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Dear KARAT News Readers !

*This month I would like to draw your attention to news about development of a relevant resource material on legal measures to protect women from violence and discrimination based on a strategic training run by KARAT and its Belorussian partner Public Association "Women's Independent Democratic Movement". I encourage you to read also the news from Armenia where the government has rejected a draft law on domestic violence and the news about Polish labels found in collapsed Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh.*

*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

### KARAT in social consultations of the Polish National Programme on Equal Treatment

Since 2005 the Polish Government has neither formulated nor implemented a national plan of action for women, despite being obliged to do so (e.g. through signing of the Beijing Platform of Action, the CEDAW Committee Concluding Observations from 2007). The adoption of the *Act on the implementation of some regulations of the European Union concerning equal treatment*, which entered into force in January 2011, stipulates the obligation of the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment to develop and implement a multi-year programme on equal treatment. The draft was developed in February 2012 and has been consulted with civil society organisations.

KARAT together with the Coalition for Equal Opportunities submitted a written statement with comments on the draft programme and participated in a roundtable that took place on 24<sup>th</sup> of May at the Chancellery of the Prime Minister.

KARAT is disappointed that the draft programme has been developed with a delay and is concerned about lack of funding allocated for its implementation. The latter is especially alarming in terms of the effectiveness of the programme, and certainly puts a huge question mark against the scope, to which envisioned objectives could be realized.

What worries KARAT even more is that the area of most blatant violations of women's rights in Poland – sexual and reproductive health – is almost non-existent in the draft programme and there is no political will to improve the situation (e.g. ensuring access to legal termination of pregnancy, assessing the negative consequences of restrictive anti-abortion law in Poland).

For more information about KARAT's position or National Programme please contact Magda Pocheć at: [magda.pochec@karat.org.pl](mailto:magda.pochec@karat.org.pl)

### The legal measures to protect women from violence and discrimination. Resource material.

The resource material "*Legal measures to protect women from violence and discrimination*" was developed as part of a project implemented by KARAT in partnership with its member organization from Belarus, Public Association "Women's Independent Democratic Movement". The material summarizes four days of strategic training and is a relevant source of knowledge about the United Nations, European Union and Polish anti-discrimination and anti-violence legislation in a context of gender. It focuses on EU directives prohibiting gender discrimination, the recommendations of Council of Europe and United Nations on model regulations concerning counteracting domestic violence as well as Polish regulations aimed at protecting women from discrimination which can be found in the Labour Code, Polish Constitution, Anti-discrimination Act and Law on Domestic Violence. The lawyers who conducted the training explained the differences between the EU and Polish legislation on gender discrimination and why Polish legal solutions are not sufficient to guarantee full protection of women. The report also contains information about the attempts to implement the Act on the Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men in Poland as well as recommendations on how to create a good law which will effectively counteract gender discrimination and protect its victims. There is also a part which focuses on women's situation in Belarus and the attempts of Belorussian women's organizations to sensitize the government and society to violations of women's rights and discrimination of women.

The project titled "[\*Mobilization for the enhance legal protection of women's rights in Belarus\*](#)" was funded by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Warsaw.

The resource material is already available **in Polish** and will be soon available **in Russian**.

Read the resource material in [Polish](#)

Information about the strategic training you can read at: <http://www.karat.org/programmes/womens-human-rights/mobilization-for-the-enhanced-legal-protection-of-womens-rights-in-belarus/>

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

## **Macedonia: Women should be submissive to men said the Bishop**

The Macedonian Association of Development and Integration "MADI", KARAT's member, condemned the words of the Bishop Petar of the Macedonian Orthodox Church about the submissive role of women to men.

On 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 Bishop Petar of the Macedonian Orthodox Church commented on the recently published information about the increasing rate of divorces in Republic of Macedonia. The Bishop said that a reason for divorces is a lack of submissiveness and obedience of a woman in a family as well as bad law which permits abortion. He stressed that a woman should be submissive to her husband who is the head of a family. The MADI finds such a statement scandalous since it might not only deteriorate the situation of women but also negatively affect the Macedonian society. The Bishop's words violate the women's dignity and undermine their position in a community. The comment might also bring a backlash against the non-government organizations' efforts to increase the awareness on women's rights and specifically eliminate violence against women in Macedonia. The MADI thinks that the ongoing empowerment of women in Macedonia is of benefit to a general social development and these kind of conservative comments should not be said publicly again.

For more information please contact Nade Kachakova from Macedonian Association of Development and Integration "MADI" at: [madimacedonia@gmail.com](mailto:madimacedonia@gmail.com)

## **Millions of abortions in Poland**

On 27<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 the press conference titled "Millions of abortions in Poland. Why does government ignore the facts?" took place in Warsaw, Poland. The press conference was organized by Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning in response to the recent poll on "Polish women's abortions' experiences". The poll shows that at least one in four Polish women had an abortion what means that from 4,1 to 5,8 million of women terminated their pregnancies in spite of a very restrictive abortion law in Poland. The poll's results also show that the women in a bad or unsteady economic situation decide to terminate their pregnancies more often than women in a good economic situation. This data confirms the observations of the Federation which has been trying to persuade the government that forbidding abortion based on socio-economic reasons does not reduce a number of abortions but it forces the women to have back-street abortions. Instead of forbidding abortions the government should rather provide diverse social and financial support for women with children in poor economic situation.

The Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning called upon the government to analyze the effects of the current anti-abortion law and the poll's results on the scale of abortion in Poland, and implement the necessary amendments to the law. The Federations specifically calls to: 1) allow for abortions based on socio-economic factors; 2) implement the family planning counseling financed by the state; 3) finance the reimbursement of modern *contraception*; 4) *provide the youth and adults in poor economic situation with free condoms*; 5) *introduce obligatory sexual education in schools, in accordance with the best international standards and good practices*.

Source: [Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning](#)

## **European Union**

### **Polish labels in ruins of Rana Plaza factory**

The labels of the Cropp, a brand owned by the biggest Polish garment company LPP S.A. were found in the ruins of Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh. The factory collapsed on April 24 killing 1127 workers who sewed the clothes for many world's brands, including Cropp.

Clean Clothes Polska immediately responded to information about Polish brand's clothes produced in Rana Plaza by asking the LPP company to comment on it, sending information to the media and launching online campaign to make LPP take full responsibility for its chains of production.

Consequently, on May 27<sup>th</sup> news about Polish clothes being produced in the collapsed factory appeared on the media, more than 1500 emails were sent to the LPP in response to Clean Clothes Polska's call for action and the LPP issued a statement admitting that its clothes were produced in the fatal factory.

Currently, Clean Clothes Polska is taking steps to make the LPP sign the [Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh](#) since the company so far has not made any efforts to become responsible for working conditions in its chains of production.

[The Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh](#) has been signed this month by 31 of the world's leading retail labels including H&M, C&A, Tesco, Tchibo, Lidl, Marks & Spencer, Primark, Mango, Carrefour, Benetton and Next. In agreeing to the binding programme of fire and building safety reforms based on independent inspections, worker-led health and safety committees and union access to factories, signatories commit to underwrite improvements in dangerous factories and properly confront fire safety and structural problems. Importantly the Accord grants workers the right to refuse dangerous work, in line with ILO Convention 155.



KARAT is a member of Clean Clothes Polska.

To join the Clean Clothes Polska's action calling upon the LPP to take responsibility for its production chains send the letter available at:

[http://www.ekonsument.pl/apel24\\_wyslij\\_apel\\_do\\_lpp\\_metki\\_cropp\\_znalezione\\_w\\_ruinach\\_rana\\_plaza\\_w\\_bangladeszu.html#bottom](http://www.ekonsument.pl/apel24_wyslij_apel_do_lpp_metki_cropp_znalezione_w_ruinach_rana_plaza_w_bangladeszu.html#bottom)

More information about the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh at: <http://www.cleanclothes.org/news/press-releases/2013/05/16/global-breakthrough-as-retail-brands-sign-up-to-bangladesh-factory-safety-deal>

For more information please contact Joanna Szabuńko at: [joanna.szabunko@karat.org.pl](mailto:joanna.szabunko@karat.org.pl)

The photo was taken by Zbynek Hrbata at the ruins of Rana Plaza factory.

## World

### Armenia: Domestic Abuse Law Rejected

The Armenian government has rejected a draft law that would define the nature of domestic violence and set out mechanisms to punish perpetrators and help victims. The decision has disappointed activists who spent years preparing the bill, and who insist that specific legislation is needed to address issues where current laws are failing.

Over 760 cases of domestic violence were recorded in Armenia last year, including five where women were killed by their husbands. Activists say the statistics represent only a fraction of the true numbers. The Women's Rights Centre in Armenia began the drafting process in 2007, and submitted a proposed law to the labour and social affairs ministry two years later. After two highly-publicised cases where women were murdered by their husbands, the government turned its attention to the law, and set up a special working group in 2011.

Now Armenia's deputy labour minister, Filaret Berikyan, says the justice ministry, police, prosecutors and judges have described the law as unenforceable. She suggested that ongoing revisions to the current criminal statutes would effectively meet the same needs that the domestic abuse bill was trying to address. Advocates of the bill say that at the moment, there is no legal mechanism that enables police to identify victims of domestic violence. The legislation would seek to protect victims by banning assailants from approaching them or entering their homes, even when the property belongs to the offender.

A group of civil society bodies has sent President Serzh Sargsyan a letter with more than 1,300 signatures appended saying that "The government has made it plain to the Armenian public and the wider world that preventing domestic violence is not seen as an important problem. We now believe that the government lacks the political will to pass this law, but that it's

constantly flirting with it in order to win time, as it doesn't want to go against the obligations it has assumed in international conventions."

The decision has brought back an old debate about whether Armenia needs to legislate on domestic abuse at all.

Source: [Institute for War and Peace Reporting](#)

### **Post-2015 Development Agenda needs to be refocused said UN Human Rights Experts**

A group of United Nations human rights experts called for [the post-2015 development agenda](#) to be urgently refocused on equality, social protection and accountability. The statement came as UN Member States will discuss this week in New York how to shape a new set of global development goals.

The experts called for the post-2015 agenda to include: stand-alone and cross-cutting goals for eliminating inequalities; a goal on the provision of social protection; and a double accountability mechanism to hold countries to account for their commitments at national and international level. They stressed that inequality takes various forms, from income divides to unequal political access, and originates in a variety of factors, such as gender, ethnicity, disability, legal status, caste, skin color, language and economic status. The richest 1 per cent of the world's population now own 40 per cent of global assets, with the bottom half holding just 1 per cent of global wealth. Meanwhile, over the past decades inequality has also risen within most countries, in nearly every region of the world.

The experts identified social protection as an essential part of the policy toolkit for tackling inequalities, to ensure that the post-2015 agenda leaves no group, community or region behind. In their view, "the post-2015 agenda should link to the International Labour Organisation's Recommendation 202 on social protection floors, and help establish a funding mechanism for supporting the establishment of developing countries' social protection schemes." As the first strand of a 'double accountability mechanism' the UN experts urged States to establish independent monitoring bodies with civil society and public participation to ensure that the next round of commitments made at the global level are fulfilled. The experts emphasised the importance of reliable data for setting and monitoring targets on inequality, social protection and other areas, highlighting the need to account for gender, age, disability and demographic factors (e.g. rural and urban, informal and formal settlements), as well as including criteria such as access to basic rights and services, in addition to income inequality.

[Read the full UN experts' statement](#)

Source: [AWID](#)

## **Upcoming event**

### **Towards Post-2015 with Unique Experiences: Discussion in Latvia**

The Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS) invites you to discuss: Towards Post-2015 with Unique Experiences: Is there anything to contribute from EU12 perspective? Special guests are A.Piebalgs (European Commissioner for Development) and René Mauricio Valdés (UNDP). The aim of this debate is to understand the role of NGOs in framing post-2015 agenda; to examine the negotiation results at EU level and worldwide; to get to know if there are EU12 specific objectives for post-2015 framework and to inspire national level activities to stir up debate in EU12.

Date: 14 June 2013

Place: MFA, Kr.Valdemāra ielā 3, Riga, Latvia

Working language: English

Registration till 02.06.2013 by filling the [registration form](#)

Agenda available online [HERE](#)

More information available at <http://www.trialog-information-service.blogspot.co.at/2013/05/towards-post-2015-with-unique.html>

## 5<sup>th</sup> Congress of Women: Partnership, Solidarity, Diversity

The Congress of Women was established in 2009, on the 20th anniversary of the political and economic transformation in Poland. Its goal is to shed light on the vast contribution of women to the social, civic and economic transformations, emphasizing women's role in the building of modern Poland. The Congress gives the women a forum for sharing their experiences, finding inspiration, and gaining motivation. Without such a platform, effective cooperation beyond political, ideological, and social boundaries would indeed be hard to achieve.

Time: 14 – 15 June 2013

Place: Poland, Warsaw, the Palace of Culture and Science

Cost: The participation is free of charge but you must register [here](#)

For the detailed program and other information see [the brochure](#) in English

## A Decent Life for All: European Development Days 2013

European Development Days (EDDs) is Europe's premier forum on development cooperation committed to eradicating poverty and ensuring a sustainable development by engaging international organisations, business, political, academic and civil society leaders to shape a new development agenda. It brings together thousands of development stakeholders, practitioners and advocates, in informal sessions for debates, exchanges of best practices, networking and brainstorming of creative solutions.

The working title of the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of EDDs is "A decent life for all by 2030 - Building a consensus for a new development agenda". This year's forum will be structured around four themes: 1) scaling up and improving the ongoing work; 2) upholding universal rights and values; 3) ensuring inclusiveness and sustainability; 4) acting together in coherence.

Date: 26-27 November 2013

Place: Brussels

To discover the topics to be addressed during the 8th edition of the European Development Days, please consult the [Programme overview](#) and visit the [website](#).

More at: <http://eudevdays.eu/>

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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): Macedonian Association of Development and Integration "MADI", Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning, Clean Clothes Polska, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, AWID.

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