



## Call for Applications for the Women's Human Rights Training Institute (WHRTI), 2016-2017

**Deadline for applications: 30 June 2016**

Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation (BGRF), in cooperation with its partners the Advocates for Human Rights from Minnesota, the International Network for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights /ESCR-Net/ and the European Women Lawyers' Association/ EWLA/ are pleased to announce the **Call for Applications to participate in the training programme of the Sixth Round of the Women's Human Rights Training Institute (WHRTI), 2016-2017. The first session of the Institute will be followed by a workshop of the International Network on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.**

The Institute is a **unique initiative** founded by the BGRF, the Center for Reproductive Rights and the Network of East-West Women (NEWW) in 2004. It is the first-of-its-kind programme aimed at building and developing 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**
- **social and economic rights and employment discrimination.**

The Institute, organized by the BGRF in cooperation with its partners, already has successfully completed five rounds: WHRTI 2004-2006, WHRTI 2007-2009, WHRTI 2009-2011, WHRTI 2011-2013, WHRTI 2013- 2015, and trained more than 100 lawyers.

The WHRTI provides the participants **advanced and in-depth knowledge and practical exercises on women's human rights protection** in the three areas noted above. The WHRTI improves their **practical skills in writing and advocacy for development of strategic litigation** in the region both at the national and international levels **through the use of 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 Court of Justice of the European Union.**

### **ELIGIBILITY:**

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

- have a substantial and sustainable interest and a demonstrated commitment to women's human rights advocacy and/or litigation and in using the law creatively to secure redress for women's rights violations;

- have a professional relationship/affiliation 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 interest and basic knowledge of the international universal and regional human rights law, legal standards and instruments,
- be committed and available to actively participate in all the three 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 2016 to the following e-mail address: [office@bgrf.org](mailto:office@bgrf.org) and [whrtinstitute@gmail.com](mailto:whrtinstitute@gmail.com)

The applicants short-listed for an interview will be contacted by **20 July 2016**

The final selection will be done by **15 August 2016**

**The First session of the WHRTI 6 is planned for 27 September until 2 October 2016, and the workshop of the ESCR- Net will take place on 3 and 4 October 2016.**

#### **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 WHRTI relies on a three-prong approach focusing on the developing jurisprudence in the three above mentioned fields of women's rights. **The WHRTI takes place in Bulgaria. WHRTI will consist of three sessions that are scheduled every six months. The first session will last 8 days and will be focused on the development of legal feminist theories, establishment of the relevant regional and universal norms and standards, and the available legal remedies at regional European and universal level. The second session will last 5 days and will be focused on practical exercises with the implementation of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms – Moot Court Session. The Third session will also last for 5 days and will provide the participants the opportunity to exercise their practical legal skills addressing the UN treaty bodies on a variety of legal issues affecting women disproportionately and especially the UN CEDAW Committee. The same group of participants work together for a period of 20 months. 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 the topics of 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's co-founders, Prof. Isabel Marcus and the Center for Reproductive Rights, will continue to participate in relevant sessions of the sixth round.

The Institute participants will be trained to examine and apply existing legal theories that are currently applied to women's human rights violations, including anti-discrimination legal theories and multiple/

intersectional discrimination of women, to participate in the multiple challenges posed by developing new legal theories in the field of women's rights and to 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 and its partner organizations, members of the network of lawyers-fellows of the WHRTI. **The Institute is also planning to support additional initiatives** such as joint research, litigation and advocacy initiatives by the participants and attendance at relevant international events.

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

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

WHRTI encourages the development of professional connections and networks among women's rights lawyers in the region. Alumnae of the Institute include over 100 lawyers from **Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Georgia, Hungary, Ireland (observer), Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe**. The alumnae 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. Several alumnae have worked 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!!!**