

THE Stability Pact GENDER TASK FORCE

GENDER EQUALITY IN Southeast EUROPE:

Five years in the making

1999 – 2004

Prepared by:

Mary Ann Rukavina Cipetić
Tihana Ančević
Sanja Kolarić
Helena Tokić-Matić
Tanja Prpić

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GTF REGIONAL CENTER FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Savska 41/2, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia

tel: +385 1 6137 783

fax: +385 1 6137 784

gtf@zg.hinet.hr , www.gtf.hr

INTRODUCTION

For many women in SEE, significant changes have taken place and progress has been made to ensure that women benefit from their basic human rights. In 2004 women in SEE have better opportunities to contribute to political and public decision-making, and in the economic life of their countries. Balanced participation of women and men is at the heart of the functioning of pluralist democracy.¹

Why should democracy and gender be interlinked?

Firstly, women's political rights are an essential element of their human rights; and human rights are an indispensable aspect of any democratic framework. Secondly, in a democratic system the points of view of the dissimilar groups involved ought to be taken into account in creating any decision or in carrying out any strategy. In other words, democracy must include the opinions and insight of women as well as men. Lastly, possibly the single most crucial justification for connecting gender and democracy is that women effectively represent half of the human race and more than 50% of every single national population. Regardless of the existence of indistinguishable political rights between women and men, politics and public decision-making continue to be male-dominated fields. Men still decide on the political priorities. The challenge is to make the change from formal *de jure* equality to genuine *de facto* equality, from women's passivity in male party politics into the active partnership of women party members in determining gender balanced strategies of their party.

Gender Equality Indicators 1999/2004

	1999	2004
CEDAW ratified	8/12	12/12
CEDAW Optional protocol ratified	0/12	8/12
Law on Gender Equality	0/12	7/12
National Gender Equality Mechanism	4/12	11/12
Ombudsman for Gender Equality	0/12	2/12
Quota enacted in election legislation	1/12	5/12
% women in municipal councils	unavailable	12%
% women MPs	7%	16%
Number of women ministers	3 governments without a single woman	21

THEN CAME THE GTF

In the SEE region in 1999, women's participation in politics was purely symbolic. Women's political participation and representation was a prerequisite to sustainable development of the SEE region. For this reason the GTF is dedicated to advancing gender-balanced

¹ Universal Declaration of Human Rights "peoples of the United Nations have...reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom..."¹

participation in developing stable and democratic societies in South East Europe. Years of systematic work of the GTF on the political empowerment of women in SEE countries have brought important new experiences:

- the experience of women working together across party lines,
- across ethnic and state borders,
- across position and opposition,
- across NGOs and parties, cooperation with(in) parliaments and governments,
- experience of negotiations, consensus building and lobbying of male leaders,
- experience of mass media and grass roots campaigning,
- experience of women activists monitoring the fairness of elections.

WHAT IS THE GTF?

The Stability Pact Gender Task Force² (GTF) is a South East European regional initiative born out of an Appeal sent to the participants of the Stability Pact summit in Sarajevo in 1999. Over 150 women's NGOs, prominent gender equality activists, experts and politicians from the SEE region and beyond signed the Appeal and presented it to the Stability Pact Special Coordinator. In all countries in transition, and most dramatically countries that underwent armed conflict, women's political participation was dangerously low (less than 7% representation in state parliaments).

Women in National Parliaments 2004

Country/Territory	Lower or single House	Seats	Women	Current % of women in parliaments
	Elections			
Albania	06 /2001	140	8	5.7
Bosnia and Herzegovina ³	10/2002	42	8	19
Bulgaria	06/ 2001	240	63	26.2
Croatia	11/2003	152	27	21.7
Hungary	04/2002	386	38	9.8
R. Macedonia	09/2002	120	22	18.3
Moldova	02/2001	101	13	12.9
Romania ⁴	11/2000	345	37	10.7
Serbia and Montenegro	09/2003	126	10	7.9 ⁵
	12/2003	250	28	11.7
• Serbia	2006	75	10	13.3
• Montenegro	10/2000	90	11	12.2
Slovenia				
Kosovo ⁶	10/2004	120	33	27.6

¹ Lower House figures.

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¹ prior to 2003 elections

¹ Recognized by UN SCR 1244.

² GTF encompasses twelve SEE countries and territories, namely: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Kosovo, R. Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovenia.

Women had been pushed out of politics and transformed into victims of mostly male, aggressive politics. For this reason the Appeal called for a full and formal participation of women in the stabilization process in order to build peace, establish democracy, ensure the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and stable, democratic and prosperous development of the entire region.⁷ From its inception, the GTF based its activities on an assessment of regional and national women's needs and priorities⁸; nationwide cooperation of civil society actors (women NGOs, trade union and political party women groups), representatives of government and parliamentary gender equality committees; regional, European and worldwide exchange of experiences and best practices; and on the coordination of their initiatives with international governmental and non-governmental organizations with gender equality mandates in the region (OSCE, Council of Europe, European Parliament, OSCE-ODIHR, UNDP, UNIFEM, etc.).

IN CONCLUSION

Over the last decade, the legal status of women in SEE has undoubtedly improved; however, effective equality is far from being reality. Women are still marginalized in political and public lives, paid less for work of equal value, find themselves victims of poverty and unemployment more often than men, and are more frequently subjected to violence. This situation can be tackled efficiently by integrating a gender equality objective into the policies that have a direct or indirect impact on the lives of men and women. Women's concerns, needs and aspirations should be taken into account and assume the same importance as men's concerns in the design and implementation of policies. This is the gender mainstreaming approach⁹.

The Stability Pact Gender Task Force continues to play an important role in advancing gender equality throughout the SEE Region. Its "mainstreaming" approach allows it to make a significant contribution to the main priorities of the SEE Region and the Stability Pact.

SOME GTF ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

OVER 450 WCDI I, II, III Professionally-trained Trainers in 11 Countries have trained

OVER 16,000 Women in

OVER 600 Local Seminars and 70+ Parliamentary Political Party Seminars

OVER 25 National Campaigns in Southeast Europe

And the establishment of the first SEE Regional Think-tank for Gender Mainstreaming, the Regional Center for Gender Equality in Zagreb, Croatia

⁷ The OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the CEE Network for Gender Issues were the key actors in the mobilization of SEE women in this historic event.

⁸ The GTF has organized Eight (8) **Regional** Meetings of GTF Government, NGO and Parliamentary Representatives and hundreds of National and local meetings throughout SEE from 1999 – 2004.

⁹ Gender mainstreaming is "(re)organization, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender quality perspective is incorporated in all policies and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy making." *Equality between Men and Women*, Council of Europe

Today the GTF works on three pillars (ensuring sustainability of achievements):

1. Active Women’s Citizenship / Political Empowerment / Cross Border Activity

Targeting EURO Regions in SEE, Post Conflict areas, Roma and Minority Women, grassroots outreach, local democracy, etc.

2. Engendering Key Policies

Economic, social, security policy: establishing and strengthening Social Dialogue, poverty reduction, refugee integration, etc.

3. Strengthening Gender Equality Machinery

Improving the governmental framework for progress towards gender equality

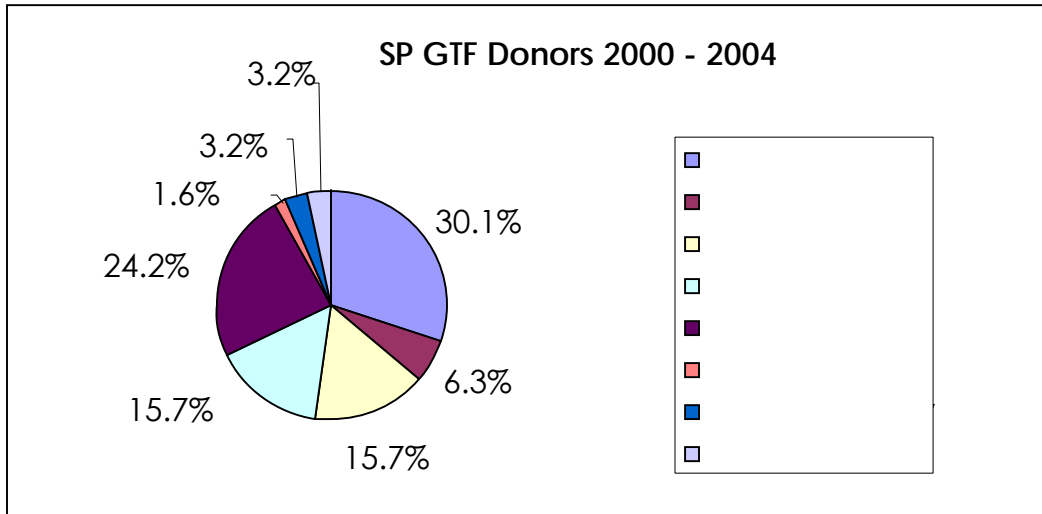


TABLE OF DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS BY COUNTRY

Country/Organization	Amount in Euro	Percent
Norway	940,000	30%
Italy	757,000	24%
Switzerland	490,000	16%
Austria	489,000	16%
Denmark	198,000	6%
Netherlands, FNV	100,000	3%
Greece	100,000	3%
Germany	50,000	2%
Total	3,124,000	100%