

## **ELDR empowers Ukrainian women – report on “Kiev Win with Women conference”**

From 1st to 3rd September 2006, ELDR in cooperation with its member parties' foundations and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) organised a “Win with Women” seminar in Kiev, Ukraine, which was attended by 31 Ukrainian female politicians looking to increase their profile and participation in political life.

The conference started with a speech of the Finnish Ambassador to Ukraine, Mrs **Laura Reinilä**. She focused on current issues of the EU-Ukraine relationship and the challenges posed by the recent change of government. She sees the EU-Ukraine summit which will take place late October in Helsinki as an opportunity to sign a Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreement and an occasion to start talking about a free trade area on conditions if Ukraine becomes a WTO member. Explaining that energy will also feature high on the agenda of the summit, she said that Ukraine is playing an important role in the security of energy transit to the EU. The ambassador expressed her opinion that the process of legislation in Ukraine should be reviewed to ensure laws are actually implemented and do not simply remain declarations. Participants unanimously expressed their will to see a visa facilitation agreement being signed between the EU and Ukraine.

The training started with a presentation by **Julia Leferman**, LYMEC Vice-President, of a case study of Romania on combating corruption in society. Julia explained that when the new Romanian government was sworn in last year, corruption was the main concern of both the new administration and the European institutions in analyzing Romania's progress towards accession. Consequently the fight against corruption was made a priority and significant efforts were deployed in order to lift the red flag covering this sector. The measures resulted in greater transparency in public administration, increased integrity in the judiciary system and more efficient criminal proceedings and the reduction of corruption in business.

UK Liberal Democrat MP **Jo Swinson** and professional trainer **Candy Piercy** gave training sessions on the role of women in politics, development of campaigning skills and confidence in communications skills. They insisted on the importance of setting one's self goals and developing a profile and action plan to achieve it. To do so, they gave useful advice on networking, campaigning and communications skills. Then, MEP **Lena Ek** and former MP **Francine Giskes** explained how they won their seats. Lena EK emphasized how helpful it has been for her to belong to a women network.

A long standing Ukrainian MP, who participated in the conference, stressed that women take better into account social issues, thus helping policies to address all society's needs. She also said that for women in politics to succeed, it is important to have supporting partner. She expressed the will that European organizations set up a long term strategy for co-operation with Ukraine and that this conference will contribute to establishing a network of women in politics in Ukraine.

The last session was about communicating with the media and gender communication. **Peter Götell**, editor in chief of a Swedish regional newspaper stressed four important points in communicating externally:

- never lie
- be yourself
- never do anything you do not want to do
- everything said to the media must be on the record and publish-able

He highlighted the importance of establishing a list of media contacts and planning media events well in advance and checking what is going on on the day. To attract media attention, he recommended sending press releases early in the morning and staging events that allow good pictures and illustrations. He also highlighted letters to the editor and opinion pieces as a good way to appear in the media.

**Candy Piercy** gave some useful tips on how to answer media questions:

- prepare yourself by thinking about potential questions
- think about short and catchy sentences to convey your message
- be confident and direct and speak in a low voice
- express your position in 4 steps: state your position, give the reason behind it, give an example and restate your position.

The training was considered a great success and the participants to this Win with Women seminar will form a network that will be coordinated by NDI Ukraine. Lena Ek proposed a study visit to the European Parliament.

For more information, please contact Myriam Cornillet ([mcornillet@eldr.org](mailto:mcornillet@eldr.org))