



РІВНІ МОЖЛИВОСТІ
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES INTER-FACTION UNION

Newsletter / № 3 (April 2015)

PAST EVENTS

On May 10, 2015 Mother's Day was celebrated on the initiative of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine and "For the Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union of Kyiv Council in the M.M. Hryshko National Botanical Garden.

We invited representatives of public and international organizations and all interested persons to join the celebration of Mother's Day. MPs of Ukraine, members of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union and the deputies of Kyiv City councilors, members of the "For the Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union were invited to the event. During the celebration the representatives of authorities planted Oriental cherry tries in the botanical garden.

Anyone could participate in master classes on making a present for mother, the fair of sweets and handicrafts and festive concert.

THE INTER-REGIONAL FORUM "WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND EURASIA REGION"

On **April 16-17**, the Inter-regional Forum "Women's Leadership in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia region", organized by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) with support of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) in cooperation with the Office for Democracy Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) was held in Belgrade, Serbia.



More than 50 women politicians, civic activists and entrepreneurs took part in the event to discuss the priorities of women's political and economic participation, areas of cooperation in various sectors to create alliances to promote women as well as security issues and to ensure women's rights during the conflict.

NDI/Ukraine organized working visit of Ukrainian MPs, members of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union **Lilia Hrynevych**, **Maria Ionova** and **Iryna Gerashchenko** to Belgrade, Serbia. Together with Mary O'Heygen, Senior Resident Director of NDI/Ukraine, and Olena Yena, Senior Manager of the Women Lead Program NDI/Ukraine, MPs of Ukraine took part in the Forum and discussed a number of issues related to the problem of women's empowerment and prevention of discrimination.

The "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union expresses its gratitude to NDI for organizing the visit and for the opportunity to get acquainted with the best international practices of establishing equal rights and opportunities in all spheres of public life.

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1624702291096917&id=1568562916710855

Conference on Women, Peace and Security

On **April 20**, conference on Women, Peace and Security, organized by the OSCE in cooperation with UN Women was held in Vilnius, Lithuania. MP of Ukraine, Co-chair of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union **Maria Ionova** took part in the conference, devoted to the assessment of the progress of promoting women's role in ensuring peace and security in the OSCE region.



The participants, including the President of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė, the OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier and OSCE Adviser Miroslava Beham, raised a number of topical issues related to strengthening women's participation in peace-making processes and increasing their role in decision-making on peace and security. Maria Ionova, MP of Ukraine, informed about the progress in the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on women, peace and security and emphasized that the government is delaying the signing of the National Action Plan for implementation of the UNSCR 1325. The members of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union will actively insist on implementation of the National Plan and fulfilment of other international obligations in the field of gender equality by the government.

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WOMEN SHOULD TAKE MORE ACTIVE PART IN POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING AND IN PEACE-MAKING PROCESS IN UKRAINE

A wide range of issues related to the implementation of the equal opportunity policies were discussed during the Inter-regional Forum "Women's Leadership in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia region" held in Belgrade. MPs of Ukraine, taking part in the Forum with support of NDI/Ukraine, informed about the state of addressing gender equality in Ukraine and the key achievements and challenges in implementing the policy of equal opportunities. In particular, **Lilia Hrynevych**, Co-chair of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union noted that underrepresentation of women in political decision-making process remains one of the key issues in the field of gender. MP of Ukraine told about the legislative initiatives of women MPs to support women's leadership, including introduction of gender quotas in election legislation.



Besides, participants of the Forum paid special attention to discussing security issues and how to ensure women's rights during the conflict. MPs of Ukraine, **Maria Ionova** and **Iryna Gerashchenko** informed about the problems women face during the conflict in the Donbas region and emphasized importance of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Given the fact, that the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, signed by Ukraine in 2000, calls all parties of the conflict to fully comply with the international standards ensuring the rights of women and girls, its implementation is especially important for Ukraine during conflict in the Donbas region.

Maria Ionova, MP of Ukraine, Co-chair of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union informed about women's participation in peace-making processes in the Donbas region during the event and showed photos of the exhibition "Women: Peace and War", illustrating the important role of women in conflict settlement as a proof. Spreading accurate and reliable information about the conflict in eastern Ukraine is a key condition to better understand its consequences and to counter Russian propaganda.

Members of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union got acquainted with the experience of other countries that passed through the military conflicts, and with their practices of overcoming and preventing conflicts, as well as ensuring women's rights during the conflict and in the post-conflict process.

<http://iportal.rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/107526.html>

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=1625411607692652&id=1568562916710855

"EU Gender Policy: can we implement best European practices in Ukraine?"

On **April 20**, a conference dedicated to the introduction of the European experience of policy of equal rights and opportunities, organized by the International Centre for Policy Studies (ICPS) was held.



MP of Ukraine, Co-Chair of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union **Lilia Hrynevych** took part in the conference and informed participants about the legislative initiatives of the members of the Caucus that are called to create additional conditions for equal access of women and men to decision-making legislature and in the local government bodies.

The participants, including the Ambassador of Sweden to Ukraine Andreas von Bekerat, Chairman of ICPS Vasyl Filipchuk, Kyiv City counselor Natalia Shulga and gender expert Tamara Martseniuk were unanimous that promoting public dialogue on the importance of gender equality is vital condition for improving gender policy. In particular, it is necessary to inform citizens about the positive examples and results of the gender equality in all spheres of life in the EU.

<http://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/107754.html>

THE "EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES" INTER-FACTION UNION INSISTS ON ADOPTING THE BILL №1456

On **April 23**, Co-Chairs of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union **Olena Kondratiuk**, **Lilia Hrynevych** and **Aliona Babak** had a working meeting with representatives of the **International Foundation for Electoral System (IFES)** David Ennis, Peter Erben and Tatiana Bibik.

The state of election legislation reform in Ukraine and implementation of an effective mechanism for gender quotas was discussed during the meeting.

Members of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union underlined that it is important to adapt changes in the Ukrainian legislation to eliminate the barriers for women's political participation. For this purpose, members of the Caucus registered the bill

№1456 «On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of Ukraine (regarding equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the electoral process).»

Co-Chair of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-faction Union Olena Kondratiuk informed that the bill will ensure that no less than 30% and no more than 70% of representatives of each gender will be among the top ten



candidates of the electoral list and no more than 60% of the each gender will be among the top five candidates of the electoral list. She also underlined that the adoption of the law before the 2015 local elections will give an impetus to change and

update the public dialogue on women's political participation as a guaranty for effective political process.

The "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union and IFES agreed to cooperate for adopting the bill №1456.

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VISIT OF THE UKRAINIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON DC



Members of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-faction Union, MPs of Ukraine **Olena Kondratiuk, Lilia Hrynevych, Iryna Gerashchenko, Maria Ionova** and **Aliona Babak** made a working visit to Washington DC (USA), organized by the International Republican Institute (IRI). Within a five-day visit the Ukrainian parliamentary delegation held a series of meetings with senators and congressmen to discuss the current situation in Donbas region and in Ukraine in general. In particular, MPs of Ukraine met with Senator John McCain, representatives of Senator Bob Korker, congressmen Kelly Ayotti and Peter Roskam. The situation in the Donbas region was one of the key issues discussed at the meetings.

The conflict in eastern Ukraine was the key topic of the discussion "Ukraine in the war and reform", held at the International Republican Institute. MPs of Ukraine had the opportunity to inform American colleagues about the humanitarian situation in the east of Ukraine and to present the latest data on victims of the conflict, both military and civilian. Maria Ionova, Co-Chair of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-faction Union informed IRI about the problems of internally displaced persons, especially women and children who suffer the effects of the conflict the most. MPs of Ukraine called congressmen and senators to increase financial and humanitarian assistance to address the issues of displaced persons and to restore the basic infrastructure on the liberated territories of Donetsk and Lugansk regions.

Special attention was paid to human rights violations on the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Lugansk regions and in Crimea. MP of Ukraine Olena Kondratiuk underlined that it's important to consolidate international efforts to liberate Nadia Savchenko. Olena Kondratiuk handed Senator McCain and representatives of the US State Department the so called "Savchenko's list", which includes 35 people directly involved in the abduction, transfer and illegal detention and manufacturing false evidence in the case against Nadia Savchenko. She informed about the steps taken by the Ukrainian authorities to provide information sovereignty of Ukraine and to implement the media reforms aimed to spread socially important information

American experts and politicians were especially interested in the reform process in Ukraine. Thus, the current state of economic and political reforms in Ukraine was discussed at the meetings with John Herbst, head of the Eurasian Center at the Atlantic Council and other experts of the Atlantic Council, representatives of the Foreign Policy Initiative NGO and Freedom House analysts. MPs of Ukraine underlined that the Ukrainian authorities are aimed at carrying out effective reforms in all spheres of public life and fulfilling international obligations.

MP of Ukraine Aliona Babak informed about the key directions of economic reforms and a number of measures taken to combat corruption that is a key aspect of a reform process and Ukraine's European integration. However, not only the concept of economic development is aimed at European integration. Prospects of European integration cause the necessity to form an effective policy of equal rights and opportunities for women and men. It was underlined by Lilia Hrynevych, the MP Ukraine, who informed about the activities of "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union and the key legislative initiatives aimed to improve the situation of women and to increase the level of their political participation. Given the fact that gender equality is one of the preconditions of European integration of Ukraine, MPs of Ukraine are working on a number of initiatives to support women's leadership and ensure women's rights during the conflict in the Donbas region, which has become a key challenge for all Ukrainian women. Lilia Hrynevych informed about the main directions of the education reform in Ukraine and work of the profile parliamentary committee.

The "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union is grateful to the International Republican Institute and personally to Senator John McCain for the well-organized visit and for the opportunity to meet with the US parliamentarians, political experts and representatives of NGOs and tell the truth about the current situation in Ukraine.

<http://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/108527.html>

Interview for Voice of America



Maria Ionova: "We want Senator McCain to put further pressure regarding sanctions. We also spoke about Nadia Savchenko, who we are proud of. As women, we want to communicate that every woman in Ukraine is for peace».

<http://ukrainian.voanews.com/content/savchenko-list-to-mccain/2739837.html>



Lilia Hrynevych: "Today Ukraine suffers huge losses and its economic potential went down for approximately 20% due to the war, but the worst are the terrible human losses."

<http://ukrainian.voanews.com/media/video/ukraine-osivta-grynevych/2736704.html>



Aliona Babak: "Ukraine today is a test for the international community on support for the democracy and human freedoms."

<http://ukrainian.voanews.com/media/video/alyona-babak-samopomich/2739693.html>



Iryna Gerashchenko: "The key task we have is to help integrate 1.200000 internally displaced persons into a new life."

<http://ukrainian.voanews.com/media/video/gerashchenko-dnr-lnr-socialni-vyplaty/2743501.html?z=1686&zp=1>

Senator John McCain visited a photo exhibition about Donbas



On **April 27** MPs of Ukraine, co-chairs of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union **Maria Ionova, Olena Kondratiuk, Aliona Babak** and **Lilia Hrynevych** with support of the International Republican Institute (IRI), presented the exhibition

"Donbas: Peace and War " and "Women: Peace and War", which was launched in Russell Senate Building in Washington DC. Senator John McCain, true friend of Ukraine, became the first visitor of the exhibition, which is aimed to illustrate the most dramatic events in the Donbas region for the international community and at the same time inform them about the important role of women in the peaceful settlement of the conflict.

MPs of Ukraine informed Senator McCain about the difficult humanitarian situation in the east of the country and problems of internally displaced women and children, as well as people affected by the conflict in the Donbas region. Members of the Ukrainian parliamentary delegation toured the exhibition together with the senator. Maria Ionova, MP of Ukraine told John McCain stories of women behind the photos presented in the exhibition and emphasized significant role of Ukrainian women in the peaceful settlement of the conflict. MPs urged to increase financial and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine, needed to address the problems of internally displaced persons and to restore critical infrastructure on the liberated territories of Luhansk and Donetsk regions. In her conversation with Senator McCain Maria Ionova emphasized the importance further strengthening sanction against Russia as the aggressor country.

<http://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/108419.html>



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