



# Bosnia and Herzegovina

## BIAS-MOTIVATED SPEECH

In February, the secretary general of a basketball team posted a homophobic message to the winners of the female basketball finals. The Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports of the Republic of Srpska condemned the statement.

In May, hateful slogans were painted on buildings in the centre of Prijedor, featuring symbols of the far-right organisations “Krv i čast” [Eng: Blood and Honor] and “Borba 18” [Eng: Fight 18]. At the beginning of the year, the name of the organization “Borba 18” was written on the facade of the Prijedor high school.

Adna Pandžić, mayoral candidate of Novo Sarajevo (Democratic Front (DF) and the Citizens Alliance (GS) called Pride a shameful march and made hateful comments about the LGBTI community in August. In September, the Central Election Commission (CIK) established that her post amounted to hate speech, violating the Election Law. Pandžić and her nominating parties were both fined, 1,500 euro and 750 euro, respectively. The decision was later annulled by the state Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the post appeared before the official start of the election campaign.

## BIAS-MOTIVATED VIOLENCE

Domestic and family violence remained key issues for the LGBTI community this year. Five out of 14 cases of biased-motivated violence and harassment that were reported to SOC were cases of domestic violence.

## EQUALITY AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

The informal working group, consisting of state and civil society representatives, and set up with the support of the Council of Europe, prepared the draft LGBTI Action Plan this year, the first of its kind in the country. The Plan covers protection from discrimination and violence, the right to private and family life of same-sex partners, asylum, and other key areas. It is expected to be adopted in 2021. Civil society has welcomed the Plan and looks forward to its adoption.

## FAMILY

In March, Sarajevo Open Centre was asked by the Federal Government to participate in the first Intersectoral Working Group on same-sex rights and partnership. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the activities were later put on hold.

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY

The second Sarajevo Pride was planned for 23 August, but was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the preparation, organisers faced the same difficulties as last year, including having to plan self-funded fences and private security services to protect the participants. In the end, Pride was held as an online event, alongside Pride on Four Wheels, where activists formed a motorcade through the city centre, waving rainbow flags, honking horns and chanting slogans from their cars. The route was secured by the police.

## INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

In October, the Ministry of Human Rights and Refugees announced that it plans to include 8 September, the date of the first Pride march in Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the list of important dates related to human rights. The request originally came from the Sarajevo Open Centre. The plan needs to be approved by the Council of Ministers.

Sarajevo Canton adopted a Gender Action Plan in February, inclusive of LGBTI people. The plan aims to establish procedures for cooperation between the police and the Prosecutor’s Office on hate crimes, protection in the area of sexual and reproductive health, and measures to make policies trans-inclusive.

## PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC, CULTURAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

On 6 February, the Sarajevo Open Centre held the 8th annual Merlinka international queer film festival, named after Vjeran Miladinović Merlinka, a trans person who was brutally murdered in Belgrade in 2003.



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