

15 February 2005

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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
Thirty-second session  
10-28 January 2005

### **Concluding comments: Croatia**

1. The Committee considered the second and third periodic reports of Croatia (CEDAW/C/CRO/2-3) at its 673rd and 674th meetings, on 18 January 2005.

#### **Introduction by the State party**

2. In introducing the report, the representative noted that in the framework of the State party's accession process to the European Union which was currently under way, European authorities had recognized that laws and institutional structures for the promotion of gender equality were largely in place in the State party.

3. The representative stressed that laws and regulations were in place to promote gender equality and eradicate discrimination against women. The Constitution recognized gender equality as the highest value of the constitutional order. The Gender Equality Act of 2003, which largely followed the provisions of the Convention, protected women against discrimination and set out a policy of equal opportunities for men and women. Other laws and policies, such as the Protection from Family Violence Act, the Act on Same-Sex Unions, and the second National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality, contributed to the effective promotion of women's rights.

4. The national mechanisms included the Government Office for Gender Equality which had been established in 2004 as the central government expert body, the Parliamentary Gender Equality Committee, established in 2001, and gender coordinators in ministries and at the local level. The Ombudsperson for Gender Equality was envisaged in the Gender Equality Act, and appointed in 2003. Several of these had only recently been established, and especially the Government Office for Gender Equality would need to be further strengthened to ensure effective implementation of existing laws and policies.

5. Women's participation in political life had consistently increased since the 1990s, and women now held 25 per cent of the seats in Parliament, putting the State party above the European average. Of the leading government officials 30 per cent

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were women, including 4 out of 14 ministers and 1 of 2 deputy prime ministers. This positive development was achieved through public debate, the adoption of various laws and strategies, including temporary special measures in accordance with the Convention, and especially the commitment of non-governmental organizations (NGOs). However, women's participation in local government was significantly lower than at the national level and stood at 14 per cent, and a series of activities aimed at increasing women's representation in the near term had been launched.

6. The representative affirmed the Government's commitment to cooperate with NGOs in achieving gender equality. Such organizations had received funding for projects to promote women's political participation, as well as for publications, seminars and symposiums on gender equality and wome





25. While noting the steps taken by the State party to strengthen the national mechanisms for the advancement of women, including the establishment of the Government Office of Gender Equality and of the Omb

through effective and proactive measures, including temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25, and awareness-raising programmes. It calls upon the State party to provide, in its next periodic report, a comprehensive picture of the situation of Roma women and girls, including data disaggregated by sex, in regard to their educational opportunities and achievements, access to employment and health-care services, and participation in public life and decision-making, especially in regard to policies that directly affect them. The Committee requests the State party to ensure equality for Roma women in the enjoyment of citizenship rights. The Committee invites the State party to monitor the situation of Roma women

36. The Committee recommends the State party to take appropriate measures to increase the representation of women in the executive bodies of local authorities, *inter alia*, by implementing temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and its general recommendation 25. The Committee recommends that the State party assess the causes for the successful increase of women in public and political life at the national level, including in Parliament and Government, and to use the lessons learned for increasing women's participation in local government structures.

