

**Implementation of the Agreed Conclusions of the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women on  
“Women’s empowerment and the link to sustainable development”:**

**Contribution by Greece**

1. What measures have been taken to strengthen normative, legal and policy frameworks for the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

■ The **coordinating mechanism for the 2030 Agenda** implementation in Greece lies in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the General Secretariat of the Government. There is currently an **ongoing process** for inter-ministerial cooperation with various stakeholders to proceed to the elaboration of a National Implementation Plan for the SDGs.

■ **Law 4604/2019** on Substantive Gender Equality and Preventing and Combating gender-based violence<sup>1</sup> is the first attempt in Greece of drafting a horizontal bill aiming at the creation of all those circumstances that could lead to the achievement of substantive gender equality and the elimination of gender inequalities in all sectors of public, social and economic life. The notions of gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting are introduced for the first time into a legislative text. A chapter is dedicated to “gender mainstreaming in private life and labor” with articles concerning provisions on behalf of the employer for the substantive gender equality in labor, social dialogue, establishment of Equality Signs and Gender Awards for enterprises adopting gender equality corporate policies. The Law brings together in one legislative text the central, local and regional agencies and bodies involved with gender equality issues in Greece. The General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality/ GSFPGE (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) is the competent governmental authority for the promotion of gender equality, and the design, implementation and monitoring of national equality policies and combating gender discrimination. Also KETHI, the Research Centre for Gender Equality, is a legal entity of private law supervised by the GSFPGE, that coordinates, promotes and conducts research and studies on gender issues and implements national and European action programmes on women's counseling and their social and employment integration.

Through the National Action Plans on Gender Equality adopted and implemented by the GSFPGE (the current is for the period 2016-2020, while the next one for 2021-2025 is under preparation), our country takes into account the national needs and gaps in gender equality issues and at the same time remains strongly committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as they provide an ambitious, visionary and transformative framework for a new, equitable and sustainable development path.

2. What actions and investments have been made for financing gender equality and the empowerment of women?

Unfortunately, Greece does not keep track of the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting). Nevertheless, the Law 4604/2019 on Substantive Gender Equality establishes for the first time in the greek legal order the obligation for gender budgeting for the central government. Also the GSFPGE as well as the Research Centre for Gender Equality implement EU funded programmes aiming at highlighting gender equality issues and contributing to the empowerment of women.

3. What steps have been taken to bolster women’s leadership and women’s full and equal participation in decision-making in all areas of sustainable development?

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.isotita.gr/nomothesia/ethniki-nomothesia/>

- Increasing the participation of women in decision-making centers has always been one of the key priorities of the Greek state being one of the main prerequisites for achieving effective substantive gender equality. The fact that the participation of women in decision-making centers is still significantly lower than that of men, undermines taking advantage of the whole social experience and creates a democratic deficit.
- The above mentioned Law 4604/2019 for substantive gender equality has introduced the system of **40% quota** in favour of women for the lists of candidates in each electoral prefecture at the **parliamentary elections** and also for the election of the members of the **European Parliament**. This is a clear measure for women's empowerment in political decision-making increasing the gender quota from 1/3 to 40%.
- After a long discussion both on a national but also on a European level, Greece has most recently introduced a Law (**Law 4706/2020**) dealing with corporate governance aiming at modernizing the internal structure of the listed companies with a view of strengthening their autonomy in order to meet modern Capital Markets' requirements. Article 3 par. 1 provides **for the first time in Greece a gender quota of at least 25% on listed company boards**. Therefore, the new Law envisages provisions regarding a more comprehensive gender representation in the Board of Directors, by introducing mandatory quotas and stipulates the company's obligation to set diverse criteria for the selection of its directors.
- During the health crisis, the measures taken in the first phase were general and horizontal due to the emergency situation that needed rapid responses. The pandemic could be an opportunity for women to be more involved in decision-making on the way out of the crisis and in the recovery processes. After all, women make up the majority of employees affected by this situation (health professionals, carers, teachers, domestic workers etc) and should be included in decision making more effectively.

4. What macroeconomic, labour and social policies have been put in place that promote full and productive employment and decent work for women, in response to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women's employment and economic rights and independence?

5. What response and recovery measures to the COVID-19 pandemic have been taken to improve and expand social protection for women (e.g., healthcare coverage, unemployment benefits, paid sick leave, paid parental leave, maternity benefits, pensions, income support such as cash transfers)?

6. What actions have been taken to expand the availability and affordability of care services to address the increase in unpaid care and domestic work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., care subsidies, paid leave)?

- The first COVID-19 case in Greece was confirmed on 26 February 2020 and the first **horizontal measures** (and not aiming solely to women) were implemented in March 2020. Since then the Greek government adopted various **general emergency measures** in response to the Coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak in the form of Acts of Legislative Content, aiming at supporting workers/employees and businesses to deal with the effects of COVID-19 coronavirus, but also the return to a social and economic "normality".
- **Violence against women during the pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic highlights gender inequality in all its forms, with serious consequences in women's health, their rights, and freedoms worldwide, and it is worth noting the direct and indirect consequences of quarantine to all women and girls in Greece, with a particular emphasis towards vulnerable groups of our community, such as women refugees and migrants, women living in poverty, women with disabilities, single parents women, low-skilled women workers etc. The GSFPGE supervises and co-ordinates the integrated network of structures operating across the country to tackle gender-based violence (and all forms of violence) and protect and support women victims. The network consists of:

- The bilingual SOS 15900helpline, a nationwide telephone line that provides immediate assistance in emergency cases on a 24-hour basis (in Greek and English), all year long; at the same time, it is possible for women to communicate electronically through the e-mail address: [sos15900@isotita.gr](mailto:sos15900@isotita.gr)

- 42 counseling centers that provide social, psychological, legal and employment support services, as well as,
- 20 shelters that offer safe accommodation to women victims of violence and their under-aged children.

The services provided by the above mentioned structures are free of charge and include psychosocial support, legal counseling as well as counseling in labour issues, emergency shelter and, where necessary, legal aid in cooperation with local Bar Associations. In addition to safe accommodation to women victims of violence and their children, the Shelters provide additional psychosocial support, and facilitate access to health services and the enrollment of children in schools.

As part of the emergency measures to address and prevent the further spread of the COVID-19, the GSFPGE sent instructions to all structures on their operational procedures in the current situation in order to protect the health of both employees and women victims addressed there. At the same time, the GSFPGE has also informed the local government bodies, in the framework of which the counselling centers and the shelters are operating. All structures continue to offer their services adapted to the emergency restrictive measures in force due to the coronavirus, while tele-working and telephone support sessions have already been ensured and are being implemented.

In emergency cases that needed accommodation, the General Secretariat, in collaboration with the Hellenic Society of Forensic Medicine, has offered during the lockdown measures special accommodation, with free housing and meals throughout Greece to women and their under aged children living in poverty, migrants and in situations of vulnerability. In the cases of women victims of violence, free medical tests were provided by the Hellenic Society of Forensic Medicine when required or needed.

In addition, free of charge medical tests for the children of women gender-based violence victims were offered by "The Smile of the Child", a voluntary, non-profit child welfare organization. The GSFPGE collaboration with "The Smile of the Child" has been actually confirmed by the signing of a Cooperation Agreement between the 2 organizations for the protection and holistic support of women and children victims of violence.

Moreover, with continuous posts on the social media of our governmental organization and in the media (press and electronic press, television news broadcasts), the possibility of increasing incidents of domestic violence was stressed in order to inform and raise public awareness. At the same time, women who remained at home were urged not to remain silent but report possible violence incidents. They were also informed about the support structures. A video spot was published as part of the central campaign of the Greek Government "We Stay at Home", with the message "We Stay at Home but We Don't Stay Silent". The video spot has been widely broadcast on all national television channels. In addition, a weekly statistical processing of data deriving from the common database of the network was launched, in order to have a complete and accurate assessment of the effects of the restrictive measures on the increase of domestic violence rates.

- The Research Center for Gender Equality (KETHI) conducted a sponsored information campaign on support structures for victims of violence on social media with a short video (Gif).
- In addition, via the SURVIVOR project (Enhancing services for refugee and migrant GBV survivors) which the GSFPGE implements as partner, migrant women requiring assistance for domestic violence issues, received information regarding the transportation during COVID-19 translated in Farsi and Arabic while the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI) conducted the translation of information leaflets regarding the COVID-19 restriction measures in various languages. A three-party collaboration among KETHI and NGOs providing translation services to women victims of domestic violence, when required, and relevant training, took place.
- Measures for Workers regardless of gender:

For workers whose employment contracts have been temporarily suspended by the enterprises (i.e., for companies the operation of which was suspended following public authority orders or for companies designated as affected by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic), the following measures, among others, are provided for:

- During the period March-June 2020 while schools have remained closed by public order, **special leave provisions have been applied to parents for childcare**. Workers-parents had the eligibility to be absent from

work for 4 days at a recurrent base, continuously or not, from which the 3 days consist special leave (1 day is paid by public expenditure, 2 days are paid by the employer) and the 4th day is considered as 1 day of paid annual leave. This right can be exercised either exclusively by one parent or can be shared by the parents.

- From 15/3/2020 until 30/9/2020, depending on the sector of enterprises they belong to, workers, whose contracts are being temporarily suspended, receive a **compensation of 534 euros** per month which cannot be confiscated, is tax-free and cannot be offset against other debts. Social security contributions are covered by the state budget.
- 40% home rent subsidy for workers whose employment contracts have been temporarily suspended provided it is their main residence.
- Ensuring the payment of Easter Bonus to all private sector workers.
- **Safeguarding employment rights**, in the event of suspension of employment contracts, by prohibiting layoffs and obliging enterprises to job retention.
- **Compensation of 800 euros** to special categories of workers who work for multiple employers or are entitled to special social contributions regimes due to the nature of their work.
- For specific **categories of scientific disciplines** (economists and accountants, engineers, lawyers, physicians, teachers and researchers), an one-off **compensation of 600 euros** was granted.

■ Measures for unemployed persons regardless of gender:

- A two(2)-month extension as regards the entitlement to the unemployment benefit, the long-term unemployment benefit and the unemployment benefit payable to freelance professionals and the self-employed, is applied to unemployed workers whose entitlement to the benefit expired during the first five months of 2020.
- Compensation of 800 euros for those who have voluntarily left their jobs or were made redundant from 1/3/2020 to 20/3/2020, provided that they do not receive the unemployment benefit.
- One-off compensation of 400 euros to long term unemployed people .
- In June 2020 with Law 4690/2020, the "SYN-ERGASIA" mechanism came to force and is being implemented since the 15<sup>th</sup> of June. The purpose of the "SYN-ERGASIA" Mechanism is to provide support, in the form of financial support for short-term work, to employees of companies in the private sector with the aim of maintaining full-time jobs.

7. What action has been taken to increase resources and support for women's and civil society organizations as they cope with the COVID-19 pandemic?

No specific measures have been put in place. However, the GSFPGE has been and continues to be in direct contact with non-governmental organizations, other non-profit organizations and the civil society, especially collaborating with them to better address the phenomenon of domestic violence during COVID-19.

8. What steps have been taken to improve gender-responsive data collection in the context of follow-up to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and to track and monitor the gender-specific impacts and response measures to the COVID-19 pandemic?

In Greece, it is the mission of the Hellenic Statistical Authority to safeguard and continuously improve the quality of the country's statistics. However, there is no specific unit responsible for promoting the production of sex-disaggregated data within ELSTAT. On the other hand, the "Observatory on Gender Equality", organizational part of the GSFPGE, constitutes a mechanism to support Public Administration and Local Authorities to design, implement and evaluate policies concerning gender equality through detailed gender-segregated data on equality issues (statistics and surveys) deriving from the development and function of relevant tools. The structure of the Observatory is based on the twelve critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA). The GSFPGE's Observatory has an online portal "[paratiritirio.isotita.gr](http://paratiritirio.isotita.gr)" designed to include, analyze, process and diffuse statistical data and indicators on gender equality policies. Its goal is mapping gender differentiations in 12 basic policy areas

and the monitoring of any relevant trends and advances in Greece. Moreover, it includes 84 gender indicators based either on the Beijing Platform for Action or on specific national priorities and is followed by metadata.