

## **DRUŠTVO VITA ACTIVA**

### **F-MAIL - Project description**

#### **Project background**

In Slovenia the tradition of independent women's organisations dates back to the early 1980s. In spite of that, gender equality as a concept and goal has never acquired the 'right to reside' in the country. Not only 'feminism' but also 'women's movement' are words that are used as insulting expressions. We recently even witnessed instances of hate speech being expressed by important social points (such as the National Assembly, ministers, the media) that directly attacked gender equality, derided efforts to ensure equal opportunities and advocated traditional, stereotypical gender roles. It is possible that this kind of public language jeopardises the level of equality already attained or is at least slowing down endeavours in that direction. This threat seems to be much more serious because women are still underrepresented in all decision-making positions in Slovenia; as an illustration: only 13.3% of MPs (2004 elections), 21.7% of local community councillors (2006 elections) and 3.3% of mayors (2006 elections) are women; in 2005 of the country's 100 most influential managers there were just 5 women.

In our opinion, one of the key reasons for this situation is that the different organisations and bodies that are working for equal opportunities, especially women's NGOs, are not sufficiently informed and connected to each other. That is why many activities and programmes do not create synergy that could lead to a broad acknowledgement of the importance of gender equality.

Critical points here are: the information flow between NGOs dealing with different issues (for example, violence – political participation); the information flow from national mechanisms to NGOs (for example, informing about the preparation of national documents); the information flow from abroad (different types of information from EU bodies or concerning the situation of women in developing countries); and the information flow from NGOs to European and other NGO networks.

To improve the situation it is on one hand necessary to improve the quality of information circulation and the connections between those organisations, bodies and individuals who are already working for gender equality and, on the other hand, to raise the awareness of those who can be assumed they would be potentially active in the field provided they had the appropriate support.

#### **Project's purpose**

So the project's purpose is to raise awareness about the different rights connected to gender equality, about the importance of equality and activities to eliminate gender stereotypes and for improving women's social and political position. In this name the project increases the availability of important information on gender issues and strengthens information sharing between NGOs and other relevant bodies.

It brings information on important inter/national documents on gender equality (passed documents, documents in procedures), legislation, statistical data, cases of gender discrimination, data on advanced situation of women as a result of gender equality policy mechanisms and positive actions, statistical data, educational opportunities, events, etc., all in different fields (employment and working conditions, politics, health and reproductive rights, violence and trafficking in human beings, culture and arts, migrations, history, gender studies, etc.).

The **main goals** are:

- to raise awareness of rights in the gender-equality sphere: by informing about important inter/national documents concerning gender equality (documents that have been passed, documents undergoing procedures);
- to raise awareness of the importance of gender equality: by providing data that shed light on inequalities (statistical data, cases of gender discrimination), data on the advanced situation of women as a result of gender-equality policy mechanisms and positive actions in Slovenia and abroad;
- to raise awareness about activities for eliminating gender stereotypes and for improving women's social and political position: by giving information on the activities of as many actors as possible from Slovenia and from abroad (NGOs, inter/national mechanisms, national deputies and community councillors, co-ordinators for equal opportunities within the ministries and communities, other individuals and organisations/institutions);
- to support actors who are engaged in gender-equality activities in different organisations and institutions or individually, and to support the position of women in general;
- to support the networking of actors from above;
- to enhance modern forms of communication as regular ways of becoming informed (electronic newsletter and web page);
- to develop new needs: to stimulate the need for experiences and knowledge exchange through regular informing.

### **Main activities**

We are achieving this goals by two main activities – daily refreshed web-page ([www.drustvo-vitaactiva.si](http://www.drustvo-vitaactiva.si)) and weekly electronic newsletter ("F-Mail").

During the six months of Slovene Presidency of the EU also by administrating one of seven main topics of the Slovenian non-governmental organizations portal for the period of the EU Presidency 1.1.-30.6.2008 (<http://www.predsedovanje.si/>) and by monthly electronic newsletter - English version with important information about the Slovene Presidency of the EU in the context of gender equality.

### **Results of the project**

On the base of the **response of the target groups** we can say that the products of the project are useful and welcomed. The number of subscribers is constantly increasing and some subscribers are forwarding the products to their own subscribers' lists. Other media take over our information and publish them.

We also received invitations to become a partner of the NGOs' networks who are developing new information systems, i.e. Dodogovor [www.dodogovor.org](http://www.dodogovor.org), Fikus [www.fikus.si](http://www.fikus.si), Predsedovanje.si <http://www.predsedovanje.si/>.

## **Future perspectives**

The further development of the project depends on finances since it is not possible to widen the activities on the basis of the voluntary work. The possibilities for **future funding** that we are currently investigating are:

- foreing funds for women's projects (small funds),
- EU structural funds: through networking with other independent NGO media and with the support of Gender Equality Institute.

In spite of the fact that the further development of the projects depends on finances our optimistic **long-term goals** are:

- to develop a Europe-wide media on gender equality in at least four languages (Slovene, English, German, Spanish)
- to develop a network of independent gender equality media (F-Mail, dieStandard, NEWW, One World, different web-pages)
- to develop an interactive web-portal
- to encourage other media to inform regularly and reliably on gender equality issues.