

**National Report  
on the Twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on  
Women and adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for  
Action (1995)-Beijing+25**

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Republic of Cyprus



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## Abbreviations

ACPCDV	Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CAPA	Cyprus Academy of Public Administration
CGE	Commissioner for Gender Equality
CGEO	Cyprus Gender Equality Observatory
CPC	Cyprus Productivity Centre
CRTA	Cyprus Radio Television Authority
CSW	Commission for the Status of Women
<i>CYSTAT</i>	Statistical Service of Cyprus
EIGE	European Institute of Gender Equality
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GECEVT	Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training
GEU	Gender Equality Unit
HOR	House of Representatives
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MJPO	Ministry of Justice and Public Order
MLWSI	Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
NAPGE	National Action Plan on Gender Equality
NAPPHFAV	National Action Plan for the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NHS	National Health System
NMWR	National Mechanism for Women's Rights
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
PES	Public Employment Services
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SWS	Social Welfare Services
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

## Introduction

1. The Government of the Republic of Cyprus regrets that due to the continuing illegal occupation and effective control of the 37% of its territory by Turkish military forces, the Government is unable to ensure the full realization of women's rights and equality between women and men in the whole of its territory and that, therefore, is also deprived of its ability to apply gender equality law, policies, practices and programmes to those living in the occupied area. It is for this reason that no reliable information and data are available regarding the enjoyment of the relevant rights by the Cypriot population living in the occupied area which is not controlled by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to reach a solution on the Cyprus problem at the simultaneous referenda before the accession of Cyprus to the European Union in 2004, despite considerable efforts deployed by the international community and the United Nations Secretary General. The Cyprus Government policy is to keep the road open towards the reunification of the island. Therefore, all information provided in this report concerns the Republic Of Cyprus controlled areas.
2. The report has been commissioned by the Gender Equality Unit (GEU) of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order to an independent expert on women's rights, gender equality, migration and trafficking in human beings. The report was compiled by the expert in close collaboration with the Gender Equality Unit, that provided all relevant material and data submitted by all Governmental ministries/Departments and other agencies.
3. In this regard the report is a comprehensive national level review assessing the progress made in implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) as well as taking stock of achievements, identifying gaps and setbacks and outlining strategies for addressing those gaps and challenging aiming at achieving equality between women and men and therefore for all women living in Cyprus to fully enjoy their rights. The Cyprus government would particularly wish to stress the advancement of collaboration between the state and civil society organisations underlining in this respect a more holistic, democratic approach to the implementation of actions and policies in place.
4. During the period under review, Cyprus has made considerable progress and headway in the promotion of women's rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women. Since the last report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) 2014, where Cyprus has been hit by the financial crisis and progress was affected in many different areas, however the general picture remained satisfactory and efforts continue to promote gender equality, especially since Cyprus accession to the EU in 2004.
5. Despite considerable progress gender equality based on policies, regulations and legislation, entrenched social and cultural norms continue to maintain discrimination against women. Persistent gender stereotypes and bias in policymaking and budget decisions is hampering progress and making it slower. While women comprise 65% of public sector employees, there are still too few women in senior public jobs and decision-making posts.

6. The Government is committed in taking all the necessary measures to overcome the slow progress and barriers to reach gender equality. All legislations, policies, programmes are discussed in detail below.

## Section One: Priorities, achievements, challenges and setbacks

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### Most important achievements, challenges and setbacks in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past 5 years.

7. Cyprus has a comprehensive policy on gender equality, which is formulated in accordance with the provisions of International Conventions, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), International Recommendations, Action Programs, including the Action Plan of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995), the European Acquis, European policies in the field of equality between men and women, in particular the Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality 2016-2019 and the European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020.
8. The Government policy has two main goals:
  - The elimination of legal discrimination against women and the safeguarding of equality between men and women in all areas of law, and
  - Strengthening the principle of equality and equal opportunities in practice, involving, inter alia, the change of attitudes, promoting specific programmes that support and empower women in their multiple roles, and mainstreaming the principle of equality into all programmes and policies.

To address these two goals a number of measures are being taken. These are the following:

### Policy and institutional developments and achievements

***Please note that reforms, new or amended legislation in relation to all critical areas of concern are mainstreamed throughout the report.***

9. During the past five years a number of Action Plans and Strategies have been developed addressing the issue of gender equality and women's rights. New legislations tackling gender inequalities have been enacted and new independent bodies have been set up. Additionally, new policies have been formulated in the field of violence against women, trafficking in human beings- especially in women, employment, social inclusion, education, health, public and political life. At the same time policies are aiming to highlight the positive role women can play as agents of change. These policies, which are set out in detail in the following sections of the National Report, include the National Action Plans on Gender Equality 2014, on Trafficking in Human Beings in 2013

and 2016, on Youth Employment in 2014, on Violence in the Family in 2017, on Gender Equality in Education in 2018, on Minimizing the Consequences of the Economic Crisis in Public Healthcare in 2013, as well as the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Violence in the Schools in 2018, all of which mainstreams gender.

### Strategic Action Plan on Gender Equality

10. The most significant achievement in terms of policy was the adoption of the Strategic Action Plan on Gender Equality (2014-2017), which incorporated a holistic approach to gender equality, addressing the following six priority areas: Administrative Reform, Improvement of the Legislative Framework, Balanced Participation in Decision Making Posts, Combating Violence against Women, Economic Empowerment of Women and Elimination of Social Stereotypes and Prejudices. It was specifically designed to promote the implementation of the CEDAW Concluding Observations on the Cyprus Report of 2013, which proved to be of fundamental importance to the government. Furthermore, for the successful implementation of the Plan the BPfA and EU Law policies all played fundamental role in the design of these actions. Its development was a collective achievement of close collaboration of the Government and local authorities, the Commissioner for Gender Equality, women's organizations, NGOs, academic institutions and human rights bodies.
11. A report on the evaluation of its implementation, conducted in 2017, revealed that significant progress had been made in the areas of employment, economic empowerment of women and combating violence against women. However, one of the challenges and setbacks identified is related to the European Elections and thereafter the area of political participation, as no women were elected in the European parliament. Another area of concern, is that of the mass media where it has been observed that sexist attitudes still dominate and therefore gender inequality is sustained. Both areas are directly related to social attitudes and stereotypes.
12. At present, the third National Action Plan on Gender Equality (NAPGE) 2019-2022 has been concluded, as a result of close collaboration of the government, local authorities, the Commissioner for Gender Equality, NGOs, women's organizations, academic institutions, employers organizations and trade unions as well as human rights bodies. This NAPGE was designed to promote the implementation of the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) following the review of the 8<sup>th</sup> Periodic Report of Cyprus, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), as well as towards the acceleration of implementation of the 2013 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
13. Drawing from the report on the evaluation of the second Action Plan, the third Action Plan will include the following seven thematic areas/objectives that will form the key priorities for action over the next three years:
  - Combating all forms of Violence against Women and gradual implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence ("Istanbul Convention");



- Promoting balanced participation between women and men in decision-making positions in public, political, social and economic life;
- Reforming and improving the legislative framework;
- Protecting and Empowering Vulnerable Groups of Women;
- Promoting equality between men and women in employment;
- Eliminating Gender Stereotypes and Social Prejudices and
- Education and Training of Women in Information and Communication Technologies.

### National Action Plan on the Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence

The ACPCDV has drafted the second NAPPHFV (2017-2019), which has been approved by the Council of Ministers. The new NAPPHFV focuses on the following objectives:

- Completing the revision of the Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures;
- Promoting systematic, specialised and interdepartmental training for “front-line” professionals dealing with incidents/cases of domestic violence;
- Reinstating Family Counsellors within the Social Welfare Services (SWS);
- Development and adoption of a multi-agency Risk Assessment Mechanism for more effective management of incidents/cases of domestic violence;
- Promoting the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the House of Representatives (HOR);
- Promoting the effective implementation of the Establishing Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law, 2016 [L.51(I)/2016].

### Development of National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)

14. The Commissioner for Gender Equality has undertaken, in close cooperation with the government and civil society organizations the drafting of the first National Action Plan in view of the implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on “Women, Peace and Security” covering the period 2019- 2022. This Plan aims to ensure the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The first draft has been prepared, following a round of consultations among the relevant Ministries. A second round of public consultations is expected to follow in June 2019, aiming at finalizing it and submitting it to the Council of Ministers of approval. The Action Plan as it stands today is consisted by four main pillars:

- Participation and Empowerment;
- Protection;
- Prevention;
- Promoting and informing civil society about UNSCR.

### Strategic Planning of the Interdepartmental Committee of the Ministry of Education for equality between women and men.

15. One of the main aims of the Plan is to combat negative gender stereotypes and perceptions amongst educators, counselors and students. More specifically a specific programme is created aiming to the increase of female participation in technical fields and the promotion of girls in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The plan includes activities aiming at the reshaping of Secondary Technical and Vocational education with the aim of attracting female

participation. Additionally, another innovative action of this specific plan relates to the examination for the implementation of all day school aiming at allowing students to stay at school studying and be involved in sports, arts and any other pedagogical actions. This action at the same time can be considered as an action for the reconciliation between family and professional life of parents and particularly the mothers.

## **Institutional mechanisms**

### *The Commissioner for Gender Equality*

16. Attaching great importance to the issues of gender equality, the President of the Republic has set the diffusion of the principle of equality in all state sectors as one of its high priorities. In this context, in March 2014 (renewal in 2018) the President decided to establish the institution of the Commissioner for Gender Equality (CGE).
17. The Commissioner is accountable to the President of the Republic and at the end of each year submits an annual report with comments and recommendations directly to the President of the Republic. Her main duties and responsibilities are amongst others to:
  - Promote equality between men and women and the elimination of discrimination against women;
  - Preside over and coordinate the work of the NMWR;
  - Monitor the implementation of policies and measures promoting equality between men and women;
  - Submit proposals / recommendations for the legislative safeguarding of equality and the elimination of discriminations in the legislation;
  - Submit proposals / recommendations for the promotion and implementation of policy measures in the field of gender equality;
  - Organize seminars and training courses on questions of equality between men and women;
  - Organize information campaigns to inform the public and especially women about their rights;
  - Participate in international conferences on gender equality;

### *The National Mechanism for Women's Rights*

18. A key mechanism in shaping and promoting this policy is the National Mechanism for Women's Rights (NMWR), chaired by the CGE, based on a decision of the Council of Ministers dated 23/4/2014.
19. The NMWR plays a leading role in ensuring the introduction of gender mainstreaming in all national policies and programmes. This is done through the encouragement of training of relevant professionals within the public service on gender equality issues, the support of the development of research on gender-related issues, the promotion of data collection and gender-disaggregated statistics, and the organisation of relevant training workshops, seminars, and conferences with the participation of international experts.

20. The NMWR also participates in a number of multidisciplinary committees under other ministries dealing with issues such as family, children, violence against women, trafficking, social inclusion, employment and contributes substantially to ensuring a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of relevant policies. It should also be noted, that during the last years the government has developed much stronger ties with women's organisations by involving them in relevant spheres of policy formulation and decision-making processes.
21. During the period of review, the most important achievement of the NMWR was the development of the NAPGE (2014-2017). The NAPGE was adopted by the Council of Ministers in December 2014. The NAPGE is significant in that it incorporated a holistic approach to gender equality addressing six priority areas, namely: employment, education, decision-making, social rights, violence and gender stereotypes
22. In accordance with the decision of the Council of Ministers no.61.649, dated 24/2/2005, the NMWR has been involved in the procedure for ensuring that gender mainstreaming is incorporated in all stages of the utilization of the funds granted to Cyprus from the Structural Funds (programming, selection of projects, implementation and evaluation). In particular, it is responsible for evaluating and certifying that projects funded by the Structural Funds comply with the national and EU legislation / policies on gender equality.
23. With the initiative and collaboration of the NMWR, in the period 2014-2017, the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA) has organised a number of seminars and training programmes, aimed at increasing awareness and knowledge on gender equality policies among civil servants and in particular the officers who serve as Focal Points for Gender Equality, appointed in all ministries and who all comprise the Inter-ministerial Committee of the NMWR.
24. In terms of cooperation and collaboration with women's organizations and NGOs, the Council of the NMWR consists of 20 women's organizations -which are the main women's organizations, trade unions and other major NGOs-, including two Turkish Cypriot organizations. An additional 70 NGOs are members of the National Committee. The National Committee is the largest body of the four bodies of the NMWR.
25. The budget of the NMWR covers operational expenses of the Equality Unit, as well as a budget for grants and subsidies to women's organizations, which constitutes the biggest part of the annual budget. The grants for women's organizations and NGOs cover two categories of sponsoring: a) an annual subsidy to cover operational costs of all members of the Council and some members of the National Committee on specific conditions according to Revised Regulations, which have been in force since 2014 and b) the subsidies for the implementation of particular projects and activities such as conferences, training workshops and information seminars, research, on gender related issues.

26. The Office of the CGE, as well as the GEU use the services of external consultants who have been commissioned to provide support and assistance for actions and programmes on a needed basis. Despite the fact that the budget of the NMWR had been considerably decreased due to financial constraints and the need to adhere to a rigorous economic adjustment programme, the annual subsidies to NGOs-members of the NMWR have not been decreased. In recent years, the budget of the NMWR has been increasing considerably, namely from 235.000 Euros in 2016 to 270.000 Euros in 2017 and 370.000 Euros in 2018.
27. In line with the NAPGE, the NMWR has mobilized all its Subcommittees and has set up new ones in order to contribute substantially to the implementation of the NAPGE. These Sub-Committees are:
- The Committee on Employment and Economic Empowerment of Women;
  - The Committee on the Elimination of Stereotypes and Social Prejudices;
  - The Committee on European Affairs;
  - The Committee against Violence Against Women, including on Anti- Trafficking and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation of Women;
  - The Committee on Bi-Communal Cooperation;
  - The Committee on Gender Equality in the Mass Media and Social Networking and
  - The Committee on the participation of Women in Decision Making Positions.

#### *Gender Equality Unit of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order*

28. The GEU of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order plays a leading role in the overall promotion of gender equality at a national level. The functions of the GEU include the following:
- Contribution of law reform, particularly in the area of family law;
  - Drafting of policies, programmes and laws promoting women's rights;
  - International and European relations in the field of gender equality;
  - Gradual implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence ("Istanbul Convention");
  - Support and subsidization of women's organisations;
  - Promotion of gender mainstreaming in public policies;
  - Provision of secretariat and scientific support to the NMWR;
  - Monitoring, coordination and evaluation of the implementation of programmes in the field of gender equality;
  - Awareness raising programmes/campaigns aiming at the increase of women's representation in political and public life, and violence against women;
  - Promotion of education and training programmes on gender equality issues;
  - Chairing of the Technical Committee on Gender Equality, which deals inter alia with the monitoring of the implementation of the NAPGE;
  - The dissemination of publications.

*Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights as NHRI and Equality Body.*

29. Another key institutional mechanism in the field of equality is that of the Commissioner for Administration and for the Protection of Human Rights as National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) and Equality Body. In 2011, the Commissioner for Administration Law was amended (no. 158(I)/2011) and mandated the Commissioner with specific functions for the promotion and protection of human rights, their preservation or expansion in the Republic of Cyprus and the observance of fundamental principles of human rights by the administration (art. 5 (1)(d)). The Commissioner for Administration was renamed to the “Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights”, a name, which reflected its broader functions in the area of protecting, promoting and guaranteeing human rights as NHRI in line with the Paris Principles.
30. In particular, the Commissioner has responsibility through the exercise of its own power to:
- submit ex-officio reports related to any situation of violation of human rights which it decides to take up;
  - submit ex-officio reports related to the national situation with regard to human rights in general and on more specific matters.
  - have consultations with non-governmental organisations, human rights organisations, other social groups and human rights bodies.
31. The Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights, as the national Equality Body examines complaints related to discrimination. The Combating of Racial and other forms of Discrimination Law (L. 42(I)/2004) provides the legal basis for Commissioner’s interventions. According to the law, any discrimination is prohibited.
32. The Law covers discrimination on:
- the conditions of access, employment, promotion and selection criteria in employment, self-employment and occupation;
  - the access to vocational guidance, vocational training and retraining and obtaining practical work experience;
  - the working conditions and terms of employment, dismissals and pay;
  - the membership of and involvement in organisations of workers, employers or any organisations whose members carry on a particular profession, including the benefits provided for by such organisations;
  - the social protection, including social security and healthcare;
  - education; and
  - the access to and supply of goods and services including housing.

*Commissioner for the Protection of Children’s Rights (CPCR)*

38. The Commissioner for Children’s Rights is an independent institution which deals exclusively with the rights of the child and whose competences and obligations are prescribed by law. The

Commissioner is appointed by the Council of Ministers pursuant to the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights Laws 2007 and 2014 [(Laws 74(I)/2007), 44(I)/2014)], which came into force on 22/6/2007. The mission of the Commissioner is to protect and promote the rights of the child. Her role is to represent children and their interest at all levels, to promote public awareness and sensitivity so that children's rights in the family, at school, in the community are safeguarded and to identify and promote the views of children where they themselves cannot be heard, to monitor legislation relating to children and to submit proposals aiming at their harmonization with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to carry out public awareness campaigns, to appoint a representative of the child in judicial proceedings affecting him/her and to represent children in procedures affecting them.

39. More specifically, the Commissioner has competence and responsibility, inter alia:
- to represent children and their interests at all levels;
  - to promote public awareness and sensitivity so that the society will be mobilized and safeguard in practice children's rights in the family, the school, the community where they live and the society in general;
  - to have contacts with the children in order to identify and promote their views where they themselves cannot be heard;
  - to supervise and monitor the implementation of the provisions of the UN Convention and of other Conventions;
  - to follow up and monitor the legislation and practices in Cyprus concerning children and to submit proposals aiming at their harmonization with the Convention;
  - to carry out public awareness and change of attitude campaigns with regard to the situation of children in our society;
  - to conduct studies on the situation of children in Cyprus;
  - to make recommendations and proposals to all competent bodies engaged with children so as to promote the interests of children and to give publicity to them whenever she deems it appropriate;
  - to organise seminars and educational programs relevant to children's rights;
  - to represent children and their interests in procedures affecting them and to be appointed by the court as their representative;
  - in general, to take any action as she may deem necessary for the protection and promotion of the rights and interests of the children of Cyprus.

### *Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training*

33. The Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training (GECEVT) monitors the application of the Equal Treatment of men and women in employment and vocational training Law 205(I)/2002 by the concerning Service of Labor Ministry and Social Insurances (the Department of Labour) and has an advisory role in regard to:
- The formation or the revision of national policy .
  - The import or revision of relative legislation.

- The adoption of measures and the application of programs for the promotion of gender equality in its field of competence.
- The GECEVT conducts studies and researches, collects statistical values and submits reports and proposals to the Minister of Work and Social Insurances.

34. The GECEVT further submits self-appointed complaints, and accepts complaints which are forwarded in turn, to the Chief-Inspector (Director) of the Department of Labor for investigation. The Department of Labour is responsible to inform the GECEVT on the outcome of the investigation. When it comes to public service the GECEVT provides advice and information, free of charge, to any interested party on gender equality issues in employment and vocational training. It further, provides legal aid, free of charge, to victims of discriminative behaviour.

#### *Advisory Committee on the Prevention and Handling of Domestic Violence (ACPHDV)*

35. The ACPHDV was established in 1996 in accordance with *The Violence in the Family (prevention and protection of victims) Laws 2000 and 2004 (L119(I)/2000 and L212(I)/2001)*.

36. The terms of reference of the ACPHDV include the monitoring on issues related to family violence in Cyprus; Raising awareness and provide information to the public, first line officers and professionals; conducting of scientific research on the issue of domestic violence; the promotion of services working on the all aspects of domestic violence; and monitoring the effectiveness of the appropriate services and the implementation of the legislation.

#### *Equality Inspectors-Department of Labour (EIDL)/Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (MLWSI)*

37. The Equality Inspectors of the Department of Labour (EIDL) of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (MLWSI) play an important role in combating gender discrimination in employment. During 2012-2013, officers of the MLWSI, as well as officers of the Ombudsman's Office, received intensive theoretical and on-the-job training on the enforcement of equal pay and equal treatment in employment legislation. During 2015, there were more than 1,000 inspections on equal pay legislation, with the aim to monitor and further reduce the gender pay gap.

#### *Gender Equality Certification Body (GECB)*

38. By decision of the Council of Ministers, the National Certification Body was established in April 2014 as the competent authority for evaluating enterprises on their degree of equal treatment/equal pay "best practices" in the workplace. There are two types of certificates: the 'Equality Employer' certificate; and the "Good Practice" certificate relating to equal treatment and/or equal pay.

#### *Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group on the prevention and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting the victims (MCG)*

39 In order to address in a consistent and comprehensive way the phenomenon of trafficking in human beings (THB), Cyprus has established by law a Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group (MCG). The MCG, which is chaired by the Minister of Interior as the National Coordinator, has been assigned with the task to coordinate and, among other issues, monitor the implementation of the measures that are taken against Trafficking in Human Beings (THB). Its main duties are the coordination of actions towards the prevention, control and suppression of THB, Victims of Trafficking early identification, protection and support, the promotion of international cooperation, the monitoring of the National Action Plan, the collection of data and the submission of legislative proposals. According to the legislation the MCG should meet on a regular basis every three months or at least three times a year. To operate more efficiently, it is divided in Working Groups, which deal with specific matters with the responsibility to submit relevant recommendations to the plenary of the Group. The Group is composed of 18 members, representing the relevant government services and NGOs. Up to four NGOs can be represented in this Group (by Law).

#### *Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women*

40 The Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women was created, by decision of the HOR in 2011, through the consolidation of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and the Parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women. It examines law proposals and issues relating to equality and human rights. During its sessions, the Committee frequently invites the CGE and women's organizations to express their opinions on gender equality issues.

#### *Police Committee for Gender Equality (PCGE)*

41 The PCGE was established in 2008 following a decision by the Council of Ministers. Its main tasks are the full implementation of legislation on gender equality among the Police, the promotion of equal treatment and the development of a new attitude based on the principle of gender equality. The PCGE consists of six senior police officers (three men and three women).

#### *Horizontal Actions- Awareness raising on women's rights Gender Mainstreaming as a horizontal action*

42 When it comes to horizontal actions the promotion of gender mainstreaming in the public administration is one of the main priorities of the government of the Republic of Cyprus. The horizontal promotion of gender mainstreaming was one of the main activities of the NAPGE for the last years. For its implementation an ad-hoc committee was set up aiming in the drafting of an educational handbook on the issue. The ad- hoc committee is comprised by



representatives of the MJPO, the GECEVT, the CAPA<sup>1</sup>, the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) and the Office of the GEC. Beside the handbook, which was commissioned to the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, (MIGS) NGO, an Action Plan has been drafted for the training/ education of civil officers responsible for the design and strategic development plans of all ministries including those designing the budget of each ministry. It is envisioned that such trainings will begin in September 2019 with the support of the CAPA.

### *Overcoming Sexist Language in Public Administration*

- 43 In the framework of the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Equality between Women and Men 2014-2017, the Office of the CGE and the NMWR organised five two-day seminars on the Elimination of Linguistic Sexism in the documents of public service as for example all governmental positions are referred to men (i.e. the director= διευθυντής [*diefthintis*] while the female would read διευθύντρια [*diefthentria*]).
- 44 Furthermore, the Cyprus Gender Equality Observatory (CGEO) conducted a survey entitled “Overcoming Linguistic Sexism in the documents of the public administration of the Republic of Cyprus”, with the financial support of the NMWR, as well as a Practical Guide. The Guide aims to highlight linguistic sexism in public documents and at the same time proposes practical ways of deconstructing it.

### *Activities by the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration for horizontal awareness in the public sector*

- 45 As part of the holistic action of the government in promoting women’s rights and gender equality, the CAPA is promoting awareness seminars and trainings to all public officers. CAPA’s mission is to contribute to the efficiency, effectiveness and continuous improvement of the Public Service for the benefit of the individual and the society at large, mainly through the formulation and implementation of a comprehensive learning and development policy for the Public Service. In promoting women’s rights and gender equality in the public service, CAPA is working closely with the Office for the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman), the MJPO, the Gender Equality Committee, the Office of the GEC and different NGOs such as the MIGS, the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (APHVF) and the CGEO.
- 46 In this direction CAPA organized and implemented the following trainings in the last five years:
- Gender Equality in Employment and Vocational Training in the Public Service, highlighting the legislative framework and sexual harassment in the workplace;
  - Combating Sexual Harassment and Harassment in the Workplace;

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<sup>1</sup> CAPA is an active member of the Thematic Network of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) on gender mainstreaming , 2019

- Coexistence Policy and Public Service: The challenge of non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity”;
- Early detection and referral of cases of exploitation and trafficking;
- Excessing linguistic sexism in the documents of Cyprus Public Administration;
- Gender Equality in Civil Service;
- Workplace Bulling in the Civil Service;
- Multiculturalism and diversity management in the public sector;
- Dealing with discrimination in customer service;
- Quality Services for people with disabilities, in collaboration with the Department for Social Inclusion of Disabled and Cypriot Unions Confederation of Disabled;
- Structured Democratic Dialogue for the ACPCDV. The workshop was addressed to the Coordinators for the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence (2017-2019) in all the Ministries. After the end of this seminar a report was prepared concerning the objectives, the achievement of which will lead to effective prevention and fight against domestic violence.
- Promotion of 3-hour interventions about Gender Equality and sexual harassment in all the ministries;

#### *Gender Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs*

- 47 A milestone in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ efforts to introduce new horizontal themes that reinforce and enrich the foreign policy pillars of the Republic of Cyprus has been the appointment of an Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on the mainstreaming of the Gender Dimension in foreign policy. In this framework, the Ministry has started designing and implementing targeted actions and initiatives at a regional, European and international level with the aim of contributing to efforts to eliminate inequality between women and men in all sectors and to accelerate progress internationally. 2019 will become a landmark year for gender equality through a number of actions, including, *inter alia*:
- 48 Organizing seminars for all staff on the effective integration of the gender dimension into foreign policy; organizing a specialized training seminar exclusively addressed to Women working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on “Women and Leadership”, aiming at narrowing the gap between women and men in decision-making positions at the Foreign Ministry; Organizing a Public Consultation on gender mainstreaming with the involvement of civil society, in particular bodies and organizations specializing in the promotion of equality between women and men; Organizing together with other UN Member States, the European Union and a United Nations Agency an event on the sidelines of the 74<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly dedicated to the promotion of gender equality.
- 49 At the same time the Government has actively participated to the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) review posing questions to other countries in relation to women’s rights and gender equality. The advisor to the Minister participated to the Commission for the Status of Women

(CSW) 2019, at the Headquarters of the UN, where she was a panelist at a side event, on education and employment and has made public statements during High level Interactive dialogue: “accelerating implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Exchange of best practices in preparation of the Beijing +25 review and appraisal”. Meetings with different representatives of different countries including UN Women were held in order to enhance further collaboration between the Government and the UN as well as other states on the issue of gender equality.

## Cyprus top priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls over the past five years through laws, policies and/or programmes

The following have all been priorities for accelerating progress for women in girls in the Republic of Cyprus over the last five years:

### Employment

- 50 In relation to employment the Department of Labour is actively taking all necessary measures to implement its national legislation on the enforcement of the equality principle and the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women in the workplace, vocational training, according to the Law 205(I)/2002 as has been amended and is fully harmonized with EU directive 2006/54/EC. Also the Law 58(I)/2004 as has been amended is fully harmonized with 2000/78/EC and 2000/43/EC. This Law provides a general framework for combating discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation as regards employment and occupation, with a view to putting into effect the principle of equal treatment. Great emphasis is given to the protection of maternity and employee women who are pregnant, from being adversely affected due to their pregnancy.
- 51 Recently two new amendments enacted regarding the protection of Maternity Law of 2002. Specifically (a) the amending Law No. 116 (I) / 2017 which provides for a surrogate mother and her entitlement to maternity leave of 14 weeks and (b) the amending Law No. 20(I)/2018 which extended the prohibition of dismissal of the employee mother to 5 months instead of 3 months which was before, at the end of maternity and provide provision for protection of the breastfeeding within her workplace.
- 52 Furthermore the enactment of Paternity Law No.1 17(I)/2017 provides that employee has the right of two consecutive weeks paternity leave within the period commencing from the week of birth and ends after sixteen weeks.
- 53 In relation to the rights of the pregnant women and new mothers, the Commissioner for Administration has launched a campaign in July 2016 – October 2016. The main goal of the campaign was to inform pregnant women, new mothers and women in general, about their rights according to the national legislation. The campaign started with the dissemination of a newly designed publication to the public hospitals and health centres in Cyprus as well as to labor unions and employers associations. The publications were also disseminated to NGOs

and were published at the official website of the Commissioner. After issuing a press release on the issue, a social media campaign followed for a period of four weeks by disseminating the publication, drawings designed specifically for the campaign and other material. The campaign was promoted through media and social media and at the end a round table discussions was held with social partners, representatives of NGOs and of the MLWSI.

54 Additionally, during the past five years, gender mainstreaming and positive action measures were gradually being implemented at all levels in various policy areas, particularly in the area of employment, aiming at the economic empowerment of women. The Employment Policy of the country has been targeted, among others, towards supporting the most vulnerable groups of unemployed through the continuous implementation of active labor market policy measures such as training programs for upgrading of skills and subsidized employment schemes for the creation of new jobs through economic incentives to employers. Moreover, the Public Employment Services (PES) have enhanced its capacity and effectiveness towards the integration and reintegration of the vulnerable groups of unemployed, including women, into the labor market. In particular, through the temporary recruitment of new personnel the Cyprus PES has upgraded its capacity in the provision of individualized counseling to young unemployed females aged of 15-29, long-term unemployed women and vulnerable unemployed women dependent on public benefits.

55 As a result of the recent good performance of the economy of the country and the implementation of the above mentioned measures, female employment indicated positive signs of improvement. In particular, the female employment is indicating an increasing trend especially for the ages 15-24 and 55-64, while the unemployment trend is steady descending, especially for the young women. Moreover, the female employment rate reached the level of 68,9% in 2018 from 63,9% in 2014 in the ages 20-64. The corresponding employment rate for men was 79,3% in 2018 while in 2014 was 71,6% (see table 1).

<b>Table 1: Statistical data</b>		
	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
<b>Employment rate</b>		
2014	63,9%	71,6%
2018	68,9%	79,3%
<b>Temporary employment</b>		
2014	24,3%	13,0%
2018	17,1%	10,4%
<b>Part - time employment</b>		

2014	17,2%	11,2%
2018	14,9%	8,7%
<b>Unemployment rate</b>		
2014	15,1%	17,0%
2018	8,7%	8,0%
<b>LTU</b>		
2014	7,0%	8,3%
2018	2,8%	2,5%

56 The temporary employment rate for women decreased to 17,1% in 2018, the part time employment rate reached 14,9% in 2018 while the long term unemployment rate was 2,8% for the same year. The unemployment rate decreased considerably for both sexes since 2014. Although a bit higher than men, the unemployment rate for women was down to 8,7% in 2018 from 15,1% in 2014 , while for male it went down to 8,0% in 2018 from 17,0% in 2014.

57 When it comes to the gender pay gap, this has decreased significantly and keeps following a downward trend, reaching a percentage of 13,9% in 2016, decreasing from 16,8% in 2010. The Republic of Cyprus now ranks 5th among EU Member States, having accomplished the highest percentage decrease in the gender pay gap during the period 2010-2015, despite the economic crisis, and having to implement a strict economic adjustment program for the 2013-2016. As several of the measures are ongoing or expected to have long-term benefits, and due to the gradual but continuous advancement of women’s position in the labour market, the downward trend of the gender pay gap is expected to continue.

58 Further, several maternity protection legislative provisions have been enacted, improving the level of protection for pregnant women. In March 2018, the Penal Code was amended and the offence of "Preventing a mother from nursing" was added aiming to safeguard the right of nursing mothers to breastfeed their children in public places.

59 A success story was the adoption of the Code of Conduct to prevent and combat sexual harassment in the public sector. The Code of Conduct has been prepared by the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights in collaboration with the GECEVT . The Code of Conduct was approved by the Council of Ministers in July 2018 and all the public authorities are called to cooperate for the implementation of the code, with emphasis to their obligation to take measures for the prevention and the handling of harassment and sexual harassment.

- 60 The code aims to prevent and handle such phenomena as a disciplinary offence according to the national legislation, in order to succeed the implementation of the equal treatment principle and the respect of the human dignity. The Code of Conduct defines harassment and sexual harassment as a form of gender discrimination and gender based violence, that offence victims' dignity.
- 61 For the successful implementation systematic trainings on the Code of Conduct were conducted to public officers. Further and in order to sensitize trade unions officials and workers organisations on eliminating the gender pay gap and any discriminatory wage practices, the GECEV organized a Forum on Equal Pay in close collaboration with the Labor Department of the MLWSI and the Office of the Commissioner of Administration (Ombudsman). The Forum aimed to inform participants on the Equal Pay between Men and Women for the same work or for Work to which Equal Value is Attributed Law (2002- 2004), the criteria for job evaluation but also on EU Court's Decisions on the issue at hand. The Committee has also implemented different seminar programmes to large companies. In 2019, more than 25 trainings took place to raise awareness public servants regarding the introduction of the Code of Conduct on Preventing and Combating Sexual Harassment and Harassment in the Public Service
- 62 Within the framework of its work the Committee has implemented a number of other activities and programmes as for example:
- A conference on Sexism in employment, public and political life and the Media;
  - Publication of a study "Sexism in all its forms";
  - Creation of a film on sexual harassment and employment;
  - Drafting of a study on the national legislation and jurisprudence on the protection of maternity and sexual harassment;
  - The day to day guidance to workers and employers on related issues.
- 63 All the above activities are targeting different groups such as the public, companies, workers, employers aiming to sensitize them and raise awareness on negative gender stereotypes and perceptions.

## Education

- 64 Access to equal opportunities in education for both sexes on a non- discriminatory basis, at all levels, is of the main principles of the Republic of Cyprus. A universal system, where education is obligatory and free for all children from the age of 5 8/12 until the age of 16 contributed in having positive results in Cyprus.
- 65 Data from the Report of the European Institute of Gender Equality (EIGE 2017) on Gender segregation/differentiation in education, training and the labour market in the EU Member States, show that the percentage of women graduates of tertiary education in Cyprus (34,6%), is higher than men's (29,7%) as well as than the EU's mean score in women and men,

respectively. Data further shows that Cyprus has a high concentration of women in the fields of natural sciences, mathematics and statistics and it was one of the countries that has shown the biggest increase in these fields.

- 66 The findings of the international survey PISA 2015, focusing on 15-year olds, are in line with the findings of European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) Report, which shows that, in Cyprus, in contrast with other OECD countries, girls outperformed boys in all three subjects: science (17 points difference), mathematics (5 points difference) and reading (52 points difference).
- 67 Results from EIGE (2017) are in line with the data from the national statistical service. It is worth noting that the GECEVT conducted a research in 2012 in a sample of 1500 people (860 women and 640 men). The results showed that amongst the participants, a percentage of 53.5% of women had a university degree, when 46,5% of men did, and 52,6% had a master's degree when the percentage of men that held a masters degree was 47,4%

### Violence against Women

- 68 Preventing and combating violence against women is an issue of high priority for the Government. In this regard, important developments have taken place with of most important to be the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, in November 2017. Alongside a draft of specific law on violence against women which is in line with the Convention is currently going through a legal audit from the law office.
- 69 The Government is promoting the enactment of the newly drafted bill on stalking and harassment for a more holistic approach and implementation of the Istanbul Convention.
- 70 Strengthening the commitment of the Government towards the protection of women victims of any form of violence the ministerial committee approved the creation of the Women's House. The Women's House aims at the protection, assistance and support of women victims of violence. The Women's House will function as an interdisciplinary centre, where professionals from various disciplines and state officials such as Clinical Psychologists, Social Workers, specially trained Police Officers will work under the same roof to provide appropriate support and treatment to women who are victims of violence.
- 71 Further of crucial importance is the implementation of the NAPGE (2014-2017) which includes specific actions on Violence against Women. The NAPGE has gone through evaluation and based on this further activities on the issue are designed which are included in the new NAPGE (2019-2022);
- 72 To give a more holistic approach to the issue the development of the second National Action Plan for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (NAPPHVF 2017-2019) as well as the development and adoption of a Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures have taken

place by the ACPHFV. Specific actions are designed for the encouragement to report cases of violence through awareness raising and other activities, along with the launching of awareness-raising campaigns addressed to the general public and women in particular. Further to the above the systematic training of professionals working in the field remains a priority.

- 73 As is specified in detail below [section II] one of the Governments' priorities is the economic support to NGOs providing protection and assistance to women's victims of violence.
- 74 For accelerating progress in the field of actions to combat violence against women the Government will continue to improve data collection and the development of research which in turn will inform laws, policies, measures and practices for the eradication of violence against women.
- 75 In the framework of the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Equality between Women and Men 2014-2017, large awareness raising campaigns have been implemented to encourage women to report incidents of violence and to sensitize professionals and the society at large.
- 76 Further, in 2016, the NMWRs focus specifically on actions aiming at prevention. More specifically, it has launched seminars, lectures and workshops for university students on gender-based violence, domestic violence and trafficking in women, aiming at awareness-raising [details are presented in Section II- Violence against Women].

### Trafficking in women

- 77 Although trafficking in women is considered a form of violence against women, the Government places Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) and trafficking in women in particular as a stand alone priority in order to underline the special attention that this crime requires.
- 78 THB in general and more specifically trafficking in women and girls has been a priority issue for Cyprus. During the period under review, new comprehensive tools have been developed in a continuous effort to combat trafficking in women. Such tools include:
  - 79 A new legislation which transposes the Directive 20011/36/EU on combating and preventing trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims into Cypriot Law 60(I) of 2014 on Combating Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons and Protecting Victims;
  - 80 The drafting and implementation of the National Action Plan (2016-2018);
  - 81 The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) aiming in strengthening the interdepartmental collaboration and the collaboration between the state and NGOs through memorandum of understanding.



- 82 The Anti- Trafficking Police Office has been strengthened with specialized agents and therefore investigations and prosecutions has been accelerated. Although there are still barriers to overcome, the fact that the Anti- Trafficking Police Office has been strengthened several cases has been brought before the court, resulting in convictions. The support and protection provided to the victims has been a major factor in successfully filing a case before the court.
- 83 It should be underlined that overall the collaboration amongst the state and the NGOs has succeeded in bringing the crime on the surface and out of invisibility, placing it in the social sphere through discussing in the schools, army camps and the universities as well as panel discussions. The media has also been sensitized on the issue. This is evident through reporting in the news (newspapers, TV, radio and social media).
- 84 Further, awareness raising on the issue has also been achieved through large scale conferences, training programmes, press conferences, and seminars. At the administrative level, the issue has grown into an ongoing issue which is developing based on the ground realities.
- 85 The US Department of State, Trafficking in Persons Report (June 2018) acknowledges the fact that the Republic of Cyprus has achieved during the last years and has upgraded the country into Tier 1.

### Women in political and public life

- 86 Although there is progress in the field of participation of women in political and public life, at the same time there is a setback, especially when it comes to the Parliament and the European Parliament. Despite the increasing numbers of women actively involved in public and political life in Cyprus, women are still underrepresented at the decision-making level. The balanced participation of women and men in decision-making positions in public and political life, has remained a priority for the National Mechanism for Women's Rights in line with the Strategic Action Plan on Gender Equality. Measures taken towards this direction include awareness-raising campaigns with the broad participation of women's organizations, meetings and contacts with political parties and media organizations, dissemination of statistical data and research findings, exchange of good practices in the framework of conferences and seminars. These were enhanced, particularly, in view of the Parliamentary and Local elections of 2016 and the European Parliament Elections 2019. However, the Government of Cyprus is concerned on the under- representation of women in the House of Representatives (17.86%), as mayors (10.26%) and only 4.65% as members of Municipal Councils while no women have been elected for the European Parliament, placing Cyprus as the only European country with no women representation. Admittedly the issue of equal representation at all levels requires more actions.

- 87 On the other hand, when it comes to political appointments and more specifically on high-ranking posts, these have also been filled with women (see section II for details).

## Health

- 88 The Ministry of Health (MOH) offers accessibility to women in all Health and Public Health Services. The MOH has developed a new *Strategic Plan for the years 2016-2018* and it will also continue to develop and implement National Programmes that target specific and vulnerable groups including of particularly age (i.e. elderly, children, women in reproductive age).
- 89 Additionally, in 2016, the MOH has introduced, free of charge, the HPV Vaccination targeting 12 year old girls, through School Health Services (in public and private schools), providing protection from the sexually transmitted virus. The simultaneous intensification of lectures on reproductive health, contraception, and information on HIV / AIDS, and sexually transmitted diseases is of high importance.
- 90 Regarding contraception, the MOH provides, free of charge, oral contraceptives to vulnerable women aged 18-55. A recent development is the de-criminalization of abortion by an amendment of the Penal Code (Section 169A), pursuant to which termination of pregnancy, up to the 12<sup>th</sup> week, is not a crime, thus promoting respect of women's reproductive rights and autonomy.

## Development of statistical data and training

- 91 The systematic development of gender-disaggregated statistics, in the sectors of employment, education, health, poverty, quality of life and violence has been one of the main priorities of the Statistical Service of Cyprus in recent years.
- 92 The CAPA in collaboration with the NMWR, the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights, the GECEVT and expert consultants, has, during the period 2014-2017, intensified its efforts and has developed training programmes on gender mainstreaming, addressed, mainly, to civil servants and, in particular, the focal points for gender equality, appointed in all Ministries.

## Cyprus specific measures to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination

### *Vulnerable Groups of women*

- 93 Cyprus is committed towards securing the rights of vulnerable groups of women, such as, migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, disabled, elderly, rural, single mothers and LGBTI.
- 94 In line with CEDAW 2013 Concluding Observations, a *Research on the economic consequences of divorce on both spouses – Gender-based economic disparities of divorced spouses*, has been conducted. The survey has, inter alia, manifested that the economic crisis has had devastating

effects on the standard of living of divorced spouses, especially women, who are the primary caregivers of their children. Major issues include the reduction of their income, the increase of unemployment, the elimination of social service programmes for children and the defaulted loans. Taking stock of these findings, the new NAPGE includes numerous actions with the aim of Protecting Vulnerable Groups of Women, such as single mothers.

- 95 New legislation was enacted in 2015, providing for the civil partnership of the same or different sex couples, ensuring the same rights and the same access to the welfare and social protection system as married couples, with the exception of adoptions.
- 96 Through legislation, like the Guaranteed Minimum Income and Other Benefits Law and the legislative provisions concerning single parent families, unmarried couples living together are now legally recognized and therefore have access to them the same rights as married couples. Single parent families, mostly women, are entitled to additional support, such as, an additional monetary allowance for each child, and complementary services (care and assistance, transportation, education etc) based on socioeconomic criteria.
- 97 Concerning women asylum-seekers, a mechanism has been established for early identification of their specific needs (upon submission of the asylum application and throughout the asylum procedure), while, properly trained female officers and interpreters undertake the examination of their claim. Training and guidelines on preventing gender-related persecution are systematically provided to the staff of the Asylum Service and other Services involved by, mainly, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and within the framework of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) Special Support Plan to Cyprus.
- 98 In the Health Sector, the National Action Plan on Minimizing the Consequences of the Economic Crisis in Public Healthcare (2013-2015) has been specifically designed for vulnerable groups in order to intensify the existing public health programmes. Further, women aged over 63 and with limited ability to travel and/or mobility problems, receive nursing care at home. Special measures are taken for the protection of women victims of Genital Mutilation (FGM) through specific actions [see details in section II- under health].
- 99 When it comes to women prisoners it should be noted that in December 2016, a new women's wing was inaugurated by the MJPO. This is part of a project by the MJPO to upgrade and modernise the prisons, which began in December 2014 at a cost of around €700,000. The new wing consists of 20 cells with a capacity for 40 women and is expected to help alleviate overcrowding as well as improve the living conditions of female inmates. It is also expected to provide better possibilities for correction and personal development.
- 100 In the period under review, the following measures were introduced to further enhance the humane side of the prison system:

- Termination of the practice of closed visits and increase of the number of visits and visitors. The glass separating visitors and inmates was removed, and inmates can now have physical contact with their children and family as recommended by the CPR. All visiting areas are now equipped with a small playground and toys for the children of inmates;
- An infant has the right to stay with his/her inmate mother for as long as he/she is breast feeding, or for any period certified by a medical practitioner for medical reasons. The cost for feeding, maintaining and treating infants during their stay in prison is on public funds;
- Quality education leading to a school leaving certificate; vocational training offered by the MOEC and other government agencies or professional bodies; physical education and sports delivered through a structured programme of activities under the direction of the Cyprus Sports Organization;
- Access to daily telephone calls from 08.00-18.00 hours and use of Skype;
- Participation in creative activities, workshops, entertainment and social and charitable events, which are deemed important in the rehabilitation process.

See also previous question and references to trafficking in women.

## Cyprus priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls for the coming five years through laws, policies and programmes

101 Since 2014 there were significant positive developments in most critical areas of the BPfA although the government has gone through a number of challenges and setbacks mainly because of the economic crisis. Undoubtedly the position of women in the society has been improved. However and despite all significant positive developments, traditional perceptions in relation to the role of women and men, gender stereotypes and prejudices continue to impede de facto realization of women's full enjoyment of their human rights towards a society free from gender inequalities. This is reflected, inter alia in the under- representation of women in political and public life, the persistent problem of violence against women, the gender pay gap and gender segregation in employment. Cyprus is however, determined to intensify its efforts to eliminate gender stereotypes, by focusing on education and the media. Given the no election of women in the European Parliament, the CGE has already taken action calling for a public dialogue on 7 July to evaluate and assess the major issues. The aim was to rethink the strategies that are currently been undertaken with the objective in the long run to design and formulate policies, practices or even legislation which will promote possibly positive actions including quotas that will encourage the equal representation of women in all spheres of life.

102 Further, more attention and focus will be given in order to address the problems and multiple discrimination faced by women belonging to vulnerable groups aiming to ensure the full implementation of the existing legal framework and in this way safeguard women's rights.

103 The continuing of training and mainstreaming gender horizontally in the government, including gender budgeting in the government will remain a priority, to combat all forms of violence against women, including trafficking, the changing of social norms and gender stereotypes through mainly education and the media. We are firm to believe that working towards the increase of women's political participation and representation as our main priority will bring positive results in all areas of BPfA.

104 The government is fully committed to continue to work for the further advancement of women's rights in all the above mentioned areas despite the global economic crisis, which has negatively affected the country's economy and social cohesion. The greatest challenge for the future is to maintain and secure the necessary resources for effective operation of institutional mechanisms and further improve the legislation based on the realities faced by women but also to further develop programmes which promote gender equality, so as to prevent any setback in what has been achieved so far.

105 More specifically and within the framework of the new Action Plan on Gender Equality 2019-2022 and through other policies and measures the following are set as the top priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls:

### *Violence against women*

106 In order to comprehensively tackle and prevent violence against women and protect the victims the government will proceed with:

107 The creation of a Co-ordinating body responsible for the co-ordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and measures to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention; The creation and set up of a unified and central data collection system on violence against women; The creation of the Women's House for a more comprehensive multidisciplinary protection and assistance of women victims of violence; The promotion of the enactment of the bill on stalking and harassment, as well as the bill on violence against women; The conducting of a nationwide study on financial consequences of Violence Against Women; The conducting of targeting awareness raising campaigns on Violence Against Women; Efforts towards the elimination of violence against women and girls through the introduction of innovative and targeted Public Health Campaigns, protocols and victim centered services.

108 In relation to trafficking in women it should be noted that the legislation is currently criminalising the use of services from victims provided that the user had the knowledge that the person is a victim of trafficking. This took effect in 2014 with the transposition of the directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and the protection of the victims. Given that this article was inactive because the difficulty to prove the user's knowledge, the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women are currently discussing the amendment in order to remove the provision of knowledge.

## *Promoting balanced participation between women and men in decision-making positions in public, political, social and economic life.*

109 Aiming to promote the balance participation between women and men in decision-making position in all areas and to reach parity the government will take the following measures:

- Examine the introduction of special temporary measures to increase the participation of women at decision-making levels, including quotas;
- Creating an Observatory and Database on participation of women in positions of responsibility in politics, the economy, society and the business sector;
- Awareness-raising campaigns aiming to promote women candidates in view of the Parliamentary and Municipal Elections of 2021;
- Meetings and contacts with political parties and media organizations;
- Dissemination of statistical data and research findings and the exchange of good practices through conferences and seminars;
- Research programme on integrating gender equality in Municipal and Community policies;
- Dissemination of a Guide on Gender Mainstreaming in public policies.

## *Reform/ improving the legislative framework*

110 In order to reform and improve the legislative framework the government will take the necessary actions in:

- Promoting the legislation of Violence against Women, Harassment and Stalking;
- Promoting the enactment of the amending bills of Family Law;
- Translation of the Concluding Comments of the CEDAW Committee, following the hearing of the 8<sup>th</sup> Periodic Report of Cyprus;
- Accelerating the implementation of the Beijing Plan for Action and actions related to the Sustainable Development Goals 2030;
- Actively disseminating of the Concluding Comments of the CEDAW Committee;
- Raising awareness through campaigns on the existing gender equality bodies and relevant legislation, through a special publication;
- Mainstreaming the gender dimension in the state's economic policy with an emphasis on taxation, social welfare and social insurance.

## *Protecting and Empowering Vulnerable Groups of Women*

111 Protecting and empowering Vulnerable Groups of Women will continue to be a priority of the government through the following actions:

- Tacking stock of the findings of the research conducted by the NMWR on the position of women in both communities, which recorded the opinions, expectations and experiences of both Greek and Turkish Cypriot women on personal, professional and political matters;

- Conducting a nationwide research into the socio-economic position, needs and expectations of women in vulnerable groups (single-parents, LGBTI, disabled, migrant, refugees, asylum-seekers, elderly etc)-Planning a programme to socially reintegrate them-Presenting the results of this research with representatives of Organisations of vulnerable groups in attendance;
- Drafting, publish and implement the first National Action Plan regarding the implementation of the UN Resolution 1325 on “Women, Peace and Security”;

### *Promoting equality between men and women in employment-Reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities*

112 Reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities has always been a barrier to reach gender equality in Cyprus. It is for this reason that the government will step up efforts towards:

- The improvement/widening of accessible child and elderly care facilities;
- The creation of creches in workplaces where a large number of women are employed;
- The Continuing of the programme to strengthen Women’s Entrepreneurship;
- Systematically educating and information to employers in order for them to adopt family friendly measures and policies through different programmes;
- Systematic monitoring and evaluation of legislative implementation and measures regarding equality in the workplace;
- Examine new measures aiming to reconcile family and professional life.

### *Eliminating Gender Stereotypes and Social Prejudices.*

113 As mentioned in the beginning of the report one of the biggest barriers in the promotion of gender equality in Cyprus it towards the elimination of gender stereotypes, attitudes, behaviours and social prejudices. In order to eliminate these the Government will continue to:

- Monitoring and rewarding good practices promoting gender equality;
- Informing and sensitising the public on the rights of women to public breastfeeding their children;
- Conducting research into the way women are shown on Mass Media and advertisements and drafting Recommendations aiming to combat sexism;
- Adopt and Publish a Code of Conduct in Mass Media;
- Training and education of Mass Media professionals and establishment of an annual prize for journalists who cultivate a culture of equality;
- Promoting gender equality through creative activities aimed at children;

### *Access to Health*

The Government’s priority for the coming five years in relation to Health will focus on:

114 The full implementation of the National Health System (NHS) which provides equal access to health care to all Cyprus Citizens irrespective of their sex, gender identity, socioeconomic status, age, religion, ethnicity or other attribute. It is worth noting that a universal Health System is about to be fully implemented by 2020. According to Health Insurance Organization the following milestones/actions will lead to the implementation of the Health System. On June 1, 2020, the entire NHS is being implemented, with the inclusion of secondary and tertiary health care.

115 The correct and full implementation of the NHS will assist all vulnerable groups including women and will intensify current efforts of the MOH for equal access to health for women. In the meantime all actions, programmes and measures for the equal treatment of women in health will continue and be strengthened. [more details for access to health in section II]

### *Education*

116 In the strategic planning for equality between men and women of the Interdepartmental committee of the MOEC a programme for encouraging increased female participation in technical fields is planned for future activities. Furthermore, a provision for the reshaping of Secondary Technical and Vocational education with the aim of attracting female participation is set. For this purpose a Ministerial decision has been made and a memorandum of cooperation was signed.

117 In addition, the MOEC is planning to promote the piloting and the implementation of pilot a STEM Education program in 9 primary schools for the school year 2019 – 2020. A new curricula is being planned for teaching digital technologies as a separate teaching unit. Starting from the next school year, 2019 – 2020, the subject “Design and Technology” is going to be renamed into “Design and Technology – Digital Technologies”.

118 The Committee on the Elimination of Stereotypes and Social Prejudices of the NMWRs has prepared and submitted a proposal to the MOEC. This proposal aims to improve its current gender equality programmes as well as establish new ones, such as surveys and studies promoting the gender dimension and eliminating stereotypes and social prejudices. The need for integrating Gender Equality at all levels of education is underlined in the proposal.



# Section Two: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern

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## Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work

Critical areas of concern: Women in poverty, women and the economy, human rights of women, the girl child

Actions taken to advance gender equality in relation to women's role in paid work and employment

119 The Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) is a body governed by public law founded by the 21 Law of 1974 under the name of Cyprus Industrial Training Authority. 1 of November 1999 entered into force on Human Resource Development Law no. 125 (I) of 1999. The HRDA refers to the Government through the competent Minister who, under the above law, is the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance. Managed by 13 Board of Directors with a tripartite character, involving representatives of the Government, Employers and Trade Unions. The Mission of the HRDA is to create the prerequisites for planned and systematic training and development of the human potential of Cyprus at all levels and in all areas to meet the needs of the economy within the framework of the social and economic policy of the state. In order to fulfill the mission and exercise the responsibilities and powers of the HRDA, it operates Human Resources Development Fund. Each employer is required to pay to the Fund a fee not exceeding one percent of the payable earnings to each of its employees, as determined each time. The fee was set at 0,5%. The HRDA programmes and plans are gender neutral and address both women and men.

120 Further and as stated above [See Section I] the MLWSI is taking all the necessary measures to implement its national legislation on the enforcement of the equality principle and the promotion and access to equal opportunities for men and women in the workplace, vocational training, and the closure of gender pay gap amongst others. This is done through the different departments of the ministry (see section I employment). Added to what was previously stated, a mechanism worth to be added here is that of the Department of Labor which examines complaints in relation to gender discrimination at work, including complaints concerning sexual harassment at work and in relation to pregnancy and maternity, aiming to ensure equality in employment and to combat discrimination. Any person discriminated against based on sex can submit a complaint to the quality Inspectors under the Equal Treatment for Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Law. This Law provides under Section 27 the process and procedures of the investigation of a complaint by the Gender Equality Inspectors of the Ministry. The same department and continues to provide information in relation to gender discrimination. Such information is provided to the employers and employees

association as well as the general public. The specific department works closely with the GECEVT. Such complaints mechanisms feeds in the evaluation of the measures and policies currently implemented which in turn helps in the design of the policies.

121 When it comes to the gender pay gap this has been decreased significantly in Cyprus since 2010 (16.8%) and keeps following a downward trend reaching a percentage as low as 13.7% in 2017. With a percentage higher than the EU average in 2010, Cyprus ranked 5th amongst the countries with the lowest rate in 2016, and has achieved a rate significantly below the EU average (16.4%). It should also be noted that in 2016 Cyprus also ranked 9th amongst the States having accomplished the highest percentage decrease in the gender pay gap during the period 2013-2016, despite the economic crisis and having to implement a strict economic adjustment programme during 2013-2016.

122 A national Model for Certifying Enterprises which adopt Policies Promoting Gender Equality in the Workplace has been developed. A National Certification Body was established in April 2014 responsible for granting these certifications, by decision of the Council of Ministers. The National Body is chaired by the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, while its members are the GEC representatives of the employers and employees associations. According to the model of certification, companies have the right to apply for two types of certification namely (a) "Best Practice" for individual practices applied, and (b) "Equality Employer" for adopting a comprehensive system of promoting gender equality in their workplace. So far, 52 companies have been rewarded for their efforts to ensure equal pay and attract and retain the underrepresented sex, for applying actions to improve gender balance in decision making positions, for adopting gender-neutral job classification systems, for implementing policies aiming at the reconciliation of work and family life, to mention only a few. A call for inviting companies to apply for certification is announced annually.

123 Moreover, the Department of Labour Relations of the Ministry, engages in activities contributing to raising public awareness on the gender pay gap and its detrimental consequences on women's economic and social life, such as the organisation of annual Equal Pay Day events.

124 In relation to strengthening measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace, the GECEVT organized in the summer of 2017 a forum focusing on sexual harassment at the workplace. The target groups of the forum included the workers and employers organizations and NGOs. Further, the GECEVT played an active role in the drafting of sexual harassment code, which was approved in by the Council of Ministers in 2018. The code was promoted in all governmental departments and the CAPA conducted trainings to public employees in relation to the code. Further, another activity which was actively promoted was the introduction of training programmes to governmental officials, co organized by the GECEVT, the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) and the CAPA, aiming in the promotion of the code. In general the Committee conducted three- hour

seminars to staff of large private organizations. In total 1000 public officials and more than 2000 officers from private companies have been trained.

125 Within the framework of Subsidy Schemes for attracting people to the labor market through flexible forms of employment, the Cyprus Productivity Centre (CPC) implemented a Scheme specifically targeted at women during the 2004-2006 Programming Period. Subsequent Schemes developed within this framework were gender-neutral and available to both men and women to participate and seek employment, specifically to combat the stereotype that flexible forms of employment are only appropriate for, or should only be pursued by women. The most recent Scheme in this category was implemented in 2013-2015 and within its framework 556 women (57%) and 424 men (43%) were employed. At the same time the CPC organizes a large number of training programmes in the field of Management and in various technical fields. All programmes are open to both men and women and the CPC welcomes all eligible / qualified participants regardless of gender. Acknowledging, however, the fact that the overwhelming majority of participants in the vocational training programmes are men the CPC is always eager to explore ways in which to encourage the participation of more women. To this effect, in 2019, after intensified efforts the CPC organized again a vocational training programme offering different classes including on designing, sewing and clothe- making which attracted only female participants. Furthermore, there has been expressed interest from businesses in the sector, to employ the participants upon successful completion of the programme.

126 The committee on Employment and Economic Empowerment of Women of the NMWR has launched awareness-raising campaigns on women's workers' rights and is planning to organise seminars, workshops and events on equal pay, the reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities, the integration of inactive women into the labour market, etc.

### Actions taken to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation

127 Recognising that the gender pay gap and work-family reconciliation are interrelated issues in need of further analysis, the Statistical Service of Cyprus [CYSTAT] conducted in 2018 an Ad Hoc Module of the Labour Force Survey, in relation to the reconciliation of work and family life, as means for designing and implementing more effective and comprehensive action. This exercise revealed clear evidence of the connection between family care responsibilities and their disproportionate effect on different spectrums of women's working life, such as the need to take a career break and the choice of reduced working hours after having children. These choices can have many and different negative effects on the total income of women during their working life.

128 It is for this reason that the year 2017 was pioneer for Cyprus with the enactment of Paternity Law 177(i)/2017. This law provides that the employee has the right of two consecutive weeks

paternity leave within the period commencing from the week of birth and ends after the sixteenth week. Although the government recognizes that paternity leave should be more in terms of time, this legislation promotes the active participation of the father in the birth of his child and to the equal distribution of responsibilities for the care of the newborn while it contributes at the minimum to the work- life balance. However and more importantly is the fact that such legislation has a normative effect in challenging gender stereotypes.

129 The Department of Labour Relations of the MLWSI, strives for the protection and safeguarding of all employees' rights and the improvement of their living and working conditions, aiming at promoting decent work for all: Cypriots, EU nationals or migrant workers from third countries. Especially for migrant workers currently residing and working in Cyprus, the Department of Labour Relations, has established a mechanism for resolving complaints regarding violations of their employment contracts, at each District Labour Relations Office. The complaints of migrant workers, which include both domestic helpers (cleaners or carers) and labourers, are examined and a mutually-acceptable solution is being sought through an extra-judicial, mediation procedure. In cases where a violation of the employment contract is evident, sanctions are imposed on employers, through legal procedures and other internal mechanisms (i.e. no further employment permits granted for third-country nationals) in order to ensure that such violations will not be repeated. Moreover, if during the investigation of the complaints any possible trafficking issues or sexual exploitation attempts or evidence are identified, the complaints are forwarded to the competent authorities (MJPO, Ministry of Interior, Police Headquarters, etc.) for further action. It should be noted that this procedure is additional to the legal right of the employees to proceed to the Labour Disputes Court. During the year 2018, the Department of Labour Relations examined a total of 2.172 complaints, out of which, 604 were submitted by third country nationals. As far as more recent data is concerned, during the period January to March 2019, the Department of Labour Relations examined a total of 507 complaints, out of which, 146 were submitted by third country nationals.

## Poverty eradication, social protection and social services

### Critical areas of concern: Women and Poverty; Education and Training of Women; Women and Health; Human Rights of Women; The girl child

#### Actions taken to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls.

130 The Ministry of Energy, Commerce and Industry implements a scheme for the enhancement of Female Entrepreneurship. The Scheme is part of the Operational Programme 2014-2020 'Sustainable Development and Competitiveness' which is co- financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Republic of Cyprus with a total amount of €5.57 million. By the end of 2018, 28 projects completed out of 84 applications approved from the first rounds of calls. In May 2019, 86 new projects approved. The Scheme's aim is to develop,

support and encourage women's entrepreneurship between the ages 18-55, who wish to establish a new enterprise. The eligible investment projects included various professions such as nurseries, hairdressing and beauty salons, law offices, accounting/ consulting offices, bakeries, small manufacturing business, gym centres amongst others.

131 Historically, in Cyprus, women's contribution to the rural life has always been important. In the rural areas, women participate in all aspects of the farming life, whether this is cultivation of cereals, potatoes, fruits and vegetables, or the production of wine and olive oil, dairy and meat products, as well as other foodstuffs. Women in rural areas in Cyprus still have a vital position to play in the agricultural communities. Women are actively participating in a number of different tasks, such as the production of organic and traditional products, the revival of handicrafts and traditional embroideries and the direct selling of their products. Undoubtedly, women play an important role in increasing the family income. This is especially true for new and non-agricultural farm activities: it is often the wife who takes the first step and builds up a new on-farm business. Thus, farm women contribute considerably to the survival of family farms and the viability of the rural economy. It is worth mentioning that, recognizing the important role of women in family farming, the Republic of Cyprus organized at the World Conference on Family Farming, held at the FAO headquarters in Rome on 27-28 October 2014, a Side event on "Women in family farming".

132 The Ministry of Agricultural, Rural Development and Environment through the agricultural extension section informs, advises, instructs and trains the rural population. Furthermore, the Ministry designs, and implements in-service training courses. The Section is responsible for coordinating the organizing of the Pancyprian Agricultural Fair. Disseminating of information, training/advising farmers and rural women is done through the Agricultural Extension Sections Programme, which includes amongst others: Training courses and apprentice training courses at the Agricultural Training Centres; Study trips; Group activities (lectures, demonstrations and local short training courses).

133 Nevertheless, the challenges women face in farming nowadays have been changing. In order to become more competitive, women need to be educated further in the fields of economics, technology and information, as well as marketing, so as to promote in an effective way their various products. Acknowledging this need, the training schemes for empowering women in farming are being redesigned within the Cypriot Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Environment, aiming at offering the best possible training as dictated by the current challenges and needs.

134 More specifically, within the framework of the "Rural Development Program 2014-2020", measures are implemented aiming at creating a positive environment that will allow women to continue to maintain and expand their activities and become more competitive, especially through the implementation of innovative ideas. The Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 has also provided equal support to males and females in Cyprus. The programmes that have particularly been utilized by women are:

- Business start-up aid for young farmer: out of the 227 approved applications, 17 (7, 5%) were submitted by women;
- Support for investments in agricultural holdings: 188 applications were approved and 24 (13%) applications were submitted by women;
- Vocational training and skills acquisition actions: 300 women participated;
- Short term farm and forest management exchanges and farm and forest visit: out of the 258 participants, 31 were women.

135 In addition, the committee on Employment and Economic Empowerment of Women of the NMWRs in collaboration with local communities has launched a campaign in rural areas aiming to inform and sensitize the population leaving in rural areas and in particular, women on relevant issues, including the gender pay gap and the reconciliation of family and working life. In the framework of this campaign seminars have been organized in collaboration with local communities and informative leaflets and other material have been prepared and disseminated, including the CEDAW Convention, its Optional Protocol and the BPfA.

#### Actions taken to improve health outcomes for women and girls in Cyprus

**136** The protection of patients' rights law [L.1 (I)/2005] safeguards patients' rights, equal access to health care to all persons, without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, religion, ethnicity or other attribute. The Law includes a provision for monitoring its implementation by the Health Care System, both in the private and public sector, through the Complaint Examination Committee which can be found all districts. The MOH offers accessibility to Women in all Health and Public Health Services and has developed a strategic plan for 2016-2018. This Strategic plan aimed to develop and implement National Programs that target specific, vulnerable and age groups, emphasizing the following: (a) Promoting programs to protect and promote the health of children and women (b) Completion of the review of the capacities of Immigrant Health in Cyprus and preparation of the relevant strategy, according to the needs. All Public Health policies, strategic action plans are human centered and respect the human right to health and are inclusive to vulnerable groups (for example: HIV- AIDS).

137 During the period of September 2013-September 2015, a National Action Plan on Minimizing the Consequences of the Economic Crisis in Public Healthcare has been specifically designed for vulnerable groups. This Plan was implemented in order to provide the intensification of the existing public health programmes as a bridge to the National Health Insurance System which will be implemented with a specific roadmap (Implementation of Primary Health Care as of 1 June 2019, full implementation by 2020).

138 The MOH, despite immense pressure of budget cuts, continues to aim to ensure the maintenance as well as access to healthcare treatment for all individuals residing in the Republic of Cyprus. Asylum seekers are granted with full medical coverage, while all vulnerable groups and illegal immigrants are treated within international humanitarian criteria. In

addition, psychological support and continuous monitoring is provided to the staff of the shelter that house women victims of Trafficking, while at the same time a rape victim registry for rape victims exist at the Hospital level.

139 According to a circular issued by the Permanent Secretary of the MOH, pregnant women and children of vulnerable groups receive medical care for free. Women aged over 63 years with limited ability to travel or /and have mobility problems, receive nursing care at home. The community nursing homes offer free nursing care, when such a service is needed.

140 In relation to psychological support to abused women, such service is provided by clinical psychologists, in outpatient clinics (Mental Health Services). Women in such situations are regarded as urgent cases and always have a priority.

141 When it comes to the girl child, in 2016 the MOH has introduced the HPV Vaccination for girls, of a certain age group, through School Health Services for free so to protect girls from the HPV virus. The simultaneous intensification of lectures on topics related to reproductive issues-contraception, and information on HIV / AIDS, and sexually transmitted diseases build a robust background. In June 2017 a new Strategic Plan on Sexual and Reproductive Health has been developed with special actions focusing on girls needs in this regard. The Strategy includes the design, adoption and the implementation of protocols and guidelines on sexual and reproductive health and introduced a monitoring body to ensure the quality of services offered in the public and private sector. More specifically the Strategy includes the following actions with particularly focus on adolescent girls through:

- Comprehensive and qualitative information on gender, gender identity, sexuality and sexual orientation;
- Increased knowledge on the risks STIS and its adverse effects;
- Awareness raising on sexual activity including on sexual health care;
- The promotion of an environment which promotes sexual health and allows personal expression of sexuality safely. This includes a broad-spectrum of concerns in relation to sexual health including on sexual identity and gender identity, relationships and pleasure. It further includes information on adverse effects or conditions such as: Infection with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), sexually transmitted diseases and other diseases of the reproductive system and their adverse effects (such as cancer and Infertility); Unwanted pregnancies and abortions; Sexual Dysfunction; Sexual violence and Harmful practices such as female genital mutilation.

142 When it comes to safe abortions, at the Public sector, all performed abortions are reported. It is expected that upon the implementation of a unified Health System, the private sector will be included in the reporting system as well. It important to report that no maternal deaths, due to abortion, were reported in the last 3 years in the Republic of Cyprus. The above stated

[see section i] amendment of legislation to abortion and its decriminalization safeguards the rights of women and autonomy to their bodies and provides that they make a free choice.

- 143 In recent years and due to the large influx of migrants, a number of measures have been taken to raise awareness related to female genital mutilation among healthcare professionals. A two-day workshop on the issue targeting different groups of health professionals was organized by the Ministry of Health and experts from the World Health Organisation (WHO) facilitated the discussions on female genital mutilation, highlighting the cultural, religious and psychosocial characteristics of the victims. In addition, in collaboration with the Pancyprian Medical Association, the MOH has organized lectures in order to educate doctors how to recognize and treat the victims of genital mutilation with respect and sensitivity. An attempt is also made to record these incidents, in various health facilities, a step that will develop into a tool that will help the government to estimate the extension of the problem. In 2016 a mechanism has been set up in collaboration with the MLWSI so that victims of FGM can receive direct medical (gynecological examination) and psychosocial (Mental Health Services, Welfare Office) support. The officers dealing with these victims received special training. The cooperation of all relevant services and a comprehensive approach with the other ministries involved aims to introducing specific procedures and practices for a holistic and humane treatment of the victims of mutilation. Since 2016, all migrant women who have been victims of FGM are checked by specific gynecologist at Makarios Public Hospital (Women's and Children specific hospital) who received special training.
- 144 The Commissioner's for Children's Rights positions play a crucial role in the design and implementation of actions related to the sexual and reproductive rights and sexuality education.

### Actions taken to improve education outcomes and skills for girls

- 145 In the strategic planning of the Interdepartmental Committee of the MOEC for equality between men and women, a programme for encouraging increased female participation in technical fields has been planned and the addition of a provision for the reshaping of Secondary Technical and Vocational education with the aim of attracting female participation was set. For this purpose a Ministerial decision has been taken.
- 146 In addition, data from the Report of the EIGE 2017 on Gender segregation in education, training and the labor market in the EU Member States, show that the percentage of women graduates of tertiary education in Cyprus (34,6%), is higher than men's (29,7%) as well as from the EU's mean score in women and men respectively. In addition, the same data show that Cyprus has a high concentration of women in the fields of natural sciences, mathematics and statistics (EIGE 2017: 25). Also in the same report is referred as one of the countries that shown the biggest increase in the share of women in these fields. The findings of the international survey PISA 2015, focusing on 15-year olds, are in line with the findings of EIGE's report, as in



Cyprus, in contrast with other OECD countries, girls outperformed boys in all three subjects (science (17 points difference), mathematics (5 points difference) and reading (52 points difference). Results from EIGE (2017) are in line with data from the Statistical Service of the Cyprus Ministry of Finance, which for the academic year 2015 -2016 showed that in all levels of education (bachelor, master or doctoral level) the majority of students are women. As for the years 2016 and 2017 the data of the Statistical Service show that the percentage of women in tertiary education in 2016 was 62,1% when for men was 43,9% . Also in 2017 the percentages were 63,5% and 47,2% respectively, for the ages between 30-34 years old. As for the ages between 25-64 years old, the percentage of women in tertiary education in 2016 was 45,7% and in 2017 46,2%, whereas for men was 37,8% in 2016 and 38,4% in 2017. As for the attainment in private and public universities (tertiary education), the data from 2011 to 2016 show that in both sectors, women have a higher representation than men, in total numbers (e.g. in 2015 -2016: public universities: number of men: 3695, women: 6429 and in private universities: men 4304 and women 4733).

147 To strengthen educational curricula to increase gender- responsiveness and eliminate bias, at all levels of education, a revised curricula developed to include modern educational materials which include a gender perspective aimed at combating gender stereotypes from an early age, especially by encouraging boys' greater involvement in family life and women's participation in politics/public life and develop relationships based on gender equality and mutual respect between the sexes. The revised curriculum address issues of inter-personal relations; accepting, respecting and managing diversity; family planning and sexual/reproductive health; confronting prejudice; and working against stereotypes, social exclusion and racism.

148 Further the MOEC has developed its own toolkit entitled: "Discovering the Elephant". The toolkit relates to Health Education. The toolkit includes activities such on controversial issues such as racism, racist incident, homophobia, transphobia, bullying, discrimination, gender stereotypes, sexism. The toolkit is available online along with other various toolkits focusing on family planning, citizenship, stereotypes amongst others.

149 The Health Education Curriculum on Discrimination/Racism includes subjects such as violence against women and on minority groups and has been included in educational curricula through the introduction of the new subject "Health Education" in 2011. The Health Education Curriculum (HEC) and learning objectives include clearly defined success indicators related to issues concerning the various forms of racism, including sexism and violence against women.

150 In addition the Cyprus Pedagogical Institute is has launched a website dedicated to Gender Equality, which includes useful information, bibliography and teaching material for promoting equal opportunities of both genders and gender mainstreaming in the educational process. The content of the website is frequently updated. ([http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=910&Itemid=383&lang=en](http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=910&Itemid=383&lang=en) ).

151 The MOEC is focused on ensuring equal opportunities in education for both genders on a non-discriminatory basis at all levels of education, and therefore gender equality, human rights training is provided for teachers and education professionals. The MOEC has formed an Interdepartmental Committee with representatives from all its departments and services. This Committee oversees and coordinates all gender equality issues related to actions taken. The work of the Committee has resulted to the development of an Action Plan which promotes gender equality (2018-2020), targeting to the inclusion of gender equality in matters related to the structures of the educational system and to the teacher in-service training. Examples of the implementation of the action plan are provided below:

- Training courses aiming to raise awareness on gender issues related to the gap between men and women in labour targeting to all teachers in primary and secondary education, all career counselors in secondary education and all inspectors in primary and secondary education (Pedagogical Institute, Career Counseling and Educational Service and MLWSI); Training of teachers and parents on issues related to gender, through school-based training seminars and programmes (Pedagogical Institute);
- Workshops for teachers in primary and secondary education (Pedagogical Institute and the MIGS).
- In-service training of teachers on issues related to prevention and combating delinquency with reference to transgender relationships (Departments of Education and Pedagogical Institute).
- Implementing programmes in schools with the aim of promoting gender equality and respect among all children in class, irrespective of their background or gender (Educational Psychology Service).
- Workshops for teachers and pupils aiming at the promotion of equality and inclusion (Career Counseling and Educational Service)
- In collaboration with the Interdepartmental Committee with the GEVTC is organizing an annual competition for pupils at all levels of education concerning combating gender stereotypes in the field of workplace or their career path.
- In collaboration with MIGS and the CGE the Government is promoting ideas for infusing the issue of “work-life balance” in specific topics of Health Education (organizing a school unit and educating teachers how to approach the specific target in class).  
[http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1738%3A2017-03-03-11-29-00&catid=34%3A2010-06-02-08-27-34&Itemid=65&lang=el](http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1738%3A2017-03-03-11-29-00&catid=34%3A2010-06-02-08-27-34&Itemid=65&lang=el) and  
<http://www.breakingthemouldcy.com/training/>

152 In relation to increased access to skills and training in new and emerging fields, especially STEM the new curricula applied to all courses and at all levels of education. Indicators of competence and success have been developed. Based on these, the scientific committee of expert academics has made proposals for the evaluation of new curricula. An example is related to the subject of Design and Technology on all levels of education. Based on the evaluation of the

scientific committee, the general aim of the subject of Design and Technology Curriculum has been set as follows:

- To understand the different impact of technology on people (studies, occupations, quality of life) and promote the idea of equal opportunities between women and men in accessing and exploiting technology.
- To be aware of modern developments in the areas of robotics, entrepreneurship, nanotechnology and biotechnology.

153 Last, in order to have a multidisciplinary approach all reports and recommendations provided by the Commissioner for the Child are taken into consideration aiming at the best interest for the child. An example the report of the commissioner on Report by the Commissioner on the practical implementation of the rights of children receiving Special Needs Education and Education in public schools

## Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes

Critical areas of concern: Violence against Women; Human rights of Women; Women and the Media; The girl child

Which forms of violence against women and girls, and in which specific contexts or settings, have you prioritized for action?

154 The Republic of Cyprus has prioritized on the following forms of violence against women:

- Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape
- Sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings and in employment
- Child Marriage
- Female genital mutilation
- Trafficking in women and girls
- Sexual Harassment including in the workplace

## Actions the Republic of Cyprus prioritized to address violence against women and girls

155 In order to achieve actions to address violence against women and girls the Republic of Cyprus has :

- Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation;
- Introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls;
- Introduced or strengthened services for survivors of violence (e.g. shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, justice service, counseling, housing);
- The design and creation of the “Women’s House” for strengthening the protection, assistance and support of women victims of violence;
- Introduced or strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls (e.g. in the education sector, in the media, community mobilization, work with men and boys);

- Monitoring and evaluation of impact, including evidence generation and data collection, including regarding particular groups of women and girls

See details below.

### What strategies has your country used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls?

156 In order to prevent and combat violence of any form and, particularly, violence against women, important developments have taken place, such as:

- The ratification of the Istanbul Convention, in November 2017, based on which a new bill on all forms of violence is currently being prepared, including a bill on harassment and stalking and the Ministerial Decision for the creation of the Women's House;
- the development of the second National Action Plan for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (2017-2019);
- the development and adoption of a Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures;
- the encouragement to report cases of violence through awareness raising activities including the economic support provided by the Government to NGOs for a hotline;
- the launching of awareness-raising campaigns addressed to the general public and women in particular;
- the systematic training of professionals working in the field;
- the strengthening of the Police Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office,
- the Government support to NGOs providing protection and assistance to women victims;
- the improvement of data collection;
- the development of research in the field of violence against women.
- the evaluation of the National Action Plan for Equality between women and Men 2014- 2017 and
- the development of National Action Plan on Equality between Women and Men 2019-2022.

157 In January 2019 the MJPO presented the bill on violence against women and girls during a press conference, which is currently at the law service of the republic for legal audit. The bill that has been prepared covers gaps identified in the legislative framework and is perfectly suited to the national legislative. The bill is within the framework of the extensive guidelines established by the Istanbul Convention. It has been perceived by the public and civil society as an innovative legislative tool which will bring positive changes in the field, proving at the same time the Republic will no longer tolerate any form of violence against women and girls. Specifically the bill is reforming, modernises and expands the current legislative framework on violence against women. Moreover the bill:

- Covers all forms of violence against women and girls as these are stated in the Istanbul Convention;
- Strengthens the protections and assistance of women and girls victims of violence;

- Sets out proportionate, deterrent and effective sanctions;
- Lays concrete basis for the provision of specialised assistance to victims;
- Sets out a comprehensive, holistic, women centred approach [while recognising the individual agency of women], as well as preventative actions and enforcement measures;
- Provides for the establishment of a coordinated body to implement the Istanbul convention, which amongst others, will undertake the responsibility for the creation of a unified data collection system on all forms of violence against women which will include desegregated data by sex and age of the victims and perpetrators and the relationship between them as well as the type of violence;
- Sets the basis to establish international and national cooperation in the field of violence against women.

158 With regards to stalking and harassment, the bill will regulate the protection of individuals from behaviour such as harassing and stalking, as well as behaviour that constitutes harassment, as well as other related offenses. The purpose of the bill is to criminalize the offenses of harassment by varying the penalties imposed and its consequences on the victim, as defined in the bill. The bill also provides for the possibility for the court to issue decrees with a view to protecting the victim or other persons in his/her environment. A special section on urban therapies is included and, in particular, the right of the victim to compensation and rehabilitation after a final conviction is provided for. This bill has been tabled before Parliament.

159 As part of the implementation of the obligations under the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention), ratified by the Republic of Cyprus in 2017, the Council of Ministers of Cyprus has approved on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019 the operation of a “Women’s House” which will function as an interdisciplinary center, where professionals from various disciplines and state officials such as Clinical Psychologists, Social Workers, specially trained Police Officers will work under the same roof to provide appropriate support and treatment to women who are victims of violence. Victims of violence will be referred to the House by the Social Welfare Services, the police and non-governmental organizations, or other State agencies as well as directly by the victims themselves and their families.

The services which will be provided to victims by the House include:

- Counselling and support
- Psychosocial counselling support.
- Legal counselling and guidance on their rights
- Referral to the relevant services.

160 A step forward in the right direction was also the signing of bilateral cooperation protocol between the MJPO and the APHDV. The APHDV runs a 24 hour telephone helping for women victims of violence and it is funded by the MJPO. In addition the police has adopted a special Risk Assessment Protocol for cases related to intimate partner violence. The protocol is used in cases of allegations of violence, involving (former) spouses, cohabitee or partners.

161 To give full effect to the Istanbul Convention, a bill aimed at criminalizing harassment and stalking, has already been tabled before House of Representatives. In the same vein, the MLWSI Insurance has called for proposals from NGOs for the development of two new shelters, as well as a Centre of Multidisciplinary Support for women victims of violence.

162 In terms of strengthening legislations the Republic of Cyprus and specifically the MJPO proceeded to the reform of the Family Law. Calling upon the expertise of judges, lawyers, the Commissioner for Children's Rights and relevant academics, the MJPO proceeded with the preparation of seven bills. The aim of these is to modify the Family Law in an effort to safeguard the rights of women and men, while the best interest of the child remains a priority, thus achieving full harmonisation with relevant international and European human rights instruments, including the UN convention on the Rights of the Child. The modification of such legislation will particularly benefit women in different ways.

163 The ACPCVF aims to create, inter alia, a centralized data mechanism for gathering reliable and comparable data on domestic violence in compliance with the Istanbul Convention and the EU Victims' Rights Directive. [2012/29/EU]. The Council of Ministers appointed the ACPCVF to act as the coordinators for the creation and operation of the HOUSE for women [see above].

164 Special emphasis is given to the mobilization of NGOs in relation to the prevention and handling of violence in the family. In 2017 the amount of €137,000, was granted to the APHVF, through the Grants-in-Aid Scheme, for the support of its Shelters, the Crisis Center and other relevant programmes. The APHVF operates two shelters which provide a safe environment for women who have experienced violence and are at immediate physical and psychological risk from their abusers/ perpetrators. In addition, with the financial support of the Government, a telephone helpline for the victims of domestic and gender-based violence, run by the same NGO, is operating as of January 2017, on a 24-hour basis.

165 The Cyprus Police has also been making continuous and systematic efforts, aiming at higher levels of sensitivity, awareness and professionalism among police members handling cases of domestic violence. A Protocol on Risk Assessment of Intimate Partners Violence has been implemented by the Police since January, 2018. Within this framework, specialized training programmes are carried out, aimed at police members dealing with these issues, as well as newly recruited police officers. The protocols meets the criteria and the relevant provisions of the ratifying Law 14(III)2017 and the Istanbul Convention, Article 51, and the Law 51(I)2016, Articles 20 & 21 transposing EU Directive 2012/29 that establishes minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime. These trainings took place within the framework of a two-year Project (2017-19), entitled "CIRCLE OF CHANGE" (JUST/2016/RGEN/AG/VAWA/9945). Funds of the project have been also used for drafting a police training manual on violence against women, with an emphasis on domestic violence, which was issued in early 2018. The projects its been implemented in collaboration with NGOs.

166 Specifically for children including the girl child and within the framework of the implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (2016 – 2019), a central unit has been established and operates at the police headquarters investigating all child sexual abuse allegations nationally. This was established on January 2017. This special police unit is one of the main actors of the Children’s House in Cyprus which has started operating in 2017 on the basis of the principles of “Barnahus” (multi-disciplinary, one stop shop service), for child sexual abuse incidents.

167 Besides all the above the Office of the Commissioner for Administration has issued a number of interventional reports in relation to gender based violence. Indicatively we note the following:

- Report in relation to sexual harassment in the workplace (2018);
- Intervention in relation to the need for establish a mechanism for the prompt and coordinated inter- departmental intervention in cases of serious risk of violence against women (2016);
- Intervention regarding the drafting of a National Strategy on the prevention and combating of sexual crimes (2015);
- Intervention regarding the obligations of employers, when complaints for sexual harassment in the workplace are submitted (2015).

168 In addition and in relation to FGM as a form of violence against women, on June 25, 2018, the Office of the CGE, in close co-operation with the EIGE launched an event, aiming to present the outcomes of the EIGE’s study entitled “Estimating the number of girls at risk of Female Genital Mutilation in Cyprus”. According to the report, a percentage of 12% to 17% of girls living in Cyprus are at risk of FGM from a total number of 758 girls aged 0-18 originating from FGM practicing countries. The largest communities from FGM practicing countries in Cyprus originate from Egypt, Sudan, Iraq and Ethiopia.

169 Although the levels have fallen slightly in Europe overall since 2011, the number of girls at risk of FGM has increased in Belgium and France to reflect the rising number of second-generation girls. While the number is currently 44,106 in France, it is 132 in Cyprus. According to the EIGE’s representative, “Despite the number of girls at risk, research shows that communities are starting to abandon this practice as a result of efforts and laws to promote the social inclusion of these populations. In Cyprus, for example, women and men from countries to which this practice applies have stated that their attitude has changed since they migrated to Europe.”

170 In 2003, a specific criminal law provision on FGM was adopted. Article 233A of the Penal Code prohibits FGM, which is defined as the cutting or mutilation, in any way, of the major labia or the minor labia or the clitoris of a woman’s genitalia. The victim’s consent does not affect the

legal qualification of the act. Upon decision of the court, the principle of extraterritoriality may be applicable, making FGM punishable even if it is committed outside the country.

171 For the last five years emphasis is being put on the implementation of gender-sensitive asylum procedures, and in this regard, several actions have been included in the new NAPGE 2019-2021 [see more on FGM in the Health section].

172 Further to all the above the Committee against Violence Against Women of the NMWR held various seminars/events to raise awareness in urban and rural areas on the issue. In 2017, the Committee held seminars, lectures and workshops among university students in Nicosia and Paphos on violence against women and domestic violence, and in Nicosia and Limassol on trafficking of women.

### *Trafficking in women*

173 The most important development during the period under review was the adoption of a new, more comprehensive legislation in 2014, which is based primarily on the EU directive 2011/36/EU.

174 In the year 2018, and to meet the objectives of this report the MCGs most important developments includes:

- The welcoming of four NGOs as new members of the group for two years, renewable;
- The development of a standard National Referral Form of potential victims aiming at the introduction of a formal reference procedure of potential victims to the Social Welfare Services (SWS);
- Furthering the examination for the operation of a 24- hour help line for information, guidance and support of victims, through the assistance of NGO A21 in Greece;
- Trained interpreters through an online EASO specialized training for vulnerable groups.

175 For safeguarding the rights of victims it is crucially important to note that when it concerns the right to judicial review against any administrative decision, including the revocation of a temporary residence permit or registration certificate of a victim of trafficking is safeguarded by article 146 of the Constitution of the Republic. In practice, no permits or registration certificated were revoked because of the discontinuance of criminal proceedings against traffickers. At the same time the anti- trafficking legislation upon individual assessment of each case, has the power to grant a residence permit or registration certificate for humanitarian reasons of this is in the interest and protection of the individual.

176 Cyprus has succeeded over the years to bring the crime out of its invisibility through intensified efforts of the governmental to combat this crime. The collaboration between the state and civil society played a crucial role in this regard, especially through the signing of Memorandums of Understanding with NGOs offering services to victims.



177 Awareness raising campaigns as part of the prevention effort, has been systematically taken place in all spheres of life including in schools, universities and arm camps. More publicity has been given through press conferences and open discussions. On the administrative level, the issue of trafficking in human beings has been a priority and an ongoing policy development. In this direction Cyprus has developed a NRM strengthening the collaboration between the governmental departments. These tools proved to have paved a roadmap for all actors involved and it clarifies the responsibilities and duties of everyone involved. At the same it allowed for a structured and targeted response, better collaboration, accumulation and sharing of experience and knowledge. All competent authorities cooperate within this framework to ensure that victims have access to their rights and therefore enjoy their full rights in relation to assistance and protection.

178 The Ministry of Interior as the coordinator in preventing and combating THB and protecting the victims organized a series of trainings on the NRM. The target groups included front-line officers, such as migration officers, the police, medical staff, labor relations amongst others. Each authority is responsible for providing staff training on its competence especially in relation to the implementation of the NRM.

179 In relation to the protection and assistance, all victims of THB are supported by the SWS who are responsible in informing the victims on their rights. SWS refer the victims to the MOH for mental and psychological support and assessment, to the Public Employment Services for possible job opportunities. In case where the state shelter is fully occupied victims are referred to NGOs for housing and other possible support services.

180 In relation to the shelter specifically, this has a capacity of 15 places and its run by the SWS. Those victims accommodated to the shelter receive 17 euros weekly as pocket money, as all their needs are covered by the state. These include clothing, food, personal hygiene items based on their individual needs. The total cost for the shelter for the year 2018 was approximately 280,000. At the same time and even if the shelter is not fully occupied, if the victims do not wish to be accommodated at the shelter, financial and other support is provided by NGOs, for as long as required. The financial support is provided by the state based on the needs of the individual. It should be also noted that for 2018 the financial support to an NGO-run shelter was of €55,000.

181 In collaboration with the MIGS, the Wellspring Association (both NGOs), the Centre for Therapy, Training and Research of the University of Nicosia and the Ministry of Interior organized and financial supported a seminar entitled "Trafficking in Women for sexual exploitation: the mental effects on the victims". The target group of this seminar included health care professionals working in the public and private sector.

182 When it comes to the asylum procedure concerning trafficking victims it should be underlined that first screening is performed by the police upon submission of the asylum application

(completing of the special screening form for identification of vulnerable groups such as victims of trafficking). If there is the slightest suspicion that a person might be a possible victim of trafficking, then the asylum service is informed accordingly and performs a secondary screening of the application. An interview is scheduled as soon as possible by a competent officer. Through the interview, the person may be identified as a victim of trafficking. In such a case and according to the national referral mechanism, the victim is referred to the social Welfare Services provided that the applicant consents.

183 Kofinou reception center is the center that hosts asylum seekers in Cyprus. Individuals suspected of being victims of trafficking upon submission of the application are referred to be accommodated at the Kofinou reception centre. Once applicants arrive at the centre, they are being interviewed by the social workers appointed specifically for this purpose. The aim of the interview is to receive information on the social, psychological background and any other information needed for a full assessment. If a victim of trafficking is detected at the centre, the asylum service is immediately informed in order to proceed with the necessary steps as these are assigned by the national referral mechanism.

184 In 2016 and 2017 the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior, the Police and the CAPA organized a number of [training seminars](#) targeting front line officers from different departments such as the Labour Department, Labour Relations Department, Police- Immigration and local police stations, officers of local authorities conducting civil marriages and others. The aim of the training seminars was to inform and enhance knowledge to detect indications related to trafficking or the exploitation of vulnerable groups of people, mainly migrant women and refer the cases accordingly.

#### Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviors

185 In the framework of the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Equality between Women and Men 2014-2017, large awareness raising campaigns have been implemented to encourage women to report incidents of violence and to sensitize professionals and the society at large. Further, in 2016, the NMWRs designed specific actions aiming at prevention. More specifically, it has launched seminars, lectures and workshops for university students on gender-based violence, domestic violence and trafficking in women, aiming at awareness-raising.

186 Throughout the period 2014 -2016, the Office of the Commissioner for Administration , in collaboration with the ACPCDV, the CAPA and MIGS, run an awareness raising campaign on combating violence against women and girls. The campaign was funded by the EU under the Progress Programme. The main activities in relation to awareness raising were implemented via the mass media, as well as through series of trainings to groups of professionals including the police, the MOH, the MOEC, the SWS among others, who could have a preventive or repressive contribution to combating violence against women and girls in Cyprus.

187 The Republic of Cyprus is working towards the prevention of violence against women and girls in schools including on sexuality education [see also section on health above]. In order to reduce violence in schools the Observatory on Violence in Schools coordinated the establishment of a policy concerning the prevention and intervention procedures for school bullying, which includes cases of homophobic incidents. For this purpose, several guidelines and a manual for teachers of all grades have been published since February 2015. In-service training of teachers on this issue is organized by different services of the MOEC. The Observatory in collaboration with the Commissioner for Children's Rights has established the Network against Violence in School in 2014. The establishment of the Network aims to reinforce the effort of various social actors (governmental and NGOs), in the fight against violence in schools and the promotion of children's rights.

188 In April 2016, the MJPO in cooperation with the ACPCDV and the American Embassy, organized a seminar on VAW, which was addressed to professionals of all relevant ministries/agencies involved in handling domestic violence cases. The trainers of the seminar were experts on domestic and sexual violence issues.

189 In 2016, the Thematic Group "Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Women", under the NMWR Committee against Violence and Trafficking of Human Beings, worked on the design of actions aimed at prevention. In this context, it developed proposals for workshops to reduce the demand for sexual services.

### *Children and the girl child- awareness raising and changing attitudes and behaviors*

190 The MOEC, recognizing its responsibility and influence in the field of primary prevention, has proceeded to the setting up and operation of a Coordinating Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children with representatives of all MOEC departments and services. The Committee coordinates all matters concerning the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Child Pornography relating to the actions of the MOEC.

191 The National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography ("NS") constitutes the basic policy text and guides the actions and initiatives of the Authorities of the Republic of Cyprus for the next three years. The elaboration of the NS was decided by the Council of Ministers on 13/7/2015 and for this purpose an Inter-ministerial Committee has been established, comprising the Ministers of Education and Culture, Labour, Welfare and Social Security, Justice and Public Order and Health. The NS seeks to get a deeper knowledge of the scope and scale of the issue at hand, to identify the priorities for addressing it properly and to determine the necessary actions and policies in order to achieve the primary goal which is based on the principle that: *"All children should have the opportunity to grow up in conditions of security, equipped with all the tools that would allow*

*them to develop healthy relationships, without having to face any form of sexual exploitation or abuse, free from all forms of sexual injury".*

192 In the action plan of the NS, the MOEC plans for Mandatory Trainings for all educationists at all levels, working on the issue or otherwise involved in sexual education, aiming at strengthening them to implement the curriculum of health education and related disciplines. Mandatory information, training and awareness-raising are being scheduled on all these (2016-2019) by the Pedagogical Institute and the University of Cyprus for educationists at all levels (Primary / Secondary-Technical Education), Educational Psychologists, counselors of the Career Counseling and Education Services, Inspectors of Primary Education, Secondary Education and Technical Education during the three year plan of national strategy, on the characteristics and the impact of Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Child Pornography, on the procedures for the handling of such incidents and on the legal framework, through training on handling techniques of Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and Child Pornography. Also, during current school year 2017 -2018 Series of seminars on "Recognizing and Reporting Incidents of Sexual Abuse" in the context of the National Strategy against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation in all four districts of Cyprus were organized (February and March 2017 in 450 primary school teachers). (National Strategy for preventing Child's sexual abuse: [http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sws/sws.nsf/All/070F867D2763F568C2257FC70024C4F4/\\$file/1%20NATIONAL%20STRATEGY%20TO%20COMBAT%20CHILD%20ABUSE.pdf](http://www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/sws/sws.nsf/All/070F867D2763F568C2257FC70024C4F4/$file/1%20NATIONAL%20STRATEGY%20TO%20COMBAT%20CHILD%20ABUSE.pdf) )

193 At the current school year, research on sexuality education was conducted by the Centre of Educational Research and Evaluation. The research aimed at providing information about the situation as a whole at school and more specifically in classroom during teaching, but also in the wider environment of the school, by highlighting the views of teachers on these sensitive issues. Focus on teachers has been considered important, as teachers' abilities, perceptions and beliefs influence their teaching and their whole approach of these particularly sensitive issues. The suggestion to investigate the matter was raised by the Coordinating Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children, members of which contributed both in terms of methodological planning and feedback to the conclusions of this research. The Cypriot Family Planning Association also contributed to the design and final form of research, giving feedback. The research conducted as part of the action plan of the National Strategy to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography (2016-2019) in order to investigate the needs of the teachers in teaching the subject and to set related trainings (mandatory) for the next years. Based on the Policy Paper of the MOEC on the Sexuality Education that was posted in 2016 several trainings all over Cyprus were organized as mentioned previously. In addition, based on the National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography (2016-2019) several mandatory trainings had been conducted during April of the current school year 2018 – 2019, all over Cyprus.

194 The MOEC has made considerable efforts to achieve a comprehensive and effective sexuality education in schools according to WHO guidelines. Sexuality education in Cyprus is part of the reformed Health Education Curriculum which has been implemented in schools since September 2011. The Health Education Curriculum promotes active citizenship learning objectives related to critical awareness of stereotypes and social exclusion consequences. The inclusion of sexuality education through health education is compulsory and it starts from pre-school to secondary school. The themes that are mostly related to sexuality education are included in the thematic unit called "Family planning, sexual and reproductive health". This sub-thematic unit includes topics which are directly referred to a comprehensive understanding of sex and reproductive health such as local and European Law, stereotypes, family violence, homophobia, the role of religion and the media. This provides the opportunity to teachers to directly liaise themes of this particular thematic unit (and its sub-themes) with other thematic areas of the curriculum such as peer pressure, values of life, gender stereotypes, self-esteem, safety, assertiveness, rights and obligations and substance misuse.

### Cyprus actions taken in the last five years to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media

195 Article 30 of the Radio and Television Organizations Law 7(I)/1998 (as it has been amended) states that *"the Authority shall ensure that the broadcasts don't contain any incitement to hatred on grounds of race, sex, religion or nationality"*

196 Additionally, the following regulations of the Radio and Television stations Regulations 2000 (10/2000) provide that:

- [...] in regards to entertainment programs, *"broadcasting of programs that insult the dignity of the two sexes is prohibited[ ...]"*. Regulation 26(I);
- Concerning mainly News Broadcasts, Regulation 24(1)(e) states that *special provisions need to be made regarding reportages, about violence against children, women or elders"*.

197 Furthermore the Advertising Code (Appendix IX of the aforementioned Regulations), provision B8 states that *"advertisements are prepared with a sentiment of responsibility towards society and take into consideration the ethical values that are the foundations of any democratic state and are common to all country-members of the Council of Europe, such as personal freedom, tolerance and respect to the dignity and the equality of all people"*.

198 The Cyprus Radio Television Authority (CRTA) is the audiovisual regulator responsible to ensure that private radio and television broadcasters act in compliance with the Law and Regulations of the Republic. Furthermore, the CRTA has limited regulating authority over the Public Service Broadcaster.

199 The CRTA has recently drafted a preliminary set of Guidelines on gender equality and portrayal of women and men in the broadcasting media, in order to promote a balanced, non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media, thus eliminating gender and social stereotypes. The CRTA also intends to further enhance its focus on content monitoring to address issues of gender equality.

200 The CRTA examines media content either on its own accord or acts upon complaints submitted by the public on issues related (but not exhausted) to gender. Over the past 5 years (2014-2019) the CRTA has examined various cases against radio and TV broadcasters concerning discrimination on the grounds of sex and/or the transmission of content that is harmful to dignity (objectification of women) and/or programs which present violence and/or violent behavior within the family. The CRTA has the authority to impose sanctions to audiovisual providers if they are found in breach of the legislation (i.e. discriminations on the ground of sex, the broadcasting of content that is harmful to dignity etc).

201 Finally, the CRTA encourages students, through media literacy workshops, to develop critical thinking skills so they can identify and challenge gender stereotyping in advertising.

### Cyprus action in the last five years specifically tailored to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination?

See above section I- Vulnerable Groups, Employment on domestic workers and Section II Violence against Women- Trafficking in Women, under health: actions in relation to FGM

### Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions

Critical areas of concern: Women in power and decision- making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, Human rights of women, women and the media, the girl child

Actions and measures taken in the last five years to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making.

202 Despite the increasing numbers of women actively involved in public and political life in Cyprus, women are still underrepresented at the decision-making level. However, it is worth mentioning that, in terms of political appointments, high-ranking posts have been filled by women in terms of political appointments. The Council of Ministers, at present, includes women as Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance and Minister of Transport, Communication and Works; also, as Deputy Minister of Shipping and Deputy Government Spokesperson.

203 Women have also been appointed at high ranking positions, such as Law Commissioner, Commissioner for Children's Rights, Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, Commissioner for Gender Equality, Commissioner for the Environment, Commissioner for the Protection of Personal Data.

204 There is a continuous increase of women in the Judiciary, where women constitute 50% of the judges (59 out of 119). There are also 5 women out of the 13 judges in the Supreme Court.

205

206 During the last years, women's participation in the boards of semi-government organisations has been strengthened, with women accounting for 36% compared to 30% in 2016. At the same time, women participate as chairpersons in the Councils of semi-government organisations at a level of 33% compared to 24% in 2016.

207 Recently, as part of appointments to administrative boards of semi-government organisations, the President of the Republic has appointed a large number of women as Chairpersons or Vice-Chairs, as follows:

Chairpersons to the Boards of the following semi-government organisations:

- the Electricity Authority of Cyprus
- the Cyprus Telecommunication Authority,
- the Housing Finance Corporation
- the Cyprus Theatre Organisation
- the Board of Loan Commissioners
- the Council for Registration and Control of Building and Civil Engineering Contractors
- the Cyprus Radiotelevision Authority
- the Tenders Review Authority and
- the Committee for the Assessment of impartiality in public duties.

Women are also appointed as Vice-Chairpersons to the Boards of:

- the Cyprus Sports Organisation
- the Cyprus Ports Authority
- the Cyprus Theatre Organisation
- the Council for Registration and Control of Building and Civil Engineering Contractors
- the Committee for the Assessment of impartiality in public duties
- the Cyprus Radiotelevision Authority
- the Licensing Authority and
- the Foundation of the Cyprus Symphony Orchestra.

208 Further, the proportion of women senior civil servants has increased from 13.5% in 2000 to 32.7% in 2011, 37.3% in 2013 and 38.5% in 2014. There are also 3 Permanent Secretaries of Ministries out of 11, which is the highest ranking post in the Civil Service and 17 women out of 39 Heads of Department/Services of Ministries.

209 The percentage of women in the House of Representatives was 17.86% (10 out of 56) in 2016, showing an increasing trend compared with 12.5% in 2009, 10.7% in 2001 and 5.4% in 1991.

210 Women's participation in Municipal Councils has also gradually increased, but remains rather low. Based on the Municipal Elections of 18 December 2016, only four women were elected mayors out of a total of 39 (10.26%) and 88 women were elected members of Municipal Councils out of 1891 (4.65%). Some 21 women were elected heads/presidents of Village/Community Councils out of 256 (8.2%), 209 women out of 1407 (14.85%) were elected members of Village/Community Councils; and 99 women out of 219 (45.2%) were elected members of School Boards.

211 The percentage of women in the Diplomatic Service of the Republic of Cyprus is around 30% while there are currently 24 women servicing in key managerial posts at the MFA, including eight women Heads of Service.

212 At the same time an important outcome is the fact that for the first time, two Cypriot women have been chosen as Heads of Delegations of the EU (to Jordan and Pakistan), in June 2019.

213 Despite positive developments, women continue to be seriously under-represented in business leadership positions. They represent on average around 10.8% of the largest publicly listed companies at a national level, even if they participate actively in the labour market and are more qualified: they count for around 50% of new university graduates. At the same time no women have been elected for the European Parliament in 2019. To address the issue the CGE organised a public consultation to address this issue on 7 June 2019. As indicated by the statistics a significant gap between men and women still remains in nearly all decision-making positions. The prevalence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family, in the workplace, in political and public life contributes to this.

214 NGOs have been very active in recent years in promoting the participation of women in political and public life, and to this end, have organized campaigns and seminars and carried out research in this area, often with the support of the NMWR. A research study of particular interest was the research project entitled "Parliamentary Elections 2006 & 2016: The gender preferences of Cypriot voters" carried out as an exit poll on the day of the Parliamentary Elections (in 2006 and 2016) conducted by the UNESCO Chair for Gender Equality and Empowerment of the University of Cyprus and the Cyprus Gender Research Centre. The project mainly aimed to highlight the degree of change in stereotypical attitudes and preferences of Cypriot society towards women candidates and political decision-making positions in the decade 2006-2016. The findings were presented publicly



and disseminated to the government authorities, political parties, academic institutions and NGOs.

215 A challenge and a setback was the Decision of the Supreme Court (regarding the unconstitutionality of the bill aiming to introduce quotas for the participation of women on the boards of semi-government organisations, to ensure that 30% of either sex will be represented on the Board of Directors). In view of this decision other measures are under consideration to achieve the desired results, such as:

- Awareness-raising campaigns with the Government working with a broad-based of women's organizations;
- Organise meetings and contacts with head of political parties and media organizations;
- The dissemination of statistical data and research findings and the exchange of good practices through conferences and seminars.

216 Equal participation of women and men in decision-making positions in social and political spheres has been instrumental through awareness-raising campaigns with the Government working closely with civil society women's organizations, including women's wings of political parties and NGOs. Within the framework of the effort to enhance and strengthen the position of women in public and political life, the committees of the NMWRs on employment and economic empowerment of women and on women's participation in decision-making have implemented planning various actions in order to achieve equity for both women and men in political and public decision-making.

217 Most political parties have introduced the quota system to favor the participation of women in their decision-making bodies. Some of them also have quotas for their candidates' lists. The NMWRs as well as several NGOs have raised the issue of positive action measures and particularly the use of quotas in the candidates' lists, in the framework of their campaigns to increase women's participation in political and public life.

**As a donor country, does your country track the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?**

218 In 2018, the Republic of Cyprus contributed voluntarily to the following funds:

- UN Women – 10,000 euro
- UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) – Trust fund for Women's Empowerment – 20,000 euro
- Symbolic contribution of 50,000 Euros to Lebanon, aiming at the empowerment of programmes related to the improvement of access to education of girls belonging to vulnerable groups.

## Does your country have a valid national strategy or action plan for gender equality?

219 At present, the third National Action Plan on Gender Equality (NAPGE) 2019-2022 has been concluded, a result of close collaboration of the government, local authorities, the Commissioner for Gender Equality, NGOs, women's organizations including those affiliated to political parties, academic institutions, employers organizations and trade unions as well as human rights bodies. This NAPGE was designed to promote the implementation of the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) following the review of the 8<sup>th</sup> Periodic Report of Cyprus, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), as well as towards the acceleration of implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and more specifically SDG5.

220 Drawing from the report on the evaluation of the second Action Plan, the third Action Plan will include the following seven thematic areas/objectives that will form the key priorities for action over the next three years:

- Combating all forms of Violence against Women and gradual implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence ("Istanbul Convention");
- Promoting balanced participation between women and men in decision-making positions in public, political, social and economic life;
- Reforming and improving the legislative framework;
- Protecting and Empowering Vulnerable Groups of Women;
- Promoting equality between men and women in employment;
- Eliminating Gender Stereotypes and Social Prejudices and
- Education and Training of Women in Information and Communication Technologies.

Please also see section: Institutional Mechanisms including information provided under section II Headings Health and Education since other National Actions Plans on the aforementioned headings include actions related to the CEDAW, BPfA, SDGs 2030.

## Has the national action plan been costed and have sufficient resources been allocated to its achievement in the current budget?

221 The NAPGE is now in the process of costing all actions included and will have sufficient resources for its successful implementation.

## Does your country have an action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women?

222 Yes, please see above paragraphs 212- 214 (NAPGE 2019-2022). Please also see section: Institutional Mechanisms including information provided under section II Headings Health and Education since other National Actions Plans on the aforementioned headings include actions related to the CEDAW, BPfA, SDGs 2030.

## Is there a national human rights institution in your country?

223 Yes. Please see above section Institutional mechanism. The Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights. Details in relation to the mandate of the Commissioner and actions on the promotion of gender equality are provided in section Institutional Mechanisms and throughout the report.

## Peaceful and inclusive societies

### Critical areas of concern: women and armed conflict, Human Rights of Women, The girl Child

Actions taken in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda

### *Development of National Action Plan for the Implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)*

224 The CGE has undertaken, in close cooperation with the government and civil society organizations the drafting of the first National Action Plan in view of the implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), covering the period 2019- 2022. This Plan aims to ensure the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The first draft has been prepared, following a round of consultations among the relevant Ministries. A second round of public consultations is expected to follow in June 2019, aiming in finalizing it and submitting it to the Council of Ministers of approval. The action plan as it stands today is consisted by four main pillars:

- Participation and Empowerment through the empowerment and the promotion of women in decision making so that women can actively participate in discussions and negotiation in conflict prevention, peace-building and peacekeeping;
- Strengthening the protection of women and girls in was conflicts from gender based violence and sexual abuse;
- The Prevention of conflicts, including the prevention of gender- based violence and the sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls, especially during wars
- The Promotion and awareness raising of the civil society and the society at large on the resolution of the Security Council 1325.

### What actions has your country taken in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child?

- X Taken measures to combat negative social norms and practices and increased awareness of the needs and potential of girl children
- X Strengthened girls' access to quality education, skills development and training
- X Tackled disadvantages in health outcomes due to malnutrition, early childbearing (e.g. anemia) and exposure to HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases

- X Implemented policies and programmes to reduce and eradicate child, early and forced marriage
- X Implemented policies and programmes to eliminate violence against girls, including physical and sexual violence and harmful practices
- Implemented policies and programmes to eradicate child labour and excessive levels of unpaid care and domestic work undertaken by girl children
- Promoted girls' awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life

**See detailed answers under section I and II on Education, VAW and Health**

## Section Three: National institutions and processes

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**What is your country's current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women? Please name it and describe its location within Government.**

225 The NMWRs, is chaired by the CGE, based on a decision of the Council of Ministers dated 23/4/2014.

226 The NMWR plays a leading role in ensuring the introduction of gender mainstreaming in all national policies and programmes. This is done through the encouragement of training of relevant professionals within the public service on gender equality issues, the support of the development of research on gender-related issues, the promotion of data collection and gender-disaggregated statistics, and the organisation of relevant training workshops, seminars, and conferences with the participation of international experts.

227 The NMWR also participates in a number of multidisciplinary committees under other ministries dealing with issues such as family, children, violence against women, trafficking, social inclusion, employment and contributes substantially to ensuring a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of relevant policies. It should also be noted, that the government has developed much stronger ties with women's organisations by involving them in relevant spheres of policy formulation and decision-making processes [See more details Section I- Institutional Mechanisms].

**Is the head of the national machinery a member of the institutional process for SDG implementation (e.g. inter-ministerial coordinating office, commission or committees)?**

228 Cyprus' institutional mechanism for the national implementation of Agenda 2030 is comprised mainly of Ministries and other governmental services, under the coordination of the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development. The coordination when it comes to SDGs in foreign Policy is under the MFA. For the successful coordination and implementation, each Ministry appointed a focal point for the coordination of all different SDGs. When it comes to Gender Equality the GEU of the MJPO is a member of

the institutional process for the implementation.

229 The GEU of the MJPO is part of the ministerial committee and member of the institutional process for the implementation of the SDGs. The NMWR implements gender mainstreaming policies and actions in all areas and horizontally as indicated throughout the report. In this regard the NMWR also work towards the implementation of the SDGs as well as on other international commitments of the Government in relation to women’s rights.

**Are there formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

230 The implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and all actions towards equality between women and men specifically are included in the different NAPs stated above [see Policy and Institutional Developments]. However, the main policy document that monitors the implementation of the BPfA and the 2030 for sustainable development is through the NAPGE. As part of the implementation of the aforementioned plans the following stakeholders participate formally or informally in national coordination mechanisms established to contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It should be underlined that all Strategic Plans are publically consulted before their approval by the Ministerial Committee. The Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women often calls all relevant actors including NGOs for discussion related to the monitoring and implementation of the main policy document that of National Action Plan on Gender Equality. Therefore the following participate

**Beijing Declaration and PfA**

- Civil society organizations
- Women's rights organizations
- Academia and think tanks
- Faith-based organizations
- Parliaments/parliamentary committees
- Private sector
- United Nations system
- Other actors, please specify .....

**2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

- Civil society organizations
- Women's rights organizations
- Academia and think tanks
- Faith-based organizations
- Parliaments/parliamentary committees
- Private sector
- United Nations system
- Other actors, please specify .....

**Do you have mechanisms in place to ensure that women and girls from marginalized groups can participate and that their concerns are reflected in these processes?**

231 Civil society organisations and/ or women’s organisations representing women and girls from marginalized groups, including trade unions and employees organisations, are bringing forward different issues women face including those issues faced by women and girls from marginalized and vulnerable groups. This is been done through the membership and active participation to the different government mechanisms these organisations participate, as for example through the NMWR, the MCG amongst others.

Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.

232 The development of this national report was a collective achievement of close collaboration of the Government and local authorities, the Commissioner for Gender Equality, women's organizations, NGOs, academic institutions and human rights bodies.

Is gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls included as a key priority in the national plan/strategy for SDG implementation?

233 Yes. Gender Equality and the Empowerment of all women and girls are included as a key priority in the NAPGE which is the main policy document that monitors the implementation of the BPfA and the 2030 for sustainable development is through the NAPGE. As part of the implementation of the aforementioned plans the following stakeholders participate formally or informally in national coordination mechanisms established to contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

234 This NAPGE was designed to promote the implementation of the Concluding Observations of the UN Committee of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) following the review of the 8<sup>th</sup> Periodic Report of Cyprus the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), as well as towards the acceleration of implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

235 The following seven thematic areas/objectives that will form the key priorities for action over the next three years:

- Combating all forms of Violence against Women and gradual implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence ("Istanbul Convention");
- Promoting balanced participation between women and men in decision-making positions in public, political, social and economic life;
- Reforming and improving the legislative framework;
- Protecting and Empowering Vulnerable Groups of Women;
- Promoting equality between men and women in employment;
- Eliminating Gender Stereotypes and Social Prejudices and
- Education and Training of Women in Information and Communication Technologies. SDG 5B.

## Section Four: Data and statistics

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Areas in which Cyprus has made most progress over the past five years when it comes to gender statistics at the national level, including for future activities

236 The Cyprus Statistical Service [CYSTAT] is mainly concerned with the initiation, organisation and carrying out of various censuses, surveys and statistical enquiries of an economic, demographic, social or environmental content and the publication of the results with the intention both, of assisting the government in policy-making and planning of the activities and the statistical information of the private sector the general public. At the same time, CYSTAT acts as a co-ordinator in cases where other institutions (such as the Central Bank, other Ministries and Government Departments and semi-Government organisations) pursue work of a statistical nature for the collection of data of direct interest to the area of their activity.

237 Having said the above and based on research, studies and the collection of statistical information, all competent authorities and services are using the information provided the CYSTAT to design legislations, strategies, measures, policies and programmes related to women's rights and gender equality. Examples include policies and programmes to combat violence against women including on trafficking in women, FGM, women in decision making, gender equality and education, women and health, amongst others. Statistical information is also be used in order to measure the impact of the measures implemented.

#### Have you defined a national set of indicators for monitoring progress on the SDGs?

238 The Government and more specifically the national coordinator for the implementation and monitoring for progress on the SDGs, the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development is in the process of designing the national set of indicators.

#### Disaggregation's<sup>2</sup> routinely provided by major surveys in Cyprus

- X Geographic location
- X Income not in all
- X sex
- X Age
- X Education
- X Marital status
- Race/ethnicity
- Migratory status
- Disability
- Other characteristics relevant in national contexts

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<sup>2</sup> As specified in A/RES/70/1, with the addition of education and marital status.