



## **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.