



РІВНІ МОЖЛИВОСТІ
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES INTER-FACTION UNION

Newsletter / № 6 (July 2015)

The Law "On Local Elections" was adopted with the gender quota norm

On July 14, 2015 the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted a new draft law on local elections in the second reading and as a whole. The European norm of mandatory representation of no less than 30% representatives of one gender in electoral list was introduced into the law for the first time. In accordance with an Article 36 of the Law of Ukraine "On Local Elections" the political party is required to provide no less than 30% representation of the representatives of the same gender in the electoral lists.

This norm was introduced into the Law of Ukraine "On Local Elections" by MP of Ukraine **Olena Kondratiuk**. The requirement to introduce gender quotas in election legislation was actively supported by MPs of Ukraine, co-chairs and members of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union **Maria Ionova**, **Lilia Hrynevych**, **Aliona Babak**, **Iryna Gerashchenko** and **Iryna Lutsenko**, who along with the colleagues conducted a series of meetings and consultations on this issue with the President of Ukraine, the Chairperson of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, members of the Parliamentary Committees and representatives of civil society and NGOs.

PREVENTING AND COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: TOWARDS RATIFICATION OF THE ISTAMBUL CONVENTION

On July 2, 2015 on the initiative of Iryna Lutsenko, member the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union, a round table on the prospects for ratification and further implementation of the Istanbul Convention was held in the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. The event was organized in cooperation with the Office of the Council of Europe in Ukraine with the support of the Council of Europe Project "Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence in Ukraine", funded by the Swedish Government and implemented by the Office of the Council of Europe in Ukraine. MPs of Ukraine, members of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union, **Iryna Lutsenko** and **Lilia Hrynevych**, members of profile Parliamentary Committees **Iryna Suslova** and **Yurii Miroshnychenko**, representatives of the Office of the Council of Europe in Ukraine and delegates of the project "Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence in Ukraine", Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, representatives of the ministries and departments and of the public sector took part in the event. The participants exchanged views on the commitment to intensify the joint efforts of the Parliament and the Government towards ratification of the Istanbul Convention, which is an important condition for the introduction of European standards in the field of combating domestic violence.



The Istanbul Convention is based on the concept of the so-called four "P" - prevention, protection, prosecution and integrated, comprehensive policy. Implementation of these four principles helps develop an effective policy aimed at protection against domestic violence and violence against women, establish criminal liability of those responsible, and also helps prevent these facts. The Istanbul Convention applies to all forms of violence against women both in the peacetime and in the situations of armed conflict. Experts believe that its implementation is particularly relevant now, when the number of internally displaced persons in Ukraine is growing, and there is a spike of violence in the families of soldiers who return from the area of the anti-terrorist operation. The ratification of the Istanbul Convention provides amendments to the six Codes and 15 Laws of Ukraine, so the Parliament and the public sector should join their efforts for comprehensive and systematic introduction of changes into the Ukrainian legislation.

<http://rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/112980.html>

A session on planning the women's wing of the political party "Block of Petro Poroshenko "Solidarnist"



On **July 6-7, 2015** a session on planning the women's wing of the party "Block of Petro Poroshenko" Solidarnist" was held.

30 women activists from different regions of Ukraine took part in the event. MPs of Ukraine, members of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union **Maria Ionova, Iryna Lutsenko** and **Iryna Friz** shared with participants their political experience and their views on the state of the gender equality in Ukrainian politics. Participants discussed the role of political parties in increasing the level of women's representation in the political decision-making process, and the importance of women's wings in the political parties increasing women's political participation.

Political parties are the primary mechanism for women to get access to elected positions. Therefore, an important step towards increasing women's political participation is to increase their participation and role in political parties. It is especially important to increase women's political participation under the socio-economic changes Ukraine is going through, because women bring in new vision to address urgent problems of the citizens and initiate necessary changes.

The event was organized with the support of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

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MEETING WITH THE CANADIAN GENDER EXPERT BETH WORONIUK

On **July 10, 2015** the co-Chair of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union **Lilia Hrynevych** met with **Beth Woroniuk**, the Canadian gender expert, a member of the Steering Committee of the Women, Peace and Security of Canada and **Natalia Rogulina**, coordinator of the Partnership for Local Economic Development and Democratic Governance Program, funded by the Government of Canada.

Ms. Woroniuk was interested in the Caucus's activities and the key legislative initiatives of its members. **Lilia Hrynevych** presented the work of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union and informed about the main directions of improving gender legislation in Ukraine. In particular, she informed about the Caucus's initiatives to introduce gender quotas to increase the level of women's representation in governance at the national and local levels. Women's economic empowerment and support for the entrepreneurial initiatives of internally displaced women



were discussed in the meeting. **Lilia Hrynevych** explained that women in Ukraine, especially women IDPs do not have enough money to start their own business. Therefore the international assistance for the development of economic reintegration programs, and support for women's micro-credit business projects is required. According to **Beth Woroniuk** it is important to analyze gender disaggregated statistics – disaggregate the data about the owners of small- and medium-sized enterprises, wages and unemployment by gender in order to more effectively attract investments in local communities in Ukraine. This will help identify the main trends in the labor market and priority areas to attract investments.

Beth Woroniuk is an expert of the Partnership for Local Economic Development and Democratic Governance Program funded by the Government of Canada, which is why she paid special attention to the discussion of the urgent issues that not only victims of the conflict and internally displaced women, but also the Ukrainian communities deal with as a consequence of the conflict in the east of Ukraine. After all, women and children suffer the most as a result of the relocation, whereas women in local communities bear the main burden of supporting IDPs.

In addition, the issue of granting Ukraine additional support for training professional psychologists for rehabilitation and adaptation of women and children affected by the conflict was raised in the meeting. **Lilia Hrynevych** expressed appreciation to the Government of Canada and the Ukrainian community in Canada for the diplomatic, financial and humanitarian support and expressed hope for further cooperation.

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MEETING WITH THE SENATOR TOMAS E. DASCHLE



On **July 10, 2015** MPs of Ukraine, members of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union **Ivanna Klympush-Tsyntsadze** and **Leonid Yemets** met with the former US Senator and the vice chair of the National Democratic Institute **Thomas E. Daschle** and representatives of the NDI/Ukraine **Mary O'Hagan, Mario Mitre, Olena Yena** and **Vitalia Deriabina**.

Opening the meeting, **Ivanna Klympush-Tsyntsadze** noticed positive dynamics in increasing women's representation in the Ukrainian parliament and strengthening women's role in political decision-making process. In particular, she emphasized that for the first time seven Committees of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine are headed by women MPs. These

are the key committees such as: Committee on Taxation and Customs Policy, Committee on European Integration, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Committee on Freedom of Speech and Information, Committee on Science and Education, Committee on Public Health, Committee on Social Policy and Labour.

Thomas E. Daschle, who is the founder and CEO of the Dashle Group, former U.S. Senate majority leader and Vice Chair of the National Democratic Institute, was interested not only in gender equality issues, but also in the reform process in Ukraine. So, besides the growth of the women's parliamentary activity, law enforcement reform, judicial system reform, local elections and the prospects of adopting the constitutional amendments on decentralization were discussed in the meeting.

MPs of Ukraine noted that the reform process in Ukraine is complicated, because it requires not only serious and balanced decisions, but also additional funding. The anti-terrorist operation and the consequences of the conflict require budget expenditures on the daily basis, thus the situation is really complicated.



Conducting constructive and dynamic reforms is particularly important for the Ukrainian government, considering the conflict in the east of Ukraine. **Ivanna Klympush-Tsyntsadze** emphasised that the current parliament interacts with the civil society much better and experiences more civil society pressure to conduct effective reforms.

One of the key messages **Senator Daschle** received from MPs of Ukraine, was the need to support internally displaced and conflict affected people by means of funding programs aimed at their social and economic reintegration. **Senator Daschle** prepared a publication about his working visit to Ukraine and called on the US authority to support Ukraine. To read Tom Daschle's article "Ukraine Can't Survive on its Own" please follow the link below.

<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/07/ukraine-cant-survive-on-its-own-120383.html#.VbCWzfmqqkr>

MEETING WITH THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE OSCE CHAIRMANSHIP-IN-OFFICE ON GENDER ISSUES AMBASSADOR MELANNE VERVEER

On **July 15, 2015** members of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union met with **Melanne Verveer**, the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office on Gender Issues. MPs of Ukraine **Olena Kondratiuk**, **Maria Ionova**, **Aliona Babak**, **Iryna Gerashchenko**, **Ivanna Klympush-Tsyntsadze** and **Hanna Hopko** took part in the meeting.



monitoring in the east of Ukraine and collection of the data on the women's rights violations were discussed. These statistics will help to better assess the situation and provide better assistance to conflict affected people.

Participants discussed the problem of increasing women's participation in government. Given the fact that the day before, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Law "On Local Elections", which includes gender quota, the importance of the law was discussed at the meeting. Besides, the question of further steps for successful implementation of gender quotas was raised. In particular, the Co-chair of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union **Olena Kondratiuk** said that it is important to implement training programs and to train women-



candidates in cooperation with international organizations to help women engage more effectively to local governments.

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Melanne Verveer noted that given the current difficult situation in Ukraine it is important to pay more attention to Ukraine's successes on the way to reforms and European integration of the country.

The meeting was also attended by the following participants: **Daniel Bekcic**, **Ana Lukatela** and **Tetyana Rudenko**, representing OSCE, **Marcin Walecki**, Chief of ODIHR's Democratic Governance and Gender Unit, **Mayesha Alam**, Associate Director of the Institute



<http://rada.gov.ua/news/Novyny/113876.html>

THE MEMBERS OF THE "EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES" INTER-FACTION UNION AND THE UN WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES AGREED TO COOPERATE

On **July 23, 2015** a meeting of the members of the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union **Lilia Hrynevych** and **Svitlana Zalishchuk** and the UN Women representatives was held. **Oksana Kisselyova**, UN Women Programme Coordinator, **Sabine Freizer**, the Policy Adviser, Governance, Peace and Security for UN Women's Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and **Anastasia Divinskaya**, a newly appointed UN Women gender adviser took part in the meeting.



Assuming that UN Women is expanding its activities in Ukraine, the meeting was devoted to establishing the cooperation between the Caucus and UN Women in the area of gender equality and regarding the ways to involve women in the peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery process in the east of Ukraine.

The issues of participation of women MPs in the peaceful settlement of the conflict in the east of Ukraine and their activities aimed at supporting the internally displaced persons, women and children affected by conflict were discussed in the meeting.

Anastasia Divinskaya noted that UN Women will further improve their strategies for integrating gender equality and women's issues to the UN humanitarian agencies work. Considering this, the UN Women

representatives and MPs of Ukraine, who visit conflict affected areas on a regularly basis, have to joint their efforts to respond promptly and effectively in order to ensure the urgent needs of the most vulnerable groups of people in Luhansk and Donetsk regions.

The issue of increasing women's political participation was also discussed during the meeting. In particular, participants deliberated on the matter of the effective implementation of gender quotas mechanism during local elections in the autumn 2015. **Lilia Hrynevych** underlined that despite the limited time frame, the "Equal Opportunities" Inter-Faction Union is trying to engage the international organizations for implementation of training programs for women-candidates. MPs and the UN Women representatives were unanimous that it is also important to ensure that elected women have an opportunity to improve their professional skills after elections for more effective work in the government authorities.



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