

Program for Improved Protection of Labour Rights, Employment and Social Cohesion

The major concern for the citizens of Serbia is how to preserve the job and how to find a new one if they get fired, what is the quality of job they have and can they enjoy the usual work related rights. Those are key questions for one's individual development, for family life and for the social progress in general. Uncertainty disables planning of future. Incapacity to access quality jobs and enjoy decent work standards, low level of social protection and limited available new jobs, do not leave the choice neither to the employed nor to the unemployed. Faced with unemployment, with the threat of job loss, with poverty that comes with unemployment, citizens accept to work on temporary jobs with low wages, without health and security at work.

Unregistered work represents a long term deprivation of work related rights. Violation of the rights guaranteed by the law, discrimination of vulnerable groups and less employable groups, inadequate institutional protections with long lasting court proceedings in labour disputes, the dominant attitude that every worker can easily be replaced, and the lack of alternative, create the sense of deprivation, undermine the rule of law and blur the benefits of the EU driven reforms. The risk of poverty is above big number of citizens as a Damocles sword.

Sustainable economic and social development imposes the need to increase the social cohesion and solidarity. Standards of decent work are not and should not be the privilege of the most developed nations. We do not see Serbia as a country of cheap labour and of uneducated workers. Therefore, the Center for Democracy has put standards of decent work, fight against the unregistered work, focus on programs for employment of vulnerable groups, and for improved regulation and better institutional protection as one of its priorities.

Continuing its strategic orientation since 2006, with the new strategic development plan the CDF has defined as one of its three programs the program for improved protection of labour rights, employment and social cohesion.

The CDF is a leading organization in Serbia focused on economic and social issues, which has continuously developed its expertise and increased experience in the field of monitoring of the fulfilment of economic and social right in changing economic conditions, and in the context of the development perspective. The CDF has become a recognizable and credible interlocutor in debates on these issues, often consulted by domestic and foreign organizations and institutions. The CDF has a developed network of partners in private and in public sector.

Our activities:

- We monitor the implementation of reforms and of the regulatory framework and we propose solutions to identified problems and new public policies. Our results:

Monitoring of the activities of the Government of the Republic of Serbia in drafting law on private employment agencies – „Openly about Public Policies“ – our report has been quoted by the European Social Policy Network (2017)

Analysis of the effects of the 2014 modifications of the Labour Law (2016)

Public policy proposal – Decrease of the unregistered work through introduction of the information system with the Labour Inspectorate (2015)

Methodology of data collection and of monitoring of employment practices in local government and local public enterprises (2016)

Methodology for monitoring of employment in local government (2015)

Analysis „Decent Work and Grey Economy – Towards More Efficient Reduction of Unregistered Work and Grey Economy“ (2013)

Proposals for modifications of the Labour Law: some of our proposals were adopted (for example, the obligation of employers to maintain work contracts at the premises of companies, or increase of competencies of labour inspectorates)

- **We conduct research in the field of work and employment.** Some of the conducted research are:

Profiles of the employed through private employment agencies, in cooperation with the Team for Social Inclusion and Reduction of Poverty (2017)

Transparency of procedures and criteria for employment in organs and organization which are beneficiaries of public budgets – case studies (2015-2016)

Research „Citizens for Inspections` Reform“ - 5000 citizens participated (2014)

Towards More Efficient Proceedings of the Misdemeanor Courts and labour inspectorates in protecting the labour rights (2013)

Analysis „Civil Society and the Labour Rights“ (2013)

Research „Older Workers at the Labour Market – Some at Work and Some without Work and Pension“ (2012)

- **We conduct public campaigns for economic and social rights. The most successful were:**

Initiative Crnonabelo.com –sustainable Internet platform www.crnonabelo.com which was visited by more than 50.000 visitors, with more than 200,000 reviews and with an on-line community of about 20,000 members which gives the CDF a large outreach (started in 2012)

Stop the Political Employment that Threatens Decent Work (2013) – a campaign for clear criteria in employment in public sector

Citizens for Inspections Reform / 5 new mobile and web applications have been created so as to improve communication between citizens and inspectorates, with CSOs throughout Serbia, such as „Green Inspector“, „Inspector Citizen“, „Invisible Worker“ .

Balkan Network for Decent Work , with partners from Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia and Kosovo

State, Business and Citizens in Protection of economic and social rights – Good practice in corporations (2008)

- **We assist citizens:**

We inform them about their rights and protection mechanisms

We provide free legal counseling

We offer links with institutions for protection of the labour rights

We include them in exchange of experience and in debates

We build partnerships and cooperation:

In the National Convention on the EU we chair the Working Group on chapters 2 and 19

With more than 20 CSOs we have cooperated through the Initiative „Crnonabelo.com“

We empower CSOs to work in the area of economic and social rights, through sub-granting, training and mentoring

We cooperate with trade unions, with Cooperation Agreement signed with the TU Nezavisnost (2017)

We have cooperated with National employment Service, Agency for Peaceful Resolution of Labour Disputes, Commissioner for Protection of Equality, Ombudsman, Labour Inspectorate, Directorate for Health and Safety at Work and with other institutions

We gather experts and decision makers within our platform for public dialogue „Dialogue in the Center“ where we organized more than 15 debates on decent work standards, women position at the labour market.

We cooperate with the Union of Employers, Serbian Chamber of Commerce, companies and small and medium enterprises.

We are member of the UN Global Compact

We are observing member of Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS)