

ACTIVITIES

Seminar on media coverage of prostitution

The Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre (ENUT) will conduct a seminar on February 18, on media coverage of prostitution.

The seminar will focus on Estonian journalists. Its purpose is to clarify the common links between societal inequality, gender roles, and prostitution. The role of the media in handling these sensitive topics will be explored.

Well-known Estonian social scientists and other specialists in the field will explain their positions at the interactive seminar. The Estonian experience in reporting on prostitution will be compared to the experience of other countries. The organizers hope that media will disseminate these experiences to the whole public.

The seminar will take place at Radisson SAS Hotel and is supported by the US Department of State, Norwegian Foreign Ministry, Finnish Embassy, Finnish Institute and Radisson SAS Hotel.

Additional information is available from Marion Pajumets, phone: +372 6409 173, e-mail: marionpajumets@yahoo.com

Eesti Päevaleht elected by the Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable as "The Most Gender Sensitive Newspaper" of 2003

At the annual conference of Estonian women's organizations that took place at Tallinn Pedagogic University on January 24, the Roundtable of Estonian Women's Associations (ENÜ) initiated a tradition of annually recognising the most gender-conscious newspaper.

The winner of the award for 2003 was selected from among Russian and Estonian language dailies and weeklies with national circulation. The basis for the award was professional and consistent reporting by the newspaper on gender and gender related equal rights matters.

Presentation of the prostitution studies report

The report on the study "Prostitution – A Societal Problem? Views about the nature, causes and effects of prostitution" will be presented on March 10 at Olympia Hotel in Tallinn. The project was carried out jointly by the Ministry of Social Affairs and ENUT, and funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The study was conducted in the Baltic countries and north-western Russia by interviewing public opinion leaders – people whose views have a significant impact on prostitution policies and whose opinions coincide with those of the population at large.

The presentation is part of a conference aimed at exploring the roots of prostitution and related problems. Among the expected participants are government officials, foreign embassy staff, representatives of NGOs and various international organizations.

Confirmed speakers include the Nordic Council of Ministers Director Thomas Christensen and Minister of Social Affairs Marko Pomerants.

Additional information is available from Katri Eespere, phone: +372 6269 251 or 5120 163, e-mail: katri.eespere@enut.ee.

Eesti Päevaleht was voted by EWAR as "The Most Gender-Conscious Newspaper" for 2003 because it published the largest number of analytical and informational articles about men's and women's problems during the year, and because it has on its editorial staff the largest number of journalists highly knowledgeable about gender equality.

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From the Editor

The topic of several articles in the current issue is prostitution, about which several studies were completed last year. One of these, funded by the Open Estonia Foundation, was presented last fall by the Estonian Institute for Open Society Research. The results of another project will be presented in March at a conference organized by ENUT. Of course we will outline the most important recent activities of ENUT, including news of the Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable (EWAR) as well as other women's organizations.

The lead article in this issue is young sociologist Marion Pajumets's interview with Iris Pettai, our prime researcher of violence against women. To the interview Ivi Proos appends a very thought-provoking outline of two possible paths that Estonia can take in this matter.

Ilvi Jõe-Cannon summarizes a meeting she attended in Stockholm on the subject of cooperation between Nordic and Baltic women's organizations, Reet Laja writes about a meeting held in Tallinn between Estonian and Georgian women, and Eha Reitelmann presents an overview of a meeting of women's organizations in the Baltics and north-western Russia that was held in Jurmala.

We introduce and recommend to you "Separate but Equal" - an exciting booklet about gender equality. Other articles are about the university's gender studies minor concluding its first semester and an interim assessment is included. ENUT volunteer Jane Suviste left our cold winter for the warmth of Greece under the auspices of the European Youth volunteer programme.

Our very active librarian Marju Järve outlines last year's accomplishments of ENUT library and invites all who are interested to visit the library this year as well. Our able and active information secretary Birgit Soans recaps all of the updates to our home page that have kept her busy lately.

Of course you will find on the last pages news about interesting events that are coming up in the near future. Good reading!

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Prostitution – violence against women or expression of women's free will?

A dialogue with the premier Estonian researcher of violence against women with conventional wisdom – as in this instance attempted to personify by sociologist Marion Pajumets

- Estonian Institute for Open Society Research researched last year the attitudes of the adult population in Estonia about prostitution. This research was undertaken as part of the overall research project "Violence and Women's Health". I will propose a typical conventional wisdom argument: why should prostitution be regarded as violence against women when most of them sell their bodies of their own free will, even if it could be that a few prostitutes may be forced to do so?

Iris Pettai (IP): Research conducted in many countries (Estonia included) confirms that the majority of prostitutes suffer from continuous humiliation, beating and rape by their pimps as well as their customers. In spite of this, the belief persists in almost the whole world that prostitutes enjoy their work and that they do it by free choice. If this were not so, then of course they would not engage in this work. It is thought that mild violence may even increase their sexual pleasure.

Continuous humiliation, beatings and rape can only be endured by a person who has lost any sense of self-esteem, whose personality has been destroyed, who lacks the desire and will to stand for herself. Such a person is then an item of consumption, to be tossed aside once it has lost its utility. The prostitute is a consumer good that generates immense profits for the sex trade, while earning for herself only a minimal standard of living. In order to turn a young woman into an obedient consumer good that is willing to service each day 10 to 20 men of random age and appearance who may also have various physical and psychological shortcomings, methods must be applied for the destruction of initially healthy personalities. To cite Ellias Canetti: "He who wants to dominate other persons must endeavor to humiliate them, must break their resistance, take from them by guile their human rights, until they are helpless like animals, and he can then use them as animals." Pimps and operators of whorehouses have succeeded in doing this throughout history. Of course it is not possible to turn every woman into a consumer item. Preferable victims are young women with a low degree of self-esteem, who are meek and submissive, lack decisiveness, have a sense of inferiority and underdeveloped personalities, whose psyche can be more easily broken and subjugated.

- Is prostitution violence against the prostitute even when she confirms complete satisfaction with her chosen lifestyle,

drives a Mercedes and owns an apartment "with a view" of which most ordinary people can only dream? Perhaps the prostitute has deliberately chosen to sell her body, as an easy solution, one that allows her to meet the consumption ideals of our society?



Iris Pettai,

IP: Reet Nurmi, who has researched the life of prostitutes in Finland, has observed that "quite often prostitutes, as a defense mechanism, do not want to admit their miserable condition and lie to everyone, including researchers, chatting about their pleasant life that they have chosen voluntarily. Many so-called investigative journalists find such stories attractive and trump them all over the world, thereby creating ever more new myths about the

positive nature of prostitution. Of course there are some sex-providers who insist that their work is pleasant, they even form trade unions, but they constitute only a small fraction of the total number of prostitutes". (Eesti Ekspress – Nov. 21, 2002)

- But does the assumption that prostitution is a form of violence against women not contain the gender-related distortion that women cannot enjoy such work, even that women cannot have heightened sexual desires?

IP: I would respond by asking what kind of sexual desires can have a woman whose personality has been totally destroyed and who has been turned into a sex machine? In the judgment of Reet Nurmi a woman who has worked for some time as a prostitute has dulled mentally, her world of ideas has become empty and indifferent, she feels contempt toward herself as well as everyone else. She is compelled to burn away her life with alcohol and drugs. Investigators of prostitution have come to the conclusion that prostitution is not the same as normal sexual practices of ordinary people.

- You have suggested that if Finland adopts the so-called Swedish model, Finnish men will go en masse across the gulf to buy women. At the same time the creators and supporters of the Swedish policy have always insisted that the primary positive influence of legislation prohibiting the purchase of sex lies in turning public attitudes against the notion of women being used as chattel. Is there not a contradiction here? Why should members of a society that disapproves of buying of sex have to go to neighboring countries and behave there in a way that is against their principles?

ENUT home page updates

*Birgit Soans
ENUT Information Secretary*

ENUT home page www.enut.ee has seen improvements. As of January 15, it is possible to search BiblioLine, a gender research database that contains 542,723 full texts and abstracts. The link can be found under *Andmebaasid*, under the heading *Gender Studies andmebaas*. It includes instructions for access (user name, password).

The newest addition to our home page is the listing of *Valik soolist võrdõiguslikkust puudutavaid artikleid Eesti ajakirjandusest* (A selection of gender related articles from the Estonian press) that appears under the link *kasulikud viited* (useful references). The page is updated weekly, it is easy to use, and should be helpful to those wishing to do research in the field or those who wish to just keep current with developments, as entries are linked to specific articles.

"Cooperation and Partnership" – annual conference of Estonian women's organizations

The conference "Cooperation and Partnership" - sixth annual - took place at Tallinn Pedagogic University on Saturday, January 24. It was organized by ENUT and the Roundtable of Estonian Women's Associations (ENÜ).

Guests at the conference included representatives of several women's organizations from neighboring countries, among them Ebon Kram from Sweden, Bente Friis from Denmark, Iluta Lace from Latvia, as well as representatives from Lithuania and Russia. They spoke about cooperation of women in their own native countries as well as on European level. We also heard presentations from various Estonian women's associations.

Discussions about gender equality legislation have entered already the third year, but sadly this law still has not been passed by *Riigikogu* (parliament). Mari-Liis Sepper analyzed at the conference the most recent version of the draft that is before *Riigikogu*. Raili Põldsaar discussed the debate about gender equality legislation that has been going on in Estonian media. Vidmantas Dvilaitis was invited from the office of the Lithuanian ombudsman for gender rights. EWAR announced the most gender-conscious newspaper its members elected for 2003 (see backpage for story). Representatives from all of the Estonian women's associations attended the conference.

The conference was supported by the Open Estonia Foundation, Tallinn Pedagogic University and the Baltic-American Partnership Program.

Abstracts of lectures and other materials by instructors of gender studies minor can be found under the link *Lisaeriala*.

Since the e-mail list of women's organizations was discontinued last December for technical reasons, we have replaced it with a bulletin board on ENUT home page. It can be found under the link *Naisorganisatsioonid*. Announcements, news items and other postings for this bulletin board can be forwarded and are posted within one working day.

Our plans for the future include the restoration of the link *ENUT'i projektid*, where the reader will be able to find information about ENUT's past and current projects, and new projects.

We always welcome readers' responses and advice concerning our home page, including recommendations for new features and improvements to the current content.

Võru county Roundtable of Women's Associations is organized

Eleven active women from Misso, Meremäe, Lasva, Kasaritsa and other corners of Võru county gathered on December 11, 2003, in Võru to organize the Roundtable of Võru County Women's Associations.



Establishment of the Võru County Roundtable of Women's Associations on December 11, 2003.)

We can now say that each district in Estonia a women's roundtable. The Võru county women's roundtable has also become a member of the Roundtable of Estonian Women's Associations (ENÜ). The major driving force behind organizing the Võru county roundtable was Tiit Reiman from the Võru County Family Centre. She was also elected to be the representative of the roundtable at the Roundtable of Estonian Women's Association.

In January we will complete the input of the general database of ENUT library into the internet database of ELNET (<http://helios.nlib.ee>) that will link all the major libraries in Tallinn and Tartu. We will also continue the input into our database of new resources in our library, such as the remaining books donated by the *Estonian Women's Issues Project in Toronto* – work that was deferred due to a shortage of space and time. From now on the input of new books will generate concurrent entries in the electronic catalogue

ENUT joins REWIND-NET, the network of Central and East European and Central Asian Women's Information Centres

Rewind-Net is a network of women's information centers that spans post-Communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe to Central Asia. The countries participating in the network are Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Mongolia, Poland, Romania,



Djurdja Knezevic (Zenska Infoteka, Zagreb), Eva Foldvari (OSI Network Women's Program, Budapest) and Anastasia Posadskaya (OSI Network Women's Program, NY)

Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia and Ukraine. The network was founded in 2001 for the purpose of facilitating the exchange of information in the region about feminism, women's rights and gender equality. At the beginning there were no relevant information centers in about half of the participating countries. The assistance of other members in the network helped them to define common goals and methodologies, it has enabled them to recognize their needs, to develop their potential, and to find their place in their respective societies.

A result of the common efforts is a regional directory of women's organizations published and updated annually. Estonia has participated in the updating process since 2002. The most recent 2003

of ENUT and the Internet catalogue of ELNET. The electronic catalogue of our library is fully accessible through our home page at <http://www.enut.ee>. In addition to books, it contains references to feminist studies and equal rights articles published in the Estonian media since 1990, to materials about research conducted in Estonia, and a database of ENUT video library.

Access to the database significantly eases the work of our readers and our librarians. Quite often

edition of the directory contains entries about 525 women's groups and organizations and their activities. The electronic version of the directory is available in the Internet at <http://zinfo.hr/indoc/IndocHomeW.htm>. A printed version of the directory is available in ENUT library.

Another planned annual activity is the monitoring of the media for a given topic each year during a common time period and using common methodologies. The topic for last year's project was media's coverage of violence against women. The results were published at the end of last year in the book *Until it Stops*, which is available in ENUT library. The theme for this year's research was media's coverage of women participating in the political process. We hope to publish the results of this study by the end of the year as a comparative analysis of all the participating countries as well as a separate report on Estonia.

One of the vital tasks to be completed this year is the creation of a separate WIND-NET web page. Until now information about the activities of the network has been linked to the web page of Zenska Infoteka, thus making that web page much too elaborate and cumbersome.

The project is coordinated in Zagreb, Croatia, by Zenska Infoteka. Funding is provided by the network of Soros funds, which is distributed in Estonia by the Open Estonia Fund.

IP: Research conducted a few years ago in Sweden indicates that of the 13% of local men who have visited bordellos in the past, 80% expect to buy sexual services in the future as well. However they plan to do so in other countries during vacations or on weekend trips. The forays of Swedish sex tourists have already been noted with indignation in Finland, Norway, Denmark, and other adjacent countries. It follows that it is extremely difficult to redirect the values and attitudes of men who are attuned to purchasing sexual services. Constant publicity in Sweden over the past 20 years that prostitution is violence against women has had little effect upon them. I believe that when the sale of sexual services is prohibited in Finland, the Finnish consumers of such services will also continue to visit bordellos, and that the frequency of their trips to Estonia will increase significantly.

- How would you comment on the predictions by some public opinion leaders that the prohibition of sex buying will not diminish sex trade, but will push it even deeper underground?

IP: The Swedish experience shows that a certain part of sex trade indeed went underground. But it is remarkable that in Sweden there remain only three prostitutes for every 10,000 inhabitants. This is the smallest ratio in Europe and is about four times lower than the European average. In my opinion this is a true achievement. The reason for this is a drop in demand, as Sweden has also meted out real punishment to purchasers of sex.

For Estonia the ban on buying of sex could bring two positive results. For one, a drop in demand, like in Sweden. As our sex trade relies primarily on tourists, prohibition would be a clear message to them: sex tourism to Estonia is risky – it would be safer to choose another country. For another, it would then not be possible to advertise Estonia as a cheap destination of sex tourism, a practice that in my opinion has significantly damaged Estonia's reputation.

- Let's assume that Estonia will outlaw the purchase of sex and as a result the number of customers will diminish. How would this changed situation affect women primarily of Slavic origin, to whom selling their body is the only real opportunity to support themselves? Don't you see the danger that such a political change would further diminish the survival chances of that part of the society in the Estonian Republic that is already marginalized and rejected?

IP: Selling sex is an illusory and temporary solution. One does not survive for very long in sex trade. Sooner or later a prostitute has to find another solution to life's

problems. Her situation will become much more aggravated after a period of intense sexual exploitation when her devastated body and mind need restoration. Quite often prostitutes cannot accomplish this restoration for lack of necessary financial resources – they may even lack their own place to live. Prostitutes who have terminated their trade find it very difficult to survive without outside help. They have a need for specialized health and rehabilitation centers where they could get help in restoring their mental health and in acquiring new skills for employment. Germany, a country that has a 400,000-strong army of prostitutes, spends large amounts of taxpayers' money each year to bring prostitutes back into a more normal life.

- Assuming that Estonia will go the way of prohibiting the buying of sex, would this step not be seen as inconsiderate and selfish by our post-Communist neighbors, especially by Latvia? At present we ourselves fear the behavior of Swedes and the expected behavior of Finns in this matter. Should we in turn cause fear in Latvians and Lithuanians?

IP: Latvia and Lithuania could also prohibit the buying of sex. I think the Estonian example will not scare them but will rather be an encouraging role model. I have gained the impression that the Latvians and Lithuanians have great confidence in the various choices that Estonians make – perhaps this will be true in this case also. Although Latvia has already legalized sex trade, it need not preempt other choices.

- It is often argued that sex trade has become particularly deeply rooted in certain cultures, in which it constitutes a natural and inevitable component. In this case are we not dealing with a form of cultural imperialism when we tell a people that their age-old and time-honored tradition of trading in sex is improper behavior and as a matter of fact a form of violence?

IP: The world as a whole – including many civilized countries – is still very far removed from outlawing the buying of sex and from equating prostitution with violence. Even the European Union lacks a unified understanding of prostitution, using a mixed variety of legal regulations in the matter. We are dealing here with a rather unique ideology that took form in the egalitarian Swedish society. I do not think it likely that a staunchly patriarchal society will accept the idea that their traditional sex trade is in reality a form of violence. For this ideology to become acceptable, many other fundamental values of a society will first have to change.

An utopian train of thought: some possible developments in Estonia after Finland – following the example of Sweden – outlaws the buying of sex

*Ivi Proos
Estonian Institute for Open Society Reserch*

A first scenario: rapid expansion of the market and hidden promotion of sex trade

A strong impulse for the rapid development of sex trade in Estonia is given by the growing tide of Finnish sex tourists who want to “flee” from retributions in Finland. As a result, sex trade in Estonia becomes significantly more profitable and the demand for “service providers” or new prostitutes will increase markedly.

The driving force behind this scenario will be the circle of businessmen for whom the supplementary influx of sex tourists will translate into increased profits and an opportunity to expand their business activities. What this will mean is a very active lobbying campaign by influential persons to support the continuation of the currently undefined legal situation. There is no doubt that key movers in sex trade will do their best to suppress public interest in, and likely discussions of, the regulation of prostitution and of criminalizing the purchase of such services.

A second scenario: solidarity with the Nordic mentality, decisive restriction on sex trade

Estonia will follow the model of Finland and Sweden and will embark on adopting legal restrictions on the spread of prostitution by prohibiting the purchase of prostitute's services and by passing laws to penalize the purchasers of such services.

The probability of occurrence of the second scenario will depend to a great extent on the collective threshold of pain of the Estonian women's movement

Nordic Network for Women's Organisations (NOKS) meeting on November 29-30, 2003 in Stockholm, Sweden

*Ilvi Jõe-Cannon
Acting Director*

As part of the project to build a network of Baltic women's information centres, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers, ENUT's Acting Director Ilvi Jõe-

and organizations and on their willingness to equate prostitution-related business with criminal activity targeted against women.

Preconditions for the occurrence of the second scenario:

1. Women's organizations and their supporters in other associations must consciously raise the issue in a form that is clearly understandable to the public and they must squarely position themselves behind the issue (“Why do we seek to criminalize the purchase of prostitution services?” “Why is prostitution a form of violence against women and not just ordinary business based on supply and demand?”).

A debate is effective if it is as public as possible and if the “other side” (in the

given situation those who propose to maintain the current *status quo*) is included in the debate. Public figures and opinion leaders would rather not link themselves with such debates because of the danger that their participation might be interpreted as personal interest in the purchase of prostitute's services;

2. The dialogue must stay in public limelight as long as possible. Just a few articles and interviews certainly will not be sufficient. The requirement is that the topic of prostitution will be discussed and analyzed by a significant number of opinion leaders and commentators on public issues;

3. One of the coalition parties must be willing to support the demands of women's organizations and must assume the role of political advocate of women's associations in this matter.

Summary

There is no doubt that the occurrence of the second scenario would give the Estonian public yet another novel experience in democracy. In weighing the likelihood of occurrence of the two scenarios we have considered, we must confess that the likelihood of occurrence for the first one is by far greater than for the second. Those who pull the strings of sex trade and their behind-the-scenes supporters are at this time certainly a much more powerful lobby than the women's organizations and their supporters.

Cannon attended the a two-day meeting, November 29-30, 2003, of the Nordic Network for Women's Organisations (NOKS) in Stockholm, Sweden. The main item on the first day's agenda was the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Eva Geidenmark from Sweden's “Save the Children” spoke about the children in crisis in Sweden. She said that the perpetrators of harm were usually the children's own family members. The greatest number of victims, both boys and girls,

task, but also an exciting adventure. For a beginner it would be difficult to accomplish this successfully without help from more experienced sources. In practice, three parties are required for the execution of an international project of this nature: the receiving organization, the sending organization, and the volunteer. In my case the sending organization is ENUT. It is itself a volunteer organization in the sense that the guidance and support provided to the volunteer going abroad may turn into a rather complex task. There are no monetary compensations for this effort – the only reward is the infusion of new experience that it will bring to the organization. Fortunately in the course of this project the cooperation among all participants has been smooth and exemplary. All preparations were completed on time and without major hitches. For me as the volunteer this was a well chosen project: it gives me an opportunity to expand my own knowledge while making a substantial contribution to the project at hand. The important

The Year 2003 in the ENUT Library

*Marju Järve
ENUT Librarian*

The year 2003 was a very successful one for our library. We gained 147 new readers, which is an increase of more than half again compared to the year before. The largest increase in readership in the history of the ENUT library was in 2000, when we gained 175 new borrowers. We hope that 2004 will again bring us an impressive increase in the number of new readers.

Most of our new readers are students from Tallinn Pedagogical University, the University of Tartu, the Academy of Arts, and the Estonian University of Humanities. In addition to students, new readers come from the ranks of the teaching staff as well. ENUT home page has opened easy access to our library for those outside the academic world interested in the whole range of our topics. The literature available in our library has also been used by journalists and by media producers, among them the producers of the television program “Mamma Mia”. One cause of the increase in readership has been the start of the gender studies minor, in which the students are specifically introduced to the resources available at ENUT and its library.

The most frequent requests for information and resources have been requests for statistical information about Estonia, for comparisons of EU member countries regarding the status of women in the employment market and in politics, psychology, legislation, prostitution and trafficking in humans, and family

consideration is that the project will begin to work and will be useful to all participants.

The tasks assigned to the volunteers can be varied and will depend on the needs of the receiving organization as well as the knowledge and skills of the volunteer. I myself will be working in the field of digital video. Additionally I will be engaged with web pages, translations, and with organizing international youth exchange programs. In case of need I will also help out with teaching various computer courses to children and adults. Unfortunately I will not be able to instruct on my own in the beginning, as I have just begun to learn Greek.

My initial impressions of the European Volunteer Service project have been very positive. I am sure that ten months from now, after I have completed my assignment in Greece, I will be able to give a much more comprehensive evaluation of my accomplishments. In the meantime details about the

relationships. Very clearly these interests of our readers also mirror the processes taking place in our society.

Last year we added a number of new books to

our library. We were able to add to our shelves all of the most important Estonian books dealing with women's rights and equal opportunity. In addition, the collection of Barbi Pilvre's articles “Formaat”, “Võtmesõnad” (the first textbook in Estonian about gender studies), the



Marju Järve, ENUT Librarian

feminist collection of essays “Tilliga ja tillita”, the research volume “Equal Opportunities for Men and Women in the Process of joining the European Union: a Comparative Analysis of Reports by the Candidate States, Review of the Estonian Report” published in Estonian by the Open Estonian Fund, and the third issue of the gender studies journal *Ariadne's Clew*.

This year's purchase of new books was made with funds provided by a Norwegian Foreign Ministry's project grant. A target list of new acquisitions is being completed with the assistance of gender studies minor instructors and other experts in the field of equal rights. We also plan to subscribe to periodicals in the field of gender and feminist studies.

The first semester is completed

Tiina Raitviir
Coordinator of Gender Studies Minor

The historic first semester of courses for gender studies minor is completed and most of the students have finished their exams.

Three courses were taught in the fall semester: *Introduction to Gender Studies*, *Gender and the Social Sciences*, and – as an elective in the 2003/2004 academic year – *Gender and the Media*. Two courses are offered in the spring semester: *Gender Perspective in Education and Psychology* and *Gender Aspect in Literature, Linguistics and Art*. The gender studies minor can be completed in one academic year.

The instructors who had taught the courses during the fall semester met on January 15 to share their experiences and to brainstorm changes for next semester. Liina Järviste and Mirjam Hinrikus had distributed questionnaires to students of their *Introduction* course and will use the responses as input for adjustments to their lesson plans. One aspect that will receive more stress in the future is the clearer and simpler presentation of academic knowledge.

There were many students who were interested in the gender subject. By now their understanding of the subject has certainly expanded significantly. Among the active and bright students in the course *Gender and the Social Sciences* were Kaidi Arto and Helina Lindma. Mikk Kasesalk and Olavi Ollo were always eager to express their points of view. Maali Käbin stood out with her work in her seminars.

The makeup of the student body was of interest: of the students from Tallinn Pedagogic University, three quarters were from the Department of Social Sciences and 65% of these were sociology majors. Media students were the next most numerous group. Among the students attending from other institutions (TÜ, EHI) the majority were also sociology and psychology majors. Many of the TPÜ students were Estonian-as-a-second-language students. There was only one or two students from the fields of adult education, art, and sports and recreation.

To the warm shores

Jane Suviste
Athens, Greece

The desire became overwhelming to take a break from everyday activities in Estonia. While considering plans for the future, the thought occurred to take part in the European Volunteer Service, one of the youth educational programs funded by the European Union. I selected the multimedia project *Computer Adventure*



Jane Suviste, ENUT's volunteer

in Piraeus near Athens, Greece, as I am also involved in multimedia activities in Estonia.

The planning and execution of any kind of project is always a major

It is refreshing to see that social sciences students are interested in expanding their horizons in gender matters. The two are closely related, as three of the five courses taught in the minor are clearly social sciences subjects. One, the *Introduction* course, overlaps the philosophy and social history disciplines. Only one of the courses (literature-language-art) is culture-related. The minor program itself is administered by the Department of Sociology. The realities of these factors serve to confirm the impression that the gender research minor is targeted primarily for sociology and psychology majors. We have nothing against sociologists – quite the opposite. No limit was placed on the number of students attending the program. This year we enrolled about 40 students.

The gender studies minor is open to all students who have an interest in the subject. In addition to gaining specific knowledge in the subject of gender studies, our students gain an additional important benefit: experience in the field of social science that will be useful to them in achieving success in later life. Conversations with students in majors other than the social sciences have disclosed that indeed studying for the minor was more difficult for them than for social sciences majors. It follows that in the future more attention has to be paid to such students and that the most important concepts in the social sciences need to be reinforced and elaborated to them in a simple and concise fashion. We would be very pleased if in future years a broader spectrum of students would come to study this minor – particularly those who want to specialize in a teaching career.

Those interested in gender problems may soon be able to see on the ENUT home page links to detailed lesson plans and review questions of last fall's lectures. At its best, this should encourage potential students to sign up for gender studies minor. It should also be of assistance to those interested in the independent study of some of the subjects, as the materials are presented in a very systematic fashion and include basic lecture reading materials.

are refugee children. There are 140 shelters in Sweden for battered women and children. As of last September 1, an abusive man can be removed from his home by law and a restraining order can be issued against him. Ms. Jõe-Cannon reported on children's matters in Estonia. Estonia ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on September 26, 1991, and it became effective on November 20, 1991. The government issued a report to the convention in 2001, and it is the only report made to date. The Children's Rights Committee reported on January 31, 2003, on laws that have been passed affecting children: support for the handicapped, revision of elementary and secondary school laws, penal codes, family and children's benefits, instruction in school in one's native language, national health insurance programme, school lunch programme. Numerous orphanages and homes for street children exist.

On domestic violence, a recent study shows that every 5th woman suffers physical violence in her own home. A shelter for battered women is located in Tartu, and in Tallinn is located a shelter for families who find themselves suddenly without a roof over their head.

The second day's agenda addressed chiefly women's issues. Ebon Kram, member of the Board of the Swedish Women's Lobby, spoke about proposals to curtail violence against women. Under consideration is the establishment of observatories, made up of members from different NGOs, in every EU country to monitor violence against women. She also spoke about the prostitution law in effect in Sweden. The law criminalises the buying of sex. The law has the support of 85% of the public. She said that the government allocated extra money to the police during the first two years of the law's implementation, and that it is now more difficult for the pimps to operate. A large concern in the Nordic countries is with the refugees and asylum seekers, especially the women among them. Most of them come from very traditional, patriarchal societies and adjustment to the new environment, a very Nordic one, is not easy. Among the things proposed are a Nordic immigrant women's website, a Norwegian proposal for asylum for refugee women, and UN Resolution 1325 regarding women and peacekeeping operations, which has been accepted by the UN Security Council.

An agenda was proposed for NOKS for 2005-2010:

1) trafficking and prostitution in the Nordic countries

- 2) pornography in the Internet and public space
- 3) asylum for women who are victims of gender based persecution
- 4) continued support for equal pay for equal work, parental leave, women's equal representation in leadership positions
- 5) strengthen the women's organisations collaboration in the Nordic countries with the Baltic states.

In 2004, the focus will be on sexual harassment in schools and asylum for gender persecuted women. At the end of the meeting, a letter was drafted to the Nordic Council of Ministers stating that the Nordic-Baltic Campaign Against Trafficking in Women has produced very positive results and, yet, much remains

to be done in our member countries. The participants encouraged the Council to continue the work against trafficking, due to the concern that the accomplishments would be otherwise reversed by international organised crime.

NOKS was formed after a need for such regional women's organisation was recognised at the 100th anniversary observance of

the Danish National Women's Council in March 1999. NYTKIS from Finland, SAMS and Sveriges Kvinnology from Sweden, and Kvinderadet from Denmark formed the umbrella organisation, which is attended also by representatives from Norway, Iceland, Aland and the Faeroe Islands. Together they represent more than five million women. NOKS is a platform for learning, dialogue, reflection, debate, strategy, information, and for united action among women's organisations in the Nordic countries. It promotes new visions and ideas about gender equality and considers the gender perspective to be central to all political decisions.

NOKS plans to expand its activities by including representation from the Baltic countries. ENUT has asked to join NOKS. The next meeting of NOKS will be on June 10-14, 2004 in Reykjavik, Iceland and Baltic participation is anticipated. At the November meeting in Stockholm the following women's organisations were represented: Kvinderadet (Denmark), NYTKIS (Finland), ENUT (Estonia), Kvindesaksforeningen (Iceland), Kvinnufelagsamskipan (Faeroe Islands), and the Swedish Women's Lobby. Jurate Seduikiene, Women's Issues Information Centre (Lithuania) was able to attend the morning session on the 29th.



Ilvi Jõe-Cannon (ENUT) and Ebon Kram (Swedish Women's Lobby) at the seminar in Stockholm

EWAR Cooperation has expanded significantly

The Estonian Women's Associations Roundtable (EWAR) signed a Cooperation Agreement with the Coalition of Georgian Women's Organizations

*Reet Laja
Chair of the Roundtable*

Last December a group of 41 leaders of Georgian women's organizations visited Tallinn on a study trip. They had formed their Coalition more than three years ago. The purpose of the Tallinn trip was to learn about the democratization process taking place in the Estonian civic infrastructure and to gain insights from the Estonian experience that may be useful in their own country during this period of heady development in Georgia. On top of this, the Georgian group hoped to develop specific contacts with Estonian women's organizations in areas of interest that matched their own activities. For this purpose a specific day was programmed into their schedule for meetings with a range of women's organizations in Tallinn.

Individual groups visited the Home for Handicapped Persons, the Association for Mental Health, the Estonian Women's Studies and Resource Centre, the Self-Help and Information Centre for Seniors, and met with various women entrepreneurs. A visit to *Riigikogu* (Parliament) by the entire group commenced with a guided tour, followed by a visit with MP Katrin Saks. She outlined to the group the difficulties that had surfaced in



Estonian and Georgian women signing the cooperation contract



Georgian women in Tallinn

drafting the legislation for parental subsidies, detailed the results of the drafting process, and described the lobbying actions of various not-for-profit organizations in support of the drafting process. Unfortunately the very busy schedule of the visit did not allow sufficient time for visits outside Tallinn by the group.

One afternoon a team from the Coalition of Georgian Women's Associations had an opportunity to sit at the same table with representatives of EWAR who had come for this gathering from all across Estonia. At this meeting of almost 80 women activists Nina Khtsishvili gave an overview of the Georgian Coalition and outlined the activities of its various working committees. Reet Laja responded with a history of the interactions among the various Estonian women's organizations from their beginnings in 1994 to their current stage. At the conclusion of her presentation Reet Laja offered a proposal that had emerged from the

participants to formalize future cooperation between the two major organizations with a written agreement. This proposal was accepted by the Georgian participants with great enthusiasm. After its substance was agreed upon by the participants, the Cooperation Agreement between EWAR and the Coalition of Georgian Women's Organizations was signed by representatives of both sides on December 18, 2003.



Reet Laja, Chair of the Roundtable

Baltic and north-western Russian women's organizations meet in Jurmala

*Eha Reitemann
ENUT Project Director*

A contact program for representatives of the Baltic and north-Western Russian women's organizations was held at Jurmala, Latvia, on December 5-6, 2003.

The event was organized as part of the two-year-old Baltic Information Centre project in which ENUT has participated with Latvian and Lithuanian organizations. The organizers of this event were our Latvian partners *Coalition for Gender Equality*.

The meeting encompassed 20 representatives of women's organizations from the three Baltic states and from Pskov oblast of the Russian Federation. Elisabeth Leitner, representative of the Nordic Women's Cooperation Network (NOKS), participated in the meeting as an invited guest.

Estonian participants at the event were ENUT Acting Director Ilvi Jõe-Cannon, EWAR Deputy Director Julia Kovalenko and ENUT Project Director Eha Reitemann. Unfortunately a number of representatives from several Estonian women's organizations could not participate for various reasons.

The two days spent together in Latvia proved to be unusually productive. This was in a major way due no doubt to the skills of the moderator, who succeeded in actively engaging all participants in the proceedings of the meeting. Following the quite novel get-acquainted meeting and after a review of developments in women's movements in various countries, the

Different – but equal

At the end of last year was published "Different – but equal", a booklet containing basic concepts of gender equality and the attitudes held about these concepts. The authors envision a balanced society, in which the talents and skills of every individual are free to develop and can be freely exercised without restrictions due to gender.

The cheerfully illustrated 28 pages by Piret Raud contain sketches on the subjects of power, economy, work and family life, health, violence, and the media – all viewed through the spectacles of gender. The booklet offers information on concepts such as discrimination, gender inequality, and equal treatment.

According to editor Kadi Mänd, many people believe that equality between women and men is a fact in Estonia, although statistics and real-life experiences prove otherwise. Even though men constitute slightly less than half of the population of Estonia, they are in a substantial majority in the national government,

participants settled down to intensive work in various work groups. These groups developed specific project proposals from a range of topics that were selected by the whole group because they were of great interest to the participants. The work groups were formed according to the individual interests of the participants and the resulting project proposals were of remarkably professional quality, although the time available for completion was very short.



Workshop in Jurmala

The contact meeting generated many new ideas among the participants, out of which came initiatives for several joint projects. Undoubtedly we will talk more about these in the future. We also agreed with the representatives of the Lithuanian and Latvian women's organizations to meet again at the annual conference of Estonian women's organizations that will take place in Tallinn, January 2004.

parliament, and local governments. In Estonia – as in all of Europe – many women get paid less than men for same work. The authors point out that although women do an equal share of work with men and contribute a substantial part of income to the family budget, domestic work is not shared equally between the sexes. In many households the man is still the authority, giving orders and meting out punishment to other members of the family as if they were his vassals.

Of the inequalities faced by men the book singles out the right to raise children, which has been largely delegated to mothers, and the selection of women for most of the secretarial and salesperson jobs. The book states that women who want to be crane operators and men who as midwives desire to help deliver children into this world should not encounter visible or invisible barriers to the selection of their profession.

The book is distributed with support from the Ministry of Social Affairs and the UNFPA.