

C4E - Cities for Equality Project

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There is little awareness in Croatia about the role that cities and towns play in the implementation of the anti-discrimination policies, or, more widely, in promoting equality among citizens. Within the national anti-discrimination policy, their role is barely acknowledged outside the prescribed reporting requirements, and the overall regulatory and financial frameworks fail to recognize and support it. On the other hand, the city policies, regulation, and practices play a critical part in determining the extent to which the citizens may enjoy equal opportunities in their everyday life, and in the communities they belong to.

There is a number of widely supported initiatives and programmes promoting the engagement of cities with equality issues worldwide: their experience will be incorporated into the present project. We would like to note particularly the efforts by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency aimed at promoting the horizontal and vertical integration of human rights and equality issues into public governance. One of the principal aims of the project is to promote the notion that addressing the equality issues at the local level helps cities connect to and respond to the needs of citizens, and that these issues should, consequently, be mainstreamed into the regular management systems of the cities.

The project is designed to reach the following goals:

1. To define the roles and responsibilities of cities in the context of the national anti-discrimination policies;
2. To identify the existing promising practices of equality and diversity programming and management at city level;
3. To develop tools that may be utilized by city administrations for the purpose of promoting and advancing equality; and
4. To raise awareness and create incentives for sustained improvement of equality policies and practices with Croatian cities.

The principal activities are, as follows:

1. Review of the present status of policy and practice. This review will encompass three components: (a) desk review of the present policy, regulatory, and administrative framework determining the role and obligations of cities in the area of equality; (b) survey of cities on their existing policies and practices in this area; and (c) promising practices case studies.
2. Based on the results of the review, and on the international initiatives and practices in this area, C4E manual will be developed. The manual will help the cities improve their performance in this area, through practical assistance in shaping equality interventions and examples of best practices. At the same time, the manual will help raise awareness of the role that cities may and should play in this area, and of the benefits and indeed the business case for their proactive approach to equality issues.
3. The Cities4Equality Index will allow for evaluation and ranking of the cities' performance in the area of equality. The participation in the ranking will be voluntary, and is therefore expected to identify the cities that consider themselves leaders in this area. In the current context, where there is poor awareness of the role of

cities and the benefits of their engagement, the reputational gains related to participation are seen as the best incentive for improvement of the current level of practices, and for the extension of the number of practitioners in the future. The bi-annual award(s) will be given to best performers.

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