



Working group on Women and Gender realities in the OSCE region

<http://civicsolidarity.org/member/1451/working-group-women-and-gender-realities-osce-region>

The Working group met in Vienna from Dec 3 to 4 and some of the women participated in the Parallel conference of the CSP prior to the OSCE Ministerial Conference.

Our main issues:

- a) To reinforce our past commitments, structure our cooperation and the field of our activities for the future towards awareness raising of gendered issues within the CSO, the CSP and in the fields of all three dimensions of the OSCE.
- b) We agreed to work in the continuity of our past activities strengthen a meaningful and concrete impact on CSP debates, declarations, outcome documents (see the chapter on gender in the outcome document 2017)
- c) We broadened our knowledge of gendered issues in the OSCE region through the presentation and discussions of 2 women's field missions/activities in Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan – written documents distributed in Vienna and soon available on the website)
- d) We agreed on strengthening the impact of Women's rights as Human rights, of the relevance of women and gender realities in a cross-dimensional approach (between peacemaking, including specific needs, protection and meaningful participation, the rights/justice aspects and the economic dimension).
- e) We will continue to address all levels of OSCE institutions, missions and commitments and give specific attention to further cooperation with the OSCE Gender unit.
- f) We will focus on new priorities and narratives in 2018, according to Italian priorities (cross-cutting issues of the 3 dimensions, trafficking, migration) always with a gender lens and an eye on conflict prevention.
- g) We will strive for future Integration of Slovakian women partners and organizations.

Topics for 2018

- a) Discussion on the legend of preserving “traditional values”, used in many countries (with a specific dramatic efficiency in more patriarchal societies, in situations of poverty, unemployment, misery, (religious) fundamentalism and in conflicts) to stereotype, stigmatize, ridicule women, their public presence and political engagement. We consider this development as dangerous backlash because it is de-gendering political debates, has strong tendencies to exclude women from active participation in public life and in decision making and is a high risk for their freedom. Cuts (and/or privatization) of social and health services, imposed austerity politics (to pay debts which are not caused by women) and a lack of care politics, are affecting women and their role in the society. Instead of increasing women's influence and possible impact on measures against violent extremism, priority is given to “securitization” measures (security not seen as Human security securing existential needs), militarization and direct military order.
All this contributes to a lack of finances and support structures and populist-nationalistic exclusive feelings and atmosphere putting women human rights defenders – often multi-vulnerable in their societies - in danger. Restrictions and threats are already reality according to laws, have support by mainstream media and right-wing xenophobic, racist activists present on all levels of societies.

Question: how to strengthen solidarity, find adequate allies, protest visibly against these threats without falling in the trap of growing “fear”? How can we best get our voices heard and get connected internationally?

- b) Forced migration, asylum seekers (persecuted in their countries, on the move and after the arrival), IDPs – this is not gender neutral. Women (with children) suffer most from violence, SGBV, adequate conditions of decent living, lack of satisfying specific needs, exclusion.
Questions: What does it mean, looking with a gender lens on the dramatic impact of forced migration on women? How can we best re-adjusting NAPs on 1325, CEDAW recommendations to tackle these problems and provide adequate services, accommodation and participation? How can we work better with the root causes of forced migration and displacement?
- c) Promote an integrated approach linking women and gender issues such as violence against women, participation, peace advocates with SDGs (focus on 5-16), rights of indigenous women, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in their struggle for climate justice, access to clean water and food sovereignty!
- d) Strengthen the role of the new Italian Civil Peace Corps among the components of the Italian international missions (Law 145/2016) , including in the gender dimension (Law 145 art. 3) **Question:** How can we support it?
- e) Media responsibility to raise awareness on women and gender issues and on long-term commitments in combination of protecting women and show their ability to be active as agents of change and conflict prevention. **Questions:** who are our partners and which structures we have to support. – Proposal for an event in May in Yerevan/Armenia
- f) Any further business: Monitor effective implementation and monitoring of the OSCE 1325 NAP’s national provisions (also against the standard of the OSCE practical guide “result oriented NAP”) with a special focus on the role of women’s and peacebuilding organizations – linked to fact finding missions in Kirgizstan and?
- g) Support the role of CS and women’s organizations in OSCE conflict areas as a means of unarmed civilian protection (a methodology that - according to the 2015 Global Study - has especially proven its effectiveness to protect women and girls).

Participants for now:

Julia Kharashvili/Georgia

Olena Suslova +Maria Yasenovska + Olga Koreniuk / Ukraine

Tolekan Ismailova/Kyrgyzstan - Birduino

Luisa del Turco + Annalisa Milani (WILPF)/Italy

Gulnara Shahinian/Democracy today Armenia

Heidi Meinzolt (coordinator) + Marieke Eilers (WILPF), Anna Osypova, Vera Lamprecht, Polis180 – Germany

Valentina Tcherevatenko/Russia – women of Don

Annemarie Sancar/Switzerland, WIDE

Julija Ravaityte/Estonia, IPHR Brussels,

