



## COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE)

In Belgrade,  
February 2021

Dear Sir/Madame,

I am pleased to confirm that Belgrade Centre for Human Rights reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-corruption. This is our Communication on the Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact.

Belgrade Centre for Human Rights is a non-profit, non-governmental and non-partisan organization which has more than 25 years of experience in the area of human rights and rule of law in Serbia and the region. The mission of Belgrade Centre for Human Rights is to strengthen and develop democracy in Serbia and the region, to improve theory, legislation and practice in the field of human rights and humanitarian law, as well as to contribute to the development of civil society and the promotion of human rights culture.

Belgrade Centre for Human Rights will continue its commitment and support to the UN Global Compact and its principles through its work.

Sincerely yours,

Sonja Tošković,  
Executive Director, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights



## Description of Actions

Belgrade Centre for Human Rights (BCHR) is one of the leading CSOs in Serbia and the region that works on improvement of the state of human rights and protection of rights of vulnerable groups. We work with institutions, CSOs, business to improve their practices and strengthen them to implement human rights principles in their work.

BCHR also implements activities aimed at improving rights of vulnerable groups such as youth, migrants and refugees, persons deprived of liberty, and victims of discrimination in general. Beside direct protection of their human rights, lives and dignity, our activities are aimed at improving their social, economic, and educational rights in Serbia.

We are also pioneers in Serbia in the area of *business and human rights*. BCHR published first of its kind *Guide on business and human rights*, a compilation of publicly available information published by international organizations, local NGOs, government bodies, companies, media, and others. International and domestic sources were selected based on their expertise and relevance to the Serbian context, as well as taking into account their timeliness and impartiality.

### Activities:

- The Belgrade Center for Human Rights participated in Regional Forum "Business and Human Rights in Eastern Europe and Central Asia", which was held online from November 23 to 25. The first Regional Forum was organized by the UNDP Istanbul & Bangkok Regional Center and the United Nations Business and Human Rights Working Group. As a vital platform for the exchange of new practices in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and beyond, the Forum aims to facilitate exchange, constructive dialogue and education between participants from international organizations, national governments, business and trade unions, national human rights institutions and civil society organizations.
- As coordinator of the Platform of CSOs for Cooperation with UN Human Rights Mechanisms, BCHR submitted to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Report on the status of fulfillment of the recommendations sent to Serbia in 2018 within the third cycle of the Universal Periodic Review before the United Nations Human Rights Council. Selected recommendations were related to *economic, social and cultural rights; civil and political rights; torture; gender equality; rights of the child; LGBTI rights; rights of persons with disabilities; rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees*.
- We formed a network of Youth Rights Defenders groups of 45 young people from Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina through capacity building trainings for research and promotion of youth human rights (youth rights) for education, work and housing. Together with them, we have conducted a survey on human rights of young people (education, work and housing) in all three



countries of the project consortium. We have also created and launched the online podcast "Meeting Point" on human rights of young people (youth rights) and individual testimonies of violations of human rights to education, work and housing.

- Through its project *Support to asylum seekers and refugees*, BCHR, among other, actively work on integration of asylum seekers and refugees in the society. This includes improvement of policies and practice related to refugee's work, housing, social services, and education, but also establishing partnership with business in order to motivate them to employ refugees. Additionally, BCHR implements awareness raising activities aimed at breaking down prejudices against refugees and their better integration into society
- Through its annual project *Human Rights Protection and Promotion*, Belgrade Centre for Human Rights publishes its annual report *Human Rights in Serbia*, which brings comprehensive analysis of the state of human rights in Serbia – including legislation and practice. This report is based on continuous monitoring of human rights situation in Serbia, and presents an important tool for CSOs, institutions and international organizations.
- We are implementing a *Youth Employment* project, focused on social innovation in the field of youth employability, emphasizing cross-sectoral cooperation to provide sustainable solutions for the needs of young people. The overall goal is to improve the long-term employment of NEET youth and promote sustainable cross-sectoral cooperation at the local level, through entrepreneurial mechanisms based on inclusive communities.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, BCHR was one of the leading CSOs that provided protection and support to rights of citizens in Serbia. We were also continuously monitoring numerous human rights violations during the pandemic, and reacted to these violations using different available means.
- During 2019 BCHR contributed to a Shadow Report to the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), regarding the fourth reporting cycle of Serbia Report, submitted by the Platform of Organizations for Cooperation with UN Human Rights Mechanisms in regards to migrant/refugee female population.

Regarding the engagement in the Local UNGC Network in the reporting period, BCHR has been engaged at the meetings of Serbia's local Global Compact group and events; also, BCHR actively promotes the SDGs.

BCHR actively works in engaging companies in Global Compact – related issues. We initiate and establish partnership with companies, build their capacities and develop initiatives to motivate them to support and respect the protection of human rights and make sure they, in their work, do not violate human rights. Activities of BCHR are also aimed at elimination of discrimination in all areas of life, which includes in respect of employment and occupation.



## Measurement of Outcomes

- More than 1600 participants in the Regional Forum "Business and Human Rights in Eastern Europe and Central Asia";
- Guide *Business and Human Rights in Serbia* updated;
- UPR mid-term report submitted. Out of 175 recommendations related to the promotion and protection of human rights that Serbia has accepted, the report analyzes the degree of fulfillment of 56 recommendations. Only three recommendations were assessed as partially fulfilled while the remaining 53 were assessed as not fulfilled;
- Capacities of 45 young people were built for research and promotion of human rights;
- Annual report for 2019 on the state of human rights in Serbia published; annual report for 2020 is being produced at the moment, will be published during February;
- In 2020, 6 clients of the BCHR were granted refugee status, and 8 were granted subsidiary protection (including 1 UASC). The BCHR provided legal counselling to approximately 3,056 (project target was 2500) asylum seekers and persons granted asylum, including counselling to UASC in 73 cases. In 2019, 14 clients of the BCHR were granted refugee status (1UASC) and 12 were granted subsidiary protection, (Asylum Office granted asylum to 35 persons in total, making BCHR clients 74% of all asylums granted in Serbia in 2019);
- Shadow Report to the Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) submitted;
- Within *Youth Employment* project, 30 representatives of the youth civil sector and 30 representatives of institutions are trained; 25 services in five regions by the private, public and civil sectors established and offered through Community hubs; 100 young people from the vulnerable NEET group got capacity building trainings; 15 mobility programs for NEET youth internships implemented.