

## ENUT News 3/1999

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**Editor's Note** This is the third issue of ENUT News. Our principal focus is on the May seminar ENUT sponsored in anticipation of the October local elections, and a concomitant analysis of the election returns from the perspective of women candidates. The one-day seminar, Estonian Women and Local Politics: Strategies and Tactics, was held on May 7, 1999 at the Tallinn Pedagogical University.

#### *The seminar*

After welcoming remarks by Mait Arvisto, the university's rector, Population Minister Katrin Saks delivered a brief speech containing encouragement for women to be involved in politics. The morning plenum, chaired by ENUT Administrative Director Selve Ringmaa, included speakers who addressed the question of power relationships in language and politics, and the importance of knowing legal precepts in the conduct of elections. Panel discussion: incumbent women politicians shared their experiences with

the audience and gave practical suggestions on how to win elections. The afternoon plenum's topic was identifying political issues and finding solutions, featuring speakers from Nordic countries.

The seminar ended with workshops that explored such diverse topics as: how to handle media? how to read legal texts? how to network? how to identify issues in your locality? and on tactics for winning elections.

Closing address was given by Administrative Director Selve Ringmaa.

The Norwegian Foreign Office contributed funds to reimburse the transportation costs of women coming from regions outside Tallinn.

The seminar was attended by 90 women from all parts of the country.

#### *An analysis of the election returns*

At the municipal elections, held on October 17, slight gains by women continued. The 1993 local elections resulted in women winning 24% of the positions, the 1996 elections gave them 26.6% of the seats, and the last one gave women a 28.3% share. In Tallinn, where a third of Estonia's population resides, women won 17 of the total 64 city council seats. A salient feature in 1999 is high political activity by ethnic Russian women. In Estonia, non-citizens are allowed to vote in local elections. One factor that plays a role in election returns received very little attention. I served as an official observer at four polling places in the centre of Tallinn and was stunned by the frequency with which two people voted in the voting booth at the same time. At one polling place, even three people at the same time! Even more disturbing was the fact that in too many cases, the poll workers did not prevent infraction of election laws. In one place, a poll worker even remarked, "They sleep together in the same bed, so why can't they vote together in the same booth?" Although the law protects the right of a secret ballot, widespread violation of that law occurs in the polling places. It is reasonable to assume that under such circumstances, women candidates do not receive the votes they would if laws were followed. In the interest of democratic development in Estonia, voting procedures at the polling places have to be brought to standards maintained in democratic societies.

Failure to do that could cause problems with entry into the European Union.

Note: The author was formerly a Registrar of Voters in Bolton, Connecticut, USA, and for 20 years worked at the different elections in town.

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### **Why include women in politics?**

*Valve Kirsipuu, MP*

The subject of equality between men and women is not new for the Estonian society. The Soviet ideology diligently exploited that subject, praising equality between men and women in the Soviet Union. There was a time in Estonia when 100% of employable women worked. It should be noted that at the end of the 20th century Estonia is not a third world country where women hold an inferior position and need to be liberated from domestic slavery by the Western civilisation. The question in front of us is: how

publicly active women can be included in the political decision making process. Why should women be included in politics? Everybody knows what a woman is, but what about politics? The recently published Longman Dictionary of World Politics defines "politics" as follows: 1) the art and science of knowing how to govern through agreement, use of power, intrigue, manipulation and militarism; it embraces all social relations within a society and between them; 2) "who gets what, when and how" (H. Lasswell); 3) "the application of values via use of power" (D.Easton); 4) "a kingdom where conscience and power meet, where ethics and coercion are intertwined and their uncomfortable compromises are worked out experimentally" (R. Niebuhr). Considering the preceding, one can say without a doubt that politics is power. The person using power, i.e., the politician, makes decisions guided by conscience, ethics and pragmatism about who gets what, when and how much. Power means to be powerful, for the person using power is in charge of a given situation. That is the reason why a sufficient number of women have to be at the power centre not just to protect the interests of her group, but to change policies fundamentally. Considering the experiences and interests of women politicians, women politicians help to expand men politicians' spiritual horizons, because they are in many respects more critical. Research on women's participation in politics at several EU states revealed the following significant political phenomena: 1) subjects long held as being private, such as child care, family planning, sexuality, have become political questions today that are debated not only by one sex; 2) women's participation in politics changes the political culture and structure. Several studies have shown that a woman as a leader has a style different than a man's. Women are far more practical in their activity, while maintaining, at the same time, a sympathy with the problem; 3) gender differences are brought into the work environment. Women politicians prefer to seek compromises to complex problems, and will co-operate with other parties. Since politics is largely the art of compromising, it can be concluded that women are by their nature greater politicians than men; 4) women are more likely to participate in collective effort. Women political representatives, both at the parliament and the local governments, find it easier and more pleasant to meet with the electorate and different social groups than do men. Considering European experiences, women's participation in politics is necessary, since women politicians are:

- more democratic
- less confrontational
- more receptive to change
- open to collective effort

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### **Where does political power reside?**

*Ilvi Cannon, Political Scientist*

In order to better understand where Estonia is located on the political developmental scale and what needs to be done for the achievement of a democratic society, I present a

brief analysis of power location in different political structures.

A pyramid forms rather naturally: autocracy is at the top (all political power resides in one individual) and anarchy is at the bottom (political power resides in each individual, i.e., no government) Between these two extremes exist different structures.

Below autocracy can be placed oligarchy (rule by few). Historic examples can be found in dynastic and military junta regimes. Below that structure we find plutocracy (rule by the rich). In modern times, they are prevalent, and most notably in Latin American countries. Below that comes democracy (rule by many). Its salient features are equality, limited power, and representation of diverse interests in the political structure. This form of government is most common in

the Western world. And lastly, anarchy. It is a purely theoretical concept, because society almost naturally organises politically. Already Aristotle noted that man is a social/political animal that wants to live with other human beings, and in the process, rules emerge for the government of their relationships.

Monarchy, a form of rule that still exists, can be superimposed on all the political structures mentioned. Autocratic monarchies can be found even today (most conspicuously among Arab states), just as monarchies can be found at the opposite end of the spectrum – democracy (it has to be ruled out in anarchy, because no form of government exists there). Most notable examples of the democratic form are found in many European states.

Returning to democracy, it should be noted that it has greatest popular support. It is the most stable form of government. As a political system, it has to consider each person's interests, whether expressed individually or through a group, such as a non-governmental organisation. The latter would be a pressure group with which to influence governmental policies. Therefore, any kind of women's organisation has parity with all other legitimate organisations in a society. As a result, democracy is an integrated system, i.e., people are involved with their government. At the last parliamentary elections, there was considerable talk about people being alienated from their government. The alienation of the electorate from its government should be taken as a serious political crisis, because it could mean an end to a democratic system.

In a democracy, the power of the government is always limited. Members of the society give as much of the political power that resides in each of them to the government, as they deem necessary for the political achievement of their common interests and desires. The democratic system is based on a rather simple premise: Who can govern me better than I myself can? Or, to put another way: who knows better than I my interests and my concerns? The answer, of course, is: nobody. It follows, therefore, that women, whose interests and concerns are different from men's, cannot be represented by men in the government. Therein lies the imperative for women to be included among leaders in the political process.

Estonia's legal structure and international obligations support women's civil rights and their application. Obstacles exist in culture, customs and language. The legacy of the Soviet occupation also creates conditions inimical to women's political involvement. Yet, Estonia possesses historical conditions that favour the development of a democratic

society. It lacks an aristocracy and the collapsed Soviet empire left everybody poor, i.e., no inherited wealth. Among us exist simply men and women. The activity of the conspicuous parvenu element should subside once we have become politically more mature and more closely integrated with the Nordic region. Nevertheless, we should keep an eye on that situation so that our political development does not go toward plutocracy (government by the rich). Women in politics have an essential role in preventing this from occurring, for on the whole, women are more interested in matters touching the wellbeing of society and the family.

The Estonian media does not yet approach the subject of women in society in a manner similar to the way its respected colleagues in democratic societies do. Some women politicians themselves present an unattractive figure.

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### **Language and political power**

*Kristiina Ross, Academic Director of the Estonian Language Institute*

Unlike the Indo-European languages, the Estonian language lacks any specific grammatical category that calls for biological gender differentiation. For certain nouns, feminine form suffixes exist, but these are additions derived from Indo-European languages in more recent times. These suffixes are used more for emphasis and the use of the noun without them does not mean that the term signifies a male individual. Indo-European languages ascribe male meaning to the noun meaning a human being, i.e., man, (in French, homme). In Estonian, the word inimene (man), for instance, means a "human being", and carries no gender meaning. Inimene is defined as "a thinking and talking social being who fashions work implements and uses them to influence and change his environment, a person." Thus, one can assert that theoretically, Estonian has it right: The language has a gender neutral term for a human being (inimene), and a separate term for each gender - man (mees) and woman (naine). In practice, however, mees and naine does convey cultural messages. An analysis of compound nouns ending with mees or naine presents the following: in the Estonian language are a total of 292 such compound nouns, 233 of them, or 79.8%, end with mees, and 59, or 20.2%, end with naine. The meaning of these terms speaks even more strongly than the numbers. Compound nouns with substantive meaning "human being", but ending with mees number about 160. These can be divided into three broad categories: 1) nouns signifying profession or a given activity, such as metsamees (forester), labidamees (spader), kandlemees (zither player); 2) nouns that convey certain quality, such as aumees (man of honor), naljamees (joker), vembumees (prankster); 3) nouns that place a person in society, such as igamees (everybody), abimees (assistant), omamees (colleague, one's own), peamees (principal individual), suurmees (great person). The first category: determined mostly by historical factors. Originally men filled the positions, but today it needn't be so. In athletics, masculine terms are especially noticeable. After that, it is noticeable that in literature, the arts and activities associated with free time, nouns end with mees and their use with naine suffix is not possible as is

the case with some nouns. Thus, it is paradoxical that in the Estonian Language Institute consisting of 60 keelemees (language specialists), 50 of them are biological women. The second category: the salient feature is that sense of humor seems to be reserved for men in the Estonian language. The noun cannot have *naine* for a suffix, and in cases where the noun does exist with suffix *naine*, as in the case *naljanaine*, the meaning of the term in Estonian becomes a woman at whose expense a joke is made, rather than a woman who tells a joke (see *naljamees* above).

The third category: only two nouns can be found in the dictionary that place a person high up in the social hierarchy, and their application remains the same in both cases: *perenaine* (landlady) and *esinaine* (chairwoman), correspond with *peremees* and *esimees*. However, eight words can be found that place the person in the same high hierarchical position and end only with *mees* and they are: leading person, principal person, popular person, statesman, great person, top individual, high achiever, and power broker.

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## **Legal framework for elections**

*Liina Tõnisson, MP*

If women want to participate in parliamentary and local elections, they have to be familiar with Estonia's election laws.

Since restored independence, Estonia has held elections three times for the parliament and the same number of times for local governments. Statutes governing parliamentary elections have been constantly debated in the press as well as in the parliament, so that the public is well aware of them.

Voters are dissatisfied with the present electoral system. Their candidate's votes are passed to someone toward the top of the party list that has received a lesser number of votes in reality. Neither can voters recall a delegate. They have no control over a delegate's activities. The law has been revised somewhat. For example, the practice of forming party alliances to present candidates jointly for election has been discontinued. Local elections are another matter. Here exist differences in both who can vote as well as the procedure for election. Estonia is quite an exception in this area, because rules for parliamentary elections and for local elections do not usually vary so much.

The basic difference, besides who is eligible to vote, lies in how a candidate can run for an office. In local elections, candidates can run alone, as members of a party list of candidates, or as a candidate on a slate that has been formed by an alliance. The latter can be formed by parties or individual candidates, or by a combination of any of the aforementioned. Such a situation can produce members of local governments that are not accountable to any political party. In such cases, they are not accountable politically for their decisions. Since current election laws allow this, it is reasonable to assume that such situations do occur. It is not realistic to expect changes in this law before the October 17 elections and one can expect the formation of non-political candidate slates. The development of political parties in Estonia has not yet reached the stage where local

councils in more than 250 municipalities are elected on the basis of political partisanship.

Given the legal framework, women in Estonia have to decide whether to run for office politically unaffiliated, which is procedurally very complicated, or as a candidate in a political party or electoral list.

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## **Identifying Political Issues and Finding Solutions: Experiences from Finland**

*Anne Maria Holli, Political Science Helsinki University*

The feminist movement in Finland entered a dormant phase during the 1990's. The same thing has happened before in Finnish women's history. Earlier, in dormant phases of feminist activity in the 1930s to 1950s, women continued to act, politically and socially, but not in loud and visible forms. Women's activities moved very much into other women's organisations.

The economic recession during the first half of the 1990's influenced this development very much. The Finnish economy weakened; unemployment increased; there were a lot of cutbacks in the welfare services. Many women's organisations saw this reform as a threat. Since the municipality is in charge for organising health services, day care, care of the elderly and the disabled, women were afraid that the cutbacks would be realised mostly in these areas.

Defending the welfare society became women's objective nationally during the first half of 1990's, initially in municipal elections of 1992. The campaign was headed by NYTKIS, the co-operative organ of all women's central organisations in Finland. NYTKIS was founded in 1988 and it consists of the women's sections of all political parties and three non-political organisations. NYTKIS is an internationally unique organisation in that it unites women over the party lines. NYTKIS represents about 600 000 Finnish women. Much of women's local activity changed during and after the 1990's economic recession. I will mention but three types of local activities, although I am sure there are more.

1. The traditional women's organisations are rising in popularity again. By this I mean e.g. the Martha-movement, that is, an organisation that concentrates on counselling and advise on household and consumer issues as well as homemaking skills.
2. A second type of local activity is offered by the EU-funded projects, e.g. LEADER or the national POMO-projects. In these projects, local action groups, associations and private persons can apply for funding for different projects aimed at developing the local community.
3. Thirdly, there are local action groups and associations that are oriented towards finding solutions to some specific problem, often a very concrete everyday problem. There are action groups demanding that municipalities fulfil their obligations and build more day-care centres. There are parents' associations that arrange afternoon activities for school children, by employing a kindergarten teacher for the purpose.

As a conclusion, one could claim that the economic recession ended in women taking care of children, the sick, elderly and disabled again, although partly in new forms.

Finnish women are not going back to be homemakers: for many of us, that is not financially possible, either. Instead, there is a growing “third sector” (outside the state and the market), groups of people, associations, co-operations, that have taken over some of the tasks and services of the welfare state and filled the gaps left by it. The problem here may be, of course, that when women put all their energy in taking care of immediate problems, either in the family or in the third sector, they do not have any left for more far-reaching political issues. On the other hand, these kinds of third sector activities also form a platform for further political action - if not now, then later on. This happens, for instance, when this type of women’s organisation starts to demand that the State or the municipality should deal with the problem in a better fashion. In fact, working with women’s issues at a local level is a very typical way for women to get politically active, first in local politics, then possibly on the national level.

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## **Workshop summaries**

### **How to handle the media**

*Leader: Reet Valing, Estonian Radio*

Reet Valing, the workshop leader, was very exact in her presentation, because clarity and understandably were necessary.

First, one must bear in mind that journalists are often coarse. They may ask questions that are taboo in a regular social setting. One should dismiss that. When it comes to journalists, it’s wise not to become defensive. A reply in the form of a question to a journalist’s question, makes one more interesting to the journalist and one can possibly have an opportunity to use the journalist to gain supporters for oneself. As Reet Valing said, women win together with their supporters.

It’s very important to be active and to be distinguishable from the crowd. Humour, and the ability to laugh at oneself without becoming banal or ambiguous, are essential.

It is twice as difficult for women to use the media, because she has to speak so that men understand her and that women understand her. Men and women do not speak the same language. Women are used to working with others, to listen to different opinions and thoughts. A man is much more egocentric, wanting to do everything by himself.

When working with journalists, one must always be ready for that question with which the person being interviewed is trapped. One must always be prepared for that so-called surprise question. For instance, a question about something from the distant past that can be compromising. In order to prevent such unpleasant surprises, it is better not to deny the past, for hiding skeletons in the closet does not bring good results.

Diversity is necessary. Do not submit the same story to different newspapers. The competitors’ press releases need to be followed in local newspapers. Under no circumstances one should not make fun of one’s competitors.

Reet Valing emphasised that one should not talk about things in which one does not believe. It is most important to be oneself, to be an open minded and personable

candidate.

Notetaker was Kadri Josua

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### **How to work together?**

*Leader: Mari-Ann Kelam, MP*

Co-operation in political matters is difficult, because different political parties are involved. Soviet-era habits still prevail, making co-operation even more difficult. Returning phone calls and responding to letters are problems, preventing co-operation because feedback is lacking. The result: loss of interest.

Personal contacts are very important. Seeking of consensus is not less important. If will exists, the possibility for working together exists, regardless of partisan political programs. A good example of this is the Women's Roundtable where co-operation is achieved despite the fact that members are from different political parties. Compromises occur easier if parties know each other, and women are more capable of making compromises. The Roundtable experience has resulted in greater trust in women, because it has been noticed that women can accomplish things despite the general notion that women trust men more than other than women. Professional ties help women to be more effective, and these should be used more in the future.

The role of government should be as small as possible and people should be more active themselves. The third sector was strong during the first period of independence.

Presently, a new third sector movement is under way and this gives women a great opportunity to be politically active. An individual can be active, but alone her effectiveness is limited. Exchange of information and building of coalitions on the grassroots level are important. A noticeable weak link is infrastructure in rural areas. As a general assessment, it can be said that co-operation and the third sector are not in bad shape in Estonia and, most likely, as time goes on, activity in this area will increase and become more fruitful.

Notetaker was Kristiina Luht

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### **How to read legal texts?**

*Leader: Liina Tõnisson, MP*

In order to know one's rights, it is necessary to be able to read legal texts. The know-how to read and interpret the law will become increasingly more valued.

Legal texts are too difficult for the average person to read. A need for inexpensive, professional service has developed. At the moment, we lack this service. It is future women jurists that could find positions for themselves in this field.

It is necessary to increase the ability of the average citizen to read legal documents. Quite naturally, the whole legal field would remain outside his domain and professional people are the ones to explain legal complications. Local governmental officials should

be competent to understand legal texts. Citizens should be able to obtain explanations from them. Also, access to information should be guaranteed for everybody.

Basic problems emerge in local governments, because someone is operating outside his area of competence. Training is necessary. Due to the high cost of training, the official has to bear the cost himself in most cases. It is essential that the official understand those laws that are applicable to his area of work. The publication Riigi Teataja (State Bulletin) contains legal documents issued by the government and it appears every other day.

Educators and many others, members of the Tallinn City Council, for example, complain that interest in training is very low. The high fee is the reason behind it. Due to insufficient information, local governmental officials have made many errors.

A major problem in the relations between city councils and Riigikogu (parliament) is that the former grope in the dark, and the latter know but do not pass it on. In smaller communities, the problem lies with a feeling that nothing can be changed. As a result, incompetent persons are re-elected.

Notetaker was Siiri Ries

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### **How to identify local issues?**

*Leader: Anu Jänes, West-Virumaa County Government*

Looking at local situations, it becomes apparent that local matters are still closely tied to national (central) policies.

Privatisation has not yet been completed. Lack of jobs for young people is the number one concern. Second place is held by lack of information. Transparency at local government is illusory, for it is apparent that decisions have already been made behind closed doors. Unemployment on the whole is an issue. And, in some areas, integration of minorities is an issue.

Notetaker was Ilvi Cannon

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### **How to win elections?**

*Leader: Liisa Pakosta, Director, Tallinn Historical Preservation Office*

The purpose of the workshop was to analyse elections from a woman's perspective. Foremost consideration was: how to win local elections. Different women politicians, including Kadri Jäätma who has successfully campaigned for the parliament, shared their experiences.

It became apparent that a candidate has to examine whether he has enough time, will, and experience to be active in politics. A sense of responsibility must not be overlooked, for it is necessary in the parliament. Also, one's goals must be clear and what means are to be used. Without these, people will not have an interest, or trust, in a candidate.

The campaign is very important. One has to advertise oneself effectively. It is wise to know whose votes you are likely to get. The press plays an important role in a candidate's publicity. Therefore, it was good to write articles, arrange discussion groups, express your opinions.

A lot of a campaign's success depends on the candidate's character. If the past is dark, then it is very difficult to establish trust among the electorate.

In order to receive votes, it is necessary to get the support of your relatives, friends, acquaintances, schoolmates. And you will have to convince them that you are the person best suited to change things for the better. Running for local office is easier, because it is not difficult to figure how many votes you need in order to win a seat. After that you have to gather your strength.

Appearance was discussed a lot. Although men's appearance is not noticed, a woman has to be aware that her appearance is central. Studies show that 80% of the opinion is formed by appearance and only 7% by the content of the speech. For that reason, women must place great emphasis on their appearance before the election as well as after it. During the course of the discussion, many things became clearer and sharing of experiences was helpful.

Notetaker was Eed Hõimoja

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### **Conferences and seminars in the summer and fall**

\* A large, international, interdisciplinary conference, "Women's World '99", was held June 20-26, at Tromsø, Norway, with 1500 participants. Among the principal speakers were Rosi Braidotti, Nawal El Saadawi, Sandra Harding, Michal Kaufman, Irina Novikova, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Berit Ås. The conference was conducted in 13 parallel sections and covered topics on generations, politics, information technology, art, literature, history, labour, economy, violence, peace and human rights. All of the topics were examined from a woman's or gender point of view. The conference did not aim to define comprehensively the condition of women, but rather looked at the diversity in the women's world, as the plural noun in the conference's title implies.

The Nordic and Baltic states women's organisations displayed their literature at the Nordic House, which was partly sponsored by the Nordic Ministers Council. Estonia was represented by ENUT, the Tallinn Pedagogical Women's Study Center, the Tartu University Gender Study Group, the Equal Rights Bureau of the Social Services Ministry, and the "Living for Tomorrow" project. Papers were read by Julia Šamarina, Tiina Aunin, Leena Kurvet-Käosaar, Katrin Kivimaa, Mari Laanemets, Selve Ringmaa, Ülle-Marike Papp, Elo Lindsalu, Marika Truumure and Eda Leesalu, and Killu Sukmit showed her film.

\* September 6-19, The Nordic Folk Academy organised in Ligatne, Latvia an instruction program on the role of non-governmental organisations in society for the Baltic countries and north-western Russia. ENUT's Administrative Director Selve Ringmaa

attended this seminar. Topics included international co-operation projects, relations with the media, a learning organisation, the ethics and qualities of a leader. The program ended with an analysis of the activity and future prospects for a local organisation.

\* On October 2, a seminar, "Women in politics", was held in Pärnu for the purpose of analysing the role and achievements of Estonian women in politics. Suzanne Lie, the Academic Director of ENUT, opened the conference. Rein Toomla presented an overview of the political background to the local elections and the opportunities for women to participate in them. As a woman in the parliament, Siiri Oviir discussed two questions: why should women be involved in politics and what they can do in the interest of women? Barbi Pilvre presented an analysis of how the press shows women, comparing the public image that the media gives of ministers Signe Kivi's and Katrin Saks's activities. Ülle-Marike Papp talked about equal rights and what they mean for Estonia. Maret Maripuu talked about her experiences as a young woman in politics.

\* The Kristiina Institute of Helsinki University organised the master's and doctorate seminar, "Gender, knowledge and power", on October 4-8, at Siuntios, Finland. Participants were from all the Nordic and Baltic states. Selve Ringmaa and Leena Kurvet-Käosaar were from Estonia. The program was based on an analysis, presented by Prof. Tuija Pulkkinen, of the feminist philosophy of five contemporary feminists: Donna Haraway, Teresa de Lauretis, Judith Butler, Elizabeth Grosz and Rosi Braidotti.

\* "Women and Democracy at the Dawn of the New Millennium", an international conference, was held at Reykjavik, Iceland, on October 8-10. Seventeen people attended from Estonia, among them ENUT's Academic Director Suzanne Lie, and Board member Ülle-Marike Papp. Hillary Rodham Clinton from the United States was a principal speaker. Latvia's president and Iceland's former president addressed the conference.

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## **ENUT roundtable**

*Marika Truumure, co-ordinator of the "Living for Tomorrow" project*

On every second and fourth Thursday of the month, until the end of the year, a roundtable is held at the Centre, starting at 6 o'clock in the evening. Each meeting addresses a particular aspect of the general theme, "Woman and man in mass media."

The first roundtable held on October 28, was attended by 12 participants. An MTV video demonstrating fantasies was shown and it was followed by a discussion, which revealed how difficult it is not to be influenced by TV and to distinguish between fantasy and reality.

Suzanne Lie, Academic Director of ENUT, will present on November 11, a look at the advertisement world and how it portrays man and woman. Future roundtables include

Julia Šamarina, who will talk about the “fashion chick” (beibe) culture in Estonia, and Tiina Aunin with her topic on anorexia.

The purpose of the roundtable is to bring together those people who are interested in gender questions. Every time the group will be led by a person who specialises in a certain area of the subject and wants to share his/her knowledge. The presentation, which can last up to half an hour, is followed by discussion.

Before the program starts, the participants can receive literature from ENUT on every topic discussed at the roundtable and a glossary of the terms that will be used. All opinions and suggestions on topics and speakers are welcome.

The roundtable is a non-academic gathering. Anyone can participate and everyone is welcome to speak. The decision is up to the participant. One can remain silent, speak up, or, if arranged previously, act as the group leader.

The goal is to analyse gender issues and to encourage interest to develop in gender questions that emerge in society.

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### **Femina Baltica - Minorities & Mixed Families Networks**

The Femina Baltica network was established in 1998 aiming to build a long-term and large-scale co-operation of women at all levels in the societies around the Baltic Sea. The network will strive to support the democratic development in the Baltic Countries. Another important goal is to increase the awareness on gender equality and to encourage women`s participation in different spheres of social, political, economic and academic life.

The Femina Baltica network includes women from NGOs (non-governmental organisations), as well as researchers and decision makers. The network has co-operation with the Femina Borealis network, which has been doing similar work in the Barents Sea region since 1993.

The main goal of the project is to arrange seminars and conference for activists, scholars and researchers. The first part of the network will include discussions and workshops for women from non-governmental organisations on themes pertaining to the situations of minorities and mixed families (families, where the parents belong to different language or ethnic groups). The second large part of the project focuses on creating academic networks. The first step in this process will be the academic summer school courses for young students and researchers.

Femina Baltica projects work together with different organisations in Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and North-West Russia (Archangel). ENUT is the Femina Baltica partner in Estonia.

The seminars have had a variety of topics: the rights of minorities and members of mixed marriages (living in a country as a non-citizen, children of a mixed marriage –

what does it mean to grow up in a bilingual/bicultural family); the politics of identity (minorities in a society, how minorities are portrayed by the media, etc.); culture and traditions (how to combine the cultural traditions of the minority and the majority. the language issue, etc.).

The most recent Femina Baltica seminar, offering two topics: "Women and the war industry", and "Women and national identity", took place on October 22-24, at Paldiski. The influence of the war industry on the economies of the former states of the Soviet Union was enormous, but to date very little attention has been paid to the problems caused by it. The seminar participants concurred that all the problems discussed at the seminar are related in different ways, and the only way to find solutions to them is by discussing them. Femina Baltica's future plans will be decided in the near future. The direction is clear – to bring together the representatives of different organisations and professions through the medium of seminars, in order to promote co-operation and seeking of solutions to problems.

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### **Summer School (23-30 August, 1999)**

A total of 26 persons attended the summer school at Jurmala. They originated from Sweden, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, and Estonia. Lectures and workshops formed the instructional basis. Lecturers were: Irina Novikova (Latvia), Katrin Kivimaa (Estonia), Sandra Meshkova (Latvia), Leena Kurvet-Käosaar (Estonia), Tatyana Kurova (Latvia), Giedre Purvaneckiene (Lithuania), Carita Peltonen (Finland), Ebba Witt-Brattström (Sweden).

The three major topics were: "Feminist Methodology: Eastern European Perspective", "Gender and Labour Market" and "Gender, Language and Power".

Workshops were an important part of the instructional program. They provided a forum in which one learned about problems in the different countries, and what steps are being taken to solve the problems. An additional beneficial feature was the fact that the workshop participants were from different countries and they had different backgrounds. That helped to enlarge the network. The lectures were very substantive and often developed into dialogue between the lecturer and students. The lecturers were specialists in their field and they managed to make their lectures very interesting. Instruction was in English, with Russian translation. Language problems did not occur. Informal gatherings were also important. They took place after formal instruction and subjects that needed explanation were aired at these gatherings.

The summer school was well organised and lodging was excellent. Sufficient free time was allowed for personal matters. It was possible to become familiar with the cultural setting and an excursion to Riga was included. It can be said, in conclusion, those participants appreciated the experience and lots of food for thought was obtained for future digestion.

Every participant had to write an essay by October 15. After grading the essay, the

participant will receive a certificate of completion. Essay themes were assigned by the lecturer.

Summer School will be held in Klaipeda, Lithuania, next summer. The theme has not yet been chosen.

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**Other Events** Major construction and remodelling at the Tallinn Pedagogical University closed our Centre from the end of July until early September.

Lectures at TPU: on Feminist Philosophy. The lectures started on September 27, 1999, and will continue for 10 consecutive Mondays. They are partially funded by ENUT.

Voldemar Kolga, professor at TPU and ENUT Board member, gave the introductory lecture. The regular lecturer is Ms. Katrin Kivimaa. Class is attended by about 40 students, of whom about 10% are males.

ENUT sponsored a panel discussion on October 5 that was led by Kirsti Kohl Grondahl, the Speaker of the Norwegian Parliament. Members of the panel included the other Norwegian parliamentarian, and Estonian parliamentarians.

Starting October 28, and then every second and fourth Thursday of the month, ENUT holds at the centre a roundtable discussion on the general theme, "Woman and man in mass media" The first roundtable considered TV and violence, and the group was led by Marika Truumure.

On November 15, Nelli Kalikova, head of the Aids Prevention Centre in Tallinn, lectured on "Do you think of AIDS when you fall in love?"

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**New books and developments in the library** ENUT library has acquired both Estonian language and English language books. In Estonian, we have added Margaret Atwood's *The Eye of the Cat* (previously we had only the English language edition), Toni Morrison's *Dear*, Jeannette Winterson's *Passion*, Bernhard Valman's *Handbook for a Child's Health*, and Susan Quillian Child's *Body Language*, Margaret Thatcher's *The Downing Street Years* (previously we had only the English language edition). Also Larissa Vassilhyeva's *Kremlin Wives*, and *Kremlin Children*, and Anna Maria Sigmund's *Nazis' Wives*.

English language edition, *Return to the Western World*, of the Estonian language book "Naasmine lääne maailma", written by Marju Lauristin and Peeter Vihalemm together with Karl Erik Rosengren and Lennart Weibull. A very recent acquisition is the Estonian translation of Anthony Giddens's *The Third Way*, plus the late Anu Narusk's work in Estonian, "Argielu Eestis 1990-ndatel aastatel" (Every day life in Estonia during the 1990's). About 500 people have borrowed books since the previous ENUT News was issued in May.

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**Visitors** This year, 1590 visitors came to our centre, among them were student groups and visitors from other women's organisations, Estonian governmental organisations, and from abroad.

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**Future plans** An anthology of Estonian women's stories, reflecting their experiences caused by World War II, is in the work. EU sponsored conference on "Estonian Women in EU" scheduled for March, 2000. The first issue of ENUT journal is planned for release to coincide with the EU conference.

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**Estonian Women as Future Citizens in the EU : Preliminary draft of two-day Seminar, March, 2000**

Current situation illustrates the timeliness of the topic. Riigikogu is debating ratification of the European Council's European Social Charter. Estonian press has ignored the issue and women's groups are not informed enough to lobby for the Charter articles that affect their interests. ENUT is going to arrange a two-day conference on gender and equality issues in the EU. The conference is planned to inform women's organisations, local authorities and other interested parties.

*Main themes going to be discussed*

What is the EU's policy regarding equality?

What is the Amsterdam Treaty and how does it effect gender equality? What is mainstreaming and what is the mainstreaming policy of the EU?

Does Estonia need gender equality? (Reet Valing, Estonian Radio)

Human Rights, Gender Equality and adjustment of Estonian Law in light of EU legislation (Julia Vahing, Justice Ministry)

About equal rights (Ülle-Marike Papp, Bureau of Equality, Ministry of Social Affairs)

Conditions for Estonia to enter EU

Research on Estonian women's attitudes towards the EU

Access to employment for women: Self-employed and professional women in the EU (Reet Laja, Ministry of Social Affairs)

Gender aspect in education policies of the EU

Women and regional development policies

Themes of Workshops

Women and minority rights and the EU

Equal salary for equal work

Trafficking of women and prostitution

Violence towards women and children, child abuse

Does Estonia need gender equality?

Panel discussion: What are the advantages/disadvantages of being part of the EU?