



TRIENNIAL REPORT OF IFUW REPRESENTATIVES TO ECOSOC IN VIENNA

IFUW REPRESENTATIVES: Ilona Graenitz, Coordinator
Gertaud Köcher (*until December 2009*)
Karoline Maria Holmes (*ad hoc*)
Ingrid Szabolcs (*ad hoc*)
Ines Spinn (*ad hoc from January 2010*)

IFUW's team in Vienna mainly follows the work of the Commission on Crime Prevention, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on the Status of Women. The team works closely with various committees of CoNGO, the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations.

Committee on the Status of Women

The Vienna NGO Committee on the Status of Women consists of approximately 40 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. It cooperates closely with the NGO Committees on the Status of Women in Geneva and New York and follows the outcomes of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) meetings in New York.

In 2008 the Vienna CSW supported a project providing basic education and skills training to girl soldiers in Sierra Leone, run by an Austrian judge appointed to the International Criminal Court in Sierra Leone. The judge was the first to have successfully sentenced warlords for recruiting children as soldiers.

In 2009 and 2010, the focus was on "Gender Medicine" an emerging multi-faceted discipline that addresses differences between men and women in both health and disease. The Committee organised a series of lectures on "Gender Medicine" in February and June 2009. This resulted in a workshop offered during CoNGO's 2009 Civil Society Forum in Geneva. In the autumn of 2009 a special sub-committee for Gender Medicine was created. For the 2010 Commission on the Status of Women in New York, the group presented a workshop on "Gender Medicine, Better Health Care for Men and Women". This was the first time that the Vienna CSW organized a side event for the Commission. The Committee, the Austrian Society for Gender Medicine and CoNGO co-sponsored a "Global Health and Gender Symposium" in Eisenstadt, Austria in April 2010. Gender Medicine will be one of the continuing priorities in the work of the UN in Vienna and for the Austrian Association of University Women (VÄO).

Planning is underway for World AIDS/HIV Conference, which will take place in Vienna in July 2010, Vienna, in which members of the team will participate. Other health issues addressed during the triennium included the Health of Young Women and Girls linked to the Millennium Development Goals, and Health Education.

Committee on Ageing

The work of the committee focuses on aging populations in both industrial and developing countries. One of the current key issues is "accessibility", which has implications for building design and public and private transport. The Committee, in cooperation with the NGO Committees on Ageing in Geneva and New York, has been advocating for a convention on the Rights of Older Persons, similar to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, adopted in 1989. Having such a convention would ensure that older persons around world have the right to live with dignity and peace and that

governments put in place appropriate national policies and programs that allow older persons to participate and live as an active member of society and protect them from discrimination.

Committee on Peace

Gertraud Köcher has followed and played a key organisational role in the meetings of this committee. As in previous years, a Commemoration Ceremony for victims of Hiroshima was held at the Vienna International Centre (VIC) on August 7th, 2009. Education for Peace continues to be a focal point of the Committee. IFUW's representatives took part in an initiative urging the USA Government to become a party to the Arms Trade Treaty. In October 2009, discussions were held on the "Implications of Climate change on International Politics". The outcomes of this meeting were incorporated into a document prepared by the New York NGO Committee on Sustainable Development for presentation to the delegates of the Climate Change Convention in Copenhagen in December 2009.

Committee on Human Rights

During the triennium, the committee looked at the human rights of drug users and medical help/treatment for them. In December 2008, CoNGO in co-operation with the Committees on the Status of Women and Human Rights organised an event to commemorate 60 years of the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

Committee on Narcotic Drugs

Ingrid Szabolcs and Gertraude Köcher have been IFUW's representatives to the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the NGO Committee on Narcotic Drugs. The work of the Committee concentrates on preparing statements for meetings of the Commission. Many of the committee's discussions take place virtually, as not all members are based in Vienna. In 2009 IFUW and the NGO committee were partners in "Beyond 2008", a report and forum designed to provide a comprehensive overview of NGO experience and opinion on achievements in drug control since the 1998 UN General Assembly Special Session to address the world drug problem (UNGASS). The team debated whether IFUW should continue its participation on this committee, as discussions are limited to illegal drugs. After consultation with the IFUW Board, it was decided to continue IFUW's participation in 2010.

Committee on Crime Prevention (Alliance on Crime Prevention)

The team is fortunate to have a new member, Ines Spinn, a lawyer working for the Ministry for Interior, who combines professional expertise in crime prevention with an academic background. She represented IFUW, together with other team members at the UN Commission on Crime Prevention session in April 2009, which dealt with the theft of electronic identity and cyber-crime.

Trafficking is one of the issues covered by the Vienna Team. Trafficking of young women and girls from the former Soviet Republic and Asia has become a serious problem, one of great concern in European Union countries and Switzerland.

CoNGO

Ilona Graenitz, Coordinator of the Vienna team, was named CoNGO Vice-President in 2007, giving visibility to many of IFUW's concern. In November 2009 Vienna hosted the CoNGO Board Meeting. IFUW team members also took an active part in preparations for the Civil Society Development Forum 2009, organized by CoNGO, in Vienna. This briefing was the start of a fuller integration of the Vienna centre into the annual calendar of CoNGO events.

VÄO

The team has been working with the Austrian Federation strengthen links. In autumn 2008, VÄO organised a meeting for members to learn more about the work of IFUW representatives at the United Nations Centre in Vienna and the issues involved. There was another meeting with special emphasis on the Commission on the Status of Women in January 2010. In addition, VAO has created a special link on its website where members can find information about UN and CEDAW activities.

*Ilona Graenitz, Coordinator
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