



Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina

House of
Representatives



Commission for Gender Equality 2002 - 2006





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The Commission for Gender Equality of the House of Representatives of BiH Parliamentary Assembly has been inaugurated as a standing commission of the House of Representatives, with the intention to give opinions, submit proposals and reports to the House, and to conduct other duties related to gender equality in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The basic competence of the Commission is defined by the Rule-book of the House of Representatives and is directed toward creating such a social surrounding in BiH, which will ensure equality of women and men, equal presence in all areas of public and private life, especially in politics and political deciding, social security, health protection, education, preventing of violence over women and other fields.

Among numerous activities the Commission had in the 2002-2006 mandate, to single out the work on passing and implementation of the Law on gender equality, which was adopted in 2003. It's interesting that the Law was the first law and the first legal mechanism which set the path toward gender equality in the region.

The Commission also actively worked on the implementation of legal acts (before all the Beijing Declaration). Commission's members regularly and carefully monitored the work and established solid ties with non-governmental organizations, state bodies (gender centers), while directly contributing to the set up of the Agency for gender equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They also assisted by numerous activities the countries of the region (regional and state bodies and institutions) to pass their regulations and set up solid mutual links, aiming to affirm gender equality.

The goal of this publication is to first of all feature the Commission's work in the 2002-2006 period. But, of course, this body will, with no regard to its future composition, resume the implementation of launched activities, ordered by the Rule-book and coming from its plans and actual international and domestic norms. It will also lead activities on further strengthening of links with non-governmental and governmental organizations, including international bodies and institutions in the joint fight for gender equality.

Commission's chairman
Jozo Krizanović



COMPETENCES

The Commission for Gender Equality in BiH was established on July 25 2000. According to the Rule-book of the House of Representatives of BiH Parliamentary Assembly, its competence is to:

- Consider gender equality issues in BiH - particularly over facilitation of women status in BiH;
- Encourage activities in BiH institutions at implementation of the Platform for action of the Beijing Declaration (Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995) in 20 critical spheres;
- Encourage and coordinate activities with the entity parliaments at facilitation of the status of women and implementation of the Platform for action of the Beijing Declaration;
- Consider proposed laws and other regulations from the stand of gender equality and preventing of women discrimination;
- Consider draft documents and reports of BiH institu-



tions related to gender equality and implementation of the Platform for action of the Beijing Declaration as whole, respectively by certain fields;

- Consider preparations for participation of BiH delegations at international gatherings when the Beijing Declaration implementation is considered (UN, Stability Pact and other);

ACTIVITIES

The Commission held its first session on December 17 2002. Since then until today, the Commission affirmed as an important and unavoidable assembly body, which was especially confirmed during passing of the Law on gender equality, as well as by organizing public hearings (public discussions) on the topics:

1. Public discussion on the Report on application of the Convention on abolishment of all shapes of women discrimination in BiH (CEDAW)
2. Public hearing devoted to the issue of infective disease HIV/AIDS;

During 18 sessions the Commission held in the 2002-2006 period, it considered the following issues:

- a) Commission's activities at implementation of the Law on gender equality in BiH, and establishment of the Agency for gender equality BiH,
- b) Consideration of harmonization of the Draft Law on defense with the Law on gender equality,
- c) Consideration of harmonization of the Draft Law on addenda and amendments to the Election Law with the Law on gender equality, and consideration of the amendments in 2006,
- d) Launching of legislative initiative for amending the Article 36 of the Law on labor in BiH institutions,
- e) Consideration of the Resolution of delegate Milorad Živković on accepting of duties of the Ottawa Document with the program of International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) from 2002,
- f) Touring of BiH municipalities in which heads and presidents of municipal councils are women in 2004,





g) Touring of correctional institutions in BiH in which women serve jail sentences in 2004,

h) Cooperation with Gender centers of Federation BiH and Republika Srpska,

i) Marking of March 8 - Women Day,

j) Within cooperation with SP GTF, preparation and realization of the First preparation meeting on the topic "Harmonization of duties between job and family", and the

Second preparation meeting and the Second regional workshop for women MP on the topic "All-life learning",

k) Participation of Commission's members at the meeting "Gender equality: Facilitation of resolving of problems through the Parliament", New York on March 1 2006 and other activities.

COOPERATION OF THE COMMISSION WITH TASK FORCE FOR GENDER EQUALITY OF THE STABILITY PACT FOR SEE

The Commission accomplished cooperation in the 2005/2006 period with the SP GTF- Stability Pact for South East Europe, Gender Task Force Regional Center for Gender Equality at implementation of the project "SEE Women MP Exchange 2005-2006", which was financed by the German Foreign Ministry.

(SP GTF- Stability Pact for South East Europe, Gender Task Force Regional Center for Gender Equality)

The Task Force for Gender Equality was established in November 1999, seated in Zagreb, and launched operations in 2001. The GTF activities are devoted to providing support and encouragement to women for candidacy in legislative bodies in the entire region, support to initiatives for equal participation of women and men in developing stability, prosperity and democratic society, finding a long-term strategic sponsor and facilitation of cooperation with EU structures.

The countries which participate in the GTF activities are: Albania, BiH, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Moldavia and Slovenia. Aiming to accomplish solid regional linking and implementation of all of its activities, GTF has opened its office in Sarajevo, BiH.

FIRST REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY WORKSHOP

The Commission for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina has organized two regional parliamentary workshops within the project "SEE Women MP Exchange 2005-2006", at the initiative of GTF.

In favour of preparing the women MP of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly for the first regional parliamentary workshop, the Commission organized on October 6 2005 a national preparation meeting in Sarajevo. Besides the BiH women MP and Commission's members, the gathering was also attended by representatives of the Agency for gender equality BiH, Gender centers of Federation BiH and Republika Srpska, as well as women employees in the BiH Parliamentary Assembly. The goal of the meeting was to gather reports necessary for analyzing the legal framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A discussion within the topic "**Harmonization of duties between job and family**" was particularly focused on the following fields:

- *Flexibility of labor arrangements*
- *Regulation of parent leave (for mothers and fathers)*
- *Concern for children*
- *Concern for elders and incapable members of family*
- *Trends of including men in house jobs*
- *Trends in fertility rate (with special attention on state in women population from 25 to 35 years of age).*

The first regional workshop for women MP was held in Zagreb, Croatia, on October 28-30 2005, on the topic "Harmonization of duties between job and family", hosting women MP from countries of Southeast Europe, including BiH. The results of the workshop were the following conclusions:

1. In the context of neo-liberal globalization trends, negative impact on women is noticeable in the EU and



countries of Southeast Europe. Democratization has brought modernization of views on harmonization of family and business life, but transition also brought to strong return of conservative values and the traditional role of woman. The only option is leaning to values and international understanding of impartible human rights as the only way to prevent aligning of women and men in culture of employers who demand that "one person (man) works full-time, while other person (woman) provides him full-time support."

2. Both trends mentioned have impact on public opinion, re-traditionalization and modernization. Women MP must work to gain attention of the public opinion authors, and changing of laws in the light of promoting gender equality.

3. The labor market flexibility cannot be accepted without social insurance, security of employment and safety at job. It's possible to follow various models as long as they are based on the Lisbon strategy, passed by the EU.

4. There is a need to promote gender equality as a pri-

ority in all governments and there are great opportunities for success. An example is successful lobbying of women MP from Serbia, BiH and Croatia against shortening of maternal leave. There is also a need for improved organization of women, in aim of efficient performance. Budget cuts proposed by governments of the region, disproportionately burdening women, should not be considered as inevitable.

5. There is a strong need for finding powerful partners, such as unions and other social partners, as well as systematical cooperation with the mentioned.

6. The seminar provided an insight for understanding the context of EU and Southeast Europe, ways in which things develop, key issues, possible choices, ways to deal with complex policies which relate to harmonization of job and family. Studies of non-governmental organizations exist inside the majority of countries of the region and can be used as the starting point for future work.

7. It's not about lack of a labor system, but shortage of authority and systematical work and resources necessary for such a job. Actions on regional and local level are needed for ensuring the implementation of laws in daily life.

8. Changes developing in direction of job and family harmonization provide opportunities for women employment. Therefore, there is a need for rightful organization in order to conduct the job in an organized and financially-backed way, instead voluntarily.

9. Positive practices of the Macedonian women MP council have grown from the initiative of the Center for Gender Equality of the Stability Pact, a project which was executed in two years in cooperation with the Macedonian parliament. However, informal groups are insufficient for reaching sustainable changes in direction of setting up equal opportunities.

SECOND REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY WORKSHOP

At the GTF initiative, the Commission for Gender Equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina organized in Sarajevo on October 7 2006 the second national preparation meeting on the topic "All-life learning". The gathering hosted Commission's members, women MP of the BiH Parliamentary Assembly, representatives of the entity Gender centers and media.

Conclusions of the meeting were related to the fields:

- **Concept of all-life learning**
- **Level of citizens' education**
- **Statistical reports on citizens' education**
- **Good practices of all-life learning**
- **Position of legislative bodies in creating the all-life learning policy.**

After successful completion of the meeting, the Commission organized together with Zagreb's GTF the **second regional workshop of women MP** from Southeast Europe - All-life learning, which took place in Sarajevo on February 24-26 2006. The gathering hosted women MP of parliaments from countries of the region, SP GTF, as well as governmental and non-governmental sector.

The conclusions of the second regional workshop of Southeast Europe are:

10. All-life learning must become a style of life and work in Southeast Europe, which is engaged in global economy and global way of life.

11. We sought diversities in national practices in the region. Some countries have already drafted legal frameworks, initial strategies or some concrete activities, but no country has a coherent strategy, also noticing non-sensibility for gender aspects of all-life learning. Also, there is a danger for commercialization of that area, which restricts availability to those who need all-life learning the most, particularly to women.

12. It's positive that the national Stabilization and Association Agreements include the issue of education and give them priority, and that there is concordance that it's necessary to enhance state spending for education. However, it's not clearly noted that all-life learning is an important precondition of sustainable development and gender equality.

13. The all-life learning concept is further not accepted as a referent framework of overall reform of the education system, young and elders. This should be changed.

14. Women MP should launch an initiative that each country prepares a coherent legal framework and a strategy of all-life learning which will carefully engage gender aspects of this issue (special needs of women and fight against stereotypes)

15. Each coherent strategy of all-life learning should

take into consideration the following principles:

- It's important to supervise it on a clear national development strategy - economic and social

- Further political strengthening of women is one of pre-conditions

- It should lean on the framework of internationally recognized economic, social and cultural rights, and women human rights (CEDAW and laws on gender equality)

- Special strategies are needed for specially vulnerable groups, Roma, self-supporting parents, older people, and a strategy for unemployed

- It's important to ensure that such strategy respects the principle of partnership between all potential actors (cooperation of ministries, national and local level of authority, employers, unions, employment agencies, universities and scientific institutions and non-governmental organizations, ensure mutual interlock of active employment policies, a strategy to reduce poverty and social policies for unemployed)

16. Women MP should become architects of public campaigns on the importance of all-life learning for women and consciousness-raising of women on their social and economic rights. Participation in campaigns can become an important part of their pre-election activities.

17. We propose that a request be forwarded from this gathering to the European Commission to give priority to gender sensitive strategies and all-life learning projects in all countries of the region, within SAP implementation.

18. Women MP should launch the issue of staff rehabilitation for preparation of projects which would be financed from pre-admission EU funds. .

Regional cooperation of women MP in that area is a necessity for the future period.





COMMISSION FOR GENDER EQUALITY



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