

KARAT NEWS

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Our News

Dear Karat News readers,

Welcome in 2008! Lets hope that it will bring positive development in the area of gender equality. We wish you many successes in professional as well as private lives. After a break, we are happy to put in front of you the January issue of Karat News.

We have changed a bit the structure of the newsletter and hope that you will like it. From now on we will be providing you with more extensive update from the Karat secretariat as in 2008 the Secretariat will be involved in 13 projects so we will have a lot of information to share with you. You will find projects' updates in the 'Our News' section.

In the 'National/Members News' we will do our best to update you on the developments in women's rights in individual countries of the CEE/CIS region. Your contributions to this part of the newsletter are more than welcomed. We believe that it is very important to emphasize Karat News role as a platform of information and experiences sharing of its members.

We will continue to provide you with information related to European Union and in the 'Other News' section you can find miscellaneous information that might be of interest to you. Finally, in the 'Information Sharing' you can find various announcements, opportunities as well as links to useful websites and various resources.

My name is Magda Pohec and I have just joined Karat secretariat team. From now on I will be compiling Karat News and I am very much looking forward to cooperation with all of you. If you have any suggestions regarding the structure and content of the Karat News, do not hesitate to contact me at magda.pohec@karat.org.pl

Karat Board Elections 2008

Karat secretariat is pleased to announce that the Board election process has been successfully completed. At the end of 2007, three members of the Board finished their term of office. We would like to thank Shorena Dzotsenidze from Georgia, Inete Ielite from Latvia and Aleksandra Solik from Poland for their work in the Board for the last two years and we are all looking forward to future fruitful cooperation with them.

Karat members has elected three new Board members: Valentina Bodrug-Lungu from Moldova, Lyudmila Petina from Belarus, and Raluca Manaila from Romania. Congratulations and welcome!

Update from the secretariat

Due to further growth of Karat in terms of the number of ongoing and upcoming projects, the secretariat has been joined by three new staff members: Agnieszka Sterne, Marta Gontarska and Magda Pohec. Agnieszka is responsible for the increasingly complex administrative tasks of the Coalition and the secretariat.

Marta whom most of you already know as has been Karat's volunteer for over two years, took the position of PR officer. Magda is a website/news officer. In the upcoming months the Karat's secretariat team will grow to 13 people and this requires structural transformation. We will be also moving soon to a larger office.

Karat's transformation includes also the designing of the new website. At the moment, it is under construction and we will be happy to present this to you soon.

New project! Optional Protocol to CEDAW

We have a pleasure to announce that the new project has been started in January 2008. It is called *Building towards Eastern European and Central Asia NGO Coalition on Optional Protocol to CEDAW* and will be coordinated by Aleksandra Solik. The overall aim is to build capacity of women's NGOs in CEE/CIS to use OP CEDAW to forward women's rights. The project will involve Karat's members from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. Among main activities will include: trainings for representatives of women's NGOs, On-line kits on OP CEDAW, Lobbying for ratification of OP CEDAW where relevant as well as media campaigns.

We will make sure to keep you updated on the developments in the project throughout the year, but if you have any further questions please write to Ola at aleksandra.solik@karat.org.pl

Project Update! MakeITfair

As part of the makeITfair project in which Karat is responsible for focusing on the working conditions of women from CEE (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland), a capacity building workshop has been conducted in Warsaw on 30th of November. We are also about to publish a report looking at the gender aspect of production of electronics in Poland. The report will be published in February and we will inform you about it. What is most interesting and quite a significant achievement as a consequence of writing of the report Karat has entered a dialogue with one of the companies (Flextronics) covered by the report. If you would like any more information about this or other aspects of the project please write to Anita (anita.seibert@karat.org.pl) We also encourage you to visit the project website www.makeitfair.org

National/members' News

BULGARIA: Gender-based violence raises serious concerns

At the recent conference, the Bulgarian vice minister of labour and social policy confirmed that at least every fourth woman in the country is exposed to domestic violence. This alarming statistic however does not translate into scaled up response to this problem. According to the Council of Europe, the financial burden of violence against women in the home costs society an estimated 40 euros/citizen. The money spent on prevention and harm reduction in Bulgaria does not exceed 1euro per person. There is a huge gap between urgent need to end violence against women and how the state is responding to this burning problem. Statistics show that every third Bulgarian knows someone who is suffering different forms of violence at home. Furthermore, it has been estimated that 60 percent of boys who witness domestic violence turn out to be perpetrators in the future. To end this viscous circle, action is needed now.

For more information go to: http://international.ibox.bg/news/id_2072730000

GEORGIA: What does women's movement need?

As a part of the project called *Women Empowerment in Georgia through Women's NGO Structural Capacity Building*, briefing paper on the needs of national women's movement has been created. It is meant to be a useful resource for development agencies and grantmaking institutions. Based on the research, the assessment of needs represents Georgian women's voice that must be crucial in terms of determining priorities for women's empowerment in the country. Experience shows that donors have

sometimes different (than local NGOs) ideas on what should be done. The publication is also useful for women's NGOs as well as they should develop strategy which can be only effective and consistent if most urgent and deliberate needs are identified.

If you are interested in this briefing paper, you can view the full version at:

http://wunrn.com/news/2008/01_08/01_28_08/012808_georgia_files/Institutions.pdf

LITHUANIA: Women's rights at risk – Criminalization of abortion

Two-years efforts of Polish minority representatives in the Lithuanian Parliament to restrict women's reproductive and sexual rights have led to the adoption of the ban on abortion in the first reading. The proposed act resembles Polish restrictive anti-abortion law and its initiator, originally Polish, Wladyslaw Tomaszewski managed to mobilize support of the conservative parliamentarians. To enter into force, the act needs further two readings. It is proposed to bring it up for discussion and voting in the spring session of the Parliament. So there is a real threat of extreme backlash in the country in terms of women's rights. If the bleak scenario is realized, then Lithuania will be among three other countries in Europe (Ireland, Malta, Poland) with the most restrictive anti-abortion laws. Anti-Choice parliamentarians are exerting severe pressure on MPs with more progressive perception of family planning by appealing to ideological and religious arguments. One of the most passionate defenders of women's reproductive rights in the Parliament will even be questioned by the Parliamentary Commission on Ethics because of her liberal views on abortion.

For more information you can contact Astra Network secretariat at: info@astra.org.pl

EU News

(Lack of) Gender equality on the labour market

On 23rd of January 2008, the European Commission adapted new report "Equality between women and men 2008" according to which there is constant but too slow growth in number of economically active women. Women still face many barriers and discrimination on the labour market. On average, the pay gap amounts to 15% although women are better educated than men and the EU law bans discriminative practices and commands equal pay for a job of equal value. The highest pay gap has been noted in Estonia, Cyprus, Slovakia and Germany. In 2006, the employment rate of women was 57,2 % (increased by 3,5 points since 2001). In general, there is an increase in employment rate of women aged 55 – 66 (from 28,2 to 34,8 %). But this tendency isn't true for many CEE countries, for example Poland.

Electronic version is available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/docs/com_2008_0010_en.pdf

Group of experts on trafficking in human beings – call for applications

The European Commission appoints group of experts as a part of the scaled up response to fight trafficking in the European Union. The Group will consist of 21 members and will play a role of an advisory body. The call for applications is open till February, 15, 2008 and is eligible only for EU citizens. You can submit your application online at: http://ec.europa.eu/secretariat_general/regexp/

EU Gender Watch

EU Gender Watch is a project of the Network East-West Women (NEWW). It includes reports on the political, social, economical and legal framework affecting the situation of women in three countries of

the CEE/CIS region: Georgia, Ukraine and Tajikistan. The main objective of the reports is to examine the accuracy of national policies with the standards set by the European Union in terms of gender equality and empowerment. More info: <http://www.neww.org.pl/en.php/conference/raport/0.html>

Equality and non-discrimination – recommendations from the civil society

New initiatives and sustained efforts of the European Commission are needed to ensure social, economic and gender equality and to eradicate lingering discriminative practices. Being aware of this, the Commission recently organized social consultation on those issues with the civil society. Platform of European Social NGOs elaborated recommendations for further actions that basically can be limited to three general points: there must be the same legal protection for all, Member States and the European Union must provide measures that guarantee the equality in practice, not only de jure; and finally all EU policy need to be built upon equality and non-discrimination principles. Full version of the document go to:

http://cms.horus.be/files/99907/MediaArchive/Policies/Equality_and_non-discrimination/2007-10-23%20Equality%20and%20Non%20Discrimination%20-%20What%20role%20for%20the%20EU.pdf

New statistics on unemployment

Eurostat provided new data on the joblessness in the EU27. In December 2007, the unemployment rate amounted 6,9 %. In general, 24 Member States recorded a decrease and only in three countries the unemployment rate increased. The lowest drop has been also recorded in the CEE region: in Poland (from 11,8 to 8,1 %) and Bulgaria (from 8,2 to 5,8 %). In 2007, the unemployment rate fell for both: women and men but the percentage of jobless women (7,3 %) is still larger than it is in case of men (6,4 %).

For more information is available at:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/pls/portal/docs/PAGE/PGP_PRD_CAT_PREREL/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2008/PGE_CAT_PREREL_YEAR_2008_MONTH_01/3-31012008-EN-AP.PDF

Other News

CSW 52nd Session, 25 February-7 March 2008, New York, USA

The main theme of the upcoming session of the Commission on the Status of Women is "financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women". The alternative themes has not yet been decided and the final choice will be made through negotiations with national governments. During the session, the Committee will also discuss recommendations to the theme of 'Women's equal participation in conflict prevention, management and conflict resolution and in post-conflict peace building'. More info; <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/52sess.htm#themes>

CEDAW Committee Elections will take place in June 2008. It is a good motivation for women's movement to mobilize and lobby for good candidates. More information about the CEDAW Committee election process is available at: <http://www.iwraw-ap.org/committee/election.htm>

CEDAW moves to Geneva

The move of the CEDAW is of great significance as it will be now under the auspices of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). For more information go to:
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/Cedaw.aspx>

Long mediation in 'FFI case' in India reaches agreement

FFI case has been brought up on the international agenda by the Clean Clothes Campaign (CCC), that mobilized support of labour rights defenders from all over world. CCC coordinated a campaign against Fibre and Fabrics International (FFI), as well as its subsidiary Jeans Knit Pvt. Ltd. (JKPL) due to serious violations of working rights in those manufactories. Due to CCC's action and publicity on the scandalous working conditions in FFI and JKPL, the Indian court issued international arrest warrant for Dutch labour activists. This launched the process of mediation in which the Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers took part. Finally, on 29th January 2008, agreement has been reached. FFI assured that all cases against working rights activists will be dropped while CCC agreed to cease campaign against the company. More info: <http://www.cleanclothes.org/urgent/ffi.htm>

Information sharing

January issue of CaucAsia now available

The theme for this month is Gender and Fashion. It discusses the female dress codes imposed by culture and how they possibly affect women's lives, what is the rationale behind fashion's dictates. CaucAsia magazine is available online at: <http://www.gmc.ge/images/PDF/Kavkazia2008-1E.pdf>

Database of various statistics on the internet: World Freedom Atlas

provides world statistics on the great variety of issues. It might be effectively used by social scientists, journalists and NGOs. World Freedom Atlas focuses on the issues of democracy, human rights and development. The data available on the website is divided into three categories: What is it? (statistics that measure the level and quality of democracy, human rights etc.) How to get it? (data that shows factors that lead to achievement and realization of those) and finally What you get? (this category includes tangible benefits of societies that live in freedom and democracy with good governance). We encourage you to check it out at: <http://www.freedom.indiemaps.com>

Gender in transition: New issue of the newsletter on Development and Transition

Development and Transition is a joint newsletter of London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and United Nations Development Fund (UNDP). It is released three times a year. We encourage to use this useful resource as it covers the topics important for the CEE/CIS region, especially that the last issue is fully devoted to the subject of Gender and Development. Among others, there is an article on women on past-communist labour market, a portrait of women migrant workers in Uzbekistan, as well as gender and EU enlargement. Moreover, there are two articles covering the different aspects of economic situation of women in Poland: one is on promoting gender equality in Poland's private sector and the other on Polish women's labour markets at home and abroad.

To read full text and to have access to archives go to: <http://www.developmentandtransition.net/>

Putting Gender Back in the Picture – Rethinking Women's Economic Empowerment

New publication has been released by BRIDGE. It includes brief overview of the variety of issues linked to the economic situation of women but most importantly it refers the reader to a great deal of resources on concrete topics.

Electronic version can be downloaded at: www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/bibliographies.htm

Warsaw East European Conference, July 15 – 18, 2008, Poland

The topic of the conference is "Freedom and power: empires, states and nations in the east from the 18th to the 21st century". The organizers inform that the main focus will be question of freedom and power in East Central, South East and Eastern Europe, Russia, Central Asia and Caucasus. Organizers propose concrete topics for the speakers, among which gender issues are not specifically mentioned. However, organizers declare that they are open to suggestions and input, which leaves a space for activists to include gender issues that are missing in the conference programme.

For more information you need to login at the conference website at:

<http://www.studium.uw.edu.pl/weec/>

Oxfam – Gender & Development Journal: Call for papers on Leadership

Issued three times a year, Gender & Development Journal provides an opportunity for researchers, practitioners and activities to submit their articles. Next edition that will be published in November 2008 deals with the topic of leadership. Editors are interested in the following topics: what is the role of development organizations in supporting women's leadership?; Do women leaders make a difference in terms of gender equality outcomes and especially pro-poor outcomes?; How progressive agendas can be supported and mainstreamed?; What attracts women to conservative or fundamentalist political groupings?

If you would like to submit a paper contact: gadeditor@oxfam.org.uk

Deadline is April, 7, 2008.

You can also find more information at: <http://www.genderanddevelopment.org/news.asp?>

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): WIDE; Astra Network; NEWW-Polska; EastChance, WUNRN;

Edited by Magdalena Pohec