

Addendum for drawing up the Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in accordance with Resolution HRC 32/31 on the Civil Society Space

Civil society organisations in the Republic of Serbia have an important role in the democratization of the society and in their activities they achieve developed cooperation with regional and international organisations. In this sense, particularly relevant is the role of civil society organisations as independent arbitrators of reformed processes and effects of adopted public policies which can draw attention of international actors to inconsistencies and difficulties in the work of public institutions. Additionally, civil sector representatives may provide relevant contribution to the work of international and regional institutions owing to their knowledge of the local context and professional expertise.

The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society, which performs professional activities for the Government of the Republic of Serbia relating to the provision of harmonized operation of public administration authorities and the promotion of cooperation between public administration and associations and other organisations of civil society, organizes and provides support to public administration authorities to implement the procedure for the selection of civil society representatives and/or independent experts from the Republic of Serbia in international organisations and their bodies. The Office insists on ensuring transparency and the establishment of clear and precise selection criteria in these processes, based on appropriate qualifications. So far, the Office has implemented the following procedures for the selection of candidates from the body of civil society representatives and/or independent experts for the membership in the bodies of international organisations and consultative bodies:

1) The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Veteran and Social Policy announced a call for proposals, in April 2014, aimed at associations and other organisation of civil society for the proposal of candidates from civil society for the membership in the Common Consultative Committee comprised of the representatives of the European Economic and Social Committee and the representatives of social partners and civil society organisations in the Republic of Serbia. Associations of Citizens and other civil society oorganisations were eligible to propose only one candidate for membership. After completing the List of candidates meeting the criteria, the Office published the list on its website and made a public call for the representatives of associations and other civil society organisations to vote for one of the candidates from the list. In total, 402 civil society organisations voted for 15 candidates, and one civil society representative was selected for each of the four priority areas (Rule of Law, Environmental Protection, Agriculture and Rural Development, Social and Economic Development).

2) In February 2015, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, the Office made a call for proposals for the selection of candidates from the body of independent experts for the membership in the Expert Group with the CoE Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) – GREVIO. Eight candidates in total responded to the public call and the Commission made up of the representatives of the Office, Ministry of Labour, Employment Veteran and Social Policy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposed three candidates.

3) In April and May 2016, in collaboration with the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office for Human and Minority Rights announced a public call for independent experts as candidates for the memebrship in the Advisory Committee of the CoE Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. There were 4 proposals in the public call

and the Competition Commission, comprised of the representatives of the Office for Cooperation with Civil Society, Office for Human and Minority Rights and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, proposed 2 candidates for the membership in this body of the Council of Europe.

The Office for Cooperation with Civil Society, also, in accordance with the need and initiative of the public administration authority, announces public calls for civil society organisations to participate in round tables and meetings dedicated to the analysis of the implementation and fulfilment of obligations provided for in relevant international documents whose signatory is the Republic of Serbia, as well as for collecting contributions of civil society organisations on the implementation of these documents.