

Advocacy Strategy Document

Advancing the Rights of LGBTIQ+ Women and Non-Binary Persons in Serbia

Introduction

This Advocacy Strategy is developed as part of the project “Amplifying Voices: Research and Advocacy for LGBTIQ+ Women’s Rights in Serbia.” The strategy provides a roadmap for engaging policymakers, institutions, civil society allies, and the broader public to address gender-based violence (GBV) against LGBTIQ+ women and non-binary persons. It builds on evidence collected through surveys, focus groups, workshops, and community-based initiatives conducted between 2024–2025, and aligns with Serbia’s obligations under CEDAW, GREVIO, and international human rights standards.

Advocacy Goals

The overall goal of the advocacy strategy is to ensure systemic recognition, protection, and empowerment of LGBTIQ+ women and non-binary persons in Serbia by influencing policy frameworks, strengthening institutional responses, and raising public awareness. The specific objectives are to secure inclusion of LGBTIQ+ perspectives in Serbia’s GBV prevention and protection frameworks; to advocate for transparent, accessible, and non-pathologizing gender recognition and legal reforms; to push for national policies that prohibit discrimination against LGBTIQ+ persons in education, employment, and healthcare; to ensure implementation of GREVIO and CEDAW recommendations through coordinated state action plans; and to strengthen cooperation between feminist and LGBTIQ+ organizations to ensure a united advocacy front.

Target Stakeholders

The primary stakeholders for this strategy include government bodies such as the Ministry of Human and Minority Rights and Social Dialogue, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health. Independent institutions such as the Commissioner for Protection of Equality and the Ombudsman, as well as the judiciary, police departments, public prosecutors, and courts, are also key actors. Secondary stakeholders include parliamentary committees on gender equality and human rights, local governments in cities such as Belgrade, Niš, Novi Sad, and Subotica, as well as the EU Delegation in Serbia, embassies supportive of human rights, and international monitoring bodies including the

CEDAW Committee, GREVIO experts, the Council of Europe, and UN agencies. Allies consist of women's rights organizations, feminist collectives, Roma women's groups, human rights NGOs focusing on youth, disability, and labor rights, and media outlets sympathetic to equality agendas.

Advocacy Channels and Methods

The advocacy will be carried out through several channels and methods. Policy engagement will include submission of policy briefs and recommendations to ministries and parliamentary committees, bilateral meetings with policymakers and government officials, and participation in working groups on gender equality and GBV. Strategic litigation and shadow reporting will be used to hold the government accountable through GREVIO and CEDAW mechanisms, as well as supporting cases of discrimination through legal aid partnerships. Public awareness efforts will focus on social media campaigns, opinion pieces in mainstream and feminist media, and cultural events highlighting GBV issues. Community mobilization will involve support groups, workshops, leadership training, and outreach activities designed to empower survivors and foster solidarity. International advocacy will engage EU institutions, embassies, and international donors, as well as presenting findings at international conferences and forums.

Key Messages

The key messages guiding this advocacy strategy are that gender-based violence policies must include LBTIQ+ women and non-binary persons, that Serbia must adopt legal frameworks for same-sex partnerships, gender recognition, and intersex rights, that institutions must ensure safety and dignity for all survivors, and that visibility and recognition of LBTIQ+ persons as equal citizens are essential to building an inclusive society.

Timeline (2024–2026)

In the short term, over the next six months, the focus will be on publishing policy briefs, engaging ministries on GREVIO and CEDAW follow-up, and launching media campaigns. In the medium term, between six and eighteen months, the priority will be to push for amendments to GBV laws and to secure commitments for inclusive education and healthcare policies. In the long term, over eighteen to twenty-four months, the strategy will work toward institutionalizing regular consultation mechanisms and achieving legal reforms on partnerships and gender recognition.



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Monitoring and Evaluation

The progress of this advocacy strategy will be monitored by tracking the adoption of policy recommendations in national GBV strategies, measuring engagement through the number of meetings with policymakers and references in parliamentary debates, collecting feedback from community beneficiaries and partner organizations, and documenting media coverage and international attention generated.

Sustainability

This advocacy strategy is designed not as a one-off campaign but as part of a long-term process of structural change. By combining community empowerment, legal reform, public awareness, and international pressure, the strategy aims to ensure sustainable improvements in the rights and lives of LGBTIQ+ women and non-binary persons in Serbia.