

**PARLIAMENTARY WOMEN’S CLUB**

**PERIODIC REPORT**

***ON THE WORK OF THE* PARLIAMENTARY WOMEN’S CLUB *IN THE ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA***

July 2017 - December 2018

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**Skopje**

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# INTRODUCTION:

 The Parliamentary Women’s Club works with a common and only goal - to achieve gender equality and promotion of women's rights through legal solutions, their active involvement in the decision-making process in the country, as well as strengthening and spreading democracy in all spheres of the Macedonian society.

 Pursuant to the **Rulebook of the Organization and Scope of Work of the Parliamentary Women’s Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia**, and in order to provide comprehensive insight into the professional, independent, efficient, transparent, impartial, and above all responsible work of the Club - **values included in the strategic plan,** in the past period   an annual report for 2018 was prepared.

According to **Article 5** of the Rulebook on Organization and Scope of Work of the Club, an annual report on the activities, goals and work which is submitted to the members, the Presidency of the Club and the President of Parliament is prepared. The annual report on the work of the Club will be published on the official website of the Club.

In order to cover the activities of the Club from the beginning of the mandate of the current composition of women MPs, upon the proposal of the women Members of Parliament at the working meeting held on February 4, 2019, this Periodic Report was prepared as an update to the Annual Report.

In addition to activities from 2018, this periodical report covers activities from 2017, too.

**6 July 2017**

##  CONSTITUTIONAL MEETING OF THE Parliamentary Women’s Club

* The Parliamentary Women’s Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia held a constitutional meeting on July 6th, during which an MP from SDSM, Gulumser Kasapi was nominated as coordinator, and the MPs from the parliamentary parties agreed to delegate members for the presidency of the Club.
* In the next four-year mandate, the following members of the presidency were delegated and elected: Liljana Kuzmanovska and Emilija Aleksandrova from VMRO DPMNE, Irena Stefoska as independent MP, Liljana Popovska from DOM, Sonja Mirakovska from NSDP, Shpresa Hadri from DUI, Teuta Bilali from BESA, Tatjana Prentovic and Meri Lazarova from SDSM and Daniela Rangelova from VMRO DPMNE, in the capacity of Chair a of the Committee for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia.
* The Parliamentary Women’s Club works with a common and only goal - to achieve gender equality through legal solutions and to promote women's rights, their active involvement in the decision-making process in the country, as well as strengthening and spreading democracy in all spheres of the Macedonian society.

##  MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENTATY WOMEN’S CLUB ON THE TOPIC: "THE PARLIAMENTATY WOMEN’S CLUB, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PRIORITIES"

**July 21, 2017**

* The Parliamentary Women’s Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia held a meeting on the topic: "THE PARLIAMENTATY WOMEN’S CLUB, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PRIORITIES"

The meeting was attended by the Women MPs of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, former Coordinators and Deputy Coordinators of the Club, representatives of the non-governmental and international organizations, the National Democratic Institute and the European Commission.

* Prof. Dr. Gulumser Kasapi, Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club and Daniela Rangelova, Chairperson of the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia gave their open addresses.
* MP Liljana Popovska, former Club Coordinator, Katerina Dimeska, Savka Todorovska from NSRR-SOZM, women MPs and former coordinators of the Club Liljana Kuzmanovska and Sonja Mirakovska, Daniela Dimitrievska from the Macedonian Women’s Lobby, the former coordinator of the Club, and the current Secretary General of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, Cvetanka Ivanova, Gjuner Nebiu of the Women's Civic Initiative ANTIKO, former MP Lidija Dimova, Suzana Musli on behalf of women from the ethnic communities, civil activist Violeta Drakulevska, Gzime Hajredini from  NGO "Golden Hand" - Tetovo, former MP Tanja Tomic and Aleksandra Cvetkovska from the National Democratic Institute participated in the discussion.
* At the meeting, certificates for appreciation were given to former coordinators and deputy coordinators of the Club and the founders of the Parliamentary Women’s Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, namely: Ministry of Labor and Social Policy; National Council for Gender Equality - SOZM - founders; Macedonian Women's Lobby - MZL - Founders;  Savka Todorovska - participant in the establishment of the Club; Elena Grozdanova - participant in the establishment of the Club; Liljana Popovska - participant in the establishment of the Club; Daniela  Dimitrievska - participant in the establishment of the Club; Blagorodna Mingova-Krepieva - Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club; Silvana Boneva - Deputy Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club;  Cvetanka Ivanova - Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club; Katerina Dimeska - coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club; Liljana Kuzmanovska - Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club; Eleonora Petrova Mitevska - Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club;  Sonja Mirakovska - Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club; Slavica Grkovska - Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club; Tanja Tomikj - Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club, as well as the National Democratic Institute.

**July 27, 2017**

## MEETING OF THE PRESIDENCY OF THE PARLIAMENTATY WOMEN’S CLUB

* At the request of MP Liljana Kuzmanovska, on July 24, 2017 a meeting of the Presidency of the Parliamentary Women’s Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia was held, where specific cases concerning the position and status of women in the workplace were considered.
* The following conclusion was drawn at the meeting: the Parliamentary Women’s Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia is guided by the principles of gender equality, protection of the rights of women and promotion of their status in the society. Therefore, the Club will pledge to protect the position of women, on personal and on professional plan.
* The attitude of the Parliamentary Women’s Club has always been, and will be, that, when there is a violation of women's rights, the competent institutions in the state, on any grounds, must act in accordance with the Constitution and laws, that is, the Law on Labor Relations.

**21-22 September 2017**

## WORKSHOP UNDER THE MOTTO "BUILDING BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING"

* A Workshop under the motto "Building Bridges of Understanding" was held in Struga on September 21 and 22, organized by UN Women and Macedonian Women's Lobby (MZL), which was attended by members of the Parliamentary Women’s Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia.
* Ms. Gulumser Kasapi, Coordinator of the Women MPs' Club, Ms. Ermira Lubani and Dominika Stojanoska, representatives of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, addressed the workshop.
* Ms. Cvetanka Ivanova, Secretary General of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, spoke about the positive experiences from the work of the women MPs, and Ms. Daniela Dimitrievska, the Executive Director of the Macedonian Women's Lobby talked about the Parliamentary Women’s Club - about their mission, vision, competence and positive experiences and results.
* Mrs. Neda Maleska Sachmaroska, an expert, gave an overview of the Basic Concepts and introduction to the gender perspective in the mainstream, which was preparation for the group work, in which all women MPs took part regarding the Equal Opportunities vis-a-vis Equal Access - Policies: Assessment of the impact of gender policies.
* At the end of the workshop, the participants recommended that more such workshops be organized, where all women MPs from all political parties represented in the Legislature will have the opportunity to attend and debate on various gender issues.

## PRESENTATION OF WOMEN MAYORAL CANDIDATES

**October 6, 2017**

* The Parliamentary Women’s Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia in cooperation with the National Democratic Institute NDI organized an event to promote women mayoral candidates in the upcoming local elections in the Republic of Macedonia. The women candidates for mayors and women carriers of councillors’ candidates’ lists were welcomed and wished a successful campaign by Gulumser Kasapi, Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club, Daniela Rangelova, Chairperson of the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and Chris Henshaw, Director of NDI Macedonia.
* 10 candidates out of 15 women mayoral candidates participated in the event: Dafina Stojanovska, mayoral candidate in Gostivar of the VMRO-DPMNE-led coalition, Zaklina Jovanovska, mayoral candidate in Staro Nagoricane, SDSM-led coalition, Jadranka Biban, independent mayoral candidate in Debarca, Maria Jones, mayoral candidate in the City of Skopje from Levica, Milikije Halimi, mayoral candidate in Arachinovo, SDSM-led coalition, Nafie Selmani, mayoral candidate in the City of Skopje, BESA, Nermin Telovska, mayoral candidate in Chair, the coalition led by VMRO-DPMNE, Sonja Stamenkova, mayoral candidate in Makedonska Kamenica, SDSM-led coalition, Teuta Arifi, mayoral candidate in, DUI and Snezana Maneva, independent mayoral candidate in Dojran.
* After the presentation of the candidates, there was a discussion in which great support was expressed for the 15 women mayoral candidates and 50 women lists carriers, which is an unsatisfactory number according to the current MPs fighting for more women in the decision-making structures in the political and social life in the Republic of Macedonia.

## CELEBRATION OF THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORMATION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY WOMEN’S CLUB OF THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

**March 7, 2018**

* On the occasion of this anniversary, the following addresses were made by: Talat Xhaferi, President of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia; Ms. Frosina Tashevska-Remenski, Vice President of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia; Ms. Cvetanka Ivanova, Secretary General of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia; Ms. Louise Vuitton, UN Resident Coordinator in the Republic of Macedonia; Ms. Liljana Popovska, one of the founders of the Parliamentary Women’s Club and former president of the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men; Ms. Daniela Rangelova, Chairperson of the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men; Ms. Daniela Dimitrievska, Director of the Macedonian Women's Lobby; Mrs. Savka Todorovska, President of NSRR-SOZM and Mr. Chris Henshaw, director of NDI Macedonia. The discussion was also joined by more current and former women MPs.
* The Parliamentary Women’s Club was established in March 7, 2003 within the framework of the regional project of the Stability Pact - a group for gender equality, with the help of the local partners the Macedonian Women's Lobby, SOZM and the Unit for Promotion of Gender Equality within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.
* The Parliamentary Women’s Club works with a common and only goal - through legal solutions to achieve gender equality and promotion of women's rights, their active involvement in the decision-making process in the country, as well as strengthening and spreading democracy in all spheres of the Macedonian society.

**March 20, 2018**

##  STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF THE PARLIAMENTARY WOMEN’S CLUB

STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITIES OF THE CLUB OF FEMALE MPs

* The Parliamentary Women’s Club, organized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe - Mission in Skopje (OSCE), held a training on "Strengthening the capacities of the Parliamentary Women’s Club"
* The training consisted of the following panels: Parliamentary Women’s Club - achievements and opportunities (where the present achievements of the Parliamentary Women’s Club were presented and the further possibilities of the Club were discussed); constituent outreach - experiences and challenges (MPs spoke about their personal experiences in communicating with the citizens and what challenges they faced); women MPs and civic associations (this session was attended by several civic associations who presented their experiences from meetings with MPs and who had very interesting suggestions and directions for further cooperation.)
* The training consisted of the following sessions: organizational development, constituent outreach, Sstrengthening of the Parliamentary Women’s Club - what can we do and what we will do together, the power of public speaking, voice techniques in public speaking, public speaking.
* At the training, several activities were proposed for the further work of the Parliamentary Women’s Club, among which the Strategic Plan-Action Plan for the operation of the Club, followed by the creation of teams from all women members of the Club who will work on specific topics that will be specified together.
* According to the participants and the organizer, the training not only fulfilled, but exceeded the expectations of both parties, thus, the cooperation between the Parliamentary Women’s Club and OSCE will continue in the future.

## Parliamentary Delegation At A Regional Meeting On Gender Equality And Corruption

**May 16, 2018**

* Delegation of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, represented by *the Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club Gulumser Kasapi,* and MPs Liljana Kuzmanovska and Katerina Kuzmanovska participated at a regional meeting in Sarajevo, organized by the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina in cooperation with the office the OSCE for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and the OSCE  Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's Operations in the Region, on the topic *"Gender Equality and Corruption".*
* The gender focus in anti-corruption measures by including gender equality in law-making policies and their actual application were the basic dimension of the regional meeting.
* The conclusion that emerged from the regional meeting in Sarajevo was the creation of mechanisms to design a common gender equality policy among the countries of the region, to extend and deepen regional cooperation.

## WORKING MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY WOMEN’S CLUB FOR GENDER RESPONSIBLE POLICY MAKING AND BUDGETING

**June 7, 2018**

##

* The Parliamentary Women’s Club, in cooperation with UN Women and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, held a third thematic working meeting titled "Gender Responsible Policy and Budgeting".
* This meeting as an integral part of a series of workshops was aimed at discussing topics of importance for the promotion of gender equality, as well as defining the goals of the Club and the vision of the Club on issues that are crucial when it comes to the role and status of women in our society.
* At the working meeting, a key emphasis was placed on gender responsive budgeting as an approach or a tool that can serve Members of Parliament to call for increased transparency in budgetary decisions, as well as accountability towards gender equality efforts. It complements all efforts and commitments to achieve gender equality, by directing attention to equality in the allocation of public finances.
* "The fact that gender responsive budgeting is one of the important tools in the transformation of society, which aims to respond to the needs of different groups, has influenced the defining of the strategic areas and the appropriate goals that derive from the activities, the timeframe and the institutions responsible for implementing it. Gender responsive budgeting makes visible the contribution of women and points to the value of unpaid women labor. In Parliament, the MPs should recognize the gender components in the budget, and in that sense when considering the budgetary processes, the gender aspect should be taken into account ", stressed at the workshop, Mrs. Gulumser Kasapi, Coordinator of the Women MP's Club.
* Ms. Liljana Kuzmanovska, MP, recalled the experiences dating back to 2009, when pilot initiatives on gender responsive budgeting were launched at the local level for the first time and when this topic was still unknown. She stressed that continuous support is needed in order to improve the capacities of both central institutions and local governments for its implementation in all sectoral policies.
* Under the mentorship of Ms. Neda Maleska-Sachmaroska, an expert on gender responsive budgeting, the MPs discussed the linking of the process of policy creation and adoption of budgets with the oversight function of the Parliament and what are the key gender specific issues that the MPs detect when considering programs and budgets.

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**June 8, 2018**

##   WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS' SUMMIT

* Within the framework of the Women Political Leaders' Summit, held this year in Vilnius, Lithuania, there was Delegation of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, composed of the Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club Gulumser Kasapi, and MPs Irena Stefoska, Liljana Kuzmanovska and Mirsada Emini-Asani. The main message and agenda for most of the topics discussed at this Summit was the leadership of women politicians who are changing the world.
* The Macedonian delegation actively participated in this Summit, and in particular, addressed the topics on the equality and representation of women in Macedonian politics. Among the many topics addressed by the Macedonian delegation, the importance of the Parliamentary Parliamentary Women’s Club was emphasized, as well as the contribution made by this club in the framework of the improvement of the legislation, especially the increase of the percentage of participation of women and men as topics that regulate gender equality.

##

**July 16, 2018**

##  PUBLIC DEBATE ON THE TOPIC: "ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION  ON PREVENTING AND COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA 2018"

##

* The Parliamentary Women’s Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy organized a public debate on the topic: "Action Plan for the Implementation of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence in the Republic of Macedonia 2018", at which representatives of non-governmental and international organizations and the European Commission were invited.
* In her welcoming address, Gulumser Kasapi, Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club, noted that the Parliament recently ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence or the Istanbul Convention, and that today's event is devoted to reviewing the Action Plan for the implementation the provisions of the Convention and its implementation.
* Minister of Labor and Social Policy, Mila Carovska and State Secretary, Jovana Trencevska presented the draft Action Plan for Implementation of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of the Republic of Macedonia in 2018.  Carovska stressed that this is not only a women's issue, but also a national issue to which we should say "no", and that the Istanbul Convention is the first step to show that we, as a society, are positioned towards states that have said no to domestic violence.
* Louisa Vinton, on behalf of the UN, supported the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, as well as the opportunity to participate in this Action Plan and to be our partner.
* The interlocutors agreed that this public debate was an excellent opportunity to present all constructive suggestions and remarks regarding the Plan, and that this is not only a women's issue, but also a family issue that should be resolved jointly by raising social awareness, as well as driving a greater the involvement of men and their opinions on this path in the fight against violence.
* At the end of the public debate, Kasapi indicated that the *Conclusions* stated will be prepared and adopted at the next meeting.

**July 17, 2018**

##  WORKING LUNCH-MEETING OF THE MACEDONIAN WOMEN'S LOBBY WITH THE WOMEN MPs

* On July 17, 2018, the Macedonian Women's Lobby organized a working lunch with the Women's Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia on the topic "Gender Challenges before the new Electoral Code".
* At this working lunch, a meeting was held with the women MPs from the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, with representatives from all parties. The meeting was attended by 30 representatives - women MPs, employees of the commission and the Parliamentary Women’s Club, as well as the Secretary General of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia.
* The meeting  discussed the ways of implying national policies at the local level, but at the same time discussed the presentation of local gender policies in terms of their attempts, successes and failures before the Parliament.
* A special emphasis was put on creating an amendment to improve the number of women candidates for mayors. Several ideas and proposals for resolving this issue were given at the meeting through amendments to the Electoral Code. The new Electoral Code presents a new challenge for women and an opportunity for greater gender equality of women in society.
* A working group was formed to create amendments and lobbying to improve the number of women candidates for the mayor's position, and this working group met once again on July 30th and came up with proposals to be discussed at a session of the Parliamentary Women’s Club.

PARLIAMENTARY WOMEN’S CLUB MEETS YOUNG LEADERS OF TAJIKISTAN

**July 27, 2018**

* The Parliamentary Women’s Club held a meeting with a delegation from Tajikistan, comprised of 15 young leaders-champions of gender issues in their country. The meeting was conducted on the proposal of the OSCE mission in Skopje, attended by Gulsumer Kasapi, coordinator; Daniela Rangelova, Chairperson of the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and member of the Club; Ivana Tufegdzic, Coordinator of the Youth Club; as well as MPs Liljana Kuzmanovska, Meri Lazarova and Liljana Zaturoska. The delegation was accompanied by Jeff Bieley, head of the OSCE Department of Political Affairs and Dimitar Spasenoski.
* The meeting discussed the reasons for forming the Club and its mission, the role of the Club, the advantages and disadvantages of quotas for the less represented sex, and the stereotypes that women face in politics.
* Gulsumer Kasapi also referred to the organized and realized activities with the support of international organizations and stressed the importance of supporting men for achieving the goals of gender equality.
* Ivana Tufegdzic introduced the participants to the process of drafting the Law on Youth with the involvement of non-governmental organizations and youth unions of political parties, as well as the situation on several current issues, such as the youth guarantee, brain drain and youth activism, and the role of the student movement in the country.
* Young leaders from Tajikistan presented the project that the OSCE has implemented in their country for strengthening women's rights, through which women's networks, the youth network and men's network for supporting women are being built, as well as training for mentorship with the participation of women representatives from political parties and from the non-governmental sector. They stressed that despite the small number of women MPs in their parliament, an Alliance of Women MPs has been formed and that they are working on amending laws in the direction of achieving greater gender equality. Their goal is to have women at all positions and levels in society. They showed particular interest in the measures that Macedonia is taking in the fight against domestic violence.
* At the end of the meeting, Kasapi expressed gratitude for the visit and the interest shown in the work of the Club and the willingness for cooperation in the future on parliamentary level, as well.

**10 October 2018**

##  OPENING OF A WOMEN'S ROOM OF THE PARLIAMENTARY WOMEN’S CLUB

* The Parliamentary Women’s Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, on the eve of the 11th October holiday - the Day of the Uprising of Macedonia, organized the opening of the Room of the Women MP's Club.
* The opening address was given by the coordinator of the Women MPs' Club, Gulumser Kasapi, who was decisive in her view that: The Parliamentary Women’s Club should act jointly and contribute, otherwise it should not exist.
* The President of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, Talat Xhaferi, as the initiator of the idea for the establishment of the Room, noted that the example of the Swedish Parliament is followed for keeping and promoting the contribution of women MPs and holders of functions in the Parliament and the working bodies in the Parliament. In this room, the Parliamentary Women’s Club will function, will hold meetings, will receive delegations and socialize.
* The purpose of the Room is to preserve and nurture the institutional memory, to testify about history and to encourage all young people to look differently on the role of women in politics, emphasizes the Vice President of the Parliament, Frosina Tashevska-Remenski, adding that for the first time signatures were gathered of all MPs to increase the women's involvement quota, i.e. for that to be 50:50.
* Quotas should be parallel with quality. This parliamentary composition has a historical responsibility and a chance to influence a different type of dialogue. It is not about the emancipation of women, but working on empowering men for the benefits of equal participation of women in all spheres of action - said the former Club's coordinator, Slavica Grkovska.
* This event was a great opportunity to gather, at the same place, the current and former members and coordinators of the Parliamentary Women’s Club, as well as all those who contributed to the role of women in the political and social life in general. There was an expression of gratitude  for the unconditional support of President Xhaferi and the Secretary General of the Parliament, Cvetanka Ivanova.

## MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY WOMEN’S CLUB ON THE GENDER ASPECT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

**November 23, 2018**

* The Parliamentary Women’s Club in cooperation with UNDP, for the first time in the Parliament, initiated the merger of two important issues - gender aspect and climate change.
* In the Women's Room, the Coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, Gulumser Kasapi, the President of the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, Daniela Rangelova, as well as representatives of UNDP, NDI, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning and Ministry of Labor and Social Policy discussed how official committees and bodies in the Parliament can contribute to greater action-taking aimed at mitigating and reducing climate change and the vulnerability of men and women caused by climate change.
* The main conclusion of the meeting was that this issue deserves more attention and to that end, on December 3 in the Parliament, a public debate will be organized on the topic: The gender aspect of climate change. This will officially mark the launch of the Conference on Climate Change (COP24), where this issue is gaining momentum.

## WORKING MEETING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY WOMEN’S CLUB ON THE TOPIC OF "JUVENILE MARRIAGES"

**December 14, 2018**

##

* The Women MPs' Club held a working meeting on "Juvenile Marriages". The event was organized in cooperation with the National Democratic Institute (NDI).  The working meeting was attended by MPs from most parliamentary groups in the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia.
* The Coordinator of the Women MPs' Club, Gulumser Kasapi, in here introductory address said that juvenile marriages are a burning problem at the international level. She pointed out the remarks of the United Nations Committee on Child Rights and the Report of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women  in the Republic of Macedonia.
* Nesime Salioska, executive director of ROMA SOS Prilep, presented the findings and recommendations of the research they conducted in the Republic of Macedonia on the topic "The gray area between tradition and the rights of the children".
* Cvetanka Ivanova, Secretary General of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, who was involved in the research as a legal expert, referred to the legal framework and stressed that the Republic of Macedonia does not have an integrated system that addresses this problem and that, unfortunately, the exception becomes a rule. Although the lower limit has been established in the Constitution and in the law, the Republic of Macedonia approves the conclusion of marriages by the age of 16, since its research showed that no single application submitted for marriage under 18 has been denied so far, and this must not are allowed. Changes in existing legislation are required, including  Article 197 of the Criminal Code and Article 16 of the Family Law, as well as laws on primary and secondary education.
* Representatives of ministries of labor and social policy, justice, education and internal affairs spoke about the current and future activities of their ministries.
* Gulten Mustafova and Svetlana Cvetkovska of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy pointed out that the Family Law will change and is expected to be completed by August 2019 and called for a comprehensive discussion on the law, and that at present the Law on Gender-Based Violence is being drafted and that it is a first law in a region of this type.
* Tatiana Kikerekova of  the Ministry of Justice noted that it is important to act on the factors that generate this phenomenon, as well as on prevention.
* Nezihtere Sulejmani of the Ministry of Education noted that with the introduction of compulsory secondary education, there are already results in terms of reducing this phenomenon.
* Jasminka Angelova from the Ministry of the Interior shared statistical data regarding Article 197 of the Criminal Code for 2017 (12 criminal acts against 17 perpetrators) and 2018 (18 criminal offenses against 24 perpetrators)  , but also urged the Legislature to adopt the legal changes, and they as a Ministry will certainly ensure its implementation.
* Within the discussion, which included the women MPs, MP Samka Ibraimovski and the representatives of the ministries, broad support was provided for the sooner changing of Article 197 of the Criminal Code. It was proposed that the term "child marriages" be used instead of the term "juvenile marriages", in accordance with international conventions.

## PUBLIC DEBATE: SUPPORT FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL POLICIES, MEASURES AND BUDGET FOR SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES

**December 25, 2018**

* The Commission for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men at the Eighth Session  held a Public Debate on the topic: Support for implementation of social policies, measures and budget for single-parent families

The public hearing was held in cooperation with the Parliamentary Women’s Club, and at the initiative of the Citizens' Organization for Single-Parent Families "One Can" Skopje.

* At the hearing, a part from the members and deputy members of the Commission, there was an invitation to: all members of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, the Minister of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia, the PI Inter-municipal Center for Social Work, the Employment Service Agency of the Republic of Macedonia, the National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility, Coordinators for Equal Opportunities of the Ministries of the Republic of Macedonia, Mayors, Local Equal Opportunities Commissions, representatives of international organizations, university professors, experts, the Gender Studies Institute, representatives of the NGO sector in this field, as well as a representative of the European Commission.
* The session was opened by the President of the Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, Daniela Rangelova, and Gulsumer Kasapi, coordinator of the Parliamentary Women’s Club of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia, Dorothy Pachkova, President of CSO "One Can" and the representative of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia, Sofia Spasovska.
* The discussion included MPs:  Juliana Nikolova, Mirsada Emini - Asani, Zaklina Peshevska, Vesna Damchevska Ilievska, Jagoda Shahpaska and Maja Morachanin, legal expert Mersiha Smailovic, representatives of the NGOs Gjuner Nebiu from the Women's Civil Initiative ANTIKO,  Naum Ribaroski from the Initiative for joint and responsible parenting after a divorce and Gulten Mustafova from the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy of the Republic of Macedonia.
* After the discussion, the following *conclusions were adopted*:
	+ Clarification of existing rights and their reformulation with legal and by-law acts, as well as specific measures for different contexts of single-parent families;
	+ Opening opportunities for independent housing;
	+ Creating mechanisms for quality employment;
	+ Analyzing and re-thinking the system of social monetary benefits and opening up real opportunities for appropriate benefits;
	+ The measures covered by the Documents in the area of social protection, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, in which single-parent families and single parents are to unite in the management of the social resource center for single-parent families (National Program for Development of Social Protection, National Strategy for Poverty Reduction)
	+ To enhance the capacities of the relevant institutions in charge of the effective implementation of the treatment, measures and rights of single parents, which are insufficiently sensitive to this topic;
	+ Improvement and promotion of the Law on Family for notification of weaknesses, and adjustment of the defined terms and the Laws on Social and Child Protection; Adjusting the terminology that implies to single parenting as a social risk, in itself;
	+ The necessity of legitimizing the profession of gender experts, expert on specific gender-sensitive topics such as single-parent families;
	+ The Commission on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women should incorporate it into one of the priority points for advocacy, the problem of single-parent families and single parents;
	+ To increase the supervisory role of the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia in relation to the issue of the situation of single-parent families and single parents;
	+ To provide a mechanism for fully implementing social inclusion for all members of single-parent families;
	+ To provide, by the State Statistical Office, the collection, monitoring, evaluation and processing of precise statistical indicators on the number and condition of single parents at national and local level;
	+ The report of this session should be submitted to all line ministries and local self-governments; The conclusions to be considered and to be followed.

**Parliamentary Women’s Club**

**Coordinator**

**Prof. Dr. Gulumser Kasapi**