



Human Rights and Gender Equality Network of Committees in the Western Balkans



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in the Western Balkans

About HUGEN



Human Rights and Gender Equality Network of Committees in the Western Balkans (HUGEN) was officially established in October 2019 as a parliamentary network which aims to improve existing and develop new mechanisms for regional parliamentary cooperation on human rights and gender issues in the Western Balkans. HUGEN is also contributing development of stronger parliamentary oversight over human rights and gender laws and policies.

HUGEN NETWORK CONSISTS OF:

8

Parliaments from
the Western Balkans

15

Parliamentary committees on
human rights and gender equality

FROM OCTOBER 2019 HUGEN NETWORK HAS SUCCESSFULLY ENGAGED:

- More than **200** members of parliaments and **40** parliamentary staff members
- Over **25** experienced international and regional experts
- More than **100** representatives of civil society organisations, members of academia, human right activists and public servants

MAIN RESULTS OF THE HUGEN NETWORK ARE:

- Establishing parliamentary platform for exchanging regional knowledge on human rights/ gender equality with **8** parliaments from **6** Western Balkan countries
 - Introducing modern oversight practises in cooperation with **7** parliaments and producing **8** PLS reports
 - Developing unique capacity building activities with esteemed members of academia from the United Kingdom
 - Creating **7** research products in order to develop more robust parliamentary oversight in the region
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Improving regional exchange and knowledge on human rights and gender equality



Launching of HUGEN network directly contributed to regional peer-to-peer exchange of knowledge and best practises regarding different aspects of human right and gender equality. Members of parliaments and relevant staff members were given the opportunity to learn about best international standards from eminent experts in order to enhance implementation of human rights and gender equality legislation and policies.

2

Conferences
and Online
webinars

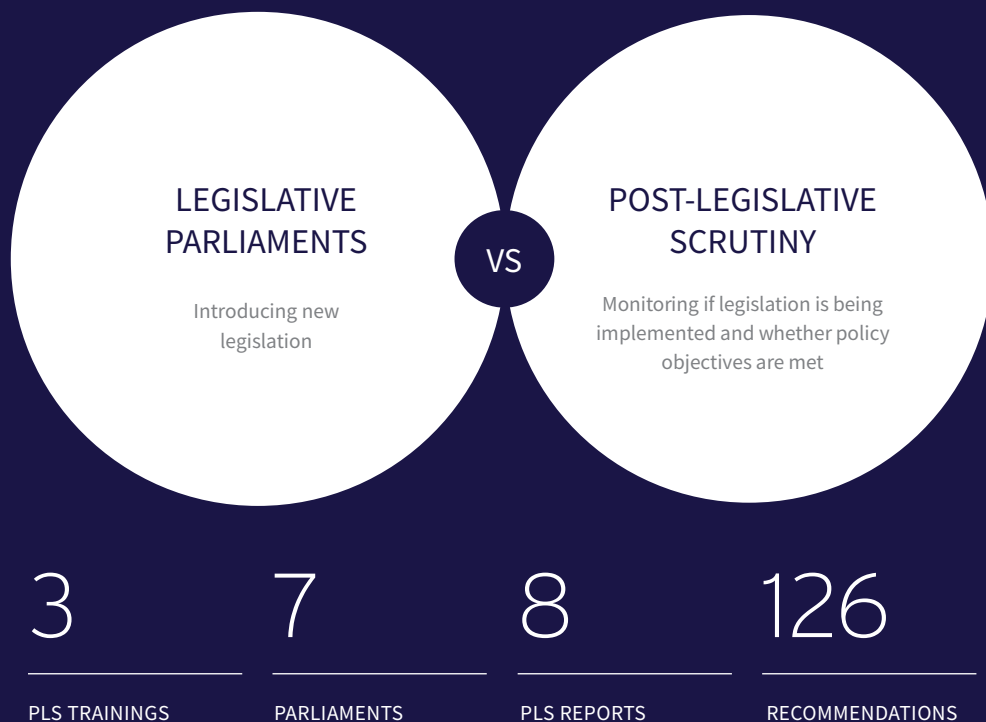
3

Multilateral
meetings and
Trainings

During time of crisis, such as COVID-19 pandemic, human rights are often derogated and violated. To improve current practices and adopt best international models regular online multilateral meetings and webinars were organised in order to explore how COVID-19 pandemic is affecting different disadvantaged social groups . By engaging with international experts and non-governmental stakeholders members of parliaments were able to learn that the COVID-19 pandemic is not affecting all communities equally.

Innovative approach for enhancing oversight capacities

For the first time in the Western Balkans a regional pilot process of post-legislative scrutiny (PLS) of human rights/gender equality legislation was implemented.



Within PLS pilot process 7 parliaments from HUGEN network selected 8 laws to scrutinise. For the first time parliaments were piloting modern oversight mechanism in order to receive actual information and insights on how specific legislation is being implemented in practise - what the results of the implementation process are and whether the intended policy objectives are met and, if not, why.

Each PLS report contains specific recommendations to improve selected human rights/gender legislation and policies. PLS reports are available at <https://www.hugenwb.net/materials/> and on official parliamentary websites.

Developing unique research products



In order to support oversight over human rights and gender related laws and policies HUGEN has developed

7

unique research products and materials.



parliamentary response to covid-19
implementation of recommendations from ombudsperson
assesment of committee work
pls in the western balkans

During times of crisis, like COVID-19 pandemic, need for effective parliamentary oversight is important than ever. To support sharing knowledge around parliamentary work during COVID-19 pandemic, two regional research papers on parliamentary response to COVID-19 were developed.

Ombudsperson institutions respond to cases of human rights violations by issuing extensive number of recommendations. Recommendations are crucial part of reports which are submitted to parliaments each year. HUGEN network is analysing status of implementation of recommendations from these reports. More information is available at <https://nhriwb.net/>

Regional analysis of the work of human right committees presented an important step in creating HUGEN network. Analysis have indicated that committees in Western Balkans share many similarities regarding their status, competences, institutional setup, as well as capacities.

Impact of HUGEN network

By organising regular regional meetings and conferences parliaments from Western Balkans had the opportunity to share knowledge and experiences around different human rights and gender equality topics. Members of parliaments were committed sharing their knowledge in order to implement best regional and international practises in their jurisdiction. Lessons learned from regional parliamentary cooperation are very important for improving overall human rights situation.

Post-legislative scrutiny pilot process was a landmark in promoting a culture of conducting effective oversight among parliaments. This was the first ever regional project which was foreseeing implementation of ex-post oversight at the same time. For the first time, HUGEN network parliaments were in position to proactively monitor implementation of specific legislation and to see what the impact of the law implementation process was.

As a result of the PLS pilot process some of the WB parliaments started to explore the opportunities of making the PLS process an official parliamentary mechanism. Some parliaments from the region already used PLS reports in order to change scrutinised legislation.



200

Parliamentarians
from



8

Western Balkan
parliaments have:

- Established parliamentary network consisting of **8** parliaments from **6** countries
- Selected **8** laws for the PLS process
- Organised **8** committee hearings on reviewing and adopting PLS reports
- Participated at **3** multilateral meetings to discuss key issues on human rights and gender equality during times of COVID-19 pandemic
- Held **6** Network board meetings and two annual conferences of the network
- Contributed to **2** online webinars
- Received certificates on PLS after successfully finishing introductory course on PLS
- Substantially improved their knowledge on PLS after completing an one-month advanced course on PLS



Further information about HUGEN network is
available at <https://www.hugenwb.net/>



Norwegian Ministry
of Foreign Affairs