

A/RES/72/234 on “Women in development” Contribution by Greece

Legislative measures

1. On 26-3-2019, Law 4604/2019, initiated by the Ministry of Interior, was passed by the Hellenic Parliament. Its first part (articles 1-30) is dedicated to the issues of substantive gender equality and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Its basic characteristics are the following:

- The specific law constitutes an integral legal framework on gender equality and elimination of discriminations against women. Female gender is not treated as a “special category” or a “vulnerable group” and all its provisions are in accordance with the Constitution, EU Directives, international Conventions ratified by the Greek State, as well as Greek family law, labour law and social security law.
- All basic notions, mechanisms, institutions and stakeholders are explicitly clarified aiming at the implementation of the principle of equal treatment of sexes, gender mainstreaming and the formulation of a network of permanent structures across all national policies for the prevention and elimination of violence against women.
- The panhellenic SGBV network by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and the Municipalities is institutionalized (Counseling Centers, Hostels, a 24-hour SOS 15900 hotline).
- Public and private enterprises are encouraged to draft and implement “Equality Plans” with specific targets, strategies and practices and the General Secretariat for Gender Equality of the Ministry of Interior can award “Equality Labels” to them as a reward for their engagement in favor of equal treatment and equal opportunities for their male and female employees.
- The use of gender-neutral language in official documents is incorporated as a distinctive task of the public administration. Greek language, like a number of other European languages (e.g. French, Italian, Spanish), is characterized by the use of male and female nouns and adjectives. The tendency has been to use the male noun collectively when we refer to both sexes, despite the fact that this practice clearly implies gender discrimination. For example, in English there is the word “students” for both boys and girls, but in Greek there is the word “μαθητές” for boys and “μαθήτριες” for girls.
- The system of quota 40% in favour of women is institutionalized for the lists of candidates in each electoral prefecture at the parliamentary elections. This is a clear measure for women’s empowerment in political decision-making. It is noted that the same increased quota has already been in practice for the elections for Local Authorities (Regions and Municipalities). Furthermore, the absence of quota system in the composition of Councils of the Public Administration arouses legal penalties.
- An Autonomous Equality Office is established in each of the 13 Regions of the country, the Central Union of Greek Municipalities and the Union of Greek Regions, while the Municipal and the Regional Equality Committees are upgraded.
- Special provisions have been put in place in the crucial field of education (primary, secondary and tertiary education) aiming at the elimination of gender stereotypes and the advancement of healthy attitudes for the future citizens of the country.
- In addition, the principle of gender mainstreaming is set in the fields of health and social solidarity (e.g. special attention to the status and the needs of vulnerable groups of women), while a special leave of seven working days is attributed to female employees who attend prescribed programs of medically supported fertility.
- In the fields of mass media and advertisement special provisions are activated against gender stereotypes and discriminations.
- Ministries are urged to collect gender disaggregated statistics and to have equality plans and publish yearly their results. This holds for all national sustainable development policies.

2. Since 29.3.2018 the Law 4531/2018 ratifying the Istanbul Convention is in force. One of its major goals is to contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including by empowering women. The

Convention emphasizes on prevention of gender-based violence through specialized education and awareness programs and specialized measures are envisaged:

- to protect women-victims of violence in order to prevent their secondary victimization,
- to protect children witnesses of abuse,
- to facilitate access for victims of gender violence to legal compensation and
- to establish a mechanism for the monitoring of its implementation, which is the GSGE
- to empower the economic independence of women victims of violence.

3. The Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Welfare is on the process to ratify the Protocol to the Forced Labour Convention, 1930, of the year 2014. In addition, the Law 4488/2017 provided further protection in the context of employment and enhanced the labour rights of people with disabilities.

4. Complying with the relevant national and international legislation, Greece has put in place a formal national identification and referral system for victims and presumed victims of human trafficking. The Mechanism operates as a hub for coordinated action and partnership building, among all actors involved in combating human trafficking (state agencies, International Organizations, NGOs). It subscribes to a more inclusive identification regime that brings-in additional professionals and stakeholders into the screening and identification process of mixed migratory/refugee flows (migration services, labour inspectors, health providers, local administration authorities).

5. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality, in cooperation with the Office of the National Rapporteur, has set up a Committee of Experts to review the existing legal framework on prostitution and advocate against sexual exploitation and demand for commercial sex acts. The Committee included legal experts, academics, the anti-trafficking police unit and representatives from NGOs. The overall task of the Committee was to examine closely best practices aimed at targeting buying and selling of sexual services (e.g. Nordic model) and put forward specific proposals for applying these practices in Greece.

6. The Hellenic Parliament has set up a sub-committee on human trafficking under the Special Permanent Committee for Equality, Youth & Human Rights issues. The Committee is responsible for monitoring developments, legislative updates and the overall implementation of counter-THB policies and measures. The 13 MPs of the Committee are regularly updated by the Office of the National Rapporteur and its partners on all issues and challenges regarding THB in the country.

7. The drafting of the new National Action Plan on Combatting THB (2019-2023) has been completed and it is expected to be officially endorsed by the Greek government in the next months. In the new National Action Plan, a shelter specifically for women victims of human trafficking and another for girl victim of human trafficking are foreseen.

Prevention and awareness raising measures

1 Greece has embarked on large-scale campaigns to reduce 'Demand' for services or products extracted from THB victims. In this context, as a good practice of effective collaboration between the State and the Private Sector to prevent and combat THB is the public awareness Campaign "BREAK THE CHAIN" – a product of a large partnership coordinated by the Office of the National Rapporteur and constituted by multiple stakeholders; most of them from the Private Sector. In 2018, a second large awareness-raising event was organized which focused on the prevention of labour exploitation, the Raise your Voice Festival.

2. In January 2019, the Office of the National Rapporteur on THB, in collaboration with the OSCE, the Council of Athens, the Bloomberg Associates and the Athens Partnership organized a seminar in Athens on the "Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings in Supply Chains through Government Practices and Measures". The seminar was the launching event of a pilot study on the measures that have to be taken in order to ensure that no exploitation against human beings is taking place in the Municipality of Athens' procurements and supply chains.

3. The Office of the National Rapporteur is a permanent member in the National Council against Racism and Intolerance (Law 4356/2015). One of the main issues promoted by the National

Rapporteur in the context of the National Council against Racism and Intolerance is the inclusion of modules on Human Rights, Reproductive Health and Sexual Education in schools.

Trainings for professionals

Training of professionals on first-level identification is an intrinsic part of Greece's anti-trafficking and protection to victims of THB policy. The ONR steps up efforts to facilitate capacity-building activities through a strategic partnership with the State Institute of Training (National Center of Public Administration & Local Government).

Safe shelters, health and psychosocial support

Greece has secured a significant number of shelters for victims of gender-based violence, including women victims of human trafficking. As the competent State entity, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSCE) implements the "National Program for the Prevention and Combating Violence against Women", which is funded by the National Strategic Reference Framework (European Social Fund). In addition to the shelters coordinated by the GSCE, EKKA operates one (1) emergency shelter in Attica for women and girls – victims of violence, as well as two (2) short – term shelters in Attica and Thessaloniki (which also operate as emergency shelters). The NGO A21 operates one shelter in Thessaloniki, exclusively for THB victims. Other NGOs, such as the Smile of the Child, Praksis and Arsis occasionally provide shelter to victims of trafficking. With reference to the host spots located at the Greek islands, specific places have been delimited for women traveling alone and for unaccompanied minors (safe zones).

Legal aid and compensation

The Greek Law recognizes to victims of human trafficking the right to apply for a compensation from the Greek State and accordingly all competent authorities are giving priority to the protection and safety of the victim, provide translation and interpretation services when needed, and provide all necessary legal assistance.

Social Reintegration

Public social protection services and specialized NGOs offer psychosocial support to victims of trafficking. Most of the women survivors of trafficking would approach a social worker or a mental health professional for the first time to ask for help for their children. When trust is built, those women will speak about their stories. The ONR proactively seeks the collaboration of the private sector to prevent THB and to assist victims and provide work integration to trafficked survivors and refugees. Several NGOs provide the opportunity to victims to develop skills (e.g. language learning, continuing education, professional training) that will help them to find a job.

Employment

The economic crisis experienced by Greece and the prolonged austerity policies implemented over the past 10 years have resulted in a dramatic drop in employment for both women and men. The policies implemented in the public sector (reduction of recruitments), legislation on the reduction of labor rights in the private sector (limiting the protection of employees from collective redundancies, reduction of overtime compensation, flexible working hours), but also the operation and the taxation of small and medium-sized enterprises and self-employed workers have had a significant impact on employment in the public sector (reduced entry and exit waves) but also in the private sector for the employees, the self-employed and the entrepreneurs.

These measures also had gender consequences as they had disproportionately affected women, young people and migrants, who are more concentrated than men in the lower part of the wage scale and in the secondary sector of work. At the same time, issues such as the gender pay gap and pension gap, the glass ceiling, the under-representation of women in specific sectors of the economy, persist as gender inequalities, which interact with the new social and economic conditions that emerged in the last 10 years.

To combat all these negative effects of the economic crisis, both the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of the Interior, through the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, undertake actions to increase the participation of women in the labor market in general and change the landscape that wants them to occupy higher rates in atypical work.

First of all, through the implementation of Law 3896/2010 the national legislation was adapted to the provisions of Directive 2006/54/EC and created a unified and clear legislative framework on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of employment and occupation, in the private and public sectors. The law seeks to establish synergies with all relevant institutional mechanisms of the State, as well as cooperation with the social partners, non-governmental organizations and enterprises, in order to combat the gender gap in the labor market, and enhance the participation of women in employment. The law aims to encourage proactive legislation by establishing a set of provisions ensuring the effective implementation of the principle of equality through the appointment of a competent body for the uniform examination of complaints about its violations but also through a system of extended legal protection and appropriate and dissuasive sanctions.

The provisions of the above law have a very wide scope covering persons employed or candidates for employment in the public and wider public sector as well as in the private sector, in any employment relationship or form of employment, including the work contract and remunerated order, regardless of the nature of the services provided, to persons engaged in liberal professions and to persons receiving vocational training, or who are candidates for the vocational training of any type and form.

The scope of the law covers access to employment and the terms of employment by prohibiting all forms of direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of sex or marital status as regards the conditions of access to employment or generally to professional life, including selection criteria and terms of recruitment, irrespective of the branch of activity and at all levels of the professional hierarchy. In addition, any reference to gender or marital status or the use of criteria and elements that result in direct or indirect discrimination based on sex, in respect of publications, advertisements, notices, circulars and regulations, concerning selection of persons for filling vacancies, providing education or training, or granting professional leave.

Moreover, "Women's participation in the labor market, reconciliation of family and professional life" is one of the strategic goals of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016-2020 elaborated by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality of the Ministry of Interior. Our ministry is also collaborating with all the relevant stakeholders always in line with the European and international guidelines. Our objectives are:

- i) Encouragement of female labor market participation.
- ii) promotion of the principle of equality in enterprises.
- iii) Promotion of female entrepreneurship -social and solidarity economy.
- iv) Improvement of the status of women in the agricultural sector.
- v) Encouragement of the use of ICTs by women.
- vi) Reconciliation of work and family life.
- vii) Collection and provision of data on gender differences in the labour market outcomes.

New technologies

As far as training in new technologies and the elimination of the digital divide is concerned, the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (NAPGE) 2016-2020 includes as a goal, "The Digital Divide, the use of ICT as a field of gender inequality and their interconnection with school vocational guidance and the labor market".

In this vein, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality submitted to the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and Youth proposed actions under the "New National Lifelong Learning Programs" aiming at the elimination of digital illiteracy and the integration of vulnerable social groups, especially young women and girls, in the workplace.

Finally, new technologies and digital skills can be used in a way that favors women's employment and the elimination of inequalities in the labor market. The challenge is to drive women into

higher and more creative positions, which to date are occupied by men in most cases, and not just flexible jobs, which will in turn promote professional segregation. So from our point of view and within our field of expertise, the GSGE has taken measures which have been included as a good practice in the report of the UN Secretary-General for 2018. The subject of the report concerns the implementation of state actions on women's participation and access to and use of the media and new technologies to strengthen the position of the female population on the planet. (See <http://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2018/4>). Indicatively, the measures taken by Greece included in the report are the following:

- promotion of women to new technologies: cooperation of the GSGE with the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs, for the mainstreaming of the gender perspective at all levels of education, with emphasis on the increasing participation of girls and women in new technologies, as well as the cooperation of GSGE with the Hellenic Management Association (EEDE) in providing five scholarships for EEDE postgraduate programs (academic year 2016 - 2017).
- Promoting women in new technologies: the participation of the GSGE in the implementation of the co-financed project entitled "Innovation and Employability of Women" with the coordination of the "Democritus" Research Center for the need to continuing education and training of women in new technologies (January 2016 - March 2017).
- Promoting women in new technologies: participation of the GSGE in the Social Audit Council of the ERT (Radio and Hellenic Television), in order to mainstream gender in the structure and program of public broadcasting in Greece.
- Strengthening databases and documentation: It refers to the GSGE's structure "Observatory", which focuses on the 12 themes of the 4th World Conference on Women's Action (known as the Beijing Platform) and includes the section "women and the media". It is worth mentioning that this structure has been included by the European Commission as a good national practice in the "Annual Report on Equality between Women and Men in the EU" (Brussels, March 2016).

Contribution of the Office of the National Rapporteur, Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the General Assembly resolution A/RES72/234 on “Women in development”

Responses should provide concrete examples of measures taken at the national level with regard to the issues outlined below, highlighting results achieved, lessons learned and opportunities for up-scaling and replication:

• *Preventing and eliminating all forms of violence, discrimination, and sexual harassment against women at work, and providing remedies, support and services for victims and survivors of violence and harassment (operative paragraphs 14, 32 and 33);*

Searching for employment often places women at a vulnerable position, that is more acute with migrant and asylum seeking women and women involved in prostitution. The Greek State and the Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Human Beings have taken several initiatives to prevent human trafficking for sexual and labor exploitation.

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