

KARAT COALITION
Regional Coalition of Women's Organizations
from Central and Eastern Europe and
Central Asia

Title of the Program:

From the Regional to the East-North-South perspective
(Women's Human Rights and Gendered Economic and Social Justice
in Central Eastern Europe and Central Asia)

KARAT Programme 2009 – 2012

Warsaw, 27 April 2009

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Abbreviations:

AWID	Association of Women's Rights in Development
DG	Directorate General
CCC	Clean Clothes Campaign
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CEE	Central Eastern Europe
CEE/CIS	Central Eastern Europe/ Commonwealth of Independent States
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ECCJ	European Coalition for Corporate Justice
EC	European Commission
ECHR	European Court for Human Rights
EL	Economic Literacy
EU	European Union
GA	General Assembly
GEAR	Gender Equality Architecture Reform
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IWRAW AP	International Women's Rights Action Watch – Asia Pacific
MS	Member states
NGDO	Non-Governmental Development Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMS	New Member States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OP CEDAW	Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
OMS	Old Member States
OWA	One World Action
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UN HR	United Nations Human Rights
WIDE	Women in Development Europe
WTO	World Trade Organization

General Information and Overview:

Name	KARAT Coalition
Address:	ul. Rakowiecka 39a/14 02-521 Warsaw, Poland
Telephone:	+48 22 849 16 47
Fax:	+48 22 628 20 03
E-mail:	Secretariat@karat.org.pl
Name of contact:	Kinga Lohmann, Executive Director
E-mail:	Kinga_Lohmann@karat.org.pl
Main theme:	Gender equality (activities in the context of the Central Eastern Europe and Central Asia)
Sub-themes:	1. Gendered economic and social justice 2. Women's human rights 3. Gender focused development cooperation 4. Organisational and strategic empowerment
Countries in which active:	Central Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with a secretariat based in Warsaw <u>Member organizations from 23 countries:</u> Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kyrgyz Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Ukraine <u>Partner networks</u> in Europe: WIDE, ECCJ, CCC; partner global networks: Social Watch, IWRAW-Asia Pacific
Grant period:	2009-2012
Type of funding:	Programme core funding
Total budget for the period 2009-2012	
• Total	2 800 000 euro
• Year 1	600 000 euro
• Year 2	700 000 euro
• Year 3	700 000 euro
• Year 4	800 000 euro

1. Preface

KARAT would like to apply for core funding for a 4 year period 2009-12 which would allow it to implement its program based on the four main strategic goals and thematic priorities.

Activities of KARAT are focusing on the specific geo-political region (in the document referred to as "the Region") which consist of the countries of the former Eastern Block located in (the continent of) Europe, as well as states located in (the continent of) Asia but which in the past used to be part of the Soviet Union. The reasoning of focusing on this specific group of the courtiers is explained in the section 2 of the document (Context in which KARAT is implementing its programme).

2. Context in which KARAT is implementing its programme

2.1 Short history of KARAT

KARAT Coalition was established in the 1990s as a response to the invisibility of women from Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States and their concerns and needs on the international area. Its establishment was related closely to the Beijing conference on Women in 1995, where a vital need for cooperation of women from the Region to advocate jointly for Region specific needs of women was identified and the idea of network/coalition was born. This led to the creation of KARAT, which took place in 1997 at a working meeting which gathered women's NGOs from 11 countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine). The goal of the Coalition was to monitor the responses of the Region's governments to their international commitments, especially those made at the Beijing Conference.

KARAT's history could be divided in three major stages related to the geo-political changes in the Region. From 1997 to 2000 the main focus and tool of the organization was the Beijing Platform for Action (particularly institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women), and the main activities of KARAT were related to the UN Beijing process. During the second stage (2000-2004): Karat shifted its focus from UN mechanisms towards EU enlargement process, which at that time was a dominant process in the Central Eastern European region. The organization used this opportunity to influence the process through assessing the impact of EU enlargement on the situation of women in the Region. During this stage a new main area of interest in KARAT programme was introduced: gender, economic and social justice. Further, the transition from first to second stage was characterized by extensive process of development of KARAT's structure that was finalized by official registration of the Coalition in October 2001. The third, current stage began in 2004. It focuses on the impact of EU enlargement on the Region's women, including such issues as division within the Region, strengthening inequalities between the countries, inclusions and exclusions. It also focuses on the impact of the EU enlargement on KARAT as a network - namely a very difficult financial situation of KARAT due to the withdrawing of donors.

During the third stage a new strategy was adopted by the Board in 2005 which includes strengthening the cooperation with women's NGOs from CIS countries and Balkans by introducing common program/projects, as well as significant strengthening of the strategic partnership with EU networks/organizations and building bridges between EU and Region.

2.2 Context

As it was described in the history section KARAT has been established as a response to the invisibility of the perspective of women's NGOs from the Region at the international arena which became extremely apparent at the Beijing Conference (1995). The Coalition tries to answer to the needs of Region's women identified by its members, as well as to respond to the institutional needs of its member organisations. Its aim is to deal with the issues of concerns of women from the specific geo-political region ("the Region") which consist of the countries of the former Eastern Block including those located in (the continent of) Europe and parts of (the continent of) Asia which in the past used to be part of the Soviet Union. Previously the Region was referred to (by KARAT but also by other stake holders) by the name based on the UN regional division: CEE/CIS (Central Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States).

Prior to the political, social and economic transformation that has begun in 1989 this Region was characterised by centrally controlled economic and political system. Further, in the case of all the countries with the exception of the Balkan states they were either part of the Soviet Union or were to lesser or greater extend controlled by it. The common economic but also historical heritage of the Region, which in the case of different combinations of the countries goes beyond post Second World War history, created the basis for the contemporary social and economic context of the Region characterised by (but at the same time not limited to) many shared approaches, perspectives and mechanisms. This is why addressing socio-economic position of women from the Region may require different strategies, programs, and solutions (then those applied in other parts of the world). At the same time feminist movement from the Region may offer European or global feminist movement new, innovative (or at least different) approaches and strategies to challenges faced by women on the European or Global level. This need for Region specific solutions combined with international cooperation established over 13 years ago is still relevant as the process of the economic, social and political transformation of the former 'communist' Region continues till today. Additionally, the transformation has contributed to the backlash against human rights caused by diverse fundamentalist movements and trends that have developed in the Region during last 20 years.

As far as the political system is concerned all of the countries addressed by KARAT experienced transformation to democracy, and as far as economy is concerned they experienced transformation from a centrally controlled economic system to the market controlled system. The fact that they experienced this differently and on different schedule offers an opportunity but also a need for sharing a knowledge, experience and know-how between the women's organisation of the Region.

The process of EU enlargement which led to some countries of the Region becoming EU states contributed both to the shared experience of transforming economic, social and political reality and to the need for learning from experiences of other countries of the Region, strengthened by the fact that some countries (for example Poland and Hungary) joined the EU earlier and other (Bulgaria and Romania) joined it more recently. Importantly, the EU enlargement contributed to creation of the gap between the countries of the Region which joined the EU and are now in privileged position as far as the economic, social, political but also gender justice is concerned and the countries which are not in the EU. The Central European EU states now can take advantage of the free movement of people and increased democratic development, as well as new dynamic based on cooperation with other EU states and this is not the case as far as non-EU states of the Region are concerned. Number of initiatives of KARAT are aimed at eliminating this gap. The particular focus of KARAT is directed towards Central Asian states, which often do not only cooperate with each other. KARAT has offered number of opportunities for such cooperation. Another focus is Shengen perceived as an obstacle to the Regional cooperation.

The process of EU enlargement and the gap between the countries of the Region it has created, is a basis for KARAT's strong interest in gender and development. As it was said above as the consequence of this process some of countries of the Region became EU states (i.e. donor countries) where number of countries of the Region are developing countries (in most cases medium human development countries). What is important due to the factors already mentioned (i.e. joined historical, social and political context) this is where KARAT wants to continue to focus its development initiatives, particularly since many of the countries of the Region are overlooked in development initiatives focusing on Africa, Asia or South America with which many of the 'old' EU states have links dating back to the colonial times). At the same time, however KARAT wants to contribute to overcoming racial ignorance and racism which (partly also due to the historical reasons) are very strong in the Region.

Another element of the socio-economic environment in which KARAT implements its actions is the fact that the process of transformation mentioned above have been extremely dynamic (in relatively short period of time economic, social, political structures have been changed or eliminated), this means that for example while the market economy has been developing quickly and relatively smoothly mechanism that are often available in older capitalist systems aimed at protecting those who for a variety of reasons are disadvantaged by various aspects of the market economy have not been developed. Also the strength and recognition (by decision makers) of the civil society lags behind development of market economy. The quick pace and unevenness of the transformation also resulted in the fact that many of the countries of the Region experience problems similar to developing countries, while the countries which are considered developed still have less experience dealing with capitalist and democratic processes (this for example is the case in NMS (New Member States) from Central European region). What it means in practice is that initiatives aimed at increasing gender justice implemented in the Region have to be regionally specific (for example then need to focus on regionally specific aspects of unemployment; withdrawal of state from social security; privatisation of health and education)

KARAT is a coalition organisations and individuals believing that profoundness and acuteness of socio-economic obstacles and inequalities faced by women from the Central Eastern Europe and Central Asia are one of the characteristics of the Region and that this obstacles and inequalities are intrinsically linked to (but not necessary recognised as) a backlash against women's human rights which is a reality in the Region but is also a European and Global phenomenon.

KARAT is concerned about the socio-economic inequality particularly in the Region but also that existing on the European or global level caused by neo-liberal economic paradigm (and particularly by the Region-specific interpretations and applications of this paradigm). The gender aspects of socio-economic consequences of the current economic crises, and especially that women as a group are not well prepared to deal or even to understand it is an important element of the context in which KARAT is implementing its programme. While KARAT is a network of organisation from Central Eastern Europe and Central Asia it believes that gender justice in the Region can be only insured through pan-European cooperation as well as cooperation between EU and the countries outside it. This is why KARAT participates in diverse EU initiatives related to human rights of women, gender and development, gender and economic justice (for example EU Neighbourhood Policy or Development Co-operation).

Another important element of the context in which KARAT implements its programs is a concern about the financial situation of women's NGOs in the Region, in Europe, and Global South connected to the reluctance of the national and local authorities to provide funding for NGOs, and particularly gender focused NGOs recently strengthened by the financial crisis. This combined with the fact that the Region in the past has been overlooked by donors and additionally that many donors has windrow from the Region in the beginning of the century seriously threatens the possible strength of gender initiatives in the Region.

In order to address far reaching effects of gender equality in the context described above KARAT has engaged with the organised women's social movement and participates in regional, European and global initiatives focusing on the strengthening of gender justice. This engagement takes form of strategic partnership with other networks and organisations in each of the thematic priorities of the Coalition (for more details see section dedicated to KARAT's partners). At the same time KARAT has developed its own four year program based on strategic goals and thematic priorities responding to the specific context of the gender issues in the Region and building on the experience, know-how and ongoing need analysis implemented by KARAT.

3. Strategic goals and thematic priorities of the KARAT programme 2009-12

The strategic goals of the KARAT programme in 2009 to 2012 are:

- Enable women's organizations from the Region to participate in policy debates on socio-economic gender inequality in the Region with an emphasis being placed on women's access to decent work and on problems faced by women migrants; and strengthen KARAT presence and influence in the socio-economic advocacy/discourses/events/campaigns.

- Improve women’s ability to use international/national women’s rights mechanisms and raise public awareness on women’s human rights’ backlash in the Region.
- Increase participation of women from the Region in the gender in development discourse/processes through:
 1. An emphasis on development needs of women from specific countries of the Region,
 2. Fostering links between the Region, the Global South and the North.
- Strengthen organisational capacity and strategic impact of KARAT’s network as well as capacity and strategic impact of KARAT’s member organisations

This should be realized through the four thematic program priorities:

- Gendered economic and social justice
- Women’s Human Rights
- Gender focused development cooperation
- Strengthening of governance and operational capacity of KARAT’s network, KARAT’s member organization and of KARAT’s secretariat.

KARAT’s program entails the following activities:

- Capacity building
- Awareness raising and education
- Advocacy, lobbying and campaigning
- Research and monitoring of policies and commitments of diverse actors (states, international bodies and organizations, corporations, employers)
- Networking and alliance building

4. Presentation of KARAT’s thematic priorities 2009-2012

4.1. Gendered economic and social justice

Strategic goal: Enable women’s organizations from the Region to participate in policy debates on socio-economic gender inequality in the Region with an emphasis being placed on women’s access to decent work and on problems faced by women migrants; and strengthen KARAT presence and influence in the socio-economic advocacy/discourses/events/campaigns.

Overall presentation

In the implementation of this thematic priority KARAT will build on its extensive previous experience in the area of gendered economic social justice that was gathered over last 10 years and includes: research, capacity building (economic literacy), advocacy, and lobbying at EU level. The objective of this thematic priority is to building critical understanding of the key issues relevant to the socio-economic situation of women in the Region and to increase informed and effective participation of women’s NGOs from the Region in the debates related to the issue. Further, the fact KARAT sees the need for EU to establish a clear and coherent strategy towards gender equality, social and economic justice consisting of the concrete set of policy instruments and mechanisms is an important

element of this thematic priority. The activities associated with the priority will be implemented in the context of cooperation of KARAT with its strategic partner networks (e.g. WIDE, ECCJ, CCC) involved in lobbying European Commission (EC), European parliament and other stakeholders related to labour market's trends decent work, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), migration policy. This thematic priority consists of three separate topics: Gender impact and aspects of economic and social changes and related policies; Gender aspect of working conditions and decent work; Gender aspect of migration to, from and within the Region.

4.1.1 Gender impact of economic and social changes and related policies

The gender justice problems addressed by this thematic priority are related to several fundamental concerns. Firstly, the specific actors/processes such as World Bank (WB), International Monetary Fund (IMF), EU (its policies), corporations, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), World Trade Organization (WTO) are shaping the global face of Europe and the face of globalisation in Europe, but while the structure, policies and influence of these bodies in the Region are changing the structures of gender inequality are persistent.

Secondly, despite multiple commitments for gender equality and women's empowerment made on different levels (for example UN Beijing Platform for Action and CEDAW, EU gender equality standards and requirements) the backlash against women's economic rights persists and in some instances it becomes stronger.

Thirdly, despite the above described concerns very little is done about it on the regional level, as there is a lack of the theoretical basis allowing for development of initiatives aimed at changing the situation caused by the existence of very few critical regionally appropriate analysis of the impact of a neo-liberal economy, changes and trends in the labour markets on women from the Region. Additionally, recent development in the world economy created a burning need for gaining understanding of the impact of the current economic and financial crisis on the Region's women and the need to understand why the alternatives of women's organizations get little attention, and gender commitments are ignored by national and international decision-makers.

One of the mechanism which KARAT is planning to utilize to increase its capacity to tackle the issue of gender impact of the economic and social changes and related policies will be through cooperation with its member organizations from the Region and within the established partnerships with European/EU networks (e.g. WIDE, ECCJ, CCC). Further, KARAT plans to emphasize the importance of the economic rights of women in this context.

4.1.1.1 Objectives

- Building a critical understanding on economic trends (including the current economic crisis), policies and structures promoted by the EU/other stakeholders and their

impact on women aimed at increasing social and economic policy analysis capability of NGOs through

- Increasing skills of NGOs to engage in a dialogue with decision makers and to influence economic and social policy at different levels
- Raising awareness of EU general public and decision makers about the economic and social problems and preferences of women in the Region

4.1.1.2 Target group

The target groups of KARAT's activities related to the gender impact of the economic and social changes and related policies, are the bodies which have the capacity to contribute to the marked improvement of the situation described in point 4.1.1 including:

- National policy makers
- EU decision makers
- Women's organizations (including members of KARAT), social and development networks
- Other NGOs addressing social aspects of impact of economic and social changes and related policies.
- General public

Allies: Women's European networks (e.g. WIDE), social movement (eg. Social Watch Bank Watch), gender experts, researches, academics, Trade Unions, EU institutions.

4.1.1.3 Activities

- Building strategic alliances with existing and new partners (women's networks, social movement, selected trade unions) working on gender, economic and social justice (eg. Social Watch)
- Building analytical skills and knowledge base within KARAT network related to gender impact of economic and social changes and related policies
 - Analyze the impact of the current economic/ financial crisis on women;
 - Researches: on gender impact/aspects of EU enlargement (social and economic context);
 - Report on social (and gender) impact of current Economic crisis (within Social Watch project)
 - Research/critical analysis of labour market trends including entrepreneurship, informal work; , interplay with unpaid (care) work
 - Critical analysis of tax policies; current economic crisis and their impact on women
 - Building alliances with feminist researches and strengthening cooperation with them
- Organizing internal (for KARAT and its strategic partners) workshops, capacity building trainings consultations, working groups

- Organizing external seminars, trainings round tables, debates, experience exchange at regional and EU level
- Publications (new chapters to Economic Literacy Kit from gender perspective, booklets, reports)
- Capacity building/experience exchange of women's NGOs on European Funds for women's activities
- Continuation of the economic literacy program from gender perspective (trainings at national and regional levels, new chapters to the kit)
- Development of lobbying and advocacy tools, e.g: position papers, case studies
- Monitoring, analysing and influencing stakeholders (WB, IMF, EBRD, EU) on economic and social policies from gender perspective
- Participating in the policy debates at national, EU and international level

4.1.1.4 Expected outcomes

KARAT, KARAT members, strategic partners but also other gender NGOs from the Region having greater critical understanding of economic trends (including the current economic crisis), policies and structures promoted by the EU and other stakeholders and their impact on women.

KARAT and other NGOs (particularly KARAT members, partners and gender NGOs from the Region) having significantly greater ability to analyse social economic policy. Increased participation of KARAT and other NGOs engaged in a dialogue with decision makers related to the gender aspects of economic and social changes and related policies, at national, EU and international level. Increased awareness of EU general public and decision makers about the economic and social problems and preferences of women from the Region.

KARAT and others influencing policy on different level.

4.1.2 Gender aspect of working conditions and decent work

Despite multiple commitments to decent work and protection of labour rights (ILO, EU) the working conditions in the Region, not observing those commitments (in better cases) and even exploitation (in more extreme cases) particularly of the most vulnerable groups of women (e.g. low skilled, living in areas with limited employment opportunities) is widespread. Number of factors contributing to this situation includes the post-1989 geopolitical and economic changes in the Region which included opening the borders for foreign investment, introduction of free trade, movement of the large multinational corporations to and within Eastern Europe to take advantage of cheap (or easier to exploit) labour force. What is very important here for historic reason, all of these process were done in the environment characterized by the civil society having extremely limited knowledge, skills and experience dealing with protection of labour rights and striving for decent work and free market but also democratic society; existence of very few mechanisms effective for protection of working conditions and decent work; limited political interest in the real ensuring of decent work. Again due to the specificities of the Region the main global actors

shaping working conditions such as multinational corporations often behave in different manner than for example in 'old' EU states.

While EU and national regulation as well as international commitments of the countries of the Region offer extensive framework for protection of working conditions and ensuring of decent work the Region is characterized by the multiple forms of employment where the labour rights are not observed. In many instances women constitute majority of such employment groups.

KARAT's strategy to tackle the issue includes monitoring and documenting, research, analysis, coalition building in the Region with close link to the EU networks CCC, ECCJ.

An important element of KARAT's approach to decent work is involvement in activities focusing on CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) and particularly relationship between CSR and decent work, CSR and gender equality. This element of CSR is rarely taken into consideration and KARAT aims to introduce it in the Region. In its activities focusing on CSR KARAT believes that CSR should have more committed approach to human rights and women's human rights.

And finally KARAT plans to respond to the recent changes to the global economic environment caused by the financial crisis and connected to it economic recession. Those events already have an impact on the situation of Region's women in the labour market, and it can be anticipated that with time this impact will become only more profound. Unfortunately it can be also assumed that it will have a negative impact on the women in general and their economic situation in particular. What is important so far little attention is paid by decision makers, policy maker, researchers and civil society (including gender focused NGOs) to the link between gender aspect of working conditions and decent work and the current economic crisis. KARAT would like to fill this gap particularly through research and fact finding activities, especially as most of these trends affect predominantly women.

4.1.2.1 Objectives

- Improving women's working conditions and protection of labour rights (focus on employees in supermarkets, and selected industries; exploring CSR)
- Raising awareness of consumers (education and campaigns) for improving working conditions of women, organising in conjunction with consumer organisations
- Influencing the public debates by linking the concerns about decent work for women to current macroeconomics, labour market and informal work trends
- Influencing the national and EU agendas on decent work for women and CSR in the context of gender equality by experimenting with combined strategies like court cases, publicity, mobilising with cross sectoral organisations etc

4.1.2.2 Target Groups

- Corporations
- Consumers
- National policy makers
- EU decision makers.
- Women's organizations, social and development networks
- Media
- General public

Allies: European networks (e.g. CCC, ECCJ, WIDE), gender experts, researches, academics, Trade Unions, EU institutions

4.1.2.3 Activities

- Building strategic alliances with existing and new partners working on gender, working conditions, CSR (for example women's networks, development, social movement, Trade Unions, Consumer groups)
- Building analysis skills and knowledge within KARAT network related to decent work and CSR in the context of gender equality
- Exploring the CSR as tool to secure gender equal opportunity and improving working conditions
- Monitoring and documenting women's working conditions with the focus on selected industries (supermarkets, garment industry, toy industry)
- Organizing trainings, workshops, consultations,
- Organizing seminars/round tables/debates/ experience exchange at regional and EU level
- Publications (reports, booklets, brochures, guides, kits)
- Participation in key events/debates on decent work, working conditions, CSR in relation to gender
- Development of advocacy tools (e.g.: case studies, position papers)
- Development of awareness tools raising: (e.g. leaflets, posters, consumer guides, tool kits, education materials and modules)
- Consumer education and campaigns aimed at the general public
- Monitoring and lobbying corporations, and influencing EU policy related to decent work as well as gender and work aspects of CSR
- Influencing national government to focus on CSR
- Lobbying EU for CSR through participation in ECCJ
- Influencing ECCJ to include gender equality perspective in their activities/lobbying

4.1.2.4 Expected outcomes

- Working conditions of women employed in supermarkets, clothing and toy industries as well as other selected industries improved.

- Labour rights of women better observed (rights guaranteed by national labour codes and international agreements are really observed), by targeting selected countries and industries
- Progress on the implementation of independent monitoring mechanisms of CSR in the Region
- Increased knowledge on the important trends and developments for the Region, regarding working conditions, decent work and trends in the labour market
- More knowledge among targeted women workers and KARAT members on labour rights and successful organising
- Increased mobilisation among KARAT members and their allies on these topics
- Awareness of consumers related to working conditions of women significantly improved.
- Visible emphasising of concerns about decent work for women by KARAT, KARAT members and partners participating in public debates related to current macroeconomics, labour markets and informal work trends at national, EU and international level.
- Build alliances with Trade Union
- Trade Unions are responsive to gender equality

4.1.3 Gender aspect of migration to, from and within the Region

The geopolitical changes in the Region taking place since 1989 led to the “explosion” of migration to, from and within the Region. This large scale of the migration was caused by opening of the borders (a marked difference to the pre-1989 period where traveling abroad was extremely difficult) as well as uneven economic development of the countries of the Region and related to it movement of people seeking better (or any) employment opportunities. The entering of the EU by the states from the Region (in 2004 and 2007) resulted in extremely large numbers of people from the new member states (NMS) moving for employment (but also for education and lifestyle) purposes to the ‘old’ member states (OMS). At the same time the migration of workers from non-EU countries of the Region to the (more economically stable) CEE NMS continued despite the challenges associated with difficulties caused by the Schengen Agreement.

KARAT’s activities related to the gender aspects of migration focus on the EU as a main policy actor, particularly policies related to free movement of people within EU; migration to EU; closed and open labour markets of EU countries (after 2004). The issues which KARAT is particularly interested in are: the position (working conditions, social provisions, living conditions) of migrant women from Eastern Europe (from NMS and from outside the EU); the problem with EU approach that migration within the EU is not migration but free movement of people; and perspective of Eastern European women perspective of this policy; women’s migration and decent work; women’s migration and informal work and unpaid (care) work. EU policies on trafficking on women and its link to migration is also one of the issues KARAT is interested in as one of the negative side effects of unregulated migration is trafficking in human beings for the purpose of labour exploitation and/or sexual exploitation. Anti-trafficking programmes and projects that in the first place perceive trafficking as the matter of state security often overlook this dimension. They focus on the

protection of borders and combating organized crime rather than on the protection of migrants and understanding of the push and pull factors, including the gender dimension of the phenomenon.

It should be also emphasized that looking at migration of women in the context of current economic/financial crisis is extremely timely, as it has been already impacting migrants in and from the Region. At the same time however, there is no through knowledge about the relevant process and there is no programs in place aimed at decreasing the negative impact of the economic slowdown on the women migrants.

KARAT's strategy to tackle the issue of gender aspect of migration to, from and within the Region is to be involved in documenting, research, analysis, and awareness raising about the women's migration to and within the Region, and coalitions building in the Region with close link to the EU networks (for example WIDE).

4.1.3.1 Objectives

- Building a critical understanding of women's NGOs from the Region on the impact of economic trends and structures promoted by the EU on the economic and social security for women in the context of migration
- Engaging in a critical analysis of migration/free movement of people from gender perspective (documenting/analysing the concerns and experiences of Eastern European migrant women including exclusion and inequality)
- Influencing the public debates by linking the concerns of women migrants to current macroeconomic, labour market trends, decent work, informal work and financial/economic recession; and by critical analysis on EU and governments policies on these trends

4.1.3.2 Target Groups

- National policy makers
- EU decision makers
- Women's organizations, social and development networks
- Migrants organizations and organizations working with migrants
- General public

Allies: Women's European networks (e.g. WIDE), gender experts, researches, academics, migrants organizations and organizations working with migrants, EU institutions

4.1.3.3 Activities

- Building strategic alliances with existing and new partners working on gender, migration, social and economic justice (for example women's networks, social movements)

- Building knowledge as well as analysis skills within KARAT network related the social and economic security of women in the context of migration/free movement of people:
 - a) Analyzing the impact of the financial/economic crisis on gender aspects of migration/free movement of people;
 - b) Documenting Eastern European migrant women's cases of discrimination, exploitations, exclusions, social and economic insecurity and risk;
 - c) Conducting Research on Eastern European migrant women engaged in informal care economy;
 - d) Analyzing the women's migration/free movement of people in the context of current macroeconomic, labour market trends, decent work, informal work;
- Building knowledge and critical analysis skills within KARAT network on EU policies in relation to gendered migration/free movement of people.
- Participation in key events/debates on women's migration/free movement of people
- Organizing workshops, capacity building trainings, consultations, working groups related to gender aspect of migration to, from and within the Region
- Organizing in partnership with WIDE an international conference on migration and decent work, informal work, EU policies on human trafficking and migration (Romania 2010)
- Publications (booklets, reports, etc)
- Developing of lobbying and advocacy tools (e.g.: position papers, case studies)
- Monitoring, analysing and influencing the EU policy on migration/free movement of people.
- Participation in Social Watch report on migration in Europe (2009)

4.1.3.4 Expected outcomes

- KARAT network and other women's NGOs from the Region having critical knowledge related to the impact of economic policies and structures promoted by the EU on the economic and social position of women migrating to, from and within the Region.
- Critical analysis of migration/free movement of people from gender perspective (including documenting/analysing the concerns and experiences of Eastern European migrant women including exclusion and inequality) developed
- KARAT network participating and influencing relevant public debates through highlighting the links between concerns of women migrants and current macroeconomic, labour market trends, decent work, informal work, current economic recession
- KARAT participating or conducting critical analysis on EU and governments policies on relevant to gender aspect of migration to, from and within the Region.
- KARAT network and other NGOs from the Region having at their disposal quality publication and advocacy tools addressing gender aspect of migration to, from and

within the Region that can be used in advocacy and lobbying as well as capacity building and strategic planning

- Mainstreaming issue of gender impact of migration to, from and within the Region among Region's women's NGOs and in the public discourse in the Region

4.2 Women's human rights

Strategic goal: Strengthen the observance of women's human rights by improving women's ability to use international/national mechanisms and raise public awareness on women's human rights' backlash in the Region.

4.1.1 Overall presentation

The context in which KARAT works is characterised by fundamental changes of political systems that all countries in the Region underwent in the 1990s. The transformation from authoritarian regimes to democratic systems has not been an easy process. Women in the entire Region face many challenges and problems associated with new democracies. One of them is the lack of gender awareness among the society in general, and among the government, public authorities and other decision makers in particular, resulting in the limited understanding of the significance of observing legal and policy provisions, including international agreements addressing gender equality and women's human rights. Ratification or signing the international documents often does not lead to their implementation. Simultaneously, the young civil society is not sufficiently developed, experienced and resourced to demand such implementation. Moreover, there are no effective mechanisms to hold governments accountable for their international commitments.

Another challenge is a revival of the religious fundamentalisms which occurred during the political transformation and the growing role of the conservative political forces. The religious fundamentalism (Catholic Church, Orthodox Church, Islam) in some of the countries in the Region has a strong political influence and power over women which forcing them to fulfill a traditional social role resulting in their withdrawal from the labour market, public life, and education.

As a consequence of the above, a visible backlash against women's rights in the Region has been observed. Moreover, the UN policy on advancement of women resulting in shifting the focus from promotion of the Beijing Platform for Action to Millennium Development Goals has had a negative impact on the capacity of women's NGOs since they lost a significant instrument to lobby the state actors in relation to the women's human rights.

The EU gender equality standards and policies have influenced some of the countries of the Region (current New Member States or Accession Countries). The accession process has been characterised by the state authorities attempts to present themselves as observing gender equality standards thus providing good environment for lobbying. Unfortunately,

after joining the EU in 2004 and 2007, the authorities of NMS simply do the minimum that is required of them.

KARAT is concerned about the gap between the international standards of women's human rights, as defined in the international documents and the access to these rights by Region's women. KARAT's concern about the observance of women's human rights has been recently strengthened by the global economic crisis, as it might further undermine already problematic approach to women's human rights, including of course the economic rights of women.

Therefore KARAT sees the need of intensifying efforts and joining global women's actions and campaigns at UN level (e.g. Beijing+15, CEDAW) aimed at counteracting such trends and at preventing the further backlash against women's rights. It also wishes to explore the possibility of using other human rights mechanisms for promoting equal status of women and protecting women's rights within the Region, and to get involved more extensively in the debate and campaigns related to other human rights mechanisms (e.g. promoting the Optional Protocol to International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and lobbying for its ratification).

KARAT invests its resources in using available EU mechanisms to influence the EU policies in order to improve the observance of women's rights in the entire Region (i.e. use them both within EU as well as in non-EU states). Special mechanisms are addressed to each categories of the countries having different status in their relation to EU (i.e. different mechanisms are available to women from EU member states, different mechanism are available to pre-accession countries and again another set of mechanism is available to countries defined as EU Neighborhood countries, and finally different mechanisms to the developing countries).

When implementing this thematic program priority KARAT draws on its extensive experience related to participating in activities focusing on women's human rights such as the Beijing follow-up process which allowed to develop a regional strategy aimed at keeping the states accountable for observing their international commitments by using the mechanisms provided by the international human rights documents. In relation to CEDAW KARAT implements this thematic priority in the context of the already established strong partnership with other global networks and at established action-targeted partnership with NGOs in the countries of the Region.

4.2.1 Observance of women's rights through improved implementation of UN convention/documents and better functioning women's rights mechanisms

Since the beginning of the political transformation women's NGOs from the Region have been playing an important role in promoting the UN women's rights standards at national, regional and international level (Beijing and follow-up processes, Cairo and follow-up processes, Social Summits). The UN Human Rights reporting mechanisms, including the CEDAW alternative reports, have been widely used. However the results have not been satisfactory due to the lack of adequate response of the States to the recommendations of

the UN human rights bodies. KARAT aims at increasing the impact of women's NGOs on the position of the governments. Its strategy includes building the relevant capacity of women's NGOs as well supporting initiatives and developing partnerships aimed at compelling the States in the Region to observe their international commitments, in particular those related to CEDAW - the treaty that is available for women in all countries in the Region.

KARAT recognises that empowering women in the Region to seek justice through international human rights instruments is a necessary part of the strategy aimed at counteracting the violations of women's human rights. This is why KARAT promotes the Optional Protocol to CEDAW and builds capacity of women's organisations to use the procedures provided by it. This part of KARAT's strategy will also contribute to strengthening the significance of CEDAW in the Region. As there are countries in the Region where the OP to CEDAW has not been ratified KARAT supports the initiatives as well as the advocacy and lobbying campaigns aimed at pushing the governments to accede the treaty. KARAT also recognises the potential of other human rights instruments for addressing the women's rights violations and explores them in this context.

KARAT believes that common regional strategy is necessary to more effectively counteract the backlash in the area of women's human rights (also through bringing the problems of women from the Region to the international forums). In order to achieve that KARAT focuses on strengthening the network of women's organisations and undertakes activities that allow women leaders, experts and activists to meet, share experience, develop strategies and partnerships as well as contribute/build on the developed expertise.

Closer cooperation between women's NGOs and experts in the area of women's rights necessary to make the problems of women from the Region more visible at international level and to more effectively participate in the global campaigns and debates related to shaping processes aimed at advancing women's rights (e.g. Beijing+15). This is why the Coalition cooperates strategically with other international organisations and networks in the area of the observance of UN women's rights standards (e.g. partnership between KARAT and International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific).

4.2.1.1 Objectives

- Improving knowledge and understanding of CEDAW convention among women in the Region, and developing their skills to monitor the implementation of CEDAW and to use the related mechanisms
- Strengthening the networking of women organizations from the Region in the area of women's human rights
- Participating in the global debates and intensifying strategic cooperation between KARAT and other stakeholders at Regional, European Union, and the global level in the area of women's human rights.

4.2.1.2 Target Groups

- Women's organizations (including KARAT members); human rights organizations
- Women's networks, including networks from outside the Region
- National policy makers
- CEDAW Committee
- Media
- General public

Allies: Women's international and regional organizations and networks (e.g. IWRAP Asia Pacific and WIDE), experts on international human rights law and women's rights, CEDAW Committee members, human rights organizations, lawyers and lawyers' associations.

4.2.1.3 Activities

- Improving knowledge among the women's NGOs from the Region about CEDAW and its mechanisms, including the Optional Protocol to CEDAW
- Building capacity of women's organisations to advocate and lobby for the implementation of CEDAW and where necessary for ratification of the Optional Protocol
- Monitoring the implementation of CEDAW in the Region
- Exploring the accessibility of other (than CEDAW) human rights mechanisms to protect women's rights
- Building strategic alliances for more effective use of CEDAW and other UN Human Rights instruments to protect and promote women's rights in relation to: 30th anniversary of CEDAW; 15 anniversary of Beijing Conference
- Building the strategic alliances of women's networks for advocating and lobbying for women's human rights standards and for counteracting the backlash against women's rights at Regional and global level
- Monitoring the impact of global financial crisis on the observance of women's human rights, including access to funds for preventing the backlash against these rights.

The above mentioned activities will be implemented through: publications; organising trainings, seminars, strategic meetings; development of advocacy, lobbying, awareness raising and communication tools.

4.2.1.4 Outcomes

- Women's organizations in the Region having improved skills to monitor the implementation of CEDAW and to use the related mechanisms
- Growing recognition of the CEDAW convention among the decision makers in the countries from the Region
- Improved knowledge and understanding of the convention among women, including improved access to information about CEDAW and the Optional Protocol to CEDAW;
- Established pool of regional experts on CEDAW and OP CEDAW

- Existence of the strong network of women organizations from the Region in the area of women's human rights
- KARAT, KARAT members and other NGOs from the region actively and effectively participating in the global debates related to women's human rights
- Intensified strategic cooperation between KARAT and other stakeholders at Regional, European Union, and the global level in the area of women's human rights.

4.2.2 Coherence of EU policies and gender equality commitments in the Region

From the beginning of Eastern European enlargement process, the EU has been one of the most important actors of geo-political changes in the Region. Through different mechanisms such as pre-accession instruments, neighborhood policy and development co-operation, the EU has created different categories of countries as far their position to the EU is concerned and hence created new divisions in the Region. As those mechanisms/policies have references to the basic principles of the European Union Treaty, they should also observe the gender equality and women's rights standards, but unfortunately they are not sufficiently gender sensitive. This has to be changed and assessing their impact on the situation of women in the context of women's human rights is badly needed.

Based on its broad experience related to the activities and strategies focusing on women's human rights within the EU accession process in the current NMS¹ KARAT strongly believes that the EU women's human rights standards could play an important role in improvement of observance of women's rights in the Region. The knowledge of women's organizations from non-EU countries on EU gender equality standards and laws allow to use these standards as a model for promotion of women's rights in their countries. Moreover, this acquaintance among women from the entire Region allows to influence national governments for coherence of EU policies and gender equality and women's rights commitments in their countries. For example, in NMS in relation to the Lisbon Treaty or EU Development Co-operation, in accessing countries on greater importance of women's human rights in the negotiating/accessing process to the EU, in neighboring countries in relation to national action plans related to neighborhood policy, and finally in developing countries in relation to EU development cooperation.

KARAT recognizes the potential of the EU as a supporter of women's rights and gender equality in the global debate. Therefore, KARAT aims to influence the EU policy makers to approach women's rights in a more comprehensive way consistent with the standards defined e.g. in CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. Therefore EU's position in favor of these rights should be more definite.

In the context of evident backlash against women's rights, KARAT is seriously concerned about the fact that the organizations focusing on women's human rights and

¹ KARAT has conducted four national studies on Gender assessment of the impact of EU Accession on the status of women in the labour market in CEE for Bulgaria, Czech Rep., Hungary and Poland in 2003; training on EU gender equality and women's human rights standards in neighborhood policy and advocacy for it in Brussels in 2006

particularly organizations undertaking dogwatch and lobbying activities in the Region experienced enormous financial difficulties related to the withdrawal of hitherto donors. It resulted in seriously diminishing the number of such organizations and such activities. The available EU money assigned for gender equality (and not for women's human rights) in the Region has had inconsistent effects and has been seriously weakening activities on observance of women's human rights.

Therefore, KARAT believes that counteracting the above trends and mobilizing women's organizations from the Region and European Union is vital. Participating in and influencing European debates on observance of and financing for women's human rights, intensifying strategic alliances between KARAT and other stakeholders at European Union level in the area of women's human rights is KARAT's strategy for the next years. Such approach is critical taking into consideration a current economic crisis which might have an impact on further backlash against women's rights and lack of financing for women's rights.

4.2.2.1 Objectives

- Raising awareness and improving knowledge on EU gender equality standards in EU neighborhood and development policies among women in the Region
- Developing skills of women in the Region to put pressure on national governments to ensure coherence of EU policies and gender equality and women's rights commitments in their country
- Participating in the European debates and intensifying strategic cooperation between KARAT and other stakeholders at European Union level in the area of women's human rights including raising awareness of the EU policy makers of the women's rights standards as defined by UN.

4.2.2.2 Target group

- Women's organizations and networks in the Region and European Union
- Human rights organizations in the Region and European Union
- Development networks and organizations in the European Union and the Region
- EU policy makers and members of the European Parliament
- EU member states governments;
- National governments and national administration of the Region's states
- Donor organizations and European Commission (as donor)

Allies: Women's European networks (e.g. WIDE, WOMNET, APRODEV), human rights organizations, lawyers, gender experts, EU institutions.

4.2.2.3 Activities

- Building the knowledge/capacity about the impact of the EU policies on the observance of the rights of women in the Region:

- a) analysing the influence of EU policies/treaties (addressed to developing countries, neighbouring countries, accession countries and NMS) on the situation of women in the Region's beneficiary states in the context of women's human rights;
 - b) organizing study visits in NMS (Poland) and Brussels for sharing experience on EU accession process with women's organizations from accession countries;
 - c) bridging the KARAT member organisations from the Region with KARAT's partner networks/organizations from EU (through workshops, strategic meetings, communication tools)
 - d) researches and analysis resulting in various publications and focusing on:
 - assessment of the impact of joining EU on women's human rights
 - situation of women's human rights organisations in the Region with relation to the EU funding
 - assessment of the impact of neighbourhood policy on women's human rights
 - assessment of the impact of EU development cooperation on women's human rights in the Region with a focus on Central Asian countries
 - women's human rights' violation of the female migrants who migrated from the Region to the EU
- Strengthening/building strategic alliances with existing and new partners working on women's human rights, gender, working conditions and development including civil society, academics, researchers, lawyers, EU parliamentarians, officials, Trade Unions through strategic meetings, joint trainings, conferences and workshops;
 - Influencing/advocating for women's rights standards at EU level through the build alliances and strategic partnerships including:
 - a) Participation in key events including e.g.: political debates on critical analysis on Lisbon Treaty from women's human rights perspective and Beijing+15
 - b) Participation in lobbying activities for greater importance of gender equality and women's human rights within the negotiations process with accession countries from Western Balkans
 - c) Development of position papers from the perspective of women's from the Region
 - d) Developing the advocacy and lobbying strategy for the equal recognition of all women's human rights protected by CEDAW/Beijing Platform for Action and others international mechanisms by the EU institutions;

4.2.2.4 Expected outcomes

- Greater awareness/knowledge among Region's women's NGOs about the links between EU gender equality policies/programs/laws and the EU pre-accession, neighborhood and development policies
- Women's NGOs from the Region involved in influencing the EU policies relevant to their countries and/or national Action Plans from women's human rights perspective
- Women's NGOs from the Region actively participate in the political debates on women's human rights at European level

- Stronger alliances and strategic partnership between KARAT, its member organisations and other stakeholders at Regional and European Union level related to women’s human rights
- Greater awareness of the EU policy makers of the women’s rights standards as defined in CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action
- Greater awareness of national governments and national administration about the need for Coherence of EU policies and gender equality commitments in the their country
- Greater awareness among European Commission officials and other EU donors about the need of financing women’s human rights activities and organizations.

4.3 Gender focused development cooperation

Strategic goal: Increase participation of women from the Region in the gender in development discourse/processes through:

- An emphasis on development needs of women from specific countries of the Region,
- Fostering links between the Region, the Global South and the North.

Overall presentation

The Gender Focused Development Cooperation is a most recent thematic priority of KARAT, this however does not mean that KARAT has not been involved in gender and development issues in the past. In fact KARAT has been directly and indirectly involved in the development issues since its beginning despite the fact that it operates in the Region of “emerging donors”, where far very few women’s organizations are involved in the development as such. KARAT sees a need to change this and to attract new emerging donors to gender sensitive development cooperation, and believes that making strong link between development and gender justice is fundamental for ensuring gender equality in the entire Region.

While the Gender Focused Development Cooperation is quite an innovative program as far as the Region is concerned, KARAT is in a position to build on its previous experience related to gender focus development cooperation with its Eastern European member organizations. Historically due to the fact that a large number of KARAT members are based in the developing countries (countries which are recognized by UN to be medium human development countries) large percentage of KARAT’s activities were de-facto development activities. This activities included capacity building (such as training on related to neighborhood policy of EU, economic literacy training); strategic alliances with EU NGOs and related advocacy; lobbying at EU level.

The element underlying KARAT’s activities related to development is placing emphasis on the fact that in the context of the global development environment the needs of the developing countries from the Region, and more specifically the needs of the women from the Region have to be highlighted as those countries are often overlooked in the context of development targeting ‘traditional’ developing countries (in the development jargon know as ‘South’) such as those located in Africa or parts of Asia. KARAT’s tries to

convey the message that 'East is also South'. Hence KARAT has developed its approach to gender focused development cooperation program aimed at: raising awareness and influencing EU in relation to development problems experienced by women in the Region; linking development perspective of women from the East, North and South; and increasing participation of women's NGOs from the Region in the development cooperation.

Further, on a more detail level KARAT sees the need for EU to establish a clear and coherent strategy towards gender equality in the development and external cooperation in Europe which should consist of the concrete set of gender sensitive policy instruments and mechanisms. Additionally, KARAT also want to focus on challenging racism and racist ignorance present in the Region directed at persons from outside the Region.

While gender focused development is a most recent of KARAT's programs, the Coalition has already strong existing strategic partner networks (eg. WIDE, OWA, WOMNET) which are an entry points for building the relations with the global South, building KARAT's capacity in the development cooperation with the Global South, and to strengthening KARAT's involvement in lobbying EC, European parliament and other stakeholders in relation to gender sensitive development cooperation.

4.3.1 Development problems experienced by women in the Region

The actors and processes shaping the face of Europe such as EU and its policies (for example neighborhood and pre-accession) could and should play a role in ensuring gender justice. Unfortunately, while the structures and policies, as well as the influence of these policies are changing in the Region, structures of gender inequality in the Region are persistent. What is more despite multiple commitments for gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of development (UN: MDG, EU gender equality in development cooperation) the backlash against gender justice in the Region is very visible. This already problematic situation is worsened by the fact that the Region is often omitted in the development policies and funding by various donors which makes it difficult to address gender and development in a regionally appropriate manner.

KARAT's strategy to tackle this issue is based on following principles:

- building strong Regional constituency for gender sensitive and responsive EU neighborhood and pre-accession policies and strengthening strategic alliances with the established partnership focusing on gender and development (WIDE, OWA), as well as building new ones for example with APRODEV, EUROSTEP
- Raising awareness about the development problems faced by women from the Region and influencing EU policies that can be used to facilitate gender sensitive development the Region's states that are outside the EU.

4.3.1.1 Objectives

- Strengthening the cooperation among women's NGOs from developing countries in the Region and enlarging it to Central Asia, and through this building regional strong constituency for gender-sensitive and -responsive EU neighbourhood and pre-accession policies
- Through building and strengthening partnership with EU development networks actively participating in influencing EU policies related to developing countries from Eastern European, and EU external policy towards Eastern European neighbourhood and pre-accession countries in the Balkans
- Increasing awareness of all stake holders including decision makers and the general public about the development problems faced by women from the Region particularly in the EU but also in the Regions states outside the EU.
- Increasing willingness of donors to provide funds for regionally appropriate gender sensitive development initiatives.

4.3.1.2 Target groups

- National policy makers
- EU decision makers
- Women's organizations, development networks, CONCORD,
- Donors providing funds for development initiatives
- General public in EU, but also in developing countries of the Region
- Media particularly in EU but also in other countries of the Region

Allies: Women's European networks (e.g. WIDE, CONCORD, APRODEV, EUROSTEP), social movement, gender experts, researchers, academics, EU institutions.

4.3.1.3 Activities

- Building strategic alliances with existing and new partners (women's networks, development, social movement) working on neighborhood policy, pre-accession and development cooperation.
- Building knowledge and analysis on the neighborhood policy, pre-accession and development policy within KARAT network
- Awareness and education raising activities addressing development problems experienced by women in the Region targeting general public (materials appropriate for general public such as exhibition, posters, billboards, postcards, Facebook and YouTube publications etc).
- Organizing trainings, workshops, consultations (including those targeting general public),
- Organizing seminars/round tables/debates/ experience exchange at regional and EU level
- Publications (reports, booklets, leaflets) (including those appropriate for the general public)

- Participation in key events/debates on neighborhood policy, pre-accession and development policy
- Development and advocacy tools e.g.: position papers
- Monitoring, analyzing and influencing the EU policy on gender equality in the neighborhood policy, and development policy
 - Mid-term review of the neighborhood policy
- Monitoring, analyzing and influencing the EU financing for gender equality in the neighborhood, development policy and pre-accession countries
- Cooperation with media in relation to development problems experienced by women in the Region

4.3.1.4 Expected outcomes

- Existence of strong and effective cooperation among women’s NGOs from developing countries in the Region including Central Asia.
- Strong constituency for gender-sensitive and -responsive EU neighbourhood and pre-accession policies
- Existence of useful in terms of gender and regional appropriate EU policies related to developing countries from Eastern European perspective, and EU external policy towards Eastern European neighbourhood and pre-accession countries in the Balkans
- Increased awareness of all stake holders including decision makers and the general public about the development problems faced by women from the Region particularly in the EU but also in the Regions states outside the EU.
- More funds available for Regionally appropriate gender sensitive development initiatives.

4.3.2 Linking development perspectives of East, North and South.

This is pioneering initiative as far as KARAT but also other women’s NGOs from the Region and outside it are concerned. It stems from number of factors including noticeable lack of knowledge and experience about the development, and gender in development in the Global South demonstrated by the Region’s NGOs and other stakeholders; and the lack of experience in cooperation with women’s from the global South demonstrated by the Region’s gender focused NGOs. Further in the Region there is limited knowledge and awareness about resemblance of problems and concerns faced by women in the Region and the Global South. All of the above factors make addressing development issues experienced by women in the Region much less effective and additionally prohibits the Region’s women from being effectively involved in the development initiatives of global relevance.

KARAT’s strategy to tackle the issue is based on close cooperation with established partnership with Development NGOs from the ‘North’ (OWA/WIDE) working on gender in the context of development as well as new alliances with global networks working on gender in development. It will involve building the regional civil society constituency for cooperation with the women from the Global South as well as building new alliances with women from the Global South.

4.3.2.1 Objectives

- Increasing participation of women's NGOs from the Region in development co-operation
- Raising awareness and building capacity of women's NGOs from the Region on gender sensitive development cooperation and gender in development in the Global South
- Increasing skills of women's NGOs in the Region to dialogue with decision makers and to influence development cooperation from gender perspective at different levels
- Improving critical analysis of women's NGOs of EU policies related to developing countries
- Raising awareness in EU and Global South on gender and development issues in the Region
- Initiating the cooperation between women's NGOs from the Region and women from the Global South and strengthening cooperation with NGOs from EU
- Influencing the public debates by linking the development problems experienced by women in the Region and in the Global South to women human rights and gender equality and macroeconomic trends and related policies
- Joining EU constituency for gender-sensitive EU Development Cooperation

4.3.2.2 Target groups

- Women's NGOs from the Region
- Women's NGOs from the Global South
- Women's NGOs from the North
- EU and national policy and decision makers
- Women's networks/organizations, development networks, CONCORD,

Allies: Women's European networks (e.g. WIDE, OWA), European Development organizations (e.g. CONCORD, APRODEV, EUROSTEP), global gender development organizations (e.g. AWID), gender experts, researches.

4.3.2.3 Activities

- Building strategic alliances with existing and new partners (women's networks, development networks and organizations, broad social movement) working on gender in development
- Building knowledge and analysis skills related to gender sensitive development cooperation and gender in development within KARAT network (particularly knowledge and analysis skills of women's NGOs from new member states)
- Organizing trainings, workshops, consultations
- Organizing seminars, round tables, debates, experience exchange at regional, national and EU level.
- Publications (reports, booklets, leaflets)

- Participation in key events/debates on gender in development
- Development and advocacy tools e.g.: position papers
- Monitoring, analyzing and influencing the EU policy on gender equality in the development
- Monitoring, analyzing and influencing the EU financing for gender equality in the development
- Participation in key events/debates on gender in development and financing for gender equality

4.3.2.4 Expected outcomes

- Greater awareness and capacity of women's NGOs from the Region on gender sensitive development cooperation and gender in development in the Global South
- Greater awareness in EU and Global South on gender and development issues in the Region
- Increased cooperation between KARAT and other stakeholders from North, East and South on gender and development issues
- Visibly more joint initiatives conducted by NGO's from North, East and South focusing on gender and development.
- Long term cooperation between women's NGOs from the Region and women from the Global South
- Stronger cooperation with NGDOs from EU
- Public debates influenced by KARAT by linking the development problems experienced by women in the Region and in the Global South to women human rights and gender equality

4.4 Organisational and strategic empowerment

Strategic goal: Strengthen organisational capacity and strategic impact of KARAT's network as well as capacity and strategic impact of KARAT's member organisations

Overall presentation

KARAT is a membership based organization which at the moment has 54 member organizations from 23 countries of the Region and a number of individual members. KARAT has several key goals as a coalition of organizations. Firstly, while KARAT never claims to represent women from the Region it wants to strengthen impact of its activities, postulates and statutory goals by legitimizing them through size of its membership. Secondly, KARAT as a coalition of organizations wants to present the perspective of those organizations which effectively is a regionally specific perspective. And finally, but not lastly KARAT strives to build capacity of its member organizations to allow them not only to participate in the initiatives that KARAT is facilitating and participating in but also to actively engage in other gender justice related initiatives. This approach not only ensures multiplier effect of KARAT

activities but strengthens the impact of gender focused initiatives undertaken in the Region and outside and therefore increase the chance of the improvement of the socio-economic situation of women in the Region and globally. The capacity building is particularly important due to the fact that civil society of the Region and hence indigenous NGOs operating in the Region are relatively young: they have been operating only since the process of the transformation has began 20 years ago (strong contrast to civil society and NGOs in other parts of the world including those in developing countries). Further, due to historic reasons they operate in a context which is quite different to the context in which NGOs operate in other parts of the world (there are for example difference in funding environment and in relationship with other stakeholders such as local and national authorities, academics etc). Therefore there are particular skills that need to be developed and strengthen as far as NGOs from the Region are concern. Additionally, this capacity building needs to be regionally appropriate – i.e it may require regionally specific tools and body of knowledge which frequently have not been yet developed.

Another key issue is that strength of the KARAT and the impact of its initiatives (including multiplier effect) is strongly linked to the fact that KARAT is a network. Therefore it requires a strategic approach to its development as a network, with a team of workers or at least networking officer focusing being employed exclusively in order to perform this task. Further, resources need to be dedicated to strengthening professionalism of the Coalition including ensuring appropriate governance and legitimacy which for example requires organizing of a regular Board meetings (at least twice a year), General Assembly (at least every two years and possibly combined with a conference with critical issues and topics for KARAT) as this would ensure that the Secretariat and the Board will have regular contact with constituency which shapes strategic objectives for KARAT's development. Further KARAT and more specifically KARAT Secretariat which is an implementing body of the institutional activities of the Coalition also requires resources which would ensure for example strengthening of fundraising strategy of KARAT (to ensure stability of the Coalition), allowing professional and not ad-hock development strategies (for example annual program development workshop for Secretariat staff, Board and KARAT's advisory body), other capacity building activities for the Secretariat, Board, Advisory Body and relevant member organizations (for example training on governance, professional annual evaluation of Secretariats staff, and regular evaluation of the Coalition etc). Unfortunately securing funds for the above crucial activities has always been a problem.

Since KARAT is undertaking organizational and strategic activities since its beginning and since those activities are often undertaken not as separate projects but as part of other project the structure of this section of the programme is different to the first 3 thematic priorities. They are not divided into objectives, activities and outcomes but are based on a list of objectives.

4.4.1 Integration and mobilization of member organizations

- Involving members in programs, projects, activities and lobbying undertaken by KARAT and its strategic partners and ensuring a shared ownership and participatory process of this involvement; supporting members in their activities

- Ensuring coordinated efforts in joint action campaigns among members and strategic partners, lobbying etc.
- Strengthening the role of KARAT networking officer with clearly defined tasks (e.g.: visiting member organizations in their respective countries to discover their work, needs and expectations).
- Ensuring transparency strategic decisions of the Board and work of the Secretariat.

4.4.2 Capacity building of member organizations

- Building capacity in gender analysis related to specific areas covered by the program
- Developing a pool of experts and trainers in the fields of: economics, social and development policy, and women’s human rights and related instruments
- Building capacity on financing for gender equality and fundraising related issues
- Establishing an international internship program for young women from Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

4.4.3 Strategic alliances and partnerships

- Maintaining and strengthening existing strategic partnerships
- Establishing new strategic partnerships
- Connecting members organizations with strategic European and global partners

4.4.4 Communication tools

- Website regularly updated, developed and evaluated
- KARAT’s News (monthly newsletter) regularly issued
- E-groups moderated
- Updating members’ database

4.4.5 Efficient and democratic governance

- Ensuring regular Board meetings (at least twice a year)
- Moderation and regular communication and consultation with Board members through Board-e-group
- Organizing regular General Assembly (combined with conference)
- Ensuring regular elections to the Board (by electronic means)

4.3.5 Efficient Secretariat’s management

- Ensuring professional human resources management and development
- Ensuring professional fundraising
- Ensuring professional financial management
- Staff capacity as a team is further enhanced through evaluation, staff trainings
- Evaluation of the programme and KARAT Secretariat work

5. Expected outcomes of the 2009-12 programme

- Professional, strong, influential, recognized and financially stable Coalition implementing projects related to the programme, reflecting KARAT's statutory objectives and responding to the needs and goals identified by KARAT's members.
- Greater integration and co-operation of the women's NGO's from the entire Region related to the national, Regional, European and global initiatives focusing on economic position of women, human rights of women and gender focused development co-operation.
- Effective, strategic and well informed participation in the economic debates on the national, EU, and global level leading to influencing policy, practice and theory connected to the economic situation of women in the Region.
- Making a strong permanent and widely recognized connection between the economic situation of women from the Region and outside it and human rights of women (perceiving economic rights of women in the context of women's human rights).
- Strengthening of the cross regional network of organisations focusing on women's Human Rights.
- Significantly larger number of the NGOs from the Region involved in gender focused development co-operation.
- Concrete improvement of the specific aspects of the socio-economic position of women from the Region (outcomes of specific projects).

6. Organisation

6.1 General remarks

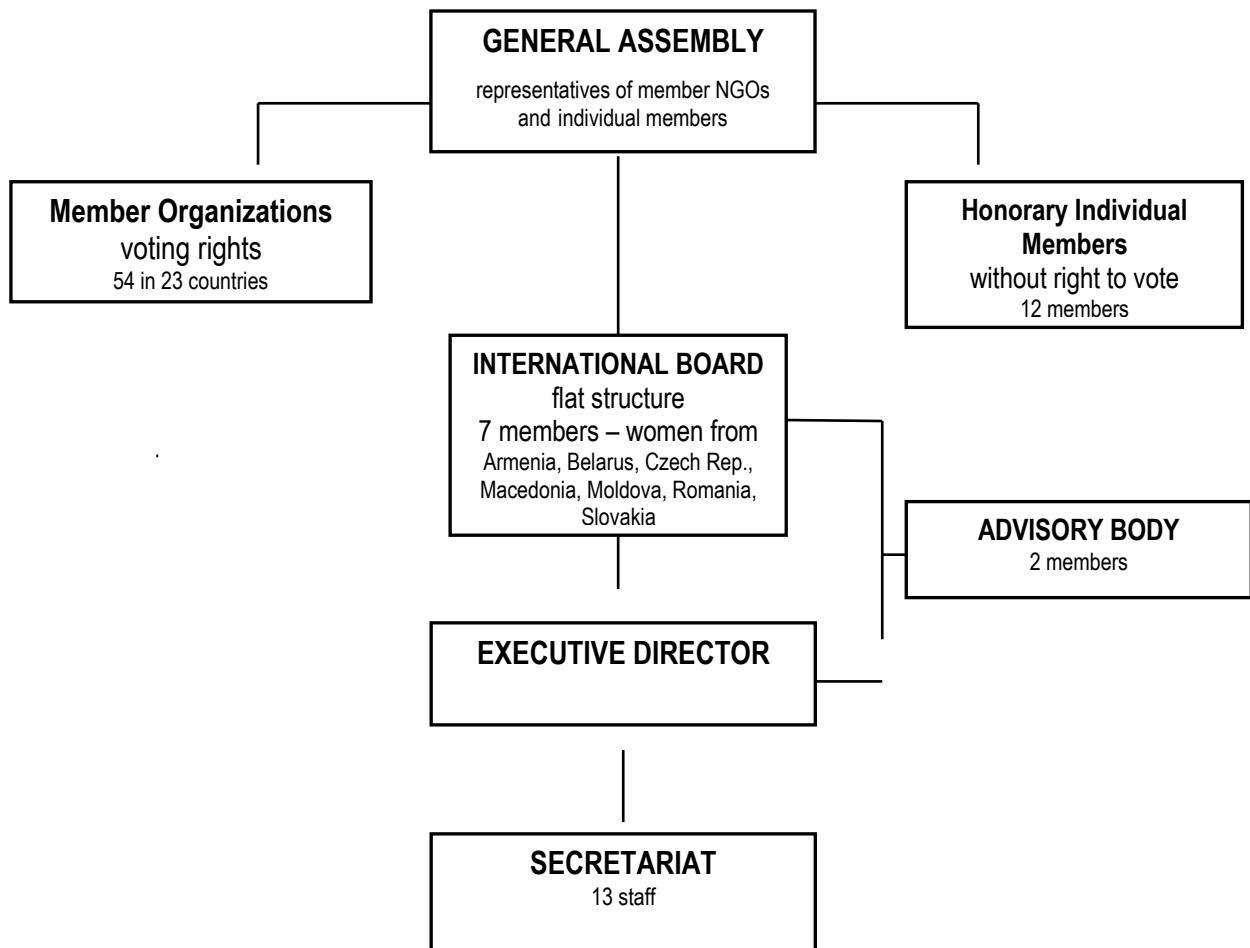
KARAT is registered in Poland as a non-profit organisation focusing on the Region. It is a network organisation. KARAT's Secretariat is based in Warsaw, and it employs with 13 persons who carry out the ongoing work. In addition, KARAT hires specialised professional consultants on a temporary basis to carry out specific tasks, such as writing papers on specific topics, translation of papers, translation (Russian/English) during the events, trainers etc. KARAT also accommodates interns to assist on projects basis and networking tasks.

Secretariat's staff comprised:

1. Executive Director (100%) hired by the Board,
2. Program Manager (50%) of Gendered Economic and Social Justice program
3. Program Manager (100%) of Women's Human Rights program
4. Program Manager (100%) of Gender focus Development Cooperation program
5. Office Manager (100%)

- 6. Financial officer (100%)
- 7. Networking Officer (100%)
- 8. PR Officer (100%)
- 9-12. four project Coordinators (100%)
- 13. Project assistant (50%) (replacing an employee on maternity leave)

6.2 KARAT structure



Membership

Karat network is comprised of organizational members (54) from 23 countries of the Region and individuals (honorary) (11) from Czech Rep., Germany, Hungary, Poland, Serbia and Slovenia. The organizational members participate with a decisive vote in the General Assembly; the individuals have the advisory voice and all rights of a regular member, except passive and active right of vote. To become a regular (organizational) member an organization has to be recommended by two KARAT’s members and accepted by the Board (twice a year).

Governing bodies (decision making mechanisms)

The General Assembly is the supreme body, consisting of all organizational members. It's called by the Board (either face-to-face or by electronic mail) every year.

The Board is the decision-making body of between the General Assembly Meetings. The Board is comprised of 7 voting members (from Karat member organizations) from at least three countries and the co-opted non-voting Executive Director. Meetings of the Board are called, if feasible twice a year face to face and regularly on-line by the Executive Director. The Board is elected by the General Assembly in a secret ballot (except in case of electronic voting), for a two-year term of office with one-year alternation. The Board takes decisions with consensus minus one. Voting is done only in irresolvable cases with at least more than half of the Board members present.

The current Board members:

Valentina Bodrug-Lungu, PhD (Gender-Center, Moldova)

Zuzana Jezerska (Slovak Center for Communication and Development, Slovakia)

Raluca Manaila (National Association of Human Resources Specialists, Romania)

Michaela Marksova-Tominova (Association for Equal Opportunity, Czech Republic)

Katerina Milenkova (Permaculture and Peacebuilding Center, Macedonia)

Ludmila Petina (Women's Independent Democratic Movement from Belarus)

Susanna Vardanyan (Women's Rights Center, Armenia)

Advisory Body. Advisory Body has consultative function. It is a form of a Think Tank to assist/advice KARAT in relation to development of strategy, program, good governance of the network; to ensure a continuation of KARAT vision and mission and contribute to building organization expertise. It is comprised of individuals with long working experience with KARAT and recommended by the Board. Currently the advisory Body comprises of: Silke Steinhilber (Germany), independent researcher with expertise on social security in the Region, and Regina Barendt (Germany/Bulgaria), independent consultant on gender equality in the Region.

Partners and partners in the project. As a membership based coalition KARAT makes an attempt to involve largest possible number of its members in all this projects as well as non-project based activities. KARAT has also strategic partners which are not member organisations and they are: Women in Development Europe (WIDE); European Coalition for Corporate Justice (ECCJ), Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC); Social Watch, International Women's Rights Action Watch-Asia Pacific (IWRAP-AP).

Main (non-member) partners in current transnational projects, campaigns and activities: WOMNET Gender und Globale Strukturpolitik (Germany); SOMO (Netherlands); Südwind Agentur (Austria); INKOTA- netzwerk e.V. (Germany); Social Watch; UCODEP (Unità e Cooperazione per lo Sviluppo dei Popoli) (Italy); WEED (World, Economy, Ecology & Development) (Germany); CIR (Christliche Initiative Romero) (Germany); Women's Political Resource Center International Foundation (Georgia); Ukrainian Women's Fund (Ukraine); Gender Media Caucasus Association (Georgia)

Members of KARAT involved in the current KARAT's projects: Women's Independent Democratic Movement (Belarus); Permaculture and Peacebuilding Centre Shtip (Macedonia); Slovak Centre for Communication and Development (Slovakia); Gender-Centru (Moldova)

Current main partner in project at Polish level: Stowarzyszenie Poszkodowanych Przez Wielkie Sieci Handlowe "BIEDRONKA.

6.3 Organizational development (Secretariat)

Key staff members. An outstanding financial progress, organizational enlargement and management development has taken place in 2008. It was a direct result of fundraising efforts of the very experienced and devoted staff. The key staff beside Kinga Lohmann, Executive Director since 1997 are three Program Managers with long experience working in the Secretariat: Anita Seibert, PhD (in KARAT since 2002), Joanna Szabunko, (in KARAT since 2004) and Aleksandra Solik, co-founder of KARAT, and employed in KARAT since 2006. They are involved in overall strategy, decision making process of Secretariat's work (weekly meeting) and supervising implementation of the projects. The new staff hired in 2008 include: Office Manager, Financing Officer, Networking officer and four project coordinators. Implementation of KARAT's project and non-project based activities is based on team-work: important issues are discussed and decisions are made at weekly staff's meetings. Key issues are also discussed at weekly meetings of managers as well as at project/issue team meetings conducted as required.

Management style. To ensure development of its human resources and creation of transparent, friendly and pleasant, yet more formalized work environment in KARAT Secretariat which is now employing significant number of people following actions have been undertaken in 2008: annual evaluation of all workers (managers are evaluated by external consultant, other workers are evaluated by evaluation team consisting of two managers); staff training; salary policy; internal rules.

Physical infrastructure. Karat Secretariat is based in a comfortable office, rented for 1200 Euro monthly, with 13 workplaces all equipped with computers. The Secretariat also has at its disposal basic equipment necessary for effective operation.

Monitoring, evaluation and quality management. All KARAT programs are monitored very closely in terms of being in line with the strategy developed by the Board. Further all the project and large number of individual activities (workshops, conferences etc.) are evaluated either in accordance with the requirements of the donors or KARAT's own evaluation formula. The reporting process, different for each donor is observed very rigorously. Detail reports (narrative and financial) are prepared for each project and submitted to the given donor at the required intervals (e.g. annual, half-yearly basis) and strictly respecting the deadlines. Every year KARAT also develops its annual report covering all the projects and non-project activities.

Financial management structure and budget. KARAT has a well established structure of financial management. The annual audit of organization is conducted on annual basis since 2005. It is carried out in accordance with the general auditing standards. In addition, external audits of specific projects and on the use of funds are carried out if it is required by the contract. In February 2008 an highly skilled and experienced Financial Officer – Monika Roslonska has been hired who works closely with Executive Director and an external accountant who double-checks justification of expenses and accuracy of payments in accordance with the Polish law, payment for Social Security contributions for workers and for Tax office. The financing officer also assists project coordinators with the finances of their projects.

The financial administration procedures (efficient Chart of Accounts used to account and code all financial documents and transactions under each project; monitoring the financial execution of projects, financial planning and management considering the increase of projects executed by the Secretariat were significantly improved. Financing officer as well as project coordinators were trained on the EC finance reporting by external trainer.

The budget for 2008: 405 786 Euro. The main donors: European Commission, Oxfam-Novib, The Sigrid Rausing Trust, Open Society Institute, Embassy of Netherlands, Minority Rights Group, Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

Treasury

Funds received through grants and donations are allocated to bank accounts (including separate accounts for Euro, USD and PLN, and one savings account, and one sub-account) held in DNB NOR Bank, ul. Dubois 5a, 00-184 Warsaw, Poland. Where required by funding contract, separate accounts are opened at the Bank for receipt and disbursement of funds for specific projects.