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Dear KARAT News Readers !

This issue of KARAT News is special because it covers two months: October and November. From now on you will receive the KARAT News at the end of every month.

Remember also 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 ?

National Dialogues on Gender Equality

The participants of November (2011) National Dialogues on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment discussed the issues of gender equality and development cooperation from national and international perspective, exchanged views, concerns, ideas and experience, had a chance to talk to partners from Global South and took an opportunity to meet policy makers.

This time the National Dialogues, organized by two project's partners, members of KARAT: [Gender Studies](#) and [Slovak Centre for Communication and Development](#), took place in Prague and Bratislava. The events drew participants from national NGOs, government institutions, specialists from KARAT and special guests from Sub Saharan Africa. During 4 days the women's organizations and decision makers from Czech Republic and Slovakia learnt a lot about the importance of women's issues in development policies of the EU New Member States.

The Dialogues were followed by the public events concerning gender equality and women's empowerment in a development cooperation: film screening and lectures for students of the Development Studies in Olomouc (Czech Republic) and Trnava (Slovakia).

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

KARAT in Busan

Approximately 2000 delegates, ministers from across the globe, parliamentarians, governments, civil society organizations and private sector representatives will come together for the [Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness](#) in Busan, Korea (Nov. 29th - Dec.1st 2011). They will review a global progress in improving the quality of aid, share global experiences in delivering the best results and make new commitments to further ensure that aid helps reduce poverty and supports achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The representatives of NGOs, including KARAT members, will take part in this very important event to lobby for inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment issues into the aid effectiveness policy developed at the Forum.

The representatives of over 500 CSOs from across the globe, including KARAT members, will make the final preparations for the HLF4 during a 3-day - [Global Civil Society Forum](#) taking place just before HLF4. A series of plenary meetings, workshops and strategy sessions will culminate in a statement from civil society to the HLF-4.

The outcome of the HLF4 will be discussed with the KARAT members from EU New Member States during an international conference in Warsaw on 13-14 December.

To find out more about KARAT's current advocacy activities on gender equality in development cooperation please contact Marta: marta.gontarska@karat.org.pl.

KARAT and Arab Spring's women

On 27th – 28th October 2011 KARAT members from Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Poland participated in the WIDE Annual Conference "Women's Rights and Gender Equality amidst the 'Arab Springs': Challenges and Lessons Learnt across Regions". The conference was a good opportunity to learn from the witnesses and women directly involved about the women's engagement in the "revolutions" and the social change movements in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) Region. It also provided a forum for comparison, mutual learning and discussion based on experience of the post- communist states (KARAT members) gained during the similar processes of political transformation. KARAT members shared their reflections, analysis and lessons learnt during that time. The conference's participants discussed also the risks, possible joint efforts and

ways forward to secure a transition that will include women's rights perspective in a current political processes in the Arab countries.

For more information please contact Aleksandra Solik: aleksandra.solik@karat.org.pl

Poland: Demand for national machinery for the advancement of women

Along with a newly appointed government, a result of the October elections, a chance for a competent and supportive for women's rights Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment has come up. On November 9th 2011 KARAT in partnership with two Polish NGOs appealed to the Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, to establish the governmental office for equal chances and women's rights with adequate budget and mechanism enabling the CSOs to participate in formulation, implementation and evaluation of relevant policies. CSOs called upon the Prime Minister to appoint a person with relevant experience and ready to cooperate with CSOs representing the groups vulnerable to discrimination.

The previous government's anti-discrimination policy left much to be desired, and the person appointed for a position of the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment proved to be incompetent and anti-women's rights.

To learn more about the issue please contact Magda Pohec at magda.pohec@karat.org.pl

Poland: KARAT's shadow report on human rights

During the 13th Session of [UN Universal Periodic Review](#) (May 2012) Poland, along with other 13 countries, will be reviewed in terms of state's realization and promotion of human rights. Therefore, KARAT in partnership with [Campaign Against Homophobia](#) submitted alternative report on the state's performance during the last four years to the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and contributed to the report submitted by the Polish ATD Fourth World in the UPR mechanism. The KARAT's chapter focuses on women who are 'working poor', a growing problem rarely discussed in the framework of human rights. In the previous review in 2008 the need for the advancement of women's and LGBT rights was highlighted.

More detailed information about 13th Session of UPR and NGOs participation is to be found at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/NgosNhris.aspx>

To learn more about the issue please contact Magda Pohec at magda.pohec@karat.org.pl or Kinga Lohmann at: kinga.lohmann@karat.org.pl

Members' News

Czech Republic: Cultural Studies through gender glasses

Over sixty students, teachers and experts attended a very successful conference „Cultural studies through gender glasses“ held at Charles University in Prague on November 7th 2011. A discussion focused on the gender aspects of cultural studies and cultural anthropology. The strong interest in the conference shows that gender perspective is increasingly emphasized in social sciences such as anthropology, ethnography, sociology, linguistics, psychology, history, political science or history of art. The representatives of the Agentura GAIA, a KARAT member, took an active part in the conference.

For more information please contact: Adela Purschova: adela@quovadisfemina.cz

Georgia: Discrimination of Azeri women

The Women's Center will establish the Consulting Center with a hot-line and the Minority Women's Rights Network to support the integration of Azeri women in Georgia, prevent their discrimination and support their rights. To build the national minority women's legal protection system the Georgian women rights' organizations advocate for implementation of the international human rights' standards into the domestic legislation and policies. The Women's Center strives to introduce the Human Rights and Gender Equality component into the National Advocacy Plan for Tolerance and Civil Integration (2009 – 2013). This should strengthen the minority protection against discrimination and gender based violence. Various activities are implemented including youth empowerment through education, distribution of the brochures on Azeri language or mass-media involvement thought trainings and articles' publication.

Although the Azerbaijan national minority constitutes the largest minority in Georgia it almost does not integrate with the Georgian society. The survey conducted by Women's Center and UNICEF revealed that in some parts of Georgia more than 80% of Azeri women have no education. Lack of education, work and language (Georgian) skills leads to discrimination Azeri.

For more information please contact Ia Verulashvili: iaverulashvili@yahoo.com

Tajikistan: Reproductive rights on TV

The Tajik audience will watch a cycle of television programs addressing modern family planning methods, the importance of condoms in preventing sexually transmitted diseases and a medical abortion as a safer and less expensive option as compared to the traditional method. The programs will increase social awareness about growth of sexually transmitted diseases (men's migration to and from Russia greatly contribute to) and maternal deaths (due to a lack of proper medical care during pregnancy and labor and unsafe abortions). The programs are the part of a project "Health of the Woman" carried out by the NASL, a KARAT member, in cooperation with the Department for International Development UK and Tajik Family Planning Alliance. Within the project diverse activities aiming at raising society awareness of the reproductive rights are implemented including establishment of the women friendly offices within the administrative bodies to support women in need.

For more information please contact Orzu Ganieva: orzu-77@mail.ru

Albania: Stop domestic violence!

A group of 23 human rights and women's rights organizations (a Network of the Civil Society Organizations Against Gender Based Violence) issued a public letter to protest against an increasing number of domestic violence acts against women in Albania. In the letter they call on the Albanian society to raise its voice against the damage this violence causes to the entire society. The organizations stressed that it is a duty of the Albanian institutions to prevent and punish domestic violence. Further, they stressed that the courts, police, prosecutors, local governments' social units and bailiff office should give special attention to strengthening and increasing effectiveness and implementation of the existing legal means, especially of the Family Code and of law "For legal actions against violence in family relations". The organizations said that effective protection of the victims of domestic violence requires some amendments in the Penal Code and the Code of Penal Procedures.

According to the organizations only in 2011 seventeen women has lost their lives inside their family homes.

For more information please contact Mirela Arqimandriti at: marqimandriti@gadc.org.al

Economic crisis shapes a new development policy

In October 2011 the „[Agenda for Change](#)” was launched by the EU Development Commissioner, Andris Pielbalgs. The agenda outlines the EU’s development policy in the next decade. The new agenda is characterized by the business and economic growth oriented language relating to development, an evident result of the current economic crisis. Although the agenda places the gender equality and women’s rights issues high it does not provide satisfying implementation mechanisms to make a significant change in the women’s position in the near future. As WIDE noticed that it seems that development objectives are becoming increasingly subordinated to the neo-liberal market agenda, and human development and women’s empowerment are being streamlined towards market integration.

CONCORD, the Europe’s Development NGO Confederation, expressed its great disappointment at the new EU agenda. It stresses that the most important and alarming change in the new agenda is that aid to the world’s poorest is being cut, diverting funds towards energy and private sector investments which are in the interest of the EU only, not the developing world. CONCORD calls the UE to be more focused on poverty eradication than on self-interest and to take a leading role in the fight against poverty.

The source: [CONCORD reaction to EU Commission 'Agenda for Change'](#).

Lithuania: March to publicize a new law against domestic violence

In December 2011 a new law will come into force in Lithuania providing special protection for women who are victims of domestic violence. A conference drawing over 200 participants held at the Parliament in Vilnius on October 10th focused on the implementation of the new law. Conference speakers included a victim of domestic violence, members of Parliament, the American Ambassador, NGOs targeting domestic violence victims, police officials, a representative of Ministry of Justice, and speakers from [The Advocates for Human Rights](#). After the conference the [Women’s Issues Information Center](#), the KARAT Coalition’s member, led a march aimed at bringing the new law to the attention of the general public. The conference and march gained the attention of the media and the decision makers.

Before an implementation of the new law domestic violence was regarded as a private matter in Lithuania. According to the survey almost 20% of married women experience violence at the hand of their partner. However, less than 2% of registered calls reporting domestic violence result in legal proceedings. The new legislation makes domestic violence a public concern. It establishes and funds 10 new centers for victims of violence.

The source: [The Advocates for Human Rights](#)

Poland: Women and LGBT rights in the parliament

A well known pro-choice activist Wanda Nowicka from [the Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning](#), a KARAT member, has been elected to the parliament in elections held in October 2011. It is a significant breakthrough in a long-standing fight for the reproductive rights in Poland. It is for the first time that an NGO’s activist, advocate of legal abortion, contraceptives, in vitro and sexual education has been given an opportunity to influence state policy as a parliamentarian. Together with Wanda Nowicka a Poland’s best-known gay activist Robert Biedron and a transsexual woman Anna Grodzka have got a parliamentary seat. Both of them have made quite a stir among the conservative members of parliament. The NGO, LGBT and feminist activists and groups pin their hope upon them to advocate for their rights in the parliament.

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

Ukraine: Gender equality mechanisms essential to keep pace with Europe

Ukraine plans to pay more attention to the gender equality issues as it heads towards the European integration. During a two-day “International Conference on the Current Trends of Development of National Gender Mechanisms in European Countries” that took place in Kiev in October 2011 the Ukrainian government confirmed the state’s willingness to include women’s rights issues into a long-term government policy. During the discussion on efficient operation of national gender equality mechanisms experts talked about women in national parliaments, positive actions and quotas, the equality ombudsperson institution, the proper functioning of public authorities responsible for gender equality, the role of NGOs, and the role of men in ensuring and promoting gender equality.

The guests from 14 European countries shared their national experience in gender equality implementation emphasising the importance and urgency of the national gender equality mechanisms’ implementation for a sake of democratic development. They stressed, however, that the adoption of a gender equality oriented legislation is not enough to stop discrimination. European countries’ experience had proven that provision of relevant State tools is necessary for achieving real gender equality.

On the basis of the conference outcomes recommendations for the member states were drafted.

The source : [UNDP Ukraine](#)

UN: States have to protect women against violence

On October 10th 2011 the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, Rashida Manjoo, speaking to the UN General Assembly stressed the importance of states’ roles in protecting women from violence. Silvia Pimentel, Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), shared her concern regarding the pervasiveness of violence against women in much of the world. She noted that many states party to CEDAW have made positive improvements in furthering the rights of women in areas such as political participation, education, and employment. However, these trends are tempered by the fact that women, on average, still receive less pay than their male counterparts, and are significantly underrepresented in top decision-making positions around the world.

For more information about the UN Special Rapporteur statement check [UN News Center](#) website.

The source: [The Advocates for Human Rights](#)

Call for participation

Kyrgyzstan: Call to end bride kidnapping!

Take action and call upon the government of Kyrgyzstan to ensure that cases of bride kidnapping are investigated and prosecuted! Women are kidnapped by men wanting to marry them and kept imprisoned until they agree to the marriage. While imprisoned by the ‘grooms’ they are pressured to agree to the marriage, threatened and subjected to violence (including being raped) if they refuse. Those who manage to escape are left stigmatized with little access to help or justice.

To join Equality Now and call upon the government of Kyrgyzstan to ensure that cases of bride kidnapping are properly investigated and prosecuted and to raise public awareness about the importance of equal rights within society click the link http://org2.democracyinaction.org/o/6208/p/dia/action/public/?action_KEY=8675

Resources

CONCORD: Spotlight on UE policy coherence for development

In November CONCORD launched a report "Spotlight on EU Policy Coherence for Development (PCD)". The new Spotlight Report assesses different EU policies in the areas of Food Security, Natural Resources, Human Security and Migration against the benchmark of PCD. A number of recommendations to redress coherence are proposed to EU institutions, which are accountable for the proper implementation of the Lisbon Treaty.

Full report [here](#)

More information about PCD at coherence.concordeurope.org

UNFPA: People and possibilities in a world of 7 billion

In October the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) launched its report "State of World Population 2011. People and Possibilities in a World of 7 Billion". The report explores the implications of population growth but also shows challenges of population trends such as migration, urbanization and ageing.

The UNFPA State of World Population 2011 is available [here](#).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS

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