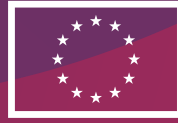




United Nations



European  
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## United Nations Global Open Day on Women Peace and Security

“Trust-builders and Deal-Makers:  
Focus on gender-inclusive and responsive  
political processes”

Pristina, March 12, 2019

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**#WomenDealmakers**



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# Introduction

On 12 March, UNMIK, the United Nations Kosovo Team/UN Women and the EU Office in Kosovo/EUSR, jointly organized the seventh Kosovo edition of UN Global Open Day, under the theme: “Trust-builders and Deal-makers: Advancing gender-inclusive and responsive political processes”. Recognizing current setbacks in advancement of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in Kosovo, including the appointment of an all-male negotiation team for Pristina, and women’s limited representation in high-level ministerial and deputy ministerial positions, the event focus was on ways to increase women’s participation at the negotiating table and the need to integrate a gender perspective in ongoing political processes.

The event, which featured one panel discussion and two televised debates followed by a robust audience question session, brought together 251 participants (161 women and 85 men) from different communities across Kosovo, including parliamentarians, politicians, government officials, civil society activists, representatives of the international community and regional participants, including members of the Regional Women’s Lobby for Peace Security and Justice in South East Europe.



Participants acknowledged the crucial role women in Kosovo, and across the region, have had in trust- and peace-building initiatives and expressed concern about the fact that, at this point in time, women are excluded from Pristina’s negotiating team for the EU-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade. Participants recommended inter alia the establishment of formal mechanisms to ensure that the future political negotiation processes are representative of women’s positions and priorities, including those of women from non-majority communities.

The importance of ensuring women’s participation and integrating a gender perspective in ongoing political negotiation processes was also underlined in the most recent report of the UN Secretary-General to the Security Council on UNMIK, in the EU Council Conclusions on Women, Peace and Security adopted on 10 December 2018 and the recent resolution adopted by the European Parliament’s Committee for Women’s Rights and Gender Equality.

First established in October 2010, in commemoration of the 10th Anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women and peace and security, Global Open Days are designed to support regular dialogue between UN senior leadership and women’s organisations around the world. Among others, the 2019 Kosovo Global Open Day also provided an important entry point to support future dialogue between women leaders and activists from all communities as part of the outcomes of the UN Trust-building Forum.



## Opening Session

The event, which was widely covered by Kosovo-based Albanian and Serbian media outlets, began with key note messages from the EU Special Representative in Kosovo Ambassador Nataliya Apostolova, the United Nations Development Coordinator for Kosovo Ulrika Richardson, Chair of the Women's Caucus and Member of the Kosovo Assembly Ms. Mexhide Mjaku Topalli and United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, Mr. Zahir Tanin. Key note speakers highlighted that women are under-represented in decision-making at all levels in Kosovo and the region and that their participation is vital to effective, sustainable peace and post-conflict recovery. Ms. Rozafa Kelmendi from the UN Women Office in Kosovo served as Master of Ceremonies during the event.



# 35%

Increase in the probability that a peace agreement will last more than 15 years, when women are included.

An International Peace Institute study of 182 signed peace agreements found that when women are included in peace processes, there was a 35 per cent increase in the probability that a peace agreement will last 15 years or more.



**Ambassador Nataliya Apostolova, the EU Special Representative in Kosovo** welcomed the event's theme and called for a gender-sensitive legal framework, especially electoral laws and regulations, to be put in place. Ambassador Apostolova regretted the small number of women representatives in Kosovo institutions following the 2017 general and local elections and called on Kosovo leaders to increase the number of women in decision-making levels in political and peace processes. She concluded by saying that integrating a gender perspective into all political processes and ensuring women's full and equal political participation are key democratic requirements.

*"More women are needed in important political and peace processes. It is very worrying that Kosovo has no female mayors and has only two female ministers. This needs to change."*

Ambassador Nataliya Apostolova,  
Head of EU Office in Kosovo/EU Special Representative

4%

**Women signatories to peace agreements**

A UN Women study showed that of the 31 major peace processes, only four per cent of the signatories to the resulting peace agreements were women – and only nine per cent of negotiating teams were comprised of women.

**Ms. Ulrika Richardson, United Nations Development Coordinator for Kosovo** highlighted women's proven positive and significant impact on sustaining peace, arguing that they can bring a more comprehensive peace plan to the negotiating table that also addresses societal needs. Ms. Richardson said that more needs to be done, both in Kosovo and globally, to combat gender stereotypes, discriminatory laws and non-inclusive political rhetoric that hinder women's meaningful participation. Ms. Richardson argued that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also a necessary foundation for a just and peaceful world.



*“Women remain the greatest untapped resource for the achievement of sustainable security and durable peace globally. Kosovo is no exception to this global underrepresentation.”*

Ulrika Richardson,  
United Nations Development  
Coordinator for Kosovo

**Ms. Mexhide Mjaku Topalli, Chair of the Women's Caucus and Member of the Kosovo Assembly** hailed the commitment and tireless work of early women activists in Kosovo, who in her view, have paved the way for women leaders of today. While highlighting the progress made in the past years, Ms. Majku Topalli stressed that more needs to be done to enable equitable representation by standing up to patriarchal norms that give men a dominance role in the family and public life and ensure that all institutions respect and implement the law on Gender Equality. She expressed concern of women's limited participation in political negotiations and decision-making in Kosovo and the region, stressing that lasting peace cannot be achieved and sustained unless it is carried out at the highest institutional level and includes women's needs and priorities.



*“No society can change a mentality if half of its human capital is not put into the service of democracy, peace and stability. I believe strongly that only by being protagonists as women we can be in power.”*

Mexhide Mjaku Topalli, Chair of the  
Women's Caucus and Member  
of the Kosovo  
Assembly





**Zahir Tanin, United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK** noted the increased durability and robustness of peace agreements that included women as part of the negotiating teams, reflecting on research that shows that when women are included in peace processes there is a 35 per cent greater chance that the agreement will last 15 years or more. SRSg Tanin recalled the commitment and sacrifices of UN women and men for peace and security around the world and emphasized the role of the UN and EU in ensuring and promoting the engagement of Kosovo women for the betterment of the whole society.

*“Women’s voices should be heard. Their role should be respected. Their visible and invincible reality should be recognised – not just by good talk and nice statements, but by practical steps.”*

Zahir Tanin  
Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK



## Interactive Panel Discussion: “Beyond words and numbers: Why women’s presence at the negotiation table matters, drawing on global and regional experience”

Discussions in the UN Global Open Day began with an interactive panel that invited international and regional practitioners and esteemed civil society activists, including two former women chief negotiators in peace processes, to share their practical experiences and discuss the meaningful participation of women in deal-making and trust-building. Drawing on global and regional experience, panelists stressed the critical need for women to be fully engaged in all tracks and levels of political processes.

It was also noted that across the region, some of the most successful efforts to bring communities together and to bridge ethnic, religious, political and cultural divides, and mobilize coalitions of diverse groups, were led by women. The work of the Regional Women’s Lobby of South Eastern Europe, supported by UN Women, was put forward as a prime example of a powerful network continuously advocating for women’s meaningful participation in contributing to peace and security in the Western Balkans and beyond. The panel was moderated by Ms. Jo-Anne Bishop, Gender Advisor to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.



In a video message, **Mara Marinaki, European External Action Service Principal Advisor on Gender and on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security Ambassador** reiterated the EU’s commitment to continue supporting Kosovo institutions in their efforts to create the needed space for women in political decision-making processes, arguing that only once women feel safe and encouraged will they be able to deploy their full potential. According to Ambassador Marinaki, Kosovo women have proven in the past, through their active engagement and commitment especially in the context of the civil society, that they have all the qualifications and experience needed to have leadership roles both at the local and central level.



**United Nations Standby Team of Expert Mediators and the** first woman chief negotiator in the world to sign a final peace accord, Prof. Miriam Coronel Ferrer, elaborated on different global approaches in ensuring that peace agreements are gender inclusive and gender responsive. Sharing best practices from Syria, Colombia and the Philippines, Professor Ferrer gave concrete examples of how by establishing the right mechanisms—be it in the form of committees, networks or advisory groups—it is possible to enable women to articulate their concerns and needs and ultimately ensure equitable representation. She also spoke about the importance of ‘Women appointing women’ – or WAW – meaning women advocating and lifting other women up once they attain a position of authority.



*“It is really important to create a network of movements...what is good with the women, peace and security agenda is that we can bring women with diverse agendas to work on the shared agenda and make it very powerful.”*

Miriam Coronel-Ferrer, first woman chief negotiator in the world to sign a final peace accord when she negotiated on behalf of the Philippines government with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front

**Ms. Edita Tahiri, former Minister of Dialogue and former Chief Negotiator for the Pristina-Belgrade Dialogue**  
**Ms. Edita Tahiri** shared with the participants her experience as the sole chief negotiator in the region and one of the few women head negotiators in peace and political processes. Ms. Tahiri stressed that it is crucial for women to step up their game and with courage and vision become protagonists of their own future. She concluded by stating that there cannot be peace and stability without the full engagement of women in decision-making positions and their participation in all political and peace processes.



*"No society can change a mentality if half of its human capital is not put into the service of democracy, peace and stability. I believe strongly that only by being protagonists as women we can be in power."*

Edita Tahiri, Kosovo Deputy Prime Minister and Chief negotiator Edita Tahiri

**Ms. Irina Pockova, Steering Committee Member of the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice for South East Europe** echoed the sentiments of other panelists about the paramount importance of women's participation in political processes, highlighting the role and influence of women's groups during the negotiation phase that led to the historic name deal (Prespa Agreement) between Greece and North Macedonia in January 2019. Speaking about another successful example of women's participation in negotiating processes, Ms. Pockova acknowledged the remarkable role of the North Macedonian Minister of Defense in leading the country's integration to the North Atlantic Organization (NATO).





On the same panel, long-standing Serbian women's activist **Ms. Sonja Licht, Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence president** regretted the fact that women in the Western Balkans continue not to be engaged in "key decision-making processes", stressing that without the active engagement of women, society would not improve. Ms. Licht underlined the need for greater involvement of women and called on women in the region to enter politics, as in her view there is no representation without participation. She said that women should strive for a "new kind of politics" as the old one led by men has so far proven unsuccessful. Ms. Licht also highlighted the need for issues linked to poverty, such as property rights, economic participation and gender-based violence, be addressed urgently.

*"In my opinion, in many conflicts, not only in the Balkans, the basic cause of conflict was some particular interests, often criminal, and these interests were going against societal interests and interest of women. That is why I was engaged in the anti-war movement."*

Sonja Licht, Serbian women's activist and President of Belgrade Fund for Political Excellence president





## Televised Panel Debate: “Ensuring a seat and voice for women at the table: Kosovo’s past successes and current challenges”

During this session, participants analyzed successes and setbacks in ensuring women’s participation in political dialogue processes in Kosovo and explored ways of moving from rhetoric to action. They all agreed that more needs to be done to influence and advance gender-responsive negotiation processes, especially at the central level.



# 2%

## Women chief mediators

Globally women still make up only two per cent of chief mediators and just nine per cent of negotiators in major peace processes, according to the Council of Foreign Relations.

Participants agreed that while a strong legislative framework exists to support women’s representation, good will is needed to implement the measures. The session, which was organized in partnership with the Balkan Investigative Research Network (BIRN) and chaired by renown journalist Jeta Xharra, was screened on Kosovo public television and Facebook Live on April



**Political Advisor to the President of Kosovo Mr. Adrian Arifaj**, stressed the need to look beyond statistics when discussing gender inclusive political and negotiating processes and instead identify and tackle the real challenges that hinder it. For Mr. Arifaj, women's emancipation cannot and should not be seen as separate from the emancipation of men, arguing that advancing equal participation requires not just the institutional commitment but that of the society as a

**Ms. Igballe Rogova, Renown activist and Executive Director of Kosovo Women's Network** spoke about the significant role and contribution of women's groups immediately post conflict in influencing important legislation and advancing women's participation in political and peace processes. Sharing experiences, she recalled how in 2006, in partnership with Belgrade-based Women in Black, the Kosovo Women's Network organized parallel women's negotiations during which they analyzed and commented the positions of official (Belgrade and Pristina) negotiation teams and handed over to the UN special envoy for Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari, a proposal of the women's peace platform for negotiations about the status of Kosovo. Ms. Igballe Rogova called 2019 "the year of solidarity", when women from all walks of life in Kosovo stand by each other so their voice is heard and their just demands are met. She stressed that only by working together can women raise awareness for more equitable political representation and spur institutions into action.







**Mr. Naim Rashiti, Director of the Balkan Policy Research Group** assessed that campaigning and sensibilization is just not enough to ensuring equal participation, arguing that without targeted efforts followed by concrete actions the reality will not change. He called for an increase of the gender quota from 40 to 50 percent, arguing that women in politics and civil society need to engage in more advocacy and lobbying to influence legislation. He also suggested that clear and punitive measures and sanctions are put in place in the event quotas are not being implemented.

**Ms. Tatjana Lazarević, Editor of KoSsev portal** reflecting on the events of the 1990s in the Western Balkans she recalled how that period was run entirely by “male actors with their big male jobs”, completely ignorant of women’s needs and perspectives. From the looking glass of the K-Serb community, Ms. Lazarević assessed the current situation in Kosovo and the region as a continuous struggle to meet the basic needs, stressing that for women the burden is twice as big. On a positive note, Ms. Lazarević recognized that nowadays there are more women in the frontline of free speech, challenging deep-rooted patriarchal norms and amplifying women’s voices.





## Panel Debate: “Hear Us Too: Highlighting women’s priorities to be addressed in the current political processes”

This session was characterized by a dynamic conversation between institutional leaders, civil society representatives, members of parliament and event participants, who assessed and discussed achievements and challenges with regards to decision-making processes that are more gender inclusive. Panelists also highlighted the importance of having the needs and concerns of conflict-related sexual violence survivors from all communities reflected in the agenda of political processes.



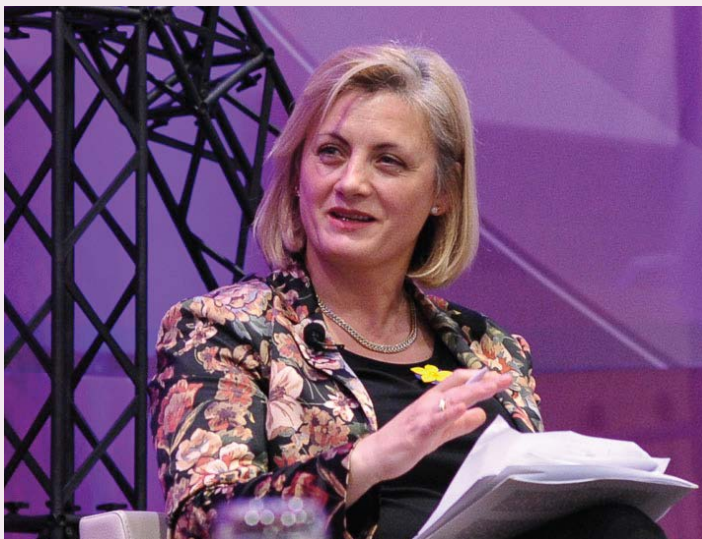
**Deputy Minister of Justice and Kosovo Coordinator against Domestic Violence Mr. Naim Qelaj** presented an overview of achievements and challenges in the institutional response to gender-based violence. While highlighting progress made in this regard, Mr. Qelaj recognized the need to do more in monitoring and holding institutions accountable for implementing the Kosovo Strategy and Action Plan on protection from domestic violence. Mr. Qelaj said that despite criticism, the institution he heads is doing all is possible to ensure that shelters for victims fleeing domestic violence receive the appropriate financial support to operate.



**Chairperson of the Assembly of Kosovo Committee on Human Rights, Gender Equality, Missing Persons and Petitions Ms. Duda Balje**, began by sharing her personal journey of how she first entered politics as a young Bosniak women just to fulfill the quota for later to succeed and be elected for three consecutive terms on her own merits. Looking back at her journey and the struggles she faced, Ms. Balje said she is fully committed in helping change the mentality within the Bosniak community, which is not supportive of women’s involvement in politics. She strongly advocated in favour of political parties introducing a 50 per cent quota for their electoral lists, arguing that without representation there could be no transition to a society of rights.



**Ms. Milica Andrić, Civil Society Activist** expressed concern over what she called the “invisibility” syndrome of women in Kosovo’s political arena. According to Ms. Andrić, strong women politicians, like Ms. Rada Trajković, who have integrity and enjoy the support of the electorate, are often stigmatized as they challenge the patriarchy mentality within the political parties. In her view, this is not only detrimental to the individual but it also discourages other women and young girls from entering politics. She concluded by stating that “inequality costs” and this is a cost that the Kosovo society cannot afford.



**Ms. Feride Rushiti, Executive Director, Kosovo Rehabilitation Centre for Torture Victims** spoke about the need to incorporate the concerns and needs of survivors of conflict-sexual violence into the agenda of the EU-facilitated dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. While several panelists stressed the need to fast track the work of the Government Commission on Recognition and Verification of the Status of Sexual Violence Victims during the Kosovo conflict, Rushiti explained how the reason behind the slow progress is not lack of good will, but rather the fact that the members of the Commission are doing this on a part time basis and it takes considerable time to undertake the checks.

**Ms. Mimoza Kusari-Lila, Former Mayor of Gjakova/Djakovica and Member of the Assembly of Kosovo** said that although she was asked to be part of the Pristina negotiating team to Brussels she refused as she knew that the invitation was nothing else but an attempt to have the support of the party she leads and to use her as an “adornment” to an all-man team. She insisted that she will never allow that her gender be instrumentalized in order to legitimize a process which she labeled as “fake and without substance”.



## Recommendations

Participants provided a number of specific recommendations during Global Open Day 2019 highlighting the need for:

1. Women to be fully engaged in all tracks and levels of political negotiation processes between Pristina and Belgrade through the creation of formal consultative mechanisms that ensure that such processes are representative of women's needs and priorities.
2. Greater political commitment by political leaders for more inclusive political negotiation processes in order to ensure that the voice and views of women and men, including from non-majority communities, are reflected in ongoing discussions.
3. Strengthened engagement with and support for regional women's networks, such as the Regional Women's Lobby for Peace, Security and Justice for South Eastern Europe, aimed at advancing women's meaningful participation in contributing to peace and security in the Western Balkans and beyond.
4. Greater efforts to implement the Law on Gender Equality, with special care taken to protect the rights of women from non-majority communities – whose discrimination also relates to their minority status.
5. Increasing existing gender quotas for members of the Assembly of Kosovo as well as proactively including women in political advisory roles, in order to encourage women to pursue political careers; with the clear implementation of sanctions in instances where gender quotas are not met.
6. Increasing support for elected women in order to heighten their impact in decision-making and influence legislations that advance women representation and gender perspective in political and negotiation processes.
7. Including the needs and concerns of conflict-related sexual violence survivors from all communities in the agenda of political processes.
8. Fast-tracking the existing initiative for the Regional Commission Tasked with Establishing the Facts about All Victims of War Crimes and Other Serious Human Rights Violations Committed on the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia (RECOM).

Global Open Day 2019 constituted a unique opportunity to stimulate discussions on the various drivers and impediments to gender inclusion, to formulate concrete recommendations for policies to advance it and to exchange good practices that inspire action. Throughout the event, participants acknowledged the strong link between women's participation in negotiation processes and politics and concluded that more women in politics can pave the way towards lasting peace.









Pristina, March 12, 2019

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