

Genoveva Tisheva, Director of "Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation":

"In this letter I would like to express my satisfaction with the first discussion on gender equality with party representatives. The Debate was very well organized; it was obvious that the party representatives simply had to be well prepared, too. Although it was impossible to avoid competition, as the elections were drawing closer and the parties rivaled each other, interesting ideas were proposed and some promises were made, which, we hope, will be fulfilled. It was obvious that the audience was much better acquainted with the issues in question than were the politicians, and so, further interaction will be necessary. There was some disagreement among the participants as to the way of implementing the adopted legislation. All the speakers focused on executive mechanisms, whereas these mechanisms are often implied in the law itself, and the effectiveness of the law depends largely upon the proper functioning of state institutions.

Some subtle gender-related issues, such as social and family roles, gender education, etc, also remained unresolved. Still, the efforts made by the politicians must be appreciated.

Another issue which was not fully understood was the quota question and the necessity to adopt amendments to the Constitution, so that it could incorporate temporary positive measures for achieving real gender equality. The need to create an institutional mechanism was not well understood.

Once again, it is the NGOs that have to urge the institutions to work on gender equality problems. We hope to have a more balanced cooperation on equal terms with the next Parliament and government. This is the only way to solve gender equality issues."