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What's new in KARAT

- > **KARAT Board Elections**
- > **KARAT on Facebook**
- > **KARAT's new website**
- > **KARAT's look at Polish development policies**
- > **Polish government asked about delayed CEDAW report**

Members' News

- > **Azerbaijan: Women's rights in police forces**
- > **Kyrgyzstan: MPs not yet ready to stop bride kidnapping**
- > **Czech Republic: Awards for gender sensitive policy**

European Union

- > **International Women's Day**
- > **Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly calls for more gender equality**

World

- > **Big fashion company threatens NGOs**
- > **CEDAW Committee Elections**

Upcoming events

- > **12th International Forum on Women's Rights and Development**

Resources

- > **KARAT: No 12 The OP CEDAW as a mechanism for implementing women's human rights: An analysis of the first five cases under the communications procedure of the OP CEDAW**
- > **KARAT: No 13 the OP CEDAW as a mechanism for implementing women's human rights: An analysis of cases No 6-10 under the communications procedure of the OP CEDAW**
- > **The World We Want – Beyond 2015, A toolkit for national deliberation**

Dear KARAT News Readers !

I would like to draw your attention to important news about the results of KARAT Board Elections. I would like to congratulate the new Board members and thank all the candidates and our members for their great involvement in the elections' process.

I also encourage you to visit KARAT's new website and to post your news on KARAT's Facebook profile.

Remember that I am always looking forward to receive your news. Let all the KARAT members know what happens in your country concerning women's issues. Please send me a short paragraph till the end of each month.

Have a nice reading !

Agnieszka Walko-Mazurek, KARAT Networking Officer

What's new in KARAT ?

KARAT Board Elections

The election to the KARAT's Board took place between 6th and 19th of February 2012. The aim of election was to elect 4 new members of KARAT's Board for three year term of office (from the beginning of 2012 to the end of 2014). Each of KARAT's 61 member organizations had one vote and could choose from 8 candidates.

The results of the election were announced on February 27th 2012. The new KARAT Board members are: Valentina Bodrug – Lungu from Gender – Center (Moldova), Jivka Marinova from Gender Education, Research and Technologies Foundation (GERT) (Bulgaria), Iatamze Verulashvili from Women's Center (Georgia) and Evgenia Ivanova from Center for Gender Initiatives "Adliga: Women for Full Citizenship" (Belarus). They will join 3 existing Board members: Mirela Arqimandriti from Gender Alliance for Development Center (Albania), Raluca Manaila from AUR (Romania) and Olga Sirbu from Women Political Club 50/50 (Moldova).

The participation in the election was satisfying with a turnout rate of 52,4% . The Election Committee would like to thank all the candidates and the member organizations for taking part in this important event for KARAT's future.

For more information please contact Agnieszka Walko-Mazurek at: agnieszka.mazurek@karat.org.pl

KARAT on Facebook

Do you remember that KARAT Coalition has a Facebook profile? And if you do, have you subscribed to it (i.e do you 'like' it)? If you use facebook, but do not use KARAT's Facebook profile we would like to encourage you to do so. KARAT's Facebook profile is a great tool for communication between members and other people and organizations that like KARAT. You can place your announcements, photos, comments on KARAT's wall and respond to announcements and comments of others. At the moment we would like to write on KARAT's facebook profile about anything that you or your organization is doing to celebrate International Women's Day.

Here is the link to KARAT's Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Karat-Coalition/101262886598399>

For more information please contact Anita Seibert at: anita.seibert@karat.org.pl

KARAT's new website

We are very pleased to announce that the KARAT's new website is already operating. Creating this website was not an easy task and took more time than we anticipated but the final result is very satisfying.

We hope that the new website will be a good source of information about KARAT's activities and initiatives as well as platform for communication with KARAT's friends and potential donors.

If you wish to have your website linked to the KARAT's website or you know the quality websites on women's human rights, gender equality and/or economic justice which should be put on the KARAT's website please write to Agnieszka at: agnieszka.mazurek@karat.org.pl

To see the new KARAT's website click at: www.karat.org

For more information please contact Agnieszka Walko-Mazurek at: agnieszka.mazurek@karat.org.pl

KARAT's look at Polish development policies

KARAT has published the case study "[Gender equality in development policies and practices in Poland](#)". The study provides information about how Poland implements its commitments to gender equality in development cooperation and formulates recommendations to push for gender equality to be at the center of the Polish development cooperation.

The research was conducted in 2011 which was a significant time to review to what extent the gender and development commitments have been kept. Polish presidency of the EU Council symbolically brought to a close the initial post-accession period, in which the foundations for a stable and functional aid system should have been laid. Unfortunately, the EU and global commitments regarding gender equality are generally neglected in Polish development cooperation.

For more information please contact Marta Gontarska at: marta.gontarska@karat.org.pl

Polish government asked about delayed CEDAW report

KARAT is very concerned about the Polish government not meeting its commitments towards CEDAW Committee. The government still has not submitted the periodic report on the implementation of CEDAW Convention in the years 2002-2010. In February 2012 KARAT took an active part in submitting the parliamentary question to the Polish MPs about the delayed report. It also asked the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment about the date of issuing the report and declared its interest in participating in the consultations of the official report. The Plenipotentiary said that the report would be published in the upcoming weeks and confirmed KARAT's involvement in consultations. KARAT hopes that the constant pressure on the government from CSOs will lead to this important report being submitted to the CEDAW Committee.

For more information please contact Magda Pocheć at: magda.pochec@karat.org.pl

Members' News

Azerbaijan: Women's rights in police forces

The police officers, prosecutors and lawyers from several regions of Azerbaijan will take part in special workshops on domestic violence and women's human rights. The workshops are the part of project on Gender Mainstreaming in the Police System aiming at increasing the number of women working in the police forces and empowering their role in the justice system.

The Gender Association "Symmetry" which is a partner within the project expects that the workshops will change the attitude of the law enforcement institutions towards the issue of domestic violence and its victims making them more sensitive and responsive to the problem.

It also expects that the higher number of women working in the police forces will make it easier for the victims of domestic violence to report the acts of violence to the police.

According to Azerbaijan's official data from 2010, 35.6 % of women declared that they were abused at homes by their husbands or husbands' relatives. A number of reported cases on domestic violence, however, is extremely low compared with a very large number of abused women who remain the silent victims.

For more information please contact Kamila Dadashova at: kdsgender@yahoo.com

Kyrgyzstan: MPs not yet ready to stop bride kidnapping

On January 26th 2012 the Kyrgyzstan's parliament rejected the bill that aimed to lower the number of marriages resulting from bride kidnapping. The bill would have introduced fines for Islamic clerics who bless the marriages that are not already registered with the state.

According to a member of parliament the bill was rejected because a key provision could also be used to stop the practice of polygamy. Although the Criminal Code forbids the bride kidnapping and polygamy, they are widely tolerated in Kyrgyz society, especially in rural areas. In some towns and villages almost 50% of marriages are non-consensual and result from bride kidnapping.

The bride kidnapping practice causes very serious legal consequences for a kidnapped woman. She is usually forced to religious, unofficial marriage which denies her the right to children, property, alimony or state's protection if she leaves her husband.

According to the women's rights NGOs the voting on the bill showed that the Kyrgyz MPs have very conservative view on gender roles and give favor to tradition at the cost of women's human rights and their well-being.

For more information please contact Chinara Kartanbaeva at: ckartanbaeva@gmail.com

Source: Eurasianet.org

Czech Republic: Awards for gender sensitive policy

From 2004 the Czech companies are awarded for promoting the principle of equal opportunities of female and male employees and implementing this principle in their employment policies. The award has been launched by Gender Studies (a KARAT member) and is popular among Czech companies.

The winner of 2011 competition was valued for its highly developed system of programmes on equal opportunities (especially for 50+ women) and appointing a person to focus exclusively on equal opportunities.

For more information please contact Anna Kotková at: office@genderstudies.cz

European Union

International Women's Day

Every year the European Parliament celebrates International Women's Day with an event that brings together European and national MPs from parliamentary committees for equal opportunities. In 2012 the event will focus on the theme "Equal pay for work of equal value". President Martin Schulz will open the debate. European and national parliamentarians will have the chance to share their experiences and best practices on the effectiveness of current measures to reduce the gender pay gap and talk about future initiatives to solve the problem. The meeting will take place the 8th of March in Brussels and it is open to the public.

Source: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/FEMM/home.html>

Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly calls for more gender equality

The Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly has adopted the resolution on women's rights. The resolution "[Advancing Women's Rights Worldwide](#)" calls for new impetus to be given to the protection, promotion and effective implementation of women's rights worldwide.

The Assembly is worried that inequalities might deepen as a result of the steps taken by states to stop the economic and financial crisis. It also states that separation of religion and state is necessary for the realization of equality and non-discrimination both de jure and de facto.

In the resolution the Assembly called upon Council of Europe Member States and observer states to increase efforts to combat discrimination against women and to raise the profile of gender equality issues and women's rights. It also calls on effective technical and political dialogue between civil society organizations and the governments by providing spaces for joint decision-making.

Source: [EuroNGOs](#)

World

Big fashion company threatens NGOs

The worldwide fashion brand Diesel threatens Women on Waves and Women on Web, the NGOs focusing on access to safe medical abortion, to take legal action against them.

The company is outraged at the NGOs' new initiative showing the violation of women's rights in clothing industry. The NGOs have created the website [dieselforwomen.com](#) where the worker's rights are combined with the women's right to free abortion pills. It shows that violations of human rights never happen in isolation and that the right to a safe abortion is connected with the broader framework of social rights, workers rights and the right to autonomy.

The NGOs have used the company's name on purpose as Diesel is one of the fashion brands that uses production factories that refuse to pay a living wage to their workers, violates their human rights and forces them to work in dangerous and unhealthy conditions.

More about the NGOs' campaign at: [dieselforwomen.com](#)

CEDAW Committee Elections

The next CEDAW Committee elections will take place in June 2012. The new members will be elected for a term of 4 years. Until March the NGOs lobby at the national level to ensure that the candidates nominated by States to the CEDAW Committee are independent experts and strong advocates for women's human rights. NGOs have a vital role to play in this.

Each CEDAW Committee member can advocate for women's rights at 3 levels: to uphold the idea that states are responsible to women, to promote rights contained in the CEDAW Convention along feminist principles and to ensure that women's NGOs are a part of CEDAW – related processes.

As the CEDAW Convention is the only UN human rights treaty that focuses on gender issues it is important that the 23 experts of the CEDAW Committee have an understanding of the realities of women's lives.

For further information about the election process, go to: <http://www.iwraw-ap.org/committee/election.htm>

For general information on the CEDAW Committee go to: <http://www.iwraw-ap.org/committee.htm>

Upcoming events

12th International Forum on Women's Rights and Development

The 12th International Forum of Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) will take place on the 19th – 22nd April 2012 in Istanbul (Turkey). The title of the forum is 'Transforming economic power to advance women's rights and justice'. It aims to explore how economic power is impacting on women and the planet, and to facilitate connection between different groups working on these issues in order to make stronger and more effective strategies to advance women's rights and justice. The forum will be based around 10 themes, one of these is capacity building on economics and women's rights.

More information about AWID Forum 2012 and registration form at: <http://www.forum.awid.org/forum12/>

Resources

KARAT: No 12 The OP CEDAW as a mechanism for implementing women's human rights: An analysis of the first five cases under the communications procedure of the OP CEDAW

The publication analyses the first five decisions of the CEDAW Committee under the Communications procedure of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. The main objective of the publication is to extract lessons from these five cases in order to promote a better use of this mechanism by the women's movement. The publication by KARAT is a Russian version originally published in English by IWRAW Asia-Pacific in 2008.

Russian version is available at KARAT website [HERE](#)

English version is available at IWRAW Asia-Pacific website [HERE](#)

KARAT: No 13 the OP CEDAW as a mechanism for implementing women's human rights: An analysis of cases No 6-10 under the communications procedure of the OP CEDAW

This is another KARAT publication which is a Russian version of IWRAW Asia-Pacific English original from 2009. It analyses decisions 6 to 10 of the CEDAW Committee under the Communications procedure of the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. Similar to the OPS 12, the objective of the publication is to extract lessons from these five cases in order to promote a better use of this mechanism and to enhance the use of the OP CEDAW as a mechanism for women to claim their rights under the treaty and to study the jurisprudence of the CEDAW Committee.

Russian version is available at KARAT website [HERE](#)

English version is available at IWRAW Asia-Pacific website [HERE](#)

The World We Want – Beyond 2015, A Toolkit for National Deliberation

The toolkit was jointly prepared by [Global Call to Action Against Poverty](#) (GCAP), [Beyond 2015](#) and the [United Nations Millennium Campaign](#). It aims to help CSOs to understand the processes for the creation of a post-2015 global development framework, to organise advocacy work to influence those processes and to develop a clear CSOs position on the post 2015. You can download the advocacy toolkit [HERE](#). .

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

KARAT Secretariat would like to sincerely thank the following for their contributions to the News (forwarding information and providing us with 'original' information): Gender Association "Symmetry" (Azerbaijan), Forum of Women NGOs of Kyrgyzstan, Gender Studies (Czech Republic), EuroNGOs , EWL and AWID.

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