



MARIJANA SAVIC



CITIZENS ASSOCIATION FOR COMBATING
TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AND ALL FORMS
OF GENDER - BASED VIOLENCE

PROFILE

Marijana is the founder and director of Serbian NGO Atina that combats human trafficking and fights violence against women. Through Atina's creative social enterprise, Bagel Bejgl Shop, Marijana creates a safe space for female trafficking survivors to learn new skills and find employment opportunities alongside other survivors and at-risk women.

CONTACT

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“ VOICES OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURS

● What motivated you to become an entrepreneur?

I am a doer, always oriented toward setting goals and achieving sustainable results, willing to try new things and offer solutions. That is how we created Bagel Bejgl, a women's social entrepreneurship initiative. NGO Atina is the owner of Bagel Bejgl and has been intensively working to protect human trafficking victims in Serbia for the past 20 years.

● What is one challenge you had to overcome in the creation of your enterprise?

The challenges are everywhere, but my task, and the task of the entire team, is to keep overcoming them each day, remain unshakable and focus on the future. The essence is in consistency and not giving up. Also, you must learn to let some things go when the time comes, even if it means letting go of an initial idea, no matter how good it was. If the circumstances change, you always have to adapt to the new ones.

● Women, Business and the Law data reveals that 8 positive reforms related to women's economic empowerment occurred in Serbia since 1971. How do you think these legal reforms have impacted your and other women's ability to participate in the economy?

Although Serbia has adopted new laws, inefficient procedures cost us the most. In addition to the laws themselves, it is necessary to invest in active citizenship and women's leadership in order to encourage institutions to implement the measures that benefit all members of society indisputably and in accordance with the law.

● In what areas in your country would you like to see legal reforms that help encourage women's participation in the economy?

I would invest in a care economy and social care system, so that the care work does not only and exclusively fall on women, or that it becomes recognized as a job, and compensated for accordingly. That will allow many women to fulfill their ambitions in a way they need to, not in a way that is imposed on them by the current system.

● What advice do you have for other women entrepreneurs?

I don't like to give advice, but I do have four guiding ideas that I keep repeating to myself, which may be useful to other women as well: 1. Always believe in yourself, even when no one else does; 2. Always support other women, everywhere, in everything they do (true solidarity as a key feminist principle); 3. Never back away from malicious and gender insensitive comments; 4. Stay determined.



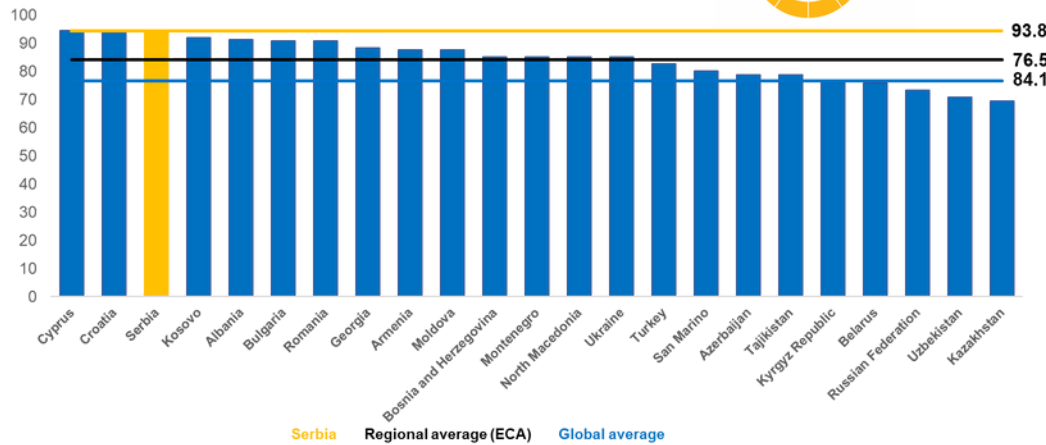
REGION
Europe & Central Asia

MAIN BUSINESS CITY
Belgrade

INCOME GROUP
OECD high income

FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION
47%

SERBIA WBL INDEX SCORE



BREAKDOWN OF THE SCORE BY INDICATOR

Serbia - Scores for Women, Business and the Law 2022



OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFORM

Serbia has the maximum score for seven out of eight WBL indicators, but it could consider filling the gaps in the **Pension** indicator. For example, by adopting legislation that would equalize the age at which men and women can retire will full and partial pension benefits.



Pension

The age at which men and women can retire with full and partial pension benefits is not the same.

LEARN MORE

[Women, Business and the Law 2022 Report](#)

[Serbia Economy Snapshot](#)

LEGAL REFORMS (1970-2021)*

- 2011** Serbia made access to credit easier for women by prohibiting gender-based discrimination in financial services.
- 2010** Serbia mandated equal remuneration for work of equal value.
- 2007** Serbia enacted legislation protecting women from domestic violence.
- 2003** Serbia introduced paid paternity leave. It also introduced paid parental leave.
- 2003** Serbia prohibited gender discrimination in employment.

MARIJANA SAVIC ABOUT THE REFORMS:

"A lot has been done in the past 50 years, of course. It would be problematic if that was not the case. The lapse of the system here is the fact that, unfortunately the institutions in Serbia are not strong, accountable and transparent. The system of **checks and balances** is only nominally in place, and the separation of power within the government **does not function** in practice."

* Only displaying a selection of reforms by WBL Report Year