

Narrativer Report WG Women and Gender realities in the OSCE region - Teil 2: Albanien, Kosovo, Nord-Mazedonien

Overall topic: How to implement the WPS Agenda?

Social context: highly patriarchal, with high rates of SGBV, fear and discrimination – especially in rural area – of social depression (feelings of helplessness- powerlessness), economic difficulties (high prices, inflation, lack of qualified employment – especially for women), problems in the educational sector with partly ethnic separation, language problems in a broader sense linked to various disadvantages and discrimination, (ongoing) traumatisation through experiences during the war with deportation, bombing, loses, destruction, refugees, hate. Partly the people are exposed to re-traumatisation through the Ukrainian war and many more difficulties to manage daily life. Young students in Kosova told us that ½ of their comrades with good education would love to leave the country.

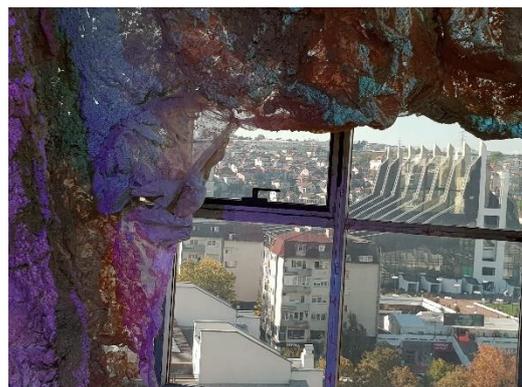
We met strong women’s organisations and well developed feminist civil society for a transformative agenda, active in numerous fields: giving space and voices to women, defending rights and freedoms (e.g. as lawyers, social workers), working on NAPs 1325 and their localisation – but complaining about lack of implementation, dissociation of existing laws and practice, and the danger of being co-opted more and more by institutions and States). Intersectionality, intergenerational commitment are key elements and the exchange with women’s groups and (international) organisations from neighbouring countries as well as in a specific way of Europe are crucial to hear different narratives and experiences, hopes and challenges, to find common ways, solidarity and support.

In the political context: Very different situations in the 3 countries but also similarities and interconnectedness – everywhere women working hard locally, regionally, internationally connected and cross-borders - but don’t see real changes for their roles, rights and freedoms.

The biggest problems lie in the difficulties and frustrations with the EU accession process. There is a great interest to strengthen and re-animate the Berlin process- and not the “open Balkan” concept - by politicians and people from Think Tanks that we met. There is influence from a lot of players in the region for their specific and very problematic interests : Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia...There is continuous fight against corruption and not sustainable foreign (and partly diaspora) investments (in all areas but very visible in the construction area in Pristina) and lack of support for sustainable development which is a critical issue in countries of more than 90% of dependence from coal (3rd biggest reservoir in Europe, 5th world-wide!) – Very competent and committed politicians and NGOs (with still not enough support from the international movements – climate activists, ecologists to follow the line of “leave it in the ground” and instead support renewable energies.

There is also constant fear of new tensions and disputes about borders, ethnics, fuelled immensely by the Russian war against Ukraine and old/new players such as Turkey, Russia,

Artistic context: The **Manifesta** in Prishtina accompanied artistically many of the challenges in Kosovo: How to (re-) use public space for creative action, awareness raising of problems from the past , present and future, support for commons, meetings and initiatives for the society as a whole and women in particular. How to deal with violence and violent experiences in a constructive way was a great ambition realised by local and international artists – many women artists and performers and feminist views. How to spare energies and resources and use and create more sustainability in thinking and acting was another major issue.



1. Tirana und Durres 20./21.10.22:



Annalisa Milani/It, Mina Damnjanovic/Sr, Heidi Meinzolt/D participate in a meeting with the Albanian Women's movement at the occasion of "22nd Anniversary of women's rights protection and women's empowerment". We were deeply impressed by the continuity of their

commitment in so many fields – from local handicraft support to women's spaces and political discussions. We profited of the occasion to exchange different practices and challenges of the implementation of UNSCR1325 in a local/regional context with women from the region and talk about support and solidarity. A short exchange with the Swedish and French ambassadors was interesting accompanying the great presentation and exhibition of women's work on the ground.



2. Prishtina 19. and /22.-26.10.22

a) Civil society meetings: Participants: Annemarie Sancar and Rut-Gaby Vermot/CH, Edlira /Al, Heidi Meinzolt/D, Mina Damnjanovic/Se, Annalisa Milani/It meet with different NGOs: Kosova Women's network (Igo Rugova and team), Partners Kosova (e.g. Shukrie Gashi, Nora Ahmetaj), Forum for Civic Initiatives (Dajana Berisha), u.a., Studentinnen, Anwältinnen, young women human rights defenders and peace builders.

Topics: Learning from History, challenges of women's life and realities, exchange of different narratives, solidarity actions, political activities from local to global, and reporting, how to channel Track 3 initiatives to Tr2 and Tr1, planning of assessments on the situation of women, needs and specific challenges in the field of human security, safety, collecting stories for a kind of living library, information on conflict



cycles and a preventive role of women in early warning, early action, development of a common feminist strategy for Kosovo and a new peace architecture, changing mind sets of decision makers, working on toxic masculinity, creating safe spaces , organising local dialogues and developing a common language for the participation in “peace tables”.



b) Participation in the high level WPS Forum “Building alliances for Sustainable Peace” – organised by the president of Kosovo with numerous very inspiring contacts local, regional, national, international. HM participated as coordinator of the OSCE WG in a plenary session on “Foster participation. Empower women - Build peace”.

Discussions with governmental representatives of Kosovo, a short conversation with Anna Lührmann - German state secretary – and other politicians from the region and Think Tanks completed the presence on the European enlargement process - chances of strengthening the Berlin Process, launching sustainable development initiatives. Presentation of the book 1325 - facts and fables by the team of Igo Rugova.



Participation on official invitation in the feminist workshop on women and peace processes, resilience and empowerment. How to build support mechanisms in all conflict settings. How to implement better the WPS Agenda, based on human security processes and feminist transformative agendas, disarmament, prevention in a multilateral framework and organize better dealing with the past – learning for the present and envision the future.



3. Skopje 26.-27.10.

I organised meetings with young women from the Think Tank “Institut for democracy” working mostly on research and projects in the field of democratic and sustainable development and European processes. They are



also part of the women’s network Stella for mentoring and awareness raising for young women interested in feminist perspectives; they open spaces – townhall discussions - collect books for rural libraries, support rights and needs with solidarity and empowerment activities. At the end I

presented the CSP WG in preparation of the upcoming OSCE chairpersonship and eventual useful connections to position a feminist agenda in the framework of the CSP and OSCE. The WG will contribute to detailed analysis, assessments, using OSCE chairpersonship and a greater awareness in the region and supported by the international group on gendered issues.

The group will continue working and enlarging connections in Northern Macedonia during the next months in preparation of a meeting in 2023.



4. Cooperation with the WG on women and gender realities for the next future

What the CSP WG can offer: Exchanging experiences and narratives, transporting regional knowledge and possibilities of civil society into political decision making, institutions, Think Tanks, express solidarity and sisterhood.

Some examples: Covid stories (Armenia), critical approaches to Feminist Foreign policy (Germany), Stop violence against women and training in self-defence and women’s empowerment (Serbia, Italy, Austria), reloading 1325 and stop war (Switzerland), Analysing why peace processes failed (Bosnia), conflict prevention and empowerment of women (all) , countering violent extremism, fake news and toxic masculinity as well as de-gendering and right-wing developments all over Europe (and the world), discuss justice and rights, document crimes against humanity, discuss borders in the context of refugees and (forced) displacement, visa regulations, business and human rights (Ukraine, Armenia, Kirgizstan) and more.

The next meeting possibility is in Armenia/Yerevan 18.-20.11.22 and end of November in Lodz/Poland around the CSP parallel conference and the final OSCE conference for the Polish chairpersonship. In between there are several online meetings to follow the agenda.

The agenda is full. Women can make a change when united!

Stop the war! Support and strengthen multilateralism!