

Financial and Economic Crisis as a Challenge for Non-Derogability of Human Rights

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Abstract : The paper will introduce main findings of the research of the responses of the Central European and South Eastern European (CEE/SEE) countries to the global economic and financial crisis in 2008 from human rights and gender perspectives. The research methodology included desk research and qualitative analysis of the available data, studies, statistics, and reports produced by the governments, the UN agencies, international financial institutions (IFIs) and international network of civil society organizations. The main conclusion of the study is that the governments in the region missed to assess the impacts of their anti-crisis policies both ex ante and ex post from the standpoint of human rights and gender equality. Majority of the countries have focused their efforts solely on prompting up the banking and financial sectors, and construction business sectors. The tremendous debt which the states have accumulated for the rescue of banks and industries lead to further cuts in social expenses and reduction of public services. Decreasing state support to health care and social protection and declining family incomes made social services unaffordable for many families. Thus, the economic and financial crisis stirred up the care crisis that was absorbed by women's intensifying unpaid work within a family and household to manage household survival strategy. On the other hand, increased burden of the care work weakened the position of women in the labour market and their opportunities to find a job. The study indicates that the artificial separation of the real economy and the sphere of social reproduction still persist. This has created additional burden of unpaid work of women within a family. The aim of this paper is to introduce the lessons learnt for future: (a) human rights may not be derogated in the times of crisis; (b) the obligation of states to mitigate negative impacts of economic policies to population, particularly to vulnerable groups, must be prioritized; (c) IFIs and business sector must be liable as duty bearers with respect to human rights commitments.

Keywords : CEE/SEE region, global financial and economic crisis, international financial institutions, human rights commitments, principle of non-derogability of human rights

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