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## **KARAT & Members' News**

### **Bosnia & Herzegovina: Rural women's perspective in local development policies**

In order to strengthen the role of civil society in promotion of the human rights and democratic reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Association Vesta has decided to focus on difficult position of women in rural areas of the country. The Association launched two important initiatives. The first one titled "Rural women for socio-economic strengthening and equal participation in the local development plans" involved more than 450 rural women who took part in the research and workshops concerning the national and international laws on women's rights, and gender equality principles. The research highlighted, among other issues, that rural women in Bosnia and Herzegovina are still largely isolated and discriminated when it comes to claiming and accessing their rights. Despite some positive changes in their situation, the traditional conceptions and stereotypes still prevail. The research resulted in developing the advocacy tools and appeal to the local and regional governments calling for a systematic efforts to eliminate the limitations and stereotypes which are responsible for an unequal role, status and position of the rural women in the political, socio-economic and cultural sense. The appeal called also upon other development stakeholders to channel their actions towards the rural communities, especially focusing on the support instruments for the women living there.

The other initiative titled “Improving the position of the rural women at the local level” aimed at assessing a situation of rural women in targeted municipalities and producing analytical bases to identify the challenges and formulate the recommendations for the local governments. This initiative resulted in adopting by the authorities of the municipality Gracanica and Tesanj the action plans on how to incorporate gender perspective into different segments of local community development plans, programs and budgets.

The Association Vesta based their initiatives on the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a state party to the UN CEDAW Convention being obliged to work for advancement of the socio-economic situation of rural women, their fair access to resources, market, information, infrastructure and public services. These are the areas where, in the opinion of Vesta, the rural women should seek enhancement of their position in a more organized and proactive manner with a support of local CSOs.

For more information contact Amra Selesković from VESTA at: [amra@vesta.ba](mailto:amra@vesta.ba)

### **Estonia: Gender mainstreaming – progress & challenges**

In the years 2004 – 2013 a progress in balancing Estonian society has been noticed. Although there is still a long way to achieve gender equality standards in all spheres of social and professional lives of people, the expression of positive attitudes towards gender equality principles has increased a lot in a society, including the decision makers. An institutional capacity building has taken place, though still on a project dependent basis. The national projects on gender equality are run by the Gender Equality Department at the Ministry of Social Affairs which plans to elaborate a national gender equality strategy to contribute more to gender mainstreaming. The Ministry has carried out many social surveys and the gender equality goals have been translated into a variety of policy documents. In 2011 the inter-ministerial gender mainstreaming and promotion group was revived after many inactive years.

Nowadays there are two important national programs in Estonia: “Promoting gender equality through empowerment and mainstreaming” supported by the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, and the “Domestic and gender-based violence”. Estonia has put a lot of effort into research, awareness raising, systematic approach and capacity building in the field of gender-based violence. The Ministry of Justice has placed the problem of domestic violence among its priority areas in recent years. The knowledge, awareness and specificity of gender-based violence have significantly increased among the professionals, civil servants and decision makers. Several training programs and handbooks are available for nurses and health practitioners. However, a lot has to be still done in this area and the law should be amended. For example, the law does not respond to the problem of psychological violence and ‘stalking’ is still an unknown term in Estonian legislation.

The creation of the office of Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner has increased the awareness of the general public concerning discrimination issues. The Commissioner has brought several discrimination cases public through media channels. In 2013, the Gender Equality Council was established as an advisory body within the Ministry of Social Affairs, which approves the general objectives of gender equality policy. There are 22 members, representing the Government and different national agencies, local governments, political parties, employers, students, women’s and other NGOs. Legal framework has been developed and equality directives transferred into national law. Existing Gender Equality Act was amended and a law on equal treatment adopted in 2009.

One of the main problem related to gender equality in Estonia is a gender pay gap. It is the highest in Europe. There are several factors which support the persistent gender pay gap like an individual agreement based employment contracts, weak trade unions, earnings as a part of private data by the case law.

To conclude, Estonia has developed a lot in the recent years, but in the field of soft values like caring, gender equality and equal opportunities a long way is still to go starting from the acceptance of social problems.

For more information contact Anu Laas, gender expert at: [anulaasile@gmail.com](mailto:anulaasile@gmail.com)

### **Georgia: Supporting young people through the transition to adulthood**

Forty teachers from Kvemo-Kartly region of Georgia were trained on how to discuss with the young people the issues such as sexuality, reproduction, sexually transmitted diseases, alcohol, drugs or discrimination. The teachers use different techniques to develop an effective and in-depth discussion with the students who are encouraged to approach the issues from various perspectives. The students take part in role-playing, explore their attitudes towards the given problem or situation, analyze gender stereotypes and train their reasoning and negotiation skills.

The training of the teachers and the schools' activities were organized as a part of a project "Building critical thinking among the youth through promotion of healthy lifestyle" run by NGO "Women's Center " with financial support of the American Embassy in Georgia and Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund. The project aims to support behavior change of the young people who provided with knowledge and skills will be better prepared to make informed choices and protect themselves from harm as they maneuver through adolescence into adulthood. The project is run in cooperation with the professionals in school education, local NGOs as well as central and regional governmental institutions.

A part of the project focuses on the universities and colleges where the students are shown how to involve the young people into a discussion about the problems they face. To date, over 160 lessons at schools and 160 lectures at the universities and colleges have been held.

For more information contact Iatamze Verulashvili from Women's Center at: [iaverulashvili@yahoo.com](mailto:iaverulashvili@yahoo.com)

### **Macedonia: Dancing to stop violence against women**



On February 14, 2014 people gathered in "Makedonija" square in Skopje to call for ending violence against women and girls. The Skopje's residents, including the celebrities and representatives of the foreign embassies performed a community dance as a part of V Day Campaign to break the silence on women and girls who suffer from violence. Prior the performance the informative materials were disseminated to access those who are either potential or current victims of violence and do not know where to look for help.

Macedonia joined this year V Day Campaign's quest for justice by preparing a new law on prevention of domestic violence. The law will strength a role of the authorized institutions in protection of domestic violence victims and provide the victims with better access to justice. The domestic violence expert, Biljana Nastovska of the NGO "Macedonian Association of Development and Integration - MADI" is a member of the working group developing this law.

The V Day Campaign – One Billion Rising for Justice was organized by Macedonian Association of Development and Integration – MADI which provides free physiological help and support to the victims of violence, along with the NGO-s Zonta Klub Skopje, H.E.R.A., Union of Women of Skopje City and National Council of Gender Equality. The campaign was supported by French Embassy in Skopje and a few private companies.

The pictures from the event are available on MADI's Facebook page [HERE](#)

For more information contact Nade Kachakova from MADl at: [madimacedonia@gmail.com](mailto:madimacedonia@gmail.com)

### **Montenegro: Women want to know about cancer**

The women from the northern part of Montenegro took part in the workshops on the prevention of breast and cervix cancers. The workshops, conducted by a team of experts were organized by the Association of Working Women of Montenegro "Women Today" and responded to the problem of limited access of the women to information about these deadly diseases. The workshops were combined with free-of-charge gynecological and oncologic examinations in the health centers of their cities and preceded by publication of free magazines on the topic. Since the interest in the workshops and examinations was extremely high, the Association is going to hold another one in Pljevlja city in March. The activity is supported by the Ministry of Health and conducted in cooperation with other NGOs as well as the Embassies of Ukraine, China and Turkey.



For more information contact Rosa Popovic from „Women today“ at: [womentoday@t-com.me](mailto:womentoday@t-com.me)

### **Poland: Shadow Report for CEDAW 2014**

On February 13, 2014 KARAT, coordinator of the CEDAW Coalition of Polish Non-Governmental Organizations, submitted a draft of the alternative report to the CEDAW Committee. The report is as part of reporting process of the Polish Government for the period 2002-2010. The draft discusses the most dire problems concerning the implementation of the provisions of CEDAW Convention in Poland in the years 2002-2013. The chapters contain: 1) description and analysis of the most pressing problems related to discrimination of women as well as inaccuracies and gaps in the law and governmental policies; 2) commentary to the governmental report submitted to the CEDAW Committee; 3) recommendations for the Polish Government concerning implementation of CEDAW Convention and gender-sensitive policy.

At the Pre-Session Working Group (March 3-7, 2014) the CEDAW Committee will adopt the List of Issues and Questions to be asked the Polish Government. The draft of the alternative report is preceded by a proposed List of Issues & Questions which the CEDAW Coalition of Polish NGOs would like to bring to the attention of the Pre-Session Working Group. The review of the Polish Government's report is scheduled for the 59th Session planned in October 2014.

Read the [Alternative Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\), including List of Issues & Questions. Poland 2014](#)

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## European Union

### Resolution on inequalities in the post-MDG's - Gender

On 30th January 2014, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted unanimously a progressive resolution "[Stepping up action against global inequalities: Europe's contribution to the Millennium Development Goals \(MDG\) process](#)".

The resolution 1975 (2014) represents the position of the entire European continent, the 47 Member States of the Council of Europe and is very supportive of gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Assembly called on Member States to respond to ODA commitments at level of 0.7% of GDP, empower women and girls in all spheres of society, promote the guarantee of sexual and reproductive health and rights for women and girls, in particular with a view to avoiding unwanted pregnancies and further reducing maternal mortality, step up the fight against violence towards women and girls, and create equal opportunities for women and young people to access quality education and decent.

Source: [EWL](#)

## World

### CEDAW statement on sexual and reproductive health and rights

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, at its recently concluded [session](#), issued a statement on sexual and reproductive health and rights, which is its contribution to the ICPD+20 review process.

The Committee reminds us that it *"has observed that failure of a State party to provide services and the criminalisation of some services that only women require is a violation of women's reproductive rights and constitutes discrimination against them."* It States that *"the provision of, inter alia, safe abortion and post abortion care; maternity care; timely diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases (including HIV), breast and reproductive cancers, and infertility; as well as access to accurate and comprehensive information about sexuality and reproduction, are all part of the right to sexual and reproductive health"* and that *"every State can and should do more to ensure the full respect, protection and fulfillment of sexual and reproductive rights, in line with human rights obligations."*

You can read the CEDAW statement [Here](#).

Source: [ASTRA Bulletin](#)

## Coming events

### 58th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

On March 10 - 21 the 58th CSW session will take place in New York. Representatives of Member States, UN entities, and non-governmental organizations from all regions of the world attend the session to discuss its priority theme of *Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls and the review theme of Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work.*

The draft agreed conclusions are available [online](#).

For more information and the documentation go the CSW website at [UN Women](#)

## Resources

### **Extreme poverty is violence. Breaking the silence. Searching for peace.**

In this publication, ATD Fourth World presents the results of its research on the relationship between extreme poverty and violence. The summary is both instructive and horrifying: extreme poverty, marginalization, the situation of helplessness in which thousands of millions of human beings live—and die—is unacceptable whichever way it is looked at and constitutes a great challenge that must be confronted on a global scale.

The publication is available at: <http://www.4thworldmovement.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/ATD-Rompre-Anglais2.pdf>

### **Implementation of Mongolia's Domestic Violence Legislation. Report**

NCAV and The Advocates for Human Rights carried out fact-finding in Mongolia to monitor the government's implementation of domestic violence legislation. The authors conducted two monitoring missions in January and March 2013. They traveled to seven cities in Mongolia and conducted 137 interviews with ministry officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), victims, social workers, police, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, governors, and healthcare workers. The findings and recommendations presented in this report represent the results of these interviews, the authors' observations, and secondary research.

You can download the report [HERE](#)

### **AWID: New Actors, New Money, New Conversations. Report**

The purpose of this report is to contribute to filling a gap, particularly among women's rights organizations, in understanding the current landscape of the corporate sector and other actors that are new to supporting women and girls, and the role they are playing in shaping related funding discourse and practice. This report is not an exhaustive account of these actors' involvement in development funding, but it unpacks some of the most visible trends impacting women and girls – the 'tip of the iceberg' as it were – and offers important considerations for women's rights organizations interested in influencing and engaging with these trends.

You can download the report [HERE](#)

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## **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): Association Vesta (Bosnia & Herzegovina), Anu Laas (Estonia), Women's Center (Georgia), Macedonian Association of Development and Integration – MADI, Association of Working Women of Montenegro "Women Today", EWL, ASTRA.



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