



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosovo - Republic of Kosovo
Kuvendi-Skupština Assembly
Women Caucus

WOMEN CAUCUS



ANNUAL REPORT

January 2011 - 31 December 2011

Contact information:
Women Caucus of Kosovo Assembly III Floor, No. 319/A; Tel: 038 211 330
Web: assembly-kosova.org Email: woman.caucus@assembly-kosova.org
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Drafted by the Women Caucus Office:
Sebahate Grajçevci – CBF, Women’s Caucus Advisor
Arjeta Rexhepi – Women’s Caucus Assistant

Women Caucus - WC

Women's Caucus Board

1. Teuta Sahatçija (LDK) - Chairwoman
2. Flora Brovina (PDK) - member
3. Donika Kadaj-Bujupi (AAK) - member
4. Alma Lama (VV) - member
5. Suzana Novoberdaliu (KKR) - member
6. Myfera Sinik (Grupi 6+) - member
7. Jelena Bontić (SLS) – member

Women Members of the Assembly of Republic of Kosovo

1. Afërdita Berisha-Shaqiri
2. Albana Fetoshi
3. Albana Gashi
4. Albulena Haxhiu
5. Alma Lama
6. Aurora Bakalli
7. Biserka Kostić
8. Blerta Deliu-Kodra
9. Donika Kadaj-Bujupi
10. Duda Balje
11. Emilija Rexhepi
12. Flora Brovina
13. Ganimete Musliu
14. Hasime Krasniqi
15. Hykmete Bajrami
16. Jasmina Zivković
17. Jelena Botnik
18. Justina Pula
19. Kimete Bytyqi
20. Kimete Bajraktari
21. Lirije Kajtazi
22. Lumnije Morina
23. Myfera Srbica-Sinik
24. Myzejene Selmani
25. Nazane Breca
26. Rada Trajković
27. Rita Hazeraj-Beqaj
28. Safete Hadërgjonaj
29. Sala Berisha-Shala
30. Salihe Mustafa
31. Sevdije Lama
32. Suzana Novoberdaliu
33. Teuta Haxhiu
34. Teuta Sahatçija
35. Tim Kadrijaj
36. Valbona Dibra
37. Vesna Mikić
38. Vjollca Krasniqi
39. Vjosa Osmani
40. Xhevarire Izmaku

Sebahate Grajçevci - Women Caucus Advisor

Arjeta Rexhepi - Women Caucus Assistant

Abbreviations:

AAK	Alliance for the Future of Kosovo
AGE	Agency for Gender Equality
CBF	Capacity Building Facility
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
DEMI	Democratic and Effective Municipalities Initiative
EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission
KSF	Kosovo Security Force
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
GGD	Women Caucus (Grupi i Grave Deputete)
ICO	International Civilian Office
KKR	Coalition for New Kosovo
LDK	Kosovo Democratic League
MLGA	Ministry of Local Government Administration
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
MJ	Ministry of Justice
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MLSW	Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare
MH	Ministry of Health
NDI	National Democratic Institute
WHO	World Health Organization
UN	United Nations
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe – Mission in Kosovo
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
PDK	Kosovo Democratic Party
EPAP	European Partnership Action Plan
RTK	Radio-Television of Kosovo
RTV-21	Radio-Television 21
SLS	Serbian Liberal Party
USA	United States of America
KPS	Kosovo Police Service
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNKT	United Nations – Kosovo Team
UNWOMEN	International Women's Development Fund
VV	Self-determination Movement
6+	Non-Serbian minority Assembly Caucus

Introduction

The Women Caucus of the Assembly of Republic of Kosovo is a rather active group, gathering women members of assembly from all parliamentary groups and of all nationalities.

The group works towards strengthening the position of women and establishment of an environment in which women will become equal social partners.

We trust that without equal representation of both genders in all social processes, no proper democracy, economic or social development can be achieved. Thus, the role of our group is to work towards the accomplishment of the related Millennium Development Goals – MDGs, and of the objectives deriving from the European Partnership Action Plan – EPAP.



Women Caucus held numerous round-tables and meetings; conducted visits and campaigns and participated in local, regional and international conferences; and implemented many other activities. In an effort to entice open discussions with a great significance for the country and for women in special, Women Caucus invited to these events representatives of the Presidency, Parliament, Government, municipalities, political parties, various local and international institutions, civil society, business representatives, etc. Such inclusiveness was deemed necessary to arrive to suggestions and recommendations that would ensure an impact on the welfare of citizens in general and of women in particular, the advancement of the position of women and provision of support to women in improving their intellectual and professional capacities, by considering their appointment in key decision-making positions and by drafting instruments that substantially empower women.

Good will was shown by the President, President of the Assembly and many other friends that believe in what we do; thus, we face favorable circumstances and will be able to do much more for our women.

In its mission, Women Caucus is supported by its strategic partners, which assist in the implementation of its activities. The list includes NDI, OSCE, UNDP, CDF, FES and many others.

NDI offered researches, expertise and technical assistance for Women Caucus; supported the series of policy roundtables on issues such as electoral reform, domestic violence, breast and cervix cancer, women in business; organized regular monthly TV debates and the English language course for fellow members of parliament.

The OSCE supported various important visits Women Caucus had in the country and abroad.

UNDP supports different forms of activities, and CDF recently supported the Women Caucus through the hire of an advisor and a public relation expert.

Supported by FES, we organized numerous meetings in municipalities, in which the Women Caucus, women municipal assembly members, political party women's forums, women municipal officials and civil society activists work commonly in enhancing the role of women at the local level.

In the end, I wish to underline that we, members of assembly, with no partisan or national distinctions, are striving to establish a critical mass of women in decision-making throughout Kosovo. This critical mass will encourage women to take over responsibilities in various sector, and we are in the right path to accomplish in our societies something that nature already provided: gender balance.

Teuta Sahatqija
Women Caucus Chairwoman

Executive Summary

I. Meetings held:

Meeting with the President of Republic of Kosovo, Ms. Atifete Jahjaga.

Meeting with the President of the Assembly of Republic of Kosovo, Dr. Jakup Krasniqi.

II. Women Caucus of the Assembly of Kosovo

- 1 Amendment of the Rules of Procedure of the Kosovo Assembly – in cooperation with OSCE/NDI
- 2 Submission of amendments to the sub-committee on Mandates, Immunities and Rules of Procedure
- 3 Women's Caucus Work Plan – NDI/OSCE
- 4 Preparation of Women's Caucus Rules of Procedure – NDI
- 5 Request for research on regional electoral systems – OSCE
- 6 Request for research on electoral systems, lists, zones and their impact on gender representation – NDI (expected)
- 7 Planning for the Women's Caucus Strategy and Action plan (UNWOMEN)
- 8 Session – commencement of the awareness raising campaign on the social position of women: Women in Decision-Making in the Assembly of Kosovo
- 9 Session – reaction against a denigrating article in a daily newspaper.
- 10 Request for Women's Caucus member representation in two ad hoc commission: Commission on Electoral Reform and Commission on Constitutional Reform, and approval by the Assembly
- 11 Participation of Women's Caucus Board members in various committees on the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly.
- 12 Reaction against mono-gender list of Kosovo ambassadors presented by the Government.
- 13 Appeal of the Women's Caucus to all institutions and personalities to fight domestic violence, during a parliamentary session.

III. Meetings with international institutions and authorities and Women's Caucus diplomatic activity

1. **Meeting with the EU Rapporteur for Kosovo, Ms. Ulrike Lunachek**
2. **Meeting with Quint Ambassadors in Kosovo**
 - Ambassador of United States of America, Christopher Dell
 - Ambassador of United Kingdom; Ian Cameron Cliff,
 - Ambassador of Federal Republic of Germany; Ernst Reichel
 - Ambassador of French Republic, Jean François Fitou
 - Ambassador of Republic of Italy, Michael Giffoni:
3. Reception for Bundestag women parliamentarians
4. Meeting with the Senior Representative of the European Commission, Mr. Khaldoun Sinno, on electoral reform and EU expertise on gender quota
5. Meeting of the Board with representatives of ICO, European Commission, and the expert on electoral reform hired by the European Commission.
6. Meeting with UNDP
7. *Letter from Ms. Clinton*
8. *Letter from Ms. Obama*

8. Meeting with **British Council**
9. Meeting with **UNICEF**
10. Meeting with Swedish Women Parliamentarians
11. Meetings of the Women's Caucus Chairwoman, Ms. Teuta Sahatqija, at the NDI Headquarters in USA.
12. Meeting of Women Caucus with the Swedish Ambassador in Kosovo, Ms. Ingrid Johansson, and reception at the Assembly premises of a group of Swedish parliamentarians.

IV. Meetings and visits abroad

1. Meeting of Board members with Ms. Doris Pack on electoral reform initiated in Kosovo and consultations on EU's stand on gender quota representation, during an official visit to Brussels.
2. Members Sahatqija and Bujupi took part in the Seminar "Women in Politics" (held in Durres)
3. Members Teuta Sahatqija and Suzana Novoberdaliu attended the regional UNDP conference in Istanbul on women empowerment in institutions and political parties and quotas.
4. Women Caucus Board undertook a study-visit to Sweden, organized by the OSCE.

V. Policy Round-Tables supported by NDI, with invitees from: the Government Cabinet, Committee Chairs, Members of Parliament, Competent Personalities from the country and abroad, Members of Parliament, Women Forums, Civil Society, etc.

1. Roundtable: **Electoral Reform and Gender Representation;**
2. Roundtable: **Fight Against Domestic Violence;**
3. Roundtable: **Fight Against Breast and Cervix Cancer;**
4. Roundtable: **Women in Business: Why women need women.**

VI. Meetings with local institutions, organizations and personalities:

1. Women Caucus and President Atifete Jahjaga visit Medika and Dairy Factory in Gjakova.
2. Women Caucus visited: the RTK Board – remarks on gender representations in debates and institutional reportages
3. Women Caucus visited SOS – Kinderdorf
4. Women Caucus held a working lunch with the Agency for Gender Equality
5. Conference AGE-Women Caucus
6. Women Caucus visited the Oncology Institute
7. Conference at the National Library, with special contribution by the international expert – Dr. Drude Dahler.

VII. Meeting with municipal assembly women caucuses, in cooperation with FES and OSCE:

1. Meeting with women representatives of Gjakova Municipality
2. Meeting with women representatives of Prishtina Region
3. Meeting with women representatives of Istog Municipality
4. Meeting with women representatives of Gjilan Municipality on electoral reform
5. Meeting with women representatives of Vushtrri Municipality

VIII. Media:

1. Regular monthly TV –debate “I take the floor”, offered by TV-21, organized by NDI
2. Press conference on Breast Cancer
3. Television debate on: Breast Cancer Treatment
4. The full composition of the Women Caucus held a press conference to reject the submitted ambassadors’ list.
5. OSCE-supported Women Caucus television show.

IX. Other activities:

1. Walk for the campaign – Battle against breast cancer; common activity of the President, AGE, NGO-VITA, Prishtina Municipal Assembly, French Embassy, UNDP and civil society.
2. English language courses for women parliamentarians, organized by NDI.

X Achievements:

1. Women Caucus managed to preserve the gender quota through powerful lobbying
2. Delegations visiting other countries and attending meetings abroad are selected in line with adequate gender representation principles.
3. The Assembly has allocated budget to the Women Caucus.
4. Positive response by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in relation to the appointment of ambassadors.

MARCH

Common activity of women parliamentarians and NDI on 8 March



On 8 March, the International Women's Day, the Women's Caucus of the Assembly of Kosovo, in cooperation with the National Democratic Institute – NDI, organized an activity in the Assembly of Kosovo, titled "Women in politics make changes happen", headed by Donika Kadaj-Bujupi, and attended by other women parliamentarians and representatives of non-governmental organizations,

as well as Laura Nichols, NDI Kosovo country director. At the event, Kathy Gest, communication expert and director for public relations at NDI headquarters in Washington DC, held a lecture on media techniques and modalities, which would serve the attendants in improving their respective profiles. Using this occasion, lecturer Kathy Gest reminded the participants of Madeleine K. Albright's words, who said in one occasion: "Women participation in politics represents a real achievement for democracy, as it increases accountability in meeting citizens' needs, cooperation that exceeds partisan and ethnical divide and makes peace more sustainable".

In the gathering, it was said that representation of women in the Assembly of Kosovo was impressive, as such representation levels are seldom found anywhere in the world. It should be noted that 40 women are members of the current Legislature, of which 12 have ensured sufficient votes for taking their parliament seats (similar to their male colleagues).

This activity was accompanied with various questions and debates on challenges faced by this informal caucus, deemed a supra-partisan caucus based on the grounds of its work methods and results achieved. However, one of the most significant results of the Women's Caucus, as underscored by assembly member Flora Brovina, is the participation and engagement of women parliamentarians in reviewing and adopting laws that will serve for further improvement of the position of women in the society, such as the Law on Gender Equality, Law on Elections, Law on Labor, Law Against Domestic Violence; Law on Inheritance, etc. However, it was noted that adoption of laws by no means suffices, as another fundamental factor continues to be their implementation in practice.

The Women Caucus used this event to express its gratitude to various institutions that supported the implementation of Women's Caucus activities, such as NDI, UNDP, OSCE, etc.

APRIL

Women MPs change the name of the group, from “Women Informal Group” to Women Caucus.

On Wednesday, 06 April 2011, a meeting of the Women’s Caucus of Assembly of Kosovo was held in the facilities of the Assembly of Kosovo, chaired by Flora Brovina. In the beginning of this meeting woman MPs jointly agree and decided to change the name of the group by excluding the word “informal”, and named it Women Caucus (Grupi I Grave Deputete-GDD). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss about the latest developments in Kosovo’s political scene with great interest. Therefore, the following statement was issued after the event:



STATEMENT

“Women members of the Assembly of Kosovo are following the latest developments in Kosovo’s political scene with great interest.

We conclude that these developments are characterized by political stalemate and degradation of the basic principles which we’re called to preserve.

The recent problems are caused because party interests, or, even worse personal interests, were placed before national interests. Therefore, we, as representatives of our people, call upon the heads of these political parties to overcome party differences and show a high level of state-forming awareness.

Crises of any nature are not in the interest of Kosovo or its citizens. It is time to prove political maturity and, above all, to work in fulfilling the democratic aspirations, which we were entrusted with.

Women members of the Assembly of Kosovo would also like to raise their concern with arrests and persecution of a former KLA soldiers, as such persecutions are politically motivated and aimed at discrediting the values of our liberation war.

These soldiers fought to protect our doorsteps, children and families from the Serbian occupation forces, the violence exercised by which left 15 thousand murdered, thousands missing and hundreds of thousands houses destroyed. KLA war was righteous, and its righteousness is the reason why NATO undertook military action. Therefore, we call upon EULEX to work in punishing real war criminals, which caused tens of thousands of victims in Kosovo”, said the statement issued by Women’s Caucus of the Assembly of Kosovo.

MAY

Women Caucus organized a round table on “Political party democratization strategy”

On May 24, Women Caucus in cooperation with the National Democratic Institute (NDI), organized a common roundtable on the topic: “Political party democratization strategy”, which represents a key issue for the Women Caucus. The roundtable was opened by NDI director, Laura Nichols, who said that this venue represents an opportunity to review best practices of various countries around



the world on political party democratization, always taking into consideration interests of the Kosovo women MPs. The floor was then taken by NDI Women Program Director in Washington, Ms. Susan Markham, who emphasized that for 25 years NDI has had wide engagements in retaining the trust of public in political parties. However, this can't be achieved without due internal democratization of the parties, which will further spark the inclusion of voters in party activities. One of the most significant factors impacting party democratization are their statutes, respectively, the application of internal rules and regulations. An important element for wider inclusion of women in partisan life is democratic election of members, she stressed, with emphasis on transparency pertaining to the election of partisan leadership.

During the debate, Teuta Sahatqija, Alma Lama and Emilia Rexhepi spoke on the issue of gender representation, addressing the 30 percent quota of women representation in the Assembly. It was mentioned that this quota is ever more being considered a great reward and privilege, therefore, it may become subject of constitutional amendments. The table concluded that a greater engagement of women is required to maintain and implement the 30 percent quota in party structures too. Along these lines, women need to engage and vest their efforts and capacities in strengthening further the position of women in institutions and social developments.

From the parliamentary session

Women Caucus member Alma Lama reacts against domestic violence and the murder of Diana Kastrati

Transcript

Friday, 27 May 2012

President: Thank You. Member Alma Lama.

Alma Lama: Thank You!

Honorable President,

Honored fellow members,

A severe crime happened some days ago in the center of Kosovo's capital, in broad day light and viewed by many passers-by. Diana Kastrati, 27-year old mother of a child, was shot by her former husband. The entire society was shocked by this ugly murder, while all mothers, wives and sisters remain angry with the apathy of rule of law bodies in arresting the perpetrator.

Diana's murder was no individual crime, it was a crime committed by a killer husband and an irresponsive court, which did not undertake preemptive measures on time. This makes this tragedy even more painful. The lack of care by justice bodies, which failed to prevent this crime, is unforgivable. Municipal Court of Prishtina failed to positively respond to Diana's request for the protection necessary to save her life. The rejection was so evident that there can be no other qualification but lack of accountability and professionalism, accompanied by lack of human sensitivity. What would be more important for the work of a policeman, prosecutor or judge than the protection of human life? Nothing!

Today, while we are speaking here, hundreds or thousands of women are reported with the police, in which women are victims of domestic violence. However, there are also hundreds of other women that are victims of psychological and physical violence and which hesitate to address their concerns with the institutions – because of their lack of trust in them. And, Diana's case is merely confirming their doubts on the effectiveness of law enforcement agencies. Diana's murder will discourage tens or hundreds of other women which need protection from the state.

Today, there are tens of women in Kosovo that wish for no more than a shelter and escape from the violent hell they live in. Today, there are hundreds of children in Kosovo raised in environments that can guarantee merely one future for them – one that resembles their parents'.

Today, in Kosovo women are not even guaranteed the bare minimum – their lives. It would be ironic to speak today of their discrimination in the society, institutions, decision-making, economy, etc.

The unfortunate case of Diana should serve us all to be more cautious on domestic violence, but, above all, it should serve the law enforcement agencies as an eye-opener for decisions that weigh as heavy as people's lives.

Vetevendosje Movement asks of the Ministry of Justice and other institutions that appoint and monitor the work of judges and prosecutors to be more responsible and to appoint respective candidates not based on political affiliations and empty rhetoric, but to seriously engage in developing an independent and highly professional judiciary. On the contrary, Diana's case will reappear and many other ugly crimes will occur as long as criminals do not feel fear of punishment.

Thank You!

Women Caucus elects the Chairwoman of the Women Caucus Board

Friday, 27 May 2011

Women members of the Assembly of Kosovo (40 members from all politic entities), elected today the Board of the Women Caucus and its Chairwoman, as part of their efforts to functionalize this entity.

They initially elected a six-member Board, and then the Chairwoman of the Board.

The results of a secret ballot showed that Ms. Teuta Sahatqija gained the trust of most women members of parliament and was elected Board Chairwoman.

The newly elected Chairwoman thanked the previous leader of the caucus, Ms. Flora Brovina, for her hard work and efforts to date and expressed her commitment to closely cooperate with all women parliamentarians.



JUNE

Women Caucus proposes amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of Republic of Kosovo

Tuesday, 7.06 2011

Women Caucus analyzed the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of Republic of Kosovo, and after a common work of all women parliamentarians, a number of amendments to the Rules of Procedure were proposed, in order to further functionalize and democratize the work of the Assembly (by MP Alma Lama).

The following amendments were supported and signed by 61 members from various groups and nationalities.



Republika e Kosovës
 Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo
 Kuvendi - Skupština – Assembly
 Grupi i Grave Deputete



TO: The Committee for Mandates, Immunities and Rules of Procedure
Chairman Mr. Armend Zemaj
From: Women Caucus
Subject: Proposals for amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of Kosovo
Date: 31 01 2011

Dear Chairman,

Please find attached proposals for amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly of Kosovo, drafted by the Women Caucus.

Amendments aim to ensure respect of the gender aspect in both language used and gender representation in Assembly bodies, while ensuring adherence to the Law on Gender Equality adopted by this Assembly.

We trust that these amendments will support further democratization of work in the Assembly, and will stimulate further democratization of political parties and the society in general.

Trusting we will have your understanding,

Respectfully,

Teuta Sahatqija

Chairwoman of Women Caucus

Assembly of Kosovo

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Article 1 (remark: a 3rd item should be added to the article)

3. *These Rules of Procedure shall respect gender representation in all decision-making bodies of the Assembly and in parliamentary delegations.*

Deputy-President(s) of the Assembly

Article 7; (16) remark: add a sentence in the second item and add a new fourth item)

The following should be added to item 2:

The party/coalition which proposed the President of the Assembly shall propose a member of the different gender for the post of Deputy-President.

An item 4 should be added, to state the following:

4. *The President of the Assembly shall request from the Women's Caucus to propose a candidate for Deputy President of the Assembly, to represent the Women's Caucus on rotation basis.*

Article 14 (17) should be amended to state:

The Presidency of the Assembly comprises its President and six (6) Deputy-Presidents.

Establishment of parliamentary groups

A sentence should be added to Article 19 (23)

1. **Members may establish parliamentary groups based on their partisan belonging or political orientation**, and based on special interests, such as Women's Caucus, Youth Caucus, etc.

In item 2 the following should be added:

2. *Members may form parliamentary groups on the basis of special interests, such as Women's Caucus, Youth Caucus, etc.*

In item 3, the word 'political' should be added

3. At least six members are required to establish a parliamentary group. Members may be part of only one political parliamentary group.

Chairing parliamentary groups/provision of working conditions for parliamentary groups

Article 20 (24) remark: retain item one of this paragraph

1. Each parliamentary group shall elect its chair and deputy chair in its first convocation. These two posts shall be held by members of different genders.
2. Political parliamentary groups and the Women's Caucus should be provided with working environments, staff, budget and equipment necessary for their functioning.

Article 23 (28) Composition of Assembly Committees

Remark: the following should be added to item 3:

3. The composition of parliamentary committees shall reflect the political power of parliamentary groups, and, to the extent possible, gender equality.

A fourth item should be added

4. *Chairs and deputy chairs of committees shall not belong to the same gender.*

Item 4 becomes 5 and item 5 becomes 6.

Article 24 (30) (remark: a second item should be added to this Article)

Chairs and deputy-chairs of Assembly Committees

1. Parliamentary groups propose chairs, deputy-chairs and members of committees in line with the agreements reached in the President's Conference. The agreement on appointment of committee chairs shall take into consideration the number of members of each parliamentary group.
2. Chairs and deputy-chairs of the committees shall not belong to the same gender.
3. All committees shall have at least two deputies (first deputy-chair and second deputy-chair) that belong to different parliamentary groups. At least one of the deputy-chairs shall belong to a community different from that of the chair.

Meeting of the Women Caucus Board with the RTK Board

Thursday, 09 June 2011

The Women Caucus held a meeting with the Board of the public broadcaster, Radio-Television of Kosovo, as part of its activities aimed at strengthening the role of women in politics and society. At the meeting, discussions focused on improvements of women representation in the public medium. "Currently, the representation is poor and there is gender-based discrimination", said the Chairwoman of the Women Caucus Board, Teuta Sa-



hatqija, asking for equal access for both genders. Donika Kadaj-Bujupi, member of the Board, said that the public broadcaster should be more cautious in its news and television debates, and should invite women to provide their stances regarding ongoing processes in the country. Member Alma Lama emphasized the extraordinary role that media play in social development and said, in regard to the public broadcaster, that it should promote all values, and that women should hold an important place in all spheres of life.

Rrahman Pacarizi, Director of the RTK Board expressed his readiness for cooperation and promised RTK would take immediate measures to improve the presentation of women's efforts in media, and to reject all stereotypes currently prevailing in the Kosovar society. He asked the Women's Caucus' supra-partisan format, for support to RTK both in completing the legal framework and in preserving its editorial independence, as a substantial prerequisite for the work of its journalists.

President of the Assembly received the Women Caucus Board

Tuesday, 14 June 2011

President of the Assembly of Kosovo, Dr. Jakup Krasniqi, held a meeting today with the Women Caucus Board, headed by the Board Chairwoman, Teuta Sahatqija. The meeting was held as part of Women Caucus' activities for strengthening the role of women in politics and society. Teuta Sahatqija said that the new Board has some ambitious plans for enhancing the role of the Parliament in democratization. "During our work, we will remain a group of dedicated women parliamentarians that are ready to work in strengthening the role of women and to exceed their party boundaries, but we will also continue to work with all our fellow parliamentarians in performing all other tasks awaiting us" said Sahatqija. During the conversation, Board members noted the good work done in two previous terms and underlined that the Women Caucus should be further empowered. Attention was also focused on the engagements in implementing a number of amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly, in the spirit of gender sensitivity, and adequate representation of women members in Assembly bodies, including its Presidency, committees and parliamentary groups. Women parliamentarians asked for the President's support in implementing these plans, claiming also that he supported women parliamentarians' activities to date. It was for this reason that the Women Caucus Board invited the President of the Assembly to become the first honorable member of the Women Caucus.



The President of the Assembly promised to support activities organized by this group of women parliamentarians that exceeds any political and partisan boundaries, committing to look into the possibilities for supporting women in all their engagements. To this end, he promised support in providing them with adequate working facilities and, possibly, material support. "Your contribution is very valuable, especially in providing ideas for the upcoming electoral reform process, currently conducted by the Committee for the Amendment of the Law on General Elections in Kosovo. To this end, you should remain committed to retaining the 30 percent quota for women representation in the Assembly," said the Assembly President Krasniqi. It was unanimously concluded that the rights attained to date should be advance and not reduced.

Women Caucus received representatives of the German Bundestag

Friday, 24 June 2011

Women Caucus of the Assembly of Kosovo, lead by its Chairwoman Teuta Sahatqija and members Alma Lama and Donika Kadaj-Bujupi, received today a group of German Bundestag representatives.

Bidding them welcome, Ms. Sahatqija initially informed the guests of the engagements of women parliamentarians of the Assembly of Kosovo, their initiatives in affirming women rights and challenges faced in reaching their objectives.



In this regard, the Women Caucus Chairwoman, Ms. Sahatqija, informed the delegation that Assembly of Kosovo comprises 120 members, of which forty are women. She further clarified how according to the currently applicable Law on Elections, the quota of 30 percent women representation is guaranteed. However, Ms. Sahatqija added, Kosovo is developing a new legal infrastructure regulating elections, therefore, our group should remain committed to retaining and further enhancing the representation quota. In relation to this, she informed the guests on the establishment of two ad hoc parliamentary committees for the amendment of the Law on elections and the Constitution. "Women are represented in both committees, as electoral and constitutional reforms play a key role in determining the role and participation of women in decision-making," said Sahatqija.

Further, member Donika Kadaj-Bujupi focused on Kosovo's objectives. "Our objective, the objective of men and women in Kosovo, is membership in the greater EU family" she said. She also expressed her gratitude for the interest and support Germany vested in Kosovo in all processes to date.

The other member of the Women Caucus, Alma Lama, stated that the severe economic situation in Kosovo is generating numerous problems, referring to her previous experience as a journalist. Regretfully, said Lama, due to the difficult economic situation in the country, there are also occurrences of domestic violence. Further, she added that in such events, women bear the heaviest consequences. Ms. Lama also thanked Germany for, as she put it: "A realist attitude to a Balkans reality."

On the other hand, Inge Hoger, speaking on behalf of the German delegation, thanked their hosts for the warm welcome and spoke on the purpose of the visit. "We wanted to know how women in Kosovo are organized and how are they coping with their parliamentary duties," said Ms. Hoger. "In the German Bundestag there is no Women's Caucus; and women are represented through their parties," she added. The Bundestag representatives agreed with the conclusion that economic difficulties generate various problems, and added that currently they represent the greatest problem for Balkans. Further, Ms. Hoger encouraged women parliamentarians to persistently pursue the creation of better living conditions for Kosovo women. "You have done a great job, and you should continue to advance your rights and role in decision-making", said the Bundestag representative, Ms. Hoger.

Women Caucus visits SOS – children villages



Monday, 27 June 2011

In an effort to raise the awareness of our society on the protection and support for children without parent care, during the week of SOS villages, Women Caucus visited such villages to see how abandoned children and children without parent care are supported in Kosovo.

During the visit, members of the Assembly of Republic of Kosovo had the chance to hear more about this social category, and focused on the legal infrastructure aspect. Nezahat Salihu, National Director of Kosovo SOS children villages said in her opening remarks “these children are not only of SOS – they are children of all Kosovo”, while asking the visitors to become the SOS’ voice in the Parliament.

The presentation touched also upon a number of applicable provisions that regulate numerous aspects of child care.

One of the laws that require amendment and supplementation is the Law on Corporate Income, which does not encourage companies to donate for humanitarian purposes, through various fiscal alleviations.

Also, other laws that are deemed very important for this field include the Law on Volunteering and Law on Sponsorship.

Teuta Sahatqiu, Chairwoman of the Women Caucus, said in her address to SOS employees: “your work is not easy, and should be supported by the country’s institutions; we as members of parliament should work more to resolve problems you currently face in dealing with abandoned children”.

SOS children villages commenced the traditional week of awareness and fund-raising, between 23 and 29 June 2011, under the motto “A little from you means a lot to me.”

SOS children village in Kosovo is operating since 1999. To date, supported by four projects, around 1000 children that were abandoned or risked abandonment were taken care of at SOS children villages.

Women Caucus visit Brussels

Doris PACK supports gender quota and open lists:

25 June 2011

During their visit in Brussels, representatives of the Women Caucus held a meeting with Ms. Doris Pack, member of the European Parliament. The meeting served to discuss on the work of the Assembly of Kosovo, with special emphasis on the Women Caucus' engagement in gender representation.

The meeting was attended by Ms. Teuta Sahatqija, Chairwoman of the Women Caucus Board, and Alma Lama, Donika Kadaj, Vjosa Osmani and other members of the delegation.

Topics of discussion included the amendment of the electoral law, currently addressed by an Assembly Committee. After being informed on the problems faced by the drafters, Ms. Pack expressed her full support to the preservation and respect of the gender quota and open lists, which provide for a wider scale of democracy and enable voters to vote for the individuals they trust.

During its visit in Brussels, Women Caucus raised the same issues with other senior officials of the European Union, including Mr. Lawrence Meredith, Mr. Ruud VAN ENK, Ms. Jana Sindekova, Ms. Anna-Maria- Eleni Boura, and Mr. Jonas Jonsson, in order to solicit support for its cause

JULY

Women Caucus meets European Experts

July, 06 2011

The Women Caucus Board, headed by its Chairwoman Teuta Sahatqija, held a meeting today with experts from the European Commission, ICO and OSCE to discuss on the electoral reform, from the perspective of women participation in election and their representation in the



country's institutions. Initially European Commission experts Nikolai Vulchanov and Karin Marmsoler spoke on different electoral practices in other countries, also referring to international covenants on elections and gender equality. They presented a number of alternatives pertaining to the application of open and closed lists and gender representation quotas in the Assembly.

In the comprehensive debate that followed, Chairwoman and members of the Women's Caucus Board underlined their resolve to support women activities for improving the position of Kosovar women and to ensure their proper representation in the Assembly and other state institutions. Discussants supported open lists and retention of 30 percent quotas, and requested a wider support to women in elections, in order for them to ensure parliamentary seats through direct ballots. The results achieved to date make Kosovo the leader of our region, but their achievement required a lot of effort. Nevertheless, they had remarks on the scope of action offered to women in all processes leading to elections, including the electoral campaign, media, etc. in which men, especially party leaders, are always prevalent. It was stressed that the problem of the electoral process in Kosovo is not quotas, but rather the manner in which elections are held. In the spirit of the above, discussants asked for better supervision of the electoral process by relevant institutions, in order to avoid irregularities and electoral manipulations. In this aspect, the problem is not the application of open lists or gender quotas, but the compliance of electoral processes with the applicable legal provisions, respectively the immunity of those perpetrating irregularities.

Meeting of the Women Caucus with President Atifete Jahjaga**07 July 2011**

The Women Caucus Board, met with the President Ms. Atifete Jahjaga. Women Caucus Chairwoman, Ms. Teuta Sahatqija informed the President on the work and engagement of Women's Caucus in the Assembly of Kosovo, the Women Caucus activities in strengthening the role of women through the application of local and international instrument, such as CEDAW, Law on Gender Equality, etc. and on the need for treating other laws from the gender perspective. Parliamentarians expressed the need for better implementation of the Law on Gender Equality from aspects other than quantitative, insisting to place women in senior decision-making posts. The President congratulated parliamentarians for the good work and ensured them that she will work towards the country's democratization and will not sign or decree documents or positions that do not favor gender equality.

Women Caucus lobbying for the gender quota

The letter of the Women Caucus addressed to Quint Ambassadors in Kosovo

The Women Caucus Chairwoman, Ms. Teuta Sahatqija, sent the following letter to Quint Ambassadors in Kosovo.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo
Kuvendi - Skupština – Assembly
Grupi i Grave Deputete

Honorable Ambassador

Date: 06.07.2011

I am writing on behalf of the Parliamentary Women's Caucus and am pleased to invite you for a meeting with the Quint Ambassadors any time during the week of 18 July 2011.

The reason for this meeting is to discuss our concerns related to the ongoing constitutional and electoral reform, in particular, the tendency to close the lists and to remove the legislative gender quota.

As you are aware, open lists have enhanced democracy in Kosovo and have given the voters the opportunity to have a direct impact in the democratization of the parties, and the gender quota has had an important influence in the empowerment of women in decision making. Thus, it is our strong belief that any decision to the contrary would undermine Kosovo's state-building and democracy-building process. Kosovo has been internationally recognized as one of the best examples globally with respect to its gender quota, and we have shown the positive impact of this example with the election of our President, as the first woman President in the region.

Looking forward to meet you soon in person to discuss these issues, please accept, Mr. Ambassador, the assurances of my highest esteem and consideration.

Teuta Sahatqija
Women Caucus President

Women Caucus organized a policy roundtable on Electoral Reform



On July 15, The Women Caucus in cooperation with NDI, held a roundtable on Electoral Law reform, attended by the Chairs of committees for electoral reform and constitutional reform, Haki Demolli and Arsim Bajrami, as well as other members of assembly, representatives of political parties, women forums, civil society and international organizations in Kosovo and experts. The roundtable was chaired by Alma Lama, while the opening remarks were presented by Teuta Sahatqija, Chairwoman of the Women's Caucus Board. Ms. Sahatqija emphasized that Women's Caucus remains engaged in empowering women in politics and other segments of institutional and social life while overcoming party interests, aware that women face similar problems. Strengthening democracy, she said, is not possible without the participation of women in all social processes, including decision-making. Although notable results were accomplished to date, women should not be satisfied with their representation in decision-making and governance, Ms. Sahatqija said, illustrating this with relevant data. Flora Brovina provided a comprehensive overview of women parliamentary activities, stressing that the quota should come as a facilitative measure, but women should be provided with sufficient space in all relevant activities, in order for them to fight the electoral battle and be elected based on directly obtained votes.

Haki Demolli gave a wide overview of activities carried out by the Committee on the Amendment of the Law on General Elections in Republic of Kosovo, emphasizing that it's the mandate of this committee to conclude the amendment of the Law on Elections within 12 months. This committee, he added, has established a working group, in which members are focused on three directions: identification of electoral problems, organization of debates and timely drafting and procession of the Law to the Assembly.

Speaking on the work of the Committee for the Amendment of the Constitution of Republic of Kosovo, its Chairman Arsim Bajrami explained that the dismissal of two presidents due to constitutional violations mandated the direct election of the

president by citizen votes. This will support the President in representing national unity and ensure legitimacy of his/her election, neutrality and stability, as the Prime Minister and President would be elected separately and in different manners. For the first time, Bajrami said, Kosovo will have a law regulating direct election of the president.

Member Donika Kadaj spoke on the Women's Caucus activities, especially focusing on the meetings that this group had with various local and European representatives, while NDI Country Director Laura Nichols said that her organization would continue to support many aspects of Women's Caucus' activities and provide comparative analyses on the topic at hand. In the debate, it was said that the Women's Caucus and all women associations should increase their engagements in further improving the position of women in governance and decision-making. And although the 30 percent quota is seen as an irreplaceable solution, new proposals could be made while taking into consideration the effects they will produce.

Key final conclusions of the roundtable were to respect the quota and open lists. Further significant conclusions included voting for more than one candidate and strengthening the functionality of the judiciary, which would guarantee respect of the law on elections, law on gender equality (by ensuring 40% representation in all institutions), improvements in the technical aspect and enhancement of transparency, as well as on gender budgeting, which is essential for implementing laws from a gender equality viewpoint.

Another urgent need addressed in the event was internal democratization of political parties, which is key to further development of democracy.

Women Caucus Board meets the EU Rapporteur for Kosovo, Ms. Ulrike Lunacek

Tuesday, 19 July 2011

Teuta Sahatqija, Chairwoman of the Women Caucus, accompanied by its members Flora Brovina and Donika Kadaj-Bujupi, met today with Ms. Ulrike Lunacek, EU Rapporteur on Kosovo, to discuss on Women Caucus' activities and the work of women in Parliament, political parties, and in Kosovo institutions and society in general.

Special emphasis was placed on the initiation of the electoral reform and the engagement of women in the reform process. In this meeting, concerns were voiced over the preservation of gender quotas in the new electoral system with electoral zones.



They expressed their trust in the fact that strengthening the position of women in institutions and in the society in general supports the democratization of the society, as the presence of women increases seriousness and diminishes chances for corruption and abuse.

Ms. Lunacek said that women should hold positions in institutions and to play an important role in the processes Kosovo is going through, and that the empowerment of women represents one of EC's priority objectives.

*Letter to secretary Clinton***20 July 2011**

With the aim of raising sensitivity of international authorities regarding the potential of women in Kosovo and contributing to further democratization of the country, which would be ensured by organizing proper elections and providing the women the role they deserve, the Chairwoman of the Women Caucus, Ms. Teuta Sahatqija, addressed letters to women that play a significant role in international politics. The letter below was sent to US Secretary of State, Ms. Hillary Clinton, former Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, Ms. Melanne Verveer and the first lady of United States of America:



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo
Kuvendi - Skupština – Assembly
Grupi i Grave Deputete

Honorable Secretary Clinton:

It is an honor to write to you on behalf of 40 Women MP's of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo and of over 50 percent of the Kosovo population consisting of women.

The Republic of Kosovo is going through very crucial times and is now working on constitutional and electoral reforms. The past few elections, despite many challenges, were successful and productive in one regard: women empowerment. The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo applies a 30 percent quota for women representation. An example of how this quota has influenced the empowerment of women in politics and other representative positions is the fact that only compared to the last mandate, the number of women who got in as MP's without the quote increased for 50 percent. In addition, it was thanks to the votes of women in Parliament (despite political party affiliation), that the institutional crisis of electing a President was overcome, and as a result, Kosovo is now represented by the first woman President, Mrs. Atifete Jahjaga, who is the first woman President in the region.

We understand and are inspired by Obama Administration's increased interest and elevated importance for Global Women's issues, and in particular, Your personal role in empowering women and girls across the globe. It is precisely the same principles that we are guided by in our important, but challenging goal of representing women and providing concrete support to women's rights and their political, social

and economical advancement. The Kosovo society and institutions still have a long way to go with respect to women's rights, and an attestation to that is the fact that only 2% of women in our country can exercise their property rights.

It is for that reason, that we are asking for Your support, in keeping the 30 percent quota representation for women in the Kosovo Assembly. The Women Parliamentary Caucus is highly dedicated to being a strong and efficient voice for all the women of Kosovo, regardless of their ethnic community or social status. While the electoral reform in Kosovo is ongoing, we are concerned about the tendency to remove the 30% women quota and apply closed lists for parliamentary elections. Both these actions would undermine democracy and would allow political parties, rather than the people, to be the only decision-making power in choosing the next representatives of the people of Kosovo.

The United States of America has supported Kosovo in each and every step of its state and democracy building process. We count on Your support for this important objective which touches upon the life of each and every woman in Kosovo.

Sincerely,
Teuta Sahatqija
Chairwoman of the Kosovo Assembly Women Caucus

Reaction of Women Caucus Board member, Flora Brovina, on gender discrimination in naming streets, institutions, etc.

Transcript from the plenary session.

Thursday, 21 .07. 2011

PRESIDENT: Thank You!

Member Flora Brovina has the floor.

Flora Brovina: I speak on behalf of the Women Caucus.

Allow me, Mr. President, honored colleagues, to elaborate on a topic that was current ever since the end of the war. Although some other matters may represent the topic of the day, we should not negate the existence of the Law on Gender Equality, when naming schools and streets, now when councils are being established to name new streets and schools that will be commissioned for the first time this September. Based on a study published some days ago, the contribution of women in education, health and the freedom and independence of Kosovo is not being acknowledged in the naming of streets and cultural and educational institutions. Of 576 primary schools in Kosovo, only 10, or 0.2% hold names of distinguished women. The situation among secondary schools is slightly better, as 15 or 17% of the names belong to women. No better is the situation with the naming of streets; for instance, our capital has 477 streets and only 16 (3%) hold names of women, in Ferizaj it's 8%, in Prizren 4%, in Gjilan 6%, in Mitrovica 7%, in Gjakova 5% (where even the streets named after women are renamed in men names). The data speak of themselves, namely the contribution of women and their sacrifice in all spheres of life is not acknowledged. In order to contribute to the work of the teams working in naming schools and streets, I will mention merely few distinguished women: Shote Galica, Xheve Lladrovci, Hyre Emini, Katarina Josipi, Qirijazi sisters, Marie Shllaku, Ganimet Tërbeshi, Zahide Jashari, Rukie Beqiri, Fatime Krasniqi, Ylfete Humolli, Shukrie Obërtinca, Sadete Mekuli, Mother Ajshe Gërvalla, Bije Vokshi, Hyrie Hana, women from Baliq in Ferizaj, Bread March or the March of Women for Drenica, Member Gjini from Mitrovica, or women that were active in blood-feud reconciliation, like Myrvete Maksutaj, Edit Durham, Madeleine Albright, Elena Gjika, Misine Kokollari, Marie Kraja, Natasa Kandic, Sonja Biserko, Women in Black from Belgrade, who raised their voice against the closure of schools in Kosovo, Doris Pack, Kristin Folcon, Eva Bentley, Melihate Ajeti, Xhanfise Keko and certainly women of Qirez, girls of Qirez that sacrificed themselves, Yllka Domi and many others. We will forward these names to the municipalities!

Women Caucus meets Quint Ambassadors

Friday, 22 July 2011

Kosovo Assembly Women Caucus held a meeting with the Quint Ambassadors accredited in Prishtina. The purpose of this meeting was to inform the ambassadors on the engagement of Women's Caucus in the amendment of the electoral law. The Caucus' Chairwoman, Teuta Sahatqija, informed the ambassadors on the work of the caucus after its constitution and expressed



its stand on supporting open lists and gender representation quota, as two elements that support democracy in transition countries like Kosovo. Member Flora Brovina said that countries of the region are using the Kosovo electoral law, which regulates open lists and a sole electoral zone, as a good example of democratization. Further, Alma Lama said that the problem is not the law per se, but rather its implementation. The justice system should be strengthened in order to sanction perpetrators of electoral violations, similar to those occurring on 12 December elections. Member Donika Kadaj-Bujupi cautioned about the empowerment and further stimulation of autocracy of political leaders, if the closed list model was chosen.

Quint ambassadors, namely the US Ambassador Christopher Dell, French Ambassador Jean Francois Fitou, UK Ambassador Ian Cliff, and Italian Ambassador Michael Giffoni, gave full support to the Women Caucus and their stands regarding the electoral law and other fields of engagement.

Secretary Clinton responds to the Women's Caucus letter through Ambassador Reeker

Dear Ms. Sahatqija,

Thank you for your recent letter seeking Secretary Clinton's support in ensuring that the ongoing electoral reforms in Kosovo do not diminish women's representation in the Assembly of Kosovo. The Secretary asked me to respond and reassure you that women's empowerment – political, social and economic – is a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy, a point she underscored when she met with women leaders last October in Prishtina. Women in Kosovo are making great strides, perhaps best exemplified by the April election of



President Atifete Jahjaga, which has given hope and inspiration to women and girls throughout the region. The goal must be a fair and transparent electoral system, but also one that ensures women a prominent place in the Kosovo Assembly and in legislative deliberations – deliberations that play a critical role in building an open, multi-ethnic democracy, laying the foundation for private sector-led economic growth, and ensuring Kosovo’s government and society are firmly grounded in the rule of law.

As you know, our Embassy in Prishtina has worked closely and directly with the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus on the much-needed electoral reforms and we will continue to support your hard work, particularly on the issues of gender quota and open lists. Your group, because of its demonstrated ability to work across partisan lines, is its own best advocate, so we encourage you to do your utmost to seize every opportunity to advance your cause. We will continue, through USAID-funded programs, to provide direct assistance to the Women’s Parliamentary Caucus, both in your work in the ongoing electoral reform process, and as the Caucus addresses other issues important to women and society.

Your efforts to create space in the Assembly for all voices – the voices of women, of youth, of minorities, for new ideas and for new solutions – are very important to Kosovo. We look forward to continuing to work with you as you build a better future for the women of Kosovo.

Yours Sincerely,
Philip t. Reeker
Ambassador
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for South Central Europe



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

August 23, 2011

Teuta Sahatqija, Chair
Women's Parliamentary Caucus
Assembly of Kosovo
Pristina
Republic of Kosovo

Dear Ms. Sahatqija:

Thank you for your recent letter seeking Secretary Clinton's support in ensuring that the ongoing electoral reforms in Kosovo do not diminish women's representation in the Assembly of Kosovo. The Secretary asked me to respond and reassure you that women's empowerment – political, social, and economic – is a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy, a point she underscored when she met with women leaders last October in Pristina.

Women in Kosovo are making great strides, perhaps best exemplified by the April election of President Atifete Jahjaga, which has given hope and inspiration to women and girls throughout the region. We believe the electoral reform process offers a chance to further expand women's political empowerment. The goal must be a fair and transparent electoral system, but also one that ensures women a prominent place in the Kosovo Assembly and in legislative deliberations – deliberations that play a critical role in building an open, multi-ethnic democracy, laying the foundation for private sector-led economic growth, and ensuring Kosovo's government and society are firmly grounded in the rule of law.

As you know, our Embassy in Pristina has worked closely and directly with the Women's Parliamentary Caucus on the much-needed electoral reforms, and we will continue to support your hard work, particularly on the issues of gender quota and open lists. Your group, because of its demonstrated ability to work across partisan lines, is its own best advocate, so we encourage you to do your utmost to seize every opportunity to advance your cause. We will continue, through USAID-funded programs, to provide direct assistance to the Women's Parliamentary Caucus, both in your work in the ongoing electoral reform process, and as the Caucus addresses other issues important to women and society.

Your efforts to create space in the Assembly for all voices – the voices of women, of youth, of minorities, for new ideas, and for new solutions – are very important to Kosovo. We look forward to continuing to work with you as you build a better future for the women of Kosovo.

Yours sincerely,

Philip T. Reeker
Ambassador
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for South Central Europe

AUGUST

Reaction of women parliamentarians on headscarves

Plenary session; Draft-Law on Pre-University Education in Republic of Kosovo

Members react and vote against amendments 7 and 8, which requested the application of religious classes and allowance of headscarves in schools.



***Material from the transcript of 21 August 2011**

TEUTA SAHATQIJA: Mr. Chairman, this amendment says: “Public and private educational institutions shall refrain from any type of religious or ethnic discrimination and spreading ethnic or religious hate.” Articles 21 and 22 of our Constitution speak explicitly on the general principles, rights and fundamental freedoms, and protect such rights and interests. If the amendment says that any sort of discrimination should be prevented, this brings the impression that there is inter-religious or ethnic discrimination currently. On the contrary, I think that among our people, and this might be unique globally, inter-ethnic tolerance could be deemed exemplary. Thus, we trust that this article does not serve the fight against discrimination, but rather stipulates that there is discrimination which has to be fought by this law, as if the Constitution is insufficient for this purpose. This issue is regulated by our Constitution and the Constitution stands above all laws, therefore, I think that there is no need for such additional regulation.

TEUTA SAHATQIJA: Thank You, Chairman!

I believe that monkey origins and communism should not be part of the debate waged here. We speak here of a very important topic. If it were communism, this issue would not be put up for debate in the Assembly at all. Further, the fact that debate that has no consensus among confessions was opened shows that there was a need for such an early elaboration – and all works conducted at an earlier stage yield in positive results. This debate may be premature but there is no confessional consensus on the matter, as we were also witnesses of the reaction by the Catholic Church and others. Thus, we feel that as a society we need more time to develop and we could discuss on this matter at later stages. This is a premature debate and this amendment should not be brought to the Assembly at all.

Chairman: Thank You!

TEUTA SAHATQIJA: In the 60s there was less suicides, etc. In the 60s there was no religious education as far as I know. Therefore, we can not justify the introduction

of religious classes with the number of suicides. If religious classes make us better and not hypocrites there are possibilities and curricula that provide for such education, which should receive much more attention. That's better than regulating social morals by law. Again, going back to the rationale for my response...there is a severe lack of consensus. Before we present this as an amendment there should be consent between confessions. There is no such consensus, therefore, I once again reiterate, it is early to present this, it's premature.

Chairman: Yes, please...

FLORA BROVINA: Thank You!

I do agree with you when you say that the debate has degenerated and is waged in a manner unbecoming of this Parliament. The Assembly of Kosovo is certainly not the interpreting authority for the Constitution of Kosovo, but it should defend the Constitution of Kosovo. And, we should be very vocal in protecting it. The Constitution says that Kosovo is a secular state, in which religious freedoms and non-discrimination are guaranteed to all, even legally. No one has ever tried to intervene in hindering such a freedom, but this amendment of the Law on Pre-University Education violates the Constitution of Kosovo, which, as I said, is secular state. Certainly this law will also violate women's rights. It was said here the prostitution developed in the democratic regime. I can not agree with this saying of the expert that knows psychology. Prostitution can develop in other circumstances too, even under veils and headscarves – and I know this as a professional of this sphere.

I will go no further in this debate, because I do not want to further degenerate this debate, but, let's not divide issues pertaining to morals, religion and education in our society. I believe that we should be able to protect all of them. I do agree with Kosovo intellectuals that state that women should be empowered and that their institutional presence should be strengthened, and they should be better education, and not allowed for the coverage of faces and hair in schools. If they wish to receive religious education, we do have religious schools. Furthermore, this amendment, as one of the other confessions stated, will bring division and there is no common stand on the introduction of religious education in pre-university education or allow for certain wear for women. Thank You!

Donika Kadaj - Bujupi: Honored Chairman,

I would not have taken the floor, as this amendment was brought to the Assembly by a group that does not represent even one percent of Kosovo's population. On the contrary, the Minister says that he represents 90% of Kosovo's believers.

You have mixed your calculations! You do not represent the majority of Kosovo citizens in this Assembly and you have no right to manipulate such wording. You should at least be correct in what you claim. Everyone knows that headscarves and black flags in the center of Prishtina, which you promote, represent no will of the citizens of Kosovo. Even our grandmothers fought against what you wish to install in Kosovo, which would be very harmful to our nation. We know that Albanians are one people and that their religion is Albanianhood. Today, I would like to ask all Members of the Assembly not to harm further state and national interests of Kosovo. Kosovo has long ago decided on its path and we all know what Kosovo's orientation stands for. We are striving towards a pro-western, pro-European system, and what you are asking is neither western, nor European or democratic. Therefore, please

stop such manipulations and, please, stop insulting this Assembly by claiming that you speak on behalf of 95% of Kosovo citizens, whereas you fail to represent even 1% of Kosovo's citizens and you hold the seat you do by sheer coincidence.

Therefore, honorable Chairman, I kindly ask you to place this issue up for voting and to take a due decision and conclude this chapter here and now, as it is really serving to the degradation of the Assembly and we are merely torturing the citizens of Republic of Kosovo with such speeches, which are neither true, correct or on their behalf. Thank You, Mr. Chairman.

SEPTEMBER

Women's Caucus drafts its Strategic Plan

9 to 11 September

The Women Caucus, supported by UNDP and UNWOMEN, and in cooperation with the Political Party Women Forums, drafted its first strategic plan. The three day finalization workshop was conducted in Prevala.

CBF funds an Advisor for the Women's Caucus

Monday, 12 September

Ms. Marta Gazideda from CBF informed the Women's Caucus Board on their decision to support the Caucus by funding an advisor that will support the latter in accomplishing the objectives deriving from item 116 of the European Partnership Action Plan, pertaining to the increase of the level of implementing the Law on Gender Equality. In meeting this objective, CBF will support the Women Caucus by funding the hire of an advisor - Sebahate Grajçevci.

Teuta Sahatqija met the Senior UNDP Gender Advisor, Ms. Jocelyne Talbot

Friday, 16 September 2011

Chairwoman of the Women Caucus, Teuta Sahatqija, met today with the Senior UNDP Gender Advisor, Ms. Jocelyne Talbot, the UN Coordination Expert, Ms. Nora Loxha Sahatciu, and PSDP Project Director from UNDP, Mr. Selim Selimi, in order to discuss on finding adequate modalities for raising the level of women inclusiveness in all sectors, as well as for increasing dynamics of the treatment of gender issues. Ms. Sahatqija underlined the significant role of UNDP and UNKT in developing Women's Caucus' capacities and addressing gender in a substantial manner. UNDP and UNKP will support the Women's Caucus in drafting a comprehensive Strategy and Action Plan on the application of gender quota, with the aim of ensuring women representation in decision-making positions.



During the meeting the role of women members of the Assembly of Kosovo in reviewing, drafting, monitoring and budgeting laws was emphasized, due to its significance for the inclusion of a gender perspective, which further advances democratic functioning of authorities in all levels.

UNDP and UNKT concluded that there is a need for better promotion of the work of women parliamentarians and voiced their support for the latter, especially in the sphere of public relations, media communication, organization of conferences, etc. These organizations will specifically focus in promoting the positive effects introduced by the application of quotas and empowerment of women, and the significance of continuing this process, which will, in turn, enhance civilized values in the Kosovar society.

Women Caucus members attending English language Course

Wednesday, October 2011

Supported by NDI, members of Women Caucus are now attending the English language course.



Members of Assembly Sahatqija and Bujupi take part in the Seminar Women in Politic, organized in Durres



Wednesday, 21 September 2011

Kosovo Assembly members, Teuta Sahatqija and Donika Kadaj-Bujupi, participated in a seminar held in Durres and organized by Kvinna Till Kvinna, on the topic: Women in Politics, decision-making and gender quota in Kosovo.

The meeting focused on discussions whether Kosovo needs gender quotas and how to increase the number of women in decision-making; on what politicians and civil society can do in this respect and on how to increase cooperation among them?

During this debate, Ms. Sahatqija said that Kosovo held a number of elections with open lists, closed lists, with quotas only on lists and quotas that were compulsory, with one, five or ten selections – and everyone knows what the effect of each of them was. It is important to decide what our requests and priorities are, whether we seek democratization and possibility to select from the available competition, or democratization of the society through adequate representation of women.

In relation to the legislative quota at the parliamentary and municipal levels, there can be no discussion on their removal, but rather discussions must focus on their advancement. “Moreover, we believe that adequate representation of women and their empowerment can be introduced by installing gender representation quotas in political party statutes,” said Sahatqija.

Assembly member Kadaj-Bujupi emphasized that international experiences prove that political classes do not usually provide women and youth with sufficient maneuvering space, therefore, affirmative policies are necessary in order to break stereotypes and provide equal inclusion opportunities, especially for women, who provide ever more qualitative inputs as leaders in politics and public life in general. The last decade in Kosovo resulted in positive changes in regard to the presence of women in parliament and government, although the process has proven to be very challenging. Also, the election of the first woman President in the region cast a positive image of Kosovo, projecting it as a democratic country that aspires European integration. Ms. Kadaj-Bujupi said that each right attained should be further advanced and not regressed.

Women Caucus meets women from Gjilan municipality

wednesday, 5 october 2011

As part of the series of meetings with municipal women representatives, Women’s Caucus met today with a group of women from Gjilan region. In this meeting, Assembly Member Donika Kadaj-Bujupi spoke on the important role that women have today in democracy building and EU integration processes. These processes are also dependent on empowering women in all levels and sectors. Ms. Kadaj-Bujupi spoke on the electoral reform; the importance for Kosovo to have trustworthy and democratic elections; the significance of applying Gender Quotas in the Law on Elections, in conformity with the Law on Gender Equality; and the inclusion of women in positions in which they will be able to affect the implementation of adequate gender policies. Gjilan region women groups voiced their concerns with the failure to implement the Law on Gender Equality and discontent with the ongoing hidden discrimination in employment in more senior positions. Recommendations of the meeting included:

- Gender representation quota in the legislative should be applied as part of the electoral reform, in conformity with the Law on Gender Equality.
- Law on Gender Equality should be amended to improve its applicability in a qualitative manner.
- The Law on Political Parties should include compulsory gender quotas to be included in their respective normative acts.

- The role of women in Municipal Assemblies should be enhanced, by strengthening the existing gender mechanisms, such as Municipal Women Caucuses and Gender Equality Offices.
- Educational policies should include gender perspectives, and investments should be made towards the increase of women's professional and intellectual capacities.

Women Caucus organized a roundtable on domestic violence

On October 19, Women Caucus organized a policy round table on Domestic violence and its prevention. This round table was chaired by Teuta Sahatqija, the chair of Women Caucus and attended by the President of Kosovo, Atifete Jahjaga, Deputy Prime-Minister and Minister of Justice, Hajredin Kuci, NDI country director for Kosovo,



Laura Nichols, Kosovo People's Advocate, Sami Kurteshi, members of assembly and representatives of numerous institutions working in women protection.

In her address to the event participants, President of Kosovo, Atifete Jahjaga, emphasized that violence against women harms and destroys entire families. Violence as such becomes an obstacle for a dignified life for women and a hindrance for social prosperity in general. Violence, she added, represents an ugly global phenomenon, the eradication of which should be fought through concrete actions. Further, there should be zero tolerance for violence against women and children. She assured the participants that they will enjoy the President's support in fighting this phenomenon. President Jahjaga expressed her commitment to the provision of a healthy environment for children in their families and schools, similar with other civilized societies.

In her opening remarks, Laura Nichols, NDI Country Director, said that domestic violence occurs around the globe; therefore, greater commitment is required for the fight against it. This fight should enjoy a high-level priority. NDI vests great interest in fighting this phenomenon, and 'when we are together and work united – we are stronger and our results are more positive,' she said. Deputy Prime-Minister and Minister of Justice said that in his initial remarks that domestic violence is of the most shameful phenomena, bearing in mind that women represent the foundation of the society. The Government of Kosovo remains committed to the protection of women and children from violence, as this represents one of its law and order priorities. It is tragic, he said, that half of the victims of violence are women and children. Speaking on the necessity to undertake preventive measures against violence, Mr. Kuci expressed his commitment to the creation of a violence-free environment. It is necessary, he added, to work more in the rehabilitation of women and children that were victims of violence. Reporting each domestic violence case represents one

of the most important factors for decreasing the occurrence of this phenomenon. However, this requires courage and adequate legal assistance. In the fight against domestic violence, the Government of Kosovo also contributes from the legislative compilation aspect. To this end, he made note of the need to shorten procedures envisaged in the Criminal Code for obtaining respective measures against violence perpetrators, and to conclude domestic violence cases in at most two court hearings.



Kosovo People's Advocate, Sami Kurteshi, spoke on the role and contribution that this institution can give in fighting the said phenomenon, which, according to him, is more spread in rural areas. In addition to physical violence, he also mentioned mental violence against women, which causes long-term psychological trauma and consequences to both victims and children.

Assembly member Albana Gashi spoke on the engagements of the Committee for Human Rights and Missing Persons in implementing Law on Domestic Violence. Discussants also focused on the concern that domestic violence reporting is not accompanied by efficient action from law enforcement agencies. One case was mentioned in which a woman was killed, after domestic violence was reported but law enforcement bodies neglected it. According to statistical data, the number of domestic violence cases has diminished; however, it is difficult to attest this information, as it is not clear whether the occurrence of domestic violence has decreased or the citizens have lost their trust in respective institutions and see no reason to report their relevant cases to the police. The idea for establishing an integrated program for reacting in cases of reported domestic violence, in order to implicate a greater number of people in respective reporting, not only victims and police, was also brought up in the discussions.

Letter of the First Lady of United States of America, Ms. Michel Obama, to Women's Caucus Chairwoman, Ms. Teuta Sahatqija

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 24, 2011

Ms. Teuta Sahatqija
United States Embassy Pristina
9520 Pristina Place
Washington, D.C. 20521

Dear Ms. Sahatqija:

On behalf of the First Lady, I would like to thank you for your letter.

It is my understanding that the United States Department of State has already responded to your inquiry. Thank you again for writing to the Office of the First Lady. Mrs. Obama sends you her best wishes.

Sincerely,



Howli J. Ledbetter
Director of Correspondence
Office of the First Lady

TV-Debate on TV21 discussing the “Breast Cancer”



On October 31, a new circle of the regular TV debates started. This debate is being offered by TV21 since almost three years now. To discuss on the topic of the Breast Cancer present at this debate were; Teauta Sahatqija, chair of the women Caucus, Flora Brovina, member of Women Caucus board, Naser Ramadani, Director of the National Institute of Public Health and Mejreme Maloku, Executive Director of Oncology Institute. Mrs. Sahatqija talked about the activities that Women Caucus has organized during the month of October. She also emphasized the Women Caucus cooperation with the local NGO Jeta Vita, who organized a walking march a day before etc ..

Women Caucus Anti-Breast Cancer Campaign

In the framework of the anti-breast cancer campaign, the Women’s Caucus requested from the Government to allocate budgetary means for treating this disease, which represents an ever growing occurrence in Kosovo. Assembly members emphasized that this disease causes mortality of many women in Kosovo, due to the failure to provide timely and adequate diagnostics.



Breast cancer represents one of the illnesses with the highest mortality rate, because in our country it is usually diagnosed in severely advanced stages. Although there are no official statistics, according to certain available data, one in ten women in our country is affected by breast cancer.

Assembly member Flora Brovina said that a problem in the country continues to be lack of work conditions and adequate equipment to treat this disease. She voiced her concerns regarding prevention, which is being neglected, and the legal regulation of institutional support to breast-cancer affected women.

November

The Women Caucus met with a delegation of important personalities from five European countries that have not recognized Kosovo yet, under the organization of British Council.

Tuesday, 01 November 2011

Assembly of Kosovo Women Caucus received today a delegation of representatives of various European countries, organized by “British Council”.

Chairwoman of the Women Caucus, Teuta Sahatqija, thanked the British Council for gathering representatives of various countries, especially representatives of the five European countries that have yet not recognized Kosovo’s statehood, and provided the delegation with an overview of the background and activities of the group she heads. Sahatqija especially focused on gender and minority representation in the Assembly of Kosovo, assessing that gender quota is key for advancing democracy in Kosovo.

Other members of the team, Flora Brovina, Donika Kadaj-Bujupi and Alma Lama, spoke along the same lines on the advancement of the role of women in the society and political life in Kosovo, but also elaborated on the need for its further factorization, especially within political parties. Positive notes were also voiced over women’s representation in the executive branch, mentioning posts ranging from the President of the country, to Deputy Prime-Minister and Minister Positions in the Government of Kosovo.

Spanish, Greek, Slovak and other representatives expressed their positive remarks in relation to women representation in institutions, and expressed their interest on other aspects and roles women play in decision-making, especially in the private sector, businesses, etc. while the present assembly members provided respective responses.



Women Caucus meets the Swedish parliamentary delegation

Wednesday, 02 November 2011

Kosovo Assembly Women's Caucus, headed by Teuta Sahatqija, met today with a parliamentary delegation from Sweden, headed by Jonas Gunnarsson, PSD Chair. The Swedish delegation showed interest on the position of women in the society, and on the engagements of this group in advancing women representation in the Assembly and other local institutions. Teuta Sahatqija and Donika Kadaj-Bujupi provided an overview of the Women's Caucus activities, in function to further democratization of Kosovo. Initially, Teuta Sahatqija spoke about the Women's Caucus composition, emphasizing that all parliamentary groups have members in this caucus and that in it there are

no partisan division; moreover, this is the most cohesive caucus, as the position of women is not viewed from a partisan viewpoint. Later, she spoke on the 30 percent parliamentary representation quota, which is positively



reflected in the position of women in general, and which would be further preserved. However, she expressed dissatisfaction with insufficient participation of women in leading bodies, such as the Assembly Presidency, Assembly Committee Chairing and the Government of Kosovo. She expressed her commitment to ensuring women representation in all leading structures, as this is in function to gender equality and destruction of stereotypes of electing only men in leadership positions.

Another topic of this meeting was employment at the University, where positions are reserved for men, although women do not lack relevant qualifications. Donika Kadaj-Bujupi mentioned the low level of women representation at the local level. She went on to state that citizens have shown greater trust in women during elections. Women are obtaining ever more votes, perhaps owing to the fact that they seem to be immune to corruption and other negative phenomena. Swedish guests were also informed on the numerous and fruitful Women's Caucus activities, the constant contacts with citizens, participation in various debates and engagement in various campaigns, such as the early breast cancer fighting campaign and electoral reform activities. Most of such activities are supported by the President of the Assembly, NDI and OSCE, as well as other counterparts representing civil society.

Sahatqija and Bujupi expressed their content with the contact with Swedish parliamentarian delegation, part of which was Adnan Dibrani a Kosovar emigrant to Sweden in the beginning of 90s. They said that they see Sweden as the ideal country. In such spirit of cooperation, the Swedish delegation said that they would gladly host a visit of the Women's Caucus to Sweden.

Women Caucus meets group of women from Vushtrri

2 November 2011

In the series of meetings with women groups from Kosovo municipalities, today Women's Caucus met with women from Vushtrri. In this meeting, Women's Caucus Chairwoman, Ms. Teuta Sahatqija, spoke on the important role and work that Women's Caucus is doing in democracy development and EU integration processes. This process is also dependent on the role and empowerment of women in all social sectors. Ms. Sahatqija spoke of Caucus' engagements in improving the legal position of women, their health, and in fighting negative phenomena, such as domestic violence, discrimination, trafficking etc. Further, Ms. Kadaj-Bujupi spoke on the electoral reform; the importance for Kosovo to have trustworthy and democratic elections; the significance of applying Gender Quotas in the Law on Elections, in conformity with the Law on Gender Equality; and the inclusion of women in positions in which they



will be able to affect the implementation of adequate gender policies. Women groups from Vushtrri Municipality, lead by Ms. Gjylsime Feka, voiced their concerns regarding the failure to implement the Law on Gender Equality and their discontent with the ongoing hidden discrimination in employment in more senior positions. Recommendations of the meeting included:

- Gender representation quota in the legislative should be applied as part of the electoral reform, in conformity with the Law on Gender Equality.
- Law on Gender Equality should be amended to improve its applicability in a qualitative manner.
- The Law on Political Parties should include compulsory gender quotas to be included in their respective normative acts.
- The role of women in Municipal Assemblies should be enhanced, by strengthening the existing gender mechanisms, such as Municipal Women Caucuses and Gender Equality Offices.
- Educational policies should include gender perspectives, and investments should be made towards the increase of women's professional and intellectual capacities.

Women Caucus and President Jahjaga visited Medika Association in Gjakova

3 November 2011

Today, the Kosovo Assembly Women Caucus, headed by its Chairwoman Teuta Sahatqija and member Donika Kadaj-Bujupi, accompanied the President of Kosovo, Ms. Atifete Jahjaga, on a visit to 'Medika' Association in Gjakova.

Ms. President expressed her readiness to support this association and women victims of war, victims of violence and other women in need that found support in this association.

Ms. Sahatqiu congratulated Ms. Veprora Shehu for the great efforts she and Medika are vesting in providing medical, legal and psycho-social assistance to the women. Ms. Sahatqiu congratulated the association for its good work, and emphasized the need for further stimulating women's economic activities, in order for them to provide better welfare for themselves and their families. Provision of better opportunities for women's economic empowerment and independence supports not only women, but also the family and society in general.

Ms. Donika Kadaj-Bujupi spoke on the severe impact that war had on Gjakovar women and on how women can, nevertheless, overcome pain and build their future and contribute to state-building.

Ms. Veprora Shehu informed the President and assembly members on the work and achievements of Medika.

After the meeting, the delegation visited the Dairy Production Factory, a facility almost finalized and constructed specifically for the use of women, which was built by German funds at Medika's request. The President and the assembly members expressed their readiness to support the finalization of this facility, the commissioning of which is very important for the local women and for Gjakova's economy in general.



Women Caucus Board visits the Oncology Institute in Prishtina

Wednesday, 09 November 2011

Women Caucus Board, composed by its Chairwoman Teuta Sahatqija and members Flora Brovina, Alma Lama and Suzan Novoberdali visited today the Oncology Institute in Prishtina. This is the second visit of this nature made to this institute by Women's Caucus, as part of the breast cancer awareness-raising campaign. Women parliamentarians were received by the senior executives of this Institute, whereas the purpose of the visit was to review needs and problems faced by the Institute. Noteworthy, the Women Caucus held a number of discussions with the Kosovo President, Atifete Jahjaga, and various organizations in an effort to provide material means to purchase mobile mammography appliances, to be used by this institution. Teuta Sahatqija stated that she hoped for the said equipment to be purchased during the first half of 2012. The directorate of this institution informed the assembly members on their need for 7 thousand chemo-therapy protocols. The leadership of the Oncology Institute said that there is also a great need for cytostatics and herceptine. Furthermore, it is expected to also commence with radiotherapy in Kosovo.

In support of this institution, women assembly members have initiated a thorough review of the budget allocated to the Oncology Institute, in order to provide them with sufficient means for providing adequate services, in order to retain Kosovar patients from seeking healthcare services abroad.

Women Caucus appeals against domestic violence



The agenda of today's plenary session of the Assembly of Kosovo included in its item 10: "Review of the report of Committee on Human Rights, Gender Equality, Missing Persons and Petitions on oversight of the implementation of Law on Protection from Domestic Violence". Unfortunately this topic was addressed in a dull and numerical manner, without giving it the priority and significance it entails.

Being concerned with this phenomenon, Women Caucus held a round-table on this topic on 19 October 2011, participating in which was President Ms. Atifete Jahjaga, Deputy Prime-Minister and Minister of Justice, Mr. Hajredin Kuci, members of the Assembly Committee on Human Rights, Gender Equality, Missing Persons and Petitions, the People's Advocate, competent representatives of Kosovo Police, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, civil society and many other.

Family is the nucleus of the society, and an environment in which love, respect and welfare should prevail. Family values are reflected into social values, and respect for parents into respect for the teacher, work, solidarity, honor, patriotism. Family multiplies such values through the children cultivated in them.

Regretfully, in some families there are no peaceful relations. Unfortunately, in Kosovo there are many families in which instead of respect, violence and even murders prevail. Such is the case of Diana, murdered in broad daylight in the middle of the city, which unfortunately made little impression in the society. A human life was lost, and an individual was deprived of her dreams and plans, not by someone she did not know – rather, by an individual who was supposed to love her and protect her from harm. On the other hand, children remain parentless, a burden for the society. Understandably, being without proper protection, they too are prone to violence. We expect our male colleagues to take the floor and ask for an end to violence, which has become part of our mentality and daily routine, as we, representatives of the people, have to request an end to violence.

The Women's Caucus congratulates the Committee for Human Rights, Gender Equality and Missing Persons for its work in monitoring the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence, and the NDI for the research conducted in this field. While appealing to put an end to this concerning phenomenon, the Women's Caucus proposes the following:

Recommendations:

1. The Government of Kosovo should support ministries, NGOs and shelters tasked with addressing domestic violence, in an effort to implement the Program against Domestic Violence.
2. The Ministry of Justice should draft Administrative Instructions and other normative acts, in order to improve the effectiveness of the law, and to establish a special fund for this purpose, in line with provisions of the Law on Public Financial Management and Accountability.
3. Courts should treat domestic violence cases with utmost priority, as their delay can cause irreparable damage.
4. Relevant institutions, namely MJ, MLSW, MIA, MH and KP should train judges, medical staff, social workers, police officers and staff, etc. in providing specialized treatment to domestic violence cases.
5. In cooperation MLSW, MH, MLGA, MIA and MEST should establish the necessary infrastructure to support and fulfill the needs of persons on which domestic violence was exercised.
6. Kosovo Police should adequately react to any request for assistance and protection in case of domestic violence, even when the individual reporting domestic violence is not a victim of domestic violence.
7. Kosovo Police should grant calls pertaining to domestic violence the same priority with other criminal cases.
8. Kosovo Police, upon receiving the call, should evaluate the risk and respond to the circumstances, interrogate the victim and witnesses, including children, in separate rooms and provide for unimpeded statements and transportation of victims to the healthcare facility or a safe house, in line with Article 24 of the Law on Protection against Domestic Violence.
9. The Police should offer protection to the individual reporting domestic violence.
10. In cooperation with MEST, MLSW should draft a special program on reintegration (education, vocational training and employment) of persons affected by domestic violence and a program to facilitate provision of temporary residence (and if possible permanent residence) for such persons, in conformity with the objectives deriving from the Kosovo Program against Domestic Violence.
11. The inter-ministerial team may suggest other to the Government of Kosovo and other relevant institutions the establishment of relevant ancillary services or direct funding for victims of domestic violence, by developing:
 - a. sufficient residences or shelters for victims of domestic violence, including good and safe accommodation, professional counsel and long-term accommodation for victims of domestic violence;
 - b. counsel and support centers for victims of domestic violence, which would provide proactive support, including legal aid.

Reaction of the Women Caucus on the proposal of the discriminatory ambassador's list



Women Caucus expresses its concern and protest regarding the list of ambassador candidates presented today to the Committee on Foreign Policy. The list of proposed ambassadors includes only male candidates. Not only that the number of female ambassadors is not increasing (zero growth), the current list has removed the sole female ambassador serving to date and replaced her with a male candidate (-1).

This represents a flagrant violation of the Constitution of Republic of Kosovo (Article 24 (2)) and the Law on Gender Equality (Article 3). In specific, Article 3.4 of the Law on Gender Equality envisages that: *“Equal gender participation must be observed during the appointment of members of certain councils, committees and representative bodies within and outside Kosovo, by the competent institutions.”*

This also represents a violation of the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, which is directly applicable in Kosovo, as per Article 22 (6) of the Constitution. Moreover, this casts a bad international image on Kosovo and clearly violates the rights of over 50% of Kosovo's population. It is concerning to see that the female ambassador, which is now alleged to be replaced with a male candidate, has scored more points by the Interview Panel in direct competition with the male counter-candidate. Kosovo has able and dignified women that are able to represent Kosovo's interests properly and convey a positive image of our young nation.

Women Caucus calls on the Government of the Republic of Kosovo to halt this discriminating practice and on the Assembly Committee for Foreign Policy and the President of Kosovo, not to adopt or sign this discriminatory proposal. The Women's Caucus shall not adopt this mono-gender list and will use all legal remedies to prevent such discriminatory practices, which, above all, are not quality-based.

Respectfully,
 Teuta Sahatqija _____
 Chairwoman, Women Caucus
 Assembly of Kosovo
 Kati -III Nr N 319 A
 E-mail: woman.caucus@ks-gov.net
 woman.caucus@gmail.com
 Tel: 038 211 330

THREE FEMALE AMBASSADORS, RESULT OF WOMEN CAUCUS REACTION

After Women's Caucus reaction on the mono-gender list of proposed ambassadors, a letter of response was sent by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Enver Hoxhaj.



Republika e Kosovës
Republika Kosova - Republic of Kosovo
Kuvendi - Skupština - Assembly
Grupi i Grave Deputete

Ref. No: 212/11

Date: 16 November 2011

TO: Women Caucus, Assembly of Republic of Kosovo
THROUGH: Ms. Teuta Sahatqija
FROM: Mr. Enver Hoxhaj, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Republic of Kosovo
SUBJECT: Response to your reaction related to the proposed ambassadors' list

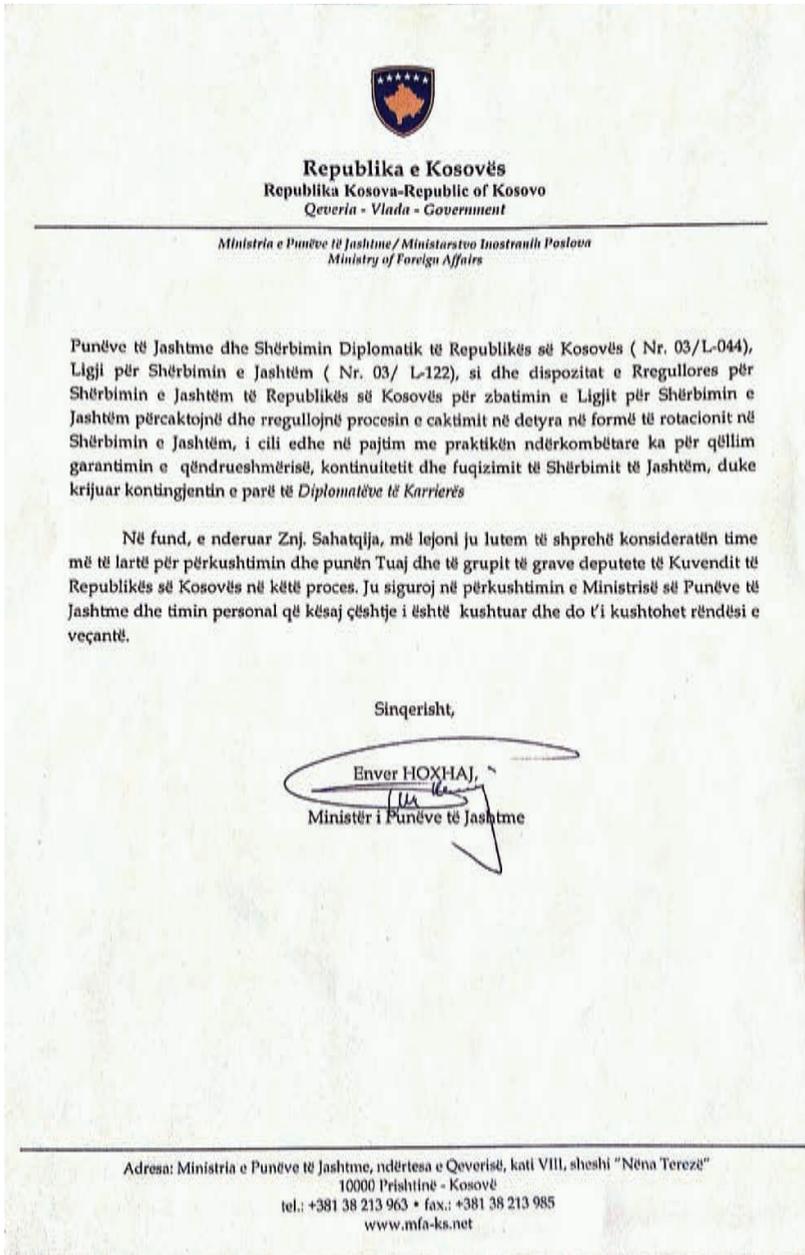
Dear Ms. Sahatqija,

We have respectfully acknowledged and reviewed the reaction you sent on behalf of women Members of the Assembly of Republic of Kosovo. Initially, please allow me to express my consent with your reaction, and state that the issue you rightfully raise was already considered with special care and seriousness at our Ministry.

Furthermore, I wish to ensure you that we are currently concluding consultations with a number of possible female candidates that could be recommended for appointment as Ambassadors. After consultation and verification of criteria fulfillment, as stipulated by the Law and applicable procedures, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will submit its recommendations for the appointment of ambassadors in the diplomatic missions of Republic of Kosovo.

Second, please allow me to also inform you that the applicable legal framework provides that appointed and serving ambassadors remain part of the Foreign Service. The movement of ambassadors from one mission to another, also conducted in line with the legal framework in force, will serve to further strengthening and consolidation of the Foreign Service of Republic of Kosovo, an objective towards the accomplishment of which I and my Cabinet are committed to accomplish. The scope of the abovementioned legal framework, especially of the Law on Ministry...

Letter sent by Minister Enver Hoxhaj to the Women's Caucus.



Women Caucus visited the Swedish Parliament and other important institutions in Stockholm

Wednesday, 30 November 2011

The Women Caucus visited the Swedish Parliament and other important institutions in Stockholm.

A delegation of the Assembly of Kosovo Women Caucus Board conducted a two-day visit to the Swedish Parliament. The delegation of women parliamentarians held a number of significant meetings. They were received by the highest representative of this institution, the President of Swedish Parliament, Mr. Per Westerberg.

Chairwoman of the Women Caucus Board, Ms. Teuta Sahatqija, informed the President of the Swedish Parliament on the engagement of women parliamentarians in significant matters, such as the representation quota in parliament and municipal assemblies, gender equality



in other Kosovo institutions, efforts to further democratize the country and other activities undertaken by the caucus. Mr. Westerberg emphasized that 47% of the members of Swedish Parliament are women, while they also represent the majority of the government cabinet. He emphasized that there is ongoing debates and efforts to introduce gender quotas of representation in state boards and agencies, as well as boards of private companies.

Board members held a meeting with the Swedish Parliament Women Caucus, comprising members of all parties and dealing with gender issues. In addition to sharing mutual experiences, representatives of the two teams discussed on common initiatives that could be developed in the future.

In a meeting held with Kvinna Till Kvinna (Women for Women) foundation, its Secretary-General Lena Ag, emphasized that the experience of Kosovo Women's Caucus could serve as a very good model to be recommended to many other countries around the world. During the visit to Sweden, members of the board also held a number of meetings with representatives of the Gender Equality Ombudsman institution, in order to discuss and obtain Swedish experiences in protection of human rights in general, and of rights of women and children in special.

Similarly important was the meeting at the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, specialized in electoral systems. The representative of this institute, Ms. Rumbidzai, said that legislative quotas have resulted in tangible positive developments in Kosovo, and that now the war should be concentrated in internal democratization of political parties. According to her, the introduction of gender quotas in party statutes is necessary not in Kosovo, but also in other countries.

Women Caucus organized a policy roundtable on breast and cervix cancer



On November 25, Women Caucus in cooperation with NDI organized a roundtable on breast and cervix cancer, at the premises of Kosovo Assembly. This roundtable, also attended by the Minister of Health, Ferid Agani, was held as part of a series of activities undertaken by the Women's Caucus in an effort to initiate preventive measures for fighting this disease. In her opening remarks, the event moderator, Ms. Flora Brovina, and the Board Chairwoman, Ms. Teuta Sahatqija, expressed the Women's Caucus readiness to legislatively support health institutions in providing all necessary prerequisites for adequately treating patients affected by these illnesses.

Minister Agani spoke on MoH's engagements in diagnosing, treating and raising awareness on these diseases. Ms. Sonja Mirakovska, member of the Assembly of Republic of Macedonia, elaborated on the achievements of Macedonia in fighting this disease. The roundtable also benefited from contributions by Shqiptar Demaqi, Mejreme Krasniqi, Lumturie Luci, Elvis Ahmedi and Nafije Latifi.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The law on health, expected to be amended, should hold a special amendment on additional care for the treatment of breast and cervix cancer.
2. A database on the exact number of patients affected by breast and cervix cancer should be established as part of the existing protocols.
3. The budget for cytostatic therapy, which is very costly and unaffordable for patients, should be increased.
4. Closer cooperation between oncologists, pathologists, gynecologists and thoracic surgeons competent for such diseases can influence early discovery of cancers through adequate examinations.

5. Improved cooperation between KCUC and regional hospitals, in order to provide adequate staff exchange that provides for medic's proximity with patients.
6. Utilize all possibilities to improve breast and cervix diagnostic capacities and undertake all legal remedies to prevent, test, diagnose and treat this illness.
7. Government of Kosovo and MH should review all possibilities to improve capacities of medical staff, with the aim of providing adequate treatment for breast and cervix cancer and for carcinoma in general.
8. Consider the possibility to provide the breast cancer vaccine, in cooperation with WHO and international organizations.
9. Provide for ambulant testing possibilities (mammography and papa test)
10. Provide engineering human resources to maintain diagnostics and treatment equipment.
11. Organize debates, roundtables and awareness raising activities, with the aim of early prevention and discovery.

DECEMBER

Women Caucus meets with the Coalition of Child Protection NGOse

Friday, 02 December 2011

Today, the Assembly of Kosovo Women's Caucus, in cooperation with UNICEF, met with a Coalition of Child Protection NGOs. The meeting was opened by Suzan Novoberdali, stating that although Kosovo has no special law on child protection, it respects the Convention of Rights of the Child, and the Assembly, particularly its Women's Caucus, remain dedicated to the provision of legal and institutional support to various categories, especially children affected by various types of discrimination, violence or those lacking family care or protection. Along similar lines, member and leader of the Center for Mother and Child Flora Brovina emphasized the need to closely cooperate with all organizations in order to improve sheltering conditions and children welfare.

The meeting was attended by the following representatives, who also provided information on the role and engagement of their respective organizations: Johannes Wedding, Head of UNICEF Office in Kosovo, Donjeta Kelemendi from the Child Protection NGO Coalition; Hamjet Dedolli, Head of the Center for Victim Protection and Prevention (MVPT Center); Artur Marku delegated by Terre des Hommes; Ibadete Krasniqi, head of Amici dei Bambini Kosovo; Valbona Qitaku, Director of the Hope for Children of Kosovo; and Rudina Ademi Shala, Program Officer – Save the Children.



Chairwoman of the Women's Caucus Board Sahatqija meets the Director of the Democratic and Effective Municipalities Initiative (DEMI), Kapitanova

Friday, 09 December 2011

Chairwoman of the Assembly of Kosovo Women's Caucus Board, Teuta Sahatqija, held a meeting today with the Director of USAID's Democratic and Effective Municipalities Initiative (DEMI), Glinka Kapitanova, to discuss on forms of cooperation towards enhancing efficient local governance, with specific emphasis on the empowerment of municipal administrations, municipal assemblies, citizen participation in municipal decision-making, improvement of municipal services and promotion of local economic development.

Sahatqija informed Ms. Kapitanova on the dedication of Women's Caucus to strengthening women's positions in all spheres, especially the encouragement of women at the local level, in order to ensure they become equal partners with men in raising the level of democracy, social welfare and economic development.

Sahatqija and Kapitanova agreed to start a more intensive cooperation from the beginning of next year, which will benefit women municipal assembly members as well as local NGOs and women forums, etc.

The meeting was also attended by DEMI experts Melihate Limani and Hanife Limani.

President of the Assembly, Jakup Krasniqi, and the Chair of Women Caucus, Teuta Sahatqija, participated in the conference “Gender quota – equal representation for women in Kosovo”



Monday, 12 December 2011

President of the Assembly of Republic of Kosovo, Dr. Jakup Krasniqi, took part today in the conference “Gender quota – equal representation for women in Kosovo”, held in the premises of the Kosovo National and University Library and organized by the Kosovo Gender Studies Center. In his address to the conference participants, Krasniqi said “It is my honor to greet all participants in this conference, on behalf of the Assembly of Kosovo and on my name, and I would like to express my gratitude to the Kosovo Gender Studies Center and Kvinna till Kvinna for the remarkable organization and for inviting us all here to address very interesting, important and current topics.”

Further, he said that addressing gender matters in Kosovo’s current historic context should not be considered to pertain only to women’s rights, but to the interest of the entire society and country, to the utilization of the entire country’s intellectual and professional potential and in function to the overall development. Women comprise not only half of our population but also half of our developmental potential.

In the not too distant past, women in Kosovo were suffering double enslavement. In free and democratic Kosovo, a comprehensive and irreversible process of social, politic and economic reforms has commenced. In this sense, and with the aim of improving gender equality and women representation in the highest representative and legislative body, the Assembly of Kosovo undertook affirmative action and stipulated a 30 percent quota for the representation of women in the Assembly,” said President of the Assembly Krasniqi.

Moreover, he stressed that the purpose of this conference would be to debate on the improvement and advancement of Kosovo’s electoral system. Such debates are just and adequate, as the electoral system is not to remain merely an issue addressed

by political entities – part of such debate should be the entire civil society and the public. In this context, he encouraged the civil society to continue to provide its contribution in gender issues, as its role in this sphere remains irreplaceable.

In addition to the international gender equality instruments, Kosovo now also has its own legislation and respective programs which tend to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and to ensure their equality with men in all spheres of life. Women's status in social, economic and political life of any given country, and the care provided to the mothers in that country, are clear indicators of the emancipation of a given society and the development of a given country. There can be no discussion of the democratization of Kosovo and its institutions, until criteria for the equality of men and women in the society are fulfilled, including economic equality which represents a *conditio sine qua non* for the emancipation of women.

Gender equality is not a present to women by men or institutions, it is their legal and natural right. Women in Kosovo have contributed to our emancipation, progress, development and freedom, thus ensuring for themselves an equal status. Gender issues in Kosovo are institutionalized at both central and local level. Women in Kosovo are present and represented in the Assembly, Government, among local authorities, KSF, KP, civil service and education, culture and science. However, the role of women in decision-making requires further empowerment. A society may not be deemed emancipated if one half of it, the entire female gender, remains non-emancipated.

Women of Kosovo should fight for their rights, and men should work to integrate gender balancing, reciprocal respect and equal opportunities for both genders in all spheres of life, as this represents a prerequisite for the a democratic and developed society. Gender issues are and should be an issue not only for women but men too. Further, he noted: "Our legal framework, the foundation of which is the Law on Gender Equality, should be implemented and advanced through a thorough cooperation between the Assembly, Government and civil society. Advancement of gender equality represents a global process. The award of the Nobel prize to three women activists and gender equality fighters, represents an important, meaningful and motivating event. Finally, I wish for this conference to yield in clear recommendations for the institutions and society in general. I trust that this conference will contribute to our country's policies aimed at improving gender equality and the country's electoral system. I would like to convey to you my willingness to support gender equality and to the protection and advancement of the representation of women in the Assembly of Kosovo," said Krasniqi. Chairwoman of the Women's Caucus Board, Ms. Teuta Sahatqija, spoke today on the significance of preserving gender quotas, because it ensures a critical mass of women that will empower further women holding more junior positions and will encourage women to take a more active role in the society. In natural system there is gender balance, why should there be no balance in our societies.

International electoral expert, Prof. Drude Duhlerup, took part in this roundtable, pending insisting by Ms. Sahatqija, to elaborate on gender representation in other countries. She emphasized that countries that claim to be democratic are applying gender quotas as affirmative measures. The discussions were attended by Luljeta Vuniqi, Igballe Rogova and many other stakeholders.

“Why Women need Women”? Women Caucus organized a policy roundtable on Women and Business,

“Why Women need Women”?

On December 15th, Women Caucus supported by NDI held a roundtable discussion on the subject: “Why women need women?” chaired by Donika Kadaj-Bujupi, member of Women Caucus Board, who spoke on the severe economic situation, high level of unemployment and poverty and other limited possibilities to start and develop economic activities. She said that although about one hundred businesses are registered in Kosovo, only about half of them are functional, while women are owners of less than 6% of all registered businesses.

Women Caucus Chairwoman, Ms. Teuta Sahatqija, spoke on Women Caucus dedication to work in adopting favorable policies that stimulate economic development and on the great will of women to contribute to the budget of their families and country, and no to remain merely spenders; this, however, requires adequate policies.

Further, the Minister of Economic Development, Besim Beqaj, elaborated the significance of encouraging women to engage not only in small businesses and manufacturing, but also in more powerful businesses, namely in small and medium enterprises, which generally have better development prospects and in which women have proven to be very successful. The Chairman of the Assembly Committee on Economic Development, Zenun Pajaziti, said that supporting women in business activities is also one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), while the President of the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce, Safet Gerxhaliu, underscored the need for public-private partnerships and subsidies for women’s businesses. Presentations were also held by NDI International Advisor, Cathy Allen, Her Excellency, member of the Royal Canadian Council, Sarmine Bulte, Senior UNDP Kosovo Gender Advisor, Jocelyne Talbot, Director of She-Era Association, Mirlinda Kusari, and Owner of Data-Projekt Electronics, Linda Shala.



Recommendations

1. Legal support to women businesses and compilation of policies that empower women economically and stimulate women businesses.
2. Draft a national strategy for women in business.
3. Develop university curricula favoring gender policies and women in economics.
4. Develop economic and fiscal policies (favorable loans, low tax rates, etc.) and subsidize women's business activities in various sectors.
5. Consider the possibility for creating a women's business development fund.
6. Establish a committee to evaluate and monitor women business activities.
7. Organize seminars, trainings and specializations, with the aim of increasing women's capacities in business development.
8. Provide on-job coaching, access to the labor market or retraining for re-entry into the labor force, in cooperation with NGOs.
9. Promote women participation in information industry.
10. Increase the occurrence of public-private partnerships, to empower women economically.
11. Improve the presence of women in public enterprise boards.
12. Stimulate absorption capabilities for local and international grants for agro-business and other economic activities.
13. Support women heads of families in initiating and developing businesses.
14. Prepare platforms for child growth management, professional engagements, etc.
15. Organize exhibitions, fairs, publications and other forms for promoting women activities.
16. Conduct a campaign, with the aim of promoting and improving consumption of domestic products, under the motto 'Love your own!'
17. Strengthen legal mechanisms, in order to fight negative phenomena that hinder business development, especially corruption.

Meeting Sahaqija - Glenski

Thursday, 29 December 2011

Chairwoman of the Women Caucus, Ms. Teuta Sahatqija, met today with Ms. Karen Glenski, International OSCE Advisor and Ms. Sabiha Shala, Local OSCE Advisor.

Ms. Sahatqija spoke on the activities of Women Caucus towards strengthening the role of women and on the Women Caucus engagement in relation to welfare, health, employment and other aspects of women's lives. Ms. Sahatqija informed OSCE representatives on the Strategy of the Women Caucus. It was said that united 40 women members of the Kosovo Assembly will be able to do more for women, democracy and activities related to the implementation of Millennium Development Goals, in line with the applicable legal provisions and the Acquis Communautaire. Ms. Sahatqija thanked the OSCE representatives for their cooperation to date and emphasized the need for further cooperation, particularly in the aspect of empowering women at the local level and in other spheres.

Ms. Glenski expressed her readiness, and the readiness of the OSCE to continue and enhance cooperation with the Women Caucus in the implementation of the latter's plan and strategic objectives.

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