



**4<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
OF RWL SEE**

**“ON THE ROAD TO EMPOWERING  
WOMEN IN POLITICS,  
PEACE PROCESSES AND EU  
INTEGRATION”**

*Convened by*

*The Regional Women's Lobby for  
Peace, Security and Justice in South East  
Europe (RWL SEE)*

*September 18-19, 2014  
Saranda, Albania*



## ***SUMMARY OF THE CONFERENCE***

On September 18 and 19, 2014, in Saranda, Albania, the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe (RWL SEE), organized an international conference, "On the Road to Empowering Women in Politics, Peace Processes and EU Integration." The agenda is attached as Annex 1 to this report.

### **The Goal of the Conference:**

This goal of this Conference was to establish a forum for women in politics and CSO activists from across the region to discuss and agree on a set of recommendations on how to increase the role of women and inclusion of women's perspective in regional peace, security and justice processes, in the political agenda in Western Balkans, within the framework of European Integration processes, thereby also improving neighborly relations and regional cooperation.

The Conference aimed to achieve this goal by: strengthening the collaboration of women politicians with women's organizations at the national and regional level; supporting women, especially those who have influential positions in their communities, as agents of peace and reconciliation who can as such assist in bringing people together to support dialogues at different levels; and creating a dynamic, interactive and creative forum of women voices to mobilize support and engagement in a regional partnership with women and men political leaders.

### **Key Results of the Conference:**

- Participants agreed on a set of recommendations related to enhancing women's role in peace and security in the Western Balkans and in the processes of European Integration; implementing the Brussels Agreement; and ensuring women's access to and full participation in political structures, leadership and decision making;
- Conference declaration was agreed by all participants;
- Participants agreed to continue and intensify networking amongst them and to continue strengthening cooperation among all relevant stakeholders.

### **Conference Participants:**

During the conference, more than 70 participants from the region took part in panels and discussions. These included Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, Members of Parliament, women in politics and women from civil society who came from seven countries in the region, and the EU member countries. The list of participants is attached as Annex 2 to this report.



**CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS**

**Welcome Remarks:**

Speakers used the welcome remarks, moderated by **Marieta Zaçe**, Former Deputy Minister for Social Welfare and Equal Opportunities and Regional Women’s Lobby Steering Committee Member, Albania, to stress the importance of the Lobby’s work, especially in the field of empowering women, fostering regional cooperation and promoting peace. They also stressed that it is crucial to fully include women in all areas of conflict resolution and peace building.

**Edita Tahiri**, Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo and the RWLSEE Chair, who joined the Conference on the second day (due to her participation in inaugural session of new Parliament of Kosovo) in her welcoming remarks spoke on the increasing role of the RWL for positive changes in the region through empowering women in the South Eastern Europe. She emphasized that RWL is today a credible women’s voice in the region because of its capacities and uniqueness as only regional womens organization. She said that women are a strategic asset of any society hence

**Eglantina Gjermeni**  
*Minister of Urban Development and Tourism in Albania and Regional Women’s Lobby Member*

*“We all know that as long as women are economically marginalized, they will have weak decision making power.”*

**Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladdottir**  
*Regional Director-Designate for the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and the Representative-Designate of UN Women in the Republic of Turkey*

*“We cannot afford to wait another decade for equality. We have come a long way, gained a lot, but more needs to be done.”*

its potentials must be unlocked to be able to contribute to a better democracy, peace and development worldwide. RWL Chair Tahiri expressed high appreciation to UNWomen for continuous support and to Swedish Government for its generous grant in support of RWL work.

**Eglantina Gjermeni**, Minister of Urban Development and Tourism in Albania, Regional Women’s Lobby Member and host of the conference spoke about the importance of economic empowerment and financial stability of women as a means of increasing their role in decision making at all levels. She stressed the need for regional cooperation, dialogue and economic exchange across borders, as key elements to future economic growth and job creation, and used tourism as an example of a cross cutting issue that increases cooperation.

**Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladdottir**, Regional Director-Designate for the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and the Representative-Designate of UN Women in the Republic of Turkey, praised the RWL SEE as an example of how fundamental women’s participation in all aspects of decision making is for a more peaceful and stable society and world. She highlighted UN Women’s commitment to women, peace and security issues in Europe and Central Asia, and in particular to support the implementation of the Brussels Agreement as a crucial tool for achieving sustainable peace in region and EU integration.

**Henrik Nilsson**, Head of Embassy of Sweden in Kosovo, reiterated Sweden’s long standing commitment to support Western Balkans in peace efforts.

**Flora Macula**, Head of UN Women Kosovo, welcomed the participants at the opening of Conference on behalf of **Edita Tahiri**, Deputy Prime Minister, Kosovo Government and Chair of Regional Women’s Lobby Steering Committee She gave a brief background on the RWL SEE, stressing the fact that the members engage in a lot of information exchange, and support each other throughout various processes. Moreover, members have influence with their governments and the international community, and have used this to advance women, peace and security issues in the region. Macula stressed that the Lobby will continue its important work, and in particular continue contributing to the Brussels dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, and the women there.

**PANEL 1: EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESSES AND WOMEN’S ROLE AND PRIORITIES**

The first panel, moderated by Flora Macula, Head of UN Women Kosovo, discussed the involvement of women in decision-making within the EU and the European integration processes as a catalyzer for promoting democratization, gender equality, and regional cooperation and peace. At the same time, panelists also highlighted that European integration could involve decreasing rights already enjoyed in a country.

**Elisabeth Rehn**, Ex-Finnish Minister of State, Former Minister of Defense, Former UN Under-Secretary-General, currently Independent Expert on Peace building, for UN and MFA Finland, spoke on the involvement of women in decision making within the EU. She criticized the EU that while it has good intentions and a lot of different papers, not much is done in practice within the Union. Rehn mentioned NATO as a positive example of an institution that has managed to achieve more in the field of women, peace and security than the EU. She also mentioned the UN Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security and emphasized the need to focus on concrete actions that will be implemented, as well as on the need to move away from viewing women as victims towards empowering them as decision makers.

**Bardhylka Kospiri**, Deputy Minister for Youth and Social Welfare, Albania, stressed the importance of women’s empowerment as a further guarantee in the region’s road towards EU integration. She highlighted achievements of the Albanian government in implementing its commitments to gender equality and to decreasing gender based violence. Kospiri also spoke on the importance of including women with disabilities in the fight for women’s rights and in the RWL SEE, since they are always doubly discriminated.

**Edita Tahiri**  
**Deputy Prime Minister, Kosovo Government**  
**and Chair of Regional Women’s Lobby**  
**Steering Committee**

*“RWL is the only organization that gathers women politicians and women from civil society from seven countries. It has proved that it is possible to go beyond differences and work jointly, while putting history behind, it cannot be forgotten but we can make sure it does not hinder our current cooperation. RWL proved this. It has become a model of regional cooperation, model of cooperation of women for the advancement of our status, for working to reform the male dominated mentality, so that one day society can make choices more based on quality and less on gender.”*

**Gordana Sobol**, MP / Chairwoman of the Mandate and Immunity Committee, Parliament of Croatia and Regional Women’s Lobby Steering Committee Member, Croatia, spoke about Croatia’s experience with EU accession mentioning that it can serve as a lessons learned experience for other countries of the Lobby. She said that Croatia’s laws on gender equality improved during the accession process, though implementation is still lacking and many of these decisions continue to be seen as imposed solutions, which are often not fully understood and accepted by the citizens. Sobol emphasized the important role that support from civil society played in ensuring that laws on gender equality are passed and appropriate mechanisms established.

Sobol also elaborated on some of the downfalls of the EU integration process. She said that the process has also resulted in laws which might actually decrease rights already enjoyed by women, especially considering that in the recent years social rights are actually decreasing within the EU. To illustrate this, she gave Croatia’s example of having to increase women’s retirement age so that it is equal to that for men.

**Teuta Arifi**, Former Minister of EU Integration, Mayor, City of Tetovo - Regional Women’s Lobby Member, Macedonia spoke about the importance of the EU integration for the region. Reflecting on the complexity of the political reality in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Serbia, she emphasized the need for the EU to keep its doors open for these countries and the need for these four to continue striving towards EU integration. Arifi also spoke about the difficulties of the integration process, and how this could cause a hesitation to implement change among country leaders. She emphasized the catalyzing role that EU membership can play in this respect, in fostering change towards more democratic and transparent governments, and the role that women and the RWL SEE should play in

**Gordana Sobol**  
*MP / Chairwoman of the Mandate and Immunity Committee, Parliament of Croatia and Regional Women’s Lobby Steering Committee Member, Croatia*

*“[During Croatia’s accession to the EU] laws on gender equality have improved, but the implementation still needs a lot of work... We also learned that beyond the border, when it comes to women, the situation isn’t necessarily much better. The process itself of accession is not a guarantee that all the new legislation will be immediately accepted and implemented and have the full understanding of our citizens. Moreover, a lot of those decisions were perceived, and still are perceived, as imposed solutions, especially when it comes to human rights.”*

**Teuta Arifi**  
*Former Minister of EU Integration, Mayor, City of Tetovo-Regional Women’s Lobby Member, Macedonia*

*“EU as a concept is an alternative to the patriarchal reality of our region. It is seen as a chance for women who don’t want to participate in politics of division, but want to include understanding”*

continuing to lobby for enlargement, also as a means of further empowering women.

Arifi also spoke about her experience as Tetovo’s mayor and how her work there is guided by the principle of transparency and close and direct contact with the city’s citizens. She mentioned several successful policies that she has implemented in the city, and used her experience to urge women to also become interested in decision making positions that might not be in high level politics, but that can nonetheless have a big impact.

#### **Open discussion**

During the discussion with the audience, participants reinforced the need to involve women in politics and to vote them and support them after they are elected, as well as the need to present women as role models and not only as victims.

In specific regards to EU integration, the need to keep citizens informed of all the steps of EU accession was stressed; in particular the importance of the government to honestly and openly explain what happens during EU integration and the reasons behind it. There was also discussion on not rushing with EU integration before the issues and problems are solved first within and among the nations of the region; as well as reiteration that the EU itself does not always have an impeccable record in terms of women's rights and empowerment and that it is the role of its members to keep the EU and its members in check.

**Ulrike Lunacek**  
**Vice-President of the European Parliament, the Greens/EFA, Austria and designated Co-President of the EP's LGBT Intergroup**

*"The concrete implementation of all levels of the Brussels Agreement is critical in order to improve the life of citizens on a daily basis and the functioning of the four states in a neighborly manner. It has been a crucial step in bringing both, Kosovo and Serbia closer to each other and also closer to European Union"*

## **PANEL 2: BRUSSELS AGREEMENTS: EVALUATION OF THE STATE OF PLAY IN IMPLEMENTATION AND ROLE OF WOMEN TO SPEED UP THIS PROCESS**

The second panel, moderated by Slavica Striković, NGO "Women Actions" and Regional Women's Lobby Member, Montenegro, focused on a discussion of the Brussels Agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, its implementation up to date, its impact on normalization of situation in northern part of Kosovo and involvement of people there, and a more general discussion on involvement of women in peace processes.

**Dijana Vukomanović**  
**Vice President of Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) and Head of SPS Parliamentarian Group**

*The EU is the answer, the hub above all of us, because that's our collective happy end. If the EU community decides that we are democratized enough and ready to respect human rights and rule of law, than we will belong there.*

**Ulrike Lunacek**, Vice-President of the European Parliament, the Greens/EFA, Austria and designated Co-President of the EP's LGBT Intergroup, provided her remarks in a video statement. She welcomed the Brussels Agreement as a crucial step in bringing the two countries closer to each other and thus closer to EU. She said that implementation of the agreement, which is currently lagging behind, is critical for improving

people's lives, and thus should move forward. Lunacek also stressed the important role that women can and do play in implementing the agreement.

**Dijana Vukomanović**, Vice President of Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) and Head of SPS Parliamentarian Group stressed the importance of involving women in peace processes, such as the involvement of Edita Tahiri and Catherine Ashton in the Prishtina-Belgrade dialogue. She mentioned criticism of the Brussels agreement that people see it as an agreement that deals with people but fails to involve them. Nonetheless, she characterized the agreement as one that deals not only with political issues, but also technical ones, with measures that can improve lives of people. In that respect, she also mentioned the importance of the economic empowerment of women, as a means to improve people's daily life. She said the dialogue is a process, it continues every day and there should be more meetings similar to this conference, where women from the region have an opportunity to talk to each other.

**Memnuna Zvizdić**, Director “Žene Ženama” and Regional Women’s Lobby Steering Committee Member, Bosnia and Herzegovina, spoke about the Dayton agreement and the role of women in that agreement, as a way of providing lessons learned and an example of experiences to the women in Kosovo and Serbia. Saying that all women go through the same processes after a peace agreement, Zvizdić spoke how gender stereotypes have further enforced the position of women, especially in the first years after the conflict. As such, women continued to face humiliation; they were regarded as less of a victim compared to men, who had usually fought in the battlefield; there was very little open talk about conflict related sexual violence, resulting in women being passive, blaming themselves and not speaking about their experiences. She also spoke on how tensions often rise after a peace

**Edita Tahiri**  
**Deputy Prime Minister, Kosovo Government and Chair**  
**of Regional Women’s Lobby Steering Committee**

*“If we don’t speed up peace process and European reforms and if EU doesn’t widen the doors instead of narrowing them for the Western Balkan[s] countries, the peace processes can’t progress towards sustainability. It degrades.”*

agreement, which usually focuses mainly on infrastructure and not on repairing of relationships. And this is where women can play a big role: since they are usually at the heart of the conflict, they are also the ones that start building peace and that set up humane structures that can support complicated peace agreements. She highlighted that the Brussels agreement is a

small part in bringing peace to the region, and as other peace agreements, its implementation depends on the political will of involved parties.

**Edita Tahiri**, Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo Government and Chief Negotiator at The Brussels Technical Dialogue spoke on the progress and challenges of the Brussels dialogue stating that thanks to this dialogue and the EU effective facilitation the neighbourly relations between Kosovo and Serbia of hostile past are being transformed into European model of cooperation. The breakthrough and progress in this dialogue could only happen when both parties moved away from old thinking and provocative language and decided to look towards European future. The negotiating process has not been easy, and results have been possible only after both sides realized that agreement will not come by itself but rather through serious commitments of both sides to respect European values.. “Consequently, there are now 17 agreements between Kosovo and Serbia, from technical dialogue and a historic Brussels agreement of 19 April 2013 on normalization of relations between two states. I strongly believe the Brussels Dialogue can serve as a model on how to approach the fixing remaining open issues in relations of countries in the entire region” said Tahiri. She praised the Brussels dialogue process as a successful one, noting the progress achieved in several fields, such as the establishment of legal local structures in the four municipalities in northern Kosovo and the integration of Serb policemen in the Kosovo Police, European model of integrated border management between both countries etc., and added that while not all changes are happening overnight, a lot has already been done.

Tahiri stressed that in order for the peace processes in the region to continue, the prospect of European integration needs to remain a tangible reality for the countries in the region.

She also replied to Vukomanović’s comment that the Brussels agreement is for the people without the people, explaining that she understood it as a comment that the dialogue is between Kosovo and Serbia, without the Serbs from northern Kosovo. Tahiri said that is so because Serbia has kept interfering in Kosovo and not allowing those Serbs to integrate in Kosovo’s system, which is why the dialogue in Brussels is being done with Serbia.

### Open discussion

During the open discussion with the audience, the importance of focusing on the commonalities among the countries was stressed. In that regard, the RWL SEE and the conference were characterized as important venues that enable dialogue and cooperation, and especially do so outside the formal setting of the conference. Participants also made comments on how despite what politics and regimes impose, cooperation at an individual level is easily achieved.

Women from Serb community of northern part of Kosovo voiced their opinions too. Some criticized the negotiations for what they perceived as lack of their involvement of in the Brussels Dialogue, adding also that neither Kosovo nor Serbia have shown real concern about the people in northern Kosovo and have not explained to them the practicalities of the agreements, and others spoke of the recent integration of this part of Serb community in the institutions of Kosovo. One participant asked Vukomanović directly about the involvement of her party in supporting women in northern Kosovo, to which she replied that daily life problems should be solved on the ground, and not through political parties, while at the same time she highlighted the support that Serbia has been given to the serb community in Kosovo through retirements, salaries, etc.

Tahiri highlighted that the Brussels agreement is not only about normalization of relations between Serbia and Kosovo, but also about normalization of situation in northern Kosovo. She highlighted the positive steps in this regard in terms of integration of Serbs of north in the Kosovo's system, establishing rule of law and democracy through legal municipal structures now operating there within Kosovo's legal framework, where the elected mayors are now working based on Kosovo's law and using Kosovo's budget. She also mentioned setbacks in northern Kosovo, such as the continuing work of parallel serb mayors appointed and supported by Belgrade and the fact the elected mayors are favoring people who worked for parallel structures during employment. She stressed the importance of involving all people and not discriminating towards anyone based on political preferences to ensure for peace to work.

Vukomanović also stressed that joining the EU is the final goal of the region's countries, as well as proof that they are democratized.

**Morana Paliković-Gruden**  
*Former Vice president of Municipality Assembly of Zagreb, Vice President of the Croatian Olympic Committee, President of the Scatting Federation and Regional Women's Lobby Member, Croatia*

*"We suffer from too much satisfaction with gender equality, the only thing we have actually achieved is that today there is no political party leader who can publicly talk against women, but we got in a phase where they in a refined and secretive manner work and talk against women. Politics is still a men's club."*

### **PANEL 3: THE ROLE AND POSITION OF WOMEN WITHIN THE POLITICAL PARTIES**

Panelists in the third panel, moderated by Irina Pockova, Former President of Women's Chapter of Social Democratic Alliance political party in Sv. Nikola and Regional Women's Lobby Steering Committee Member, Macedonia, spoke about the position of women within political parties, and shared their ideas and recommendations on how to improve and strengthen this position.

**Morana Palinković-Gruden**, Former Vice president of Municipality Assembly of Zagreb, Vice President of the Croatian Olympic Committee, President of the Scatting Federation and Regional Women's Lobby Member, Croatia, characterized political parties as the best existing instrument for women's political participation. She said that while quotas have not helped out to ensure that women's participation is widely recognized, they usually are

representative of the membership within the political party. She went on to speak about how women in political parties often shine for a few years, and then slip to anonymity. She exposed several myths women hold and that result in this slip to anonymity: that negative things do not happen within their respective party, which is untrue, as they happen everywhere; that their party would not let anything bad happen to them as it could cause a scandal, but bad things could happen and a scandal would not ensue; that they have achieved their position on their own, but they have actually done so thanks to the political party and the party is aware of that and will support the woman until it suits their interest; that they have worked well, but if the situation changes, the party will move any woman that doesn't suit its interests; that women in politics should be interested in social policies, but it is a myth that there should be a division of roles on what gender deals with what policies.

Palinković-Gruden also offered some ideas for steps forward in strengthening women's political empowerment, such as asking for gender desegregated political party membership statistics, to prove that the quota is representative; and educating women politicians about mandates they might get, to ensure that they fully use those, about networking, and media relations to ensure that their views and interests are properly presented.

**Teuta Sahatqija**, Vice President of Democratic League of Kosova (LDK), President of Women Caucus and Regional Women's Lobby Member, Kosovo, spoke about the 30% quota in Kosovo's electoral law, which is obligatory and ensures that every third candidate in a party's list is from another gender. Sahatqija highlighted that the quota has enabled the creation of a critical mass within the Kosovo Parliament, but it is not sufficient, as in the end the make-up of local and central governments is a product of political parties, which continue to be led by men. Moreover, since women are not empowered within political parties, men claim there are no suitable women to be selected for decision-making positions. She highlighted the work the Women Caucus at the Kosovo Parliament has done in empowering women within political parties, adding that there is a need for additional legislation on political parties that would empower women, such as for example a request that the president and vice president of a political party cannot be of the same gender. She explained that the Women Caucus has been a forum where women of all parties have come together to address issues concerning women and their empowerment.

**Nataša Mičić**, President of the Political Council of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), former president of the National Assembly of Serbia and Regional Women's Lobby Member, Serbia, emphasized that women should become engaged in politics even if they do not want to be members of a political party. She too mentioned that about one third of members in a party are women, but that is not reflected in the decision making structures of the party, due to candidacy lists not being transparent and due to problems with financing for women. She mentioned that during the 1990s in Serbia women were the ones that focused on employment and economic development, issues that directly influenced people's daily lives, while men were more focused on the new constitution and on keeping Kosovo as part of Serbia. Mičić also spoke about the EU and criticized it for doing very little in the field of women's political participation, as it has shied away from any directives in this regard, and has mainly focused on women in employment, labor market and in relation to gender based violence.

**Luljeta Vuniqi**, Executive Director, Kosovar Gender Studies Centre and Regional Women's Lobby Member, Kosovo, also touched upon the electoral quota in Kosovo and how it has enabled women's representation in local and central assemblies, but not in other decision-making levels. As such, it has become a sort of a glass ceiling: it stops women's progress at the level of participation in assemblies. Thus, while recognizing its positive effects, she called on women to not be too comfortable with it, and instead think of it as a basis for women's participation, but not as a permanent measure. She suggested the possibility of voluntary quotas within political parties as an exit strategy from legislative quotas. Vuniqi also emphasized the need to have more financing available for women in political parties, as well as a supporting circle within and outside the party. She recommended an inclusion of a 50% quota within the decision-making structures of a party, and not in the entire party; use of open lists; intensive work with women at the local level to empower them politically; women to work more with women within their constituencies; and splitting the electoral in more regions so as to ensure better representation.

### **Open discussion**

Discussion with the audience focused on the quota, with one participant stressing the need to find a way to ensure the quota is qualitative one, and another participant defending the quota and claiming it should be introduced in other spheres of public life too. There was also discussion on the importance of democratization within the party, so that the order of voting lists is not decided only by the party leader, as well as more discussion on the negative effect of the lack of financing for women within political parties and for parties led by women.

In relation to promoting women to decision making positions within the political party, Sobol mentioned a new practice in her party, where people self-nominate themselves for decision making positions. This has resulted in 15% of women nominating themselves for various positions within the party's structures, and about the same percentage has been elected to these positions too.

Discussion also touched upon the importance and role of women's forums within political parties. Palinković-Gruden responded that they are a specific tool, but also added that tools used before might need to be changed and adapted to fit the needs of the new generations, and stressed the importance of education in that respect.

### **PANEL 4: HOW COLLABORATION BETWEEN WOMEN IN POLITICS AND CSOs CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING**

The fourth panel, moderated by Sonja Biserko, Director, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights and Regional Women's Lobby Steering Committee Member, Serbia, focused on the collaboration of women in politics and civil society, as a means of improving women's position in society, and especially in decision making. All the panelists, members of civil society and of political parties, highlighted the need for such a collaboration, which should move beyond being just ad-hoc collaboration.

**Marieta Zaçe**, Former Deputy Minister for Social Welfare and Equal Opportunities and Regional Women's Lobby Steering Committee Member, Albania, spoke on the importance of cooperation among women in civil society and politics, especially since the expertise among the civil society sector in a specific field can even be greater than that among the political sector. This cooperation results in pushing forward the agenda of women's empowerment

and enabling or speeding up the implementation of reforms needed for EU integration. Regarding the latter, Zaçe pointed out that civil society helps in this regard through various projects and researches. She mentioned the example of Albania, where good cooperation between civil society and government, including in drafting documents, has also influenced the increase in the number of women in the parliament. She highlighted the RWL SEE as a good regional model that enables the cooperation and sharing of experiences among women in politics and in civil society.

**Savka Todorovska**, President “National Council of Women” and Regional Women’s Lobby Member, Macedonia spoke how women in civil society and in politics have the same goal, but often act from different angles. She highlighted how women in civil society have strong networks, exchange information, attend international events, and are close to women

and their needs at a grassroots level. While women in political parties have the power to make changes and influence decision making processes, they have better access to media and legitimacy to speak and be heard by the public, but they often tend to not be very gender sensitive, to vote based on party instructions and are not coordinated with women in other political parties. Todorovska spoke of the need to strengthen the capacities of women in both civil society and politics, to improve cooperation and flow of information between them, while she also noted that the relationships between women from these two groups usually depend on personalities, and are not institutionalized.

**Lovorka Marinović**  
*President of Center for New Initiatives and international independent consultant, Croatia*

*“We can’t look at democracy without women as a lesser democracy, it’s no democracy at all.”*

**Nada Drobnjak**, MP / Head of the Parliamentary Commission for Gender Equality and Regional Women’s Lobby Steering Committee Member, Montenegro, called for more cooperation and synergy of efforts between women in civil society and politics, as a means to improve women’s position, especially now during the processes of EU integration. While stating that some cooperation is visible, she mentioned that this cooperation still happens haphazardly, from time to time, and has limited results. Drobnjak recommended that ad-hoc thematic networks should be established, rather than multi-sector, multi-discipline networks.

**Lovorka Marinović**, President of Center for New Initiatives and international independent consultant, Croatia, gave two examples from the past where women from civil society and political parties have cooperated. During the 1990s, women’s rights were not taken into consideration at all and they were marginalized everywhere in the region. They had to return faith and trust into power of joint actions and women’s voices. It was in part thanks to the support of women from civil society, that women were able to enter politics and have their voices heard within the political parties. Another area where this cooperation brought results is in the field of gender based violence, where thanks to joint work and advocacy, protection measures for victims of gender based violence have been strengthened and important legislation has been passed.

Marinović also spoke about how important it is for women in the civil society sector and women in political parties to jointly tackle migration, and especially its gender aspects, which are currently not dealt with at all.

### **Open discussion**

During the open discussion with the audience, participants spoke about funding of civil society and the need for governmental support and particularly support from women in government, since donors are moving out of the region.

Women in the audience also highlighted the need to increase cooperation between women in politics and in civil society, as they should serve as partners for each other.

### **DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION OF THE JOINT DECLARATION**

Based on the discussions, recommendations and the summary of the main points of the four panels of the Conference, the RWL SEE Chair, Edita Tahiri prepared the draft Declaration, which was read out loud by RWL SEE Coordinator Diana Cekaj Berisha during the last session. All the present participants discussed the declaration, and unanimously approved it. As per the agreement of the conference participants, the declaration has subsequently been shared with media in all seven countries of the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe. Please find the full declaration below.



## 4th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE “ON THE ROAD TO EMPOWERING WOMEN IN POLITICS, PEACE PROCESSES AND EU INTEGRATION”

Convened by  
The Regional Women’s Lobby for  
Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe (RWL SEE)  
September 18-19, 2014, Saranda, Albania

### SARANDA DECLARATION

(Saranda, 19 September 2014): More than 70 prominent women politicians and civil society activists from the Western Balkans gathered in the city of Saranda in Albania on 18-19 September 2014 for the International Conference “**On the Road to Empowering Women in Politics, Peace Processes and EU Integration**” to discuss and agree on a set of recommendations on how to increase the role of women in the peace and security process in the region and political decision-making. Special emphasis was given to EU Integration and the implementation of peace agreements in the region.

The conference was convened by the Regional Women’s Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe (RWL SEE) in partnership with UN Women and with the support of the Swedish government and the Albanian government. Among the high-level participants were Edita Tahiri, Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo; Dijana Vukomanovic, Vice President of Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS); Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladdottir, Regional Director-Designate for the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and the Representative-Designate of UN Women in the Republic of Turkey; Elisabeth Rehn, Former Minister of State of Finland and Eglantina Gjermeni, Minister of Urban Development and Tourism in Albania. Ulrike Lunacek, Vice-President of the European Parliament participated with a video statement.

The RWL SEE in collaboration with UN Women and all of the participants of the conference present the following recommendations:

1. The European Union integration is a peace project that has the power to transform the relations amongst the countries and the people in the Western Balkans towards sustainable peace and stability by speeding up the process of integration of the countries into the EU while asking the countries to strengthen European reforms and helping them to achieve the goals.
2. To consistently lobby for the process of EU enlargement and explain to the society that enlargement is a chance for the Western Balkans to catch with the Western part

of Europe and support the empowerment of women through the implementation of EU policies and standards by each country. And, also to call for increasing the role of women in the EU Integration process.

3. The participants reiterated their support for the Brussels Dialogue while calling for full and effective implementation of all agreements reached to date. The successful implementation implies an all-inclusive process that encapsulates all levels of public institutions and society. Special emphasis should be given to interethnic dialogue between Albanian and Serbs in Kosovo. Because the Brussels Agreement is beneficial to all citizens as well as contributing to regional peace and stability. Brussels Dialogue can also serve as a model of peace-making to resolve remaining differences in the region. Women's role in this dialogue should be increased in all on-going peace processes and in the ones to come in the future. Focusing more on the future and less on the past should act as a guiding light to take us forward towards a peaceful and stable society.
4. RWL SEE presents a successful model of regional cooperation and peace-building and should be included as a partner in peace processes in the region as well as being a role-model for other peace processes in other regions in the world.
5. Women remain under-represented in politics and decision-making. We call for more representation of women in governments, in the leaderships of political parties, in the parliament and in local governments as mayors. We urge women to be more proactive in seeking a role in leadership positions in political parties and not to wait for the parties to offer them leadership positions. Women's caucuses in parliament and various networks between women politicians and women civil society organizations should be instrumental towards the goal of empowerment of women.
6. Along with appropriate legislations to protect and promote gender equality, there should be more affirmative action policies at national and international level that support and encourage more women to acquire political leadership because women have the capacity to assume leadership positions for the betterment of the society.
7. There should be more effective cooperation between women in politics and civil society organizations and the role of women in civil society should be acknowledged and respected. Civil Society Organizations of women should be supported with more resources and funding by states budgets.
8. Prepare young women leaders to serve as agents of change through the establishment of a regional academy where RWL SEE can play a crucial role.

## Annex 1 – Agenda of the Conference



### **4<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

#### ***“ON THE ROAD TO EMPOWERING WOMEN IN POLITICS, PEACE PROCESSES AND EU INTEGRATION”***

*Convened by*

*The Regional Women’s Lobby for  
Peace, Security and Justice in South East Europe and UN Women*

*September 18-19, 2014, Saranda, Albania*

## AGENDA

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**September 17, 2014** Dinner @ 8:00pm

### **DAY 1.**

**September 18, 2014**

**9:00 – 9:30**                    ***Registration of Participants***

Moderator: **Marieta Zaçe,**

Former Deputy Minister for Social Welfare and Equal Opportunities –  
Regional Women’s Lobby Steering Committee Member,  
Albania

**9:30 – 10:00**                    ***Opening of the Conference***

- **Edita Tahiri**, Deputy Prime Minister, Kosovo Government and Chair of Regional Women’s Lobby Steering Committee/ **Flora Macula**, on behalf of Ms Tahiri.
- **Eglantina Gjermeni**, Minister of Urban Development and Tourism in Albania, Regional Women’s Lobby Member
- **Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladdottir**, Regional Director-Designate for the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and the Representative-Designate of UN Women in the Republic of Turkey
- **Henrik Nilsson**, Head of Sweden Embassy in Kosovo

**10:00 – 10:15**                    **Coffee Break**

## PANEL 1: EUROPEAN INTEGRATION PROCESSES AND WOMEN'S ROLE AND PRIORITIES

- ✓ Which are the main EU Policies for the empowerment of women?
- ✓ How women can contribute to EU Integration processes?
- ✓ Experiences of women's roles during EU Integration processes (best practices: do's and don't's )

Panel moderator: **Flora Macula**,  
Head of UN Women, Kosovo

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| 10:15 – 10:30        | <b>Elisabeth Rehn</b> , Ex-Finnish Minister of State, Former Minister of Defense, Former UN Under-Secretary-General. Currently Independent Expert on Peace building, for UN and MFA Finland  |
| 10:30 – 10:40        | <b>Bardhylka Kospiri</b> , Deputy Minister for Youth and Social Welfare, Albania   |
| 10:40 - 10:50        | <b>Gordana Sobol</b> , MP / Chairwoman of the Mandate and Immunity Committee, Parliament of Croatia-Regional Women's Lobby Steering Committee Member, Croatia  |
| 10:50 - 11:00        | <b>Teuta Arifi</b> , Former Minister of EU Integration, Mayor, City of Tetovo-Regional Women's Lobby Member, Macedonia   |
| 11:00 - 11:40        | <i>Open discussion</i>   |
| <b>12:00 – 13:30</b> | <b>LUNCH</b>   |
| 14:00 - 17:00        | Visit old town of Butrint. The bus will leave @2pm from Hotel Butrinti   |
| <b>20:00</b>         | <b>DINNER at Castle of Lëkurës</b> organized by the Ministry of Urban Development and Tourism, Albania for all participants, outside of the hotel, with traditional Albanian music. Participants will meet in front of Hotel Butrinti @7:30pm. |

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## DAY 2.

**September 19, 2014**

**9:00 – 9:30**                      **Registration of Participants**

## PANEL 2: BRUSSELS AGREEMENTS: EVALUATION OF THE STATE OF PLAY IN IMPLEMENTATION AND ROLE OF WOMEN TO SPEED UP THIS PROCESS

- ✓ Which are the main challenges of the implementation of the Brussels Agreement?
- ✓ The importance of women's role in peace processes and negotiations.
- ✓ How does the Brussels dialogue contribute to stability in the region?

Panel moderator: **Slavica Striković**,  
NGO "Women Actions"- Regional Women's Lobby Member, Montenegro

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 09:30 – 09:40 | <b>Ulrike Lunacek</b> , Vice-President of the European Parliament, the Greens/EFA, Austria. Designated Co-President of the EP's LGBT Intergroup ( <a href="#">Video statement</a> ) |
| 09:40 – 09:50 | <b>Edita Tahiri</b> , Deputy Prime Minister, Kosovo Government, Chair of Regional Women's Lobby Steering Committee  |
| 09:50 – 10:00 | <b>Dijana Vukomanović</b> , Vice President of Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), Head of SPS Parliamentarian Group  |
| 10:00 - 10:10 | <b>Memnuna Zvizdić</b> , Director "Žene Ženama" – Regional Women's Lobby Steering Committee Member, Bosna & Hercegovina   |
| 10:10 - 10:50 | <i>Open discussion</i>  |

### **10:50 – 11:10 Coffee Break**

### **PANEL 3: THE ROLE AND POSSITION OF WOMEN WITHIN THE POLITICAL PARTIES**

- ✓ *Why is the participation of women in political parties important?*
- ✓ *How does this reflect in their positions within the Government?*
- ✓ *What can women do to advance their role and position within political parties?*
- ✓ *Electoral systems and affirmative actions for increasing women participation in decision making.*

Panel moderator: **Irina Pockova**,  
Former President of Women's Chapter of Social Democratic Alliance political party in Sv. Nikola-Regional Women's Lobby Steering Committee Member, Macedonia

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 11:10 – 11:20 | <b>Morana Paliković-Gruden</b> , Former Vice president of Municipality Assembly of Zagreb, Vice President of the Croatian Olympic Committee and President of the Scatting Federation - Regional Women's Lobby Member, Croatia |
| 11:20 – 11:30 | <b>Teuta Sahatqija</b> , Vice President of Democratic League of Kosova (LDK), President of Women Caucus -Regional Women's Lobby Member, Kosovo  |
| 11:30 - 11:40 | <b>Nataša Mičić</b> , President of the Political Council of LDP party, former president of the National Assembly of Serbia- Regional Women's Lobby Member, Serbia   |
| 11:40 - 11:50 | <b>Luljeta Vuniqi</b> , Executive Director, Kosovar Gender Studies Centre-Regional Women's Lobby Member, Kosovo   |
| 11:50 - 12:30 | <i>Open discussion</i>  |

### **12:30 – 13:30 LUNCH**

## PANEL 4: HOW COLLABORATION BETWEEN WOMEN IN POLITICS AND CSOs CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE POSITION OF WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING

- ✓ *What is the current situation of cooperation between women in politics and CSO?*
- ✓ *How can they reinforce each other and the goals of women empowerment?*
- ✓ *What are the main concerns in the region for women human rights and how can these be addressed?*

Panel moderator: **Sonja Biserko**,  
Director, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights-  
Regional Women's Lobby Steering Committee Member, Serbia

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| 13:30 – 13:40        | <b>Marieta Zaçe</b> , Former Deputy Minister for Social Welfare and Equal Opportunities – Regional Women's Lobby Steering Committee Member, Albania |
| 13:40 – 13:50        | <b>Savka Todorovska</b> , President "National Council of Women" and Regional Women's Lobby Member, Macedonia  |
| 13:50 – 14:00        | <b>Nada Drobñjak</b> , MP / Head of the Parliamentary Commission for Gender Equality-Regional Women's Lobby Steering Committee Member, Montenegro   |
| 14:00 - 14:10        | <b>Lovorka Marinović</b> , President of Center for New Initiatives and international independent consultant, Croatia                                |
| 14:10 - 14:50        | <i>Open discussion</i>  |
| <b>14:50 – 15:10</b> | <b>Coffee Break</b>   |
| 15:10 - 16:10        | <i>Discussion and adoption of the Joint Declaration</i>   |
| 16:10 - 16:30        | <i>Closing / Thank you remarks</i><br><b>Edita Tahiri</b> , Regional Women's Lobby Chair,<br><b>Flora Macula</b> , head UN Women, Kosovo            |

**19:30** **DINNER**

The conference is a part of the UN Women Project "Advancing the Leadership of Women in Promoting the Implementation of the 2013 Pristina-Belgrade Agreement, Reconciliation, Peace, Security and Justice in the Western Balkans" funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden.



## Annex 2 – List of Invitees to the Conference

### ALBANIA, host country

|                    |         |   |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| Marieta Zace       | Albania | Former Deputy Minister for Social Welfare and Equal Opportunities – Regional Women’s Lobby Steering Committee Member, Albania |
| Eglantina Gjermeni | Albania | Minister of Urban Development and Tourism, Former Director of Gender Alliance for Development Center, RWL SEE Member          |
| Bardhylka Kospiri  | Albania | Deputy Minister for Youth and Social Welfare  |
| Etleva Sheshi      | Albania | Specialist for policies against domestic violence and gender issues   |
| Arjan Vulka        | Albania | Driver  |
| Mimoza Hajdarmataj | Albania | Director, Eurosig   |
| Eneida Guria       | Albania | e-Commerce Consultant at MEGATEK S.A  |
| Rajmonda Balilaj   | Albania | Mayor, Patos  |
| Adelina Farrici    | Albania | Mayor, Burrel   |
| Mimoza Arapi       | Albania | Mayor, Konispol   |
| Lefterie Luzi      | Albania | Head of Central Election Commission   |
| Armela Prevazi     | Albania | NDI Program Officer   |
| Entela Lako        | Albania | Program Analyst, UNDP   |
| Edlira Cepani      | Albania | NGO, Equality and Decision Making   |
| Klotilda Ferhati   | Albania | NGO, Association for Integration of Informal Areas  |
| Arben Rama         | Albania | UNDP Cluster Manager  |
| Estela Bulku       | Albania | National Program Officer, UN Women  |
| Fiorela Shalsi     | Albania | National Program Manager, UN Women  |

### BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA

|                  |                      |  |
|------------------|----------------------|--|
| Memnuna Zvizdić  | Bosnia & Herzegovina | Executive Director “Žene Ženama” & RWL SEE Steering Committee Member |
| Lidija Zivanović | Bosnia & Herzegovina | Former Director of Helsinki Citizen's Parliament, RWL SEE Member     |

### CROATIA

|                         |         |   |
|-------------------------|---------|---|
| Gordana Sobol           | Croatia | MP / Chairwoman of the Mandate and Immunity Committee, Parliament of Croatia & RWL Steering Committee Member  |
| Morana Paliković Gruden | Croatia | Former Vice president of Municipality Assembly of Zagreb, Vice President of the Croatian Olympic Committee and President of the Scatting Federation, RWL SEE Member |
| Lovorka Marinović       | Croatia | President of Center for New Initiatives and international independent consultant, RWL SEE Member  |
| Lara Sobol              | Croatia | Student   |

### KOSOVO

|                 |        |  |
|-----------------|--------|--|
| Edita Tahiri    | Kosovo | Deputy Prime Minister, Chair of the RWL SEE Steering Committee                                 |
| Teuta Sahatqija | Kosovo | Vice President of Democratic League of Kosova (LDK), President of Women Caucus, RWL SEE Member |

|                      |        |   |
|----------------------|--------|---|
| Luljeta Vuniqi       | Kosovo | Executive Director of Kosovar Gender Studies Centre, RWL SEE Member |
| Xhevahire Izmake     | Kosovo | Member of Parliament  |
| Time Kadrijaj        | Kosovo | Member of Parliament  |
| Blerta Deliu - Kodra | Kosovo | Member of Parliament  |
| Sala Berisha - Shala | Kosovo | Member of Parliament  |
| Lirije Kajtazi       | Kosovo | Member of Parliament  |
| Suzana Novoberdaliu  | Kosovo | Women politician  |
| Shukrije Gashi       | Kosovo | Director, Center for Conflict Management                            |
| Veprora Shehu        | Kosovo | Executive Director, Medica, Kosovo                                  |
| Kaqusha Jashari      | Kosovo | Deputy leader of social democratic party                            |
| Dragana Milutinović  | Kosovo | Peace and Development Officer, UNKT                                 |
| Niina Tenhio         | Kosovo | Programme Analyst, UNDP   |
| Gordana Lazović      | Kosovo | MWAHR   |
| Katarina Adjancić    | Kosovo | Tax Administration Kosovo, Mitrovica North                          |
| Vasiljka Voinović    | Kosovo | Director "Svet andjela"   |
| Olivera Milosević    | Kosovo | Director "WBA"  |
| Rada Kapetanović     | Kosovo | Director "Kolo Srpskih Sestara"                                     |

#### MACEDONIA

|                  |           |   |
|------------------|-----------|---|
| Irina Pockova    | Macedonia | Former President, Women's Chapter of Social Democratic Alliance political party in Sv. Nikola & RWL Steering Committee Member |
| Teuta Arifi      | Macedonia | Former Minister of EU Integration, Mayor, City of Tetovo, RWL SEE Member  |
| Savka Todorovska | Macedonia | President of the National Council of Women of the Republic of Macedonia, RWL SEE Member                                       |
| Drita Abdiu      | Macedonia | Chief of Cabinet, Tetovo Municipality   |

#### MONTENEGRO

|                        |            |  |
|------------------------|------------|--|
| Nada Drobnjak          | Montenegro | MP, Head of the Parliamentary Commission for Gender Equality & RWL Steering Committee Member |
| Ljubomirka Mira Asović | Montenegro | President of League of Women Voters of Montenegro, RWL SEE Member                            |
| Slavica Striković      | Montenegro | Managing Board Member of NGO Women Action, RWL SEE Member                                    |

#### SERBIA

|                    |        |   |
|--------------------|--------|---|
| Sonja Biserko      | Serbia | Director of Helsinki Committee for Human Rights & RWL SEE Steering Committee Member   |
| Natasa Mičić       | Serbia | President of the Political Council of LDP party, former president of the National Assembly of Serbia, RWL SEE Member                |
| Dijana Vukomanović | Serbia | Member of Parliament, Vice President of SPS   |
| Biljana Dobrić     | Serbia | Councilor of the Municipality of Kovin, President of the Council for Public Service, Member of the Commission for Population Policy |
| Tamara Tripić      | Serbia | Women Politician  |
| Judita Popović     | Serbia | Women Politician  |
| Jelena Trivan      | Serbia | Women Politician  |

|                            |        |                  |
|----------------------------|--------|------------------|
| Snežana Stojanović Plavšić | Serbia | Women Politician |
| Ana Novković               | Serbia | Women Politician |

|                               |                          |  |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Elisabeth Rehn                | Finland                  | Ex-Finnish Minister of State, Former Minister of Defense, Former UN Under-Secretary-General. Currently Independent Expert on Peace building, for UN and MFA Finland, RWL SEE Advisory Board Member |
| Ingibjorg Solrun Gisladdottir | Istanbul, Turkey         | Regional Director-Designate for the UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia and the Representative-Designate of UN Women in the Republic of Turkey                                    |
| Henrik Nilsson                | Swedish Embassy Kosovo   | Chargé d'Affaires / Head, Swedish Embassy  |
| Kathrina Ramberg              | Norwegian Embassy Kosovo | First Secretary, Royal Norwegian Embassy   |
| David Saunders                | Albania                  | UN Women, Country Representative   |
| Gizem Yarbil Gürol            | Istanbul, Turkey         | UN Women Communications and Advocacy Specialist  |

|                     |        |                                      |
|---------------------|--------|--------------------------------------|
| Flora Macula        | Kosovo | Head, UN Women, Kosovo               |
| Diana Cekaj-Berisha | Kosovo | UNW / RWL SEE Coordinator            |
| Nita Gojani         | Kosovo | Project Coordinator, JP EU/UN on WPS |
| Vlora Nushi         | Kosovo | Project Assistant                    |
| Art Murtezai        | Kosovo | Senior Driver / Admin Clerc          |