



75 (01) 2013. Warsaw, 07/02/2013

KARAT's News

- The Board discussed the priorities and challenges of KARAT
- New members of KARAT
- The Birthday Fundraiser event
- KARAT's contribution to general discussion on access to justice

Members' & Regional News

- Kyrgyzstan: New law on bride kidnapping and forced marriage
- Macedonia: Women's participation in politics – a significant social value
- Poland: Civil partnerships rejected
- Poland: 20 years of restrictive anti-abortion law

Upcoming events

- 57th session of CSW
- One Billion Rising Campaign

Resources

- ILO: Global employment trends 2012
- EWL: Ticking Clocks: "Alternative 2012 Country-Specific Recommendations to strengthen women's rights and gender equality in the Europe 2020 Strategy"
- UNESCO: Gender-Sensitive Indicators For Media: Framework Of Indicators To Gauge Gender Sensitivity In Media Operations And Content
- UNHR: Practical Guide for Civil Society: Human Rights Funds, Grants and Fellowships.
- EuroNGOs: Towards a Post-2015 Development Framework. Position Paper

Call for submissions

- HRC welcomes information on best practices in the application of traditional values

Dear KARAT News Readers !

I would like to draw your attention to news concerning the meeting of International Board that discussed a strategy for KARAT for the coming years. I also encourage you to read about KARAT's new members who joined the Coalition in January and about our Birthday Fundraiser event which we are very proud about. In Members' News you will find important information about a new law on bride kidnapping in Kyrgyzstan and heated debate on civil partnerships in Poland.

Remember that I am always looking forward to receiving your news (also in Russian), so do not hesitate to write to me at: agnieszka.mazurek@karat.org.pl

Have a nice reading !

Agnieszka Walko-Mazurek, KARAT Networking Officer

KARAT's News

The Board discussed the priorities and challenges of KARAT

KARAT International Board meeting took place on January 31 – February 1, 2013 in Warsaw, Poland. [The Board Members](#) discussed the strategy for KARAT for the nearest future in the context of challenges the Coalition is facing, KARAT's Programme 2013 – 2016, and the next elections for KARAT Board.

During two-day discussion the Board Members focused on the best strategy for the Coalition to overcome the difficulties with funds and continue its work in Central & Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The Board Members shared their fundraising experiences and knowledge about funding opportunities. They debated on KARAT's priorities in the context of current global backlash on women's rights and limited financial resources. This resulted in development of a draft version of the KARAT's Programme for years 2013 – 2016.

The Board Members expressed their support for making stronger partnerships with international organizations and coalitions which share priorities with KARAT such as AWID or ESCR-Net to strengthen the voice of KARAT's members on EU and UN levels. They were pleased that despite the fact that global financial crisis has affected KARAT, the Coalition has managed to obtain grants for new projects such as the one with Belarusian partner "Mobilization for the legal protection of women's rights in Belarus" as well as for continuation of some of the previous projects.

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

New members of KARAT

We are very glad to announce that the Board accepted two new members of KARAT. The new member organizations are the [Macedonian Association of Development and Integration - MADI](#) and [Trans-Fuzja](#) from Poland.

The Macedonian Association of Development and Integration – MADI aims to promote women's rights and non-discrimination. It is committed to achieving gender equality, peace, democracy and social justice in Macedonia through awareness raising initiatives, capacity building, partnerships, cooperation and networking. MADI' work focuses on contributing towards behavior changing and creating non-violence culture in all segments of Macedonian society.

The Trans-Fuzja is so far the only Polish organization supporting trans-gender people and working on trans issues in Poland. It was founded in 2008 with a mission to advance the human rights of gender-variant people in Poland while simultaneously creating a self-sustainable, trustful community. Trans-Fuzja's wide range of activities includes supporting (self-help groups, individual meetings, social evenings, help line, outsourced psychological and legal help), education (workshops, publications, lectures etc.), culture (debates, panels, manifestations, artistic projects) and advocacy (researches, publications, panels, debates, conferences, campaigns etc.). The Foundation lobbies for changes in the Polish law regarding gender recognition, discrimination based on gender identity and/or expression as well as healthcare issues, especially the regulations concerning the reimbursement of trans-related medicaments and surgeries.

Now KARAT Coalition consists of 63 organizations from 25 countries of Central & Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

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

The Birthday Fundraiser event

On January 31, 2013 the Birthday Fundraiser event was held in Warsaw, Poland to celebrate 16th birthday of KARAT Coalition. The event also aimed at expanding KARAT's constituency of supporters including the business community.

It was attended by more 100 guests who had a chance to find out more about KARAT's work, see the exhibition of photographs of women and by women from Central & Eastern Europe, and support our work by donating small amounts to KARAT in exchange for magnets and badges. The birthday celebration was a great opportunity for our team to meet old friends of KARAT and make a new ones, and we are very grateful for all the support that our guests gave us. We hope that the links established and strengthened at the event will last for many years.



As it was mentioned before the event was celebrating 16 years of KARAT's activity in the field of women's human and economic rights in the Region. We are very proud that KARAT still exists in spite of many difficulties it has faced over the time and can make its mark in the very important struggle to make the voice of women from Central & Eastern Europe and Central Asia to be heard at EU and UN levels.

See the photos from the Birthday Fundraiser event on KARAT's [Facebook fanpage](#).

See the exhibition photos presented during the event [HERE](#)

Read more about KARAT's history [HERE](#)

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

Photographer: Ewa Dąbrowska-Szulc

KARAT's contribution to general discussion on access to justice

On February 18, during its 54th Session, the Committee on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women will be holding a general discussion that will initiate the process of elaborating the General Recommendation on access to justice. The decision to adopt the recommendation has been made in 2011 in order to improve the states' understanding of their obligations to guarantee that women's rights to justice will be respected, protected and fulfilled. The document will provide the States-Parties with the guidance on the measures that should be adopted to ensure that women have access to effective domestic remedies in case their rights are infringed. KARAT Coalition contributed to the general discussion through the written statement focused on the impact of so called traditional values on women's access to justice in our region.

The contribution is available at: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/WrittenContributions2013.htm>

For more information about general discussion and the concept of the General Recommendation visit: <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/accesstojustice.htm>

For additional information please contact Aleksandra at: aleksandra.solik@karat.org.pl

Members' & Regional News

Kyrgyzstan: New law on bride kidnapping and forced marriage

On December 20, 2012 the Parliament of Kyrgyz Republic adopted the law which tighten punishment for marrying a person under 17 (a marriage age) and kidnapping a woman to force her into marriage. The law "On amendments to the Criminal Code of Kyrgyz Republic" increases the minimum length of a prison sentence and introduces the term of "kidnapping a woman to marry against her will" in Article 155 of the Kyrgyz Criminal Code. According to the new law a bride kidnapper faces a prison sentence from 5 to 7 years. That is more severe than it was before (from a fine to 3 years in prison) but as some women's rights activists say it is still lenient if comparing to punishment for a cattle-stealing which is 11 years in prison.

The new law is welcomed by Women's Support Center, a KARAT member, which has been fighting for these amendments in Criminal Code for several years. Before this success there were several tragedies such as these in 2011 when two students committed suicides after being kidnapped. The law amendments were preceded by 2 years of extensive awareness raising campaigns in society as well as actions targeted at MPs. The Women's Support Center sees these changes in law as an another important step towards gender equality in Kyrgyzstan.

Read more about the awareness raising actions related to bride kidnapping [HERE](#)

Read more about the new law and a road to it at Women's Support Center website [HERE](#) (in Russian).

For more information please contact Women's Support Center at: kyrgyzwomen@gmail.com

Macedonia: Women's participation in politics – a significant social value

Due to the coming local elections in Macedonia, three NGOs - Macedonian Women's Lobby, National Council for Gender Equality and Civil Initiative Antico joined their forces in order to react to a lack of women mayors in cities across the country. Therefore, the organizations prepared the declaration calling on each political party in Macedonia to show active support for gender equality in decision making processes. The declaration calls upon increasing the number of women mayor candidates and their involvement in the political life in Macedonia.



The preparation of the declaration was followed with a conference held on the International Human Rights Day (December 10) where the representatives of three big parties, including the ruling party - VMRO DPMNE discussed the importance of having more women in politics, the benefits of women's participation in decision making processes and their possible female candidates for mayors during the coming local elections. The conference's participants concluded that having more politically active women both on local and national level will bring important benefits to the society as a whole, but it also will be an important step towards achieving gender equality which all considered as a significant social value.

The representatives of Macedonian Association of Development and Integration, a KARAT member, attended the conference and signed the declaration in order to show their support for women in decision making processes.

For more information please contact Nade Kachakova from Macedonian Association of Development and Integration (MADI) at: nade_kachakova@hotmail.com

Poland: Civil partnerships rejected

On January 25, 2013 Polish parliament rejected draft laws on civil partnerships. All of three submitted drafts stressed that a legal basis for civil partnerships should be adopted irrespectively of sexuality.

The drafts on civil partnerships gave rise to an extensive discussion in the parliament. It focused mainly on the issue of homosexuality despite the fact that the new law would have served mainly thousands of heterosexual couples who live together without being officially married. Unfortunately, this important issue did not draw the MPs' attention who got into an argument about homosexuality and a danger it constitutes to morality of Polish society. The voting on the drafts showed a sharp division within the ruling party – Civic Platform since many of its MPs voted against the draft submitted by their party. Before the voting began, Justice Minister Jaroslaw Gowin declared that the draft bills contradicted the Polish Constitution, citing Article 18, which holds that “marriage as a union between man and woman” is protected by the state.

The discussion in the parliament as well as rejection of all three drafts in the first reading caused a public outrage. The Civic Platform's MPs who voted against the drafts received almost 700 000 emails from outraged members of the public. The MPs from three political parties intend to resubmit draft laws on civil partnership soon.

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

Poland: 20 years of restrictive anti-abortion law

On January 21, 2013 the [Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning](#), a KARAT member, held a conference “20 Years of the Anti-Abortion Law in Poland. Reproductive Rights Legislation in Poland and other EU States”.

The conference's speakers analyzed why a strict abortion law was passed and had not been changed for the last 20 years, discussed the future of reproductive rights in Poland, and introduced a history of fighting for women's right to legal abortion in Poland to those from the audience who were too young to remember it. The speakers stressed the profound role of Polish Catholic Church in shaping the abortion law in Poland, and the fact that the political transformation at the beginning of 90s was accompanied by a sudden rise of traditional and conservative forces in society, including the politic. Consequently, the freedom of Polish women to decide about their bodies has been seriously limited in spite of public protests and demands for referendum. The speakers discussed the problem of unfavorable lineup of parties in the parliament where the left-wing party is too weak and the ruling centre party is too conservative to change this strict abortion law. They stressed the need of constant awareness rising work on reproductive rights being a part of human rights, and the fact that the current highly restrictive abortion law limits not only women's freedom but it causes serious social consequences such as unsafe backstreet abortions.



Polish abortion law is one of the most restrictive regulations in EU. It allows for the pregnancy to be terminated only in cases of rape, incest, serious fetal abnormalities and threat to women's health and life. In practice the most hospitals deny the women abortion even in the above cases.

For more information please contact Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning at: biuro@federa.org.pl

Upcoming events

57th session of CSW

The [57th session](#) of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 4 to 15 March 2013. Representatives from [Member States](#), UN entities, and [NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\)](#) from all regions of the world will attend the session. The two-week session will include a high-level round table, interactive dialogues and panels, and parallel events.

The 2013 session will focus on the following key areas: Priority Theme: Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls; Review Theme: The equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men, including caregiving in the context of HIV/AIDS

Source: [Eige](#)

One Billion Rising Campaign

The US-based One Billion Rising campaign is calling for 1 billion women and men around the world to raise awareness of violence against women by walking out and dancing on the streets on February 14th. The campaign was initiated by the US-based nonprofit V-Day organization, which was founded 15 years ago by playwright Eve Ensler, whose play *The Vagina Monologues* grabbed the world's attention. The One Billion Rising campaign is V-Day's most ambitious project, with more than 5,000 organizations and 161 countries having signed up to participate.

According to the V-Day organization dancing on February 14th will mean joining in solidarity, purpose and energy, and shaking the world into a new consciousness. Your dance that day will show that you want to end violence against one billion women and girls.

You can start a raising in your community, office, college, or school. Organize a flash mob at a landmark building/site, in the streets or in a nearby mall. Have a dance party, produce a theatrical event, march in your streets, protest, strike, Dance. Or you can join an existing event near you.

For more information about the campaign and how to join read at <http://onebillionrising.org/>

Source: [One Billion Rising website](#)

Resources

ILO: Global employment trends 2012

This report examines the conditions of women's engagement in the labour market, by estimating and analysing five key gaps, or gender differentials, between women and men which disadvantage women: in unemployment, in employment, in labour force participation, in vulnerability, and in sectoral and occupational segregation.

Download the report from [HERE](#)

EWL: Ticking Clocks: "Alternative 2012 Country-Specific Recommendations to strengthen women's rights and gender equality in the Europe 2020 Strategy".

The report aims to provide input for the European Commission annual drafting of recommendations to the Member States in socio-economic policies. The report has been drafted with the input of the EWL's member organizations and is the first of many as the EWL continues to monitor, assess and propose recommendations to strengthen women's rights and gender equality in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

Download the report from [HERE](#)

UNESCO: "Gender-Sensitive Indicators For Media: Framework Of Indicators To Gauge Gender Sensitivity In Media Operations And Content"

The aim of this publication is to contribute to gender equality and women's empowerment in and through media of all forms, irrespective of the technology used. The main focus is on the equality and gender dimensions of social diversity in the media.

Download the publication from AWID website [HERE](#)

UNHR: Practical Guide for Civil Society: Human Rights Funds, Grants and Fellowships.

This Practical Guide - the fourth in the series of practical guides for civil society - provides a brief description of funding sources, grants and fellowships administered by or with the participation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The purpose of the Guide is to provide guidance to prospective applicants interested in these funds and programmes to further contribute to the promotion of human rights in their own countries and worldwide.

Download the guide from [HERE](#)

EuroNGOs: Towards a Post-2015 Development Framework. Position Paper

The paper was jointly developed by EuroNGOs, Countdown 2015 Europe, IPPF EN and ASTRA. It reflects the common position of the European sexual and reproductive health and rights community on the post-2015 development framework, explaining mainly how the key European networks see SRHR feature in it. The paper is structured around 4 sections – Vision for the post-2015 framework; Three priorities for the post-2015 framework; and Changing perspective: a multi-level framework, learning from the past - developed through internal consultations carried out between December and January by each network and based on a number of strategic documents and outcomes of meetings held in 2012.

Download the paper from [ASTRA](#)

Call for submissions

HRC welcomes information on best practices in the application of traditional values

The Human Rights Council in its resolution A/HRC/RES/21/3 of 9 October 2012 has requested the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) to collect information from States Members of the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders on best practices in the application of traditional values while promoting and protecting human rights and upholding human dignity, and to submit a summary thereon to the Human Rights Council before its twenty-fourth session.

The text of the resolution, which should guide the content of the inputs, is available in all UN languages from the following webpage: <http://goo.gl/YzwGq>. Submissions from civil society organizations are welcome before **28 February 2013**, to be provided in the electronic format (MS Word document or compatible format) to registry@ohchr.org and spuvimanasinghe@ohchr.org. Concise submissions not exceeding 2 pages are encouraged. All submissions will be made available at OHCHR website.

Source: [AWID](#)

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): Women's Support Center (Kyrgyzstan), Macedonian Association of Development and Integration, Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning, EWL, EIGE, AWID, ASTRA

Edited by Agnieszka Walko-Mazurek

KARAT Coalition

ul. Walecznych 26/5

03-916 Warsaw, Poland

phone: +48 22 8491647

fax: +48 22 628 20 03

Subscriptions and news contributions are welcomed at: <http://www.karat.org/category/newsletters/>

Visit our website: www.karat.org

Find us on [Facebook](#)

To support our work go to <http://www.karat.org/how-to-support-us/>