

INTERVIEW: Spomenka Kronic, female director of Gender center Government Republic of Srpska

The money is condition for freedom and equality

Spomenka Kronic discovers in conversation for Lara online, how far we came on the way to Europe, why combat against violence in family will be for years priority, when will women get their part of budget's cake, and when will female contractors get suitable development credits.

Gender center of Government Republic of Srpska as institution responsible for promotion gender equality had five employees and handled the budget with only 70 000 KM per year five years ago when is founded. Only few persons who fighters for human rights knew that Gender center exists and for what should use in that time. Today this is respectable institution with ten employees high educated professionals, and with annual budget from half million KM. Gender center RS became no roundabout factor in process of bringing majority entity's law, in development of mechanism for combat against violence in family, then for economic and political women's strengthening. They announce that they will become important link in one from the most important public jobs - dividing money from republic's budget, soon.

Spomenka Kronic, female director of Gender center RS doesn't hide pride, how because of institution development which she has been running for years, also due to obviously improvement of society in region of gender equality. It is more and more women who decide in extremely men's region long ago, like the politics and business. Victims of violence in family are not abandoned to themselves; the question of discrimination came out from "illegal". But, in this region still there are a lot of works, and process of European integration has opened recently, and it put new challenges in front of Gender center RS and partner's organization.

Finally, we set out to Europe formally, when BiH signed a Contract about stabilization and joining with EU. What that means from aspect gender equality, because we know that in European Union to this segment human rights gives especial importance?

- Signing of this Contract is especially important for achieving equality citizens of both sexes in all life regions. Gender mechanisms have already included as at entity level so at state's level in process harmonizing domestic law and practice with European standards. We are constantly in connection with Direction for European integration BiH. So, the great job is on-going, which is at beginning because with opening new chapters in negotiations it will set constantly new requests in front of us.

What are these requests of Europe in region gender equality?

- In phase of joining which is temporally in BiH it is asked from us that we have developed mechanisms for securing gender equality in region of work and employment in access health and social protection, and of course to enable equal

participating for women in political and public life. Those questions are actual now, and in following phase of joining to Europe will come turn on other region, too.

How much have we come to European standards in region human rights and equalities men and women till now? Do we stagnate too much for Europe?

- We very good coordinate legislation in region of work in RS with European standards. In great measure it is merit of Gender center RS, because we together with Ministry of Labor brought in all basic institutes and postulates gender equality in laws which regulate this region. And, when is case about fighting against violence in family, I have to point out our important participating in creating and process of bringing Law about protection from violence in family as one special law which will enable more efficient victims protection, because combat against violence in family is one from condition which European Commission puts in front of us, too. We did a lot of at executing that law, although there were a lot of problems at beginning. We did a lot at strengthening capacities of all subjects who give protection to victims of family violence in order to committers of violence adequately be punish, and in order to they would be far from victims. Of course, we aware that further improve that region, and a lot of job still is waiting for us.

Can we say then that we with one leg in Europe when is case about gender equality?

- We can say that our laws in stated regions very good. Still, we are dissatisfied with laws that regulate enterprise. We get activities going in that part in order to through Ministry of economics and with cooperation with Investment development bank RS ensure opening special credits lines for women contractors. That is expected from us, not only because of coordination with standards which promote EU, than UN Convention for combat against women discrimination (CEDAW) obligated us on that, too. We have obligation to present to CEDAW Committee 2010 what we did at guarding that Convention in order to show that we improved not only in laws than in practice, too. Next segment which I don't satisfy is participating women in public and political life.

Do you think in legislative sense, or in political practice?

- We are not satisfied in legislative sense either. Election law BiH isn't coordinated with Law about gender equality in BiH, neither with European standards which request participating 40 % in politics. Election commission BiH do not respect the fact that the Law about gender equalities is *lex specialis* and because of that it should apply directly there other laws aren't coordinated with it.

Which concrete remarks you have when is guiding election in question?

-Concretely, it isn't respected parity at lists in sense Law about gender equalities because the women should be represent not with 30 % than with 40 %. We also asked that again according to Law about gender equalities ensure more participating in election commission and voting boards. Statistic divided per sex it isn't respected strictly in all election processes, too. For example, by there isn't term of sex by the name of candidate, actually of female candidate, and sometimes form the name it cannot conclude is it women or men. Gender statistics even they exist they are not available to public on the way when we enter at web site Election commission BiH, you can immediately conclude how much

women represented in election process.

How much has done till now at so called gender budgeting in RS? Was ensured mechanisms that the money from budget which citizens and female citizens fill of this entity be equally available to women and men, too, in other words to be respectful specific needs of female citizens?

- That is important question which request big job. We have just started that job. Some project activities are realized with help of donor's means especially with help of UNIFEM, and with participating NGO sector. UNIFEM ensured specific means in order to finish that process in RS. Gender Center RS will coordinate the project, and our the most important partners will be Ministry of Financing RS and Main service for revision public sector, then departments for financing some local communities. Process gender budgeting it isn't moved far either in Europe, or in the world, even in undeveloped countries, so that we don't have good practice on which we could follow their example, and according which we could have good arguments in sense: here it is that country arranged on that or this way, and that brought progress. So, we can't know with which instruments are achieved the best results in gender budgeting. We will not try as the others have worked till now with variety analyses of budget prove how women are refused for specific part of money, or how is said in populace budget's cake. We count that is already clear that the women endangered in that sense. We don't get anything concretely; we don't change anything with proving of that thesis. We will try to make guidelines and instructions with cooperation of Ministry of Financing RS in order to bring positive affirmative actions to impose obligations to institutions in order they plan budget in that way that they have special lines or for women, either for improving gender equalities in regions which they act. So, we will try for beginning gender budgeting bring directly in system with guidelines and references.

When can we expect concrete results when is case about more equal money distribution from budget RS?

- We can make influence only at bringing budget for 2010 because the activities at planning budgets for next year have already started. We will see what we will make, but anyway, our attention is to start systematically, to not lean on only at pilot projects which give some indicators, and then when the project was done nothing positive is happened in practice.

What the strategy for achieving gender equality in BiH has brought to us till now?

- That strategy is defined by state's Gender action plan. That is job in jurisdiction of Agency for gender equality in BiH. That state's plan of action has got 15 regions, one from those regions is gender budgeting. However, the process of implementation of that action plan in right sense hasn't started jet frontally in all levels and in all regions. Some activities started at the level of entity, but Agency for gender equality in BiH hasn't made agreement with donors who should support that process with middle-deadline. I hope that will happen till end of this year.

Which are priorities of work Gender center RS in this and future year?

- Those are priorities coordinated with process of European integrations. Before all, our priority is economical women strengthening because the economical independent is the key of equality. That's the condition for freedom. Our priority is more intensive partnerships with educational institutions. We did a lot of at compilation of materials, and in the future we

will work at their practical implementation together with Ministry of Education and Culture, and with partnerships organizations. Combat against violence in family will be our priority still the least three to four years. Our priority is further institutional strengthening of all mechanisms for gender equalities, and there fore Gender center RS, too. Gender center RS continuously works at personnel strengthening. We have ten employed at present, but according systematization is planned 15. Our budget is increased till 500 000 KM yearly. For those who do not know this region it will seem a lot, but regarding to our mandate and workload which we do that is really real amount. They in government RS are aware that we bring important progress in many life's regions, so we achieved resections of others institutions, too.

Let's finish this conversation with again subject violence in family. Do experts and female experts from NGO and their colleagues from social services have different attitudes about how the most efficient solve this social problem?

- Those differences are smaller, and the truly approaching and qualitative partnership is in the act. That problem is being solved a lot more successful today then before, thanks to good synergy and common forces. That the best shows situation in Banja Luka, where in mobile team for combat against violence in family and victim's protection together work social workers from the Center for social work, police officers of Ministry of interior RS and female activists NGO "Udružene žene". It is very good model of work which in the practice gives efficient protection to victims and alleviates process of distance aggressive tyrants. I am happy because I see that mobile team in Banja Luka advance its work thanks to cooperation and understanding for welfare those whom their help necessary day in day out.

Is it more often opened dilemma how solve the problems at the field - Is it solution with distance tyrants from the flat or with accommodating victims in safe house. That dilemma is especially actuated there where there aren't safe houses and there is not developed logistic, as in Banja Luka?

- There is not dilemma. It must be applied both methods. Temporally shelter must exist in order to victims be protect in extreme situation when really there are no other solution. Victims in such situations should far from flat or house, not because we consider that tyrant should stay in flat, than in order to that victims could save at the moment of urgent violence, and order to could work peacefully at psychosocial plan with them. We must ensured peace to victims, that they can bring important decisions about their further life without fear and spanking. Temporally in RS, we have three shelters for victims of violence in family in ownerships of NGO sector - in Banja Luka, Prijedor, and Modrica. Of course, that it is not enough. In NGO sector consider that it is necessary two houses more in other parts of RS. I think that it is real estimation. That could reconcile interest of civil society and state's institution, and that in some smaller municipalities in which really do not exist need for building safe houses we ensure temporally accommodation for victims of violence in family within single-room apartment building, geriatrics' centers or similar objects. I suppose that such solution will be recommend through strategy for combat against violence in family, whose bringing we expect till the end of year.

Network of support to victims of family violence in RS on some way illustrate condition in our society, too. So, the only one mobile team we have in Banja Luka, all of three houses are in the circle from hundred kilometers in advancer and richer north-west part in RS. Do such differences exist already in region of protection of human rights and gender equalities?

- That is really delicate question and it is not connected only for human rights, than for economic power and for development specifics parts ES, too. But, honestly speaking there is the true there - it isn't in the same position woman in Banja Luka and in Rogatica. It would be hypocritically states that the protection of human rights at same level in all parts RS.

Still, it would be unfair state that is the result of some central or discriminatory politic. That what is, let's say headquarters Gender center RS in Banja Luka, doesn't mean that we only sit in Banja Luka and that we do not know what's happening in other regions of RS. On the other hand, we work in whole RS; we are permanently at the field regardless on the small number of employed and still modest capacities. There, we have just finished serial of seminars with police because of sensibilities at violence in family, and we were in all five centers public securities. So we had opportunity to hear that victims of vilence are not left to their own resources where there aren't safe houses and powerful NGOs, too. There are developed specific, local models of work, cooperation among police and centers for social work is developed, local communities and schools are included in the process...