New OSCE/ODIHR handbook on national human rights institutions and gender equality presented at Sarajevo workshop

Jasminka Džumhur, Human Rights Ombudsperson of Bosnia and Herzegovina, speaks to journalists ahead of an expert workshop on national human rights institutions and the role they can play in promoting gender equality, Sarajevo, 4 December 2012. (OSCE/Vedran Pribilović)

A new publication to highlight the role national human rights institutions can play in protecting and promoting women’s rights and gender equality was presented at a regional expert workshop, organized by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Sarajevo on 4 December 2012.

The Handbook for National Human Rights Institutions on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality is a new tool developed by ODIHR that offers a survey of trends, examples, questions for consideration and recommendations to guide national human rights institutions in strengthening their capacity and practical work on women’s rights and gender equality.

“International standards and OSCE commitments on women's rights and gender equality are well established, yet their implementation remains a challenge,” said Nathalie Tagwerker, the Deputy Head of ODIHR’s Democratization Department. “National human rights institutions can greatly contribute to promoting understanding of women's rights and facilitating the exercise of those rights.”

Kendall Palmer, Deputy Director of the Programmes Unit, Human Dimension at the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, added that the workshop “seeks to contribute to strengthening the capacity of human rights institutions to advance women’s economic and social rights.”

The publication, which is available both online and in print, was presented to some 30 participants from national human rights institutions and organizations from South-Eastern Europe and OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, including Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia.
“Ombudsperson institutions must not only address individual complaints, but also serve as an effective mechanism for promoting gender-sensitive and women-friendly laws and policies,” said Jasminka Džumur, Human Rights Ombudsperson of Bosnia and Herzegovina.