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KARAT & Members' News

Czech Republic: Our colleague nominated as Minister of Czech government

We are glad to inform that a long term KARAT's member and its representatives on national and international fora Misha Marksova Tominova from the Association for Gender Equality has been appointed a Minister of Labor and Social Affairs in Czech government.

She can draw on her broad experience in the fields of gender and minorities to introduce protections for both into specific systemic measures. As she said, she is going to focus in her work on such priorities as recovery of employment agencies, the full indexation of pensions, strengthening support for families with children and flawless distribution of social benefits to all to whom they are legally entitled.

KARAT's team and its members across the Region congratulate Misha on her new job.

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

Source: http://zpravy.idnes.cz/ministryni-prace-a-socialnich-veci-ma-byt-michaela-marksova-tominova-1iw-/domaci.aspx?c=A140117_091629_domaci_kop

Azerbaijan: The UN rights expert calls for women's empowerment

On December 6, 2013 United Nations Special Rapporteur Rashida Manjoo urged the Azerbaijan authorities to fully implement the country's current legislation and "to punish not only the perpetrators of violence against woman, but also those who fail in their duty to respond to the violation." The human rights expert praised the authorities for their commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights and the adoption of specific legal measures to achieve equality and non-discrimination, including for women. However, she raised the issue of limited or the lack of implementation of laws and policies. The Special Rapporteur drew attention to the issues of trafficking of women, for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labour, and the increasing number of early, forced and unregistered marriages, in particular in the Southern region. According to the State Committee, more than 5000 girls have been victims of early marriages in 2013. She also warned about an increase in the number of sex-selective abortions in Azerbaijan. The UN Special Rapporteur called for the adoption of holistic solutions to address the individual empowerment of women, while acknowledging and addressing the social, economic and cultural barriers that are a reality in the lives of women in Azerbaijan. She also encouraged the development of social transformation initiatives that address the causes of inequality and discrimination, which most often lead to violence against women.

Source: [UN Human Rights OHCHR](#)

Poland: NGOs express solidarity with the Ukrainians

In January 2014, 326 organizations, including KARAT Coalition, signed a statement of solidarity with the Ukrainian NGOs appealing to the Polish authorities to take a firm stand on the Ukrainian authorities' anti-democratic actions. In the statement the organisations expressed solidarity with Ukrainian society, as well as admiration and respect for the millions of Ukrainians proving every day that their country's rightful place lies in a United Europe.

The statement was a response to a newly passed legislation which seriously restrict fundamental civil rights and liberties in this country. The law imposes drastic limitations on the activities of Ukrainian NGOs. Organisations receiving support from abroad are to be regarded as "foreign agents", and will be forced to submit monthly reports and declare their "agent" status publicly. The act of receiving foreign aid will be synonymous with losing their status of non-profit organisations eligible for tax relief. The authorities' intentions are obvious: to discredit non-governmental organisations in the eyes of Ukrainian society, to deprive them of independent funding sources, and to prevent them from cooperating with foreign partners.

The Statement was developed by Grupa Zagranica - a platform comprising 61 Polish non-governmental organizations, including KARAT, engaged in development cooperation, democracy support, humanitarian aid and global education.

English: [Statement on the restriction of civil liberties in Ukraine](#)

Ukrainian: [ЗАЯВА ГРУПИ «ZAGRANICA» про обмеження громадянських свобод в Україні](#)

Source: [Grupa Zagranica](#)

Serbia: New law may undermine women's reproductive rights

The new law guaranteeing free healthcare to children and pregnant women and new mothers in Serbia can possibly influence their reproductive rights in a worrying manner. Article 5 of this newly adopted law requires that terminations of pregnancies, along with the identification details of the patient, be reported to the government health insurance fund. This started a heated debate over a potential register of abortions being compiled by the government. Doctors are concerned that penal provisions on healthcare facilities and practitioners who fail to send reports of their patients' procedures might push them to break confidentiality bounds and medical ethics. Meanwhile, the government is

denying accusations of creating abortion records, claiming that this is the only system to prevent misuse of free healthcare provided by the new law.

Source: [ASTRA Bulletin](#)

European Union

Punishing sex buyers a way to reduce prostitution

On January 23, 2014 the Women's Rights Committee adopted a report calling for measures to reduce prostitution by criminalising the sex buyers, Europe wide awareness raising campaigns and prevention strategies, especially for socially-excluded, vulnerable and poor persons.

Text approved by 14 to 2 with 6 abstentions, stresses the need to reduce prostitution and trafficking and to help victims of sexual exploitation to reintegrate again in the society. The approved text calls on national authorities to help prostituted women to find alternative ways to earn money other than prostitution and to put exit programmes in place. Furthermore, MEPs say that prostitution and exploitation can have detrimental health impact, physical or psychological traumas or alcohol and drug addiction on women in prostitution, especially on children and adolescents. MEPs call on member states to tackle on-going economic and social crisis which, in some cases, forces women, men and children into prostitution and to support women who want to get out of prostitution. According to the Commission's data, 62 % of persons are trafficked for sexual exploitation reasons and 96 % of the identified and presumed victims are women and girls. The European Parliament is expected to vote on the non-binding resolution at the 10-13 March session in Strasbourg.

Source: [EWL](#)

Resources

UN Women: Annual report 2012-2013

The Annual Report documents UN Women's work to foster women's empowerment and gender equality around the world. It highlights some of the organization's initiatives during the year and provides summary financial statements, a list of new programmes and projects, and contact information.

The report is available [HERE](#)

EWL: Women's Watch 2012-2013

The Women's Watch report is a snapshot of the situation during a two year period (2012-2013) and looks both at legislation and statistical data with 30 very short country pages. The report looks at women's situation and gender equality in three main areas: women in decision-making, women's economic independence and care responsibilities, and violence against women and women's sexual and reproductive rights, while also looking at the links between those areas.

Download the publication from [HERE](#)

IFAD: Gender and rural development – Europe and Central Asia

This brief covers the issue of economic empowerment of women living in rural areas of Europe and Central Asia. It highlights a situation of women in Armenia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It also includes a the learnt lessons and good practices from the projects run by IFAD in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

The brief is available [HERE](#)

ODIHR: Social & economic inclusion of women from migrant households in Tajikistan. Report.

This assessment report, which is produced in the framework of ODIHR's 2012 project "Social and economic inclusion of women from migrant households in Tajikistan" provides an updated synopsis of the socio-economic challenges faced by women from migrant households through a comparative perspective across four geographical regions and three groups of respondents, as well as an outline of the legislative, policy and institutional framework with a specific focus on gender aspects. Finally, it proposes a number of recommendations to national and local government authorities on how policy, institutional and legislative frameworks to support abandoned women from migrant households can be further strengthened.

The report is available [HERE](#)

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): UN Human Rights OHCHR, Grupa Zagranica, ASTRA Network, EWL.

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