

Intervention Working Session 14:

Achieving gender equality, the reduction of violence against women and girls and domestic violence, are among the priority objectives of the Albanian Government, in full compliance with the OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of the Gender Equality. The Labor Code provides for women: A more precise and full definition of "sexual harassment"; The employer's obligation to ensure appropriate conditions for the work of pregnant or breastfeeding women; Additional safeguards to ensure woman's return to work after the maternity leave; Non-discrimination in remuneration for all and not just for men and women.

Legal changes in the Electoral Code in 2013 provided that at least 30% of the multi-name list and the first 1/3 names of the electoral lists, must pertain to the female candidates. While the changes made before the local elections in 2015, proposed by the Alliance of Women MPs, provided that: "For the elections to local government bodies, for any municipal council, one in every two consecutive ranking names must belong to the same genus". Both these changes have led to the increase of the number of women participating in public life. This number is also increased in several other sectors such as Public Administration, Diplomatic service, Judicial system and State police.

The National Gender Equality Council has recently strengthened its role in the approval of key documents and recommendations to improve gender equality in the country. The network of gender employees in ministries and municipalities, and the local coordinators against violence are part of the country's gender mechanisms.

In the new Strategy on Gender Equality for the years 2016-2020, attention was paid to women's economic empowerment, focusing especially on women at rural areas, the fight against gender-based violence and domestic violence and empowerment services, layout and functioning of the respective mechanisms in the country, strengthening of institutional mechanisms for gender

equality and supporting them with human and financial resources. The adoption of laws and their implementation, extension of referral mechanisms at the local level and providing services to victims of domestic violence capacity building of professionals and public awareness were the main directions of our work during these last years. The raising awareness and strengthening of structures, the coordinated response to domestic violence cases have increased the number of criminal proceedings, claims for protection orders and public sensitivity to this phenomenon.

The Albanian central and local institutions, in cooperation with the civil society, and with the support of international organizations, have organized several awareness-raising campaigns, such as the campaign of 16 days of activism against gender-based violence under the motto: "Gentlemen part of the solution – demonstrate that you are against violence"; or the "He for She" campaign to encourage the implementation of specific components of the National Action Plan of anti-discrimination on gender basis.