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Dear KARAT News Readers !

*I would like to draw your attention to important news about Rio+20 conference which unfortunately was not successful as far as women's rights are concerned, and about the new initiative of NGOs which monitor the global discussion about the proposed 5<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women in 2015.*

*I also encourage you to visit KARAT's new website and to post your news on KARAT's Facebook profile. Remember 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.*

*Since the summer season has started and many of us are going on holidays **the next issue of KARAT News will be available at the end of August** and it will cover two months – July and August.*

*Agnieszka Walko-Mazurek, KARAT Networking Officer*

## What's new in KARAT

### Equality Day: Work-life balance necessary for gender equality

On June 19<sup>th</sup> 2012 we celebrated the 7<sup>th</sup> International Day of Equality Between Women and Men. The aim of the International Equality Day is to bring attention to inequities and problems around us such as the unfavourable position of mothers in the labour market, the gender pay gap or violence against women.

For the first time in history, Equality Day was also celebrated in Poland, Germany and Slovakia. Partner organizations - KARAT Coalition (Poland), Technical University of Dortmund (Germany), Aspekt (Slovakia) - in these countries and the [Gender Studies](#) from Czech Republic, a KARAT member, were sharing both positive and negative experiences of parents related to childcare. This was done in order to identify viable solutions as well as the challenges connected to finding a balance between work and childcare in practice.

Work-life balance options are necessary precondition for gender equality. Since women are still the primary caregivers in most families, a functional network of childcare facilities is crucial for their career development and employment opportunities.

However, in the Czech Republic, the demand for childcare is higher than a number of places in kindergartens provided by the state. In Poland, the current family policy has been set as far as 2030 but its scope is very limited. The policy outlines standards of pre-school education in nurseries and kindergartens but it completely omits care for the elderly or chronically ill. In Germany the families can use Family Centres which operate as integrated service points which meet the work-life balance needs of different families - the needs of children, parents and grandparents. In the Slovak Republic, the unemployment rate among young people is one of the highest in the EU. Lack of job security might play an important role in the decisions of young people about having children

As in previous years, NGO Gender Studies published a special edition of the "Fifty-Fifty" newspaper which was distributed on June 19 for free in Prague, Olomouc, Brno and Poděbrady. In these four cities, booths with information materials were available and volunteers answered questions about work-life balance and gender equality.

For more information please contact Jitka at: [jitka.kolarova@genderstudies.cz](mailto:jitka.kolarova@genderstudies.cz)

### OP CEDAW: A tool for advancing women's rights

We are glad to announce that [the article by Aleksandra Solik](#) (KARAT Secretariat) about the [Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) (Optional Protocol to CEDAW) and KARAT's role in promoting its procedures in the region of Central & Eastern Europe and Central Asia has appeared at [OP CEDAW blog](#) by Simone Cusack.

The article presents why the knowledge about the procedures of Optional Protocol is crucial to the women's organizations from our Region and why this important tool for advancing women's rights is still underutilized in the countries of Central & Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

KARAT has been focusing in its work on Optional Protocol as an efficient tool to address the systematic violation of women's rights for 5 years already. It has implemented two important projects which resulted in identifying a number of problems and barriers that hamper women's access to the Optional Protocol's communication procedure, and

[exploring the barriers](#) that prevent women who experience discrimination from using domestic laws and international mechanisms, such as the Optional Protocol to CEDAW, to protect and claim their rights.

Read the article "[CEDAW Committee needs to play a greater role in addressing the barriers that impede women's access to justice](#)" by Aleksandra Solik.

## **KARAT's historic photos on Facebook**

We are glad to announce that the historic photos of KARAT from Economy Literacy Workshops 2005-2006 are now available on [KARAT's Facebook](#) profile. We encourage you to look at this piece of KARAT's history and tag yourself and your friends. Also, if you have any photos from KARAT's events that you would like to share with the others please send them to Agnieszka at: [agnieszka.mazurek@karat.org.pl](mailto:agnieszka.mazurek@karat.org.pl) and we will be happy to include them to KARAT's herstory on Facebook.

## **European Union**

### **EU recognizes a gender dimension of human trafficking**

On 19<sup>th</sup> of June 2012 the European Commission launched the [EU Strategy to combat human trafficking](#). The document is welcomed by women rights organizations as it has a strong focus on women's rights and gender equality. The strategy aims to provide an integrated, coherent, and outcome-oriented strategy towards the elimination of trafficking in human beings. It recognizes the strong gender dimension of human trafficking and focus on reducing demand.

Data collected by the European Commission in 2011 confirms United Nations findings that more than three quarters of victims are trafficked for sexual exploitation, the vast majority of them being women and girls. The Commission acknowledges that gender inequality and violence against women play a great role in human trafficking. The Strategy identifies five priorities the EU should focus on in order to address the issue of trafficking in human beings. It also outlines a number of actions which the European Commission proposes to implement over the next five years in cooperation with other actors, including Member States, EU institutions and agencies, international organisations, third countries, civil society and the private sector. The Strategy will now be discussed by the European Parliament and the Council.

### **[The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012–2016](#)**

Source: [EWL](#)

### **Poland: Women in Parliament for convention on combating violence against women**

The Polish Parliamentary Women's Group has voted through a resolution calling on Polish government to ratify the Council of Europe [Convention on combating and preventing violence against women and domestic violence](#). Ninety per cent of female voters were in favor of the ratification. This means that Polish female parliamentarians do not agree with the Minister of Justice who so far has effectively blocked the ratification. The Minister has managed to convince the government that the Convention might undermine the traditional roles of woman and man in a family and gives the green light to homosexual marriages.

The Polish government has decided to postpone decision about ratification of the Convention as at least five other Ministries had doubts and remarks. The government is going to prepare the report about the potential consequences of ratifying this Convention by Poland.

The purposes of the Convention are, among others, to protect women against all forms of violence, to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to encourage gender equality, to provide a framework to assist victims of violence, to promote international cooperation, and to provide assistance to law enforcement agencies to effectively eliminate violence against women. In June it was signed by United Kingdom, being twenty first country to do this.

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

Source: [Wysokie Obcasy](#)

## **Social economy of mothers – good practice from Poland**

Social economy can be an answer to the problems of different groups of women who find themselves outside the labour market. One of such groups are young mothers, who face difficulties in finding employment after having a child and related to it break in their professional career.

Moms Cooperative – a social economy enterprise founded last year in Warsaw, Poland is a good example of an initiative which provides young mothers with a chance for decent work. The cooperative is producing handcraft inspired by folk art and the members' experience as mothers, which adds value to the goods.

Moms Cooperative like other social economy enterprises, combines economic and social goals. While the economic success is important for all members of the cooperative, at the same time they aim at activation of women at risk of marginalization both in society and in the labour market.



They focus on single, underage, permanently unemployed mothers and support cooperation between them. The profits that the Moms Cooperative brings will be allocated to the improvement of qualifications of its members as well as ensuring sustainability of the enterprise. When they will have larger surpluses at their disposal, Moms plan to allocate them to support other women who are interested in developing their own social economy initiatives.

The Cooperative is developing, it has recently opened an internet store. The Moms present their products and idea of social enterprise at various events related to the socially responsible business initiatives. They become more and more recognizable and count on a success of their initiative.

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

Read more about the Moms Cooperative at: [http://www.karat.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/social\\_economy\\_and\\_momscooperative1.pdf](http://www.karat.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/social_economy_and_momscooperative1.pdf)

KARAT is currently implementing a project "[Creating and promoting social economy instruments for the inclusion of marginalized groups on the labour market](#)" managed by KARAT's Romanian member: [Org AUR](#).

## **World:**

### **Rio+20: This is not the future women want**

The women organizations and activists are very disappointed with the final document "[The Future We Want](#)" of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, or Rio+20 which took place on 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The outcomes of conference went against the expectations of civil society organizations (CSOs) and women rights activists as the economic, sexual and reproductive health and rights, and women's role in climate change were ignored by the heads of States and Governments.

Although the final document's draft had already been widely criticized by women's organizations and activists before the conference's start, the governments did not decide to make the stronger commitments to women's empowerment and reducing gender inequalities hampering the sustainable development across the globe. The women's organizations openly say that the future the decision-makers gathered in Rio have offered to the world is Not The Future Women Want.



According to [the Women's Major Group](#) representing 200 civil society women's organizations from all around the world, the governments have failed both women and future generations. The women are outraged that governments did not recognize **women's reproductive rights** as a central aspect of gender equality and sustainable development, did not make any strong commitments to **women's rights to land, property and inheritance** excluding half of the world's population from access to resources, and did not make the critical connection between **climate change** and **gender**. Thus, the outcome document has downgraded women's rights and gender equality to the periphery of sustainable development concept.

This is especially evident when comparing to the [Rio Declaration on Environment and Development](#) adopted in 1992 where there were around 170 references to gender and an entire chapter on women. In the final document of Rio+20 there are only around 50 references which have been watered down in addition.

Anita Nayar of the Manila-based Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era ([DAWN](#)) comments on this "It is not a simple matter of gender mentions either, but rather there is clearly an unwillingness by some states to agree on concrete actions and an overall weakening of internationally agreed commitments on gender equality and women's empowerment".

The outcomes of Rio+20 seem to be in line with the results of 56<sup>th</sup> CSW session in New York which ended without the agreed conclusion. The influence of conservative forces on the decision-makers has become apparent. Thus, those who support or are lobbying the UN for a 5<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women should consider whether it makes sense as there is a great risk of further backlash on women's rights, especially on reproductive ones.

The official site of Rio+20 <http://www.uncsd2012.org/>

The Women's Major Group Statement <http://alturl.com/9t37n>

The South Feminists Demand <http://www.dawnet.org/advocacy-cso.php?id=248>

Asia Pacific Forum on Women <http://alturl.com/ntawb>

Source of the Picture: [Rio+20 Women's March](#)

## World Conference on Women raises great doubts

The disappointing outcomes of Rio+20 conference gave an impulse to a broader discussion about the possible results of 5<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women (5WCW) in 2015. Although the President of UN General Assembly and the UN Secretary-General who proposed the conference are enthusiastic about it and believe that the conference could tackle emerging issues concerning women, the women's organizations and activists are very skeptical about their proposal.

Several women's organizations and platforms have already issued the statements expressing their concerns about any event with negotiated text or a new document due to current geopolitics and the strength of both anti-women and anti-human rights forces in the UN. They stress that if 5WCW takes place it should rather focus on re-commitment

and implementation of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action](#) than on reviewing the previous achievements on women's rights.

In response to the ongoing discussion about the pros and cons of the conference the NGO/CSW/NY Enquiry Panel has been set up. It is an ad hoc group whose task is to fact find and gather information concerning proposal for a 5WCW.

On June 2012 the Panel issued the [Progress Report](#) presenting the facts and positions of Member States, UN agencies and organizations, and NGOs concerning the proposed 5WCW.

## Resources:

### **RECON: Extending the boundaries of civic membership Polish NGOs as change agents**

This report investigates empirically the competing narratives of collective identity in contemporary Poland, both a national state and a new EU member state. It focuses on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) role in advancing the rights and civic membership of women and sexual minorities.

You can download this publication [HERE](#)

### **UNDP: Business solutions to poverty – How inclusive business models create opportunities for all in Emerging Europe and Central Asia**

This is the first report that applies the concept of inclusive business models to the ECA region. It addresses decision makers from the region and from different sectors: company representatives, policy makers, development agencies, CSOs and other stakeholders such as academia and business associations. The report seeks to inspire companies and other stakeholders in the ECA region to identify and realize opportunities for including people with low incomes into value chains and to provide guidance on how it can be achieved.

You can download this publication [HERE](#)

## Upcoming event:

### **CCC EuroMeeting**

The EuroMeeting of [Clean Clothes Campaign](#) (CCC) will take place on 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> of July 2012 in Warsaw, Poland. This is the first time when the strategic meeting of the coordinators of National Platforms of CCC in Europe takes place in Poland. Thus, it is a good opportunity for Polish organizations and activists who are interested in cooperation with CCC to receive first-hand information about the latest campaigns. KARAT Coalition is a member of [Clean Clothes Polska](#).

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

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### **THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS**

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