



DECLARATION FROM TIRANA REGIONAL WOMEN'S CONFERENCE 17 JUNE 2024

Participants of the Regional Conference "WOMEN BUILDING LASTING PEACE IN THE WESTERN BALKANS: Defrosting the stalled Brussels dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia on normalization of relations " held in Tirana Albania on 17 June 2024 brought together women parliamentarians from Kosovo, Serbia and women leaders of politics and civil society from wider region to discuss ongoing challenges of fragile peace in the region, stalled Brussels Dialogue in past two years and lacking of implementation of reached agreements, as well as to look at women's perspective on way-out from current sensitive situation, and ways of moving from fragile peace into the lasting peace in the post conflict of the region of the Western Balkans. The Conference was organized by Regional Women's Lobby in Southeast Europe (RWLSEE) and Cordaid with the support of the Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) Rapid Response window.

Through the constructive debate women called on resuming the stalled Dialogue and implementation of reached agreements as a key to peace security and stability in the region as soon as possible while called for central role of women in formal peace processes where they are missing. The Conference considered and adopted a series of recommendations for strengthening the role of women and gender equality in the decision making, leadership, formal peace processes for strengthening regional peace and security, democracy and good governance.

Within the three panels, topics for discussion included Strategizing ways of strengthening the participation of women in formal peace processes and governance, especially in relation to the Brussels dialogue: European integration and regional cooperation with women's central role and for women's empowerment, equal participation of women in decision-making through quotas for women in government, in the delegations of both parties and mediator's delegation. Due to traditional barriers and patriarchal mentality on gender equality, only quota for women can ensure gender inclusive peacemaking and peacebuilding, as well as the need to involve men, the media, dialogue and mediation in support of inclusive peace and lasting peace.

Recognizing the complex situation of fragile peace, insecurity, instability and current geopolitical dynamics in the world, Europe and our region, and the significant role of women in ensuring peace, stability and security, as well as the need for their greater leadership, influence in building lasting peace in the region and implementing the WPS agenda, gender equality and generational equality, we agree that:

1. Peace and security in the Western Balkans are still threatened by unfinished peace, weak democratic institutions (growing autocracy and corruption), ethnic divisions, mistrust, failure to resolve the normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, and delays in the European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the countries of the region. The Brussels dialogue, which, with the support of the EU and the USA, has been going on since 2011, as well as the Basic Agreement, from February 2023, and the Ohrid Agreement have increased hope for a peaceful future in our region, which is still suffering due to the tragedies of wars. We believe and call on resuming of the stalled Brussels Dialogue and that the reached Agreements should be implemented as soon as possible and the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia should

be continued to reduce the tensions between these two parties, which have led to negative effects even in the region. Also, the process of European and Euro-Atlantic integration of the countries in the region should be accelerated because it can be powerful enough to redirect the mutual relations between the states and peoples of the Western Balkans towards sustainable peace and stability.

2. The Brussels Peace dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia must be brought to the end with reaching the final agreement on normalization of relations between Kosovo and Serbia, as soon as possible for the benefit of everyone in the region, sustainable peace and the achievement of gender equality, implementing agreements reached, as well as UNSCR1325 and the WPS agenda.

3. The Balkans should be democratic, European and Euro-Atlantic, stable, peaceful and prosperous.

4. It is necessary to constantly advocate the EU enlargement process because it is a chance for the Western Balkans to catch up with Western Europe and implement the necessary reforms.

5. The Brussels peace dialogue, which is currently in the hands of men, produces tensions in efforts to normalize relations between the two sides, which shows that it is necessary to include women in formal peace processes and government. Also, it is necessary to demand a greater role of women in the EU integration process.

6. It is necessary to empower women more to get involved in peace processes at all levels, government, and negotiations, because we are convinced that gender equality and greater influence of women can help overcome challenges, accelerate development, democracy, stability and prevent the occurrence of young people fleeing to find a future in third countries and thus ensure the peaceful future of the Balkans. We are sure that it is one of the strategic priorities that can help maximize human resources in building a just, peaceful, prosperous and democratic future. Even though the current situation in the region has a discouraging effect on gender equality and WPS Agenda, women still show enough strength and determination to get involved in building a gender-inclusive peaceful future, and they deserve all the support at the local, national, regional and international levels.

7. Working with young women and boys empowering them to enter in politics the public arena is of crucial importance for the sustainability of democratic processes. We must support young leaders of change that we need.

8. We call on natural quota 50% of women included in peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. This implies in each delegation of negotiating parties and delegation of mediators. Quotas might sound artificial though facing traditional and cultural barriers to gender equality in decision making – quotas remain the only ensuring mechanism until the mindset of society democratize worldwide and value women capacities equally with men. To happen sooner rather than later, Diplomacy of international women's organization jointly with regional and national women's organization must launch global campaign to lobby for the quotas. "Global Campaign for women's inclusion in each peace negotiating delegation of parties and in the delegation of international mediators for peace with aim of ensuring the new UNSCR on this purpose.

9. There should be more financial support for women's peacebuilding organizations in post-conflict contexts where potentials of conflict exist as well as conflict prevention potentials.

Participant's List, Tirana Regional Conference Declaration

Women Parliamentarians of Kosovo and Serbia

Kosovo:

Time Kadrijaj, Member of Parliament, Kosovo
Vlora Dumoshi, Member of Parliament, Kosovo
Eliza Hoxha, Member of Parliament, Kosovo
Xhevahire Izmaku, Former Member of Parliament, Kosovo

Serbia:

Snežana Paunović, Vice President of the National Assembly, Serbia
Danijela Vujičić, Member of Parliament, Serbia
Slavica Radovanović, Member of Parliament, Serbia
Gordana Čomić, Former Member of Parliament, Serbia

RWLSEE Steering Committee & Members of RWLSE

Edita Tahiri, RWLSEE Chair; Former Deputy Prime minister, Chief Negotiator, Kosovo
Sonja Biserko, RWLSEE Steering Committee Member; Founder and President of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights, Serbia
Flora Macula, RWLSEE Steering Committee Member; Head of Programming (Humanitarian Response), Ukraine, Former Head, UN Women Kosovo
Gordana Sobol, RWLSEE Steering Committee Member; Former MP, Minister without Portfolio, Chairwoman of the Parliamentarian Committee for Gender Equality, Parliament of Croatia
Morana Paliková Gruden, RWLSEE Member, Expert on Strategic Communication – European Commission TAIEX Project in Western Balkans; Professional Diplomat; Former Member of Parliament, Croatia
Irina Pockova, RWLSEE Steering Member; Member (Former President), Women's Chapter of SDA political party of Sv. Nikola; North Macedonia
Memnuna Zvizdić, RWLSEE Steering Committee Member; Former Founder and Executive Director "Žene Ženama"; Bosnia and Herzegovina
Nada Drobnjak, RWLSEE Steering Committee Member; MP, Head, Parliamentary Commission for Gender Equality; Montenegro.

RWLSEE members

Mesila Doda, RWLSEE Member, General Secretary of the Party for Justice, Integration and Unity, Former Member of Parliament, Chairwomen of the Alliance of Women Parliamentarians in Albanian parliament
Eni Çobani, RWLSEE Member; Lawyer; Mediator; Professor, Television personality, Albania
Elona Gjebrea, Former Member of Parliament, Albania
Savka Todorovska, RWLSEE Member; President of the National Council for Gender Equality, North Macedonia
Edlira Çepani, National Coordinator at Network "Equality in Decision- Making", Albania
Slavica Striković, RWLSEE Member; Managing Board Member of NGO Women Action, Montenegro

Women leaders of politics and civil society

Erisa Xhixho, Deputy Director, Freedom Party, Albania
Elga Mitre, Human Rights Activist, Albania
Dea Nako, Liberal Party, Albania
Aleksandra Mlađan, Advisor to Vice President of Parliament, Serbia
Edith Harxhi, Albania, Presidency Member of Democratic Party, Former Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Albania
Biljana Žarković, Journalist, 'Vreme' Magazine, Serbia
Vetone Veliu, Executive Director, Mitrovica Women Association for Human Rights, MWAHR, Kosovo
Olivera Milošević, Executive Director, "Women Business Association (WBA), NGO, Mitrovica North, Kosovo

Farida Zmijani Ramadani, Director NGO “Women Breathe Values”, Albania
Egzona Krasniqi, Journalist, TV Channel 10, Kosovo

Representatives of WPHF, Cordaid, UN Women Albania

Achille Pende Sommo, Programm Coordinator, Rapid Response Window, United Nations Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF)

Ingrid van Bouwdijk Bastiaanse, Program Officer, Cordaid, Netherlands

Marina Manchkhvili, Marketing & Communications Officer, Cordaid, Netherlands

Michele Ribotta, UN Women Representative to Albania