



Call for Applications for the Women's Human Rights Training Institute (WHRTI), 2009-2011

Deadline for applications: 30 June 2009

The Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (BGRF), in cooperation with the Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR) and the Network of East-West Women (NEWW), are announcing their **Call for Applications for the Third Round of the Women's Human Rights Training Institute (WHRTI), 2009-2011**.

The Institute is a **unique initiative** founded by the three partners in 2004 as a first-of-its-kind programme aimed at building the capacity of young lawyers from Central and Eastern European and the Newly Independent States (CEE/NIS) for litigation on women's rights issues, including:

- **violence against women,**
- **sexual and reproductive health and rights, and**
- **employment discrimination.**

The Institute, organized by the BGRF in cooperation with its partners, has successfully completed two rounds: WHRTI 2004-2006 and WHRTI 2007-2009 (www.institute.bgrf.org), where we have trained over 30 lawyers.

The WHRTI provides participants **in-depth knowledge in women's human rights protection** in the three areas noted above. The WHRTI provides **practical skills for development of strategic litigation** in the region both at the national and international levels **through using regional and universal human rights mechanisms** such as **the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Optional Protocol to CEDAW** as well as **the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Optional Protocol to ICCPR**. The WHRTI also gives lawyers an opportunity to get acquainted with **the EU standards** in the field of equal treatment of women and men, including **the case law of the European Court of Justice**.

ELIGIBILITY:

Twenty participants will be selected among **practicing lawyers and legal counselors working with human rights or women's rights NGOs** in the region. Successful applicants will:

- have a demonstrated commitment to women's human rights advocacy, to using the law creatively to secure redress for women's rights violations.
- have a professional relationship for at least one year prior to the application with an institution/organization that has capacity to litigate women's rights cases or has experience with litigation and preferably focuses in its work on women's human rights.
- have demonstrated substantial theoretical knowledge about the international universal and regional legal systems of human rights protection and their enforcement mechanisms.
- be committed to participate in the four sessions of the Institute (approximately one week every six months) and to be involved in the intersessional work.
- have fluency in written and spoken English, and advanced English language comprehension.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES:

The completed WHRTI application form and all supporting documents (see the application form for details) must be sent to the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (BGRF) by **30 June 2009**, to the following e-mail address: office@bgrf.org

or, by mail to:

Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation
P.O.Box 938
1000 Sofia
Bulgaria

The applicants short-listed for an interview will be contacted by **mid-August, 2009**.

The final selection will be done by the **end of August, 2009**.

The First session of the WHRTI is planned for **November, 2009**.

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE:

The overarching objectives of the Institute are to:

- develop successful regional and country level litigation strategies on women's human rights in CEE/NIS.
- build the capacity of lawyers in CEE/NIS to litigate women's human rights cases at the national, regional and UN levels.
- provide continuous support and expertise for women's rights litigation efforts of lawyers in CEE/NIS and seed new women's rights litigation.
- strengthen the network of lawyers for women's human rights' strategic litigation in the region.

The initiative takes a three-prong approach in developing jurisprudence at the three above mentioned fields of women's rights. **The WHRTI takes place in Bulgaria, comprises four sessions, is convened every six months for a one-week session and includes the same group of participants throughout the two-year project period. The working language of the Institute is English. The last two sessions are designed as moot-court sessions** consisting of team work on hypothetical cases brought before the European Court of Human Rights, the CEDAW Committee and the UN Human Rights Committee. The team of lecturers and facilitators comprises of well known professors, experts, and practitioners from Central and Eastern Europe, the United States and Western Europe specialized in violence against women, reproductive rights and employment discrimination and have expertise on various aspects of the use of the international and regional human rights mechanisms for the protection of women's rights. The alumni of the WHRTI are also involved as lecturers and facilitators.

The Institute participants will be trained to examine existing legal theories that are currently applied to women's human rights violations, including anti-discrimination legal theories and multiple/intersectional discrimination of women. **The Institute is also a place to develop new legal theories in the field of women's rights and discuss their potential success in practice.**

Specific litigation activities will be both continued and launched by the participants between the Institute sessions, supported by the BGRF, NEWW, CRR and other partner organizations, members of the network of lawyers-fellows of the WHRTI and the Institute's Expert Committee. **The Institute is planning to support additional initiatives** such as joint research, litigation and advocacy initiatives of the participants, attending relevant international events, etc.

All expenses related to the selected participants' attendance at the four sessions of the Institute are covered by the organizers.

The project is implemented thanks to the generous support of our donor, **the Open Society Institute - Budapest**. Previous sessions also received financial support from other donors, including the **Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Global Fund for Women and Mama Cash**.

Over 30 young lawyers have participated in the Institute from countries such as **Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Hungary, Ireland (observer), Latvia, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Turkey and Ukraine.** For more information on our alumni, see our website (www.institute.bgrf.org/). The alumni of the Institute are establishing a network of women's rights lawyers and are at the forefront of teaching, litigating and advocating on women's rights in their countries. Some of them have already undertaken women's rights litigation before the European Court of Human Rights and the CEDAW Committee. One alumnus is working at the Registry of the ECtHR in Strasbourg, another was appointed as the Human Rights Ombudsperson of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Join a Network of Excellence, for Leadership, Empowerment and Change!!!