



Roundtable discussion “Civic Education in Serbia”

17 October, 2013

Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia organized a roundtable discussion “Civic Education in Serbia” on 17 October, 2013 at the Human Rights House in Belgrade. The roundtable discussion was organized as a part of the program “Human Rights Education for Active Citizenship in the Western Balkans”, supported by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The roundtable discussion offered answers to the following questions: What is the current situation of this course? Do life and school work affirm the values of a civic society? What are the biggest challenges in the teaching process? Do parents, students and teachers understand the importance of this course? What is the role of the NGO sector? Participants in the discussion stated their view on the current situation by answering these and other relevant questions. They also gave recommendations to deepen the importance of this course, which is intended to increase the level of active participation of youth and adults in the democratic life of the community.

Jelena Dzombic greeted the participants on behalf of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia and presented a regional analysis and plan for advocacy of civic education for democracy and human rights in the Western Balkan countries. **Zora Desic** of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technologic Development of the Republic of Serbia gave a general overview of the civic education system in Serbia and presented policies and plans of the Ministry related to this topic.

Radmila Radic Dudic of the Civic Initiatives spoke about the evaluation of outcomes of teaching civic education. **Jelena Nikolic**, civic education professor at the First Secondary School of Economics in Belgrade and **Mirjana Ilic** of the Association of Teachers of the Republic of Serbia talked about the importance of adequate education of teachers and professors of civic education. **Zagorka Aksentijevic** of the Group 484, **Rados Keravica** of the Center for Society Orientation, **Demir Mekic**, sociologist, trainer and workshop moderator in the field of human rights and democracy, **Vitomir Jovanovic** of the Centre for Education Policy and **Boban Stojanovic** of Queeria also spoke about the significance of the adequate content and form of teaching the civic education course.

Youth representatives **Emilija Radojev** of the Union of Secondary School Students of Serbia and **Marko Kazic** and **Aleksandar Savic** of the Helsinki Committees' Youth Group from Belgrade also contributed to the roundtable discussion. They especially focused on the question "Does civic education encourage youth activism?"

The goal of this roundtable discussion was to inspire dialogue between all interested parties, including the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development of the Republic of Serbia, teachers and professors, non-governmental organizations and students, about the improvement of the state and quality of the civic education course in the formal education system of the Republic of Serbia. The intention was to come up with the most practical solutions which will be implemented in order to further improve the civic education course.