



European
Social
Charter

Charte
sociale
européenne

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS
COMITÉ EUROPÉEN DES DROITS SOCIAUX**

18 June 2018

Case Document No. 11

University Women of Europe (UWE) v. Croatia
Complaint No. 126/2016

**ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS BY THE GOVERNMENT ON
THE COMPLAINT**

Registered at the Secretariat on 25 mai 2018



The European Committee of Social Rights

Complaint No. 126/2016

University Women of Europe (UWE) - complainant

versus

The Government of the Republic of Croatia - respondent

RESPONSE TO GENDER EQUALITY OMBUDSPERSONS OBSERVATIONS

May 2018

The Government of Republic of Croatia received a copy of the observations of the Gender Equality Ombudsperson on the complaint lodged by the University Women of Europe (UWE) against Croatia (reference number 126/2016).

Gender Equality Ombudsperson is an independent body in charge of combating discrimination in the field of gender equality. It investigates cases of infringement of the principle of gender equality, cases of discrimination against individuals or groups of individuals by public bodies, units of local or regional self-government or other bodies with public authority, by employees of these bodies or other legal or natural persons.

The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality acts in an independent manner, monitors the implementation of the Act on Gender Equality and other legislation pertaining to gender equality and reports to the Croatian Parliament at least once a year.

The observation from Ombudsperson for Gender Equality confirms all statements and data provided for in submission made by the Republic of Croatia. It shows that the issues of equal pay have been **addressed in a critical and systematic manner**. Each year recommendations and suggestions are being made for state institutions to improve legislation or administrative procedures.

According to observations it can be concluded that Croatia suffered major problems in gender equality during economic crisis. However, positive trends in last few years are encouraging, meaning that policy measures mentioned in previous submissions are giving results. The state of play in Croatia is much better than the world's average or even EU average. It gives hope that the gender pay gap will be eradicated in the reasonable time.

The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality mentioned only two sectors with lower salaries for women. On the other hand, there are several sectors in which women earn a higher average salary than men: production of pharmaceutical products, construction, mining, libraries and museums.

It is encouraging that efforts from Ombudsperson for Gender Equality and other state institutions are successful and that employers are accepting recommendations to change discriminatory decisions. It clearly shows that legislative framework in Croatia provides efficient tools for reduction gender pay gap. Furthermore, the possibility to intervene in judicial procedures will definitely be helpful to women who are seeking for legal remedies.

Having in mind the observations from Ombudsperson for Gender Equality on underreporting of discrimination and in order to root out traditional attitudes and prejudices about gender roles in the society, within the twinning project "Gender Equality Support" a public campaign was organized in 2017 with an aim to raise public awareness on gender-based discrimination. The Office for Gender Equality of the Government of Republic of Croatia is making considerable efforts to raise public awareness on gender discrimination and to

implement measures from action plan. It would be highly welcomed if Ombudsperson for Gender Equality adopts examples of good practise from Office for Gender Equality.

Looking the observations in their entirety, they confirmed that all responsible institutions in Republic of Croatia are doing considerably efforts to eradicate gender pay gap. The Government of the Republic of Croatia believes that the observations from Ombudsperson for Gender Equality did not in any way substantiate the allegations made in collective complaint. The observations are only partially related to Article 1 of the European Social Charter and Article 1 of the Additional Protocol to the European Social Charter.

After receiving complaint from University Women of Europe, submissions from Republic of Croatia, observations by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and observations by Ombudsperson for Gender Equality and taking into account all relevant information on the gender pay gap in Republic of Croatia, the Government of the Republic of Croatia believes it should be concluded that there is no violation of Article 1 of the European Social Charter 1961.