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KARAT & Members' News

Regional government administration invited to join KARAT's new project

On 16 June, 2014 KARAT Coalition together with its partners – KUN Center for Gender Equality and Polish Antidiscrimination Society launched the project „Preventing discrimination in the regions of Poland”. The international conference which initiated the project took place in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister in Warsaw and was met with a great interest from governmental administration, police, local coordinators of Congress of Women as well as other organizations working for gender equality in Poland. Among the guests we were honored to welcome to the conference the Ambassador of Royal Norwegian Embassy



in Warsaw Mr. J.E. Karsten Klepsvik and the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment Ms. Agnieszka Kozłowska-Rajewicz. The conference aimed to present the project and was addressed first of all to the civil servants of regional governmental bodies, including the regional plenipotentiaries for equal treatment.

The conference was attended by over 50 people, including the regional plenipotentiaries for equal treatment from twelve Regional Governmental Councils. During the conference KARAT gathered the initial declarations of the civil servants representing various regions that they are interested in joining the project.

The project is implemented in a frame of the program "[Citizens for Democracy](#)" funded by EEA Grants.

More about the conference: <http://www.karat.org/programmes/womens-human-rights/preventing-discrimination-in-the-regions-of-poland/what-is-new/>

More about the project at: <http://www.karat.org/programmes/womens-human-rights/preventing-discrimination-in-the-regions-of-poland/>

For more information please contact Anna at: anna.czerwinska@karat.org.pl

Report from the strategic meeting on gender equality in Belarus

KARAT finalized the project "Advancing gender equality in Belarus" which focused on developing an effective draft law on gender equality and lobbying strategy through the dissemination of expertise and utilization of Polish and Croatian experiences in these areas. The project's main activity was a strategic meeting „Towards effective gender equality legislation in Belarus – analysis and recommendations” for eight Belarusian women's rights experts which took place in April in Warsaw, Poland. The outcome of the meeting was a set of recommendations from the Croatian, German and Polish experts on how to improve the draft so it meets the international standards to greater extent. The experts' presentations and discussions that took place during the meeting have been summarized in the [report](#) developed by KARAT. It serves as a tool supporting the Belarusian experts' work on legislation and advocacy for gender equality in Belarus. The project was conducted in cooperation with the Belarusian partner organization Public Association "Women's Independent Democratic Movement" (PA "WIDM") and supported by the Dutch Embassy in Poland.

The report from the strategic meeting is available in [English](#) and in [Russian](#).

More about the project at: <http://www.karat.org/programmes/womens-human-rights/advancing-gender-equality-in-belarus/>

KARAT's International Board Meeting

On 26 – 27 of June 2014 a meeting of KARAT's International Board took place in Warsaw, Poland. The Board gathered to discuss the strategies for KARAT Coalition's development and a current political and social situation in the Region. The Board members confirmed that KARAT's priorities as a network are to exchange experiences, knowledge and information and to build partnerships between its members to strengthen a voice of women from the Region. The Board recognized, though, the problem of limited resources for regional projects which hinder the KARAT's activity in terms of a broad regional cooperation. The Board also discussed the recent political turmoil in Ukraine seeing a need to gather the opinions of KARAT's members and other actors of civil society on the current situation in the Region from the women's perspective. The Board members also agreed that KARAT as a regional coalition should actively participate in the events related to Beijing+20 process.

For more information please contact Kinga at: kinga.lohmann@karat.org.pl

Gender in development from KARAT's perspective

KARAT Coalition representative Kinga Lohmann took part in the panel discussion “Transformative approaches to gender: we can do better” organized by CONCORD, TRIALOG, and the Latvian Permanent Representation to the EU during the CONCORD general assembly on 4 June 2014. In the panel various actors shared examples of projects and methodologies with the potential to have transformative impact on gender equality. Several issues were stressed, such as the importance of alliance building among women’s organisations and inclusion of men, boys as well as women in the work in order to achieve transformative change. Kinga Lohmann talked about KARAT’s experiences in introducing gender perspective into development cooperation of the EU New Member States (EU NMS). She stressed that a 3-year-project “Connect!” which brought very good results was a first and significant step towards gender-sensitive and gender-responsive development cooperation in the EU NMS. She highlighted the fact that this was a new concept of development cooperation as a frame when KARAT Coalition had been formed on the basis of gender equality in the Region.

KARAT has been introducing gender perspective into development cooperation since 2008. It is a member of Grupa Zagranica - the platform of Polish non-governmental organizations involved in international development cooperation, democracy support, humanitarian aid and global education. KARAT has been involved in a process of development of the platform’s Code of Conduct based on [8 Istanbul principles for CSO development effectiveness](#). Within this process KARAT has promoted gender equality as one of key factors that must be taken into account in the work and practices of civil society organizations.

For more information please contact Kinga at: kinga.lohmann@karat.org.pl

Source: [TRIALOG](#)

Georgia: Prevention of early marriages to advance gender equality

On May 27, 2014 High level meeting on prevention of early marriages to advance gender equality and reproductive health of women was organized in Tbilisi, Georgia. The meeting encouraged a dialogue between stakeholders and policymakers to fully reflect the essence of the issue, its reasons and outcomes in Georgia and develop recommendations for further actions in terms of legislative and policy environment and programming, data collection and analysis, as well as public awareness raising. Representatives of the Gender Equality Council of the Parliament, government as well as civil society expressed deep concern regarding alarming indicators of early marriage in the country. Georgia is on the second place in Eastern Europe with the early marriage rate, which requires strong public attention and policy and legislative environment in place, which will prevent early marriage practices and enhance gender equality.

For more information please contact Ia Verulashvili at: iaverulashvili@yahoo.com

Source: [UNFPA](#)

European Union

WIDE+ close to being formally established

WIDE+ members have developed a new legal governance and membership structure to formally establish WIDE+. Along with the new structure the strategic goals of this European network have been formulated. It will help to ensure

a strong organization that is sustainable and will actively involve members and others stakeholders around the globe, creating a participatory, fluid and open network. Democratic, decentralized, inclusive and transparent decision making processes will be articulated through this structure. The WIDE+'s strategic goals are: 1) to contribute to movement-building for gender equality and women's rights at European and international levels; 2) to work towards the construction of alternatives and contributes to increasing gender, social, economic and environmental justice at the European, global, regional and local levels.

WIDE+'s founding General Assembly will be held on 30 October, 2014 in Bern, Switzerland. The meeting will formally establish WIDE+ and members will be elected to the governing bodies: the Caucus and the Coordination Group.

For more information please contact Kinga at: kinga.lohmann@karat.org.pl

Source: [WIDE+](#)

World

Georgia: New law provides better protection from discrimination

On 7 May, the Law of Georgia on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination came into force after being signed by Georgia's President Margvelashvili. The Law aims to bring the Georgian legal framework in line with the European Union's requirements and the standards of international human rights law. It extends the legal protection against discrimination previously covered by Georgia's Constitution, as well as provisions of its Law on Gender Equality and its Labour Code. Further, the Law addresses all forms of discrimination, refers to both direct and indirect discrimination, and covers both private and public spheres. However, it is expected that some of the provisions adopted may conflict with existing legislation, and thus the Law's position in relation to the Constitution and other relevant legislation needs to be clarified. It is also regrettable that the adopted law does not establish an independent equality body, as an earlier draft suggested. Instead, the body responsible for overseeing implementation of the law is the Public Defender, which does not have the authority to impose any penalties and can only issue recommendations. This unfortunate change raises concerns that the right to non-discrimination will not be effectively enforced in practice.

Source: [The Equal Rights Trust](#)

Ukraine needs to reform its antidiscrimination legislation

On 23 May 2014, following the conclusion of its 52nd session, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (the Committee) published its [concluding observations](#) on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) by Ukraine. In its comments on Ukraine's anti-discrimination record the Committee stresses the need for Ukraine to reform its anti-discrimination legislation and take steps to combat discrimination against persons on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity. The Committee is also concerned about the persistent and significant pay gap between women and men which stands on average at around 30 per cent, despite the steps taken to promote equality between men and women. It notes that the root causes of the problem lie in entrenched gender role stereotypes in the family and society at large.

Read [the Concluding Observations on the sixth periodic report of Ukraine](#)

Source: [The Equal Rights Trust](#)

Rights of workers in garment industry still seriously violated

The report "[Sewn with thick thread](#)" published by Clean Clothes Poland and the Foundation Buy Responsibly is the first publication presenting the situation of persons employed in supply chains of Polish clothing companies: LPP, Carry and Monnari. Nearly 100 employees from three garment factories in Dhaca were interviewed basing on the Clean Clothes Campaign's questionnaire for monitoring a compliance with the basic standards of labor law in the garment factories of Asia and Europe.

The results of the interviews show that in all tested factories the violation of workers' rights occurs. The workers are employed without the contracts, and the standards of working hours and the right to annual or sick leave are violated. There were incidents of verbal and physical violence. In none of the factories work a trade union or other form of employees' representation. The wages in all the factories were not enough for a decent living. The report ends with a set of recommendations addressed to Polish companies indicating the actions that need to be taken in order to make a production of Polish clothes socially responsible. KARAT is a member of Clean Clothes Poland.

Source: [Kupuj Odpowiedzialnie](#)

Upcoming events

NGO Forum – Beijing+20

The NGO Forum – Beijing +20 will take place on 3-5 November, 2014 prior to the UN Economic Commission for Europe (UN ECE) regional review meeting of 6-7 November, at the Palais des Nations, Geneva.

The NGO Forum aims to contribute to the Beijing+20 review process by bringing together the voices of civil society representatives from the 56 countries of the diverse ECE region, and provide critical input to the ECE review. The NGO Forum's expected outcome is a comprehensive report with a set of action-oriented recommendations that will be presented through oral interventions at the governmental Beijing+20 UN ECE Regional Review meeting, taking place immediately after the NGO Forum, and will be included in the final ECE report.

Detailed information on the rules of participation, program of the forum and others are available at:

<http://beijing20.ngocsw-geneva.ch/>

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): Women's Center from Georgia, TRIALOG, UNFPA, Clean Clothes Poland, WIDE+, The Equal Rights Trust.

Edited by Agnieszka Walko-Mazurek

KARAT Coalition

ul. Walecznych 26/5 03-916 Warsaw, Poland

phone: +48 22 8491647

fax: +48 22 628 20 03

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