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**Contribution of the Republic of Slovenia**

**to the Questionnaire on girls' and young women's activism**

**UN working Group on Discrimination against women and girls**

13 October 2021

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| **Questionnaire of the UN working Group on Discrimination against women and girls**  **on the issue of girls' and young women's activism**    **Contribution of the Republic of Slovenia** |

**I. Nature, modalities and trends of girls’ and young women’s activism**

The Constitution of the Republic of Slovenia stipulates in Article 14, that in Slovenia everyone shall be guaranteed equal human rights and fundamental freedoms irrespective of national origin, race, sex, language, religion, political or other conviction, material standing, birth, education, social status, disability, or any other personal circumstance. Further on, under Article 39 freedom of expression of thought, freedom of speech and public appearance, of the press and other forms of public communication and expression shall be guaranteed. Everyone may freely collect, receive, and disseminate information and opinions. Under Article 42 the right of peaceful assembly and public meeting is guaranteed. Everyone has the right to freedom of association with others. Legal restrictions are permissible where so required for national security or public safety and protection against the spread of infectious diseases. Based on government orders, the right of assembly and public meeting was limited during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia decided those orders to be unconstitutional and subsequently abolished them.

In Slovenia, people can assembly in different forms of non-governmental organizations, such as associations, private institutes, or foundations. According to the data of the Centre for Information Service, Co-operation, and Development of NGOs, almost 28,000 NGOs operate in Slovenia, most of them are associations (around 24,000), and they are followed by private institutions (approximately 3,700) and foundations (approximately 260). We don’t have data on how many organizations assembly young women and girls and what are other (informal) forms of activism of young women and girls. There are no special supportive frameworks to encourage girls' activism. Girls have the same access as boys to participate in all spheres of public decision-making fully and freely.

National Programme for Youth 2013–2022 includes the participation and representation of young women and men, among its other aims. One of the priority areas is supporting conventional political participation of youth, with regard to the principle of gender-balanced representation. According to the Youth 2020 survey, interest in politics among young people in Slovenia is low, as is participation in elections. However, there is no sex-segregated data on inclusion in political life, so we cannot presume if there are any differences between girls / young women and boys / young men. The most common form of youth participation in Slovenia is volunteer activities, which shows youth’s social engagement and interest in proactive actions. According to the Youth 2020 Survey, a petition is one of the forms of political participation that is widespread among young people. Among the respondents who participated in the survey, 43.6% had already signed a petition. Another area mentioned in National Programme is supporting of youth to engage in non-conventional political activities, such as active participation in legislative processes under the Resolution on Legislative Regulation and through other means as well as engagement in different forms of youth organizations (youth centres, national and local youth organizations). The Programme aims to lower the percentage of youth who doesn’t participate in elections (in 2008 SI average was 39.7%, the EU average was 28.2%).

**II. Enabling factors and good practices**

Recently, there were two cases of engagement of young people influencing legislation. The first case was related to amendments of the Criminal Code redefining rape as a criminal act and the other related to the referendum on Act amending the Water Act. In the first case, the leading organization was Research Institute 8 March, an organization led by a young woman activist. The institute aims to connect people and voices criticism of inequality through the prism of gender. It also fights prejudice and runs campaigns for equal rights in several other areas. The organization collected signatures of 5,000 voters to a legislative proposal of amending the definition of rape in the Criminal Code under the model “only yes means yes”. A lot of other women’s organizations supported the campaign, which resulted in the adoption of the new legislation, where the suspect must explain how he/she got the consensus and why he/she believed that person agreed with the sexual intercourse.

The other successful campaign was directed against the Act amending the Water Act. It was led by Movement for drinkable water, which united young people mostly. The Movement succeed to collect more than 40.000 signatures of voters, as requested by the Constitution to call a legislative referendum. The campaign was oriented mostly towards young people to persuade them to vote against the law due to its potential impact on their future. A lot more people came and voted against than needed, consequently, the legislative changes were abolished.

**III. Challenges and structural barriers**

As regards challenges and structural barriers, in Slovenia there is no important obstacles or barriers for young people to express their views or to engage in political movements. The biggest obstacle is lack of interest, which is improving in last year also due to the Covid-19 crisis.

**IV. Emerging issues**

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**V. Recommendations/ the way forward**

Women’s equal participation in politics is a crucial step towards achieving gender equality, the Sustainable Development Goals, and progress for all. It is not only empowering for the girls and women engaged, but benefits their communities, countries, and the world as a whole. Closing the gender gap by upholding girl’s and women’s right to political participation requires cross-cutting approaches to national and local issues and specific actions from key institutions. In order to ensure girls' and young women's participation in political and public life States should eliminate structural and legal obstacles that hinder all girls’ and women’s participation in politics and decision-making, and hold those obstructing them accountable. Furthermore, States have to provide training programs girls’ and women’s right to participation and roles in decision-making, and unconscious bias and inclusion. Another important step towards the full participation of girls and young women in political and public life is to introduce transitional quota systems and inclusive, gender-sensitive leadership pathways to help bring all girls and women into political spheres. Last but not least States should promote a safe and enabling political environment in which all girls and women may participate in public life at all levels without fear of physical, emotional, or online violence and harassment.