ABSTRACT

THE INTEGRATION OF POLAND INTO THE EUROPEAN UNION: OPPORTUNITIES FOR EQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN OR ADHERENCE TO TRADITION?

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This paper is an attempt to present briefly the situation of women and gender relations, and to consider some aspects of the most recent changes in Poland. The analysis shows the existence of various forms of gender inequalities and discrimination against women. It is also evident that there is a contradiction between reforms initiated recently and the adjustment of Polish reality not only to social expectations expressed in Poland, but also to the European Union’s fundamental objectives relating to equality between women and men, as well as legislation and programmes aimed at promoting equality and fighting discrimination. The most recent experiences of Polish women show that again women are not the subject, rather than the object, in the processes of social, economic and political changes. Therefore, it is possible to claim that the idea of Global Europe, with its principles of equality, democracy and human rights, may become in Poland only the new gendered rationalization of old ideas of unequal power divisions and inequalities between women and men in practice. In this context, it is also pointed out that further efforts toward the spread of the feminist movement and the development of feminist research and teaching may stimulate activities toward the improvement of the women’s situation and the achievement of a real gender equality, as well as the formation of a democratic state. Although the comments made in the paper relate specifically to women’s situation in Poland, I believe that this is not in fact a specifically Polish problem.