



Newsletter
**“Progressive Men and Women on the Move for
Gender Equality”**

1st Quarter 2017

Forward

These are interesting, challenging and often tumultuous times in our countries, the region and the world. This is also a time when peace and security are threatened. And yet we live in an era of so much wealth, knowledge and achievements, including on gender equality that we cannot afford that these acquis won over decades slip through our fingers. And let's face it gender equality achievements are under daily threat from the conservative and clerical forces on the right. Therefore, information and knowledge are important empowerment tools for us to learn, consult and act. Hence this Newsletter. One of the cited Newsletter articles is the one on the real impact of social protests such as the recent Women's March in the US. Let me just quote: 'For evil to reign it is enough for good people to remain silent'.



Hopefully, our Newsletter and the CEE Gender Network activities can contribute to our further cooperation, joint actions and activism.

We have gathered this information from various sources, among them from the WUNRN information sharing vehicle on gender equality: <http://www.wunrn.com>. The choice of articles and publications may be of interest to the CEE Network constituency.

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CONTRIBUTIONS

1. New adversary – regressive, misogynist civil society in Slovenia Should SD WF and SD party react and how?

In Slovenia, in the last 70 years the biggest change has been a real revolution in the social and private status of women. As slow as this change might be seen by us in the CEE Network for Gender Issues who are fighting for gender equality on a daily basis, the facts are amazing: dismantling of gender inequalities in legal frameworks, share of highly educated women, share of women included in waged work, transformation of previously unpaid domestic and care work for children, sick and elderly into waged work in public services, rates of women who are controlling their reproductive potential, the inclusion of women in political and economic decision making, the rebellion of women against private violence and discrimination, sexual violence and mobbing at work, are unprecedented.

In Slovenia, at this moment, some crucial achievements on gender equality made in socialist times still enjoy the status of nearly consensually supported social acquirements: separation of the state and religious organizations, freedom to decide upon birth of one's children and the duty of the state to ensure the fulfillment of this freedom, system of public, affordable, high quality child care facilities, public health and education systems, pay as you go pension system. Regardless of the combination of the parties in governments, till 2004 when a full right wing government was voted in for the first time after the change of the system in 1990, none of these achievements have been seriously endangered. But from 2004 on, we are experience a sneaky derogation of the secular state with, for instance, the incentives for the priests to enter the army and the police, privatization of the public health care system through a unbridled process of concessions made in public health programs not only at the primary but also secondary and even tertiary level of healthcare, 100% state budget coverage of the costs of private religious primary schools ruled by the Constitutional Court in 2015. Paradoxically, these are all in direct violation of the Constitution on the secular state.

In Slovenia, after the change of the system in 1990, till 2011, the far right has been divided between religious, anti-Communist one, promoting »traditional Christian values of the family« (Christian democratic party and Nova Slovenia, Peterle, Novak) and the secular one, promoting a weird combination of antifascism, secularism and nationalism (SNS, Slovenska nacionalna stranka, Jelinčič). The former has always been supported by the very conservative Catholic Church; the latter was getting its public support by “selling” to the voters that Slovenia should get rid of the former economic migrants who came from the Southern parts of the former joint state, Yugoslavia. Till recently none of them could get or retain the majority of voters’ support – they have oscillated between being in and out of the national parliament. Regarding gender equality issues, both of the sides opposed gender quotas, the right of single women to artificially supported conception and pregnancy and the LGBT human rights. Moreover, the religious far right also opposes the right of women to legal, safe, free of charge abortion.



After 2012, in connection with the conservative far right perceptions of LGBT rights, Slovenia for the first time faces a real regressive right wing **civil society movement**, supported from the far right funds and foundations from abroad and the Catholic church from inside the country. This civil society movement has sprung as a real bottom up initiative to bar equal rights for LGBT couples. At the initiative of this movement two referenda were organised– in 2012, preventing legal solutions which would allow LGBT couples to adopt the children of their partners, and in 2015, preventing the implementation of the law on equal marriage for all.

Encouraged by these successes and the support of all mainstream media which gave them equal space and status as they did to human rights defenders and governmental officials, this movement in 2016 openly attacked the supporters of reproductive freedoms, publicly naming and shaming pro-choice activists as an “abortionist lobby”. In May it published its political manifesto, announcing that it intended to become a new right wing party (GOD, Gibanje za otroke in družine, Premc). In this manifesto one can find a full-fledged antifeminist agenda: request for “the concept of gender” to be expelled from public policies, for sex education in public schools to exclude the promotion of LGBT rights, promise of the referendum to exclude the article of freedom to birth from the Constitution, and to include the concept of the marriage and the family based exclusively on heteronormativity of the couples, request for the religious teachings to be included in all public schools, etc...

At the same time this movement started to develop open propaganda against freedom of abortion and against any “unnatural way” of contraception. Throughout 2016 public prayers were staged in front of maternity wards in the capital of Ljubljana, and in the Week of the Child in October 2016 a pro-life film has been projected at the front wall of the Franciscan Church in the main public square of the city in Ljubljana.

At the same time the likeminded conservative “experts” in the Public Health Care Insurance system produced the proposal to its Executive Board to introduce a new savings system which would de facto end up the rights of women to free of charge hormonal contraceptives.

In this very aggressive and well-coordinated far right offensive civil society movement mainstream centrist political parties, SD (socialdemocrats) included, were taken by surprise. They did not react immediately. Even worse, they all had a problem to decisively defend constitutional order and the rule of law. The tactics they used were more: do not react, if we react, this will only make this offensive more publicly visible and raise its social appeal. The first feminist voices of the support came from the far left party in the Slovene Parliament (Združena levica)!

On the other side, progressive feminist civil society reacted immediately. Women's Lobby of Slovenia – CEE Network Ljubljana Office is its very active collective member - organized strong public action against the introduction of the payment for the hormonal contraceptives – a massive petition, a protest, a call to the government to stop this attempt to limit women's constitutional rights by abusing the excuse of needed savings in the public Health Care Insurance. The same Women's Lobby organized a serial of well documented public reactions to



the Manifesto for children and families, not even naming the protagonists of these conservative ideas, but simply explaining the concept of plurality of the families and of gender equality as has also been adopted by Slovenia in Beijing in 1995.

As a reaction to the very positive general public feedback regarding the feminists' defense of women human rights, and only after the inclusion of the WF (women's forum) of the SD in the TV discussion on this matter, governing political parties, led by SD, started to publish their own progressive positions on the issue of freedom of birth, on the free of charge contraceptives and on the plurality of the families.

Instead of conclusion:

The battle for a different political paradigm, an autocratic and conservative one, with a different, very conservative concept of gender roles, is wide open. Progressives, SD included, will not win against misogynist right wing populists without picking up the fight for the hearts and minds of the people. If SD do not do it, the far left will pick it up, and lose it as it is too weak to safeguard the feminist approach in the mainstream politics. But even this is not enough. **The battle for the “soft” gender equality issues cannot be won any more if SD do not make a serious effort to connect it tightly to the so called “hard” gender equality issues, such as employment, poverty, ageing, migrations, education, health and ecology. But if the socialdemocrats find the way how to do it, and if they do it in close cooperation with feminists in the civil society, they will for sure, at least in Slovenia, reverse the sorry trend of losing one election after the other.**



Sonja Lokar

CEE Network for Gender Issues Executive Director and President of the Women's Lobby of Slovenia

2. Sex education into curriculum and not prohibition of abortion!

The League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina most forcefully condemns the establishment of the Council to fight against abortion as announced by Minister in the Government of the Republic of Serbia Slavica Đukić Dejanović.

The name of the proposed Council itself speaks to the profound lack of understanding that abortion is a woman's choice and her own decision. It relates to her own life, health and opinions. What is even worse, this is recourse to the institution of an abortion ban!

The decrease in birth rates is not prevented by the establishment of a Council to FIGHT against abortion and discussions with priests, but with a population policy which should certainly not be based on prohibition of abortion and control over a woman's life.

For women to make decision on reproduction they would first need better financial and other conditions to ensure well-being of their future offspring. When the State ensures this condition, birth rates are going to increase and abortions will decrease.

In the meantime, the task at hand is education and counseling on reproductive health and contraception,

It is no secret that the Republic of Serbia is confronted with the "white death" phenomenon and with a high number of unwanted pregnancies and abortions.

The Republic of Serbia is in the highest rank of countries with a high number of teenage pregnancies.

For these reasons, the way to resolve this problem is the introduction of health education on reproductive health, i.e. "sex education" in elementary, secondary schools and in colleges and universities. This is an approach that has been implemented with success in Vojvodina and is serving as an example in the region.

Therefore, education YES but NO to the flagrant encroachment on human right of women to make their own choice.



Maja Sedlarević

Member of Presidency, League of Social Democrats of Vojvodina



REPORTS

1. Women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work Report of the UN Secretary-General

The present report examines women's economic empowerment in the changing world of work at a time when the international community has made an unprecedented commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report clarifies the vital interlinkages between women's economic empowerment and their rights to decent work and full and productive employment. It focuses on the obstacles women face in exercising their rights to and at work and suggests how these may be rectified. It analyses the opportunities and challenges for women's economic empowerment posed by the increasing informality and mobility of labour and the technological and digital developments that are transforming the world of work. The report outlines policies and actions to address gender gaps in the world of work and to enable the realization of women's rights and economic empowerment, calling for greater accountability to ensure that no one is left behind. The report concludes with recommendations for consideration by the Commission on the Status of Women.

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/CN.6/2017/3

2. The Global Gender Gap Report 2016

Through the Global Gender Gap Report, the World Economic Forum quantifies the magnitude of gender disparities and tracks their progress over time, with a specific focus on the relative gaps between women and men across four key areas: health, education, economy and politics. The 2016 Report covers 144 countries. More than a decade of data has revealed that progress is still too slow for realizing the full potential of one half of humanity within our lifetimes.

Talent and technology together will determine how the Fourth Industrial Revolution can be harnessed to deliver sustainable economic growth and innumerable benefits to society. Yet if half of the world's talent is not integrated—as both beneficiary and shaper—into the transformations underway, we will compromise innovation and risk a rise in inequality. This urgency is at the core of a fresh call to action to accelerate progress towards gender equality, adding to the well-established economic case for gender equality. Moreover, there is a fundamental moral case for empowering women: women represent one half of the global population and it is self-evident that they must have equal access to health, education, earning power and political representation. Through the *Global Gender Gap Report*, the World Economic Forum quantifies the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracks their progress over time. While no single measure can capture the complete situation, the Global Gender Gap Index presented in this *Report* seeks to measure one important aspect of gender equality—the relative gaps between women and men across four key areas: health, education, economy and politics. The Index was developed in part to address the need for a consistent and comprehensive measure for gender equality that can track a country's progress over time. More than a decade of data has revealed that progress is still too slow for realizing the full potential of one half of humanity within our lifetimes.



On average, the 144 countries covered in the *Report* have closed 96% of the gap in health outcomes between women and men, unchanged since last year, and more than 95% of the gap in educational attainment, an improvement of almost one full percentage point since last year and the highest value ever measured by the Index. However, the gaps between women and men on economic participation and political empowerment remain wide: only 59% of the economic participation gap has been closed—a continued reversal on several years of progress and the lowest value measured by the Index since 2008—and about 23% of the political gap, continuing a trend of slow but steady improvement. Weighted by population, in 2016, the average progress on closing the global gender gap stands at a score of 0.683—meaning an average gap of 31.7% remains to be closed worldwide across the four Index dimensions in order to achieve universal gender parity.

Out of the 142 countries covered by the Index both this year and last year, 68 countries have increased their overall gender gap score compared to last year, while 74 have seen it decrease. It therefore has been an ambiguous year for global gender parity, with uneven progress at best.

<http://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/>

3. Gender Mainstreaming in the City of Vienna

The Department for Gender Mainstreaming supports the departments and offices of the Vienna City Administration in their gender mainstreaming process. The department demonstrates that gender mainstreaming makes products and services of the City of Vienna fair and fulfilled the needs of the various target groups. The website of the department provides resource materials and covers following areas:

The Department for Gender Equality of the Vienna City Administration has prepared a manual on gender mainstreaming: "Gender mainstreaming made easy. Practical advice for more gender equality in the Vienna City Administration".

The manual covers topics as language, public relations and information, events, data and statistics, gender budgeting, procurement, subsidies, meetings, working groups, juries, management tools, legisprudence, advice and consultations. Further it contains practical advice checklists that will make gender mainstreaming at work a lot easier.

Examples of implementation

Find gender mainstreaming examples and good practices implemented by the City of Vienna in following areas:

- Work and education
 - The labour market
 - Business promotion
 - Gender Budgeting
 - Kindergarten



- Schoolyards
- Culture and leisure time
 - Art and culture
- Public space
 - Gender-sensitive traffic planning
 - Public lighting
 - Roads, paths and squares
 - Parks

General equality objectives include:

- Equal career opportunities for women and men
- Fair distribution of unpaid and paid work among women and men, wages and salaries that women and men can live on independently
- Equality of women and men with regard to political representation and participation
- Enhancement of gender roles and standards for women and men, elimination of restricting standards
- Same personal freedoms for women and men, protection against all forms of aggression
- Five Principles of Gender Mainstreaming

Get an overview of the five principles of Gender Mainstreaming and on checklists and questions asked to implement following principles:

- Gender-sensitive language
- Gender-specific data collection and analysis
- Equal access to and utilization of services
- Women and men are equally involved in decision making
- Equal treatment is integrated into steering processes

<http://www.femcities.at/gender-mainstreaming-in-vienna>

4. Call for a human economy that benefits all, not just the privileged few

New estimates show that just eight men own the same wealth as the poorest half of the world. As growth benefits the richest, the rest of society – especially the poorest – suffers. The very design of our economies and the principles of our economics have taken us to this extreme, unsustainable and unjust point. Our economy must stop excessively rewarding those at the top and start working for all people. Accountable and visionary governments, businesses that work in the interests of workers and producers, a valued environment, women's rights and a strong system of fair taxation, are central to this more human economy.

https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/bp-economy-for-99-percent-160117-en.pdf

5. Women in National Parliament



The data provided in the table by the IPU has been compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the basis of information provided by National Parliaments by 1st January 2017. 193 countries are classified by descending order of the percentage of women in the lower or single House.

Comparative data on the world and regional averages as well as data concerning the two regional parliamentary assemblies elected by direct suffrage can be found on separate pages. You can use the PARLINE database to view detailed results of parliamentary elections by country.

<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

6. ILO: World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2017 - Global Unemployment Expected to Rise by 3.4 Million in 2017

The report shows that vulnerable forms of employment – i.e. contributing family workers and own account workers – are expected to stay above 42 per cent of total employment, accounting for 1.4 billion people worldwide in 2017.

In both Europe and North America, long-term unemployment remains stubbornly high compared to pre-crisis levels, and in the case of Europe, it continues to climb despite the receding unemployment rates. Decent work deficits underpin social discontent and willingness to migrate.

Another key trend highlighted in the report is that the reductions in working poverty are slowing which endangers the prospects of eradicating poverty as set out in the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#). The number of workers earning less than \$3.10 per day is even expected to increase by more than 5 million over the next two years in developing countries. At the same time, it warns that global uncertainty and the lack of decent jobs are, among other factors, underpinning social unrest and migration in many parts of the world. “Boosting economic growth in an equitable and inclusive manner requires a multi-faceted policy approach that addresses the underlying causes of secular stagnation, such as income inequality, while taking into account country specificities,” Steven Tobin, ILO Senior Economist, said.

<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/center-for-corporate-governance/us-board-diversity-census-missing-pieces.pdf>

7. UN Women: Gender Assessment Of The Refugee and Migration Crisis In Serbia And FYR Macedonia

Despite modest gains, women and minorities see little change in representation on *Fortune* 500 boards.

This multi-year study published by the Alliance for Board Diversity (ABD), in collaboration with Deloitte for the 2016 census, provides powerful metrics on the slow change of diversity in the boardroom, and may help to guide corporations and advocates toward future improvements



in minority and women board participation.

Board diversity trends

Shifting demographics in the United States have brought diversity to the forefront of issues on the minds of C-suite executives and corporate boards. As the population of the United States continues to diversify, companies may need to determine ways to gain more diversity of thought, experience, and background in both management as well as the boardroom.

This study is the outgrowth of a multi-year effort organized by the Alliance for Board Diversity, collaborating with Deloitte for the 2016 census, which has examined and chronicled the degree of participation of diverse professionals on boards of directors across America's largest companies.

Originally organized as a "snapshot" of board diversity, the data, since accumulated over time, has allowed for the development of information on trends relative to overall diversity as well as the comparative differences in rates of representation among minorities and women over a period of more than a decade. This 2016 report highlights the progress to date that has been made for women and minorities on corporate boards. While there have been some gains, they have been negligible at best, and certainly not representative of the broad demographic changes we have seen in the United States in the same period of time. Reviewing the data provides insight into board diversity changes from 2012–2016 across the *Fortune* 500. A few specific summary items to note:

- Some progress has been made for African Americans/Blacks in securing/holding Fortune 500 board seats. The bulk of the African American male increases occurred within the Fortune 100. There has been an increase in the Fortune 500 of African American/Black women board members by 18.4% since 2012, while the total number of African American male board members in the Fortune 500 had only an increase of 1%.
- The percentage of Caucasian/White women currently holding Fortune 500 board seats has increased by 21.2% since 2012, and the number of Caucasian/White men has decreased by 6.4%.
- Asian/Pacific Islanders have shown continued growth. However, their starting baseline was small—thus their overall representation is still roughly three % of all board seats, representing a total of 167 seats, with an additional increase (46.7%) in Asian/Pacific Islander women.
- African Americans/Blacks appear to have the highest rate of individuals serving on multiple boards—indicating that companies are going to the same individuals rather than expanding the pool of African American candidates for board membership.
- Nominal gains have been accomplished for Hispanic/Latino men, while we saw a loss of two Fortune 500 board seats for Hispanic/Latino women since 2012.
- Currently, 65% of Fortune 100 boards have greater than 30 percent board diversity, compared to the Fortune 500 where that percentage drops to just under 50% of companies.

All in all, this year's census provides powerful metrics on the slow change of diversity in the



boardroom, and may help to guide corporations and advocates toward future improvements in women and minority board participation.

<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/us/Documents/center-for-corporate-governance/us-board-diversity-census-missing-pieces.pdf>

8. NATO and UN Resolution 1325

NATO and its partners are taking action to promote the role of women in peace and security. This demonstrates their commitment to support the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and related Resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2422). These Resolutions recognise the disproportionate impact that war and conflict has on women and children and highlight the fact that historically women have been left out of peace processes and stabilisation efforts. They call for full and equal participation of women at all levels ranging from conflict prevention to post-conflict reconstruction, peace and security. They call for the prevention of sexual violence and accountability to end impunity for incidents of sexual violence in conflict. Together, these resolutions frame the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

To support this process NATO has established Civil Society Advisory Panel (CSAP). CEE Network for Gender Issues is one of the 17 civil society organisations working in this area who are members of CSAP with a two year mandate.

http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_91091.htm

See also:

- Gender Perspectives in NATO Armed Forces
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_101372.htm
- Gender Balance and Diversity in NATO
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_64099.htm
- Women, Peace and Security, NATO, UNSC 1235 and Related Resolutions
http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_91091.htm

9. Domestic Violence in International Context

Edited by [Diana Scharff Peterson](#), [Julie A. Schroeder](#), © 2017 – Routledge

Domestic violence does not discriminate and is prevalent throughout the world regardless of race, age or socio-economic status. Why, then, do reactions and response differ so widely throughout the world? While some countries work diligently to address the matter through prevention and training, others take a ‘hands-off’ approach in their response. This book is one of the first to investigate domestic violence on a global scale and provides best practices gleaned from various countries around the world to paint a detailed picture of how police response to domestic violence is currently being conducted and provide training bodies with up-to-date information to enhance current curricula.

Domestic Violence in International Context brings together expert scholars native to twelve



different countries to examine the history and scope of domestic violence and how it is being addressed, repressed or ignored in their thirteen respective countries. Their specialised knowledge and unique data come together to create a series of snapshots that will guide nations, societies and communities worldwide in formulating effective strategies to prevent, intervene and combat this epidemic, and examine partnerships and programs already in place.

<https://www.routledge.com/Domestic-Violence-in-International-Context/Scharff-Peterson-Schroeder/p/book/9781138669642>

10. Minimum standards for Prevention & Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies

Gender-based violence is a life-threatening, global health and human rights issue that violates international human rights law and principles of gender equality. It is also a threat to lasting peace and an affront to our common humanity. United Nations Member States have called for urgent action to end GBV in emergencies, recognizing that in crises, the risk of GBV is heightened, particularly for women and adolescent girls. As a strategic priority, UNFPA is committed to scaling up our humanitarian response and enhancing our efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

These Minimum Standards will help us deliver on this strategic objective – providing clear and unambiguous guidance for UNFPA staff and partners on how to prevent gender-based violence in emergencies, and facilitate access to multi-sector response services for survivors. These Standards provide concrete actions that can be contextualized across all emergency situations where UNFPA operates, including situations of conflict and natural disasters. The Minimum Standards comprise a set of 18 inter-connected standards that draw upon UNFPA's comparative advantage and global expertise and are based on international best practice.

http://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub_pdf/GBVIE.Minimum.Standards.Publication.FINAL_.ENG_.pdf

11. Russia – President Putin Signed Into Law The New Bill Reducing Punishment For Domestic Violence

Moscow (CNN) Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a law that decriminalizes some forms of domestic violence, according to state-run news agency Tass.

Dubbed the "slapping law," it decriminalizes a first offense of domestic violence that does not seriously injure the person, making it a less serious administrative offense.

The punishment carries a fine of up to 30,000 rubles (\$507), an arrest up to 15 days, or compulsory community service up to 120 hours.

In cases of repeated assaults, a defendant faces a fine of up to 40,000 rubles (\$676), compulsory community service for up to six months, or being held under arrest for up to three months.

More than 85% of legislators in Russia's Duma approved the bill last month -- seen as part of Putin's drive to appease conservative pushing "traditional family values."



The bill's sponsors, including conservative senator Yelena Mizulina, believe the law would simply bring family law into line with reforms passed last summer that loosened punishment for other minor assaults.

Mizulina, a staunch proponent of traditional values, was also the author of Russia's controversial "gay propaganda law, "which prohibits" propaganda of nontraditional sexual relationships."

<http://edition.cnn.com/2017/02/07/europe/russia-domestic-violence-bill-putin/>

12. Integrating Gender into the Security Sector’s Work Is Essential to Countering Terrorism & Violent Extremism, Organization for Security & Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE)

The need to gender mainstream operational responses by the security sector in countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT) was highlighted during a two-day technical expert meeting of more than 80 law enforcement and government officials from across the OSCE region, which concluded today in Vienna. The meeting aimed to compile the experts’ recommendations on steering OSCE activities to raise gender awareness in States’ efforts to prevent and counter VERLT.

“Failing to apply a gender perspective will weaken the ability of the security sector to carry out their responsibilities and policies effectively,” said the OSCE’s Head on Anti-Terrorism Issues, Thomas Wuchte. “It also has an impact on the capacity of the law enforcement agencies to tailor interventions to reach women and girls. Although the UN Security Council affirmed 16 years ago that women’s leadership is essential in building and sustaining peace and security, implementation has been slow, and we need to increase our efforts.”

<http://us6.campaign-archive2.com/?u=b11aceda364f8f9afa6cadbbb&id=c64a5d0776&e=056b99ce0>

13. Do Political Protests Actually Change Anything? Analysis

Author: [JR THORPE](#)

The Women's March on Washington occurred January 21, and was expected to be [one of the largest political protests in recent U.S. history](#). Despite a somewhat rocky start (including a name change due to the fact that the protest's initial name, the Million Women March, [echoed the names of two African-American protests against racism, 1995's Million Man March and 1997's Million Woman March](#)), [the march](#) was shaping up to be one of the most important events of the American political year. But amidst the organizational frenzy, the growing protest momentum and the hopes that it would have a truly spectacular turnout, there have been bigger questions — questions familiar to anybody who's ever participated in a protest march: will it actually change anything at all? And what factors can actually make a protest march achieve any of its aims? It's not a new worry. Concerns about the efficacy of protest marches have been around for an extremely long time, and not without reason — for every one protest that brought about clear



change ([Gandhi's Salt March across India in 1930](#), for instance), there are counter-examples of ones that fizzled out, or simply came up against literal or figurative brick walls. But how do we define "effective" when it comes to marching? And what do social media, democracy, political organizations and a good dose of history have to do with whether or not they might work? Let's learn more about how marches create change — and why, in many cases, we have to wait for decades afterwards to find out if a protest was truly "effective."

<https://www.bustle.com/p/do-political-protests-actually-change-anything-29952>

14. European Women's Lobby calls for a solid gender equality Pillar of Social Rights

[Brussels, 7 February 2017] The European Women's Lobby welcomes the the Commission's initiative for a European Pillar of Social Rights, which is very timely and offers an opportunity to put a people centered approach back into the heart of the European Union. Six years of austerity policies have taken their toll particularly on women's rights and gender equality. A European Pillar of Social Rights is therefore an opportunity to restore trust in the EU.

Responding to the European Commission's public consultation which ended on the 31 December 2016, the EWL considers the Social Pillar to be an opportunity to reinstate the long standing commitment of the EU to gender equality. In recent years, this commitment has taken back stage, despite the legal obligations of the treaties (the EU celebrates its 60th anniversary this year), with the result that progress has been slow in achieving gender equality. The withdrawal of the maternity leave directive, the stalling of the Women on Boards directive, the downsizing of the Strategy for equality between women and men from a full-fledged political strategy to a Commission staff working document, the failure to integrate a gender dimension into the Europe 2020 Strategy and the European Semester all bear witness to the way in which gender equality has been addressed.

The European Pillar of Social Rights therefore should be gender mainstreamed throughout the set of rights proposed in the consultation document and beyond. This is crucial to avoid the creation of further gender gaps in social rights and social security/protection systems. A gender lens provides an opportunity to shape the European society we all want, one that puts women and men on an equal footing to determine and reaffirm the European social model.

<http://www.womenlobby.org/European-Women-s-Lobby-calls-for-a-solid-gender-equality-Pillar-of-Social>

15. A Social And Democratic Europe? Obstacles and perspectives for action

Author: Daniel Seikel

The European integration process has always been associated with ambitious goals. After two devastating world wars, Europe's unification was closely linked to overcoming nationalism and to securing peace on the European continent.



Despite these highly problematic developments, especially from a worker-oriented perspective, there are good reasons to defend the integration process. Given the necessary political majorities, European integration could potentially provide the historical chance to contain capitalist competition between states in times of globalisation and unfettered markets. Cooperation at the European level could create the preconditions for transnational solidarity, stopping the race to the bottom between member states, regulating markets and restoring the primacy of politics and democracy over the economy. So far, however, this option is only hypothetical. In practice, European integration contributes to the exact opposite, not least by directly exposing the member states' welfare systems and production regimes to institutionalised regulative competition. The European project is undoubtedly one of the greatest achievements of civilisation in the 20th century. However, this holds also true for the democratic welfare state, the autonomy of collective bargaining or the right to strike. Therefore, European integration must not be bought at the expense.

The social achievements that characterise the 'European social model' are seriously threatened by the current trend of the integration process, with the euro crisis and its political handling posing the biggest threat. Yet, the observable imbalance between market regulation and market creation is also rooted in the institutional architecture of the European multi-level system. For proponents of a social and democratic Europe it is important to provide an alternative to these negative developments – an alternative that can neither be an uncritical 'more Europe at any cost' nor a retreat to the nation state. Focusing on the institutional context, this paper aims at presenting some ideas on changes that might contribute to the realisation of a social and democratic Europe. While the paper does not deal with the problematic management of the euro crisis, it addresses the correction of the EU's shortcomings in its 'normal state'. The article is to be understood as a basis for further discussions and political debates on the future of Europe. The paper is structured as follows: I will first introduce the concept of social democracy as a blueprint for a reorientation of the European integration process (section 2). Following this, I will elaborate on the main barriers to a social and democratic Europe (3). On the basis of this analysis, section 4 outlines reform options for three key areas. In the final section, I will sum up the main results (5).

http://www.boeckler.de/pdf/p_wsi_wp_207.pdf

16. Investing in the care economy: path to growth & reduction of the gender pay gap & inequality, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

A new study by the ITUC shows that investment into the care economy of 2% of GDP in just 7 countries would create over 21 million jobs and help countries overcome the twin challenges of ageing populations and economic stagnation.

The report which analysed the employment growth potential in the care economy in Australia, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the USA, also demonstrates how investing in care narrows the gender pay gap, reduces overall inequality and helps redress the exclusion of women from decent jobs. The report cites additional evidence from South Africa and Turkey showing



that the economic stimulus from care investment is not limited to the world's richest countries. Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said: "This study shows how sustained investment in care is not only vital to societies, it also provides an indispensable motor for economic growth and an antidote to the destructive impact of failed austerity policies. Most of the burden of service cuts has been borne by women, which has in turn depressed household incomes at a time when boosting purchasing power and economic demand is crucial to restoring global prosperity. The care sector itself has high rates of precarious work and low pay, and it is essential that workers in this sector have the full protection of labour legislation in line with international standards."

Economists from the Women's Budget Group carried out advanced modelling of the employment impact of investing the equivalent of 2% of GDP into the "social infrastructure" of education, health and social care services. They found that:

- It would increase overall employment by between 2.4% and 6.1% depending on the country;
- Between 59% and 70% of the directly-created jobs would be taken up by women; and,
- The employment multiplier effect from these new jobs would also increase overall male employment, by between 1.4% and 4% in different countries.

"Some governments have acted to lift investment in physical infrastructure projects, to stimulate growth and overcome decades of underinvestment. We now have clear empirical evidence of the economic and social benefits of investing in care as well. Governments should look to this rather than sticking with an austerity agenda which was based on deeply flawed analysis from the outset," said Burrow.

"Cuts in public care services have had a double impact on women. They are finding it harder to get decent jobs, and in most countries the pressure on social investment means that it is mainly women who end up filling the gap as unpaid carers. This in turn keeps them out of the paid workforce for even longer and pulls apart the fabric of households and communities. Our new study confirms that the right kind of investment can turn this social crisis around, and we call on governments to take up the challenge and break from their obsession with simply keeping the financial sector happy. The evidence from these seven countries reinforces the huge jobs and growth potential in the care economy worldwide," concluded Burrow.

The ITUC represents 180 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 333 national affiliates.

https://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/care_economy_en.pdf

17. EU - Roadmap on Forced/Early Marriage - Referral Pathway for Frontline Professionals

Forced and early marriage (FEM), contracted without the free and valid consent of one or both partners or before the age of 18, is internationally acknowledged as a violation of human rights

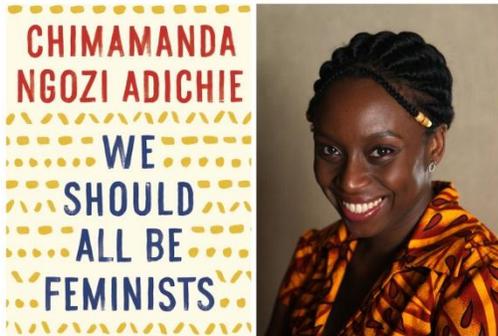


and as a form of gender-based violence¹¹. It is a multi-faceted social-cultural harmful practice that adversely impacts the personal development and future opportunities, health and wellbeing of children, with detrimental consequences on children, women, men, families, communities and nations². Forced marriage constitutes a serious breach of human rights by stripping the victims of their personal liberty, right to choose whether, when and whom to marry and often violates the right to education and profession.

Thus it consequently stands in direct opposition to the fundamental principles and essential core values of the European Union (EU), particularly gender equality and protection of the rights of the child. The EU has addressed the issue of forced marriage directly or indirectly in different legislations, such as the 2012 Victims' Directive which lists forced marriage as a form of gender violence, the 2011 Qualification Directive, which deals with the rights and duties of persons who have been victimized through gender violence, and the 2003 Family Reunification Directive that contains counter-measures to the danger of enabling forced marriage through transnational reunification. Article 63.3 of the Treaty establishing the European Community constitutes the appropriate legal basis for EU action.

<http://files.wave-network.org/home/ForceEarlyMarriageRoadmap.pdf>

BOOK RECOMMENDATION



Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, award-winning author of bestseller *Americanah*, adapted from her much admired and loved TEDx talk a personal, eloquently-argued essay named “We should all be feminists” which was distributed to every 16-yearold high school student in Sweden in hopes to start a conversation.

Taking from her experience and her perception of the world in which we live, she offered unique definition of feminism and what means to be a woman today.

“Some people ask:

“Why the word feminist? Why not just say you are a believer in human rights, or something like that?”

Because that would be dishonest. Feminism is, of course, part of human rights in general—but to choose to use the vague expression human rights is to deny the specific and particular problem of gender. It would be a way of pretending that it was not women who have, for centuries, been excluded. It would be a way of denying that the problem of gender targets women.”



IMPRESSUM

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