



# EUSBSR Forum for Gender Equality and Growth 3.0



**Gertrud Åström, President of Women's Baltic Peacebuilding Initiative**

## Message from Gertrud Åström, Women's Baltic Peacebuilding Initiative

An era of peace in Europe is broken, the war in Ukraine is affecting us all as individuals and as partners in the EUSBSR project cooperation. Women's Baltic Peacebuilding Initiative lives by the conviction that a democratic society, where women and men enjoy human rights and dignity, is the best defender of peace. To work for equality between women and men in the breadth of society, as we do in our project, is to safeguard a peaceful and sustainable development. The report on Gender Equality

and Economic Growth in BSR and EAO countries was finalized in March by Winnet Centre of Excellence® showing important results and a basis for future partner cooperation. March 10 the workshop Women in Entrepreneurship and Innovation was held within the framework of the EU Macro-Regional Strategies Week. On April 4 we are looking forward to the webinar on women's organizations and the status of women's rights hosted by the Estonian partner Etna. In this month's newsletter, we share an interview conducted in November with Marta Hozer-Koćmiel, Coordinator of Winnet Centre of Excellence® and steering committee member.

**Gertrud Åström**

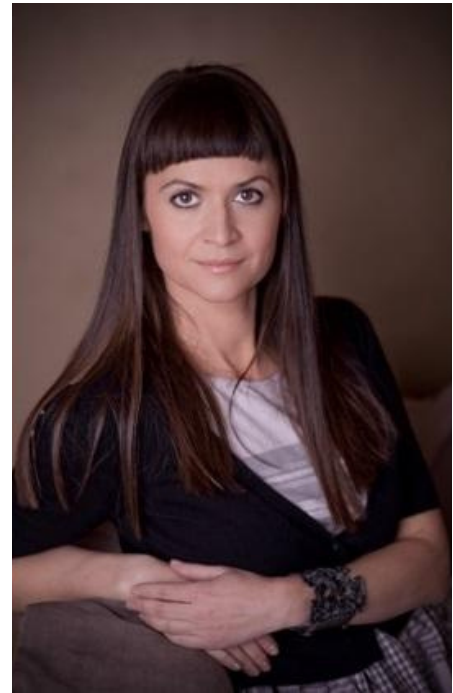
## Q&A ■ Marta Hozer-Koćmiel, Coordinator of Winnet Centre of Excellence®, University of Szczecin

Q: First, can you talk about the role of the Winnet Centre of Excellence® in the EUSBSR Forum for Gender Equality and Growth, 3.0 partnership?



Follow our work on social media!

MHK: Winnet Sweden works with this model called “women resource centers,” and they wanted to cooperate with academia. Our group, as researchers, didn’t have too much expertise with working with women in the field. We wanted to create women resource centers that would be rooted in academia, so there comes the Winnet Centre of Excellence®. It was established in 2014, after a long cooperation with Winnet Sweden because the first projects that we realized were in 2003-2004. One of the themes in the project was to create women resource centers, and in 2014 we realized that we don’t want to work with practitioners, we are academics, so we created the Winnet Centre of Excellence®. We define it as a network of researchers and practitioners for the purpose of doing and promoting research on gender equality and gender mainstreaming in social sciences.



**Marta Hozer-Koćmiel, Coordinator of Winnet Centre of Excellence®, University of Szczecin**

We take different theories that are taught in economic studies, in sociology, and we try to include this gender aspect. We ask, “ok, you have this general theory: how is it for women and for men? Whether it is the same and you can generalize, or are these two groups not homogenic in terms of your theory and they have to be treated separately?” We do this research and promote it; as you know, we publish a journal called Winnet Centre of Excellence® Series (there are four already published) and we will have the fifth with the material from this EUSBSR Forum for Gender Equality & Growth project.

There are around 30 members of Winnet Centre of Excellence® coming from different academies, different countries of the world: most of them represent Baltic Sea region countries, but there are also five or seven people from Asian countries, Sri Lanka, China, and Vietnam. Some relations are more active, we prepare articles together, participate in projects together, some are passive but it’s a huge potential. Obviously it depends on financial means, but it is like a sleeping beast that once we create another project I dream about cooperating more closely with Sri Lankan or Chinese members.

Q: One of the Sri Lankan members spoke at the recent Winnet workshop in Szczecin, right?

MHK: Yes, he is a man named Shihan Fernando, and as you know he is quite engaged in the process. In my opinion it is important to have men on board, not only to speak and work as women among women... [Read the full interview](#)

