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Dear KARAT News Readers !

*This month I would like to draw your attention to news about KARAT's cooperation with its Belarusian partner related to legal protection of women from discrimination and domestic violence as well as KARAT's involvement in a research on gender equality institutional mechanisms.*

*Please 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](mailto:agnieszka.mazurek@karat.org.pl)*

*Have a nice reading!*

*Agnieszka Walko-Mazurek, KARAT Networking Officer*

## KARAT & Members' News

### Regional research on gender equality institutional mechanisms

Currently KARAT is implementing a research project focusing on gender equality institutional mechanisms as a partner in the consortium with ATRIA Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History from Amsterdam within an agreement with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE).

KARAT members from Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic and Poland as well as partners from Hungary and Slovakia are involved in monitoring states' compliance with the commitments related to Beijing Platform for Action. The goal of the research is to assess the states' structures and strategies aimed at improving the position of women, as well as provide insight in the effectiveness of the institutional mechanisms, gender mainstreaming and gender statistics in the addressed countries. The research covers 27 EU countries and Croatia, updates information gathered in the previous research in 2005 and introduces the new recommendations to the states. It focuses on bodies within or close to the governments that are responsible for the promotion and protection of gender equality and the way they cooperate and communicate.

For more information please contact Kinga Lohmann at: [kinga.lohmann@karat.org.pl](mailto:kinga.lohmann@karat.org.pl)

### Belarusian draft law on domestic violence discussed with Polish experts

On April 18-21, 2013 ten women's rights advocates from Belarus took part in a strategic training in Warsaw, Poland on legal protection of women from discrimination and domestic violence. The training was a response to the current challenges faced by the Belarusian women's movement. It focused on raising the knowledge of participants about the essential elements that constitute a good law against gender-based discrimination and violence. The participants learned about the best European examples of this kind of legislation, and the European Union and United Nations' recommendations on effective prevention of gender-based discrimination and violence, as well as victim protection. The lawyers who conducted the training shared Polish experiences of developing the draft bills to make the participants aware of problems they might encounter while working on and presenting their drafts to the relevant state's authorities. The women's rights advocates had an opportunity to discuss with the Polish experts the weak and strong points of their draft bill on domestic violence in the light of international legislation as well as opportunities and threats in a context of current social and political situation in Belarus.



The training was one of the series of initiatives that Belarusian women's organizations plan to undertake to make the state's authorities adopt the bill on equal status of women and men as well as the bill on preventing and combating domestic violence. The training was organized by KARAT with its Belarusian member organization Public Association of "Women's Independent Democratic Movement" (PA 'WIDM').

For more information please contact Magdalena Pocheć at: [magda.pochec@karat.org.pl](mailto:magda.pochec@karat.org.pl)

### Global learning for decent work in the sportswear industry

Four KARAT member organizations from Bulgaria, Moldova, Romania and Slovakia have joined their efforts to work on a problem of poor working conditions in the garment industry in less developed countries. A three-year project "Fit for Fair" aims to develop a critical approach to buying a sportswear by the consumers in the developed countries and thus it is expected to

improve the working conditions for the workers who produce these goods. The project includes a strong gender aspect since the workers of garment industry are mainly women.

The initiative is a tool for bridging the cultural gap related to decent work in the various countries of European Union and beyond. The activities within the project are to provoke a change of the mindset and behaviour patterns of youth and teenagers as a result of increase of understanding of the human costs related to the production of high quality sportswear. The project is designed to benefit both: developed and developing countries by providing insights into the differences between the ideas of labour rights and responsibilities of consumers and the workers, and thus contribute to decreasing the gap between them.

The project is jointly financed by the European Commission and other sources and it will be implemented by partner organizations including the 'AUR' – National Association of Human Resources from Romania, Gender-Centrum from Moldova, GERT (Gender Education, Research and Technologies Foundation) from Bulgaria and Slovak Centre for Communication and Development (SCCD). The GERT and AUR will create a multiplier effect with respect to the distribution of learning approaches, contents and materials in other Eastern European EU member states.

For more information please contact Jivka Marinova from GERT at: [gert@mbox.contact.bg](mailto:gert@mbox.contact.bg)

### **Age Diversity Management Toolkit**

In 2011 - 2012, Gender Studies from Czech Republic (KARAT member) was involved in an international project about age diversity in companies titled "All Generations in the Workplace". The project resulted in a practical toolkit for age management which is a set of 17 potential workplace scenarios (*Benchmarking Behaviours*) associated with different attitudes of the management toward the aging of the employees and toward age diversity in general. The different scenarios seek to cover the range of situations which might occur in companies of different sizes or different industries and can be used by local managers in all European countries regardless of the industry. The toolkit is a response to the growing importance of building appropriate management practices to promote age management in business.

For more information please contact Markéta Štěpánová from Gender Studies at: [office@genderstudies.cz](mailto:office@genderstudies.cz)

## **European Union**

### **Lithuania: A landmark case for victims of domestic violence**

In March 2013 the European Court of Human Rights released judgment in *Valiuliene v. Lithuania* holding the State liable for failure to investigate effectively into complaints of domestic violence. The Lithuanian authorities have been found to have violated article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which prohibits torture and inhuman or degrading treatment. The case is a new landmark case for victims of domestic violence since a human rights litigation approach to domestic violence faces strong conceptual obstacles such as respect for privacy, tolerance vis-a-vis different cultures and the upholding of the rights of defendants. In case of *Valiuliene v. Lithuania* the Court found the treatment to be "inhuman" because it was planned, was applied for hours at a stretch and caused either actual bodily injury or intense physical and mental suffering. Treatment has been considered "degrading" when it was such as to arouse in its victims feelings of fear, anguish and inferiority, capable of humiliating them and possibly breaking their physical or moral resistance. The Court considered that the ill-treatment of the applicant, which on five occasions caused her physical injuries, combined with her feelings of fear and helplessness, was sufficiently serious to reach the level of severity under of Article 3 of the Convention and thus raise the Government's positive obligation under this provision. However, the judgment is not yet final, and there is a three month window in which Lithuania can contest the ruling. The applicant was awarded 5000 euros in damages.

The source [EWL](#)

## EED grants available soon

The first call for proposal of the [European Endowment for Democracy](#) (EED) will be launched in June 2013, announced Jerzy Pomianowski, Executive Director of EED during a meeting with Polish NGOs. The EED will support political activists and democratization movements, including non-registered groups (so far European programs not allowed this kind of group to apply for the grants). The EED's main purpose is direct grant-making to pro-democracy activist and/or organizations struggling for democratic transition in the European Neighbourhood and beyond, through specific flexible procedures (mainly continual). The EED can also work through European CSOs (such as Political Foundations). Apart from grants, the EED will support organizations in writing proposals to other funds and donors, searching for new source of financing, as well as networking with institution on the European level. The EED can also give short-term institutional grants for small organizations and groups. The activities supported by EED should be addressed to one of the following countries from Eastern Europe and Central Asia - Belarus, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia.

The source: [TRIALOG](#), [EED](#)

## World

### Kazakhstan: Women fight for their rights

Kazak women launched a campaign against recent changes to the law on loss of earnings during pregnancy that negatively affect the middle-class women. A group called Fair Maternity Leave is campaigning against the law, and has expressed concern at the lack of public debate about changes it believes will lead to gender discrimination in the workplace. The campaigners are exploring possibilities for getting the law revoked, lobbying members of parliament and approaching the state prosecutor's office. If that tactic fails, Fair Maternity Leave will push for amendments that alter the way employers pay into the national Social Insurance Fund. The group now has around 9,000 Facebook followers and has organised several small demonstrations and flash mobs in two cities of Kazakhstan. Over 100 letters have been sent to members of the parliament, with petitions also directed to President and the prosecutor general's office. The campaign was supported by trade unions and non-government groups and a last month discussion on gender policy, attended by government officials as well as civil society activists, ended with an agreement to set up a centre to coordinate their efforts.

The women's activists stressed that the real issue is the basic guarantee of women's right to work and have children. The amendment indicates that conditions for women are deteriorating more generally. The campaigners reject any offers that do not offer long-term solutions for all working women and call for broadening the campaign. The women and human rights' activists hope the campaign will prompt wider action on women's rights in Kazakhstan.

The source: [IWPR](#)

### Post-2015 Development Framework

As the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approach their 2015 deadline, the international community is working hard to accelerate the achievements of the MDGs in the short time that is left. It is also beginning to focus on the establishment of a new global framework for development after 2015.

To ensure a successful and meaningful participative process, civil society across the world joined in the [Beyond 2015 Campaign](#) to discuss and formulate their vision of a post-2015 development framework. Beyond 2015 brings together more than 570 civil society organisations in over 95 countries around the world. They have organized numerous workshops and already started the dialogue on various thematic issues and principles with policy makers. Furthermore, the European Task Force of Beyond 2015 (ETF) has been set up within the campaign Beyond 2015 to support European CSOs in shaping a position on post-2015 and influence EU position.

TRIALOG published the Policy Digest [Post-2015 Development Framework](#) (March 2013), which explains the process of post-MDGs and its next steps, it also includes practical suggestions how to get engaged in the topic such as putting pressure on national officials to include CSOs' positions in the Council Conclusions at the EU Council meeting in May and to have a strong EU position on post-2015 agenda ahead of the UN Special Event in autumn 2013.

The source: [TRIALOG, the Policy Digest Post-2015 Development Framework](#)

## Upcoming event

### **The 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova**

The Steering Committee of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum invites all interested parties to submit a letter of interest to participate in the 5<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (CSF). The annual CSF meeting brings together about 200 representatives of civil society organisations from the EaP region and the EU. It is an event at which officials of the European Commission, European External Action Service, governments of the EU and EaP countries address the assembly of civil society representatives and present their views on the Eastern Partnership and developments in the EaP region and the involvement of the Civil Society Forum in it. The Forum provides a platform for a debate on the achievements of the EaP and how civil society can further contribute to the success of the programme.

The event will take place on October 4-5, 2013 in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova. Submissions of letter of interest should be completed in English or Russian and sent before midnight CET, 19 May 2013 to the contact e-mail address: [applications@eap-csf.eu](mailto:applications@eap-csf.eu)

Details and downloads available at Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum website [HERE](#)

## Resources

### **IWRAW-Asia Pacific: Guide: Claiming Women's ESC Rights Using OP-CEDAW And OP-ICESCR**

The manual, created in conjunction with IWRAW-Asia Pacific, provides a practical guide to using both CEDAW and ICESCR as well as their complaints mechanisms to demand recognition and implementation of women's ESC rights.

You can download the guide [HERE](#)

### **Business & Human Rights Resource Centre: Business & human rights in Eastern Europe & Central Asia – a round-up of recent development**

The briefing provides a reality-based snapshot of companies' human rights impacts in the region. It highlights concerns raised by civil society, company responses to allegations of misconduct, positive initiatives by business, and developments in law, policy, lawsuits and the international business & human rights framework. Subjects in the briefing include widespread industrial pollution affecting health and causing displacement, workplace discrimination (based on gender, age, ethnicity, and sexual orientation), health & safety abuses, child labour, and abuses of trade union rights. The briefing also refers to human rights lawsuits against companies in Armenia, Bulgaria, Montenegro and Russia.

You can download the briefing [HERE](#)

## **UN Women: Economic Crisis and Women's work: Exploring progressive strategies in a rapidly changing global environment.**

This document examines issues of women's employment and decent work in the context of the on-going global financial and economic crisis. Recognizing that financial and economic crises affect men and women workers differently for various reasons, it considers the implications of the crisis for women workers in formal, informal and unpaid activities.

You can download the document [HERE](#)

## **EU: Briefing: The female face of sustainable development, 2013**

Whilst gender equality is an objective of sustainable development in its own right, it is also said to be one of the key enablers of sustainable economic growth and the Green Economy. In search for the right balance between the three pillars of sustainable development, women face different challenges than men, including persisting gender gaps relative to their economic position and their dominant role in the care economy. Women's informal economic activities do not always seem fully valued and make women more vulnerable when it comes to climate change and the depletion of natural resources. In terms of social equity, sustainable development should include equal rights for men and women in areas such as education and health.

You can download the briefing [HERE](#)

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## **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 Education, Research and Technologies Foundation (GERT) from Bulgaria, Gender Studies from Czech Republic, TRIALOG, UN Women, AWID, IWPR, EWL.

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