose adoption would support the development of this important area. In this context, it is necessary to consider the role, opportunities and scope of education in the process of fostering human rights. Education is a necessary part of establishing a society in which human rights are respected, but it requires financial resources, working conditions and time in order to produce results, while at the same time it cannot substitute or neutralize the lack of the rule of law, dominant conservative, nationalist and patriarchal media discourses, nor poverty and social inequalities. It is important to emphasize that civil society organizations have played a crucial role in the human rights education over the past thirty years.

In order to continue with the good practice examples of non-formal human rights education and create an environment for strengthening and expanding these programmes, and based on the previous analysis, we propose the following:

1. The conclusion of this research is that within the broader topic of human rights, the most represented topics are women's human rights, i.e. gender equality, youth rights, and violence. Non-formal education programmes also cover LGBTI+ rights, sex education, the rights of persons with disabilities, ethnic minority rights, transitional justice, ecology, labour rights, digital literacy and the right to privacy. These are topics that have been confirmed through questionnaires and desk research, however, any list of this kind is problematic due to the large number of topics and frequent human rights violations, and, in addition, there are certainly many more topics that can be added to the list.
 - **Recommendation:** There is a great need for education on all the topics mentioned above, both those that are already frequently represented as well as others. Civil society organizations have the capacities to organize more educational programmes and develop new ones, but this requires financial means (see recommendation 5 - Funding). It is recommended that all educational programmes start from the principle of intersectionality and not produce a hierarchy among marginalized groups.
2. In the context of spatial and temporal representation, good practice examples are the programmes that are held regularly (every year), programmes whose schedules are flexible and allow for the inclusion of persons who are employed, and finally programmes that are held outside Belgrade. Civil society organizations are mostly registered in Belgrade, where most activities take place, while obstacles to implementing human rights education programmes are reported by smaller organizations that complain of obstruction by local officials.
 - **Recommendation:** Greater support is required for the organization of non-formal human rights education programmes in smaller towns and villages across Serbia, and especially in south-eastern Serbia, where the smallest number of such activities is held. Also, civil society organizations require support, i.e. a protection mechanism in cases of unjustified denial of permission to use public spaces (schools, culture centres, local community halls) for educational activities.
3. This research showed that the most common methods and examples of good practice are combinations of workshops and lectures, but there are also study visits, public classes, visits to crime scene sites, use of artistic methods (theatre, literature, film) in educational processes, as well as practical work (field research, peer education, participation in organizing conferences and festivals).
 - **Recommendation:** It is important to provide the organizers of educational programmes, lecturers and trainers with the autonomy to choose their own methods and adapt them to the specific topics and target groups (their age, previous knowledge and objectives of the programme). Such autonomy should leave room for certain methods to be reused from year to year, while experimenting

with others in search of innovations in the field of pedagogy, technology and intergenerational cooperation.

4. In the context of target groups, most human rights NFE programmes are attended by young people, women, and activists. Good practice examples are the programmes that take in diverse groups, such as the SOFA programme, which works simultaneously with the young and the elderly, and is dedicated to intergenerational solidarity. Examples of good practice also include innovative programmes that work concurrently with vulnerable groups and the broader community, striving to empower the former and sensitize the latter (Plavo Theatre).
 - **Recommendation:** Members of marginalized groups need non-formal human rights education programmes in order to strengthen and better organize the exercise of their rights. Also, such programmes are important for the general population so as to better recognize cases of multiple marginalisation, create alliances and recognize positions of privilege. It is recommended to increase the number and scope of non-formal human rights education programmes, so that there is no need to choose between certain marginalized groups, or between them and the broader population (see more in recommendations 6 – on funding, and 7 – on cooperation with the formal education system).
5. The research has shown that half of the civil society organizations face significant challenges when it comes to securing funding for non-formal human rights education programmes, while at the local level there are also challenges in terms of securing adequate spaces.
 - **Recommendation:** For non-formal human rights education programmes, it is necessary to secure more funding from international organizations, foundations and embassies, as well as from state institutions, local foundations and companies. Most organizations stressed the importance of multi-annual funding, because educational programmes do not show results at short intervals (6 months or a year). In addition, support does not necessarily have to come in the monetary form, but also in providing adequate spaces and means for work. In the pre-pandemic context, this referred to paper, markers or projectors; however, in today's context, donations in the form of computers, internet access plans or particular software suitable for pedagogical work, would be welcome.
6. Most of the civil society organizations covered by the analysis conduct evaluations of their educational programmes, and the good practice examples are the programmes that conduct both oral and written (anonymous) evaluation. No organization conducts long-term evaluations, although there are organizations with twenty to thirty years of experience in educational work.
 - It is **recommended** that cooperation mechanisms be developed that would enable a number of organizations to jointly conduct long-term evaluation and more accurately identify the challenges and successes of previous programmes, as well as joint strategies for planning the development of non-formal education in this area.
 - It is **recommended** to establish or strengthen various types of cooperation between civil society organizations and the formal education system (from preschool to university level). It is necessary to enable non-formal educational methods to be used more during formal schooling, to revise the curricula in order to harmonize the principles of human rights education (see the CoE definition in the Compass Manual, page 4), and to include more classes dedicated to specific rights, i.e. specific marginalized groups (such as women, LGBTI+, persons with disabilities, transitional justice, and the relationship towards members of ethnic groups with whom Serbia was at war). It is necessary to provide teachers with real autonomy in achieving interdisciplinary competences. In parallel, it is necessary to maintain the current cooperation between CSOs and schools, which is also an example of good practice.
7. A large number of civil society organizations pointed to the unfavourable social climate in which they work and organize non-formal human rights education programmes. The media can be important allies in changing the dominant narratives in society.
 - **Recommendation:** In the context of improving the conditions for organizing human rights education programmes (formal and informal), it is necessary to carry on with the educational programmes intended for journalists and editors. It is also necessary to continue with the efforts in the fight for media freedom in Serbia. In the context of improving the human rights situation, a campaign should be organized in the future to help make the work of civil society organizations visible and acceptable, in order to reduce the impact of narratives about traitors and bad influence from the West on the universal issue of human rights, as they stem from the fact that they are all human beings and thus deserve certain rights.

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BEST PRACTICES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE REGION – A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

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Abstract

The understanding and proper implementation of the achieved standards of protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms by future public office holders depend on the prior delivery of teaching within the higher education system. The curricular contents in accredited higher educational institutions in the region began to be introduced in the curricula with the start of the European integration process and modernization of study programs, which was initiated by the Bologna Process. This survey covers the curricula and syllabi for all levels of study programs of accredited higher educational institutions in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia, as well as other extracurricular contents which are related to faculties and concern the study of human rights. A questionnaire was developed for the purposes of this survey with a view to identifying curricular contents which are aimed at the study of human rights. The survey results show that heterogeneity and inconsistency of the curricular contents on human rights are present across faculties. It was also found that there are very few curricula which pertain exclusively to the complete study of human rights. Due to this, further reforms and improvements to the curricula of the faculties are required to qualitatively improve the contents offered to students in the countries covered by the survey.

I. INTRODUCTION

The human rights idea goes as far back as antiquity, as protection of individuals against tyranny. Still, the concept and content of human rights are a legacy of the new age, i.e. the period following the French bourgeois revolution. This is evidenced by two important documents in which the modern idea of the protection of human rights was materialized. The first one is the Declaration of the Rights of the Man and of the Citizen of 1789, and the second one is the Bill of Rights from 1791, which actually constitutes amendments to the Constitution of the United States of America. Following the Second World War, a set of important documents was adopted, which established legal protection of individuals, after severe casualties and massive human rights violations during this global-scale conflict. One of the most important ones, which is even nowadays considered the world constitution of human rights, is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.¹

Human rights can be defined as a set of rights that belong to a person as a human being.² Human rights, on the other hand, constitute a limit on the government's power.³ There are numerous classifications of human rights, with the most important one being their division into civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.

The study of human rights is defined as a learning process whereby required knowledge, values and understanding of human rights are acquired, with a view to developing an acceptable human rights culture.⁴ This type of education teaches students to reexamine their experience, allowing them to integrate the concept of human rights into their value system and to apply it to their decision-making.⁵ Their initial advocating efforts for a systemic study of human rights in educational institutions started in 1953 within a program of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The first official document that pleads for human rights education is Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which was adopted by the UNESCO in 1974.⁶ Four years later, the International Congress on the Teaching of Human Rights was also held, with the aim of setting a certain framework on the application of the educational contents in educational institutions. Following the World Conference on Human Rights, which was held in 1993, the issue of human rights education became one of the central topics that is dealt with by the United Nations, while the UNESCO became an organization that has responsibility for the promotion of human rights education. The General Assembly proclaimed the 1994 to 2005 period a Human Rights Decade⁷, appealing to the member states to promote and inform about the need for human rights education with the aim of building a universal human rights culture. Following this period, the curricular contents on human rights were introduced in educational institutions with the help of non-governmental and governmental organizations, as well as individuals, who were a sort of champions of this process. In the years and decades that followed, the global demand for human rights education increased. This was also dictated by the needs of the market, which requires a lawyer who has been trained to apply the knowledge about human rights. The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the World Programme for Human Rights Education in 2004 as a leading program for advancement of educational programs at all levels.

At a European level, the Council of Europe had and still has nowadays a key contribution in the implementation process of the curricular contents on human rights in educational institutions. Firstly, in 1985, the Committee of Ministers adopted Recommendation R (85) 7 on Teaching and Learning about Human Rights in Schools.⁸ The text highlighted that young people should learn about human rights in order to prepare for life in a pluralistic society. In 2010, the Committee of Ministers adopted the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education within Recommendation (2010) 7.⁹ The Charter pleads for inclusion of the educational contents on human rights in the system, not only of higher education, but also preschool, primary and secondary education. Human rights education as part of the protection of human rights was later moved under the competence of the Commissioner for Human Rights. In numerous reports, the Commissioner calls on national authorities to strengthen and improve the study of human rights.

¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).

² V. Dimitrijević, D. Popović, International Human Rights Law, Belgrade Center for Human Rights, Belgrade, 2007. p. 39

³ D. Stojanović, Basic Human Rights - Human Rights and Freedoms in the Constitutions of European Countries, Nis, 1989, p. 54

⁴ <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/edumat/hreduseries/hereandnow/Part-2/HRE-intro.html>

⁵ What is human rights education? https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org/what_is_human_rights_education, accessed 11.02.2021.

⁶ Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co-operation and Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

⁷ <https://web.archive.org/web/20071216055141/http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/decade.html>

⁸ Recommendation R(85)7 of the Council of Europe on the Teaching and Learning of Human Rights in Schools.

⁹ Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7.

The introduction of the curricular content which is focused on human rights education in the countries of the region started after the ratification of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.¹⁰ This process was also affected by the Bologna Declaration¹¹ regarding the higher education system reform in Europe, during the so-called Bologna Process¹². During this process, the higher education system reform was carried out. The contents on human rights were introduced in the curricula at all levels. The higher education reform includes an accreditation and reaccreditation process of higher educational institutions and curricula, therefore the curricular contents are changed on this occasion, which entails dynamism with regard to the curricular contents offered to students. In some faculties, several curricula are often in operation simultaneously.

II. METHODOLOGY USED

The curricula in the state-owned and private faculties at all levels of studies (basic, master and doctoral academic studies of law) were subject to an analysis, as well as the existence of other contents (courses, seminars, training programs), which are organized by non-governmental organizations and other entities in a direct cooperation with the faculties. A survey of the faculties examined the existence of a specific Human Rights course, as well as related courses from the curriculum which include the study of human rights, and the study of human rights within the classical legal courses. In addition, the survey included the existence of extracurricular contents which include the study of human rights (legal clinics, specialist courses, seminars, mock trial clubs). The survey covered accredited faculties in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia.

For the purposes of the survey, a questionnaire was developed in the form of a table which was filled out with data about each faculty, namely: for each curriculum (all levels of studies) and data on courses under which human rights are studied. In addition, a summary overview on each of the faculties covered by the survey was provided.

III. SURVEY RESULTS

a. Albania

The survey in Albania covered the Faculty of Law of the University of Tirana, the Faculty of Law of the University of Shkodra, the Albanian University – the Faculty of Law, the University of New York – the Faculty of Law.

The Faculty of Law of the University of Tirana has in its master studies Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms as a mandatory course and Human Rights in Criminal Proceedings as an elective.¹³

The Faculty of Law of the Albanian University has stated in its objectives, among other things, preparation of specialists capable of conducting criminal proceedings while having regard for the protection of human rights of participants in the proceedings. This faculty also has in its curriculum for basic studies International Protection of Human Rights as an elective.¹⁴

The Faculty of Law of the University of New York has in its basic studies National and International Human Rights Law as a mandatory course¹⁵, while in its master studies it has Human Rights Law¹⁶.

The Faculty of Law of the University of Shkodra has stated Human Rights as one of the electives in its basic studies¹⁷, while there is International Protection of Human Rights as a course in its master studies¹⁸.

¹⁰ Albania ratified the Convention in 1996, Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002, and Serbia in 2003.

¹¹ Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia acceded to the Bologna Declaration with the Berlin Communiqué in 2003.

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/higher-education/bologna-process-and-european-higher-education-area_en

¹³ <https://fdut.edu.al/master-ne-drejttesi/>

¹⁴ <https://albanianuniversity.edu.al/en/department-of-legal-sciences/>

¹⁵ <https://unyt.edu.al/index.php/bachelor-program/law/>

¹⁶ <https://unyt.edu.al/index.php/master-programs/>

¹⁷ <https://unishk.edu.al/en/study-at-unishk/bachelor-studies>

¹⁸ <https://unishk.edu.al/en/study-at-unishk/master-of-sciences-studies>

Other Programs

- The Delegation of the Council of Europe in Albania has successfully implemented a course on human rights for law students in Tirana and Durrës. Over 500 Albanian students successfully completed the human rights course for the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights. The course was implemented during the second semester of students of basic and master studies in the law faculties of Tirana and Durrës (in March and April 2019).

A special focus was put on the case studies related to the right to a fair trial, right to protection of property and protection of gender equality. The students' knowledge and skills concerning the implementation of the European Court for Human Rights' standards and case law at the national level were improved. The seminar was delivered to the students by selected law professors and attorneys in a close cooperation with three Albanian non-governmental organizations¹⁹.

A Memorandum of understanding was signed with the University of Tirana and the „Aleksander Moisiu“ University in Durrës for the purposes of integrating the newly developed courses into the educational programs of both universities.²⁰

- The Mission of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to Albania and the University of Tirana launched the Centre for Justice and Transformation – a multidisciplinary research center in the area of transitional justice – at an online event which was held on November 26th, 2020. The Centre will strengthen the scientific research and debate on violation of human rights during the communist regime. It will also focus on the effect that the transitional justice measures have on the improvement of human rights and democratization of institutions in Albania. The Centre is the result of cooperation between the Faculty of Social Sciences, the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of History and Philology, and it is housed in the premises of the Faculty of Social Sciences.²¹

b. Bosnia and Herzegovina

The survey in Bosnia and Herzegovina covered the state-owned faculties, the Faculty of Law of the University of Sarajevo, the Faculty of Law of the University of Banja Luka, the Faculty of Law of the University of East Sarajevo, the Faculty of Law of the University of Zenica, the Faculty of Law of the University of Tuzla, the Faculty of Law of the University of Mostar, the Dzemal Bijedic Faculty of Law, and the private accredited faculties, the Faculty of Law of the University of Travnik, the International University of Sarajevo, the European University, the International University – Brčko, the Synergy University – Bijeljina, the University of Business Engineering and Management – Banja Luka and the University of Business Studies – Banja Luka.

In basic studies at **the Faculty of Law of Sarajevo**, there is no specific Human Rights course, but there are two related courses, Individual Rights and Rights of Minorities. Human rights are also part of the curriculum of specific courses at this level of studies, such as Constitutional Law, Public International Law, Criminal Procedural Law and Civil Procedural Law. In master studies, there is a course, Human Rights System, as well as related courses, Human Rights Safeguards and Criminal Law Protection of Human Rights in European Union. Human rights are also part of the curriculum of Constitutional Law. In doctoral studies, there is one related course, Rights of Child, while human rights are also studied under Constitutional Law.²²

Human Rights Clinic is *good practice example*. Unlike other faculties, Human Rights Clinic is one of the electives. In first phase, students follow lectures on human rights, which are delivered not only by teachers of the Faculty of Law, but also eminent experts in this area. In second phase, students draft pleadings before the European Court for Human Rights and have competitions in mock trials before the European Court for Human Rights. The competitions are also judged by visiting experts from the region, professors and practitioners.²³

At **the Faculty of Law in Banja Luka**, there is no specific Human Rights course at any level of studies. In basic studies, there are not even any related courses. In master²⁴ studies, human rights are studied under related courses, Human Rights in Criminal Proceedings, Proceedings Before European Court for Human Rights, Democracy and Human Rights. In doctoral²⁵ studies, there are related courses, International Law Protection of Human Rights and Democracy and Human Rights. In basic and doctoral studies, human rights are also

¹⁹ Center for Legal Civic Initiatives (CLCI), Balkan Youth Link Albania (BYL-A) and the Institute for Political Studies (ISP).

²⁰ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/national-implementation/-/successful-finalisation-of-the-human-rights-legal-course-for-law-students-in-tirana-and-durres>

²¹ <https://www.osce.org/presence-in-albania/472056>

²² <http://www.pfsa.unsa.ba/pf/#Nastava>

²³ <https://www.unsa.ba/novosti/na-pravnom-fakultetu-otvorena-klinika-iz-ljudskih-prava-u-saradnji-s-uredom-vijeca-evrope-u>

²⁴ <https://pf.unibl.org/studijski-programm19/>

²⁵ <https://pf.unibl.org/doktorske-studije/>

studied under Constitutional Law, Public International Law, Criminal Procedural Law and Civil Procedural Law courses.

Good practice example: At the Faculty of Law of the University of Banja Luka, the “Justice for Children” Legal Clinic is organized. The legal clinic is organized under the “Justice for Every Child” Project, which is implemented by UNICEF in cooperation with the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA), the Swiss Government and relevant line ministries and institutions and Human Rights Centre Mostar non-governmental organization. The students are afforded an opportunity to build their vocational and professional capacities, improve more narrowly specialized theoretical legal and practical legal knowledge and skills in the area of legal protection of the rights and interests of children and youth in different legal areas and different legal proceedings, with an emphasis on children’s rights, restorative justice, juvenile judiciary and provision of free legal aid, namely through: more narrowly specialized theoretical legal and practical legal training, analysis of the established legal solutions and concrete cases, resolution of hypothetical legal cases and expert talks with teachers and associates of the Faculty of Law and legal practitioners on the most common and most important problems in the area of access to justice for children, as well as the opportunities for finding feasible solutions for the improvement of situation in this area. As trainees of the clinic, third- and fourth-year students and graduates of the Faculty of Law of the University of Banja Luka are selected. The total envisaged number of the trainees of the clinic is up to twenty trainees. After the successful completion of the attendance of “Justice for Children” Legal Clinic, the trainees receive certificates.²⁶ In addition to this legal clinic at the Faculty of Law of Banja Luka, there is a Human Rights Clinic at which the students master basic theoretical knowledge in this area and learn about the contribution of the case law of the European Court for Human Rights.

The Faculty of Law of Zenica: At all levels of studies, there is a specific Human Rights course. It is a mandatory course in basic studies. In addition, human rights are studied under related courses, Internal Market and Human Rights in European Union and Digitalization and Personal Data Protection.²⁷ In basic and doctoral studies, human rights are also studied under the Constitutional Law, Public International Law, Criminal Procedural Law and Civil Procedural Law courses.

There is no specific Human Rights course at any level of studies at **the Faculty of Law in Tuzla**. In basic studies, human rights are studied under a related course, Democracy and Human Rights. In basic and doctoral studies, human rights are also studied under the Constitutional Law, Public International Law, Criminal Procedural Law and Civil Procedural Law courses.²⁸

There is no specific Human Rights course at any level of studies at **the Faculty of Law of the University of Mostar**. In doctoral studies, human rights are studied under related courses, International Human Rights Protection System and European Human Rights Protection Model. In basic and doctoral studies, human rights are also studied under Constitutional Law, Public International Law, Criminal Procedural Law and Civil Procedural Law courses.²⁹

In basic studies of **the Faculty of Law of the Dzemal Bijedic University** (first cycle of studies), there is a course which is completely related to human rights, Human Rights Law. In basic and doctoral studies, human rights are also studied under Constitutional Law, Public International Law, Criminal Procedural Law and Civil Procedural Law courses.³⁰ In second cycle of studies, human rights are studied under related courses: International Human Rights Protection Systems, European Human Rights System and Constitutional and Judicial Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms.³¹

Good practice example: The faculty has a program of doctoral studies which is dedicated to the study of European law. There are numerous courses within this program which deal with the study of human rights, more specifically Criminal Law Position of Persons with Mental Disorders Before European Court for Human Rights, Protection of Human Rights in Criminal Proceedings – Selected Topics of European Court for Human Rights, Human Rights Protection Institutions, European System of Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms and European Convention Criminal Procedural Law.³² The drawback of this program is that it is reserved only for PhD candidates, whereas first cycle of studies has the least contents on human rights.

In basic studies of **the Faculty of Law of East Sarajevo**, there is no course which is completely related to human rights. In basic and doctoral studies, human rights are studied under Constitutional Law, Public International Law, Criminal Procedural Law and Civil Procedural Law courses. In master studies, human rights are studied under International Law Protection of Human Rights and Freedoms course.³³

26 <https://pf.unibl.org/pravda-za-djecu/?script=lat>

27 <http://www.pr.f.unze.ba/Docs/NPPIciklus.pdf>

28 <https://enastava.pf.untz.ba/>

29 <https://pf.sum.ba/poslijediplomski-studij.html>

30 <https://pf.unmo.ba/studij/i-ciklus.aspx>

31 <https://pf.unmo.ba/studij/ii-ciklus.aspx>

32 <https://pf.unmo.ba/studij/iii-ciklus.aspx>

33 <https://www.pravni.ues.rs.ba/o-fakultetu/studijski-programi>

The Faculty of Law of the University of Travnik has in its basic studies (second year) Human Rights as an elective.³⁴ **The International University of Sarajevo** has in its basic studies Human Rights as an elective,³⁵ as well as Transitional Justice in its master studies³⁶. **The European University of Brcko** has Human Rights as an elective its basic³⁷ and doctoral studies³⁸. **The International University – Brcko** has in its master studies International Human Rights Law as a mandatory course and course entitled European Court for Human Rights as an elective. In doctoral studies, there is Rights of Child course.³⁹ **The Synergy University – Bijeljina** has in its master studies Human Rights Protection as an elective.⁴⁰ **The University of Business Engineering and Management – Banja Luka** has Human Rights as a mandatory course in its basic studies in 3rd year⁴¹, while in its master studies it has International Human Rights Law course⁴². In addition to a human rights clinic, **the University of Business Studies – Banja Luka** has in its basic studies Democracy and Human Rights, Humanitarian Law and National Minority Rights courses.⁴³

c. Kosovo

The survey in Kosovo covered the Faculty of Law of the Haxhi Zeka University in Peja, the Faculty of Law of the University of Prizren, the Faculty of Law of the University of South Mitrovica, the Faculty of Law of the University of Pristina, as well as the ESLG College.

The Faculty of Law of the Haxhi Zeka University in Peja has in its curriculum in basic studies International Protection of Human Rights course as an elective.⁴⁴ There are no Human Rights courses at other levels of studies.

Good practice example: Three years ago, this youngest faculty which had become independent established an Institute for the Study of Rule of Law and Human Rights. The idea for this institute is to profile itself as a regional research center in the region, in the area of theory and jurisprudence of human rights, rule of law and peace studies. The institute is focused on analysis of the theory and practice of the rule of law principle, research of human rights practice, analysis of the transitional justice processes and on research of peace-building strategy. The institute includes a variety of opinions and is based on the experiences of professionals and researchers in different areas. The institute wishes to combine the theoretical and practical experience based on research. The institute offers educational programs and launches initiatives which provide students, researchers and lawyers with the understanding of the rule of law principle and international human rights standards. In addition to basic studies of law (ISSLNJ), it has adopted an interdisciplinary research approach, where researchers in other disciplines such as international relations, philosophy and sociology can contribute to the current debates on the relationship between human rights and globalization. The institute relies on the human rights protection experience to date in Kosovo, which serves as a resource for all those who deal with human rights and rule of law in post-conflict societies. The institute cooperates closely with many law faculties, legal experts in and beyond Kosovo, as well as with numerous international organizations.

The Faculty of Law of the University of Prizren also has International Protection of Human Rights, but as a mandatory course, namely in first year of its basic studies.⁴⁵ It can be inferred from a review of the curriculum for this course that the study of international human rights protection documents is dominant, while little attention is paid to individual first-generation human rights.

One of the private law faculties in Kosovo, called the **ESLG College**, has in its bachelor of law program, in third year of studies, European Human Rights Law as a mandatory course.

The Faculty of Law of the University of South Mitrovica and the Faculty of Law of the University of Pristina have no courses which deal exclusively with the study of human rights.

Good practice example: Late last year, a Research Institute for Legal Studies was established within the University of Pristina, with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Pristina. The objective of the establishment of the Institute is to improve the overall quality of research at the Faculty of Law. Some of the research areas that the Institute will focus on include human rights, access to justice and transitional justice. The Institute will organize online educational programs together with

34 <https://pfk.edu.ba/v2/bs/studij/i-ciklus-dodiplomski-studij/ii-godina-studija>

35 http://oldwww.ius.edu.ba:8080/public_doc/FL_Curriculum_I_Cycle.pdf

36 http://oldwww.ius.edu.ba:8080/public_doc/FL_Curriculum_II_Cycle-public.pdf

37 <https://eubd.edu.ba/NPP/Osnovne-akademske-studije-Opste-pravo.pdf>

38 <https://eubd.edu.ba/NPP/Doktorske-studije-Pravo.pdf>

39 <http://iu-bd.org/index.php/sr/fakulteti-4/pr-vni-f-ul/ps-pr-v>

40 http://upis.sinergija.edu.ba/master/study_programme/pravo

41 http://univerzitetpim.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Nastavni-plan-i-program_Pravo-240-ECTS.pdf

42 <http://univerzitetpim.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Nastavni-plani-i-program-II-ciklus-Pravo.pdf>

43 <https://univerzitetps.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/NPP-Pravne-nauke-2020-21.pdf>

44 http://unhz.eu/?arsim_course=law-faculty&lang=en

45 [https://uni-prizren.com/en/info-law-\(curricula\)#breadcrumb](https://uni-prizren.com/en/info-law-(curricula)#breadcrumb)

international universities and research institutes. The Institute will also organize practice for law students in judiciary institutions. The Institute will work on developmental research programs and publication of research papers in the area of judiciary and human rights.⁴⁶ A Human Rights Centre, on which there is no data on the University's website, had also been established earlier. The Facebook page of this Institute says that it was established in the University, at the initiative of individual students.⁴⁷ To date, the Centre has organized a host of seminars and lectures for students, while it also participates in projects concerning human rights.

d. Serbia

The survey in Serbia covered the Faculty of Law of the University of Nis, the Faculty of Law of the University of Novi Sad, the Faculty of Law of the University of Belgrade, the Faculty of Law of the University of Kragujevac, the Faculty of Law of the University of Pristina with a temporary seat in Kosovska Mitrovica, the University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies, the Faculty of Law of Union University, the Faculty of Law of the state-owned University of Novi Pazar, the Faculty of Political Sciences, the Faculty for Commerce and Judiciary, the Faculty of Law and Business Studies Lazar Vrkatic, the Faculty of Law of the International University of Novi Pazar, the Faculty of Law and Business MB, the Faculty of European Legal and Political Studies, the Megatrend University and the Faculty of Law of the Constantine the Great University.

At the Faculty of Law in Nis, there is no specific study program in which human rights are studied. There are four levels of studies and six accredited study programs. In basic⁴⁸ and doctoral⁴⁹ studies, there is a course, Human Rights, which is completely dedicated to the study of human rights and it is an elective at both levels of studies. In master⁵⁰ academic studies, in both majors, there are related courses in which human rights are studied, but in a sectoral manner, within some areas of science. In doctoral studies, there is also a related course concerning European human rights law. In basic and doctoral studies, human rights are also studied under specific courses (study of human rights is envisaged in different thematic units of the curriculum). In basic vocational studies and specialist vocational studies, there are no courses in which human rights are studied.

Good practice example: At the Faculty of Law in Nis, there are extracurricular activities which are dedicated to the study and exercise of human rights. A couple of years ago, Iustitia Nis Club⁵¹ was established, which organizes a School for the Implementation of the European Convention and the European Court for Human Rights' Case Law, followed by human rights mock trial competitions, as well as preparation of a team of students for international competition in the area of human rights. In addition, numerous seminars and lectures dedicated to human rights have been organized. The School for the Implementation of the European Convention and the European Court's Case Law will be organized for the third time this school year. It is intended for students starting from second to fourth year of basic studies, as well as students of master studies. In the previous two years, over fifty students have attended the training program, while almost 40 candidates applied for training this year. The lectures last ten to twelve weeks and cover all of the most important human rights guaranteed by the European Convention. In addition, the European Court for Human Rights' Case Law is studied through the case study method, as well as drafting of pleadings before the European Court for Human Rights. The students successfully complete the course by taking part in a competition, for whose preparation they draft the applicant's pleading or the state's reply, and by oral presentation of the arguments on a hypothetical case.

At the Faculty of Law in Belgrade, there is no specific study program in which human rights are studied. There are three levels of studies and four accredited study programs. In basic⁵², master and doctoral studies, there is an elective which is completely dedicated to the study of human rights called Human Rights. In basic academic studies, there is a related course in which human rights are studied. Minority rights are studied in it. In Master of European Integration⁵³, European human rights law is studied. In doctoral⁵⁴ studies, there is also a related course, International Human Rights Law. In basic and doctoral studies, human rights are also studied under specific courses (human rights topics are teaching units of the curriculum).

In terms of extracurricular activities, an antidiscrimination clinic and students' participation in the Condemn Discrimination competition which is organized by the Office of the Commissioner for the Protection of

Equality should be singled out.

Good Practice Example: The Centre for Human Rights of the Faculty of Law of Belgrade has organized, in cooperation with the Council of Europe, a Regional School of Human Rights in 2019.⁵⁵ The lecturers included leading experts in the area of human rights in the country and abroad. The topics that were specifically discussed in the school included freedom of expression and limitations on freedom of expression, protection of the right to privacy, artistic speech, protection of whistleblowers and the like. In addition to the lectures, the students were presented with case studies and work in the form of workshop and mock trials.

At the Faculty of Law in Novi Sad, there is no specific study program in which human rights are studied. There are three levels of studies and eight accredited study programs. In basic⁵⁶, master⁵⁷ and doctoral⁵⁸ studies, there is no course which is completely dedicated to the study of human rights. In basic academic studies, there are not even any related courses in which human rights are studied. Human rights are studied under other courses, such as Constitutional Law, Public International Law, Criminal Procedural Law and Civil Procedural Law. In general master studies major, human rights are studied under related courses, namely International Protection of Human Rights, Constitutional Protection of Human Rights and European Human Rights Law. In national security master studies, there is a course, Security and Human Rights, while human rights are studied under Confidential Data Protection course. In doctoral studies, there are also two related courses, International and European Antidiscrimination Law, Freedom of Expression and Comparative Child Law. In doctoral studies, human rights are also studied under specific courses (thematic units in the curricula).

In terms of extracurricular activities concerning human rights, there is a legal clinic for refugee law and antidiscrimination law, while student teams take part in a regional competition in human rights.

At the Faculty of Law in Kragujevac, there is no specific course which is dedicated to the study of human rights at any level of studies. There are not even any related courses at any level of studies. Human rights are studied solely under courses at all levels of studies, such as Criminal and Civil Procedural Law, Constitutional Law and Public International Law.⁵⁹

Student teams of the Faculty of Law of Kragujevac take part in a qualifying competition for a regional competition in the implementation of the European Convention.

In basic studies of **the Faculty of Law of Kosovska Mitrovica**, there is no Human Rights course, but there is a related elective, Rights of Child. Human rights are also part of the curriculum of the following specific courses at this level of studies: Constitutional Law, Public International Law, Criminal Procedural Law and Civil Procedural Law. In master studies, there is Human Rights course. In doctoral studies, there is not a single course which in its curriculum includes units related to human rights.⁶⁰

In three-year and four-year basic studies of **the Faculty of Law of the Union University**, there is Human Rights course. In addition, there are two related courses in four-year basic studies, Fundamentals of Law with Human Rights and Antidiscrimination Law. Human rights are part of the syllabus of specific courses at this level of studies: Constitutional Law, Public International Law, Criminal Procedural Law and Civil Procedural Law. In doctoral studies, specific topics related to human rights are studied under the following courses: Constitutional Law Theory and European Constitutionalism, Criminal Procedural Law and Civil Litigation Procedural Law with Enforcement Procedural Law.⁶¹

Good practice example: There is a specific module in master studies in this faculty, which is completely related to the study of human rights.⁶² The program consists of four mandatory courses and four electives, with the candidates choosing one of the four electives. The first mandatory course is Theory of Human Rights and Right to Equality. The second mandatory topic is dedicated to the protection of human rights at international and national levels. The third mandatory course, European Union and Human Rights, deals with human rights safeguards within the European Union. The fourth mandatory course is completely dedicated to the protection of human rights established by the European Convention. The electives are dedicated to the study of the rights of the child, followed by the democratization process through the process of constitutionalization and transitional justice, human rights and public health protection, as well as the right to privacy and right to information. The classes in the program consist of lectures, practical exercises and research work of students. Current foreign relevant reading has been envisaged for each of the aforementioned courses. The classes are conducted completely in English language.

⁴⁶ <https://www.ks.undp.org/content/kosovo/en/home/presscenter/speeches/2020/02/27/launching-of-the-research-institute-for-legal-studies-at-univers.html>

⁴⁷ https://www.facebook.com/HRCOFUP/?ref=page_internal

⁴⁸ <http://www.prafak.ni.ac.rs/studije/osnovne-studije.html>

⁴⁹ <http://www.prafak.ni.ac.rs/studije/doktorske-studije.html>

⁵⁰ <http://www.prafak.ni.ac.rs/studije/master-studije.html>

⁵¹ <https://www.facebook.com/Moot-Court-Debatni-I-Besedni%C4%8Dki-Klub-Iustitia-Ni%C5%A1-365397180620467>

⁵² <http://www.ius.bg.ac.rs/Studije/NASTAVNI%20%20PLAN%20-%20STATUT%202011.pdf>

⁵³ http://pogestei.ius.bg.ac.rs/masterBG_Curriculum_19_20.htm

⁵⁴ http://www.ius.bg.ac.rs/pds/doktorske_studijski_program.htm

⁵⁵ <http://www.ius.bg.ac.rs/informacije/regionalna%20skola%20ljudska%20prava%20centar%20za%20ljudska%20prava.pdf>

⁵⁶ <http://www.pf.uns.ac.rs/studije/osnovne-studije/opsti>

⁵⁷ <http://www.pf.uns.ac.rs/studije/master>

⁵⁸ <http://www.pf.uns.ac.rs/studije/doktorske>

⁵⁹ <http://www.jura.kg.ac.rs/index.php/sr/studije.htm>

⁶⁰ <https://pra.pr.ac.rs/studije/>

⁶¹ <http://pravnofakultet.rs/studije/studijski-programi/>

⁶² <http://pravnofakultet.rs/studije/studijski-programi/master-studije/human-rights-law/>

The University of Criminal Investigation and Police Studies has in its basic studies of criminology⁶³ a course called Human Rights, which is an elective in third year. In basic vocational studies⁶⁴, there is Constitutional Law and Human Rights Protection as a mandatory course. In master⁶⁵ studies, there is also Police and Human Rights as an elective. Finally, international human rights are studied in doctoral⁶⁶ studies.

The Faculty of Political Sciences has a master module, International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law in which all students are offered theoretical and practical knowledge in the areas of humanitarian law and human rights law, as well as related disciplines. The students are acquiring required knowledge about local, regional, supranational and global dimensions of actions on the advancement and protection of international humanitarian law and human rights law. By adopting this knowledge, the students are preparing for professional tasks in their future professional roles and creating a sound foundation for future academic training in the areas of international humanitarian law and human rights law.⁶⁷

Good practice example: A master module at the Faculty of Political Sciences offers a unique and professional study of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. This is one of rare master programs in the region and in the Europe, which is dedicated to the study of these two branches of law. This facilitates not only acquisition of knowledge from two important areas, but also the understanding of the correlation of these two disciplines, in a theoretical sense and especially in a practical sense. The students acquire knowledge by attending mandatory and elective courses. The key foundation of this module is comprised of four mandatory courses. Two are in the domain of international humanitarian law – International Humanitarian Law – Protection of Victims of Armed Conflicts and International Humanitarian Law – Rules of War, whereas the other two are in the domain of human rights – Fundamentals of Human Rights and Human Rights Law and Policy.

In addition to the four mandatory courses, the students following this master module also choose three out of seven electives on offer, in accordance with their interests and academic affinities. The electives are Rights of Foreign Nationals, Contemporary International Organizations, Conflict Theories and Typologies, Contemporary Theories of International Relations, United Nations System, European Union's Constitutional Policy, Policy Regulation of Ethnic Conflicts and Relations. The work is organized in small groups, in an interactive way. There is analysis of examples from practice, with the use of the most contemporary national and international reading.

The working methods in courses are adjusted to the subject matter and are interactive. In addition to traditional lectures during learning, a multitude of case studies, term papers, drafting of pleadings, campaign design, shooting of short films and many other methods are used. The objective is to, in addition to the knowledge, also provide the students with specific skills and to enhance their independent research work and critical thinking, as well as an opportunity to hear about contemporary examples from humanitarian law and human rights law experts and practitioners. So far, this master module has been attended by nine generations and over one hundred and forty students.⁶⁸

The following faculties have only **one** elective **each**, concerning the study of human rights: **the Faculty of European Legal and Political Studies**, Human Rights, as a third-year elective,⁶⁹ followed by **the Megatrend**, Human Rights as a third-year course⁷⁰ and **the Faculty for Commerce and Judiciary**, International Protection of Human Rights, as a third-year elective⁷¹. At **the Faculty of Law of the International University of Novi Pazar**, the Human Rights course is an elective in third year of basic studies⁷². **The Faculty of Law and Business MB**⁷³ also contains in its curriculum International Human Rights, namely as a mandatory course in first year of basic studies. **The Constantine the Great Faculty of Law** offers Human Rights as an elective in second year of basic studies.⁷⁴ **The Faculty of Law of the State University of Novi Pazar** has envisaged Human Rights as an elective in second year of basic studies.⁷⁵

Other Programs

- The School of Human Rights Vojin Dimitrijevic of the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights is traditionally held in Belgrade once a year and lasts 14 days. This is an intensive and comprehensive course on human rights, intended primarily for senior year students or students of graduate studies of law and other social

sciences, but also for all those who wish to find out more, get engaged and contribute to the respect for human rights in our country.⁷⁶ Even though this is not part of the curriculum of the faculties, some faculties take part in preselection of students for this school.

- HELP Platform for Distance Learning is a series of distance-learning courses, available only to a specific group of legal experts who partake in pilot courses which are managed by certified national tutors. A list of the available courses (with description) in the catalogue of courses. The materials for independent distance learning are available to each user who opens their own user account on the platform. They include manuals on the methodology training and the key concepts of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as well as the manuals, standard training curricula, training overviews, presentations, case studies and distance-learning courses on different Articles and themes of the Convention.⁷⁷ In the light of the cooperation agreements signed with the faculties, the platform is available to students of the faculties, while teachers go through trainings in order to become certified tutors and provide further training offered to course trainees.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The survey conducted of the faculties from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia has shown that there is almost no specific study program in the territory of the countries covered by it, which would be related to the exclusive and comprehensive study of human rights. There is only one such example at the Faculty of Law of the Union University, which has such study master program. Also, at the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Belgrade, there is a master module, which is dedicated to the study of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

In basic studies, other faculties have increasingly more often in their curricula a course called Human Rights. The Human Rights course is generally an elective and is in the curriculum starting from second to fourth year (exceptionally, it is in first year of basic studies). Typically, this course is in the status of an elective, which reduces to some extent the number of students who mandatorily go through that program. It is a one-semester course everywhere, in accordance with the Bologna Process rules. In addition to a Human Rights course, the curricula also provide for related courses, which are predominantly electives in higher years of basic studies. They focus on human rights safeguards (universal and European), followed by the rights of the child or other vulnerable or marginalized groups, such as minority rights or antidiscrimination law, as well as proceedings before international organizations for human rights protection. Examples of the cases which combine in them several categories and areas are also encountered, out of which only one is related to human rights (Democracy and Human Rights, Security and Human Rights). In several faculties, there is a course which covers human rights in criminal proceedings. In basic studies in almost all faculties, human rights are studied under other mandatory courses, such as Constitutional Law, Public International Law, Criminal Procedural Law and Civil Procedural Law, but the frequency of the human rights-related topics varies depending on the curriculum and they are typically not dominant.

The law faculties of Novi Sad and Kragujevac, which do not have a Human Rights course in any of their study programs, are negative examples in Serbia. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are several faculties which do not have Human Rights course in any of their study programs (Banja Luka, East Sarajevo, Tuzla and the Faculty of Law of the University of Mostar). The Faculty of Law of Zenica, which has Human Rights course in all three accredited study programs, is a positive example. Also, there are several private faculties which do not have a single course addressing the study of human rights, including the Vitez University – Travnik, the Slobomir P University – Bijeljina and the Apeiron Pan-European University – Banja Luka. Few human rights-related courses have been identified at law faculties in Kosovo, i.e. one or none. On the other hand, in the law faculties in Albania, there are at least one or two courses everywhere, which offer the study of human rights and safeguards.

In master studies in many faculties, there is a Human Rights course, as well as related courses, which are related to human rights, with different names. One also comes across the situation where the courses are repeated by comparison with basic studies and are generally electives. These courses are covered by a general program of masters studies or specific programs in the area of public law under different names.

In doctoral studies, there are also contents which deal the study of human rights. The names of the courses often overlap with the names of the courses at lower levels of studies. Where they exist, they almost completely correspond to the courses at lower levels of studies content-wise.

63 <https://www.kpu.edu.rs/cms/studije/osnovne-studije/akademke-kriminalistika>

64 <https://www.kpu.edu.rs/cms/studije/osnovne-studije/strukovne-kriminalistika>

65 <https://www.kpu.edu.rs/cms/studije/drugi-stepen/master-kriminalistika>

66 <https://www.kpu.edu.rs/cms/studije/doktorske-studije/doktorske-kriminalistika>

67 <https://www.fpn.bg.ac.rs/modul-medjunarodno-humanitarno-pravo-i-pravo-ljudskih-prava>

68 <https://mhpllp.wixsite.com/mhpllp>

69 <https://www.fepps.edu.rs/pravo>

70 <http://megatrend.edu.rs/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Studijski-program-Pravo-Treca-godina.pdf>

71 <http://www.pravni-fakultet.info/studije-2014-15/osnovne-studije/studijski-program-pravo.html>

72 <http://uninp.edu.rs/pravne-nauke-studijski-programi/>

73 <https://www.ppf.edu.rs/%d0%bf%d1%80%d0%b0%d0%b2%d0%be-240-%d0%b5%d1%81%d0%bf%d0%b1/>

74 <http://konstantinveliki.edu.rs/pravo/>

75 <http://www.dunp.np.ac.rs/pravnenauke/pravo/>

76 <http://www.bgcentar.org.rs/obrazovanje/skole-ljudskih-prava/>

77 https://www.coe.int/sr_RS/web/help-country/about-help

The general conclusion is that the law faculties covered by the survey offer the content concerning the study of human rights, but that the situation varies from one course to as many as ten, at all levels of studies. More often, the faculties are choosing to introduce several courses on human rights in the curricula for higher levels of studies (especially master study programs), whereas mostly one, namely elective course, which deals with this subject matter, is reserved for students of basic studies. There are two specific master study programs, both in Serbia, out of which only one is exclusively on human rights, while the second one, at the Faculty of Political Sciences, is of a hybrid character, because it is dedicated to international humanitarian law in addition to human rights. There is no specific doctoral study program on human rights. The curriculum for doctoral European law studies at the Faculty of Law of the Dzemal Bijedic University in Mostar, which includes the most courses within which human rights are studied, comes the closest to this concept.

In addition to the study of human rights within the curricula and syllabi of academic institutions, there are also other extracurricular contents in the field covered by the survey aimed at enriching students with theoretical and practical knowledge in this area. The lack of curricular contents on human rights was recognized as early as 1996, when a human rights mock trial competition was held for the very first time, then organized by the Young Lawyers of Serbia, and later organized by the Civil Rights Defenders. Last year, the 14th competition was held in which law faculties from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania took part. In the meantime, a national competition was also established in Albania. This has driven the establishment of teams and clubs for organization of mock trials. The need for the selection of students required design of training programs in the area of human rights, where, out of the faculties covered by the survey, the Faculty of Law of Nis, which has a comprehensive training on the implementation of the European Convention in each school year which is attended by an increasing number of students, has gone the farthest. In addition, human rights are studied at human rights clinics at the Faculty of Law of Sarajevo and the Faculty of Law of Banja Luka. There is the School of Human Rights, which is organized by the Belgrade Centre for Human Rights as a traditional form of non-formal education.

- In addition to the curricular contents, the faculties should be encouraged and empowered towards the establishment of specific training seminars on human rights, through making provisions for and funding of projects, which are aimed at provision of complementary knowledge to students in this area. A special emphasis should be put on the study of human rights safeguards on universal and regional levels, especially before the European Court for Human Rights, but also the Court of Justice of the European Union, with the European integration process that the countries in the region are going through in mind.
- The aspiration should be to have an increasing number of students go through some form of human rights education, in order for each law student to be able to acquire the required basic knowledge in this area and to increase the number of human rights experts in the territory covered by this survey, because there are truly few of them among lawyers in this region compared to the European standards.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Based on the survey conducted, it is clear that the curricular contents on human rights in the higher education institutions are quite heterogenous and inconsistent. Students of legal sciences should be offered a comprehensive curriculum on human rights.
- Having one *mandatory* course in basic studies, Human Rights, or at least Introduction to Human Rights, which would provide basic knowledge about this area to lower-year students of basic academic studies should be advocated.
- A group of electives in higher years of basic academic studies, which would include related courses and study of the safeguards for the protection of human rights should also be advocated.
- In the light of the multisectoral character of human rights, it is expedient to improve cooperation of the departments in different scientific areas and establish interdepartmental courses.
- A good practice example, in the form of a master of human rights, should be implemented in a larger number of faculties, both private and state-owned ones.
- The pure study of human rights should be insisted on, as well as reduction of the number of the courses which include heterogenous areas, such as Democracy and Human Rights or International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law. Therefore, cooperation of different scientific areas is desirable, but it should be ensured that the course is consistent with the study of human rights, which is already a very complex subject matter in itself.
- At least one law faculty in each of the countries should have a specific program on human rights in doctoral studies of law.
- Pooling of several law faculties and design of one common program of the study of human rights in several faculties or with participation of teachers from several faculties and from several countries is recommendable.

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THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON HIGHER EDUCATION AT LAW SCHOOLS IN SERBIA

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Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic shook the education system in Serbia. From the period of the introduction of the state of emergency and up until the end of the pandemic, the education system must continually adapt to the new circumstances. The aim of this research was to examine how the pandemic affected higher education at law faculties, what was the quality of teaching and the adjustment of both teaching staff and students. Teachers and students of the largest state and private universities in Serbia participated in the research through an open structured questionnaire for teachers, associates and students from all years of basic academic law studies. The aim was to examine attitudes about how teaching is delivered, about the assessment of teaching quality and realization of curricula and syllabi, student workload, employed criteria and student results, as well as about the general perception of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education in Serbia. The results of the research tell us that there is no agreement either among teachers and associates, or among students, not even at the level of the same universities, on working conditions, quality and methods of teaching, adaptation of teaching contents, student workload, knowledge assessment methods and clear and precise methodology of teaching at law faculties of Serbian universities. The teachers, associates and students of all universities that were part of the research agree that the COVID-19 pandemic will have negative consequences on legal education. Teachers and associates, as well as students, agree that the greatest challenge, but also the biggest drawback of legal education during the pandemic, is the absence of face-to-face interaction in the classroom between students, on one hand, and teachers and associates, on the other.

I. INTRODUCTION

The research aimed at determining how the COVID-19 pandemic affected higher education at law faculties in Serbia. In the period from the declaration of the state of emergency in Serbia on March 15¹ (which lasted until May 6, 2020²) up until the very end of the pandemic, education will be one of the areas that has undergone the biggest changes, limitations, opportunities to study, teach, take exams and comply with other faculty obligations.

Upon declaring a state of emergency, a Decision on Suspension of Teaching in Higher Education Institutions, Secondary Schools and Primary Schools and the Regular Work of Preschool Institutions³ was adopted under which teaching in the educational institutions themselves was suspended and educational work was envisaged to continue by means of distance learning. Based on the Decision on the Declaration of the State of Emergency and the Instruction of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development⁴ student centers were closed on March 17 and remained closed until May 15, 2020.

The new academic 2020/2021 year began on time with the adoption of the Recommendations for the Prevention of the Coronavirus in Higher Education Institutions within the Measures related to the Prevention of the Spread of COVID-19.⁵

Research published in 2020 indicated that there were serious problems and shortcomings in the education process at different levels (primary and secondary schools, higher education institutions) during the COVID-19 pandemic⁶ which is why it was important to examine how the pandemic affected higher education at law faculties in Serbia.

The research that was conducted referred to the manner in which the pandemic affected higher education at law faculties, the manner in which classes were held, the quality of teaching, the manner in which teachers, associates and students coped with the new and extraordinary circumstances of the teaching process, and the consequences of the pandemic itself on higher education at law faculties in Serbia. The research covered state and private universities, teachers and associates, as well as students and was supposed to include faculty administrations, but we did not encounter readiness on the part of faculties and universities to share with us the official data and statistics on teaching and teaching results (outcomes) during the pandemic.

¹ Decision on the Declaration of a State of Emergency, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia" no. 29/2020.

² Decision on the Cancellation of the State of Emergency, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia" no 65/2020.

³ Decision on the Suspension of Teaching in Higher Education Institutions, Secondary Schools and Primary Schools and Regular Work of Preschool Institutions, "Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", no. 30, 15. March, 2020.

⁴ Instructions of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development no. 601-00-11/1/2020-/6, 16.3.2020.

⁵ Recommendations on the Prevention of the Coronavirus in Higher Education Institutions within the Measures related to the Prevention of the Spread of COVID-19, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development no. 612-00-01397/2020-06.

⁶ United Nations Serbia, 2020; World Bank Group, 2020; Psychology Institute, 2020; Nikolić; Totev-Jović, 2020; Stojanović, D. 2020; Stojanović; Vukov, 2020; Stojanović, B. 2020.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND PROCESS:

The research covered the four largest state universities in Serbia (University of Belgrade, University of Novi Sad, University of Kragujevac and University of Nis), as well as two private universities (Megatrend University and Union University).

By setting up a research framework, we wanted to get quantitative official data from faculties that can give us an insight into the teaching process, teaching results, student results, etc. in the last two years so that we can compare results during and before the pandemic. Our intention was to gather data about the number of face-to-face or online classes held and exam-related statistics.⁷ The instrument in this part of the research was the request for submission of data by the administrations of all faculties that were part of the research.

The research was supposed to present the teaching framework at faculties, frequency of classes held face-to-face and online, student workload and course activities compared to previous years, criteria for evaluating teachers and associates, extent of curriculum realization by course and a comparison with previous years, personal assessment of teachers and associates on teaching during 2020 and comparison with previous years, personal assessment of teachers and associates on the quality of teaching during 2020 and student results at all levels of study, as well as assessment of teachers and associates on the position of freshmen during 2020. The instrument used in this part of the research was an open structured questionnaire for teachers and associates.

The main findings should present the framework of the teaching process at law faculties and the attitudes of students about the delivery of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research included aspects of the quality of teaching held online or face-to-face, the level of workload by course, opportunities for fulfillment of obligations, assessment criteria of teachers and associates, etc. The instrument in this part of the research was an open structured questionnaire for students.

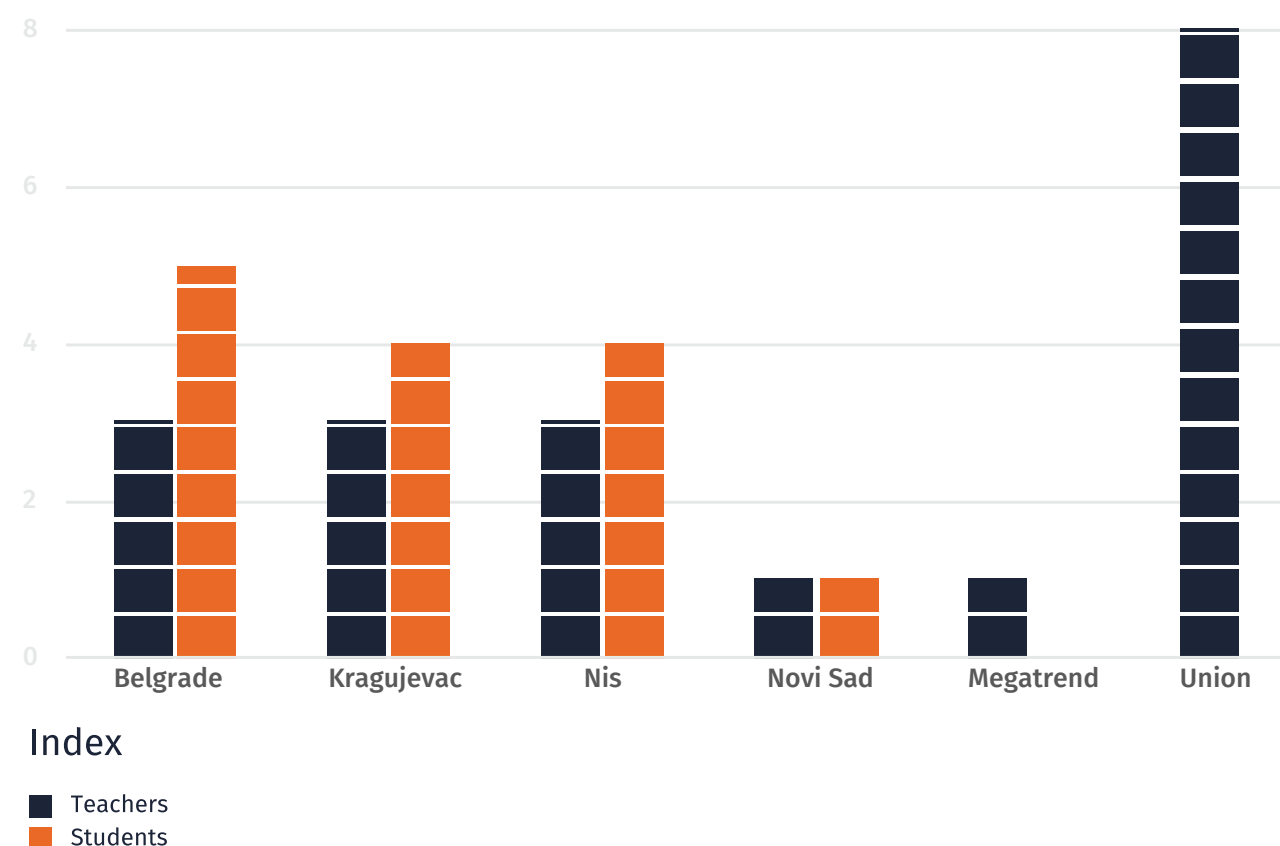
⁷ Information such as: registered exams according to the examination periods for 2019 and 2020 for all years of undergraduate studies; exam pass rates for 2019 and 2020 for all years of undergraduate studies; statistics of average grades on exams for 2019 and 2020 for all years of undergraduate studies; average number of achieved ECTS per student for 2019 and 2020 for all levels of study, average grade achieved per student for 2019 and 2020 for all levels of study; number of enrolled students during 2019 and during 2020; number of enrolled students in 2019 and 2020 in multi-year courses of study; number of registered candidates for the entrance exams in 2019 and 2020 and number of students enrolled in the studies in 2019 and 2020 and similar data collected and processed by the faculties.

III. RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND PROCESS

A total of six requests were sent to faculty administrations for obtaining official data on teaching and studying during the pandemic, sixty-five requests were sent to teachers and associates to take part in the research, and thirty-five requests were sent to students from all the participating faculties to take part in the research.

A total of nineteen teachers and fourteen students participated in the research.

Graph 1. Research participants



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Nor a single faculty administration responded within the anticipated time frame of the research. The high responsiveness of teachers and associates from most universities (with the exception of the University of Novi Sad) is commendable, where the intention to participate in the research of teachers and associates from all years of study has been fulfilled (some teachers and associates teach different courses in different years of study, so this intention has been fulfilled at a high rate). All participants in the research were guaranteed anonymity of answers provided, by which we wanted to ensure honesty and real perspective on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, quality of teaching, limitations, challenges, advantages and disadvantages of the situation in which everyone found themselves during almost the entire 2020 and in early 2021.

III. RESEARCH RESULTS

Education at law faculties in Serbia during the pandemic from the perspective of teachers and associates

Questions for teachers and associates at law faculties of universities in Serbia are divided into four areas: 1) delivery of teaching; 2) assessment of the quality of teaching and fulfillment of curricula; 3) student workload, criteria employed and student results achieved; 4) perception of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education in Serbia.

Delivery of teaching

In terms of teaching delivery, most teachers and associates applied a combination of methods. Associates at the University of Belgrade deliver practical classes exclusively face-to-face, and teachers deliver classes mostly online (or face-to-face depending on whether it is a summer or winter semester and in relation to the level of study - master and doctoral studies exclusively face-to-face). Regular classes were held mostly online whereas practical classes and study visits were delivered face-to-face. Teachers and associates at the University of Kragujevac delivered most of the teaching online (between 90% to full). At the University of Nis, regular and practical classes were delivered online on the recommendation of the University whereas tests, mid-term exams, consultations and exams were held face-to-face. At the University of Novi Sad, teaching was delivered entirely online in the summer semester whereas at the beginning of the winter semester it was delivered only partly online, and partly face-to-face until the last week of November. A teacher from Megatrend University held classes and consultations in parallel - face-to-face, but also through online aids and platforms. Teachers and associates at Union University conducted classes throughout the summer semester through online platforms, as well as from mid-November in the winter semester (from October to mid-November classes were taught face-to-face).

As to the biggest challenges in the delivery of teaching, the answers of teachers and associates at law faculties are different and range widely. Teachers and associates at the University of Belgrade believe that the biggest challenges were adjusting to the protective mask requirements, anxiety among students and lesser interest for participating in practical classes, due to the risk to their health and the health of their loved ones associated with face-to-face classes, as well as the new communication channels and the actual adaptation during online classes, more precisely adaptation to teaching without direct contact with students. For teachers and associates from the University of Kragujevac, the biggest challenges in the delivery of teaching were technical aspects, such as explaining details in reference to writing seminar papers, taking mid-term and final exams, student participation in teaching and online communication with them. Teachers and associates from the University of Nis point out that the biggest challenge was the interaction with students through the platform, as well as maintaining an atmosphere in which students do not need constant encouragement to take active part in class as in direct conversations when classes are held face-to-face. Also, one of the challenges was how to adapt to the new teaching regime, which included working from home. A professor from the University of Novi Sad points out that one of the biggest challenges was the resistance of some colleagues to use information technology and adds that it was not determined by the age structure and that teachers and associates had the same level of resistance regardless of age, and she also believes that it is a consequence of computer illiteracy or the belief that IT is simply not for them. A teacher from Megatrend University believes that the biggest challenge for teachers was to monitor the individual progress of students in mastering the material. Teachers and associates from Union University cite as key challenges forcing students to wear masks during face-to-face classes and balancing house chores with online teaching, motivating students to attend both forms of teaching, providing interactive online sessions to make teaching better, reduced opportunities to give feedback to students on their performance, adaptation to technical conditions when using online presentations, video content, etc., technical preparation for online classes or student presentations because it does not have the same effect as when presented live in the faculty premises and in front of an audience.

All teachers and associates of the University of Belgrade who participated in the research believe that it is possible to organize online teaching of an adequate quality, but that there are also limitations. One of the teachers who teaches in the fourth year of undergraduate studies believes that it is possible to offer students content of quality, but not the one that can be provided in face-to-face teaching and that

what students lose in any case, and which cannot be compensated to the end, is the mutual interaction and exchange of opinions, something that, in his opinion, is just as important as the teaching process itself. Teachers and associates from the University of Kragujevac are divided on whether it is possible to organize online teaching of an adequate quality. Two teachers and associates find that it is possible to do so whereas a teacher who teaches in the first and second year of basic studies thinks that it is not possible to organize online teaching of an adequate quality. Teachers and associates from the University of Nis believe that it is possible to organize good and online teaching of an adequate quality, and one of the teachers points out that online teaching is not a revolutionary discovery and that the differences between traditional and online teaching methods do not affect the quality of transfer and acquisition (legal sciences-related) knowledge. The online method of organizing classes is a useful way for him to use technological achievements, and we should not forget that generations of students who are now reaching maturity use mobile phones, webcams, social networks, and the like since childhood. Communication with friends from summer schools or international workshops takes place with the help of online tools and social networks, and online teaching was not unknown to students. On the other hand, one of the teachers points out that quality can be achieved if the online teaching is limited in scope, as he claims, up to 5 classes per semester. A professor from the University of Novi Sad points out that it is possible to provide online teaching of an adequate quality. She points out that even though you are not actually in the classroom and do not have direct contact, on the platform students can see the teachers live, listen to what they are saying, ask questions, make comments and receive teachers' answers in real time. She adds that "it is equally possible to convey the passion you have, only the medium of transmission is different." A teacher from Megatrend University believes that it is possible to organize online teaching of an adequate quality, but that two-way communication is necessary. Almost all teachers and associates from Union University believe that it is possible to provide online teaching of an adequate quality with the only limitation that it is possible to a certain, but not to the necessary extent.

Assessment of teaching quality, curricula and syllabi

For some teachers and associates of the University of Belgrade, classes were held in an appropriate manner, taking into account the new circumstances. Professors and associates tried to adapt their activities to the needs of students and the epidemiological situation, but in such way as not to reduce the quality of work. They point out that on the other hand, the issue of comfort, impression, effectiveness remains open for both teachers and students. Going further, one of the teachers believes that there was a significant decline in the quality of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers and associates from the University of Kragujevac rate the quality of teaching during a pandemic as satisfactory, medium or good, but not as good as in regular circumstances. As they point out, in view of the fact that legal sciences fall into social sciences, that the live discussion and interaction in the classroom are very important when explaining notions, giving examples and providing answers, the quality has inevitably declined. They explain that the quality of teaching is certainly worse than in previous years, because this way of functioning is not natural, and therefore the results are not the same. Teachers and associates from the University of Nis believe that the quality of teaching has not declined in terms of the content of information and that the quality is at a satisfactory level, especially in the winter semester, after everyone got used to it. A professor from the University of Novi Sad believes that nothing is and cannot be like teaching face-to-face, but that on a scale of 1 to 10, the quality of online teaching could be assessed with a 7. A teacher from Megatrend University, in relation to the quality of teaching, points out the lower presence of students as well as poorer results on control tests. However, he adds that the most ambitious students were active and it was possible to work with them in small groups. He also points out that the quality of teaching in the winter semester has significantly increased in relation to the period of the state of emergency (summer semester) due to the experience gained and partly due to the fact that face-to-face teaching was also enabled. Teachers and associates from Union University evaluate the quality of teaching as very high in relation to the circumstances, in other words satisfactory and solid. They indicate that the quality of teaching is negligibly lower due to the fact that despite the really great communication, the level of interaction cannot be identical to face-to-face teaching. They point out that after the transition to online teaching, several surveys have been conducted at their faculty regarding the assessment of the quality of teaching, that they monitored the results of those surveys and thus contributed to improving online teaching.

All respondents believe that they have realized the relevant curriculum and course syllabus just as in previous years.

Teachers and associates from the University of Belgrade believe that students are at a certain loss due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching (absence of face-to-face contact, partial decline in the quality of teaching which would be not happen in regular circumstances), but also that this is an opportunity to make better use of the newly occurred situation and design a more thorough approach that would allow better use of new technologies in the future. One of the teachers also believes that students

have gained a new experience that can have certain advantages in their further academic development. Teachers and associates from the University of Kragujevac believe that students are certainly at a loss in the educational process due to the impact of the pandemic. They also point out that the freshmen coped with the situation quite well, but that getting used to the new circumstances was difficult for them and brought about great concern. They believe that returning to regular education will bring students relief and enable them to raise the level of both knowledge and seriousness to a much greater extent. In relation to this, teachers and associates from the University of Nis point out that students have lost quite a lot, above all that they have been deprived of the social aspect of higher education and of the possibility to shape themselves through direct interaction with colleagues and professors. Also, they lost valuable time for practicing public speaking, which is extremely important for lawyers. They also believe that they have lost the ease of communication with professors and colleagues. They were given more time to concentrate on the material and prepare, both for the practical courses and for the exam, unencumbered by the daily preparations for leaving the house. They add that online classes constitute a significant aid that can be used in the future, as well. One of the professors thinks that it will be significantly harder for freshmen when they return to face-to-face classes because they had next to none and points out that first-year students (freshmen) do not even know each other. She points out that it is wrong for first-year students to attend classes online, that they have not even felt what student life and going to university means. She adds that time will show how much easier or harder it will be for them to return to regular higher education. However, another professor sees advantages in that. She believes that freshmen will not have problems with the higher education system when things go back to normal and that if they manage to overcome the monotony of the day and organize their time, these generations of freshmen may be more successful than previous ones, because unburdened by the challenges posed by student parties and living on their own, they can equip themselves with a very good legal knowledge, which will be upgraded in future years of study. A professor from the University of Novi Sad believes that the advantages and disadvantages of the impact of the pandemic on higher education must be viewed individually. She says that some students are grateful for this type of teaching, because they come from outside Novi Sad, so they canceled rented apartments and saved their families money. She adds that the so-called millennials, especially the Generation Z, grew up in a virtual environment and got used to it, and she believes that such a transition was completely normal for them. She also warns that it may be very difficult to bring freshmen back to the classroom after such an experience. Teachers and associates from Union University point out that students have lost so much that they had to change habits, that they may prefer face-to-face contact and that, like teachers and associates, they had to perform their duties from home, which can be a problem if they do not live alone. They add that the full capacity of the teaching process requires mutual and direct communication with students, which was difficult in the current epidemiological situation. Some teachers also believe that the students actually won in the pandemic and point out that, for example, the number of students who followed online classes was larger than students appearing in the classroom for face-to-face instruction in regular circumstances. They find that freshmen coped well with the situation taking into account that both academic years in question began with face-to-face teaching in the first semester and that during the first month they got to know the teachers and feel the atmosphere at the university, so there were no problems. One of the teachers underlines that the freshmen are disappointed that teaching is not delivered face-to-face in its entirety, but not because of the teaching, but primarily because of the socialization, the time spent at the faculty, the physical feeling of becoming part of the academic community etc. As he points out, for some students this was very convenient, especially if the faculty is not in their place of residence because they did not have to rent an apartment, travel and generally incur additional costs..

Student workload, criteria and student results

Teachers and associates from the University of Belgrade did not reduce the course workload for students (one of the teachers pointed out that although he did not consciously try, student workload was reduced), nor did they lower or increase examination criteria and other course-related obligations. None of them has data on the number of exams students registered for, the number of exams students passed, the average grade for 2019 and 2020, or whether these data differ significantly from one year into the other. One of the teachers and associates from the University of Kragujevac points out that the workload was partially reduced (in order to accommodate students within acceptable limits) and the criteria were set within normal limits in order to meet the needs of students since it was difficult to cope with new circumstances. Another teacher, although claiming that there has been no reduction of workload and that less stringent criteria have not been imposed, points out as an impression that the rate of exams passed is a somewhat better than last year. They do not have data on the number of registrations for exams, the number of passed exams, the average grades for 2019 and 2020, or whether these data differ significantly from one year into the other. One of the teachers and associates from the University of Nis points out that students had certain privileges in terms of examination periods and materials, but not significantly, that the criteria remained the same and that there is no available data on whether there have been significant differences in grades. Another professor participating in this research adds that the material and the workload remained the

same, but that she reduced the criteria for exams, because most students were not well prepared for the exam and due to the fact that, compared to last year, fewer students showed up for exams. A professor from the University of Novi Sad stated that the workload on students was reduced because not everything was “at the press of a button” for students and many were in an existential crisis (job loss), adding that it would be inhumane to burden students as if everything were ok. According to her, the largest number of colleagues shared her opinion, which was reflected in the additional possibilities students were given to take mid-term exams, the reduction of study materials and the generally milder examination criteria. A professor from Megatrend University states that he personally reduced the workload by reducing the scope of exam questions by about 10%, but that the number of tests and supplementary materials was increased by 25% and adds that the exam criteria were maintained as in previous years. In terms of exam results - he points out that the passing of the exams in March, April and May 2020 is close to the results from 2019. Teachers and associates from Union University had different approaches. Most teachers point out that they have kept the same criteria, that the exams are held live in the premises of the faculty and that everything is the same as usual, even that this way students have more time to prepare for exams. One of the teachers points out that although he has not changed anything, as far as the tests are concerned, the conditions for taking the pre-exam tests are more difficult, according to the students. The tests are taken online, so as he states, it is therefore not possible to return to the questions they have already answered, nor is it possible to skip the questions and return to them later. The only aspect of teaching he personally applied a milder criteria to during the pandemic was recording attendance. Some other teachers reduced student workload or test coverage. One of the professors compared her statistics from 2019 and 2020 (namely, the period from September to January 2019/2020 to the same period in the academic year 2020/2021) and concludes that there has been a significant increase in the number of students who took the exam in the academic year 2020/2021 (from 105 in 2019/2020 to 203 in 2020/2021), and that the average grade has gone up. She also cites the experience from 2020/2021, which showed that, depending on the examination period, the number of students who register for exams is 30-50% higher than the number who take the actual exam.

Perception of the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on higher education in Serbia

Some teachers and associates believe that the conditions of the pandemic led to a deterioration of student results, considering that due to the changed situation students were more anxious and much more worried about their health and the near future, but that the pandemic will not have long-term negative consequences for higher education in Serbia. This assessment is given taking into account that teachers, associates and students have all adapted to the changed circumstances, and that all of them have diligently tried to comply with obligations. Some teachers believe that the key assessment is the lack of a unified approach that would allow for a long-term design of a better use of modern technologies in teaching and in scientific cooperation. They believe that the spontaneous approach to problem solving can no longer be accepted, having in mind the duration of the pandemic, and that it will now have significant consequences for the higher education system in Serbia for a whole year, and possibly much longer. The consequence of the lack of a systemic answer is that everything depended on individual faculties' own endeavors and their manner of coping with the situation. Some of the teachers believe that the greatest consequences of the pandemic will be a reduction of verbalization, socialization and related abilities, and especially in the area of social sciences, as well as on the future graduates - social scientists, among them also lawyers. On the other hand, one of the teachers believes that unlike lower levels of education where socialization between students is much more important, higher education students do not lose much with online education, in particular from the perspective of social sciences and humanities, which is a field that relies less on practical teaching. One of the professors states that the biggest consequences of the pandemic will be reflected in the diminishing importance of regular and practical classes, in the sense that everything can be learned from textbooks and that the faculty's role comes down to exams only. She believes that it is an irreparable loss because the higher education experience represents a combination of acquisition of knowledge, making memories and personal maturing. One of the teachers also stated that there can be significant consequences also in the field of selection and encouragement of the most gifted, which greatly depends on personal contact. One of the teachers points out that everything that happened in Serbia in the previous thirty years had a negative impact on education, and so will the pandemic. He points out that the longer the epidemic lasts, the greater the demands for adopting milder criteria and obtaining a diploma with even less knowledge than before will be. He states that faculties and universities, due to the small number of students and unfair competition, will be forced to make more and more concessions with negative consequences on educational outcomes, i.e. the knowledge that students are required to demonstrate in exams. All this will certainly have a negative impact, and the longer the pandemic lasts, the more negative consequences it will have.

Education at law faculties in Serbia during the pandemic from the perspective of students

Questions received by students at the law faculties of Serbian universities were also divided into four areas, just like the questions received by teachers and associates: 1) class attendance and knowledge assessment; 2) assessment of the quality of teaching and fulfillment of curricula and syllabi; 3) workload, criteria, examination periods and results achieved during the pandemic; 4) assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education in Serbia.

Class attendance and knowledge assessment

Students at the University of Belgrade have been in the process of online teaching almost the whole time whereas practical classes in the academic year 2020/2021 were delivered face-to-face. In September, there was an additional COVID-19 examination period which lasted for several days and all students had the opportunity to sit for exams within that examination period. It was a compensation for the April examination period, which was cancelled due to the imposed state of emergency and movement restrictions at the time. One of the students points out that this examination period did not mean anything to anyone because, ironically, it lasted “three full days”. There were no online exams at the University of Belgrade. Some students are against taking exams online because they think that it is impossible to organize something like that at their faculty, that their knowledge cannot be assessed in this manner, and some are against online exams because they think that it is very easy to play the system and that extensive cheating would occur. Students at the University of Kragujevac had face-to-face classes only in October and November, and all other teaching was delivered online except for the mid-term exams and final exams. Students state that they had additional examination periods for the mid-term exams, and students who were infected with the virus also had additional examination periods. Some students believe that in order to ensure student safety, online exams should be introduced, while there are also those who oppose it. Students at the University of Nis received online teaching the whole time. As one student points out - from the beginning of the pandemic in Serbia until the end of the summer semester in the academic year 2019/2020, teaching in all subjects was delivered through Google classroom. Each course had its own classroom, in which teachers uploaded materials, presentations, assignments etc. What was missing in the winter semester was the delivery of regular teaching via any platform. For a couple of courses, professors had their classes recorded and delivered through Google Classroom. The main reason for failing to deliver this type of teaching was the lack of technical possibilities, because not all professors had the equipment and appropriate technical knowledge, and the faculty was reluctant to use applications without providing relevant licenses. As he further states - at the very beginning of the new academic year, the Faculty of Law of the University of Nis purchased a license for the Zoom platform and made the decision that in the year 2020/2021 the entire teaching would be organized through the Zoom platform, where regular and practical classes are delivered every week just as before the pandemic, and the number of classes is determined by the curriculum of the basic academic studies. He points out that the practical classes and consultations are held live and on schedule. In one part of the semester, it was necessary to register in order for an appointment with a teacher to be scheduled, but then at the end of January this system was canceled so that now everyone can come to the appointment scheduled for consultations. Since October, all classes have been functional without any problems, both in technical and academic terms. Four classrooms at the faculty have been designated for online teaching, one classroom for each year of studies, in which all the necessary technical equipment has been installed and from which professors deliver both regular and practical classes. The professors underwent a short training on the use of the Zoom platform. Next to these classrooms is a computer center where there are two experts who are there to help in case of any technical problems, although there have been none so far. Students point out that they have not had online exams and the faculty has had a very exclusive stand in that regard whereas the position of the vast majority is that online exams should be introduced. According to the students, all tests and mid-term exams are taken live at the premises of the faculty. Also, all exams are organized in their classical format, i.e. they have oral exams in front of the professor and peer students and since the beginning of the pandemic, only one written exam has been organized at the faculty due to the illness of the teacher. No special examination periods have been organized, but students who have been infected with COVID-19 or students who only have symptoms but have a negative test or have not been tested, can reschedule the exam to the next examination period by phone. The same refers to the students who happen to have elevated body temperature upon entering the faculty and measuring body temperature is mandatory for all who enter the faculty building. At the Faculty of Law of the University of Nis, there are six regular and at least three additional examination periods each year so students have accepted the option of carrying the exam over into the next term. As students indicate, for some courses professors allowed students who tested positive for COVID-19 to take a test or a mid-term exam within two to three weeks from the original date of the test or mid-term exam.

Quality assessment of teaching and extent of realization of curricula and syllabi

Students participating in this research hold opposing views regarding the quality of teaching and the extent of realization of syllabi and curricula during the pandemic COVID-19 and have opposing positions in relation to the greatest challenges and problems students from all universities faced. Some students from the University of Belgrade believe that the novelties introduced in view of the current epidemiological situation have given rise to confusion among students and have thus reduced the quality of teaching, which is now much lower than usual. Other students think that freshmen are the most vulnerable group in view of the fact that they are at the beginning of their studies. There is a third group of students who generally think that the delivery of teaching was on an adequate level, describing it even as solid given the working conditions. They point out that taking into account the fact that since October practical classes have been delivered face-to-face at the faculty, students have had an opportunity to clarify many of the doubts arising at the online regular classes at practical classes with professors or associates. One of the students thinks that the first semester (summer semester) was disastrous, and that the situation improved later on in the winter semester. The vast majority of students believe that it is possible to organize successful online classes. The answers of the students from the University of Kragujevac similarly vary in content. Some students believe that the whole teaching process was carried out in only the possible way given the conditions imposed by the coronavirus situation. On the other hand, some students think that in the beginning the online teaching was on an adequate level, however, as they say, over time everything lost its meaning. Some classes were not even held online, and thus many students lost further interest. Some students think that the teaching is quite well organized, that the quality of teaching is certainly better when teaching is delivered face-to-face under normal circumstances, but that the professors and teaching assistants did their best to transfer the necessary knowledge in these circumstances and bring the teaching contents as close as possible. There are significant differences in the answers students from the University of Nis gave about the perception of the quality of teaching. Some of them believe that online teaching is successful, but that there is a problem with practical classes and mid-term exams, and that the quality of teaching has certainly been significantly worse than in previous years. One of the students states that from the beginning of the pandemic in Serbia up until the end of the summer semester, the quality of teaching was not at a high level since teaching was reduced to sending materials and presentations via Google classroom, while in the winter semester, the differences between previous and current teaching were minor; namely, in certain courses the online delivery of teaching was not felt in any way. One of the students states that in relation to the previous year, the year marked by the pandemic was more difficult and of lower teaching quality.

Students of all universities, regardless of their year of study, have different perceptions of the challenges of online teaching. The attitudes of the students from the University of Belgrade greatly vary. Asked about the biggest challenges they encountered, some of the students said that at the beginning it was impossible to get immediate clarifications from professors in class. Due to the fact that classes take place online, students feel that they have been denied the opportunity to discuss teaching contents with the professors. For students, live discussion means a lot and they think that the teaching contents are better understood and faster acquired when there is live communication. Another challenge for students is the manner in which exams are held because some professors have changed examination methods, more precisely, they have opted for a written test. Some students find that they have not addressed any challenges, that they were asked to install teaching-related applications and follow practical classes, possibly answer a question or write a paper on a certain topic. They think that it was probably harder for the professors, that they were especially used to working face-to-face, that most of them did not cope well with technology, so they think that it was actually the professors who needed more time to deal with application features, since they were administrators on applications. Some students believe that the biggest challenge was the organization and the actual transition to a different type of teaching. For one of the students, the biggest challenge in learning during a pandemic is dealing with extensive and complicated teaching contents, but on the other side, it also represents an additional motivation for him to learn and achieve something on his own. The answers of the students from the University of Kragujevac also vary to a great extent. Some of the students state that the biggest challenges were waking up early for the regular or practical classes, and actually staying where you are, in front of your laptop. Others indicate that one of the biggest challenges for all people in general had to do with human psychology - it was necessary for everyone to stay calm and with clear mind after everything that happened. Of course, it was quite demanding and challenging for students to process on their own and in their own home teaching contents that they would otherwise process with professors and teaching assistants, to work to resolving ambiguities and doubts on their own and to learn mostly on their own. Some of the students believe that the biggest challenge, in addition to everything that has been happening in the world, was to remain concentrated and collected in, for the most part independent, processing of teaching contents, which would otherwise be thoroughly elaborated and explained by professors and teaching assistants. Some students believe that the biggest challenges were

in the assessment of knowledge, i.e. the organization of mid-term exams and final exams. For some of the students, the biggest challenges included getting used to following classes from their home, as well as being away from peers with whom they otherwise attended classes and performed regular faculty activities. One of them states that certain students are used to studying together or in groups, that they complete assignments together which was not possible, especially during the state of emergency. In other words, they were prevented from doing things they have grown accustomed to do together (like preparation for practical classes, learning for tests or exams). The challenges faced by the students from the University of Nis also vary greatly.

All students believe that the curriculum and syllabi were realized even in the circumstances of the KOVID-19 pandemic. One of the students from the University of Belgrade thinks that everything was completely identical, but in his personal opinion, it is not even close to the quality and level of knowledge that professors and assistants should transfer. On the other hand, one of the students of the University of Belgrade believes that when it comes to acquisition of knowledge, it mostly depends on students themselves, that if they want to learn more, if they want to learn something new, they will do so regardless of whether they have received adequate knowledge or not during classes. One of the participants in the research from the University of Kragujevac believes that the curricula and syllabi have been fulfilled, but that the knowledge obtained in this way is very debatable. One of the students from the University of Nis states that the curriculum was certainly fulfilled, but that the teaching was of poor quality. Another student states that the entire curriculum for all subjects was realized both in the summer and winter semester. However, as he points out - in the winter semester we can speak of the high quality of regular and practical classes, where knowledge was adequately transferred to students. In the summer semester, the quality was much lower because it was reduced to receiving reading materials, which practically meant receiving additional literature in addition to the textbook for each course.

In terms of the greatest losses or benefits that students can have from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the responses also greatly vary regardless of the university or year of study. The same goes for the answers of the students from the University of Belgrade. Some of the students' answers are that live exchange means a lot, especially for students of the Faculty of Law. The material is better understood and easier to learn through discussion with professors and peers. Students believe that they have been deprived this year of this type of teaching. Some students think that the *status quo* has been maintained because by switching to online classes, certain benefits of live teaching have been lost, but, on the other hand, students get the opportunity to fully organize their time, without the obligation attend classes at the faculty and that makes things easier for them. One of the students states that students, especially freshmen, lost a lot during the pandemic, because, as he points out, it is much more important to meet future colleagues, forge various friendships, meet acquaintances, than to learn, i.e. prepare an exam. He adds that he could have certainly met even more students, but also professors, and get acquainted with the work of numerous organizations and clubs that deal with the much-needed practice at the faculty whose work was suspended due to the pandemic. In the answers of students from the University of Kragujevac, we have different views on the advantages and disadvantages of the education delivered during the pandemic. One of the freshmen thinks that the freshmen "gained a lot of time" due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One group of students thinks that students are most deprived of the opportunity to hear the professors speak live, where they share their knowledge and experience with students and where there is an exchange of opinions and conversation, which mostly was not the case in online classes. One of the students thinks that she gained a lot due to such organization of teaching, primarily because she had enough time left for other activities and she could watch the classes when it suited her, and not at a specific time. The attitudes of students from the University of Nis are also quite different. One of the students states that they have lost a lot because it is still better and easier to learn through conversation and interaction. Another student states that when it comes to the winter semester, older students have lost nothing or have minimal losses. He points out that for many students, this type of teaching was actually very important because they could return to their homes (those who are not from Nis), and thus, save significant funds for themselves and their parents. He points out that even when the pandemics is over, in addition to the live format, all classes should in parallel be available online as well in order to enable education of an adequate quality for students outside Nis (those who cannot afford it) in the future. He adds that this is very important because often students who do not get their studies funded from the budget of the Republic of Serbia give up studying the following year because they cannot pay the cost of living in Nis and the cost of tuition. Again, some students believe that they have lost a lot in terms of knowledge, as well as in terms of other faculty-related activities and socialization. The vast majority of students believe that it is possible to organize online classes of an adequate quality, but it depends on several things: the content, desire and readiness of teachers and teaching associates, skills, readiness and motivation of students for this type of education. It is evident that student perceptions about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their education, losses or benefits vary. Some students do not see the problems, even more clearly see the benefits of the whole situation, and then there are others who think that they have lost a lot during this period.

Workload, criteria, examination periods and results achieved during the pandemic

Students of the University of Belgrade believe that the teaching content workload was the same as before the pandemic and that there were no changes in terms of the volume of teaching content and reference literature. Also, all students feel that the exam criteria have remained the same and that nothing has changed, except perhaps testing techniques. Only one of the students who was part of the research stated that it was easier for her to fulfill her academic obligations during the pandemic than the previous year. Among the students from the University of Kragujevac there are different views regarding the criteria, the performance of academic tasks and compliance with obligations during the pandemic in comparison to the previous year. Some students think that the criteria were milder, some think that they were fairer due to a larger number of written tests, which decreases the subjectivity of the professor, but also the students' nervousness, and some think that the criteria remained absolutely the same and that nothing had changed. Students from the University of Nis believe that the exam criteria and the possibility of complying with obligations have remained exactly the same. One of the students states that the criteria for most professors remained identical or were negligibly milder, and that in addition to the fact that teaching delivered was of a certain quality, the lack of motivation, fear and other circumstances during the movement ban together with other factors had an influence on their academic results in that they were considerably poorer, primarily in April and June. He points out a very important fact - the impossibility of using the faculty reading room, which is also a very important factor because many students do not have adequate learning conditions at home or are not used to studying at home. He also states that due to the suspension of the work of the faculty itself, primarily due to the fact that students were prevented from using the reading room, it was significantly more difficult to comply with academic obligations than in previous years.

Assessment of the influence of COVID-19 on higher education in Serbia

Students of all universities believe that the period of the COVID-19 pandemic will certainly have a negative impact on higher education in Serbia and on their personal education, but they do not think that the consequences will be excessively negative, since as they indicate, the whole world faces the same problem. They emphasize how important it is that the pandemic does not last too long. They believe that it will have the greatest impact on the new generations, especially if it so happens that someone is almost constantly in the online teaching regime for two years. Some students also think that as time passes, the situation is getting better and that problems are being eliminated over time, with an optimal work regime being created. One of the students from the University of Nis gave a broad view of the potential consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education in Serbia. He states that the most drastic consequences will be felt by the generation that enrolled at the faculty in 2020, and then by the generation that enrolled at the faculty in 2019. There will be no sense of belonging to the faculty and no feeling of being a student after two years of studying without seeing the professors or one's peer students face-to-face. The consequences will not be good at all, many will not finish their studies because they will abandon them, and those who do will not go through the process of socialization at the faculty. Being a lawyer does not only mean passing about thirty exams and getting a degree, but it also means having a mind of a lawyer. Those skills and the feeling of being a lawyer is acquired through speech and discussion, and not by sitting at home. He believes that if the pandemic remains for the whole of 2021, the consequences will only get worse and worse, because, as he states, no one understands the multiplier effects the neglect of higher education will have. He points out the fear that when the pandemic passes, higher education will really be the last thing that will be addressed, so he would not be surprised if the academic year 2021/2022 is a year of disorder.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

There is no agreement between teachers and associates, nor is there one among students, not even on the level of the same universities, on working conditions, quality and methods of teaching, adjustment of teaching content, student workload, knowledge assessment methods and clear and precise methodology of teaching at the law faculties of Serbian universities. The perception of the quality of legal education in Serbia is individual and depends on various factors from one teacher or associate to another. No serious differences have been observed among the universities. The only noticeable difference is that the teachers and associates of Union University have a somewhat stronger belief in the successful adaptation of teaching to the new circumstances. Where there is agreement between teachers, associates and students from all universities that were part of the research is that the COVID-19 pandemic will have negative consequences on legal education. The assessment of the negative effects depends on individual resourcefulness, but it is necessary to work on reducing those negative effects. Teachers and associates, as well as students, agree that the biggest challenge, but also the biggest drawback of legal education during the pandemic is the absence of a live exchange between students, on one hand, and teachers and associates, on the other. They also agree that the current situation has led to many positive effects, such as the use of various information technologies for educational purposes, and each subsequent step and development of teaching and other skills should aim at making the widest possible use of information technology and online knowledge sharing.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- In the period after the end of the pandemic, it is necessary to work on enabling students to make up for lost time, primarily in terms of legal skills;
- Universities, faculties, teachers and associates, as well as students must adapt their work in the near future so as to enable as much face-to-face teaching as possible to enable the development of legal science and the development of legal skills of students;
- It is necessary to create a common mechanism or joint recommendations for teaching at law faculties in the country in a process that will include and oblige all law faculties from Serbian universities to cooperate;
- The creation of a common mechanism or recommendation should include a broad consultative process of teachers and associates in order to give the best possible answer the profession can give in terms of teaching and knowledge transfer up until life and teaching return to normal;

The process of creating a mechanism or issuing a recommendation should include a large number of student representatives in order to minimize all the shortcomings of the current situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to provide quality legal education for future generations of law graduates from all accredited universities in Serbia.

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HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN SERBIA

