

City of Ljubljana

Zoran Janković  
*Mayor*



## **LJUBLJANA'S PLEDGE TO THE EUROPEAN PILLAR OF SOCIAL RIGHTS**

A strong social Europe means that it is inclusive for all. Ljubljana is a city where we respect diversity and live together. Ljubljana is a social city that promotes social inclusion and human dignity. Through numerous programmes, services and activities, we strive for social equality, solidarity and openness. To that end, we pay special attention to vulnerable groups.

### **Commitment to principles 2. Gender equality, 3. Equal opportunities and 9. Work-life balance**

Gender equality means that no matter the gender, we all have the same possibilities and opportunities to realise our potentials and equal rights in all aspects of life. A municipality plays an important role in achieving gender equality in society, as it plans, creates and implements policies, while at the same time encouraging the integration of gender equality in all areas as an employer. A coordinator for equal opportunities and her deputy were appointed according to the law by the City of Ljubljana. The Gender Equality Group has been functioning since 2019, and comprises representatives of the City Administration.

Over the years, the City of Ljubljana has gained a great deal of experience in gender equality, e.g. balanced gender representation on the City Council and district authorities (consequence of legal gender quotas), high female representation in decision-making positions in the City Administration, public institutions and municipal companies, good public services and support services in child care, well-organised care for the elderly, etc. The adoption of the 'Gender Equality in the City of Ljubljana' action plan in 2016 (the City of Ljubljana was one of the few municipalities in Slovenia to adopt such a plan) contributed to the improved and more systematic implementation of gender equality policies. Goals that were set in the second action plan for the period 2019–2022 are currently being implemented. The action plan is divided into eight areas; the first seven areas focus on gender equality (integration of the gender equality principle, decision-making process, economic independence, work-life balance, traditional social roles and stereotypes, social inclusion of vulnerable groups and prevention of violence against women), while the eighth area focuses on tolerance for different sexual orientations, gender identities and expressions (tolerance for the LGBT+ community). Measures in the action plan relate to two levels, i.e. activities within the City Administration of Ljubljana and activities aimed at the general public.

Gender equality must be included in all social areas; the different standpoints and needs of men and women require attention. In order to avoid stereotypical and discriminative addressing, and to prevent the social invisibility of women, the City of Ljubljana encourages gender-sensitive language in written and verbal form. To fully implement gender mainstreaming, we need to raise awareness and properly train those involved in the process of developing and implementing policies. The City of Ljubljana has thus signed the Diversity Charter, the aim of

which is to recognise and respect diversity. Arrangements were also made for educating the leadership of the City Administration of Ljubljana.

One of our goals is to ensure a social atmosphere and political culture without prejudice or stereotypical gender-based behaviour that will encourage women and men to work in untypical professions, the engagement of women in politics and career, and active involvement in the balanced representation of women and men in management and public life. It is therefore extremely important to inform people and raise awareness about overcoming traditional social roles. The City of Ljubljana will strive to recognise and eliminate stereotypical behaviours and will place emphasis on the visibility of women by naming streets and city areas after famous women, erecting monuments to honour prominent women, and placing traffic lights with female silhouettes. We will also focus on working with children and young people, and will raise awareness and questions regarding the (in)equality of genders with different activities, e.g. day spent with a female manager (children get to spend a day with a role model, for example a CEO or deputy mayor), art/literature contests for schools that discuss different aspects of gender equality, girl's day (introduction of untypical professions) and exhibition projects that address 'traditional social roles'.

The balancing of private and professional life is one of the most important conditions for implementing gender equality in society. In Slovenia, we have a long and strong tradition of a high female employment rate (according to the Gender Equality Index, the female employment rate was 75% in Slovenia in 2019, compared with a rate of 67% in the EU-28). A well-established, subsidised and accessible kindergarten network plays a key role in the female employment rate, the possibility of extended or morning care for children in lower grades of primary school, warm meals in primary schools, the possibility of (subsidised) meals in secondary schools, student meals, and a high-quality scheme of parental rights and cash benefits. In recent years, we have faced a constant shortage of kindergartens in Ljubljana, which leads to extensive investments. The rate of inclusion of children residing in Ljubljana in kindergartens is extremely high, at 92.3% in 2019, well above the average in Slovenia of 80.4%. Through public institutions and the co-financed programmes of NGOs, we will continue to provide holiday care, and additional programmes and content for pre-school and school-aged children, which throughout the year facilitate the high-quality spending of leisure time and prevent social exclusion, decrease violence amongst children, encourage the creativity and environmental awareness of children, and thus improve the quality of lives for children and their families.

Violence is a violation of fundamental human rights, freedoms and dignity, and represents a severe physical and psychological breach of a person's integrity. Violence against women represents an obstacle to improving the position of women, as exposure to violence restricts the ability to live, and leads to social isolation, anti-social behaviour, fewer economic opportunities and inability to include oneself in social life. The City of Ljubljana advocates zero tolerance for violence, both in the private and public spheres. As in previous years, the City of Ljubljana will continue to co-finance programmes through public tenders, i.e. programmes aimed at women and children, victims of violence (informing, counselling, accommodation in the form of a safe house, crisis centre, etc.) and non-violent communication programmes intended for perpetrators of violence. We will also actively participate in awareness campaigns that take place every year during international days of activism for the elimination of violence against women (25 November – 10 December).

The City of Ljubljana advocates an inclusive society without discrimination on the basis of any personal circumstance. With the aim of establishing social inclusion and preventing poverty amongst vulnerable groups of women and men, the City of Ljubljana has, in addition to the aforementioned action plan for gender equality, adopted the Social Protection Development Strategy and two action plans: 'Ljubljana, a Friendly City for the Elderly' and 'Ljubljana, a Friendly Municipality for the Disabled'. Through public tender procedures, the City of

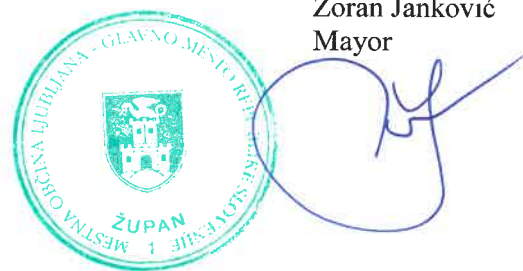
Ljubljana ensures the co-financing of various programmes and services intended for different vulnerable groups (every year we co-finance around 80 programmes that can be grouped as accommodation programmes, day centres, and counselling and informative programmes), as well as the payment of municipal financial assistance.

A lot of attention has been given to the support and empowerment of homosexuals and people with different sexual identities. In 2015, we have therefore received the EU award for best performance in the public sector for our commitment in the LGBT+ area (EPSA 2015). We were encouraged to operate proactively by the two referendums in Slovenia (2012 and 2015), which prevented the legalisation of equal rights for same-sex and different-sex couples. We discovered that in most cases people are ignorant and that can lead to unintentional discrimination. Using different activities (support from NGOs and raising awareness), we have tried to induce change of a general social relationship towards the LGBT+ community. One of the awareness raising campaigns is the 'LGBT friendly' certificate, which we developed in cooperation with an NGO and expert community with the aim to create a positive atmosphere for everyone inside of the working environment and outwards to the costumers. Already 40 certificates were awarded and amongst the recipients are elementary schools, kindergartens, other public institutions and municipal companies, the National Institute of Public Health, some corporate entities (e.g. IBM Slovenia) and also a small number of faculties at the University of Ljubljana. In the future, we will strive to interest as many organisations as we can to approach the acquisition of the certificate and thus become a partner in raising awareness about the meaning of inclusive society for everyone.

We are aware that there is still a long road before us to achieve an inclusive society and thus complete equality and gender equality. We will continue to strive to implement different activities that will transform Ljubljana into a city where every individual, regardless of their personal circumstances, feels accepted and equal.

Ljubljana, 24. 8. 2020

Zoran Janković  
Mayor

The image shows the official seal of the Municipality of Ljubljana, which is circular and contains the coat of arms of the city. The text around the seal reads "MUNICIPALITY OF LJUBLJANA - GLAVNO MESTO REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE" and "ŽUPAN". To the right of the seal is a handwritten signature in blue ink.