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Statement by the Human Rights House Zagreb, Human Rights House Belgrade and NGOs from Bosnia and Herzegovina motivated by the International Human Rights Day, 10 December

Human Rights 365¹

10 December 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights was signed. Two years after, General Assembly of the UN has proclaimed 10th December as the International Human Rights Day.

Zagreb – Belgrade - Sarajevo, 10 December 2014

The Human Rights House Zagreb, Human Rights House Belgrade and NGOs from Bosnia and Herzegovina, joint in a Regional Human Rights Network, want to warn about numerous problems that are marking today's International Human Rights Day. **We share similar problems and injustices all over the region in our divided societies. And every day we are faced with human rights violations and discrimination of a large portion of society.**

Instead of a constructive dialog and positive attempts for a social change the public space is contaminated by hate speech and intolerance towards minorities and anybody slightly different than the majority. Together with this there is a trend of growing (ultra) reactionary groups that are promoting intolerance under the disguise of promotion of 'traditional values'.

A long-term economical crisis has brought to impoverishment of a large number of population in the region resulting in a wide gap between the rich and the poor. Regarding the official data every 4th citizen of Serbia lives on the verge of poverty (24,6%). The rate for the risk of poverty in Croatia for 2013 was 19,5% while the numbers for Bosnia and Herzegovina say that 18% of the population lives below the limit of critical poverty while 48% are on the verge of poverty.

¹ This year's UN slogan *Human Rights 365*, encompasses the idea that every day is a Human Rights Day. This slogan emphasises the main point of the Universal declaration that everybody, everywhere, at any time has the right to his/her human rights because human rights belong to everybody equally and connect us as a global community with shared ideals and values.





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Our region unfortunately shares almost identical life stories of numerous people who are unemployed, working in inhumane conditions and/or do not receive salaries for their work. Women, young and elderly people are specifically underrepresented in the labour market. Amendments of the labour legislation in some countries of the region brought even more insecurity and instability for workers and the labour market. Taking into consideration the statistics, we request that the governments urgently **start to implement active measures of social policies and employment taking into consideration the capacities and specific needs of the vulnerable groups: Roma minority, youth, women, refugees, elderly and migrants.**

Therefore, we request from the politicians and the responsible institutions in our countries to stop being consumed only with their own interests. We would like to remind them that their first and only obligation is to represent the interests of the entire population. Without this change there will be no constructive change, which would enable real human rights protection of every person.

Also, we would like to invite everybody in the region to actively and solidary mark the International Human Rights Day and actively take part in protection of everybody's rights.

- Human Rights House Zagreb: B.a.B.e. – Be active. Be emancipated.; Centre for Peace Studies; Documenta – Centre for Dealing with the Past; Civic Committee for Human Rights; Association for promotion of equal opportunities; Association for promotion of mental health, Svitanje
- Human Rights House Belgrade: Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia, Civic Initiatives, Lawyers Committee for Human Rights (YUCOM), Policy Center, Belgrade Center for Human Rights
- NGOs from Bosnia and Herzegovina: Rights for All, Sarajevo Open Centre, Foundation CURE

