



# SARAJEVO OPEN CENTRE

## **STRATEGIC PLAN for the period 2014-2017**

### **Annex 1: Intersex Rights as a Priority, Feminism as the Core Value**

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## What is new?

In the implementation of the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan we identified the need to amend it. During 2014 and 2015, with the professionalization, maturity and development of the organisation, its programmes and the team, we realized that we need to amend this crucial organisational document. Even though we base our work on feminist principles, we implement feminist programmes and activities, the word feminism has not been clearly articulated as the political approach of our organisational profile. Also, our organisation was not sufficiently focused in its programmes on intersex issues, despite the fact that we have been implementing measures and activities related to intersex rights for years now. To underline our new approach, we have decided to expand the key elements of our organisational and programme profile.

Our amended vision and mission for 2016 is:

### ***Vision***

*Bosnia and Herzegovina is a society based on equal rights and opportunities for everyone. Bosnia and Herzegovina is a state built by active and engaged citizens and accountable authorities.*

### ***Mission***

*Sarajevo Open Centre (SOC) advocates the full respect of human rights and social inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\* and intersex (LGBTI) people and women.*

*Sarajevo Open Centre is an independent feminist civil society organization that strives to empower lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\* and intersex (LGBTI) people and women through community empowerment and activist movement building. SOC also promotes the human rights of LGBTI people and women publically and advocates on national, European and international level for improved legislation and policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. By working on European integration issues, SOC is improving human rights in general and encouraging further the development of civil society.*

From now on, legal, social and medical intersex issues and sex characteristics will be a part of our advocacy and institutional work, in addition to issues of sex, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity. This new reality is now recognised in our organisational values:

### **Values**

*Diversity: we respect and take into consideration intersectionalities, fighting multiple discrimination, especially on the grounds of sex, sex characteristics, gender, sexual orientation and gender identity;*

*Integrity: we are committed to transparency and accountability in our procedures and work, guided by professional standards, results we want to achieve and broad involvement of different stakeholders;*

*Proactivity: we identify challenges and find solutions before problems arise;*

*Innovation and creativity: we introduce new methods, approaches and focus areas, and are prepared for continuous learning in order to be able to respond to new challenges;*

*Collaboration and solidarity: we invest in long term partnerships and networks on national and international level, using these synergies to further our goals and strengthen our position within civil society;*

*Communication: we have established successful channels of communication with stakeholders and our target groups;*

Intersex people will from now on be one of our target groups and beneficiaries:

### **Target groups**

*LGBTI people in need of unique psychosocial and legal empowerment in order to claim their rights and/or to become human rights activists.*

*Public officials at all governance levels competent for human rights, particularly those working in security, judiciary, health, and education, with insufficient knowledge about LGBTI human rights violations.*

*Civil society organisations active in the rule of law and human rights matters.*

*Media representatives, journalists and editors of online, electronic, and print media who report to the citizens and influence public opinion.*

*International partners (governmental and non-governmental) actively supporting our advocacy and lobbying efforts.*

### **Beneficiaries**

*Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\*, and intersex people and LGBTI activists proactively participating in our actions, but also benefiting from our services, awareness raising, advocacy and institutional capacity building actions.*

*Women active in political, social and cultural life, interested in taking part in social changes.*

Intersex rights will from now on be part of our strategic objectives:

### **OVERALL OBJECTIVE**

Our overall objective is to improve the human rights situation of LGBTI people and women in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

To achieve this, we will work towards the following outcomes:

#### **Outcome 1: LGBTI people are socially and legally empowered**

*By recognizing the special needs of LGBTI people and the fact that state institutions are not providing the needed support, we will invest into social and legal empowerment. Without an empowered LGBTI community, there can be no LGBTI person claiming their rights or becoming a human rights advocate. Community activities, psychological counselling, community-oriented media content production, support groups and legal counselling are the bases for individual empowerment. As a result, empowered LGBTI people will get active and start claiming their rights before judicial and non-judicial authorities, being pioneers in the fight for human rights of LGBTI people in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

#### **Outcome 2: BiH authorities have increased responsiveness to guarantee human rights of LGBTI people and women**

*LGBTI people in Bosnia and Herzegovina are a social group whose problems and needs are not recognized in public policies. That is the reason why policy, legislative changes and innovation are needed. SOC (and partners) will develop and advocate new proposals, based on concrete needs and experience, aiming to increase the influence on decision makers. Having in mind that legislation and policies are not enough, we will also work with public officials (i.e. police officers, judges, prosecutors) by raising their awareness and knowledge on violations of human rights of LGBTI people. Future professionals can contribute to this change and they will be an important target of our work. Their skills will be improved, resulting in concrete proposals of policies or legislation related to the rights of LGBTI people and women. Together with our partners from the women's rights movement, we will develop and advocate policies and legal solutions.*

#### **Outcome 3: LGBTI and women's rights are mainstreamed**

*LGBTI people are still a taboo in BiH society, while women, although a quantitative majority, are excluded from social and political life. By targeting mainstream media, we believe that we can contribute in providing accurate information on the human rights situation of LGBTI people and women to the general public. We will also use arts and culture platforms to raise awareness of the public on LGBTI and women's rights.*

In line with these changes, our work on LGBT rights will from now on include intersex issues and sex characteristics and will become **the LGBTI rights programme**. Fighting discrimination on grounds of sex characteristics and equality of intersex people will be a priority equal to our work on lesbian, gay, bisex and trans\* rights.