



In the MAINSTREAM

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GTF formalizes ties to new Women's Trade Union Network

The Stability Pact Gender Task Force recently participated with a SEE regional delegation in the recent *Sixth International Trade Union Women's School on International and European Gender and Social Standards*, held in Ohrid, R. Macedonia, from September 28th - October 1st. The school was funded in part by the GTF through the Italian Government Donation to the GTF earmarked for Trade Union Women's Empowerment. The Sixth Trade Union School offered a unique opportunity for a number of the GTF's Civil Society and Parliamentary Partners to interact with prominent trade union women activists from 24 transition countries.

One important outcome of the school was the decision on the part of two large trade union women's networks to unite, in advance of the global unification of their umbrella trade union organizations, **ICFTU (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions)** and **WCL (World Confederation of Labor)**.

The **SPGTF** was amongst the first to congratulate this new women's network representing 43 women's structures of trade union confederations from 24 countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Newly Independent States, which is more than 25 million trade union women members.

The **ICFTU-WCL CEE&NIS Women's Network** adopted a **"DECLARATION ON GLOBALISATION AND FAIR TRANSITION FOR WORKING FAMILIES"** as a position paper of the new network.

Likewise the SPGTF made cooperation with the new **ICFTU-WCL CEE&NIS Women's Network** and the **SPGTF official by signing an Agreement of Cooperation in Ohrid on October 1, 2005**. The agreement foresees close cooperation and exchange of know-how in fields of common interest, in particular gender quality and social dialogue.

Features...

1. [GTF Formalizes Ties to New Women's Trade Union Network](#)
2. [SEE Roma Women Facilitators Meet in R. Macedonia](#)
3. [GTF Chair visits Moldova - "Moldova is making significant progress in Gender Equality issues"](#)
4. [GTF Social Dialogue & Trade Union Women Project gets off to a strong start in Serbia](#)

[^ top ^](#)

SEE Roma Women Facilitators Meet in R. Macedonia

The GTF continued its work on Roma Women's Empowerment in SEE through a two-day meeting of prominent women from 10 SEE Countries and territories in Ohrid, R. Macedonia. 20 Roma women and 10 GTF representatives met October 2 -3rd to coordinate project implementation for the next step in the GTF Regional Roma Women Can Do It II Project, funded by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry.

Prior to this regional meeting, 10 national meetings took place to gather prominent Roma Activists and Officials as well as Parliamentary and Government Officials responsible for Minority and Roma Rights to appoint two Roma Facilitators to implement the GTF Project nationally. The basis for discussions during the meeting was the National Roma Action Plans which most countries adopted on Roma Inclusion during the Decade of Roma as well as presentations from Roma Women Representatives in **IRWN** (International Roma Women's Network) and **ERTF** (European Roma and Travellers Forum). Strategic Planning for National Conferences was undertaken during this meeting and opinions and ideas exchanged regionally.

One overall conclusion was that existing Roma National Plans, despite including Roma and specifically Roma Women in their preparation, lack an awareness of the different needs of Roma Women and Men, hence, on their own, are likely to reinforce gender discrimination. During Fall/Winter 2005, 10 National Conferences will take place to identify a specific gender sensitive area of concern to the Roma community about which coordinated action or advocacy will be planned and implemented in 2006.

[^ top ^](#)

GTF Chair visits Moldova – “Moldova is making significant progress in Gender Equality Issues”

Sonja Lokar, Chair of the Stability Pact Gender Task Force, has made a visit recently to Moldova, in order to coordinate with national political and civil society leaders working on gender issues. She also met with key international actors working on Gender issues. A number of recent developments in Moldova have given the GTF Chair reason to state, "*Moldova is making significant progress in Gender Equality Issues.*"

Amongst the recent possible developments in achieving gender equality are:

21.7% women in parliament, part of a constantly increasing trend since the first free elections (in 1990, 3.8% women MPs, from 1994 5%, from 1998 - 8.9%, from 2001 - 15.8%). This positive trend is mostly based on the support of the international actors (OSCE, CoE, SPGTF, UNDP, UNIFEM, NDI, IRI, etc.), but also to the work of some 25 active local women's NGO-s, women MPs, and to the development of women organizations within all main political parties and to the growing gender sensitivity within the Trade Unions. This trend is still far from being overwhelming: as the current Moldovan government has just one woman minister!

What is important from a qualitative perspective is that elected women MPs (***Women's Parliamentary Council***) and gender equality activists are working together for adoption of an equal opportunity act, currently in parliamentary procedure, the adoption of which is expected to enact a quota for women of at least 30% political representation for women. This would make Moldova the 6th country in SEE to adopt such quota rules.

OSCE and IRI have pledged support for the inclusion of the Moldovan Parliament in the current GTF SEE Women MP Parliamentary Exchange Project; it is likely they will ensure that positive results of this project which is underway since Spring 2005 will be transferred also to the Moldovan Parliament.

[^ top ^](#)

GTF Social Dialogue & Trade Union Women Project gets off to a strong start in Serbia

The Serbian Social Dialogue & Trade Union Women's Empowerment Project has kicked off with a Train the Trainers seminar at the end of August and two field seminars (Subotica and Smederevo) already completed. 6 Trade Union trainers from two main Trade Unions, Nezavisnost and SSS Serbia, are holding seminars for Trade Unionists from the Education, Healthcare, Public Administration, Chemical and Textile Trade Union Branches in eight (8) cities, followed by a strategic seminar for strategic coordination of social dialogue in Serbia on an issue of specific concern to women workers. This project was developed on the basis of methodology from projects implemented by the GTF in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. The project is supported by a generous donation from the Italian Government and managed by GTF NGO Focal Point in Vojvodina (SCG), Marija Gajicki.

[^ top ^](#)

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