



РІВНІ МОЖЛИВОСТІ
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES INTER-FACTION UNION

Newsletter / № 2 (March 2015)

The Gender Equality Award. Spring 2015

On **March 23, 2015** MPs of Ukraine, members of the Equal Opportunities Inter-Faction Union **Iryna Gerashchenko, Maria Ionova, Iryna Lutsenko** and **Svitlana Zalishchuk** were given the **Gender Equality Award. Spring 2015** in the category "Cooperation between the government and civil society aimed to promote gender equality (59 session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women)."

The Gender Equality Award is given by the Women's Information Consultative Center and the International Women's Rights Centre "La Strada-Ukraine" twice a year on days of the spring and autumnal equinox. This year's honorary award that has a form of a green apple was first presented to the representatives of the government, who took an active part in the 59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

This award is an indication that the joint efforts of the representatives of the government and civil society are the key to further successful implementation of the equal opportunities policies in Ukraine.



59TH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The 59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women dedicated to evaluation of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action took place in New York **from 9 to 20 March 2015**. MPs of Ukraine, members of the Equal Opportunities Inter-Faction Union **Iryna Gerashchenko, Maria Ionova, Iryna Lutsenko** and **Svitlana Zalishchuk** took part in the public debates and round tables of the 59th session as part of the Ukrainian delegation and reported on the state of gender equality in Ukraine.



During the 59th session Ukrainian MPs raised a number of important issues such as: the rights of women in conflict in the Donbas region and increase in a number of women working on peaceful settlement of the conflict.

In particular, members of the Equal

Opportunities Inter-Faction Union met with the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos and discussed the issue of violence against women in the Donbas region and the need to monitor the violations of women's and children's rights in the conflict in the east of Ukraine.

The parliamentary delegation underlined that there is a need for the specialists with appropriate qualification and experience to collect data on the cases of violence against women and children with, which is why it is important to involve the UN mediators to



monitor the situation with women's and children's rights in Donbas. ,

In addition, MPs of Ukraine met with the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Šimonović and raised the issues of increasing the UN humanitarian mission. Given the fact that the humanitarian situation in Donetsk and Luhansk regions becomes more complicated, Ukraine needs additional support from the international community to effectively address the needs of people affected by the conflict.

<http://rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/105531.html>

The public called to ratify the Istanbul Convention

On **March 4**, the conference on combatting violence against women and gender stereotypes in the media, initiated by the Office of the Council of Europe in Ukraine under the Joint Programme between the European Union and the Council of Europe "Strengthening the Information Society in Ukraine" and the project "Implementation of European standards in the Ukrainian media environment", funded by the Government of Canada and the project "Preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in Ukraine", funded by the Swedish Government was held.

Iryna Lutsenko, MP of Ukraine took part in the conference on behalf of the Equal Opportunities Inter-Faction Union. At the conference Iryna Lutsenko underlined that a lot in the field of protection of women against violence is concealed. This applies particularly to the issues of domestic and sexual violence that has aggravated during conflict in the Donbas region.

The ratification of the Istanbul Convention is an important step towards solving this problem.

Further steps to ratify the Istanbul Convention and the mechanisms to prevent and combat domestic violence and violence against women were discussed at the conference.



https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1605361783030968&id=1568562916710855

THE EXHIBITION "WOMEN: PEACE AND WAR" WAS OPENED IN THE PERMANENT MISSION OF UKRAINE TO THE UN



On **March 9**, MPs of Ukraine, members of the Equal Opportunities Inter-Faction Union **Iryna Gerashchenko**, **Maria Ionova**, **Iryna Lutsenko** and **Svitlana Zalishchuk** together with Ukrainian Ambassador to UN **Yuriy Sergeyev** opened the exhibition "Women: Peace and War". The event was held at the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations in New York during the 59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Photo exhibition, which presents 40 works of the best Ukrainian photographers, is dedicated to the situation in the Donbas region and to the role of Ukrainian women in the peaceful settlement of the conflict. Photos illustrate the lives of women affected by the conflict, and women who make brave work to support the army and to help internally displaced persons.

The photo exhibition "Women: Peace and War" is another effective instrument to draw attention of the global community to the events in the Donbas region, and the opportunity to tell about the role of women in the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

40 photographs presented in the exhibition were shown in autumn in the frames of the

photo exhibition "Women and Conflict in Ukraine" organized by the UNFPA in Ukraine together with the Ministry of Social Policy and Ukrainian Women's Fund as part of the "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence" campaign. Previously photo exhibition was opened in Copenhagen with the assistance of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark Martin Lidegaard.

<http://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/105441.html>

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1608967609337052&id=1568562916710855



'Women, parties, quotas: how to achieve the gender equality in politics?'

Ukraine committed to achieving 30% representation of women in the parliament by 2015 under the UN Millennium Development Goals. However, this goal was not achieved, given the fact, that women constitute only 11.85% of the members of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine of the 8th convocation.

On **March 12**, a discussion "Women, parties, quotas: how to achieve the gender equality in politics?" took place in the Center for Visual Culture. Experts Olena Yena, Tamara Martseniuk, Olga Vesnyanka and Zakhar Popovych spoke about the world's best practices in applying gender quotas and perspectives of introducing quotas in Ukraine.



The participants discussed effective mechanisms of involving more women in politics. Studies show that the Ukrainian society demands change and political participation of women as those, who are associated with the new professional and managerial qualities necessary for effective reforms. Therefore, the introduction of gender quotas mechanism is timely. Quotas have to become an effective temporary mechanism to help increase women's political participation, to break the glass ceiling barrier in politics and to develop the gender culture in society.

MEETING WITH THE WOMEN'S CONSORTIUM OF UKRAINE



On **March 24**, members the Equal Opportunities Inter-Faction Union, MPs of Ukraine **Iryna Gerashchenko** and **Svitlana Zalishchuk** met with the representatives of the Women's Consortium of Ukraine. During the meeting the issue of increasing the representation of women in the executive and legislative authority was discussed.

2014 Ukraine's parliamentary elections were held after the introduction of the gender quota norm of law, which, however, was not applied properly by political parties. Gender election monitoring 2014, carried out by the Women's Consortium of Ukraine showed that the existing mechanisms for facilitating women's participation in politics are not enough. Hence, the participants raised the issue of integrating of gender quotas mechanism in election legislation of Ukraine.

Quotas will promote equal participation of women in politics on both national and local level, which becomes especially important before Ukraine's 2015 local elections. Members of the Equal Opportunities Inter-Faction Union are convinced that at least 30% of women should be in the upper part of the party list of candidates, and that political party not following this rule should be fined and excluded from the election process.

Women's representation in political parties' lists is one of the most effective tools to provide women with access to power and to help them expand their influence on making political decisions that really meet citizens' needs.

Women politicians focus on addressing urgent social and economic issues and initiate the real change and effective reforms in politics. Therefore, introduction of the gender quotas mechanism and the increase in a number of women in politics has real practical implications for improving the well-being of citizens.

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1615542902012856&id=1568562916710855

The German Parliament approved gender quotas

On **March 6**, Bundestag voted the “Law for the Equal Participation of Women and Men in Leadership Positions in the private and public sectors”, according to which gender quotas in the governing bodies of companies and agencies were introduced. In particular, starting from January 1, 2016 at least 30% of seats in the governing body of a private company or public corporation should be given to women.

Starting from 2018 this threshold will be increased to 50%!

<http://www.rbc.ua/ukr/news/parlament-germanii-vvel-gendernye-kvoty-06032015173400>

«Progress towards gender equality remains insufficient in employment sector»

The report on this topic was presented by the International Labour Organization before the International Day for Women's Rights and International Peace. According to the data presented in the report, women's position in the labour market has only slightly improved over the past 20 years after the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Thus, the number of working women is 50% compared to 77% of men. Women are the owners and managers of 30% of small businesses. Women make 19 % of the board members of companies, and they hold only 5% and less senior executive positions in the world's largest corporations.

http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_348035/lang-en/index.htm

<http://www.rbc.ua/ukr/news/nasozdanie-ravnyh-trudovyh-prav-muzhchin-i-zhenshchin-potrebuyutsya-06032015133800>

Women who fight for women's rights.

"Seven" women's stories

The issue of equal rights and opportunities of women and men is now important for any society. Women and men naturally have the same rights and gender-based privileges and restrictions are prohibited in most countries of the world. However, women are forced to continue to fight for their rights, to stand for the equal with men position in society and in politics. Women continue to suffer from unequal treatment, discrimination, and even worse from violence - physical, mental, moral and economic.

Women who fight for women's rights fight for rights of all mankind. Stories of such seven women activists are portrayed in the documentary play "Seven," which was presented on **March 26**, with the support of the Swedish Embassy in Ukraine, Ukrainian Women's Fund and the Swedish Institute.



The play is based on interviews and life stories of seven women activists from Northern Ireland, Russia, Guatemala, Pakistan, Cambodia and Nigeria.

Different continents, different countries, different life stories and different destinies, but one fight - the fight against discrimination, domestic and sexual violence, physical violence and abuse of women's rights, both in their private lives and in society at large. Each story told in the play in its own way sounds true for Ukraine, where women's voices very often remain unheard, and where the issue of women's rights violations should be raised as often as possible.

The play "Seven" travels around the world and has been shown 150 times in 32 countries. In Ukraine, seven women's stories read: Ada Rogovtseva, Svyatoslav Vakarchuk, Sergiy Zhadan, Oksana Zabuzhko, Mustafa Naiem, Oksana Syroid and Tamila Tasheva. (photo from Ukrainian Women's Fund Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ICFUkrainianWomensFund/photos/a.1616201755265471.1073741845.1377841039101545/1616201778598802/?type=3&theater>) <https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1616201755265471.1073741845.1377841039101545&type=1>

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