

# **NEW REALITIES CONCERNING EUROPEAN LEFT WING GENDER EQUALITY POLITICS CASE STUDY OF WOMEN IN LEFT WING PARLIAMENTARY PARTIES IN THE SOUTH EASTERN EUROPEAN REGION**

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There is a common belief, that labor, socialist and SD parties and their women's organizations are the champions of gender equality efforts in their countries. There are some signs indicating that this is not any more the case everywhere in traditional democratic European societies with strong SD parties– for example in Germany, conservative party, and not the SD gave the first woman chancellor and conservative woman minister for gender equality is implementing social democratic family policy with more vigor than SD party's ones did it when the SDP was in power. Comparing the average situation and potential for action of women in all important parliamentary parties in 10 countries of the SEE with the situation and potential for action of the women in the left oriented parties in the same region, we would like to investigate, what is happening there with regard party politics on gender equality and we would like to open the debate do our SD parties need to do serious changes in their approach to gender equality and how they should go about these changes.

In 2006 Stability Pact Gender Task Force, in close cooperation with the CEE Network for Gender Issues, implemented its second regional project on empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming in 64 that parliamentary parties of different political orientation – left, conservative and liberal, in 10 countries of the South Eastern Europe: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria and in Moldova. 21 parties who have already established some sort of membership within the SI or the PES, or who think about themselves being of social democratic orientation, were also included in this project.

Here are the main findings regarding the overall situation of women in 62 parliamentary parties in South Eastern Europe:

- All parliamentary party women organizations in the SEE region came into being due to the regionally organized international support coming for the parties of the left wing orientation from SIW and the CEE Network for Gender Issues from 1994, and for the rest of political parties from the Stability Pact Gender Task Force from 1999. Their capacity building is still crucially dependent on different sorts of international support.
- All parliamentary party women's organizations still have extremely weak organizational capacity. Not one of them has a professional organizer, working especially and only for their women's organization!
- There is no systematic focus and work of these parties with their women party members, women activists and lower level of women party functionaries (mayors, councilors), and there are still very few parties willing or able to target women voters.
- Most of these women party organizations are closed in their ghettos, penniless, politically insignificant for their parties and invisible for their societies.
- Their ability to serve the needs of women voters is still very low. But they start to get the right focus on what should be done.
- This was the second project of this kind in these parties. The positive change, made from 2002 to 2006 from the first to the second project, especially in the centre and

right wing parties, is incredible! The glass is half full and can be filled – all one needs to do, is to work on it!

The data we present below, are made at the bases of the SP GTF project report, where Ziva Zivkovic, our assistant in the Ljubljana Office of the CEE Network for Gender Issues and me, we made a detailed comparison between the overall situation of women in parliamentary political parties and the parties of social democratic, socialist or labor orientation in this region.

The main tool for our analysis was the questionnaire that I have prepared for the SP GTF regional project and which was given to all women party leaders in order to get detailed insight in the power position of women in different political parties.

It became clear that even collecting the data from the **parliamentary parties** about their women, even combined with direct communication with the party leaders and the leaders of the women's organizations within the parties and specific training sessions, was a really difficult task.

The first test of the organizational and political (in) capacity of women within the parliamentary parties was their (in) ability to answer to the questions in the questionnaire.

12 % (8 out of 64) of all parties included in this project never handed out any answers to the questionnaire. One of them (close to 5% of all left wing parties included in the sample) was between these 8 parties: newly established New SD Party of Macedonia. The rest of the participating parliamentary parties – 56 of them, tried their best to answer at least to some of the questions.

In the tables below, we illustrate the differences regarding the state of art of the women and the capacities of political parties to deal with gender equality issues, comparing the average outcomes within all 54 parliamentary parties which gave at least one answer to our questionnaire and the average outcomes within 20 labor, socialist and SD parties in the SEE region.

### WOMEN MEMBERS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY PARTIES

Question asked in the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
What is the percentage of <b>women</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>48%</b>	Albania with the lowest average has the

<b>members</b> in your party?					average of 17% of women in its parliamentary parties
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### SHARE OF WOMEN MEMBERS IN PARTY NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BODIES

Question asked In the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
What is the percentage of women in your party national executive body?	<b>64%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>26%</b>	Romania with the lowest result is at 14%

### WOMAN - PARTY PRESIDENT

Question asked In the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
Your party president is a woman? Yes	<b>88%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>95 %</b>	<b>5%</b>	Only 4 out of 12 countries has at least one woman president of the parliamentary party (Bulgaria,

					Serbia, Croatia, Macedonia)
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### **WOMAN - DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE PARTY**

Question asked In the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
Your party has a woman as a deputy president? Yes	<b>88%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>25%</b>	In most of the cases the woman is one of several party deputy presidents

### **WOMAN – SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PARTY**

Question asked in the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
Does your party have a woman Secretary General? Yes.	<b>88 %</b>	<b>9 %</b>	<b>95 %</b>	<b>10 %</b>	

## WOMEN MP-S

Question asked in the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
What is the percentage of women parliamentarians in your party's parliamentary faction?	<b>65 %</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>95 %</b>	<b>21%</b>	The lowest average is in Albania with 7.1%, the best is Kosovo with 30%

The data, collected by the Stability Pact Gender Task force, about women MP-s in the SEE region in 2007 are as follows:

## Women in National Parliaments

Country/Territory	Lower or single House	Seats	Women	Current % of women in parliaments
	Elections			
Albania	06 /2005	140	10	7,1
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10/2006	41	6	14,6
Bulgaria	06/ 2005	240	50	20,8
Croatia	11/2003	152	32	21,1
Hungary	04/2006	386	40	10,4
R. Macedonia	07/2006	120	32	26,6
Moldova	03/2005	101	21	20,8
Romania	11/2004	345	37	10,7
<b>Serbia</b>	01/2007	250	51	20,4
<b>Montenegro</b>	2006	79	10	12,6
Slovenia	10/2004	90	12	13,3
Kosovo	10/2004	120	36	30
<b>Average</b>				<b>16,3%</b>

## WOMEN MINISTERS

Question asked In the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
How many women ministers do you have?	<b>88 %</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>95 %</b>	<b>15%</b>	More and more women lead also so called male ministries: foreign affairs, European integration, judiciary, even interior and defense. But there is not one ministry for gender equality in the whole region!

**The data, collected by the SP GTF, regarding women ministers in the SEE region, are as follows:**

### Percentage of Women Ministers 1999/2007

COUNTRIES	1999		2007	
	Women / Total Ministries	Percentage(%)	Women / Total Ministries	Percentage(%)
Albania	2/17	11,8	1/14	7,1
B&H	0/12	0,0	0/16	0
Bulgaria	3/16	18,8	3/17	17,7
Croatia	2/18	11,1	4/13	30,8
Greece	1/18	5,6	3/16	18,8
Kosovo	N A	N A	1/13	7,7
R. Macedonia	5/26	19,2	3/17	17,7
Moldova	0/20	0,0	2/18	11,1
Romania	1/15	6,7	3/15	20
Serbia	4/36	11,1	0/19	0
Montenegro	0/22	0,0	1/13	7,6
Slovenia	1/20	5,0	1/15	6,7

average	19/220	8,6%	24/186	12,9%
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### WOMEN MAYORS

Question asked in the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
How many women mayors do you have?	6 %	???	40 %	???? All SD parties reported to have at least one woman mayor!	Some parties gave the figures, some the percentage, so we could not figure out the average in %

No country in the SEE region has developed special measures to enhance the growth of the share of women mayors. There are extremely big differences in the share of women mayors in the SEE region. Romania and Moldova have the biggest share, but their women mayors are mostly located in the local communities so poor and so underdeveloped, that no man wanted to run for the mayor. From the other side, there was a moment in 2005, when the pressure of women's movements to bring more women in politics, gave an incredible result: 4 capitals in the SEE region had woman mayors: Belgrade, Ljubljana, Zagreb and Athens. Three of them came from progressive or even left wing parties. This trend for different reasons did not last. From the other side, in Macedonia, first three women mayors were elected in 2002, as a direct result of the work of the cross-cutting women's movement, and in 2006, when the number of local communities has diminished, the number of women mayors stayed the same, but the share of them has even grown.

### WOMEN COUNCILORS

Question asked in the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
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	question	question	to this question		
What is the percentage of your women councilors in local communities	<b>9%</b>	<b>????</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>????</b>	The differences between the parties rank from 65 % to 13% of women councilors. Some parties gave the figures, some the percentage, so we could not figure out the data in %

### QUOTA IN THE PARTY STATUTE

Question asked in the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
Do you have quota for the decision making bodies in your party statute? Yes.	<b>88%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>60%</b>	The lowest quota is 15% and the highest 40%

In four countries, included in this sample, (BiH, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia), women's movements were strong enough to succeed to enact weaker or stronger mostly 30% minimal quota regulations for both, men and women for the candidate lists in their electoral legislation at all levels. The quotas in the party statutes define minimal share of women for party organs and in most of the cases also for the candidate lists for general elections. In the SEE region, there are still 40% of SD parties without any positive measures for equal representation of



women in their party statutes. Even worse, the quota regulations in the statutes are mostly NOT respected to the full extend neither for the party organs nor for the general elections if there are no legally binding legislative quotas in the country.

### **GENDER EQUALITY IN THE PARTY MANIFESTO**

Question asked in the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
Do you have general statement on gender equality in your party manifesto? Yes.	<b>88%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>65%</b>	

### **SPECIAL PARTY DECLARATION ON GENDER EQUALITY**

Question asked in the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
Does your party have a special gender equality dedicated declaration?	<b>88%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>30%</b>	

## PARTY ELECTORAL PROMISES AND SPECIAL GENDER EQUALITY POLICIES

Question asked in the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
Does your party target women voters with electoral promises and special gender equality policies?	<b>88%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>20%</b>	

## INCLUSION OF THE LEADERS OF WOMEN PARTY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE PARTY EXECUTIVE ORGANS AT ALL LEVELS

Question asked in the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
Are the presidents of your women's organizations included in executive bodies of your party on all levels? Yes.	<b>88%</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>35%</b>	Women's organizations are still sidelined in their ghettos

## PARTY FUNDING OF THE WOMEN'S PARTY ORGANIZATIONS

Question asked in the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
Has your party women's organization a special budget line in the party budget? Yes	<b>88%</b>	<b>1,7%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>5% (The only one out of all 56)</b>	Women's party organizations without stable funding are unable to plan their work in a strategic manner

**Not one party women organization has a professional organizer!**

## ABILITY OF WOMEN'S PARTY ORGANIZATIONS TO COOPERATE WITH OTHER ACTORS DEALING WITH GENDER EQUALITY

Question asked in the questionnaire	% of 54 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
Partnership& cooperation with <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ TU</li> <li>▪ Experts</li> <li>▪ NGO-s</li> <li>▪ Other W party org</li> <li>▪ State mechanisms for gender equality</li> </ul>	<b>88%</b>	<b>9%</b> <b>14%</b> <b>19%</b> <b>14%</b> <b>8%</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>5%</b> <b>10%</b> <b>20%</b> <b>15%</b> <b>10%</b>	The rule is that the women's party organization which opens to one partner, opens also to

					more of them
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**POTENTIAL FOR PUBLIC ACTIVITY OF THE WOMEN'S PARTY  
ORGANIZATIONS**

Question asked in the questionnaire	% of 56 parties which were able to give an answer to this question	Average outcome for all parties which answered to this question	% of 20 left oriented parties which were able to answer to this question	Average outcome for left oriented parties which answered to this question	Notes and comments
What was the issue of the last public activity of your women's organization?	<b>88%</b>	<b>27% reported of such an issue</b>	<b>95%</b>	<b>25% Reported of such an issue</b>	56 women party organizations in 12 countries could list only 15 different public

					activities altogether!
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## COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF ALL THESE DATA SHOWS:

Women in left wing parties fare much better than the women from the parties with conservative or liberal orientation in some ways.

In average, women in left wing parties:

- Have far better perception and data on the status of women within their own parties. Still 40% of left wing parties could not report, how many women members they have, 60% could not inform, how many women mayors they have, 80% could not do so regarding the share of their women councilors.
- Have 25 % more women members, nearly reaching equal share of male and female membership.
- They have 15 % more women MP-s, and 28 % more women ministers. Still their average of women MP-s is bellow the average of **all parties** in the EU. (21% versus 23%)
- Are better organized - practically all left wing parties in the SEE region have special women's organizations!
- Use quota regulations in their party statutes nearly twice as often then other parties.
- Have much more often elaborated general statements in their party programs and party declaration on gender equality issues
- Their women's organizations are better anchored in their party leaderships,
- They are equally connected or work a little bit more often with women's NGO-s, with other women party organizations and state bodies for gender equality

But:

Conservative and liberal parties:

- Are catching up left wing parties in the percentage of women in national party executive bodies
- In targeting of the women voters with special electoral promises.

**Conservative and liberal parties in SEE are taking the lead in:**

- **Share of the women party presidents and deputy presidents**
- **Cooperation with Trade Unions and experts**
- **Concrete policy issues that they develop as their public activities**

## CONCLUSIONS:

In the SEE region, joint efforts of international actors, such as CEE Network for Gender Issues, Stability Pact Gender Task Force, Norwegian People's Aid, OSCE, some UN agencies and nation wide cross-cutting networks of women activists, successfully put gender equality at the agenda of the most relevant parliamentary political parties. The main result was the same as in the most democratic old European countries, where relentless work of the strong social democratic parties forced all other parties to follow suite. In feministic theory this phenomenon is known as a "contagion effect".

However, there are three other much less understood outcomes of this process:

- ❖ This process has in effect created a new, SLOWLY BUT STEADILY GROWING target group of voters – emancipated women voters. These voters expect from all parties to target them with their electoral priorities and to openly compete for their votes with the offers of concrete gender equality policies.
- ❖ To make things more interesting, in the cases when in the electoral campaigns crucial opposing parties are neck to neck, these voters started to decide the outcomes of elections of state presidents (Finland, Austria, France, USA -2008?) and parliaments (Serbia 2000, Hungary 2002, Spain 2004, Austria 2007).
- ❖ In the SEE region too, left wing parties are not any more, like it used to be the case in the mid nineties of the former century, the only parties dealing with gender equality issues. For the first time in history, women in center and right wing parties are forging their own gender equality policies, in many very important issues – employment, pay gap, violence, political representation of women - on the common ground of the CEDAW or Beijing Plan for Action.
- ❖ Discovery of the big probability of success of the cross party women initiatives, born from the pure disappointment of women with the gender equality policies of all their mother parties in solving specific gender equality issues – political representation of women, violence against women, poverty eradication, abortion issue in same countries – has split the loyalty of women in politics, activists' and voters' alike, into the loyalty to their party and the loyalty to the common women's cause.
- ❖ The parties which do not understand this process and continue to deal with gender equality issues in the form of lip service, offering token women's representation, of demagogic electoral promises or which simply ignore this sphere of political strife for social hegemony - are going to loose.
- ❖ The challenge is even more difficult for the SD, labor and socialist parties for two reasons. Firstly Social democrat, socialists and labor parties can not renounce to build the broadest possible coalitions for making gender equality a real common value of the modern humankind, even if they risk to loose in this way, some of the uniqueness of their ideological profile. Secondly, their women members, activists and voters are much more demanding, then those from the other parties, and they expect from their parties not to bluff. They punish even small mistakes with the withdrawal from the active engagement in politics and even from the electorate. **Bluntly, left wing parties do not have any other choice than to take the lead of the whole process – the real question is HOW TO DO IT IN THE CHANGED AND EVERY DAY MORE COMPETITIVE CONSTALATION OF ACTORS?**