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Dear KARAT News Readers !

*This month I would like to draw your attention to important process of negotiations on final document of CSW 57. As usual the governments taking part in the negotiations differ a lot on their perceptions of women's rights, especially the reproductive and sexual one. Lets hope that the progresive lanugage on gender equality will find its place in the document.*

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**

### **Bulgaria: Schools for gender equality and against violence**

The Gender Education, Research and Technology Foundation (GERT) from a KARAT member Bulgaria has launched a two-year project aiming at involving boys in actions aimed at gender equality and decreasing gender based violence. GERT based its project on a research showing that it is gender stereotypes prevailing in a society that makes the opportunities unequal for boys and girls.

The project will be conducted at schools, building respect for gender differences from early age and instilling the values of non-violent, non-abusive and fair partnership between boys and girls in places and institutions where boys and girls live together and grow-up together. The successful schools will be awarded a label "School without gender based violence and negative gender stereotypes".

For the last ten years the changes in Bulgarian society has been very dynamic and profound but a tangible change in perception of gender roles in a public discourse has not been noticed. Rather the opposite, there is a double standard - a pretended egalitarian thinking in parallel with hidden but sustainable discriminative practices, including the media that openly induces and supports gender stereotypes.

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

### **Armenia: The first domestic-violence law rejected**

On January 21, 2013 the Armenian government blocked passage of the country's first domestic-violence law, saying that revisions should be made to existing legislation, or to the bill itself. The rejected draft would have strengthened official measures to protect victims by introducing restraining orders and expanding the number of shelters, among other measures.

The lack of adequate law on domestic violence brings heavy consequences for the victims as well as for the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which are struggling to address the problem. At present, three private domestic-violence shelters, along with several NGO-run hotlines are all that exist for female domestic violence victims. But the need for shelters and professional help is huge in Armenia. Over the past two years, the Women's Rights Centre (a KARAT member), which runs two hotlines, four regional crisis centres and one shelter, has received some 2,557 calls from women seeking help.

In 2012, Armenia set a grim record for domestic violence when six women, ranging in age from 21 to 50 years old, died in incidents involving their husbands or fathers-in-law. Activists believe that the six fatal domestic-violence cases might have been prevented if Armenia had had a law on domestic violence, along with a state-provided assistance for shelters.

For more information please contact: Susanna Vardanyan from Women's Rights Centre at: [vardanyan\\_9@yahoo.com](mailto:vardanyan_9@yahoo.com)

Source: [IPS](#)

### **Bosnia and Herzegovina: Women MPs unite for gender-responsive legislation**

In February a cross-party Women's Network of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ŽMBiH) was formed in the parliament, following similar practices in parliaments in many other countries. According to its founders the idea of cross-party network was born from the need of female parliamentarians to cooperate more efficiently in adopting laws and policies which aim to improve women's status and protect the rights of citizens. The network is going to oversee all proposed legislation in the light of women's interests in the near future.

The establishment of Women's Network was criticized by the mayor of Novi Grad, a municipality in Sarajevo who dismissed the initiative as "brainwashing". This was met with a strong reaction from women's group which described the mayor's remarks as sexist and discriminatory. The Women's Network released a brief statement "ŽMBiH believes that the sexist and discriminatory statements must have sanctions, especially if these statements are coming from those who are responsible for the establishment of conditions of equal opportunity regardless of gender and gender roles. We ask that representatives /

authorized institutions to take responsibility and begin to do their job for which they are paid by the citizens, and to sanction all forms of violence and discrimination against women by men, regardless of whether the discrimination or violence is carried out in the public or in private space.”

Source: [EWL](#), [BalkanInsight](#)

## European Union

### Gender Equality Committee says stop to the decline of women in society

On 19 February, 2013 the Gender Equality Committee of the European Parliament voted a non-legislative resolution on the impact of the crisis on women. MEPs are calling the EU Member States and the European Commission (EC) to implement a set of measures to address the “double punishment” women suffer since the beginning of the crisis. In the resolution MEPs call on the EC to stop budget cuts in the public sector, in social security benefits and social welfare, education and childcare services. They also call for greater female entrepreneurship by facilitating women’s access to microcredit and improving a public transport policy to facilitate mobility.

The resolution was preceded by the [report](#) on the impact of the economic crisis on gender equality and women’s rights which clearly shows that the crisis has significantly worsen the condition and status of women. The resolution will be voted in the plenary session in March 2013. It will also serve as background to the International Women’s Day event in the European Parliament.

Source: [EWL](#)

## World

### Gender equality a core of every sustainable development domain in the Post 2015 Development Agenda

On December 2012 The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with UNWOMEN and the Government of Austria, organized the first dialogue in a series of multi-stakeholder consultations in preparation for the 2014 United Nations Development Cooperation Forum (DCF). The meeting’s participants tried to answer the question how gender equality and the empowerment of women could be firmly placed at the centre of a post 2015 development agenda in light of emerging development challenges and a changing development landscape.

The dialogue became an opportunity for the feminists to express their opinions on gender in new UN development agenda. There were many voices questioning the way gender equality and women’s rights principles were incorporated into Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) having in mind that these principles have been thoroughly discussed and agreed upon in such documents as Universal Declaration on Human Rights, CEDAW Convention, the Cairo Programme of Action, the Beijing Platform for Action, the five UNCSR on Women in Conflict and the ILO Convention.

The discussion focused on the issues brought up by Wendy Harcourt who cooperated with WIDE for many years. She talked about the underlying problems that are causing the increasing inequalities and the crises we are facing. She stressed that the world has changed in these last 15 years in ways that the old MDG framework cannot address. We have to take a novel approach to gender equality and start from asking why gender inequalities are replicated in so many institutions such as UN, the office, the factory, the village or the home? Then, why can’t we use the agreed frameworks, gender norms and negotiated principles of human rights to make gender equality a reality and not another goal on a long list of global wishes? The MDGs in a form as they are now do not address the problems concerning gender equality thoroughly since they simplify the agreed norms. Why are the human rights treated as an optional extra when it comes to economic and social rights? Are we going to acknowledge that sustainability is not about resources as such, but rather about systemic, institutional change, building capacities and new systems from peoples’ knowledge, experience of nature and culture, and recognizing the damage and violence of development? In times when the world changes so fast, a new states and communities grow in power, and the nature’s well-being is at stake we should not try to reformulate the agreed principles by putting them into new frameworks. We should rather change our attitude to development cooperation and think how to work in order to include the ecological and social needs of people and the planet while moving away from the modern development framework with its fixation on the economic.

Irene Dubel who represented Hivos concluded the discussion talking about the importance of validating of past time achievements. She stressed that the women's human rights need to be centre stage in the future development agenda, not as one goal, not mainstreamed with a few indicators here and there, but in each and every sustainable development domain. It will not be possible, however, without a broad participation of women's rights activists and organisations in the processes of formulating and shaping this agenda. Key drivers of this agenda, however, need to be resourced, adequately and in a sustainable manner, within civil society but also within the other domains of governments, the donor community, private sector etc.

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

## **CSW: The final negotiations have started**

On Thursday February 28 the negotiations ("informals") on the Agreed Conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 57 started. After governments' amendments the negotiated final document is now 33 pages long.

This year the negotiations look as follows: there has been a split within EU countries on language referring to reproductive rights. Malta, Hungary and Poland have left this group, which has enabled other countries to add a strong and crucial paragraph to the text: "Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, and the United Kingdom ADD: The Commission recognizes **that protecting and fulfilling the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls is a necessary condition to achieve gender equality**, to enable all women to enjoy all human rights, and to prevent and mitigate violence against women and girls." Other strong allies for progressive language are Turkey (Sic!), Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, Iceland, Argentina, Uruguay, Norway, Colombia, and Switzerland.

The conservative governments of 17 like-minded countries consisting of members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (IOC) and represented by Egypt adopted the disrupting strategy of being difficult, asking for many clarifications and causing delays.

The Holy See, up to their usual business, has asked for the deletion of all references to gender, opposes references to sexual violence, and all language on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

The African Group, who played a mayor role in the opposition especially 2 years ago, is divided. Among this group South Africa, Zambia and Kenya are strong allies for gender equality and reproductive rights.

CSW will be held in New York on March 4 -15 , 2013.

Source: [Wo=Men in New York blog](#)

## **Upcoming events**

### **Forum of women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan invites to its sessions during CSW**

Forum of women's NGOs of Kyrgyzstan invites to two parallel sessions organized in conjunction with the 57th Session of the CSW.

The first session titled "VAW in rural areas of Central Asia" will be held on Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 14:30 PM. Venue: Drew Room, Ground Floor, Church Center.

The second session titled "Sharing responsibilities for VAW elimination" will be held on Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup> , at 12:30 PM. Venue: Grumman Room, 8th Floor, Church Center

### **International Women's Day – Women's Response to the Crisis**

Every year the European Parliament celebrates International Women's Day with an event that brings together European and national MPs from parliamentary committees for equal opportunities.

This year the event will focus on the theme "Women's response to the crisis". During the event three discussion panels will be held on the effects of the crisis on women and how the EU can support Member States in strengthening women's social and economic rights during the crisis.

One of the objectives is to share best practices and experiences from successful women professionals on how women can face the challenges during the crisis and also how to see the opportunities in these challenges.

The meeting is open to the public, registrations can be made via this link:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201302/20130218ATT61192/20130218ATT61192EN.pdf>

The programme can be consulted at this link:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201302/20130222ATT61645/20130222ATT61645EN.pdf>

## Resources

### **CEDAW: A tool for gender-sensitive agriculture and rural development policy and programme formulation.**

The publication provides a guidance on how FAO and national ministries of agriculture can support and use CEDAW at the country level as a tool for policy development and programming to achieve equality between men and women in agriculture and rural development. It outlines the importance of CEDAW as a normative framework for orienting development cooperation and suggest practical ways of enabling FAO and ministries of agriculture to engage in CEDAW reporting processes and in implementing the Convention as a tool for gender-sensitive agriculture and rural development policy and program formulation.

The publication is available [HERE](#)

### **EIGE: Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: violence against women - victim support.**

This report compares data on support services for women victims of violence among 27 EU Member States and Croatia. It presents an in-depth overview of the range and quality of: emergency services, 24-hour helplines, legal advice and other services to which women victims of violence have access. It also gives recommendations in the areas of legislative and policy measures, data collection and support services.

The report is available [HERE](#)

### **UN Women: Policy Brief: Decent Work and Women's Economic Empowerment: Good policy and practice.**

The brief describes why empowering women economically is crucial for well-being of society and its economies. What kind of measures could be undertaken to create more jobs, promote decent work and women's economic empowerment and what are the trends in women's employment.

The brief is available [HERE](#)

## Call for submissions

### **HRC welcomes information on best practices in the application of traditional values. Deadline extended.**

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights calls for submitting information on best practices in the application of traditional values while promoting and protecting human rights and upholding human dignity. Submissions will contribute to the OHCHR report on this theme requested by Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/RES/21/3 of 9 October 2012. The report will be presented at the 24th session of the Human Rights Council in September 2013.

Your submissions should be of maximum 2 pages. The report will contain only submissions received in MS Word document or compatible format. All submissions will be made available on the webpage of the OHCHR.

### **The deadline for submission is 15 March 2013.**

The text of the resolution, which should guide the content of the inputs, is available in:

English: <http://goo.gl/dokVd> . Please send your inputs to [spuvimanasinghe@ohchr.org](mailto:spuvimanasinghe@ohchr.org)

### **March For a Life Free from Violence Against Women and Girls!**

AWID, the Center for Women's Global Leadership, United Methodist Women and the Women & Global Migration Working Group are calling on women's organizations around the world to hold rallies, marches and vigils on International Women's Day, Friday March 8, 2013, to advocate that States respond, protect, and prevent violence against women and girls in all their diversity. This march calls on States to take concrete steps to end impunity, one of the biggest challenges to achieving justice in cases of violence against women; fund programs and services for gender equality and the realization of human rights; decrease military spending, one of the driving forces of violence against women; and protect women human rights defenders, who are at the forefront of defending women's rights and who face increased levels of gender-based violence globally.

More at <http://www.awid.org/eng/Library/Call-for-Participation-International-Women-s-Day-March-on-March-8-2013>

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

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