

Press Release: Local women need voice for regional and international peace to hold

Women's Lobby calls for more women to get involved in local politics and implementing peace agreements.

Date: Thursday, February 1, 2018



Women together in support to women peace and EU integration in Klokot. Photo: RWLSEE/Arberesha Dedinja

Partesh and Klokot, Kosovo^[1] - Members of the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice in South Eastern Europe (RWLSEE) took part in a two-day international conference on how women at the local level can play a greater role in peace-building. Participants from seven countries of the region explored ways to promote women, peace and security, with a focus on multi-ethnic municipalities of Partesh and Klokot in southeastern Kosovo.

They analysed common challenges and ways to get more local women involved in implementing peace agreements such as the Brussels Agreement between Kosovo and Serbia, which the EU is facilitating. They urged national and international institutions to recognize and support women at the local level as important actors of change for them.

"The journey to peace building and the Euro-Atlantic integration will be speeded up if women are empowered to take up their role in decision making at national and local levels in any country of the Western Balkans, which desperately needs to overcome the consequences of wars and wounds. Women cannot be left outside of political and economic life, because that would mean that we are not using half of the potential of our society for changes we need towards a better future," said Edita Tahiri, Chair of the Regional Women's Lobby.

Supported by UN Women and the Swedish Government, the conference also included women politicians, Members of Parliament, mayors and local leaders and representatives from the Kosovo Ministry of Local Government Administration, civil society and municipal non-governmental organizations involved in similar meetings two years ago.

Made up of representatives from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, the Women's Lobby advocates for sustainable peace, respect for different cultures, democracy, justice, security and reconciliation in post conflict countries. It is a model of regional cooperation for peace that can be used in other regions of the world.



Roundtable on Peace building efforts at local level in Pristina. Photo: RWLSEE /Arberesha Dedinja

European transformation of municipalities in Kosovo. Participants agreed that only through joint efforts can women play a larger role in peace-building and stability at all levels. They also stressed that governments and international organizations should listen to women, since their needs are often ignored or misunderstood.

Based on their shared experiences, the participants said cooperation and networking among women at national and regional levels showed a way to empower women at local levels. They emphasized that inclusive local peace-building is critical to the success of overall peace-building.

“Regarding the social and economic issues we are facing in the region, we should stay away from a discriminatory approach and nurture an approach of diversity. We should continue respecting each other as we are,” said Vesna Jovanovic, Director for Education, Health, Social Affairs, Youth, Culture and Sports in the Municipality of Partesh.

Participants agreed that women needed to advance in local governments so they had an effective voice. They warned against leaving municipal governance solely to men, noting that women bring a perspective for resolving citizens’ daily concerns such as education, employment and security.

The conference also addressed the role of women in improving inter-ethnic relations and

[1] All references to Kosovo on this website shall be understood to be in full compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

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