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Panel Discussion Organised by the CEE Network for Gender Issues

**“Making the SDGs: Green Economy and Gender Equality (SDG5) as a Connecting Glue”**

***Moderator***

**Pia Locatelli**, former MEP and Italian MP, Member of the Scientific Council of the Foundation for Progressive European Studies - Moderator

***Panelists:***

1. **Mata Szigeti Bonifert**, Hungarian Business Forum, Board Member, CEE Network for Gender Issues
2. **Lovorka Marinović, President, Center for New Initiatives, Zagreb**, Board Member, CEE Network for Gender Issues
3. **Daša Šilović**, Chair, International Board CEE, Network for Gender Issues

***Date and Time:*** Wednesday, 30 May 2018, 4:30 – 7:30 pm

***Venue:***

FEEM (Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei)

[Corso Magenta 63](#) - Palazzo delle Stelline

Milano

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1. Harnessing the potential of human capital is key to sustainable development, inclusive economic growth, social wellbeing and societal stability. The financial crisis of 2008 has globally unearthed fissures in the economic and financial policy and demonstrated the volatility of markets, economic and social insecurity and social exclusion that impacts on the most vulnerable strata of the population – the poor and uneducated, among them women and youth.

2. The crisis has also accentuated the most urgent need to address food security and climate/environmental challenges through development of human capital, sustainable use of resources and promotion of green economy. This can be best achieved through public/private partnerships and supportive networks of producers for learning, mutual support, growth and sustainable business models exchange. The Europe 2030 and SDG strategy (including national strategies) is an opportunity to address these imbalances and ensure stable and equitable growth.
3. The crisis, as well as the review of the MDGs conducted by the UN, has also emphasised the need for a more concerted and sustainable economic model to enhance and harness human potential for sustainable, inclusive and green growth. Empowering and educating the vulnerable groups and individuals, strengthening and developing capacities accompanied by supportive networks and innovation will be key to a sustainable future. **In this women, as a focus group and currently under represented group, are a strong segment of society that can contribute to economic development and social and economic wellbeing.**
4. The European economic and social model should go beyond austerity. It demands a proactive innovative and engaged response that would not dismantle the European acquis but rather maximize existing economic and social gains and build on them through inclusiveness, innovation and strategic investment – economic and in human resources.
5. Transition economies in Central and Eastern Europe underwent rapid capitalisation, not always in the immediate or long-term interest of the “ordinary” man and woman. Privatisation in agricultural enterprises, for instance, was often done by managing directors of the former state enterprises (e.g. Agrikor in Croatia) with easy loans without much thought to sustainability and labour concerns.
6. This left small private producers, often the most innovative and “green”, out of the big picture. They were left to market their own produce and sell at low prices without access to growth. Women became the most vulnerable, but often the most entrepreneurial actors selling their home made products in the open market. But most were left without the social safety net or support for growth, personal and family stability, as well often with social security. Without political and public support, they were not empowered to contribute to broader political decision-making on the kind of economic and social state they want to live in. Public and citizenship awareness programmes were lacking.
7. The current economic and social situation in the region of the Western Balkans is putting severe stress on rural women and their families, particularly those engaged in farming often in green/organic agriculture, small food production and local produce, especially as consumerism fueled by large corporations and foreign food imports increase. They are often compelled either to abandon these and seek alternative livelihoods, particularly in the cities, or to cope with underpaid production being poorly prepared to deal with volatile market conditions and social marginalization and unable to grow.
8. Governments are pro-actively seeking responses to the economic, social and environmental challenges. Europe 2030 sustainable strategy should identify solutions need to be followed by broad and multi-stakeholder groups if policies were to be implemented, or if the electorate were to participate in seeking just, socially, environmentally and economically sound solutions. The political, economic situation and social malaise should be turned around into an opportunity, of the XXI century, to build societal consensus around a “new” economically and socially sustainable “smart” state and a human development model fit to respond to the needs of the modern man and woman.
9. According to statistics (e.g. Serbian Statistics Agency) women are in possession of less than 10% of cumulative real-estate and less than 30% of a chattel (movable property). On the other side, they are the

key working force in rural areas without social and health protection and funds. If they are in position to produce goods for the market, as they are, they are not almost at all in position to sell their products and to control the income. They do not manage the results of their hard work.

10. On the other hand, those who have the knowledge and skills for green production, need the broader framework of support and connectivity to the market, they need to know how to run their businesses, they need to cooperate.
11. All the efforts of the national governments are also fully supported by the international community which has now set a new development agenda looking towards addressing the MDG lessons learnt, i.e. the SDG goals, new economic and social challenges and ensuring sustainability of the global development effort.
12. Gender equality cuts across the Sustainable Development Goals as adopted by the UN General Assembly (193 countries) on 25 September 2015 within the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. The SDGs that this proposal seeks to address in an integrated manner are primarily:
  - 1) [End poverty in all its forms everywhere](#)<sup>[14]</sup>
  - 2) End hunger, achieve [food security](#) and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture<sup>[15]</sup>
  - 3) Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages<sup>[16]</sup>
  - 4) Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all<sup>[17]</sup>
  - 5) Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
  - 6) Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all<sup>[20]</sup>
  - 7) Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all<sup>[21]</sup>
  - 8) Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels<sup>[29]</sup>
  - 9) Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development<sup>[30]</sup>
13. The panel will seek to address these challenges in order to inform the preparation of SDG strategies in respective countries.