

Gender Equality in terms of legislation

Keriman SADIKAY (Kosovo)

Kosovo is a new state, and as such has attached great importance to gender equality. Awareness of the society about this issue is important to create legislation. Given that war brings great suffering for both men and women, they have had to carefully overcome these experiences. Women in particular have experienced severe suffering as mothers, sisters and wives. But, with the emergence of a new era in education and employment after the war, women have rebuilt the state of Kosovo, side-by-side with men.

Since the war, the government of Kosovo has taken concrete steps to reach meaningful equality in society. To achieve this aim, the government of Kosovo has drafted its own legislation concerning gender equality. The Law on Gender Equality and Family Law include provisions for the protection and care of women in family and society, as well as the Law of Nonviolence and the Anti-Discrimination Law.

To better execute legislation, the government of Kosovo established both implementation and monitoring mechanisms. An assembly framework was established for the Parliamentary Commission for Human Rights, Gender Equality, Missing Persons and Petitions, and the Agency for Gender Equality, Office for Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Gender Issues was created under the Prime Minister. Human Rights Units have been established in each ministry, in which Gender Equality Officers within the Ministry report directly to the Secretary General. These units are coordinated by the Office for Good Governance. These mechanisms have also been well established in municipalities, with one human rights unit formed in each municipality. Officials in these units provide assistance in the implementation, coordination and monitoring of legislation, as well as address complaints made in implementing the legislation.

The Government of Kosovo has applied a quota of a 30% increase of women in decision-making processes. As a result, the number of women in Parliament has increased and even exceeds the quota of 30%. Presently in Parliament the representation of women is 40%.

It should be noted that the President of Kosovo is a young woman, and the Kosovo government has two female Deputy Prime Ministers. Women are also in positions as Ministers and Deputy Ministers, as well as female Counselors. The Ministry also has a considerable number of female department heads.

As well, the government also organizes trainings and campaigns on women's rights

for officials, non-governmental organizations and the media.

The government of Kosovo has also had good cooperation with non-governmental organizations on gender equality. In Kosovo, there are a great many of these organizations, which have also created networks of women. These organizations have taken active part in drafting legislation and monitoring.

The government also gives priority to women, minorities and persons with disabilities when applications are submitted for employment.

In Kosovo's society women have a more favorable position in education and economic decision-making. This does, of course, leave room for improvement, as there still is a great deal of work to do, in particular raising awareness in the private sector with regard to employing more women and creating favorable positions in decision-making. However, given that Kosovo, as a new state and with a very young population, still faces high unemployment, women continue to face problems which have been created by the economic situation.

The Kosovo government and society continue to move forward with efforts related to gender equality. Today, as the International Day against Violence against Women, we see city billboards that say "Stop Violence against Women" and "Communicate with Words, not Violence." As well, Kosovo marked October, the month of breast cancer awareness, with a number of awareness raising activities, including free breast checks (mammography) at clinics and hospitals and billboards around the country.

In this way, the Kosovo government and the society in which I live are taking the proper steps to ensure gender equality.