

# Experience of women in politics in socialism and transition period

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**Position of women in a  
society is a reflection of the  
state of its democracy  
(Nairobi Forward looking  
strategies)**

- There is a glass ceiling, you can see the sun and a bright day, but clouds could come and cover it, the day is not any more bright. Making your day bright you have to watch for stormy clouds all the time.

Black and white image of democracy before 1990:

- Communist and socialist regimes as non-democratic, sometimes the Yugoslav's was recognized as a different to others
- All western countries as democratic regimes

# The situation of women in Slovenia before 1990

- 1960<sup>th</sup> considerable change of economic and political situation (new Constitution 1963)
- - growth of GDP and development, opened borders
- - rapid growth of employment of female population
- - Enlargement of female enrolment in universities

# 1970th on:

- 1974 new constitution followed by several codes
- Recognizing classical equal rights and:
- Special protection of women and mothers at work
- Family planning and free decision on childbearing (abortion)
- paid maternity leave **and parental leave** introduced
- recognition of rape in family as criminal act
- 1978 Resolution on Promoting the Status and Role of women (as follow-up of Ciudad Mexico UN World Conference on Women -1975)

# Societal environment- social care

- construction of crèches and kindergartens
- introduction of meals at work and in schools mandatory
- paid parental leave for a sick child
- broad introduction of family planning (free contraception)
- Network of services as a help to the families

# At work

- Equal payment for equal work
- Forbidden any discrimination in advertising for a free working post except for health reasons when a work post was dangerous for fertility/pregnancy
- Paid programs for continuation of education
- Equal opportunities in competition for a job
- special concern and care for women and mothers



# In political life

- **Communist Party introduced the role of women in its program in 1940 and from then on it was in all its programs**
- **Role of women incorporated in all relevant political documents and followed by a wide legal protection and promotion**
- **Strong organization of councils for social political activities of women at all levels**
- **Promotion and general understanding to tackle gender issues by constructing solidarity between women and men**

- **Political promotion of involvement of women in political decision making at all levels (local community, community, republic and federal)**
- **In decision-making in self-management system in factories**
- **League of Communists, Socialist Alliance of Working People, Trade Unions, NGOs**

- **No quotas, but it was ‘normal’ to include women into the list of candidates as a general obligation for all political and other organizations**
- **Regular reports on situation of gender equality issues in the society and at work for political organizations**

# International activity

- Yugoslav system of self management was broadly followed and many progressive political parties used its ideas for their programs
- Yugoslav delegations (mainly under strong influence of Slovene members) participated in all UN conferences on family planning and women, and substantially contributed to resolutions and final documents
- Together with India and Irak Yugoslavia contributed to the 14 chapter of the Action plan of non-aligned countries and suggested an establishment of regular cooperation

# Situation in 1989 in Slovenia

- Unemployment rate 2,5%
- almost 48% out of labor force were women
- 17,8 % members of Republic Assembly, 17% of Federal Assembly
- 20% members of Community Councils
- 28% members of councils of local communities
- 37 % members of Trade Unions bodies
- 33% members of worker's councils in factories
- In 1987 introduction of network on equality of men and women in all republic ministries, Board of Co-coordinators was presided by Vice President of the Republic Government as the follow-up of UN Nairobi Conference (1985)

# After the first elections in 1990

- employment still high - 47% of women
- 4% of Parliament Members
- About 5 % of local communities councils
- Less than 10% in Trade Unions bodies
- Network of coordinators disappeared
- Political parties did not present equality of men and women in their political programs
- No political action in favor of gender issues
- Women disappeared from all decision-making positions
- No female member of the Government

# Societal environment

- equal rights were under severe pressure of conservative groups and in particular religious groups (mainly Catholic Church) – back to three K system
- attack on free childbearing and family planning, strong opposition to abortion (the very first political demonstration against these pressures in December 1991)
- Introduction of Office for equal opportunities – not active enough

# At work place

- extreme growth of unemployment rate effected women most from mid 90th on
- pressure on women against getting pregnant and use of parental leave for a sick child
- rumors on signing a blank sheet of paper by young women, when getting a job
- worsening of relations at work, worker's rights at stake
- growth of prices of kindergartens and crashes, no new constructions
- diminishing of equal payment for equal work



# Political and public sphere

- March 8
- Legal and political action
- General presence of gender issues in media
- Negation of all positive legal and political actions of the previous regime
- Huge lack of knowledge among political decision-makers and their advisors

# Anything in common?

- Legal and political will is not enough
- Hidden discrimination is very dangerous in all systems
- Every new comer in politics has to be informed anew
- Being en garde all the time
- Media are rather reluctant to discuss important issues on genders