

GENDER POLITICS AND DISCOURSES IN KOSOVO

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Abstract

This paper aims at analysing current gender politics in Kosovo, namely position of women at the local level in Eastern Kosovo, which has 11 municipalities¹. Despite positive achievements and a lot of efforts invested by different organizations, especially international organizations, gender equality issues, namely the presentation of women in local decision-making processes and actual implementation of the law on gender equality remain unsatisfactory. Women are virtually absent from main decision-making committees (policy and finance committees and communities committee); few women are appointed as departmental directors or chiefs of section; and no woman in the region holds the post of mayor; there is one deputy mayor, who was recently fired and there is only one municipal assembly chairperson. However, due to the application of electoral quotas, there is a *de facto* gender-balanced representation within the main legislative body of the local government - the municipal assembly, which does not in the executive. Bearing in mind the above-mentioned conditions and cultural legacy which assigns women to more traditional- household roles, this paper aims at describing and analyzing the conditions, environment, political will and opinions of women in eleven informal groups in eleven respective regional municipalities which during 2009-2010 were established in order to increase the number of women in local decision-making structures. Judgment, analysis and input are taken directly from the groups' chairs, deputy chairs and municipal officers for gender equality in all above mentioned municipalities.

Key words: *gender, women, politics, groups, local level.*