

EMPOWERING WOMEN IN CHANGING SOCIETIES

fair  
play

june 2005

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Estonia

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Malta

Poland

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Slovakia

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Spain

# Business Overcoming



# Gender Job Stereotypes

**LabourMarket**



fair play

# editorial

Enjoy reading "Fair Play" and we hope that you'll like our magazine at least as much as its predecessor.

Dear readers,

It is great pleasure for us to share with you the joy of the rebirth of "Fair Play". It's been three years since it was last published. Now we have the chance to resume, maybe for just two issues, one of our most pleasant and interesting projects.

For those, who open the covers of the magazine for the first time, here is a brief history of the magazine.

The idea for Fair Play magazine was generated and developed during Karat's visit to the 43rd session of the Commission on the Status of Woman in March 1999 in New York. The members agreed to back a funding proposal prepared by the Women's Alliance for Development (WAD) to request funding from Novib.

Coordinating, editing, design, writing, distribution, and business management was provided by WAD. The objective of Fair Play magazine was to provide a forum for members of the Karat Coalition countries to exchange ideas and best practices to improve social, economic, political, and legal conditions for women, their children, families and their countries. During the period 2000 - 2002 we managed to prepare, publish and distribute 7 issues of "Fair Play". Each one had its own idea and was devoted to a particular topic - "Beijing+5", "Women and economy", "Women and governance", "Violence", "Peace and War", "Globalization" and "Diversity". Fair Play magazine articles showcased conditions, ideas, best practices and the accomplishments of women as individuals and in groups in the Central and Eastern European countries. It was a forum for translating the needs and concerns of grass roots women to the policy- and decision-makers in the Karat countries. Fair Play included articles that emphasized the human side of women's issues. It featured stories that dramatize and illustrate the plight of women living under certain conditions and circumstances. It covered situations that contribute to the problems of a woman's life and society in general. It also took a personal look at how women's intelligence, perseverance, and accomplishment contribute to a dramatic improvement in her life, her family, and the community. Finally, it showcased the results of women's teamwork in solving mutually shared problems.

Now, three years later, we are back as a part of a project, called **"Labour Market and Entrepreneurship overcoming stereotypes"**. This issue, as well as the second one, will inform you of the development of the project, of the situation in different Eastern European and Mediterranean countries and of the problems they have to overcome. You'll meet on our pages the participant organizations and experts, as well as women entrepreneurs and ordinary housewives.







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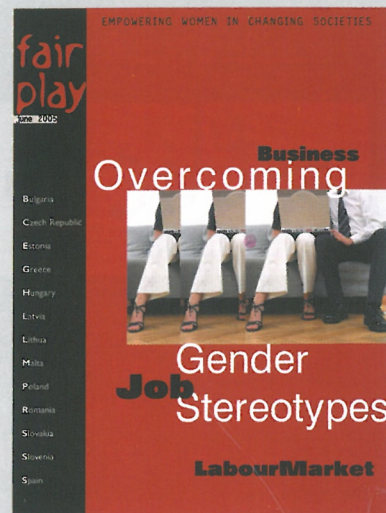
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The project entitled **"Labour market and entrepreneurship overcoming stereotypes"** aims to develop equality between men and women and overcome gender stereotypes. It hopes to strengthen active partnership of gender equality and businesswomen organizations, to

→ the project

develop their ability to create change and increase awareness and understanding among decision-makers and media on gender stereotypes in economic life are also expected. This project started up in

December 2004 and it will last fifteen months. During this period, five international meetings will be held in order to achieve the aforementioned objectives. The first of them took place last February in Warsaw, Poland and the next one will be in Thessaloniki, Greece; then Barcelona, Spain in June; Sofia, Bulgaria in September and finally, Brussels where the report will be presented to the European Commission and published soon after.

**W**

e are already living in the 21st century where technological advances increase every day, where the world is more accessible and people think globally. However, in many European countries and other parts of the world, gender equality is still not a part of daily lives and seems to be unimaginable.

One of the key aims of the European Union is to develop gender equality in its Member States. In practice, this goal is far from being achieved in ten of the new members of the Union and two of the candidate states. Assuring fundamental rights is one of the pillars of democratic societies, however, today there are still many women who cannot get access to fundamental social rights since many of the rights are not in their favour and support the model of the man as the sole breadwinner. In reality, this model is far from the present-day situation where many women have to combine family life with a professional job.

According to a recent study carried out by the Employment Information Centre in Kaunas (Lithuania), the average wage of a woman in the new Member States represent 70.5% of that of men for the same job. Also, there are more unemployed women with higher levels of education in comparison to men in the same category, representing 36% of women and 27% of men.

By 1980, Eastern European countries under the communist regime had already embodied the concept of equality between men and women as far as education and job opportunities were concerned. Equality also existed in family life and in some cases women could enjoy financial independence, hold technical jobs and be free from dependency on their husbands. Under the socialist rule, they experienced an inferior quality of life, women's needs were not taken





HOT SPOT

# Eastern and Western European women actively unite to tackle gender stereotypes.



[ The first international meeting of European Businesswomen organizations took place on 11th a 12th February 2004 in name of the project in which they are all participating called **"Labour Market and Entrepreneurship overcoming stereotypes"**. They were briefed on the main activities of the project and their fundamental roles in order to promote gender equality in the economic field and advance their influence on economic policies. ]

into account and they were suddenly burdened with household chores and a professional job. As a result, during the political transition, women's opportunities and access to jobs were limited, female representation in legislative bodies decreased and negative stereotypes about women developed.

According to the European Commission report 2005 on equality between men and women, women still outnumber men in education especially in the new Member States. But despite this fact, the average share of part-time employment is 30.4% of women compared to only 6.6% of men. This is one of the many factors, which explain the gender pay gap.

On the other hand, some social factors such as the limited access to childcare and gender stereotyped family patterns lead to women doing the majority of the housework and consequently have less time for paid work. According to this European Commission report, men do less than 40% of all housework and between 25% and 35% of childcare work in couples with children aged 6 years or less. Due to the reduced participation of women in the labour market, they have significantly less rights than men.

The report also states that at the Spring European Council 2004 it was acknowledged that "gender equality policies are instruments of social cohesion as well as economic growth". That is why Member states are demanded to keep the efforts for integration of the gender concept in all political fields in order to achieve equality between women and men in the labour market.

These are strong enough reasons to encourage cooperation among women organizations in the new Member states, candidates and European Mediterranean countries, employers and employees. And those are the aims of the project that AFAEMME (Association of Mediterranean Businesswomen Organizations) is carrying out supported by the European Commission. It is time to make the best of the enlargement of Europe and also to improve the

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Eastern  
and Western  
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unite  
to tackle  
gender  
stereotypes.



economic situation of women. Those are the goals of the project that AFAEMME, the only businesswomen organization in the Mediterranean, is aiming for together with developing the capacity of gender equality and businesswomen organizations in order to promote gender equality in the economic field and advance their influence in the economic policies.

The project, called **"Labour market and entrepreneurship overcoming stereotypes"** is funded by the Department of Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission and pays particular attention to the requirements of the main gender equality and businesswomen organizations from Cyprus, Malta, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania in order to promote gender equality and equal opportunities in the labour and entrepreneurship market. Also, in the framework of this project, several international meetings will be taking place in Warsaw, Thessaloniki, Sofia and Barcelona organized by AFAEMME and the three main partners, KARAT, WAD and SEGE to develop common strategies and activities to aid the participation and representation of these organizations in economic life.

The main objectives of the project are firstly to improve the understanding of the actions underlying gender equality and equal opportunities in the fields of employment and entrepreneurship, promoting changes in gender roles and overcoming gender stereotypes mainly in the 10 new EU member states and 2 candidate countries. Secondly - these are strengthening active partnership of gender equality and businesswomen organizations and developing their ability to create change, and finally, increasing awareness and understanding among decision-makers and media on gender stereotypes in economic life. The overall aim is to improve the general economic status of women both as entrepreneurs and employees. The rational method used is based on the experience of organizations working on a transnational scale leading projects and producing studies and assessments on regional scale that include local research and fieldwork.

As a starting point, on 11th and 12th February 2005, the first meeting was held in Warsaw where AFAEMME introduced the project in details to the twelve participating countries. They were informed about all the activities planned for the year (report writing, press activities, in particular, "Fair Play" magazine and workshops) and all the organizations participating in the project from the specified countries, the international promoter, AFAEMME, and the regional and national partners had the opportunity to exchange views and discuss the methodology.





In 1991, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted a Recommendation (No. 1146) on Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Women and Men in the Labour Market. It calls on the governments of member-states to pursue and intensify their work in order to achieve complete equality between women and men in employment and employment relations (working time, equal pay, abolition of vertical segregation, i.e. concentration of women or men in certain functions, levels of responsibility or positions). These and similar principles have been incorporated in the legislation of the EU, while the acceding countries need to adjust their national legislation accordingly



The European Commission is fully committed to the modernisation and development of the European social model. One of the priorities is promoting the equality between men and women.

Following the 2004 Green paper entitled "Equality and Non-Discrimination in an Enlarged European Union" the Commission will put forward a Communication in 2005 setting out its planned policy approach and defining the policy framework for new measures.

The European Commission plans to organize a European year on equal opportunities in 2007. The initiative aims to show the advantages of diversity for the economy and society of Europe and to emphasize the achieved results.

Among the new initiatives, the EU is expected to propose a European Gender Institute - responsible for guarding the implementation of EU laws on equality between men and women.

The major problems for the women in the EU remain in areas of women's access to and participation in the labour market, training, career advancement and gender pay gap.

According to a European Commission report European women outnumber European men in higher education, but they face a 15 % pay gap. The salary gender gap is present across Europe - it is largest in the UK, Ireland and Austria, but the women's employment rate has increased faster over the past years.

There are also a gap in the employment, with average rate 16 % for all the member countries and with the highest rates in Greece, Malta and Italy (about 25 %) but in the recent years the process of employing women increases and their higher qualifications have lead to more women on high-level jobs in the member states.

In the present European Commission the number of the women is seven and there are 222 women members of the European Parliament. The old member states are represented with 31,31 % women, while the new ten member states are with only 14.81.

The gender equality is a fundamental principle of the EU, but to achieve the that goal there must be not only legislative framework and measures or quotas for the women deputies, there also must be will in the people and in the politics.



[ Barcelona,  
Spain ]



[www.afaemme.org](http://www.afaemme.org)

## AFAEMME (Federation of Associations of business-

women of the Mediterranean) is a unique Mediterranean businesswomen network, which has, in only 3 years, gained immense International cooperation. The organisation manages International projects in cooperation with its members and collaborators, carrying out studies on the role of women to promote qualified and managerial businesswomen, to contribute to the cultural development of women in business, to promote equality in work and improving conditions for women in terms of their socio-economic and professional lives.

### WOMEN MOBILITY PROJECT

In 2002, AFAEMME created an alliance with European Commission to help support them in their policy on gender equality. This policy is a key priority for the EC and originates from a Council Decision in 2001, which established a programme relating to a community wide strategy on Gender Equality 2001-2005. With the help and expertise on European Commission activities of some of the AFAEMME members and collaborators, it won a project based on a strategy of raising awareness of the business opportunities offered by the Internal Market of the European Union and to prepare women and women entrepreneur organisations to be an integral part of it. The main activities of this project were the creation of a Mediterranean women mobility platform (production and distribution of information on key aspects of job mobility in the Mediterranean region to employers, professionals and executives in order to attract a large number of qualified women) and the creation of a website ([womenmobility.org](http://womenmobility.org)) in order to broadcast and raise the awareness of the benefits of geographic mobility within this region.

### MED-PHARE

Subsequently, AFAEMME orientated its efforts towards the Eastern European countries where most support was needed and designed an International project with the support of the European Commission, known as MED-PHARE. This project was designed to enable businesswomen organisations in the 10 applicant European Countries to be active participants in the new European market and increase business opportunities offered to them.

The final report for this project was published in February 2004: **"Report on the Internal Market Acquis Issued by the businesswomen organizations: the strengthening of the internal market, social dialogue and support for the Small and Medium Enterprises"**, 2004 coordinated and produced by AFAEMME in collaboration with 24 businesswomen Associations from the Mediterranean basin and 21 organizations from the 10 candidate and acceding countries and co-financed by the European Commission. This report can be downloaded from [www.afaemme.org](http://www.afaemme.org).

The MED-PHARE forum final presentation of the studies took place in January 2004 in Sitges, Barcelona. It was a great success and was attended by over 50 organisations from Central,



Eastern and Mediterranean countries. A key outcome was to strengthen active partnerships between these organisations and it lay the foundations for future collaborations on businesswomen issues and also gender-equality. Terezia Borosne Bartha, International Director of the Confederation of Hungarian Employers and Industrialists, describes this event well in her address to Maria Helena de Felipe Lethonen, President of AFAEMME:

"This was the first mass meeting amongst the Mediterranean Women's groups and accession countries groups. Hopefully, this is the beginning of a flourishing network and I do hope on behalf of the Hungarian delegation we can add to this success"

**GENDER EQUALITY**

We did add to this success. With the realisation that it had created something wonderful and powerful, AFAEMME presented a third proposal to the Commission, increasing its efforts further by embracing a much larger project dedicated to Eastern Europe and creating and strengthening alliances with and between organisations in the rest of Europe. This project is "Labour Market and Entrepreneurship Overcoming Gender Stereotypes" and is co-financed by the Commission with approximately 600.000 Euros. The project unites the efforts of the KARAT coalition, which has a regional network of gender equality organisations, thereby fortifying a vital link between Central, Eastern, Western Europe and Mediterranean countries. The other two main partners are WAD - Womens Alliance for Development and SEGE- Greek Association of Women Entrepreneurs.

This is a unique project in Europe in that it brings together Gender Equality and Businesswomen organisations and concentrates on the obstacles facing women in the labour market and entrepreneurship and the effect of EC legislation in the 10 new Member States and 2 candidate countries, Romania and Bulgaria. 6 Gender Equality NGOs and 6 Businesswomen organisations from these countries provide the important research critical for the final report and come together in several planned conferences to aid this process. January 2006 in Brussels will hold the final large-scale presentation of the report and recommendations to the European Community Institutions, National Governments, and a number of interested Gender Equality and Businesswomen Organisations.

AFAEMME is aware of the differences of opportunities between the countries in the Mediterranean Area, especially between the



The AFAEMME Gender Equality Project team

Northern Mediterranean (Europe) and the Southern Mediterranean countries. Women participation in business on each side of the Mediterranean Sea is extremely different, some factors that cause this big gap are the culture, religion, and traditions which are all very strong in the Mediterranean zone. Other key barriers which are common on both sides are: the lack of female role models, a commitment to family and personal responsibilities, a lack of mentoring in business and of course the common stereotypical perception of women. AFAEMME wants to help in the promotion of work equality and the improvement of conditions for women in terms of their socio-economic and professional lives, eliminating all kind of discrimination and helping them to overcome any obstacle.

AFAEMME	
EU Member organizations	
SPAIN	Andalucian Federation of businesswomen (FAME) Association of businesswomen of the Balearic Islands (ASEME) Association of businesswomen of Castellon (APMC) Associacio Catalana d'Empresaries I Executives (ACEE) Murcian Association of businesswomen and Professionals (OMEP) Association for the Development of Businesswomen of Valencia (ADE)
CYPRUS	Cyprus Federation of Business and Professional Women (KOYEE)
MALTA	Malta Association of Women in Business (MAWB)
FRANCE	Dirigeantes
GREECE	Hellenic Association of Women Entrepreneurs (SEGE-HAWE)
ITALY	International Federation of Business and Professional Women (FIDAPA) Terziario Donna Confcommercio
Also others Members* in: TURKEY, GIBRALTAR, MOROCCO, EGYPT, LYBIA, SYRIA	



[ Warsaw, Poland ]

**K**arat is regional coalition of NGOs from Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, advocating for gender, social and economic justice in the region. The main activities of KARAT Coalition are focusing on the economic position of women from the CEE region. This includes research, lobbying and capacity building. Economic position of women is particularly important in the CEE region as due to the transformation period and economic reforms, taking place in the countries of the region the economic position of women is quite unstable and different to the economic position of women in other developed countries. Most of the projects of Karat Coalition, with an exception of Fair Play, are coordinated and implemented by Karat Secretariat. This, however, would not be possible without the input of constantly growing Karat membership, and particularly the input and dedication of Karat Board.



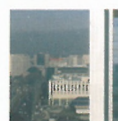
In 2002 Karat has finished the large project Gender and Economic Justice in EU Accession and Integration, funded by the UNIFEM. One of the main outputs of the projects were Gender Assessments of the impact of the EU accession on the position of women in the labour market in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. The gender assessments are available at [http://www.karat.org/eu\\_and\\_economy/gender\\_assessments.html](http://www.karat.org/eu_and_economy/gender_assessments.html)

The project culminated in a large international conference, which was held in November 2003 and provided both an opportunity to launch the Assessments and to discuss the links between the EU enlargement and the position of women in the entire CEE/CIS.

Karat started its Economic Literacy Program already in 2001, when the first economic literacy workshop for CEE/CIS was conducted. Close co-operation with WIDE (Women in Development Europe) [www.wide-network.org](http://www.wide-network.org) is one of the important elements of the Program. In the beginning of 2004 a second Economic Literacy Training was conducted. The workshop allowed for the strengthening economic literacy capacity of Karat member organizations. This had "trickle down effect" with participants, conducting trainings in their respective countries. Participants of the economic literacy workshop are now better equipped to undertake lobbying for economic justice, as well as to undertake research focusing on the issues. At the economic literacy workshop new teaching modules, developed specifically for that workshop, were tried. Further, the needs and interests of the participants relating specific fields of economic literacy were established. KARAT plans to conduct next Economic Literacy workshop for CEE/CIS region in 2006. As part of the program "Economic Literacy Kit for CEE/CIS" has been written. It is going to be published soon in both English and Russian, and it will be available in hard copy as well as electronic version. Most of the activities, undertaken as part of Karat's Economic Literacy Program have been funded by WIDE, with additional funding also received from Global Fund for Women.



During the second half of 2004 and early 2005 Karat was strongly involved in Beijing +10 process. This involved planning Karat's strategy (including fundraising), producing fact sheets and attending of the 49th CSW Session by large number of Karat members. Eleven Karat members and staff attended the session thanks to the funds secured by Karat Secretariat and provided by Mama Cash and Global Fund for Women. Other members also attended thanks to other sources of funding. Detail report about the Beijing +10 process, including fact sheets produced by Karat as well as links to other publications and position papers in production of which Karat was involved can be found on Karat's website [www.karat.org](http://www.karat.org).





Interview with **Kinga Lohmann**  
Executive Director of Karat Coalition



**FP: What has been the main achievement of Karat over the period of last two years?**

**Kinga Lohmann** In my opinion Karat's main achievement is that it is recognized as an organization, which can provide valuable expertise and consultancy in numerous areas, related to the situation of women in CEE/CIS region, and particularly in the area of economic position of women, position of women in the labour market. Another area of our recognized expertise is the link between the EU enlargement and the situation of women in the entire CEE/CIS region. Due to this recognition, Karat (and here I mean both Karat members as well as employees of Karat Secretaries) have been invited to participate in variety of large, medium and small initiatives. An example of a large initiative is the project promoted by AFEAMME that Karat (and WAD) are involved in, and that this issue of Fair Play is focusing on. Very concrete examples of smaller but very tangible example are consultancies undertaken by Karat's in 2004. Both involved creating databases: one on Institutional Mechanisms for the advancement of women in 16 CEE countries (prepared for UNIFEM) and the other on Facts and Figures on Gender Equality, in relation to the situation of women from 17 CEE countries in the labour market (prepared for ILO).

One of the main efforts (especially of those members and staff of Secretariat from new EU member

states) has gone towards being advocates of perspectives and needs of women from our region at the EU level and building the partnership and cooperation with women and NGOs, focusing on lobbying from old EU member states. This cooperation has been very important for developing a common vision and agenda for women in the wide Europe without division for EU countries and the rest of South and East Europe, which are outside of EU. At the moment most important for Karat is cooperation with Wide (they often "order" from us infosheets, focusing on the situation of women in the region) and German WOMNET and NRO Frauen Forum which let to the production common position paper. Ongoing co-operation of Karat with Germany is personified and made possible by Silke Steihilber.

**FP: This sounds very good and inspiring, but I am sure last two years could not only consist of successes. So what were the main difficulties faced by Karat during that period?**

**KL:** Of course this is true. While achieving quite a lot Karat has almost disappeared during the period! And the reasons of course were not lack of enthusiasm of its members or the Board, or lack of people wanting to work hard on the issues tackled by the Coalition, the reason was lack of financial stability. So the main difficulty Karat faced last year was assuring stable funding for its projects. The situation

w w w . k a r a t . o r g

Karat website [www.karat.org](http://www.karat.org) provides information about Karat member organizations, including links to their websites and details of contact persons. It also features updates on current Karat's projects and information about past projects. It also offers useful links.

[www.womenslabour.org](http://www.womenslabour.org) is addressed to women and the labour market in Central and Eastern Europe. This English language website addresses the situation of CEE women on the labour market and includes statistics, graphs and analysis as well as related links. Currently it only focuses on the situation of women in the labour market in four countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland), but in the future it will include data and analysis addressing the position of women in the labour market in other countries of the CEE/CIS region. The production of the website was funded by the Global Fund for Women.

w w w . k a r a t . o r g



in 2004 was particularly hard due to the fact that the main donor (UNIFEM) withdrew its financial support for KARAT activities. It was partly because of the fact that in this year Poland (a country where KARAT Coalition is registered) and some other countries of KARAT members joined the European Union. As a consequence traditional donors (mainly based in US) withdraw their support due to the assumption that it will be replaced by the EU funds. This did not happen however. EU funds are still extremely difficult to obtain for NGOs from new EU members. Additionally no transition period was assured to let them prepare themselves for the new situation and new system of applying for the grants. The situation looks much better for Karat this year. Still I am not very optimistic regarding the funds available for NGOs, especially human rights and lobbying organizations from new EU member states in the near future. There is a lot of talk about Structural Funds, but in practice there is lack of mechanisms on national level and clear rules, which would make it possible for an average non governmental organization to access those funds with a reasonable ease. At the moment nongovernmental organizations face huge obstacles, including formal ones, which in practice make it impossible for them to access the funds. So, still a lot of our efforts have to be put into fundraising. The paradox is that once you get the funding all your time is taken up by implementing the projects, leaving you less time for fundraising. I would like to add that all NGOs from our region have difficulty in securing the funds, so Karat is not alone here.

**FP: If Karat's financial future is so insecure, are you able to make any plans for the future?**

**KL:** Well, hope that the worse is already behind Karat. But I would also like to say that the fact that we cannot be sure about our financial future makes it even more important to have good strategy and constantly plan new initiatives, which can improve the situation of women in our region. For the last years Karat's activities have been focused on economic issues. This is due to the fact that this area is still overlooked by many women's organisations from the region despite the fact that as a consequence of economic changes women in CEE region are disadvantaged. In the coming years Karat will continue its activities in this area. In its future program Karat will continue working on economic issues especially those related to the labour market. We also plan to be more involved in social problems. Our work will be focused on the situation of CEE/CIS women but also within wider scope of global activities, for example those related to the Millennium Development Goals

review and Global Call to Action against poverty in which Karat plans to be involved.

**FP: This sounds like a lot of work ahead of Karat. But how do you plan your activities and how can you be sure that they respond to the actual needs of the women from CEE/CIS?**

**KL:** The main directions and key points for KARAT programs are set by Karat Board (seven members, each one elected for two-year term of office with one year alternation) during its strategy meetings. As Karat is a coalition of organizations (members) it reflects members needs and opinions in planning the future programs, therefore the consultation with members are taking place before the strategy meeting (in form of questionnaire disseminated among all Karat members), and the discussions and decisions taken by the Board are based on the outcome this consultation. The last strategy meeting of Karat took place in October 2004 in Warsaw.

Our members evaluate each project or activity of Karat internally - and some projects are evaluated externally by independent experts (this was the case with the project "Gender and Economic Justice in European Union Accession and Integration" supported by UNIFEM). Karat puts an emphasis on the participatory process of its members in the strategy planning and evaluation of the projects. Constant contact

Interview with **Kinga Lohmann** Executive Director of Karat Coalition

is possible thanks to the e-mailing lists developed by Karat for different purposes (for the communication with all members and friends, for Board members discussion or for working on specific projects). At the same time it needs to be added, that while we may decide that some programs or initiatives are very much needed what is finally implemented very much depends what the donors are prepared to give funds for. Unfortunately at different periods of time different issues are more 'trendy' than others and those trends often are not the same as areas of interest singled out by Karat. Luckily many donors consult organizations (or at least some organizations) regarding what funding should be devoted to.





Fair Play  
presents

**Vesselina**

**Filipova**





[ Sofia, Bulgaria ]

## Women's Alliance

## for Development (WAD)



### WAD

was founded in 1996. Eight years later, WAD has succeeded in establishing a highly valued Resource Centre, which specializes in the area of gender and development, and offers information, communication, consultative and training services to a broad variety of civil society organisations, paying special attention to the support of community-based and newly established groups, on the one hand, and to advocacy and lobbying on national and local level, on the other.

In 2000 WAD initiated and is now administrating the National Network for Equal Opportunities (NNEO), which includes 72 member organizations from all over the country. WAD has a good reputation not only in Bulgaria, but also on international level, i.e. WAD is one of the active members of Karat Coalition for Regional Action in CEE and CIS countries, the Gender Task Force of the Stability Pact, SHINE, Huairou Commission.

In 2003 WAD managed to coordinate the work and cooperate in coalition with the main NGOs, lobbying for the new legislative changes, mainly in the field of gender equality and social justice (1 campaign for the Domestic violence Act and legislation-related appeals initiated by supporting the Equality Act, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Trafficking law). A major advantage of WAD is the organization of advocacy initiatives related to its leading role in the NNEO - 72 NGOs, working in different areas, which could be very quickly mobilized.

In 1997 started the "Resource Center" Program, which include information, consultations, fact sheets, "Zharava" monthly magazine (36 issues published till 2000), web site - [www.women-bg.org](http://www.women-bg.org), Monthly Bulgarian bulletin, "Fair Play" Quarterly regional magazine on gender and development issues.

In 2000 began the "Training Center" Program - 42 modules covering 8 topics. For 2003 and 2004 - more than 40 trainings, delivered for over 700 participants, representatives of NGOs, local authorities, political parties, different institutions, media representatives, unemployed people.

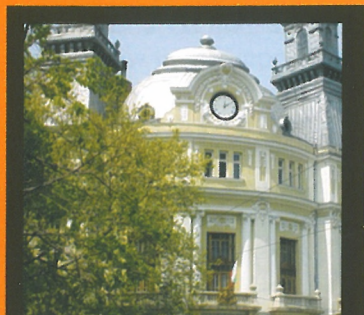
The "Lobbying and advocacy" Program, started in 1997, dealing with Participation in the preparation of the Equal Opportunities Act in Bulgaria, lobbying for the new anti-discrimination legislature, initiatives together with the NNEO on national level and participation in the regional consultative process.

The "Institutional development" Program, which began in 1996, includes capacity building of the WAD staff and stakeholders; development of monitoring system, marketing of services; evaluation and strategic planning.

In 2003 the localelections campaign "Motivation campaign for young people in the Students municipality in Sofia", sponsored by NDI was held. This project was a part of the National campaign for citizen motivation and active participation in the local elections. WAD reached 536 students, 123 of them young mothers. The main goal was to motivate students to participate in the elections and to insist on concrete measures.

In 2002 - 2003 was implemented a project, sponsored by USAID - "Reducing the risk of prostitution and trafficking of economically disadvantaged children in target areas in Russe, Bulgaria" -. WAD is responsible for the management and capacity building of the 3 partner organizations, implementing the project.

In 2002 WAD had a successful implementation of a join project, funded by NDI "Bridging the gap between elected representatives and voters. Open dialogue: Educational programs for prevention of trafficking in the secondary schools" with the



# WAD



involvement of four local NGOs - members of the NNEO. The project aimed to provoke open dialogue between MPs and citizens (young people and women) and increase the awareness on trafficking of human beings. This project received the Council of Europe "Young Active Citizens" Award for 2003.

In 2001 WAD and its partners carried out the FIRST National Women-voters' Education Campaign, aiming at increasing the participation of women-voters in the Parliamentary elections, funded by NDI.

In 1999 the Project was implemented named "Parity - Bulgaria" - WAD carried out the First national campaign for more women in the Local elections in 1999, resulting in the establishment of the "120 Platform" - a Coalition, working for equal gender representation in decision-making.

Research Projects are a significant part of WAD's work. In 2001 - 2002 "Women, Labor and Globalization" Research was carried out. It included coordination of comparative analysis of the status of women and men in Bulgaria, Hungary and Kazakhstan, sponsored by UNIFEM.

Regional research "Increasing the level of advocacy skills/experiences in South-East Europe" (2002) - coordination and administration of 4 research projects in Albania, Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia, sponsored by C.S. Mott Foundation, "Bulgaria: Gender Aspects of Poverty" Research (2002), conducted together with the agency of Social Analyses for the World Bank.

In October 1999 on behalf of Karat coalition WAD organized and



hosted a regional conference "Tools for lobbying at on gender impacts of economic globalization and transition policies - focus on the World Bank", drawing in over 50 participants from CEE and CIS region. In September 2002 WAD, in collaboration with GROOTS International - USA, organized the first workshop "Small Deals, Big Change. 30 grassroots women leaders from CEE countries, Russia, India and Turkey shared their experience regarding the social and economic situation in their countries and strategies.

In October 2003 WAD implemented a final seminar for the results of the regional research "Women, work, globalization", which was conducted in Bulgaria, Hungary and Kazakhstan.

Since 2002 WAD has been organizing the annual national meetings of the National Network for Equal Opportunities, over 100 participants from all over the country.

WAD's activities include administration and coordination of grants: 1997 - 2001- Administration of the Charity Know How program for Bulgaria, education and small grants, and 2001- 2004: Administration of the grants program of the Co-operating Netherlands Foundations.

## 2001 - 2002 Project: Regional Research Women Work Globalization

During the period 2001-2002 WAD coordinated a regional research project in Bulgaria, Kazakhstan and Hungary with the objective of improving women's access to the market and to current and future employment opportunities in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the CIS.

WAD in cooperation with the Agency for Social Analyses (ASA) conducted, published and distributed a national research on economic opportunities and social situation of women and men in Bulgaria.

The Bulgarian research was published and distributed to governmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions. The research findings were presented to media, on 3 press conferences, 10 trainings of WAD, and during 2 conferences, organized by WAD partners.

The goal was to observe the influence of the economic and social reforms, privatization and globalization processes on the quality of life, employment and life choices of citizens. The study highlights also on expectations, attitudes and new roles of women at work and in the family regarding the dynamics of the global transformations in all spheres of public life in Bulgaria.

For a first time all this processes were analyzed within the context of the different influence they have on women's and men's life and their relations in the family and in the society.

### Some of the main findings:

The process of the massive impoverishment of the population is continuing. The main problem is not only the growing poverty, but also the reduced opportunities to improve the quality of life.

Women are more vulnerable to come across poverty just because they have lower income, face more difficulties to find a job and have more health problems than men. Survey registered a strong prevail of women over men in the sphere of the "unpaid household work".

Without significant measures and strategies for overcoming poverty there is a real risk of formation of "second poor generation", with will turn the "cultural model of poverty" from national issue into a national characteristic.

The last chapter of the research is giving concrete recommendations to the government and particular ministries. In general, the development and implementation of gender mainstreaming as a strategic approach in all spheres and levels of decision-making should be a top priority of the current political agenda in the country.





# S.E.



[ Thessaloniki, Greece ]



**SEGE** was established in 1997 in Thessaloniki, Greece as a non-governmental and non-profit organization. It is a member of the Committee of Commerce and Development of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Federation of Industries of Northern Greece, the Federation of Associations of Women Entrepreneurs of the Mediterranean (AFAEMME), while many of its members are Board Members of Greek Chambers. It co-operates with Ministries, social, professional and non-governmental organizations at a national and international level for the promotion of the interests of women entrepreneurs. SEGE provides to women entrepreneurs in Greece the environment to develop their businesses and themselves, promotes youth entrepreneurship, improves

recognition of their achievements in businesses and further benefits the development of women enterprises through information and research. It promotes ethics in the business activity of women and undertakes actions that prove its social responsibility. SEGE comprises today more than 450 members from all over Greece

SEGE activities include networking with women entrepreneurs, events and conferences on crucial issues affecting entrepreneurship, training programs and specialized seminars, information on national and European business and development programs and crucial financial issues.

Among the events organized by SEGE is the conference in Thessaloniki' 99 "Euro and how it will affect companies" as well as the one in Thessaloniki'02, referred to as "Women start your own business!" Other conferences emphasized on "Nutrition and Food for Working Women"(Thessaloniki'02) and "Woman S.A. How to create it"(Thessaloniki'03). In 2003 and 2004, in Vincenza & Thessaloniki, a business partnership event "Doing Business Without Borders" - EU BORDER Programme, in which participated 400-500, aimed to help EU border and accession and candidate countries develop co-operations. Implementation of Programs for education and training of employees, financed by national and EU funds is also a part of the activities, which SEGE carries out.

The organization participated in submitting a proposal to Prefectures and Municipalities in the frames of a EU Programme for complete interventions in favour of women (measure 5.3 for the improvement of the access and participation of women in the labour market of the Programme Employment & Vocational Training), financed by The EU 3rd Community Support Framework Fund.

A part of SEGE's activities have been actions for Women Entrepreneurs, financed by Chambers of Commerce, aiming to support and inform single parent families.

Cooperation with Government organisations for the submission of proposals to the EQUAL programme (concerns policies of equality - EU initiative), training of women entrepreneurs on how to provide first aid when accidents happen in the working environment - Offered by the Red Cross, organisation of business missions to neighbouring countries have also been implemented by SEGE.



# G.E.



SEGE's address is:  
**Ermou 36, 54623 Thessaloniki, Greece**  
*Frideriki Voukali, President*



From a business trip in Istanbul, from left, President of SEGE Frideriki Voukali with the Vice President of the Turkish Chamber of Commerce Mr. Ugur Catvas and Mr. H. Kounalakis, Commercial Attache of the Greek Embassy in Turkey



President of SEGE Frideriki Voukali with Mr. Constantinos Stefanopoulos, President of the Greek Republic, in one of the business trips abroad.



## INTERVIEW WITH FRIDERIKI VOUKALI

President of SEGE

Thessaloniki 8th of April 2005

Frideriki Voukali is the President of SEGE, the most important association of women entrepreneurs in Greece. She is a woman-entrepreneur, she manages her own business, a heavy engineering company. This allowed her to become aware of the problems businesswomen have to face and also encouraged her to take a step forward to improve the status of women.

**Q: As a businesswoman yourself in Greece, how would you describe the best description of a businesswoman in your country?**

**A:** I would describe her as a woman in any other part of Europe, facing problems in every day life, in business, coping with pressure from her family and the usual problems, concerning women stereotypes.

**Q: Which actions does SEGE plan to implement in order to intervene in this situation?**

**A:** Developing gender equality policies, intervening wherever we feel it is necessary to intervene as to these issues. We are also involved in all the projects that have to do with women entrepreneurship, we work with Ministries that have shown a positive interest in order to adopt and to change some policies and to take into considerations proposals that we have made. Now we are going through a very important process with the Chambers of Commerce here in Greece, which are 59. There have been created special committees that bring together businesswomen and this is great for us because we have the opportunity to reunite and have some information of their influence. It is a great achievement both for SEGE and for women entrepreneurs in Greece, since it is a good way to bring them together too.

**Q: What is the main thing in common and the main difference between a businesswoman in Greece and in the rest of Europe?**

**A:** There is an important difference as to the percentage, in Greece the percentage of women entrepreneurs is 15%, in Europe I think is higher - 35%. On the other hand, funding is a common problem, family responsibilities, stereotypes, support from the family and also lack of information.

**Q: Can you tell me of one specific stereotype here in Greece?**

**A:** When a woman here in Greece has an idea to do something, the first answer of her family is: "You are a woman, you cannot do that."

**Q: What are the objectives you would like to achieve at the end of this project?**

**A:** We want to promote the results of this project to all the bodies where we have influence, it is something that we had in mind before and we believe we can disseminate the results of this project. Something similar happened with another project that we had about promotion of women entrepreneurship in connection with a program of the Ministry of Development for women to start a new business. This project has been in force for two or three years now and we had some disagreements as to the way the program was built and the way proposals were accepted, the way the whole system was working, the criteria and everything. We intervened and our proposals were very well accepted and taken into consideration by the Ministry and this is what we intend to do with the results of this project. They have already contacted us from the General Secretary for Gender Equality and the Ministry of Development and they are expecting to receive from us the results of this meeting.





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lot of snow, white streets and soft lights - it is a real winter blending with the specific charm of the Polish capital.

The feeling was great when we were welcomed by the bright smiles of the colleagues from Karat office, who were waiting for us to start the first working meeting of the project.

Around the table women, representatives of NGO's from Eastern European and Mediterranean countries filled the room with enthusiasm, diversity and ideas for efficient work during the project.

The main goal of this first meeting was to outline the project objectives - developing the capacity of the Gender Equality and

Businesswomen Organizations as well as promoting efficient gender equality in the economic life and advance their influence on the economic policy. We were informed about all the activities planned (reports writing, Fair Play Magazine and workshops) and all the organizations participating in the project, international promoter, regional and national partners and focal points, both kinds of organizations, working on gender equality and women entrepreneurship issues.

Project presentation also described expected outputs of the project, which include 12 national studies on obstacles, facing women in the labour force and entrepreneurship because of the gender stereotypes, and monitor the implementation of gender equality directives and EU Employment strategy at national levels. Publishing "Fair Play" - a magazine related to women in the labour market and women's entrepreneurship is also a part of this project.

Project target group and way of use of the final outputs as well as ways of communication between organizations taking part in the project were also mentioned in the presentation.

# WARSAW

11 - 13 FEBRUARY







Below we would like to briefly introduce the participants - focal points in the project with their organizations and shared expectations at the beginning of our work.

" I expect that we'll manage to make an impact on EU bodies, European Commission and National Governments. "



### Kulliki Lucks

**(Business and professional women in Estonia)**

BPW-Estonia's activities are focused on maintaining and expanding business and professional women's networks, disseminating experience and best practice for mutual assistance and support. Upgrading women's skills and knowledge through training and participation in national and international programmes and supporting women's career aspirations and all-round advancement are also part of their work. Familiarizing the public at large with business and professional women's achievements and problems, and suggesting solutions as well as stimulating women's

increased involvement in decision-making positions are aims of BPW. One of BPW-Estonia's traditions is nominating "Woman of the Year" among outstanding women-entrepreneurs and professional women to highlight women's contribution to the national economy and social development. Annual women-entrepreneurs' trade fairs and contact seminars, annual meetings, winter and summer events, arranged by local clubs monthly meetings and discussions on a large variety of women-related topics are also conventional part of the organization's work. Charity activities, training courses and discussion groups are frequently organized.

### Charlotte Gregory (Malta Association of Women in Business)

Malta Association of women in business is an organization, which promotes women-entrepreneurs. The organization works to ensure that the business environment is focused on providing opportunities for women to move forward as leaders.



" I expect that we'll hopefully find some solutions to certain problems that might be highlighted through research and discussions between all the organizations taking part in this project. I wish that we'll be able to use the final report in our country to influence governmental entities to change laws and regulations, concerning women on the labour force and to be able to encourage women to return to work. "

" My expectations are regular relations and even collaboration between women business organizations and those, specialized in gender equality policy, to be developed and strengthened in their country. "



### Stanimira Hadjimitova

**Gender Project for Bulgaria Foundation**

Gender Project for Bulgaria Foundation is advocacy group with 10 years history of work for ensuring "de facto" gender equality in Bulgaria. Organization's first project was focused on supporting unemployed women and women-entrepreneurs by providing them with training "How to start small business" and "How to export". Now the organization is going to start the first gender budgeting initiative in Bulgaria.

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**Henrieta Kollarova**  
**Alliance of women in Slovakia**

Henrieta is representing the Alliance of women in Slovakia. It is an advocacy women's NGO, dealing with all kinds of women issues, especially domestic violence, trafficking in human beings, labour market and impact on women, shadow economics, lobbying for legislative changes.

" I expect that we'll manage to overlap connections between women-employers and entrepreneurs as well as we find decisions how to deal with gender stereotypes and change them. "

**Jurate Puidiene**  
**Women Employment Information Centre**  
 Women Employment Information Centre (WEINC) in Kaunas, Lithuania is a women's NGO, working since 1994 to improve women's position through training, networking and empowering. Its target groups are

unemployed women, women who want to start their business, women in business and leadership positions. There are 5 networks, functioning at WEINC: Women in business, unemployed women "Crossroad", Women in politics, young women and girls, accountants.



" I expect from this project to strengthen networks between NGOs from other EU and CEE/CIS countries, to learn more about other experiences and cultural differences, to make friends. Additionally I would like to learn more how to influence national and EU decision- making process. "

" I expect that women's movement will become stronger and I hope that women's issues will be considered as important as other main topics on the agenda of governments. "



**Mariana Petcu**  
**"AUR" National Organization of Human Resources Specialists**

"AUR" National Organization of Human Resources Specialists is professional association, providing training and consultancy in human resources and in the same time is involved in projects, related to women's working conditions and women on the labor market. The organization circulates "friendly manner" brochures with the main labor rights, works with national and international institutions, dealing with labor rights in general and with women's rights and equal opportunities problems. AUR provides training and education on the above topics in high and vocational schools and universities.

**Jana Javornik**  
**independent expert from Slovenia**



" I hope that this project will help us in sharing the know-how among women from different countries as well as gaining an insight into labor markets of other countries. I expect that we'll manage to build a common strategy and succeed in initiating a debate in EU. This project will also make women's NGOs ideas heard and seen and it will raise the awareness about gender issues in the CEE/NMS. "



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I expect that we'll manage to develop a great report with strong recommendations, which will help us to influence the EU employment and gender equality policy.



### Kinga Lohman

#### Karat Coalition - Poland

The Karat Coalitions aims to ensure gender equality in CEE/CIS region by maintaining implementation of international agreements. It observes the implementation of platform for action by the governments and actively participates in the Beijing procedure. The coalition is also involved in EU accession process and in the labor market issue.

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My hope and expectation from this project is to learn more about the new EU member states and to work together in a team that has the objective to promote gender equality in the arena of economics. I strongly believe that gender equality is a driving force for economic development and growth.



### Elizabeth Villagomez

International Consultant, Almenara Estudios Economicos y Sociales, S.L, Spain

### Anna Colamussi

#### AFAEMME (Federation of Associations of business-women of the Mediterranean)

AFAEMME is the unique Mediterranean business-women network, which has gained in only 3 years of existence a large International cooperation. The organization manages international projects in cooperation with their

members and carry out international studies on the role of women in order to promote qualified and managerial businesswomen, to contribute to the cultural development of women in business, to promote equality in work and to improve conditions for women in terms of their socio-economic and professional lives.



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I expect to be proud of having had a faithful cooperation with NGO/Business-women organizations. Maybe we cannot change the system of discriminations, but sure we'll move something forward together.

”

I hope that we'll achieve some real results in this project - results that will affect the ordinary women, that will help women-entrepreneurs and all women at work. I expect that we'll work well together and we'll manage to deal with gender stereotypes.



### Pavlina Filipova - WAD, Bulgaria

Women's Alliance for Development (WAD) was founded in 1996. Eight years later, WAD has succeeded in establishing a highly valued Resource Centre, which specializes in the area of gender and development, and offers information, communication, consultative and training services to a broad variety of civil society organisations, paying special attention to the support of community-based and newly established groups, on the one hand, and to advocacy

and lobbying on national and local level, on the other. In 2000 WAD initiated and is now administrating the National Network for Equal Opportunities (NNEO), which includes 72 member organizations from all over the country. WAD has a good reputation not only in Bulgaria, but also on international level, i.e. WAD is one of the active members of Karat Coalition for Regional Action in CEE and CIS countries, the Gender Task Force of the Stability Pact, SHINE, Huairou Commission.

**WARSAW**  
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POINTS



The main objective of the present project is to develop the capacity of the gender equality and businesswomen organizations, involved to promote efficient gender equality in the economic life and advance their influence on the economic policy through the production, dissemination of, and exchange of information and good practice, as well as networking at Community level between the Mediterranean and the new EU members and candidate countries. In order to achieve this, a series of studies on each one of the countries will be prepared, that focus on the institutional frameworks and the realities and issues that need to be addressed most urgently in each of the countries. Although one may think that studies can sit and collect dust, the other activities in the project will ensure that its main conclusions and recommendations can be used by the organizations, involved in lobbying their own governments and EU institutions in advancing women's rights and addressing the issues.

The Eastern European States, which have recently joined the EU, the acceding states and the two Mediterranean countries have been the subject of analysis, albeit not always in the same intensity given the different political, historical and social backgrounds that led them through the process of joining the EU.

# Women and Work in the New and Acceding Member States: State of the knowledge and the added value of the Transnational Project by KARAT WAD AFAEMME SEGE

By **Elizabeth Villagomez**,  
International Consultant,  
Almenara Estudios  
Economicos y Sociales, S.L.  
(Spain)



Indeed, the Eastern European countries were the subject of much analysis after the end of the communist era and some of that analysis focused on the situation of women in particular or in the situation of gender equality. A number of institutions like the World Bank, UNECE, UNICEF, and more recently the European Foundation of the Improvement of Living and Working conditions and UNIFEM have produced or supported studies into the situation of women and of gender equality in the region in the framework of transition, globalisation and EU accession.

In the case of Cyprus and Malta, which are Mediterranean countries, but with very different situations, the focus on studies on gender or women, given by the international community have been less, but they also show the gaps with respect to women's position in the economy and with respect to gender equality. In the case of Cyprus, the issues of gender and conflict have also been important (for example the work by diverse UN agencies in Cyprus, see for example the UNIFEM web-site on Women War and Peace <http://www.womenwarpeace.org/cyprus/cyprus.htm>).

With respect to the labour market, the most influential report, which unfortunately gave a partial view about women's economic and social position in the former communist states, was that of the World Bank. The comparison of women to men resulted in stating that: "With respect to gender, the concern has been that worsening labor market conditions have had a disproportionately negative effect on women by increasing any pre-existing gender gap in employment and wages... The findings of this study ... do not support this claim. There appear to be no empirical evidence that the treatment of women in the labor market has systematically deteriorated across the region" (p.xi)

On the other hand, the reports supported by UNIFEM and carried out by some of the partners in this project (WAD and KARAT) have begun to unearth data and to look behind the available statis-



**Elizabeth Villagomez** is a specialist in applied economics in the areas of social policy and labour market issues in developed and developing countries with 15 years experience in Mexico and EU countries. Professional activities have ranged from university lecturer and researcher to project manager in a non-profit research center. Early professional activities include supervising basic data collection for economic census in Mexico. More recent work includes managing research project on fiscal impacts of insertion of disabled persons in the labour market of eight EU countries and evaluation of pilot project for insertion of young people in emerging occupations. During 2001-2002 she was Economic Governance Adviser for UNIFEM (United Nations Development Fund for Women) in New York, managing the global programme on gender budgets, supported by the Belgian Government with implementation in 14 countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America. She is a Licenciada (B:A:) in Economics by the Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana and holds a post-graduate diploma in Quantitative Development Economics by Warwick University (England). Elizabeth received the title of Doctor in Economic Science by Universidad de Alcala de Henares (Spain) in 1999 and has two awards for her thesis on informal labour markets in Mexico.

tics in order to give a different picture and to clarify two aspects that, according to a recent UNIFEM report on the region, get conflated: "1) did women's labor market position and overall living standards deteriorate after the transition? 2) and did women's labor market position deteriorated relative that of men?" (UNIFEM, 2005). To the first question the answer is a resounding yes, while to the second the picture, painted by statistics, is indeed not so clear. Opportunities for both women and men have been reduced drastically at the same time that globalisation and integration into the EU have meant that some very strict macroeconomic rules have been applied and that firms have had to adapt or die given the pressures of competition.

But the numbers, again, do not tell the whole story. One of the ways in which the interpretation of the available statistics can also be contrasted is through the use of qualitative information such as case studies, in-depth interviews and focus groups, which also shed light on the details that can sometimes escape more aggregated statistics. This will be one of the most important contributions of the focal points to the national studies that will be elaborated under this project.

Without a doubt, the complexities that affect women's everyday lives as workers and as entrepreneurs, need a much more in-depth look as official statistics both in the EU and beyond continue to be in the process of being "engendered". One of the issues, for example, that affects both women workers and women entrepreneurs is the issue of reconciliation of work and family life. For women entrepreneurs this might be seen as a very high cost given the small size of their enterprises, depending on the sector of activity and the more or less modern organisation of work or flexibilisation of work, which is used in their firms. On the other hand, the decrease in public services and the low wages received in many of the countries force women to choose over work or reproduction, or to juggle work and family in a way that becomes stressful and can endanger their health. Curiously, the World Bank publication, already mentioned above, does acknowledge that this seems to be the case in the new MS. So, what could the studies that this project is preparing add to what is already known or is being used for policy-making?

To our knowledge, the type of approach, joining the view of women entrepreneurs and women workers, has not been put forward, and even less so in the context of the stereotypes, which are built around women's vital experiences nor around their social and economic rights. In this sense, the innovation and value added of this project resides precisely in looking at issues from both angles and finding the common space in which women's rights can be advanced and equal opportunities enhanced.

Other issues, such as taxes and benefits, wage gaps, social security contributions and pensions, access to financial services are a sample of the type of information that will be processed and analysed in the 12 country reports and that will reflect the input from all 12 focal-points in collaboration with the writing and editing team. This type of collaboration will also ensure that the participants will have ownership of the study and can use it to advance the issues according to the advocacy strategies of their organisations and of the project.





# Labour Market and Entrepreneurship project in the context of KARAT's gender and economic justice program.

By Anita Seibert

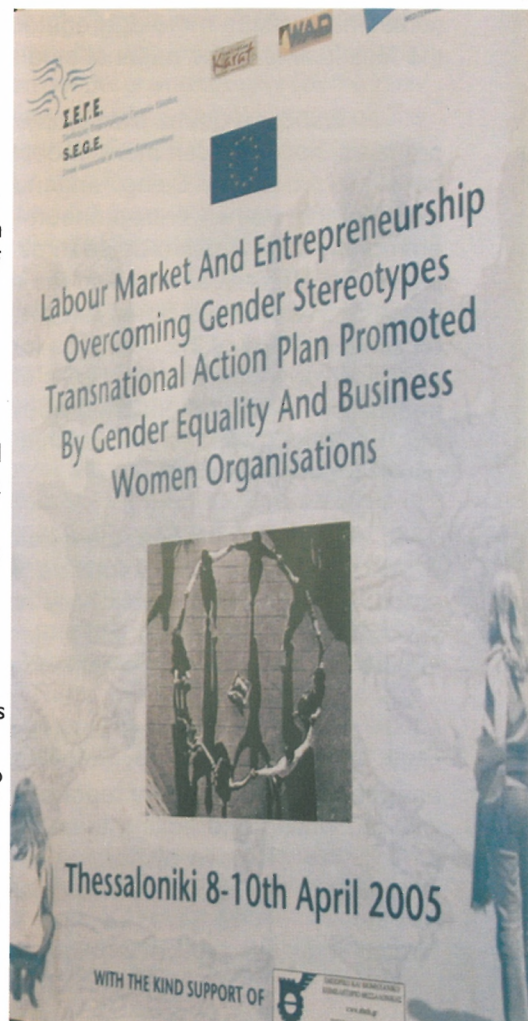


The current project "Labour Market and Entrepreneurship - Overcoming Gender Stereotypes. Transnational Action Plan Promoted by

Gender Equality and Business Women Organizations", undertaken by KARAT in partnership with AFEAMME, WAD and SEGE, builds on the extensive experience of KARAT Coalition in the area of gender and economic justice as well as other resources at the disposal of the Coalition, such as human resources. This experience has been gained during previous economy focused projects. Further, the current project is one of the elements of the long term strategy of the Coalition to address economic situation of women. The strategy is based on the assumption that gender equality cannot be ensured (or explained) without linking the current situation of women in CEE/CIS to the dominant socio-economic process and the role they are playing (or not playing) in it. This approach is particularly important in CEE/CIS region for which capitalist (neo-liberal) economic system is relatively new and only now starting to receive increasing attention of gender organizations and/or feminist academics, and other stakeholders interested in gender equality. KARAT's economic strategy also includes entering into partnerships with other organizations focusing on feminist economics, and development of working relationships with experts in the field.

While KARAT, and even more so its member organizations have always recognized the role economy plays in social and political position of women, during its first years of existence KARAT did not have projects specifically addressing economic position of women in CEE/CIS region. It was not until 2002 that KARAT was able to commence two large economic justice projects. One of the project was a two year initiative titled "Gender and Economic Justice in European Accession and Integration" funded by UNIFEM. One of the elements of the project was development of four analytical studies, focusing on the impact of the EU accession on the status of women in the labour market in CEE. The situation of four countries was analyzed: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland. The studies used latest available data and utilized expertise of KARAT members in the four countries as well as independent experts in the field of gender and economics. The studies are available at [http://www.karat.org/eu\\_and\\_economy/gender\\_assessments.html](http://www.karat.org/eu_and_economy/gender_assessments.html)

The development of the four studies led to strengthening of economic expertise among KARAT staff and members and let to involvement of KARAT in the production of other gender and economic materials. This for example included participation in Consultation at the European Parliament on





11 June 2003 organized by WIDE, which provided a critical review of the links between EU accession, macro-economic reforms, policy priorities and their impact on women in the CEE countries, as well as to linked EU annual progress reports and changes in national legislation on gender equality to the reality of women's economic and social situation. A publication of the KARAT's presentation in WIDE's Bulletin as well as the production of associated information sheets was a continuation of this process. KARAT has also established two websites dedicated to the situation of women on the labor market: [www.womenslabour.org](http://www.womenslabour.org) and [www.kobietypraca.pl](http://www.kobietypraca.pl) (in Polish).

For KARAT "Labour Market and Entrepreneurship - Overcoming Gender Stereotypes. Transnational Action Plan Promoted by Gender Equality and Business Women Organizations" project is a continuation of the 'Gender and Economic Justice in EU Accession and Integration' project. This is not only because in this project KARAT is also involved in production of gender materials, as the Coalition is responsible for co-ordination of the development of 12 National Studies addressing situation of women employees and women entrepreneurs, but also because it takes the discussion undertaken in Gender Assessments studies further - broadening it to issues relevant to women entrepreneurs. The need to adopt such broader approach was evident after completing Gender Assessments.

Another economy-focused project, undertaken by KARAT, is economic literacy. It commenced in 2002 with the first economic literacy workshop. The economic literacy program aims to strengthen economic knowledge among women's NGOs from CEE and CIS in order to increase their capacity to advocate for economic justice for all women from the region. The first regional economic literacy workshop was a great success. What is important the KARAT's members that participated in it confirm the need for KARAT to continue the project as well as its strategy focused on economic justice. Following this decision two representatives of KARAT underwent extensive training provided by WIDE to become economic literacy trainers. Second economic literacy training "How not to be scared of economy, economists and lobbying for gender and economic justice" was conducted in 2004. What is very important this economic literacy training had a significant 'snow ball effect' with participants of the training dissemination knowledge gained at the workshop in their countries and organizations, and of course using the skills gained in lobbying for economic justice.

At present KARAT is finishing the production of economic literacy Kit targeting NGOs from CEE/CIS region and particularly women's NGOs "Economic Literacy Resource Kit for CEE/CIS. Gender and Economics". The kit will be published in both English and Russian and will be available in printed as well as electronic version.

It was through the above activities that KARAT developed strong working relationship with most of the gender organizations who now participate in the "Labour Market and Entrepreneurship" project as national focal points. Consequently we could enter the project with the confidence that those organizations do have an expertise required for the production of the national report as well as other activities of the project that they are now participating in.

Although as it was said above KARAT started to focus on gender and economic justice in 2002 other activities which have been and continue to be undertaken by KARAT contribute very strongly to ability of the Coalition to follow its strategy focused on economic position of women. For example KARAT has been involved in lobbying for gender justice as well as monitoring of mechanisms aimed at ensuring gender justice from its beginning. As a consequence it is very well equipped for lobbying for related to economic issues. Secondly, KARAT has externally well established membership base, operating in the conditions governed by principles of democracy and hence can rely on its members to participate in diversity of projects including those focused on economics.

The need to continue emphasising on economic was emphasized by the participants of KARAT Coalition's Strategic meeting which took place in November 2004 and was attended by members of KARAT Board as well as other relevant persons. The Board has been also very enthusiastic about KARAT's involvement in the project "Labour Market and Entrepreneurship - Overcoming Gender Stereotypes. Transnational Action Plan Promoted by Gender Equality and Business Women Organizations", which at that state was already developed and submitted to the Commission. One of the reasons why this project is important for KARAT is that it focuses on increasing co-operation between gender organizations and businesswomen organizations. Such co-operation has been needed for quite some time now, partly, but not exclusively due to the fact that women employees (which are targeted by gender equality organizations) and women entrepreneurs are usually treated by policy makers, researchers etc as two completely separate groups, while in economic integrity of both groups is often undermined by similar gender related process. KARAT Coalition also plans to continue work in this field including project focusing on joint lobbying undertaken by gender and entrepreneurs organizations. This will be one of the elements of future implementation of economy focused strategy of KARAT.





After the end of the communists regime the labour-market situation changed dramatically. Unemployment turned into one of the biggest problems of postcommunist countries. Women suffered the consequences of this situation, trying to find whatever work possible, to take care of their families and even to keep their unemployed husbands self-esteem. Unfortunately a lot of women, especially those over 40, could not get over the "new rules" of the labour market and turned into depressed pensioners. Others, more enterprising and more courageous, managed to surmount the difficulties and after a lot of work can now proudly call themselves "women entrepreneurs".

Here we present **three ladies** - a successful businesswoman from Estonia - **Eva Truuverk**, a Romanian woman of great experience and respect - **Maria Valeanu**, and **Emilia ROSU** - secretary and president of the women's committee of the National Trade union Federation of Pensioners in Romania, who will tell more about the other side of the transition - those, who didn't manage to get on their legs again.

**Eva Truuverk** is one of the most active young ladies in our club. She has been the member of PBW Estonia already for 11 years. Three years she acted as the president of the local Tallinn Club. Eva owns a company and manages it daily. Her greatest achievement last year was the victory at the competition for Best Business Plan of the World.

- Eva, tell us briefly what kind of competition was it.

- The Board of Junior Chamber International JCI ([www.jci.cc](http://www.jci.cc)), the organization developing young leaders all over the world, initialized a project - the Best Business Plan of the world Competition in 2001. It takes place annually and everybody between 18 and 40



whole Estonian Chamber. The best part of the award was an invitation to the Annual Conference of JCI held in Copenhagen with 3000 JCI members being present from all over the world. Only this unforgettable event pushed me into the active participation of Chamber events. Last year our Chamber got a task to run the European Conference in Tallinn in 2006. I am the Deputy Conference Director of EC 2006.

([www.ec2006tallinn.ee](http://www.ec2006tallinn.ee)) I deeply appreciate the trust and regard it great personal challenge. We expect 2000 members to take part in the conference. The schedule of events will be very tight and interesting, lasting continuously for 5 days, 24 hours a day. None of the organizers gets paid for the job, doing it in their free time.

The award has supported me in my professional life as well. There were a few stories about it in the local press and therefore some business plans and establishments of business strategies have been ordered from me as a specialist in this field. It also emphasizes my opinions as a manager of a company. Mentioning the award is supportive when communicating with foreign business partners, who sometimes find

## The interview with Eva Truuverk by Kulliki Luks

are welcome to take part. The only thing a competitor has to do is to write a business plan and present it locally to the competition. There are about 100 countries, organizing the competition. Already in Estonia the Jury was very professional, decided my plan to be the best and forwarded it to the final competition, where it achieved the first price.

- 1 year has passed since you wrote the best business plan in the world. What this award has given you and what changes has it introduced to your professional career.

- Winning the competition was a great and happy surprise for me. Looking back onto these days, I must say it has turned the scales mostly in my JCI life. I have been the member of JCI Tallinn since spring 2003. Thanks to the award I became immediately known in the

Estonia and its companies insignificant. Once I was negotiating with a Finn, also a member of JCI, who had been among the audience when the award was given to me. We both found it very easy to talk to each other, having mutual interests and targets.

- What was the topic of your business plan and has it been put in the practice by now?

- My everyday work and JCI activities were connected in my business plan. I run Kvadrum ([www.ziil.ee](http://www.ziil.ee)), a company dealing with composing Internet and multimedia applications. In future we are going to specialize in the production of electronic teaching materials for small children. The first personal product is ready - the traffic game "Through the Town" ([www.play.ee](http://www.play.ee)). This is a computer game, teaching children between 3 and 7 to manage in realistic situation in streets. The aim of the business plan was to launch the game in 20 different countries at the





**Maria Valeanu** was born on 21st of August 1951 in the town of Tulcea, on the delta of the Danube River. In 1974 she graduated from the Faculty of International Trade in the Academy of Economic Studies. In the period 1974-1985 she worked as economist at the garment and textile company CONFEX, from 1985 to 1989 Maria was an economist at ROMCONTROL (control and verification body in Romania). Later she was also economist at the Academy of Economic Sciences - Laboratory for didactical and scientific researches and consultant in the team of Deloitte & Touche Romania and self-employed at the company IRMAR Imp-Exp SRL. Since 1994 Maria has been a unique shareholder and administrator of the company IRMAR Imp-Exp SRL (technical and economic consultancy and representation) and main shareholder and administrator of the company SC AUGUSTA PAPIER SRL. Married, her 28 years old son Andrei works as pilot.

Maria Valeanu is an illustration for a successful woman entrepreneur - she has large experience in international trade (30 years of work) and the right personal skills - high self esteem, spirit of competitor, very good reaction to high risk and pressure. "I took the courage to start my own business in one completely new field of activity from my desire of independency, combined with the ambition to prove that if I've been practicing very well and for long time, the main rules of my profession I may finalise any new task". Before 1989 she has

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been for 15 years only at executive positions, and after starting her own business she had to deal with all the necessary in one company activities: secretary, promoter, saleswomen, director, cleaning women etc. Her husband started to help her "for pity" and not because he believed in her success, and only after few years, when he saw the results, he recognized the capacity of his wife. In the first years after starting her own business she had to continue her activity as employee at Deloitte & Touche and at one private institute in order to have enough material means.

The activity in IRMAR Imp-Exp SRL as dealer of the German paper producer Papierfabrik August Koehler AG had started as "pioneer work", because the products were completely new on the Romanian market and the technology for

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same time as the traffic game of JCI. The mapping of the launch was planned according to the same principles and the ultimate outcome could have been a training program, basing on real life, showing how the product acts in different cultures simultaneously. It could have been used at JCI trainings all over the world.

Unfortunately I must admit that the business plan has not been put into practice in the planned way. Despite of that we sell it in three different countries. The game has been translated into Latvian, Lituianian, English and German languages. We are actively conquering new markets and have started working out a new, developing pedagogical game.

**- Tell us more about yourself. Where have you studied, how do you spend your free time?**

- I was born and I grew up in Saaremaa, a small island in the Baltic Sea. I studied trade in the university and got a masters degree in international business administration. I created my own company at the age of 23. Up until now we have been in the market for 11 years. You can consider it as a long practice in Estonia. I prefer to read and do sport in my free time. I actively play both tennis and volleyball.

There are a lot of difficulties on the Romanian market - it offers prices that do not cover the price of high quality produces, non-loyal competition (products without any known brand sold at dumping price); the banks do not support extension projects and for loans accept only private houses or ask huge amounts of money to be blocked into your account, despite the successful history of the company. Romanian clients do not agree to sign long-term contracts with companies selling supplies (comprising also paper) that also complicate the judgment of banks when asking for loans, because they need written contracts.

**- According to you is it more difficult for a woman to succeed in business than for a man?**

- Personally, I think that to succeed as a woman you have to be extremely well prepared, because only if you demonstrate a "real professionalism", will a man listen and respect you. For me it was not a problem, but I think that for men it is easier, because they do not have to prove themselves every time and in any occasion that they are so good, that nobody can reproach them anything.

**- What are the main stereotypes that you encountered in your activity?**

- In the family women have more responsibilities. Personally I do not agree, because both wife and husband have equal responsibilities, and sometimes, the husband should support more his wife in order to develop a successful business. Another stereotype: women have no courage for large projects, supposing high risks and professional financial skills. They are rather good for socio-human professions, to work with people, because they have a high intuition and pay attention to details. I do not agree with this, and the best example is my carrier. But, it is necessary to educate women to be more self-confident, to appreciate their knowledge and skills and to not be afraid the competition with men.



their processing was completely unknown in the country. Together with Romtrans, IRMAR Company contributed to the use of auto-copier paper for the custom forms, the European system of work claiming, a very high coordination between the conceiving and the editing of the forms and the legislative stipulations, statistical processing and fiscal economy.

The main difficulties were lack of financial facilities for obtaining advantageous bank loans or other kind of financing, and the Romanian business environment is difficult, due to high delays in payments. In Maria's opinion: "The financial Romanian environment does not pay attention to dealers, as intermediary between producers and consumers, and treat us like "en-gross shops".

**Emilia ROSU** is secretary and president of the women's committee of the National Trade union Federation of Pensioners in Romania. She is former lector at the Academy of Economic Sciences, Bucharest, Romania, and journalist.

**- From your experience, what are the main difficulties that have to face women pensioners in Romania?**

- The transition period in Romania caused a very "unusual phenomenon": in order to restructure former state owned companies, considered as non-profitable, a huge amount of women between 45-50 years old were offered the possibility to get to pension. The consequences of this act were that many women, capable to work, now receive a very low pension, do not have any kind of activity but housekeeping, and suffer deep depression that contribute to other diseases.

**- Which are the main stereotypes, according to you, related to women before and after retirement?**

- A few stereotypes exist, that still are difficult to be overcome - women pensioners do not look for an additional job, because they are supposed to take care of the family, employed women, older than 50 years, are marginalised, nobody prepare them for the next stage in their life. Also at grass-root level

**women entrepreneurs**

women are not encouraged to participate to trainings in order to have access to modern communication means (PC, internet, fax etc) and to learn foreign languages - as a result their contact with the "global world" is very limited and they do not understand the economic and financial trends. Women pensioners are isolated - before 1989 the trade unions used to preserve the contacts with them and invite them with different occasions and events, at present nobody take care of them.

The main problem of women in Romania is their mentality, the education in the family, claiming that women have major responsibilities for the family. They are promoted in different bodies (in politic parties, government, central and local institutions etc.) only because "somebody" asks for a certain percentage of representation, but they do not occupy decision positions in important institutions.

Thessalon



The first Project Workshop was held in Thessaloniki (Greece), on 8th and 9th April 2005. The meeting was organised by SEGE (Greek Association of Women Entrepreneurs), one of the main partners participating in the project: "Labour Market and Entrepreneurship Overcoming Gender Stereotypes". Representatives from gender equality and businesswomen organisations from the ten new Member States of the European Union (Lithuania, Estonia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Malta and Cyprus) and two candidates (Romania and Bulgaria) gathered at the meeting. Some representatives from the European press and the European Commission participated too in the sessions for discussion, planned for this first workshop after the National Focal Point meeting, which took place in Warsaw in February.

The objectives of this meeting were presenting the Organisations and the Project to the press in a press conference, presenting the current progress of the 12 national studies,





developing strategies and mechanisms for project dissemination in order to increase awareness among the media and decision-makers, and updating progress of Fair Play magazine.

Numerous media, particularly Greek, attended the Press Conference - national, businesswomen and financial newspapers. The presentations began with the welcome of Frideriki Voukali, President of SEGE. During the presentation the project was described in details to the Press. The importance of International projects for associations and in connection to that, the importance of networking in these projects were observed in order to achieve successful results taking advantage of the new framework in the European Union. Some of the participants also gave details about previous projects, concerning women issues. During the second day Anita Seibert from KARAT Coalition presented the progress of writing of the 12 national studies. She gave some background details about the reports, stressed the fact that the reports would be written by NGO's from the specific countries so that could reflect the particular situation in their countries better than anyone else. She also described the grounds of the studies: improvement of the economic situation of women, need of monitoring some employment policies, linking women entrepreneurs and employees, promoting cooperation between old and new European countries and strengthening regional collaboration.

Currently some of the studies are in the finishing stages - this applies to Estonia, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Slovenia and Romania. With the results obtained up until now some similarities can be found concerning structure, case studies, approach, data, links between employers and employees but also some differences such as availability of data, focus of the organisations, etc. Anita gave an outline of the progress of the Polish report.

Tamara Blackman, Project Coordinator from AFAEMME, presented the dissemination activities already carried out for the project in the offices of AFFAEME in Barcelona. These are primarily creation of three databases for Gender Equality and Businesswomen associations and organisations, the Institutions (EU bodies, national and local government) and the Media in the 25 Member States of Europe.

The results in terms of Web page articles and press publications in 11 countries in the EU were shown to the meeting participants and everyone was asked to help further in obtaining more contacts for the databases and also in sending copies of publications. This activity is seen as vital for the visibility of the project and the future success of the project in terms of the effect its information and recommendations can have on educating people about the gender issues in Eastern Europe and the effect it could have on updating European policies.

Pavlina Filipova, President of WAD (Women's Alliance Development) from Bulgaria gave a brief outline of the magazine. Fair Play was born to become a forum for exchanging ideas and good practices to improve social, economic, political and social conditions for women.

Two workshops were organized at the meeting. The first workshop was oriented towards discussing the mechanisms and strategies to increase awareness among decision-makers. For that purpose there





were two presentations, made by Donatella Orioli - Regional Counsellor of Gender Equality and Angelina Heerens - Member of EuropeAid (European Commission). They both tried to explain from their experiences which are the best ways to make gender issues part of the agenda of politicians.

Donatella described her job - she is Regional Counsellor of Equal Opportunities. She reports to the Ministry of Employment of Italy, which acts as an advisor on gender equality issues. Some of the problems she has to deal with are related to discrimination. For that purpose she has meetings with the Commission of Equal Opportunities in Rome and she has to be up to date concerning regional laws to report them to the upper levels. Donatella is in charge of promoting positive actions such as introducing women to new job fields, helping them to become self-employed and supporting them to combine work and family life. She is responsible for presenting some other new projects, aiming to improve the situation of women and to promote gender equality culture.

Angelina Heerens proposed a discussion in order to encourage participants to share their experiences about different issues such as access difficulties to higher positions, women's unstable situation at work, low wages, mobbing cases, involving men in gender issues, need of exchanging information amongst women, possibility to use all the political tools offered by the European Union and increasing awareness on the global concept of gender equality.

As a result of the discussion the group reached a list of key strategies and mechanisms for increasing awareness among decision-makers.

The second workshop was oriented towards discussing the mechanisms and strategies to increase awareness amongst media. For that purpose Valdas Dambrava - Equal Opportunities Ombudsman Office (Lithuania) made a presentation. He gave an outline of his experience as a counsellor of media, directing them to integrate gender equality criteria in their products. Valdas described some very useful points in order to gain effective communication with the media.

After his presentation, the participants entered a discussion about their experience on relationship with media. The general feeling was that it was quite difficult to make gender issues part of the informative agenda. The conclusion of both sides was that NGO's produce a lot of information, which is useful to journalists from the original European countries but not in the new member states and gender issues do not seem to be interesting to journalists. It was recommended that NGO's have to prepare attractive advertising campaigns, finding appropriate dissemination channels, such as welfare and lifestyle pages.

Overall this meeting was a great success. Some real results for dissemination strategies and ideas were obtained. The meeting helped to increase awareness among the press. We are looking forward to seeing some of the results in the press publications. SEGE created a harmonious atmosphere among the participants and a feeling of solidarity through their welcoming approach and extra-curricular activities, which helped to strengthen the relations between the organisations which is also a key objective of the project.







## Vesselina Krassimirova Filipova

was born on 09.01.1986 in Sofia, Bulgaria.

This is her last year in the National School

of Fine Arts "Ilia Petrov", where she

specializes in painting. In 1997 she

participated in the Seventh International

Exhibition in Korea. In 2001, soon after she

started her studies in the National School

of Fine Arts, she was awarded Third prize

at a competition - exhibition dedicated to

the 50th anniversary of the school.

In 2003 Vesselina won the Third Award at

the National Painting Competition

"Aspiration", in honor of the XXVIII

Olympic Games in Athens 2004.

In 2004 she was awarded with honorary

diploma "Portrait black and white drawing".

In February 2005 she received the First

Award of "Debut" gallery for nude.

fair play  
presents

Vesselina Filipova

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