

Gender in Politics 2009-2011

Capacity Building for EPP Parties
in Eastern and South Eastern Europe



Preface

Dear Readers,

In this booklet you will find the outcome and lessons learned from our three-year project with the Swedish Christian Democratic International Center (KIC) as well as personal reflections by our participants, speakers, trainers and representatives of sister parties, cooperating institutions.

Our project aimed at increasing women's participation in political and public life by both capacity building and supporting EPP parties in adopting gender-sensitive practices. Nominal legal equality of men and women is of course guaranteed by constitution or other legislation in all the countries of Eastern and South Eastern Europe where we work. This is still in sharp contrast to the record of reality that shows unequal representation, no level playing field in public activity and a waste of resources to societies at large as well as our political parties. This is both an issue of democracy and competitiveness.

We are proud to present you on the following pages our work and achievements in this respect, as well as contributions by the people involved.

Next to our sponsoring partner and volunteer speakers thanks are also due to Gabor Berczeli for his work as responsible RSI project manager.

Kinga Szabó

Director of the Robert Schuman Institute



Dear Readers,

My daughters' great-grandmother, Carin Ehrenberg, was born in 1913. Her family was well off. Her father, Albert, had a tremendous love for forest life – and hunting. As a child, Carin followed her father on his walks in the woods, and already in her early teens, she began to hunt. The forest became also her passion and she wanted nothing more than to become a forest officer. The problem? She was a woman. Training to become a forest officer was impossible in the early 1900's. It was a profession for men. So instead of becoming a forest officer, and live a life in harmony with the forest, Carin choose the path that was possible – the university. She became Sweden's first associate professor of forest genetics and was eventually appointed honorary member of the Royal Forest Academy. The same area – which gave her a rich life full of adventures and challenges, including being a pioneering woman in a profession **completely dominated** by men – but not quite what she had wanted.

For me, the idea of equality always followed me as a keynote through my Christian democratic engagement. Essentially a question of the equal and inviolable value of every person. All people's right not to be hindered in our efforts to become more of who we are; to develop our full potential as a person. We know that people throughout history, as well as today, in various ways have not been free to pursue their dreams and ambitions. Because of poverty. Social status. Racism. And because of their gender.

Gender equality is therefore an indispensable perspective for those who want to strive for an equal society. A society where no one is held back – and nobody is left behind. It is simply a question of ethics. Not to limit or prevent people from reaching their full potential with arguments that has nothing to do with the person at stake. We care and love our traditions and our culture, but their aim must always be to keep us together, generating and regenerating good



values. But never stop others develop according to their wishes, or to speak up for themselves.

For the Christian Democratic International Center (KIC) in Sweden it has therefore been natural to have Gender in Politics as a theme in our partnership with the Robert Schuman Institute (RSI). Gender equality is an issue that knows no boundaries and where men's involvement is as important as women's. It is with joy that we now evaluate and look back on our many years of cooperation. Our hope is that these issues and KIC's fruitful cooperation with RSI will continue in the years ahead.

Henrik G Ehrenberg
Chairman of the Board
Christian Democratic Center (KIC) in Sweden

Basic project information

RSI has been engaged in political education, party building and the development of democracy in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe for over 20 years. We brought this experience and expertise to the promotion of women's equal opportunities for participation in politics, a theme we address with special activities since 2007, and in the most comprehensive manner through the present project running in the period 2009–11.

It makes a big difference in our approach that we are a supporting partner of EPP political parties by educational and capacity building activities, and that we are not an organization focused on gender issues or representing the interests of women specifically. We actually believe that gender equality is not a women's issue. That is why we made it a point not to address only party women's organi-

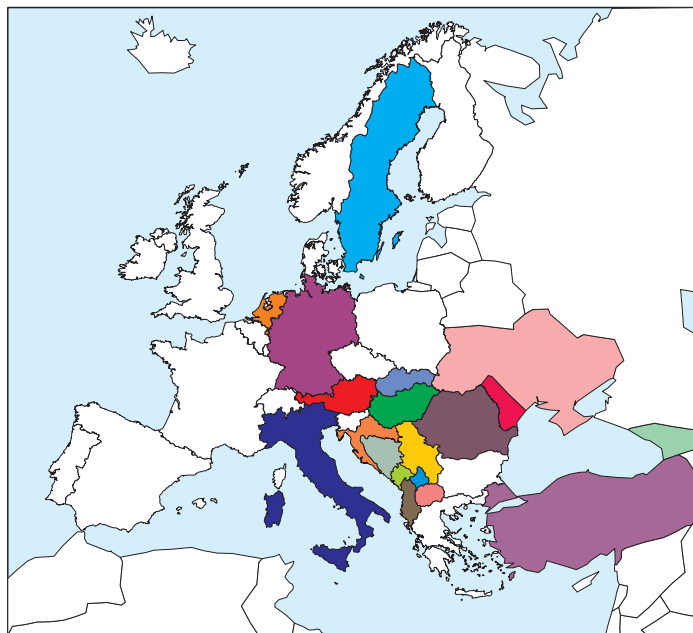
zations, but all branches of political parties, and invited men as well as women to participate. A rate of 16% male participation and active interest by party leaderships we considered a success.

The geographical scope of our project covered Eastern and South Eastern Europe, that is Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROMacedonia, Georgia, Kosovo / UNMIK, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine, where every single EPP party received an invitation to participate and to shape the agenda based on their own needs. The map shows our participants and speakers' countries of origin.

Our participants have been selected on the basis of competitive applications endorsed by leading officials of EPP parties and organizations, from among university educated, English speaking young people of age 22–35.

Participants

Albania	3
Bosnia-Herzegovina	9
Croatia	3
FYROMacedonia	6
Georgia	5
Kosovo /UNMIK	2
Moldova	3
Montenegro	3
Serbia	10
Turkey	1
Ukraine	15



Lecturers

Austria	8
Croatia	3
Germany	3
Hungary	5
Italy	1
The Netherlands	7
Romania	1
Slovakia	3
Serbia	2
Sweden	10

State of play regarding women in politics in South Eastern and Eastern Europe

In recent years in South Eastern and Eastern Europe significant changes have occurred regarding women in politics. Not all apparent trends are limited to women in politics, but rather can provide insight to the overall situation of women in this post-transition region.

OVERALL POSITIVE TRENDS

Broad participation of women in civil society in the SEE/EE Region has definitely provided an entry point into political life in some cases, while in others it has served as a gathering place for women to influence politics and educate and empower women overall to participate in political/public life.

Numbers of women in parliaments are largely stable, in many cases above 20%. This stable representation can be attributed mainly to the widespread adoption of Gender Quotas in electoral legislation, particularly in South Eastern Europe, while just over a decade ago women's representation in parliaments was below 7% on the average. This phenomenon of quotas adopted in 7 SEE countries within



12 years demonstrates the enormous potential which regional cooperation holds.

The same holds true amongst political parties. Namely, women's influence in political parties through women's organizations, informal networks and women leaders has been notably increasing, most recently amongst Christian Democratic / Conservative parties. As a result of women's activism in parties, and an overall political environment more

open to accepting gender equality standards, political parties throughout SEE /EE have made significant advances in party programs, and most importantly policy and legislative measures supportive to women when they have been in power.

Speakers of Parliament and Prime Ministers and other high ranking positions are no longer exclusively men's positions, as demonstrated in several of the countries. EU accession and membership has likewise played a positive role in much of the SEE/EE region by ensuring high standards for

Chart of gender proportion of general participants 1991–2010

This chart on participants of all RSI activities suggests the increasing embeddedness of women in our political parties. The basis of that conclusion is that all applicants to our programs need to be endorsed by the party presidency or ranking functionary in the field of the given event (such as campaign management, EU institutions, negotiation training etc.).



gender equality are integrated into policy frameworks. It is in the implementation of these high standards that most if not all SEE/EE countries meet real challenges.

OVERALL NEGATIVE TRENDS

While women's advancements in representation and gender equality standards are widely adopted throughout SEE/EE, still we can note several negative trends which provide cause for concern.

Women's representation in the executive branch (as ministers, mayors, etc.) is still seriously lagging behind men. Political party positions are predominately held by men, and the roots of women's lack of equal participation can be traced in part to unwelcoming political party structures starting at the local level.

The global economic and financial crisis in SEE/EE overall has worsened post-transition crises to create an environment for reducing funding for social services, which strong-

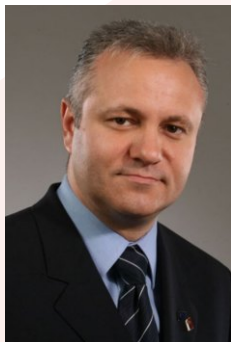
ly impacts women. Increased women's unemployment and in many countries women's migration are serious issues being faced. These challenges, in turn, have immense societal ramifications, of widespread poverty and disintegration of the family. For working women work/family balance has also become increasingly difficult forcing many women to postpone marriage and having children.

IN CONCLUSION

Women's increased participation in political life has made impacts in the quality of life in the SEE/EE region, despite their gross under representation. Women in executive decision-making are shattering the glass ceiling. Political parties have yet to fully appreciate and involve women in their structures, while women in SEE/EE still require significant empowerment and support to survive and to make a difference in politics.

Mary Ann Rukavina Cipetić





Personally, I am glad that my party and its women's network are included as part of project with positive initiatives aimed at promoting women's participation and leadership. Promotion of understanding of social and political constraints affecting gender equality, possible ways of changing them is a first step leading to successful performance in political leadership roles. As a party with strong gender awareness, we are proud of what

we have achieved so far and with your help we could become a role model to all political parties in Serbia.

Therefore it is crucial for us to pursue activities in promoting the political empowerment of women, and we hope that the in terms of political education the Robert Schuman Institute will continue to be our main partner in that regard.

Mladen Dinkić

"Reforms require involvement of women"

I would like to underline that women, all around the world, have to be equal partners with men in the process of setting up the development agendas of countries, im-

plementing reforms and projects in the political, economic, social, and cultural fields. The representation of women and the inclusion of their perspective and experience into the decision making process will, inevitably, lead to solutions that are more viable and satisfy a broader range of society.



Although in my country women and men are not yet represented equally in decision making bodies, the women participation is increasing over the years. Women understand the importance of their participation in social life, the importance of being part of the political process and of finding

better and more appropriate solutions for citizens. In this regard the Women Organization of Liberal Democratic Party of Moldova offers support to women that are interested to actively participate in the political life of the country.

I strongly believe that women should establish partnerships and networks that could reinforce their political participation and could strengthen their voice on both national and international levels.

Liliana Palihovici

Why we did it: The needs and problems

Unequal opportunities prevent society as well as a political party to draw on 100% of its resources. For a party whose supreme goal is to win elections and execute its value based program this translates into loss of potential support, votes and talent as well. Unequal opportunities for women and men are a fact of life however, and it is an issue that political parties in the region need to address, with active engagement from both genders.

Despite notable efforts and progress, even the widespread adoption of quota laws, a variety of problems persist. For one, prescription by legislation is not necessarily matched by realities. In countries and parties without quotas the proportions tend to be worse and candidate selection less transparent. Other organizations struggle to field the given number of female candidates, due to the lack of previous attention to bringing them up. On a broader pattern traditional roles in the private sphere or the double burden of employment combined with running a household prevent women from entering public life in addition. The existing party structures, decision making mechanisms or organizational habits may also act as a deterrent and demotivating factor.

A few figures sufficiently illustrate the general situation of all political parties at the time of preparing our project: female party membership ranged from 17–41%, share in executive party organs averaged 19%, in parliaments 17% and for members of government 11%. Less than half of the parties had any program point, policy or statement with reference to gender or women, in some countries only 9%, and the number of examples was decreasing as we were getting from principal declarations to more concrete measures.

This picture could be certainly refined and underpinned by more specific data as well as highlights of different contexts and causes in our 11 concerned countries.

With our limited means and scope for action we focused on two main sets of problems. Bluntly put, one is a lack of

serious focus on involving women – as voters, members, activists, functionaries and candidates. The other is a need for more efficient vehicles to shape political agendas and organizations in a gender-sensitive direction.

Lack of women in politics is an up-to-date issue. In spite of the long-term efforts still much remains to be done in order to reach gender equality. However, women's involvement in politics is not just about ensuring gender equality and giving chances to the "other half" of the society but also about improving democracy and justice in the society. Women's political participation has profound and positive impact on legislatures, political parties and citizen's lives. Women present in politics ensure that concerns of women as well as vulnerable groups are taken properly on board. Simply said by involving women to the decision-making we make better politics. This requires that traditional barriers that deter and/or defeat women candidates must be efficiently addressed. We must do our best to make sure that there are well prepared and smart women at local, national and EU level.



It requires at least three basic conditions:

- women need to be attracted to politics
- women need to be enabled to enter politics, i.e. by creating a better work-life balance
- women need to be encouraged to accept the responsibility arriving from this challenge.

Empowerment of women in different parts of Europe is a great contribution to build a fairer and better world, ensuring a dignity of life and equal chances for all.

The changing world needs new approaches even to old questions. The new strategy for Europe, the Strategy 2020 counts on wider presence of women in education and on the labour market. When we are talking about addressing the financial, economic and social crisis we must have in mind the potential that lies with women, whose current employment rate is almost 60%. Meeting the targets set by the Europe 2020 Strategy means that we need to take efficient measures in the field of reconciliation of family and working life as well to reach an employment rate of 75% for both men and women. Without half of the population there will be no democracy, neither smart growth.

I call for equal chances for women and men to become politicians and I believe that men will realize that without female politicians there is no democracy.

Edit Bauer



“As a fraction leader of the Christian Democratic group of our municipality council, I want to have a group that reflects the citizens of our society. In a democratic society no-one should be kept out of the corridors of power because of gender. It’s a democratic issue to have a good mix in gender in a party, not “only” a matter of equality. I wanted the students of this course to recognize the patterns of inequality in their own society and by good example from the work we have done in Jönköping help them in finding solutions for their own situation. The main reason for not having equality in politics is that you don’t admit you have a problem. If you want to have more female politicians you have to start by asking more women and then give them responsibility and support, sometimes it’s just as simple as that.”

Simon Rundqvist

We are not satisfied with the current situation; we still have discrimination of women in the electoral process, low representation of women in governmental bodies, a lack of education and social sensitivity on gender issues. For this our representatives in the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia-Herzegovina as well as the Federation are trying to harmonize legislation at different levels of authority. In the last five years we are very active in the implementation UNSR 1325 and our corresponding National Action Plan. The election law and the law of political parties are to be made consistent.

All of us must do more; we in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in HDZ BiH need support from you, the EPP and its institutions. We want to be a part of the EU, and you can and need to help us on the road.

Marina Pendeš



Our objectives

Our general project objective was that the political parties of the EPP family in Eastern and South Eastern Europe have built their capacity for the initiation and implementation of gender sensitive policies. That carries the implication of a resulting higher participation by women in public and political life.



- As a basis, that requires raised awareness to the causes and consequences of gender inequalities in political life and the current situation in their own organizations with regards to gender equality. We aimed to equip participants with tools and varied examples for doing it.
- Supportive practices for equal opportunities in political participation also need to be developed. Technically speaking that means better human resource manage-

ment and more effective outreach to move and involve people, especially women.

- Furthermore, our participants had to walk away with enhanced knowledge of how to improve existing party structures in order to achieve a better gender equality within the party.

A successful outcome in resolving these challenges can be reached in many ways and the people concerned know best what works for them. We did however concentrate on a concrete set of options, including

- establishing and developing women's organizations on the national and local level
- building an expertise-based profile for women's groups
- targeting women for party membership, activism and elected office
- involving women in political activity on a project basis
- advocacy and awareness raising campaigns
- building a network
- preparing for good performance and effectiveness in political activity

The RSI courses have served to broaden my knowledge of the socio-economic issues that have influenced existing prejudice regarding the roles of both genders in their daily and political life. In addition, the courses have equipped me with an understanding of the methods necessary to gradually surpass gender-based bias. The first step is raising public awareness of the spheres still lacking full gender equality. Therefore, my follow-up project consisted of a discussion between 80 young politicians and two Members of Parliament who shared their experiences as women in politics, dwelling on both challenges faced and progress made on the road toward greater representation of women in Parliament. The fact that the young politicians found this talk inspirational for their future endeavors only proves that courses such as the "Gender in Politics" are much needed.

Mare Ushkovska

Speakers' thoughts on tools for reaching goals

During my trainings in Central and Eastern Europe and at the Robert Schuman Institute I was confronted with the (many times weak) position of women in their political parties. What a waste of potential, seeing so much female talent! I was and still am convinced that it is important to **invest in these young talented women** to strengthen their position.



For female candidates it is crucial to know about their personal strengths and talents. Training programmes, like the gender leadership programme of the RSI, focussed on personal skills and leadership, can help them to develop talent, and also offer a platform for exchanging experience and the start of an international network.

Stimulating individual women however is not enough. From my experience as a former director of the political school of the Dutch Christian Democrats (CDA), I know the importance of **transparent recruitment and selection instruments**. A party should first decide on what they need in a successful political team (a team profile including diversity in expertise, skills, representation of the voters), followed by a candidate profile that creates a base for equal chances for all who are willing to stand for office.

Annet Doesburg

As president of Democrat Liberal Women from Romania I reckon it is more than useful to share our experience in promoting gender equality in politics. I must say that in Romania our party, the Democrat Liberal Party is by far the party most open to support women careers' in politics. The Women's Organization of PD-L has obtained a volunteer 30% **gender quota within the party**. It was a first step and an incentive for me to propose to the Parliament the

first **Quota Law** in Romania. The draft law states that 40 percent of the candidates from all political parties must be women and it is to be enforced through monetary sanctions. This bill is now a work in progress.

Gender quota is only one side of our actions in promoting gender equality in politics. The other side focuses on **expertise of human resources**. Two years ago we started a national program of trainings on public policies in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. With groups of 30 members we organized trainings on education, social policies and environment protection. As a result, by the end of 2011 the Women's Organization will launch three policy papers in education, social protection and environment. These policy papers will be proposed for public debates at the national level, and then included in the 2012 political program of the Democrat Liberal Party.



The Democrat Liberal Women experience shows that a strong expertise of our members improves power to **influence public policies** and to actively participate in the decision making process.

Sulfina Barbu

Gender Equality is still falsely regarded by many governments as a women's topic and often down prioritized on their political agenda. However, equal treatment and opportunities for both women and men is everything but a women's issue. It is one of the most fundamental principles of democracy and one of the few safeguards for economic and social prosperity. Countries where women's knowledge, thoughts and **capacities are integrated** in all spheres of society, from politics to education and labour



market, show significant improvements in nativity rates, economic growth and societal development.

The mechanisms leading to improved gender equality are diverse but fairly simple. They include awareness raising, education, empowerment, but also the adaptation of laws, regulation and cultures to better embrace the potential of all people, regardless of gender. Soft tools, like the **highlighting of the gender equality situation in a country followed by concrete educational actions** for both women and men are to be preferred as the first alternative compared to hard tools like numerical quotas or allocated positions for women. Quotas can be a useful tool as a temporary catalyst for change when all other methods have proven to be inefficient, but their use could implicate an unfavourable regard from society to the women benefiting from it.

The desire to improve gender equality will only come once we understand why it is important and even then education and experience is needed to achieve a difference. Women need to be given the opportunities but also pushed and encouraged to take them and men need to have the courage to let them do so. Gender equality can not be reached over night, but by starting to change today, we can ensure that future generations will continue this work in the right direction.

Adina Trunk

Fostering the full and unlimited participation of (young) women in politics needs a mix of measures such as mentoring and training and – above all – loads of sensitivity and respect for the needs and demands of the female population. On this basis, alliances within civil society can be built and concrete projects can be planned and implemented.

During my time as chairperson of the “Wiener ÖVP Frauen” I tried to initiate a **project oriented approach**



with the party as project sponsor and varying activists as project leaders. The joint participation of 80 women in branded outfits in the Vienna Women's run is one example for a PR oriented project. The organization of a panel discussion on the gender pay gap or a workshop on women and power or the cooperation with a civic action group in the district of Floridsdorf are other examples. The project structure allows to **integrate new people** on a short term basis **with concrete timelines and**

outputs. The precondition is that the party structure is well organized and flexible enough to cooperate with a variety of players.

Most importantly, any organization can be easily “gender checked” by using the **“4R check-list”** (as developed by the Swiss feminist Zita Küng):

What are the **roles and rights** of women in my party, which **resources** are allocated to women's projects and equality issues and in which way are women **represented** in my organization?

It was a great pleasure to act as trainer and mentor of highly talented young men and women at RSI who are willing and able to shape the future of their countries in a democratic and fair way.

Theresa Philippi

What we did: The activities

In terms of content it was our aim to strike a balance between developing personal strategies and skills for participants and providing input for discussion and decision-making inside their delegating parties.

The original core activity of two seminars has been extended to include individualized practical tasks. This did not only bring theory and high ideas down to the ground but provided practice opportunity in concrete implementation as well as increased visibility for our participants in front of their party organization and local community.

Below you find an outline of the activities and their main themes, completed each year by the identical group of 20 people, in total 60 young women and men.

Situation analysis of delegating parties by participants, according to given criteria, first submitted as a paper and later presented in seminar 1. Such information helps RSI monitor developments better.

Skills trainings (incorporated in seminars 1–2): Team building • Communication and public speaking • Advocacy • Networking • Decision making • Policy analysis • Political leadership and management

Seminar 1 agenda

Gender equality models and practices, strategic actions • EU standards and practices for balancing work and family life • Conflict situations: Welfare systems in transition societies • Equality strategies in political life: Women's organizations in political parties • Personal strategies in political life • Representing gender equality issues in a political organization • Public outreach: cooperation and coalition building outside the women's organization and outside the political party • EPP and Christian Democratic values in politics • Participants' presentation on relevant issues in their countries

Homework projects of participants implemented theoretical insight and demonstrated the use of tools and tech-

niques introduced in seminar 1. Their local project had to involve external cooperation with another entity of the party, an NGO or public administration.

Seminar 2 agenda

Strategy development: theory and practice • Issue management • Gender screening in legislative work • Promoting women's perspectives in policy making • EU policies and institutions relating to gender equality issues • Approaches to political leadership: Women's perspectives • Reputation building and creating a political profile • Strategies and resources for political PR and campaigning from a gender point of view • Image of a leader: Basics for media appearances, controlling the situation • Candidate selection and promotion • Presentation and discussion of homework projects

Individual mentorship program

Participants cooperated with a mentor on a concrete project during a period of 6 months. They were matched with experienced EPP sister party politicians, both women and men.

Follow-up

RSI activities normally start and conclude by asking stakeholders' views and incorporating these in the agenda. At the end of the three-year RSI project two meetings have been scheduled for Ukraine as well as Bosnia-Herzegovina and FYROMacedonia respectively. These were to bring together participants, delegating party representatives and local partner organization staff to reflect on the outcome and contribute to the planning of the next project cycle.

Based on such feedback, for 2012–14 we are planning on further additions and improvements. These are to include study visits to well working party and women's organizations, and supporting the drafting and implementation of strategy papers for all individual parties in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine that choose to be involved.

Outcome

Over the three years we held 565 participant days of trainings in addition to an unregistered amount of time invested in 32 party analysis papers written, 57 local projects or actions realized, with further results from 8 longer term mentorship cooperations connecting youth with experienced politicians from EPP sister parties.

A total of 60 participants benefitted directly, coming from Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROMacedonia, Georgia, Kosovo / UNMIK, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. In terms of stakeholders that means altogether 23 EPP member and cooperating parties as well as organizations involved. Secondary beneficiaries range in the hundreds through documented information events and home seminars held by our participants to pass on or discuss ideas and knowledge from the RSI activities.

43 (31 individual) speakers and trainers – most of them on a volunteer basis – coming from Austria, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Sweden helped realize the events.

In planning the curriculum we ensured diverse opportunities to demonstrate the practical and individually relevant usage of our training program and discussion points. Here we share output and outcome related to a limited set of key areas only, mostly in the words of our participants.

FOUNDING NATIONAL LEVEL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

The Alliance of Vojvodina Hungarians formed its Women forum in March 2009. During the preparation process, as one of the participants of the Gender in Politics course organized by the Robert Schuman Institute, I sent a letter of intention to party women in all party branches. Through this process I managed to recruit a lot of new women party members who were interested in this form of political organizing. Further on I discussed my intention with the party leadership and got their full support to continue with my

plan. On March 28, 2009 we organized the AVH Women's Forum Founding Assembly with delegates from throughout Vojvodina. The delegates have appointed women local coordinators for who are now responsible for recruitment and outreach to new women. The Women's Forum have

been discussing several areas of their interest when it comes to developing party policy and improvement of women's position and have been organizing skill building, issue based and public speaking trainings.



With excellent trainers' guidance women have worked on their short speeches and public speaking skills, and have participated in on-camera exercises. Women shared that the exercise and trainers' feedback strengthened their self-confidence

and highlighted the value of networking with other women colleagues. We have also built up educational capabilities including 10 trainers (7 women, 3 men) with support from the National Democratic Institute that is an important asset to the entire party.

AVH women's leadership is internally transparent, leadership meetings are in the most cases opened for all members.

Elvira Kovács

After spending 2 weeks in Budapest where I learned a lot about gender in/equalities that differ from country to country, getting and sharing the experience from trainers and participants, I realized that the Christian Democratic Movement of Georgia also needed to have a Women's Organization. The decision was strong but challenging – it's hard to take on such a big project without having years of experience and a vast knowledge. This time RSI gave me an opportunity to be involved in mentorship program, having me connected with a skillful and eager to help mentor, an

MP of the Swedish Christian Democrats. After several months of interactive work on our women's organization aims, statutes, structure, legal issues, finally, CDMWO was founded in September 2010.

We've done many projects since then, and our membership is growing. Having started with 200 members of the new women's organization we are now looking to build structures on the local level as well. There have of course been lots of problems and issues to be solved on the way, in which the international network again proved helpful.

Ketevan Bezhitashvili

My experience from the RSI project, both as a lecturer and a mentor, has been truly memorable. To meet young people with such knowledge and enthusiasm but also with different challenges back home creates a wonderful learning environment. My experiences from political campaigning, and being a young woman myself, did encourage many participants to use campaigning skills to reach their objectives. As a mentor I really got the chance to work with a young Georgian woman on a more individual level. She created a women's organization for her party. I find that the biggest need is not necessarily sharing of knowledge but as a mentor I support, encourage and give some ideas. This helps the person to reach higher goals, we have a saying in Swedish "Alone is not strong".



Liza-Maria Norlin

FOUNDING LOCAL LEVEL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

The seminar "Gender in Politics" 2010 organized by the Robert Schuman Institute was my first international training and had a great influence on me. Along with the other participants I have experienced a very useful mix of theory

and practical knowledge, made contact with young people from several countries of South East Europe and to become more aware of the need to involve more women in politics, opportunities and obstacles that stand in our way. A few months after the seminar I got an offer from RSI to do a mentorship project, which I gladly accepted. I proposed creating a new women's organization in the party at the local level, and for this my mentor was Ellen Larson, political secretary of the women's organization of Christian Democrats in Sweden. As a longtime member of the PDP's Youth Council, I used my previous experience too: I was working on revising the lists of members (in order to have better insight into the gender structure), invited female members and spoke with them about their role in the organization and opportunities they have, helped to organize the first meetings, scheduling activities and to implement the first activities. Advices and support from my mentor were very useful to me, because she has a lot of experience in women's organizations in Sweden, a country with highly developed democracy.

At the first election after the establishment of Women's Forum, in October 2010, the result of my party at the local level has improved by almost 40%, and women have certainly made their contribution to this result. The Forum still works very well and they created conditions for greater and more successful involvement of women in local elections next year. I am still an active member of the Youth Council, and in May this year, at the party Congress, I was elected as a member of the Main Board of the PDP. I try to contribute to all structures in the party, better the party's results and image, but as a young woman and the youngest member of the Main Board I encourage women and show them by my example that politics is also women's business.

Anja Petrović



As a local politician, I had the opportunity to gain additional knowledge and new perspectives about gender issues, equality and differences and political leadership. I was inspired to use my political position, both as the vice – president of the Party of Democratic Action in my local branch and as city councillor, in order to encourage other women to engage more in politics and take part in important decision – making processes regarding different issues. All the intensive and interactive workshops arranged by RSI inspired me to define specific goals concerning our local women’s organization. Within the well-designed RSI mentorship program, I decided to make a project to activate our women’s organization and encourage women of different age, educational background and experience to take a more active role in our political party and promote the position of political acceptance of women in politics. The outcome of the mentorship program today is that many women are engaged in political activities and some of them have become directors and managers in different institutions and businesses which usually are positions held by men. These improvements are minor to bring to the light a great change, but they are a good start for a more modern, democratic and open-minded political environment.

Azra Sulić

ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURES: DEPARTMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY

Until 2010 there was no women’s organization within the United National Movement. In May 2010 the Department of Gender Equality has been established in the party. The new structural unit is giving us the opportunity to involve both female and male members of the party in our activities. Inclusion of both genders will make it functional and encourage the youth’s activation in this regard. It also tackles the prejudice aligning gender issues only with women or feminism; which would be less possible in the framework of a women’s organization due to deeply rooted perception in the society as of an estranged formal organization for women only.



Activities of the Gender Equality Department comprise, on the one hand, working on improving women’s political skills, thus building their self-confidence, along with the will and ability for political participation, and, on the other hand, raising gender awareness among UNM male members, thus encouraging them to support gender equality not only within the party, and government but also in all sphere’s of politics.

Although the representation of women in national and local legislatures for the moment is hardly satisfying, and many challenges still remain, a quite different result is envisioned in the coming 2012 elections.

Natalia Mchedlishvili

SYNERGIES WITH EXISTING WELL-FUNCTIONING PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

My proposal was a series of four regional roundtables with the female representatives of the party in order to launch an self-reflecting internal dialogue on gender policy of the party. These took place in Belgrade, Nis, Novi Sad and Kragujevac in the spring of 2011 with Jadranka Beljan Balaban, president of G17 PLUS Women’s Network, and. Jelena Travar Miljevic, president of G17 PLUS Committee for Gender Equality (and RSI alumna) as speakers and moderators and over 100 participants who were notable female representatives of the party from city and local boards, female members in the elected position and female members of the G17 PLUS Youth Network. This provided concrete local feedback on the past activities as well as the inputs and guidelines for the future work.

On the other hand, the participants were fully aware that the level of gender equality within the party was above that in the society as a whole so they felt less satisfied regarding equality in the main political institutions (parlia-

ment, government and local self-government). Also it was noticed that some of the participants had not been fully informed about the G17 PLUS gender policy or about the principles and values regarding gender equality which were advocated by our party. Many were also unfamiliar with the relevant actions taken by their fellow party members in elected position and within the institution of the governments, so the participants concluded that it was necessary to improve the communication and reporting within the party. During the discussion we also learned that many women believed that gender equality cannot be only achieved legally, through legislation no matter how good it is, so in addition to the legislative changes it would be necessary to develop awareness that women are equally capable to handle the most demanding political tasks.

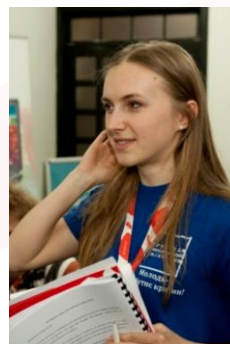
Aleksandra Čato

Understanding of potential importance of gender issues, which I got at the “Gender in Politics” course, will surely supplement my further activity with corresponding projects in political and social life of Ukraine. Together with a better grasp of different aspects of European and world politics, presentation and debating skills acquired during RSI’s “Young Leaders” courses these were an absolute advantage in my working experience in the political party “Nasha Ukraina”, as well as Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung later on.

Virginia Dronova

OUTREACH TO WOMEN

I was implementing my mentorship project during April–October 2011 in Chechelnyk region, Vinnytsia district of Ukraine. Within this project I was aiming to increase the number of women engaged in public, political and business activity of the region, as well as to widen the functions of existing institutions that work with a female audience and to create special institutions in order to inform and teach women how to be involved in public, political and business activity. As a result, an NGO that unites active women of the region was created, and a special service for unemployed wom-



en was started on the basis of Chechelnyk regional state administration within the support project for unemployed citizens of the area. This new NGO has already organized important actions in the community. Its service works as informational and consulting centre, where those who wish can get informational and administrative support for opening a small business.

Also, within the project further events were organized: trainings for youth (leadership, rhetoric, youth rights), support campaign for an ill child, and participation in the presentation of Vinnytsia region at the EU institutions.

The partners of the project were: Chechelnyk regional state administration, Chechelnyk regional council, Chechelnyk town council, Department of Culture of Vinnytsya oblast state administration, Chechelnyk central school #1, Chechelnyk central school #2, Chechelnyk music school, NGO “Vinnychany in Kyiv”, NGO “Ukraine – Poland – Germany”, and NGO “Foundation for Regional Initiatives”. The RSI mentorship program enabled me to get support from an experienced mentor, Theresa Philippi of the Viennese People’s Party that helped me perform my activity on the highest level.

Oksana Nezhyvenko

Two male participants, Aleksander Lekić from the Movement for Changes (PzP) in Montenegro, and Viktor Budzynski, local councilor of Batkivshchyna, Ukraine both implemented successful “homework projects” with the aim of recruiting more female members and activists directly for their parties.

Until this time, I held several events on gender equality mainly among young people but not only. Such events were mostly organized within the party, but we also involved other public organizations such as “Caritas”, belonging to the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. After these activities we reached two goals, firstly more women came to our party and secondly

these women are participating in activities showing the relevance of the theme in the difficult socio-economic situation in Ukraine, and all issues it brings for the modern woman.

Viktor Budzinskiy

CAMPAIGN IMPACT

Despite the developments that Albania has realized in the latest 20 years, it remains one of the countries with the lowest level of female representation in politics. Not only my contribution, but of all of the Albanian women in this area should be huge and hard. The first and most important step is to defeat once and forever discriminatory mentality regarding the female figure, and to give her its rightful place, not only in society but also in politics and decision making. My concrete actions regarding this big issue were reflected in the project "Growth of representation of youth and women in Durres Municipal Council Elections". The results were convenient for my youth organization, but the most important thing was that we were able to create an effective lobby and to reach negotiations with the governing structure of our party, regarding the representation of the young women in the Municipal Council of my city.

Given the Albanian reality (in which legal mechanisms already exist although not strictly respected), I think that it will be a long road and full of obstacles to achieve gender equality in society, decision making, and in high levels of Albanian politics, but as far as we have a very well prepared new generation, empowered and strong women, innovative ideas, new spirit and new aspirations, I believe that nothing it's impossible.

Eriola Karagozji

I attended Robert Schuman Institute's Gender in Politics Seminars in 2009, just before our local elections that took place all over Turkey. My project in this seminar was grassroots women campaigning, specialized in Başakşehir, one of the 39 districts in Istanbul metropolitan area. We started campaigning in small scale. First campaigning from 'door to door' we created groups of 2-3 people who visited every

household in that district with a rose and a brochure of our party. Most people appreciated it, to be able to ask questions on any issue that they wanted. Another activity was 'house meetings', where from each street, one of our party members opened their house for a small house party meeting only for women. This also brought housewives who never had the possibility to discuss any political or daily issue just because they don't have time or opportunity to reach us. The result is; we won the elections with a majority and our women were really proud. I had the privilege to participate to RSI's Gender Seminars where I met wonderful people (not only women, though only 2 men) from different countries and we exchanged our ideas and projects which widened our view and showed also that we nearly face similar problems all over and brought us one step further.

Ayşe Hilal Sayan Koytak



The "Gender in Politics" project had a focus on the importance of capacity building. It's important to have a variety of people and perspectives in politics and that is why it is so important for parties to think about this when they do their party list. I saw that it really inspired young politicians to see new ways of campaigning and how they can create a political profile. RSI is a good meeting point to exchange experience with like-minded people and it provides a great possibility for networking.

Caroline Szyber

AWARENESS RAISING ACTIONS

To investigate and address the problem "Domestic violence, violence over women in the society" I was communicating, coordinating and consulting with my mentor, Bettina Rausch, Member of the Federal Parliament in Austria. Following research I made a questionnaire to see if people are aware enough of these problems. It turned out that they are aware

but not prepared enough to take some action in solving them. So, the next step should be, how to encourage people to take some action. Being involved in all of these social problems made me understand that the seminars, courses and projects about gender in politics makes me more mature, stable and conscious. It makes all of us to think far more than the red line limits, to see far more than the horizon.

Sandra Nikolovska

My participation in the seminar has enabled and shown me how to write and realize projects. Furthermore, thanks to RSI, which has provided me with a good basis for work, I advanced rapidly, and after only one year, I was given the status of a trainer and educator for Gender Equality at the Directorate for Gender Equality within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

RSI assigned us to write and realize a project. Since there is a large number of Roma in my surrounding, and the statistics show great lack of education of that group of people, I decided to include in the project a primary school with predominantly Roma children, which seriously tends to become ethnically clean, without any Serbian children there. In agreement with the school principal and the parents, we wanted to draw attention to this problem, and to stimulate and reward the children's work and commitment. Our goal was also to promote the school itself, which has received a lot of awards and prizes won by the same children. On March 8th, we organized a children's auction sale of paintings and greeting cards and the money raised was given to the school. Some of the guests at our auction were municipal committee members, people who are important for the city and education, and of course, the children's parents. Before the auction, these people had interactively worked, drawn and talked with the children (there were even some presents).

This action was quite positively reviewed by the press and various TV stations. More importantly, it was very significant for the Roma children and their parents that some attention was paid to them and that their successes and problems were addressed and pointed out.

Maja Perić



Others have impacted their organizations differently. Viktor Kecskés worked out the implementation of Serbia's 2009 gender equality legislation regarding the activities of his political party, the Alliance of Voivodina Hungarians. Ina Negruta (PLDM, Moldova) chose to tackle a community problem by creating a women's initiative to manage waste better in her native town Orhei. They now oversee 385 recyclable trash collection units through a newly created company lead by a woman. Many have however opted for organizing an educational event for the home party and its youth, transferring RSI experience as multipliers.

A final important outcome of our project is the building of an international network among like-minded young politicians and professionals, with shared interest in a set of issues. Even as EPP sister parties of the region began to develop their own educational institutes and foundations, regional cooperation or other cross-border transfer of experience is still largely dependent on international partners due to shortage of own resources, and sometimes initiative. There is also a great potential in using the favorable experience of South Eastern European parties and their women's platforms in Eastern Europe, with similar socio-economic realities and political cultures. An example is the ongoing use of Serbian lessons learnt and practices from G17 PLUS in preparing female candidates of 4 EPP parties for the upcoming elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina, or organization development in the Batkivshchyna party of Ukraine.

Media echoes

The homework and mentorship projects realized by participants had a decided visibility in their respective communities and organizations as well. Several of them got extensive media coverage, contributing to awareness raising to problematic issues as well as responses proposed by RSI alumni.

Igor Andriychenko (Democratic Alliance, Ukraine) organized a roundtable in his hometown Chernigiv on the relevance of and preconceptions around gender equality programs in Ukraine. The 15 roundtable participants included a municipal councilor, officials of the local administration, representatives of 5 NGOs as well as journalists: through radio reporting, print media coverage and 5 news websites the awareness raising information reached an estimated audience of 1,400 people.

2 local TV stations covered the above described action of **Maja Perić** (G17 PLUS, Serbia) in a predominantly

Roma elementary school of Nis Crveni Krst municipality, that drew appreciation from parents and delighted children who got acknowledged and praised. The municipal administration also showed interest and proposed further cooperation, reaching out to other schools of the district with the project.

Mare Ushkovska (VMRO-DPMNE, FYROMacedonia) organized a discussion forum on the role, significance and representation of women in politics. Panelists included Silvana Boneva MP, Parliamentary Group coordinator of VMRO-DPMNE and Liljana Popovska MP, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, as well as Dime Spasov, party youth president. Approximately 80 young men and women attended and several media reported on the event held in the Army Hall of Skopje.



Future plans

One of the factors in RSI's impact is that we deal with fields and issues in long-term programmatic ways, which is the only way to yield real results. Based on stakeholders' positive feedback and interest, as well as continued support from KIC, RSI also plans to carry on with this project over another three-year cycle. The target group of that will be EPP member and cooperating parties in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. That allows us more intensive engagement of every organization as well as more specific focus for relevant content. The call for applications, as always, will be posted on our website at www.schuman-institute.eu.

We also include a gender perspective integrated in our other regular programs, such as the three-week series Young Leaders, candidate trainings, and others related to internal party development such as Political Organization Management. The RSI alumni conference also features gender issues as one of three panel topics, bringing concerns as well as recent achievements to a broader audience within the Institute's own network. Our regular training series on behalf of the EPP Group in the European Parliament "Local Self-Government: Step to Efficiency" for newly elected Ukrainian councilors is also set to have women as its special target group for 2012. That is expected to strengthen and interlink with the future "gender in politics" project.



For program contributions and ensuring real-life political relevance we continue to rely on partners and volunteer speakers from the following:

- Christian Democratic International Center
- Regional Cooperation Council Gender Task Force
- EPP Group in the European Parliament
- EPP member party representatives (government, parliament, local council, party officials)
- EPP Women
- European Union of Women
- Konrad Adenauer Foundation
- CDA Eduardo Frei Foundation
- Political Academy of the Austrian People's Party
- IRI Women's Democracy Network

These synergies also help effective information flow, to coordinate activity and to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts.

List of participants

2009

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2011

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We also keep in touch with former participants, speakers and colleagues from partner institutions through an official page on the social networking site at [facebook](https://www.facebook.com/schuman.institute)
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