

GREEK CONTRIBUTION

REGIONAL REVIEW AND APPRAISALS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ADOPTION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION IN 2010

PART ONE: Overall achievements and challenges

a. On 2 November 2004 the Government's Committee approved the General Secretariat for Gender Equality four year Action Plan entitled "NATIONAL POLICY PRIORITIES AND AXES FOR ACTION ON GENDER EQUALITY (2004 – 2008)", which links issues of gender equality to the national priorities of the country, (Development, Employment, Social Cohesion) and places emphasis on their economic, developmental and political dimensions. The Action Plan focuses on the following axes of special actions: **a.** combating the equality deficit in the labour market – **b.** stereotypic perceptions and educational procedures – **c.** preventing and combating violence against women – **d.** women's participation in decision-making. Our general policy on gender equality issues is also incorporated within the scope of these axes.

Through article 8 of the L. 3491/2006 for the first time a National Committee for the Equality between Men and Women was instituted as a permanent mechanism for social dialogue. The National Committee is comprised of the Minister of the Interior, as President, who is replaced by the Secretary General for Gender Equality, who also participates as member, the Secretaries General of the associated Ministries, Local Government representatives, OKE (Economic and Social Council), social partners, non-government organizations that are active in the sector of gender equality, as well as independent persons. The role of the Committee is to contribute to the formation of a national strategy for equality between men and women, the formation of necessary policies and measures and the monitoring of their enactment, as well as the evaluation of their results on a national and regional level. The National Committee for the Equality between Men and Women has already been incorporated by decision of the Minister of the Interior. Its first meeting took place on 26/3/2007 and the second one on 14/4/2008

b. Greece has ratified both the CEDAW Convention and its Optional Protocol. CEDAW is a key policy tool on gender equality and now we are working on our 7th Periodic Report (2005-2008)

c. Institutional protection of women's rights

1. Combating human trafficking with women as victims and care for these victims. The following measures have been taken within this framework:

■ Law 3386/2005 "Entry, residence and social integration of citizens of third countries in the Greek territory" (article 46), facilitates the grant of a residence and work permit to victims of trafficking in persons, for which no payment of a fee is required. Special care is taken for the under-age victims, aiming at the quickest possible locating of their families and their legal representation and support in judicial procedures. A basic innovation is the introduction of a recovery and reflection period, so as to enable victims of trafficking to recover and make a decision, free from any

influence by the perpetrators of the relevant crimes. At the same time, victims of trafficking in persons, during the recovery and reflection period, beyond the protection and security ensured by the prosecuting and police authorities, are also entitled to free legal assistance, medical care, and translation and interpretation services. For the protection of women victims of trafficking, the same law renders critical the prohibition of deporting a pregnant woman during pregnancy and for six months after delivery.

■ The General Secretariat for Gender Equality participates in the Special Inter-ministerial Committee of Secretaries General, established by the Ministry of Justice, aiming at the coordination of the measures confronting the phenomenon. In the framework of implementing the Integrated National Action Plan against trafficking in persons, which is politically coordinated by the aforementioned Committee, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality has ensured:

a. The provision of assistance to victims of trafficking, through the two Consultation Centers (in Athens and Piraeus) for violence against women, which ensures social, psychological and legal support.

b Possibility of including women victims of trafficking in a Program implemented by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) aiming at ensuring their employment prospects.

c. Information and sensitization of the public opinion, through broadcasting a social advertisement produced by the GSGE on television, which was first broadcast in February 2006 - with a positive response from the public- and is still being broadcast up to the present, and through an information leaflet in five languages (Greek, English, Albanian and Russian). Participation of the GSGE in the Law Drafting Committee of the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare for the reconciliation of our National Law with the provisions of the Directive 2006/54/EC “for the enactment of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment between men and women on issues of employment”.

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■ Law 3250/2004 for “Part-time employment in the Civil Sector, Local Government and the legal entities of public law” redefined the categories of beneficiaries through which new employees are hired, by adding parents who have more than three children by a percentage of 10% and expanding the category of mothers with underage children without an age limit (beneficiaries before where those who had children up to 12 years of age), also by a percentage of 10%. It also provides that a percentage of up to 60% from the various unemployment categories (up to thirty years of age, over thirty, those who are five years away from retirement), who are benefited from the hiring, is covered by women, provided an interest is demonstrated through the submission of applications. Monitoring of the law’s enactment indicates that 73% of all part-time positions in the civil sector, within the scope of the above law, are occupied by women.

■ A series of measures are taken in the new Code on Civil Servants (Law 3528/2007) in order to support women in their efforts to combine work and family. Special measures are taken for unmarried women as well as women with more than three children, as well as for cases of child adoption and surrogate motherhood. Furthermore, for the first time fathers employed in the civil sector are eligible for parental leave.

■ By decision of the Minister of the Interior (DIDAD/F.53/1222/oik.20561/9-8-2007- Government Gazette 1613 B'/17-08-2007), the leave granted to parents for monitoring their children's schooling was increased to five days per year (from four) if there are two children and over and to six days per year if the children are in different educational grades.

d. Gender mainstreaming in public administration at all levels has been a crucial priority for Greece. Through the National Center on Public Administration and Local Administration, a number of projects have been implemented throughout the country towards gender-responsive procedures. In addition, The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) has been actively participating in the preparation of the 2007-2013 NATIONAL STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NSDP). To that effect, an ad hoc Group has been set up to plan GSGE interventions: the said Group elaborated and forwarded proposals to consolidate Equality as a sector policy with a horizontal nature of intervention.

e. Programs of developmental assistance and cooperation are implemented *in the countries of origin* of victims of trafficking in persons, financed by the General Directorate of International Development Cooperation (Y.D.A.S.) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. More specifically:

a. The implementation of the program "*Education - Social Exclusion- Prostitution-Migration*" was completed in Albania, Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, with a total budget of 150,000 euro, in partnership with the Hellenic Association for Family Planning and IPPF. The program aimed at confronting the problems of social exclusion of women in those countries, unemployment, sexual exploitation and (forced) prostitution related to migration. The Research Centre for Gender Equality (K.E.TH.I.) had the economic and technical coordination of the program under the scientific responsibility and supervision of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality. A pilot seminar titled "Train the trainers" took place in Athens with the participation of representatives from all beneficiary countries and educational seminars took place in Albania, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine with the local branches of IPPF.

b. The Research Centre for Gender Equality (K.E.TH.I.) has started the implementation of the program "*Supporting regional policies against illegal trafficking in women*" in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in Serbia (Kosovo), of a total budget of 100,000 euro. The program is included in the actions taking place in the social sector and aims at confronting the phenomenon of *trafficking* through strengthening women victims, sensitizing public opinion and educating responsible agencies which deal with the assistance and protection of women victims. In September 2006 a meeting took place in Athens for the "Train the trainers" personnel who will participate in the educational sensitization campaign in the above areas.

c. In 2007, the GSGE in cooperation with the K.E.TH.I. implemented the program “*Education of Hellenic Agencies for dealing with trafficking in human beings*” of a total budget of 166,786.2€. The Program aims in reinforcing the existing structures in Greece, which focus on dealing with the illegal trafficking of women, through the conduction of a cohesive educational action to the members of responsible agencies. The basic goal of the project is the creation of appropriately trained personnel that will be able to effectively manage human trafficking incidents and in accordance with the new international rules of conduct. The particular goal of the Program is the diffusion of an important educational “package” to the responsible Greek agencies which includes contemporary practices for managing incidents of trafficking in human beings. The educational material is a pioneering composite of primary and secondary material (testimonies, examples of dealing with incidents, and best practices) that has resulted through the collective action and experiences of international organizations which have become involved in recent years in dealing with (counter-trafficking) the phenomenon of transnational white slavery. *Throughout 2007 in the framework of the Program three day seminars were conducted in Athens, Thessaloniki, Patra, Volos, Heraklio, Preveza, Kalamata, Komotini, Ioannina and Mytilini.* The results of the Program are planned to be presented in the form of a seminar within 2008.

d. The program “*Actions for the prevention and support of victims of trafficking in human beings*” has begun being implemented by the K.E.TH.I. in Albania, of a total budget of 220,000 euro, in cooperation with I.O.M. The subject of the program is the prevention of the phenomenon of trafficking in Albania, primarily through education actions in schools, as well as psychological and social support of victims, through the reinforcement of existing local I.O.M. support structures.

f. Political parties, the National Parliament, non-governmental organizations and the Women’s Political Association play an active role on gender perspectives in the public life of the country.

i. Women in Decision – Making: Law 3636/1-2-2008. A quota in favor of female candidates at the national elections is established. This means that at least one third of all candidates at the electoral lists of the political parties, coalitions of parties or independent candidates throughout the country must be women, otherwise the specific lists are not valid and are banned from the national elections

j. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality at the Ministry of the Interior closely cooperates with NGOs, social partners, trade unions and employers associations for the formulation and implementation of gender equality policies.

k. Promotion of equality among women and men in the education process – Combating stereotypes

1. Educational visits/lectures were held in High-Schools/Vocational Schools all over Greece addressed to school pupils and teachers.

2. GSGE responded to the request of school, municipal and other Library agencies regarding their enrichment with GSGE printed material (brochures/documents); in particular, GSGE co-operated with: eight (8) Schools (4 in Athens and 4 at the Region), two (2) Parent Associations (in Athens), two (2) Municipal Libraries (at the Region), one (1) Multichild Families Association (at the Region) to enrich their libraries and with one (1) School (at the Region) to support an event having domestic violence as its topic.

3. The Implementation of the Programme: “Raising Awareness of teachers and interventional programmes to promote gender equality” (OP “Education” II – Third CSF).

4. GSGE is implementing the project “Positive actions in favour of women in Initial Vocational Education and Training Schools (study/research/documentation/ support of libraries)” in the framework of OP for “Education and Initial Vocational Training (OP “Education” II) of the Third CSF. The project’s overall budget is 1,285,000 Euros. The project’s main aim is to combat discrimination and professional gender segregation by incorporating the gender perspective in the area of technological training.

5. Establishment of a “Watch for monitoring and evaluating educational policy actions on equality (Watch on equality in education –WEE)”, which will serve as a Documentation Centre for the effective and scientific concentration, registration and elaboration of information that concern the said field.

In terms of HIV/AIDS, specific information campaigns and projects are being organized by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health and the Hellenic Family Planning Association (member of IPPF).

l. The Ministry of Agricultural Development, in cooperation with women’s cooperatives, on the one hand and the Ministry of Development on the other are responsible for dealing with the issues of climate change and food and energy crises (strategic agreements, campaigns, and projects).

m. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the Hellenic Network of Corporate Social Responsibility and a Protocol of Cooperation with the top employers’ associations for the promotion of gender equality issues. In addition, specific projects are being implemented for the promotion of employment and entrepreneurial skills of women.

PART TWO: Progress in implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action

A. Strategic planning

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B. Establishment of a National Committee for the Equality between Men and Women – Social Dialogue

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■ In the framework of participating in the campaign of the Council of Europe for combating illegal trafficking in persons, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and the Council of Europe have organized a Conference titled “Action against trafficking in human beings - Prevention, Protection, Prosecution” in Athens on 5 and 6 December 2006.

■ The Consultation Centers for violence against women continue to offer psychological and social support and legal advice to the victims of human trafficking.

■ The GSGE participates with a representative in the Task Group of the Hellenic Police Headquarters, to implement the Plan of cross-border and inter-regional cooperation and operational action of the police services in S.E. European countries under the code name “ILAEIRA”.

■ The GSGE participates with a representative in the ongoing committee which operates at the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare for the protection and support of

victims of crimes of articles 323, 323^A, 349, 351 and 351^A of the Criminal Code, in accordance with article 12 of the L. 3064/2002 in accordance with the P.D.233/2003 (Government Gazette 204A/28-08-2003)

2. Promotion of equal treatment between men and women to employment access and employment relationships – Combating sexual harassment in the workplace.

a. Drafting, in cooperation with the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare, of the law 3488/2006 for the “Application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women to employment access, professional education and development, to the terms and employment conditions”.

For the first time the law defines sexual harassment, which is treated as gender discrimination in the workplace, creating a basis for victim compensation. In addition, any discrimination between men and women is removed in the private and public sectors, as pertains to access to employment, to the establishment, development and termination of the employment relationship. The employer cannot refuse the hiring of women because of pregnancy or recent delivery, while the female employee who has received maternity leave after this leave has been completed, must return to her job in an equivalent position under the same professional terms and conditions and benefit from any improvement in working conditions. This protection also applies to working parents who make use of parental leave.

The monitoring agency for the enactment of the principle of equal treatment between men and women is the Ombudsman, in cooperation with the Employment Inspection Service (EIS) in the private sector.

b. Participation of the GSGE in the Law Drafting Committee of the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare for the reconciliation of our National Law with the provisions of the Directive 2006/54/EC “for the enactment of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment between men and women on issues of employment”.

3. Women in Decision – Making: Law 3636/1-2-2008. A quota in favor of female candidates at the national elections is established. This means that at least one third of all candidates at the electoral lists of the political parties, coalitions of parties or independent candidates throughout the country must be women, otherwise the specific lists are not valid and are banned from the national elections

3. Prevention and combating of domestic violence.

a. Cooperation with the Ministry of Justice for the processing of the law 3500/2006 for combating domestic violence, aiming at the protection of the fundamental rights of women and children. Reforms of the law are the following:

- setting of the severest penalties that are imposed for perpetrating certain punishable acts within the family (particularly physical violence and illegal violence or assault)
- the establishment of the procedure of criminal mediation, pertaining to crimes of domestic violence of a delinquent nature
- the treatment of marital rape concerning both spouses as a criminal offense

- the explicit prohibition of physical violence against minors as a means of punishment in the scope of child rearing
- the expansion of the scope of enactment of the law to the relationships of common law living arrangements between men and women
- ensuring the protection of victims, in terms of facilitation to their access to justice as well as ensuring their safety both within and outside the family home; the immediate removal of the perpetrator from the home is facilitated as well as the ability to prohibit their approaching the home and workplace of the victim, their close relatives, the shelters and schools of the children, in order to ensure the most effective protection of victims and their children
- Punishable with particular severity are also cases of domestic violence against pregnant women, while the exercise of domestic violence is now a refutable indication of marital separation, such as the case of infidelity, bigamy and threats against life.

b. Also provisioned as a new authority of the first level Local Government in the new Municipal and Community Code (Law 3463/2006), is the consultative support of victims of domestic violence and violence between persons living together.

c. The provision of support to victims of domestic violence continues through the two Consultation Centers (Athens and Piraeus) of the GSGE, which provide consultative, psychological and legal support.

d. Translation and publication of the leaflet on domestic violence in the Arabic and Persian languages and pending publication in Albanian, Russian and French. The publication of the leaflet on domestic violence in the Arabic and Persian languages was deemed necessary in the scope of the Memorandum of Cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Greece (also see below under E.1).

e. The GSGE participates in the Council of Europe campaign for combating domestic violence. Representatives have been appointed toward this purpose (High Level Official and Focal Point) and an action plan has been drafted which is already being implemented.

f. In cooperation with the Institute of Training of the National Center for Public Administration and Local Administration, training and sensitization seminars addressing judges, public prosecutors, police officers and health and social workers are carried out, aiming at an effective handling of cases of domestic violence and trafficking.

g. Respective to the interpretation and the application of the new law 3500/2006, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality held an event with the topic: “New Data on Domestic Violence” (28/3/2007), in cooperation with the Criminal and Criminology Research Laboratory of the University of Athens. Also held was a seminar with the topic: “Domestic Violence: Prospects following the l. 3500/06” (28/6/2007), in cooperation with the Athens District Attorney’s Offices and the Criminal and Criminology Research Laboratory.

h. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality displayed a particular interest in the case of the abuse of a female student in a school in Evia, which occurred in October 2006. The young student was visited by a psychologist and social worker from the Consultation Center of the GSGE. A written intervention followed to the Radio-Television Council respective to the sensitivity and discretion which must be displayed by the media while presenting such incidents.

D. Promotion of employment and entrepreneurial skills of women – Encouraging the occupational promotion of women

1. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality implements the project: “Integrated Interventions in favor of women” in the framework of the Operational Program (O.P.) “Employment and Vocational Training 2000-2006” of the 3rd Community Support Framework (C.S.F.), which not only supports unemployed women in finding work, but also facilitates the reconciliation of family and working life. The Program pertains to all Administrative Regions of the Country and has an initial budget of 59 million euros. This project benefits a total of 8,763 women, primarily unemployed women of all ages, in all regions of the country.

Up to 31/12/2007:

- 8,763 unemployed women have benefited from Consultation services
- 5,004 unemployed women were promoted to employment through the Greek Manpower Employment Organization (OAED) but also from other national and business programs.
- 789 women have benefited from training programs for upgrading of their skills.

2. In cooperation with the OAED the direct employment of 2,940 unemployed women has been achieved, through the creation of new employment positions for unemployed women, the funding of new professional businesspersons and the acquisition of work experience by unemployed women. Of all women who were promoted to employment, 1,291 women established their own business.

The entrepreneurship of mothers with under-age children or women who care for persons with a disability is particularly supported through the ability to declare their home as their location of employment and claim certain expenditures (1/3 of operating expenses, child care expenses etc.). 44 women established their own home business.

Particular mention must be made to the fact that the Program “Encouraging entrepreneurship among women” from the O.P. “Competitiveness”, following the cooperation of the GSGE and the General Secretariat of Industry, particularly for women who participated in the Action Plans of the project “Support for the Provision of Integrated Interventions in favor of women” of the O.P. “Employment and Vocational Training”, provisioned, that the business proposals of candidates wanting to establish their own business would be awarded with an additional 10 grading points, received during their evaluation.

In the category of benefited unemployed women within the scope of the same program, women who had been classified as victims of trafficking were also included.

The program is further supported with events for the information and sensitization of agencies in the private sector, in order to achieve complete absorption of benefited women.

Finally the program “Integrated Interventions in favor of women” was chosen and presented as an example of best practice to the European Conference and the Informal Conference of Ministers on Gender Equality in Lisbon on 4/10/2007.

3. The GSGE also applies the program “Positive Actions for the equality of opportunities between men and women in middle-sized and large enterprises” in the framework of the Operational Program “Employment and Vocational Training 2000-2006”.

The project is being applied for the first time in Greece and aims in helping working women in middle-sized and large enterprises acquire additional skills, so they are better able to assert their development in the company under better terms. Toward this end, financial motives are provided to the companies for continuous education and training of women, coverage of operating expenses for child daycare facilities, support of work from home programs, information and sensitization of all employees regarding these programs, as well as the expansion of quality certification systems (ISO).

Thousands of women will benefit from this program which has a total budget of 16,665,479.92 €. The first cycle of the program with a total budget of 2,396,439.76 € is already being implemented in nineteen companies, benefiting a total of 2189 women. Respective to the second cycle of the program, the approval process of the action plans/proposals has been completed for 145 companies, which are beginning its implementation, with a total budget of 14,243,167.23 €, benefiting a total of approximately 20,000 women.

4. Law 3250/2004 for “Part-time employment in the Civil Sector, Local Government and the legal entities of public law” redefined the categories of beneficiaries through which new employees are hired, by adding parents who have more than three children by a percentage of 10% and expanding the category of mothers with underage children without an age limit (beneficiaries before where those who had children up to 12 years of age), also by a percentage of 10%. It also provides that a percentage of up to 60% from the various unemployment categories (up to thirty years of age, over thirty, those who are five years away from retirement), who are benefited from the hiring, is covered by women, provided an interest is demonstrated through the submission of applications.

Monitoring of the law’s enactment indicates that 73% of all part-time positions in the civil sector, within the scope of the above law, are occupied by women.

5. Signing of Memoranda of Cooperation between the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and five top employers’ organizations and the Greek Network for **Corporate Social Responsibility**, aiming at the support of employment and equal opportunities for women in the workplace (Athens – Zappeio Megaron, 2 July 2006).

6. Signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and the Greek Network for Corporate Social Responsibility, aiming at the further support of equal opportunities between men and women in the workplace (March 2006).

This initiative was chosen as a best practice by the European Network for Corporate Social Responsibility and was presented by a GSGE representative, at the annual European Marketplace II on CSR Event (Brussels, 22/6/2006) which is organized for the exchange of experiences and the analysis of methods that promote the policy of Corporate Social Responsibility of Business.

7. Participation of the GSGE and the Research Center for Gender Equality (KETHI) as partners in Developmental Partnerships of the 1st and 2nd cycle of the E.U. Initiative Equal (Equal I and II).

8. Participation of the GSGE in designing the National Reform Program for the Lisbon Strategy, aiming at the support and increase of the percentage of women's employment.

9. A series of interventions were realized by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality relative to the progress of equality actions in the Regional Operational Programs (ROP) of the 3rd Community Support Framework and the preparation of the strategic plans of development of the 4th Scheduling Period, subjects which had been absent from the Regional Programs up to now.

E. Support for the reconciliation of family and professional life

1. A series of measures are taken in the new Code on Civil Servants (Law 3528/2007) in order to support women in their efforts to combine work and family. Special measures are taken for unmarried women as well as women with more than three children, as well as for cases of child adoption and surrogate motherhood. Furthermore, for the first time fathers employed in the civil sector are eligible for parental leave. The measures that are new compared to the current legislation are the following:

- Granting of parental leave to the father employee. More specifically, the father employee is entitled to reduced work hours or a nine month leave, provided the mother employee does not make use of parental leave. The same right is also granted to the parent of single-parent families.

- In the case of the birth of a third child and above, the employee is entitled to a three month parental leave at full pay. This leave is a portion of the total leave without pay that may be granted as parental leave for raising a child up to six years of age.

- The first three months of parental leave for parents with three children or more (after the third child) are with pay. For each child after the third child, the parental leave is increased by two more months.

- Further extension of reduced work hours is provisioned for two more years in the case of the birth of a fourth child.

- A woman who adopts a child is given support in order to make the transition to her new family life easier.

2. By decision of the Minister of the Interior (DIDAD/F.53/1222/oik.20561/9-8-2007-Government Gazette 1613 B'/17-08-2007), the leave granted to parents for monitoring their children's schooling was increased to five days per year (from four) if there are two children and over and to six days per year if the children are in different educational grades.

3. The KETHI implements the program: “Equal Partners: Reconsidering the Role of Men in Work and Private Life”, which is co-funded by the European Commission (80%) and the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (20%). Areas of implementation are Greece, Portugal, Poland and Cyprus. The program budget amounts to 560,368.79€, of which 486,778 € have already been spent. Beneficiaries are the greater public, preschool children and teenagers, men, fathers, women and mothers.

The project goal is to inform and sensitize public opinion, primarily men and fathers, for the need to reconcile their work obligations with their family life, through redefining stereotypical preconceptions regarding the role of the father. Within the scope of the Program:

- a. leaflets and posters in Greek, English, Polish and Portuguese were printed
- b. radio and television ads were created, as well as educational toys for preschoolers and teenaged students
- c. seminars were conducted with the topic “The role of the Father in Reconciling Work & Family Life”, in Heraklio and Patra, with the participation of local interested agencies, labor and employment representatives, teachers and representatives from Non-Government Organizations that deal with issues of equality and family etc
- d. international Conferences took place in Warsaw and Athens, with the participation of all partners
- e. the last European Conference entitled “Gender Equality and the Role of Men in the Workplace and Family: Trends and Issues” took place in Athens on 10, 11 & 12 December 2006 with the participation of International and National Partners
- f. research was delivered on the subject “The Role of Fathers in Balancing Professional and Family – Personal Life”
- g. a manual was written in Greek and English relative to the program subject.

F. Social integration of vulnerable groups of women

1. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Refugees to promote the rights of women and underage girls given asylum or seeking asylum in our country according to the Geneva Convention.

Under the implementation of the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and the Head of the Office of the UN High Commissioner in Greece visited on 14/12/2006 the Attica Immigrants Division of the Ministry of Public Order. They visited the areas of detention of foreign women and discussed with them the problems they face. Women were also handed GSGE brochures in various languages. In this context, GSGE addressed a request to the Secretary General of the Ministry of Public Order asking foreign women’s detention areas to be guarded by policewoman, a request that was immediately accepted.

2. Provision of Accompanying Supporting Services (ASS) by the Consultation Centres of the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI).

The Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI), supervised and financed by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, set out to implement a Programme for the Provision of Accompanying Supporting Services entitled "Improving the conditions for the integration of vulnerable groups of women in the job market". The aim of the programme is to strengthen and prepare women for their integration in the job market, support them in taking on entrepreneurial initiatives and advancing them to jobs.

The programmes for the provision of consulting and legal supporting services, which will provide advisory and legal support in matters of employment and entrepreneurship to eligible women, will be implemented in nine Regions of the country (Eastern Macedonia-Thrace, Central Macedonia, Thessalia, Epirus, Sterea Ellas, Western Greece, Attica, Peloponnesus and Crete).

In the same framework, KETHI consultation centres already operating in Athens, Thessaloniki, Volos and Heraclion will be improved. Furthermore, five new Branches will be established in Kalamata, Amfissa, Preveza, Komotini and Alexandroupolis.

The project's overall budget is 2,350,668.04 Euros.

Eligible women are 3,475; they concern special categories of women threatened by social exclusion, long-term unemployed over 45 years old and other categories of women threatened by exclusion from the job market, particularly immigrants.

3. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality filed a two-year schedule of actions to the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection to assist it in drafting the 2006-2008 National Action Plan on Social Integration (NAPSI).

Scheduled actions regarding social integration concern the following:

- Boost participation in the job market, dealing with the disadvantaged position of women as regards education and training;
- Support the family and combat domestic violence;
- Improve access to quality services (lifelong learning, financial services, legal consulting services);
- Deal with discrimination and integrate people with disabilities, national minorities and first and second-generation immigrants in society.

4. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality participates in the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) set-up at the initiative of the Ministry of the Interior, charged with elaborating a Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) for the social integration of third-country nationals in the Greek society. GSGE filed its comments, remarks and proposals on the CAP drafted by the appropriate service of the Ministry in writing.

5. Self-Administration Agencies' social care structures will continue to operate; the State has guaranteed their financing that will extend also beyond June 2007 and up to the completion of the new institutional framework to support women's employment elaborated by the Ministries of the Interior and Employment.

6. In the framework of the National Policy and the Comprehensive Action Plan (CAP) for the Social Integration of **Greek Roma**, in co-operation with the jointly competent Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity, the Programme "Protection, Promotion of Health and Psycho-social support of Greek Roma" is being implemented. In 2005, the aforesaid programme was enriched with the assistance of the University of Ioannina with a specially equipped and staffed Gynaecological Unit.

Until August 2007, over 400 women had received a Pap test and breast examinations. In addition, special training programmes and educational projects are being implemented by the General Secretariat for Adults' Education.

7. A meeting among the Minister of the Interior Professor P. Pavlopoulos, the Secretary General for Gender Equality Mrs. E. Tsoumani and the Secretary General of Amnesty International Mrs. Irene Khan was held; the agenda included the conditions of asylum seekers' detention, immigrants, violence against women, as well as the laws on domestic violence and women trafficking (21.9.2006).

8. Special reference must be made to the fact that the framework of the implementation of project "Comprehensive Interventions in favour of Women" carried out by GSGE in the country's 13 Administrative Regions benefited women that belong to vulnerable social groups. Based on the evidence available to our service to this date, considering that the project's evaluation is still in progress, the project benefited the following women:

- a. Muslim women in the context of the implementation of the Action Plan at the region of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace;
- b. Female refugees, economic immigrants and Roma women in the framework of the implementation of two (2) Action Plans at the Attica region;
- c. Women victims of domestic violence;
- d. Women with a disability.

G. Promotion of equality among women and men in the education process – Combating stereotypes

1. Educational visits/lectures were held in High-Schools/Vocational Schools all over Greece addressed to school pupils and teachers. In addition, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, in cooperation with its Library on Women's Issues, has organised a number of lectures and meetings on gender equality on its premises.

2. GSGE responded to the request of school, municipal and other Library agencies regarding their enrichment with GSGE printed material (brochures/documents); in particular, GSGE co-operated with: eight (8) Schools (4 in Athens and 4 at the Region), two (2) Parent Associations (in Athens), two (2) Municipal Libraries (at the Region), one (1) Multichild Families Association (at the Region) to enrich their libraries and with one (1) School (at the Region) to support an event having domestic violence as its topic.

3. Commencement of the Implementation of the Programme: "Raising Awareness of teachers and interventional programmes to promote gender equality" (OP "Education" II – Third CSF)

The Programme is implemented by the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI), which is supervised by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality in co-operation with the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs; its overall budget is 25 million Euros, of which 16,530,810 Euros have been absorbed (absorption rate: 66.32%). The project's scope is to raise teachers' awareness in matters of gender equality. Throughout the project starting in 2002, 8.250 teachers are to be trained in

all 13 Regions of the Country, to complete 700 Interventional Teaching Programmes enriched by the perspective of gender equality.

From the commencement of the programme to this date, 487 Interventional Programmes have overall been implemented by equal associations of school units that involved the participation of 3,621 school units, 6,719 teachers and 89,782 pupils.

4. GSGE is implementing the project “Positive actions in favour of women in Initial Vocational Education and Training Schools (study/research/documentation/ support of libraries)” in the framework of OP for “Education and Initial Vocational Training (OP “Education” II) of the Third CSF. The project’s overall budget is 1,285,000 Euros. The project’s main aim is to combat discrimination and professional gender segregation by incorporating the gender perspective in the area of technological training.

The programme aspires to enhance and enrich the libraries of 764 public Technical Schools and Vocational Training Institutes of the country with books related to gender equality matters. After completing a research bibliography on women’s issues, a study-catalogue of the relevant national and international literature with a list of the bibliography on gender equality resulted. The work of drafting the bibliography list has already been completed.

Meanwhile, the online connection of Technical Schools and Vocational Training Institutes’ libraries with the library for women’s issues of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality has already commenced that will inform students and teachers and raise their awareness on gender perspective issues.

5. Establishment of a “Watch for monitoring and evaluating educational policy actions on equality – “Paratiritirio” (Watch on equality in education –WEE)”, which will serve as a Documentation Centre for the effective and scientific concentration, registration and elaboration of information that concern the said field. The Project is the product of a co-operation between GSGE, responsible for planning gender equality policy in all areas, and KETHI; the overall budget of the project that is now under way is 951,000.00€.

6. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) actively participates in most of the educational activities organised by a number of international organisations, e.g. UNESCO, OECD, ILO.

H. GSGE’s contribution in preparing the 2007-2013 National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) and integrating gender equality in the Operational Programmes of the new 2007-2013 Programme Period

1. Since 2004, GSGE has been actively participating in the preparation of the 2007-2013 NATIONAL STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NSDP). To that effect, an ad hoc Group has been set up to plan GSGE interventions: the said Group elaborated and forwarded proposals to consolidate Equality as a sectoral policy with a horizontal nature of intervention.

In this context, we achieved the following:

a. General Target 11: *promotion of the economic, social and developmental character of gender equality matters by directly linking them to dominant national political priorities (development-employment-social cohesion)* was integrated in the NSDP.

Moreover, General Target 12: Improvement of the quality of public policies etc.... includes the explicit reference: *A significant horizontal target is to effectively integrate the national policy on Equality in the entire public action spectrum etc...*

b. Funds have been reserved, as explicitly cited in all (Sectoral and Regional) Operational Programmes: “To promote gender equality and achieve the targets of the Operational Programme in this sector, a specific percentage out of the programme’s budget is going to be reserved in the most convenient way. This percentage will be specified by decision of the monitoring committee”.

c. The implementation of specific actions in favour of women/and actions to support women’s entrepreneurship and employment have been planned, including to incorporate equality in the planning and to implement all axes, actions and priorities of all Operational Programmes.

d. A special priority axis was elaborated and included in OP “ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM” of the Ministry of the Interior entitled: “Strengthening equality policies over the entire range of Public Action”.

The aim is to improve quality and efficiency of the engines and structures for planning, implementing, monitoring and assessing gender equality measures and policies, as well as to effectively integrate the gender equality perspective over the entire range of public action, at a central administration and a local administration level, by triggering the active participation of civil society and NGOs.

Emphasis shall also have to be placed on enhancing the presence and the participation of women in the public and social sector and in decision-making centres.

2. As of December 2004, GSGE has filed a National Strategic Plan on Equality to the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF). In 2005, GSGE organised together with the General Secretariat for Investments and Development of MEF (in the framework of a Public Consultation) a day conference to present its Strategic Choices to social partners and state agencies.

I. Mass Media Issues

- The promotion of social messages by the country's television stations was sought, with the aim to inform public opinion and raise its awareness.
- We made an intervention in writing to the National Radio and Television Council requesting it to secure the sensitivity and discretion required when Mass Media show certain social phenomena, such as the event that involved the female school pupil in Evia.
- A pecuniary prize named “Woman and Equal Opportunities” was awarded to a film successfully dealing with Equality issues in the framework of Thessaloniki Film Festival, rising to the amount of six thousand (6,000) Europe. The prize was awarded to director and scriptwriter Jasmila Zbanic for the film “I love Sarajevo” at the closing ceremony of the 47th Thessaloniki Film Festival, 2006. On 25/11/2007 the prize was awarded to the film “Buddha Collapsed out of Shame” by Hana Makhmalbaf (Iran, France) at the 48th Festival.
- The Equality Prize of the Foundation for the Promotion of Journalism Athanassios Vas. Botsis, awarded to journalists that have contributed to highlighting and promoting Gender Equality matters through their work, was in the 2004-2007

three-year period awarded to the following people: journalist Victoria Dagounaki (22-3-2004), journalist Mary Pini (17-5-2005), journalist Spyros Michalopoulos (15-5-2006), journalist Christina Damoulianou (19-6-2007), journalist Konstantina Ioakimidou (13-5-2008).

- The General Secretariat for Gender Equality has already produced special TV spots and radio messages about all its educational/training programs/projects.

J. Administrative and operational modernisation and upgrade of GSGE

GSGE Services' Upgrade

■ The preparation of a new GSGE Agency that will respond to contemporary needs, according also to European standards considered was completed (P.D. 5/2008 (GGI17A'/08-02-2008).

■ The relocation of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality's administrative services was completed in April 2006, by further leasing the 7th floor of the building it is already housed in, with an overall surface area of 1,150 m².

■ GSGE Library operations were enhanced through the following:

1) Library expanded to the 2nd floor of the building on 19, Kapnikareas Street, and appropriate facilities were supplied to accommodate its Historical Archive in this area;

2) The Historical Archive was officially inaugurated by the Minister of the Interior, Professor Prokopsis Pavlopoulos on 24/4/2007, while the Historical Archive was presented to women's associations (8/5/2007);

3) Library opening hours were prolonged to better serve readers;

4) Library automation system ABEKT was upgraded to its most recent version;

5) Database bibliography was enriched to also offer for search based on key words entered by readers and remote users;

6) Foreign magazine subscriptions were upgraded, providing access to their digital form within the area of the Library;

7) A new librarian database was established within the Library's website for Historical Archive documents and 130 entries were introduced;

8) The website is constantly developed and updated to:

a) Provide detailed information on the collections, operations and services of the Library and the Historical Archive;

b) Offer the possibility of searching among the list of the Library and the Historical Archive;

c) present the digitalised material of the Historical Archive (7 old and rare books, 4 issues of the "Ladies' Journal", 24 women's organisations brochures, 16 slides, 44 posters and 4 videos of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality and Equality Council).

9) A permit was granted by the General Secretariat for Youth to establish a link to 23 documents hosted at the website of the Historical Archive of Greek Youth, including their bibliographical entries existing in the Library database;

10) 1922 new books were bought or donated, 460 documentaries from Operational Program "Education" and 2847 archive documentaries were entered and recorded;

11) The Library's name changed from "Library for Women's Issues" to "Library for Equality and Gender Issues".

K. GSGE/Ministry of the Interior next to the women at the areas hit by fire in Peloponnesus and Evia (August, 2007)

The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) of the Ministry for the Interior, driven by the unfortunate event of the catastrophic fires that recently struck our country, immediately implemented programmes to support women that are the ones particularly afflicted because of their multi-fold roles within local economy and the family.

In particular, GSGE proceeded to the following actions:

-Two mobile units visited the prefectures of Ilia and Evia from Monday, September 3rd to Sunday, September 9th. The mobile units were staffed with appropriately informed staff and consultants (psychologists, social workers and employment consultants) of GSGE and the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI).

Each mobile unit toured the areas hit in Ilia and Evia starting from Pyrgos and Styra respectively, shaping their schedule of visits together with the local authorities.

-Moreover, in the framework of the project “Comprehensive Interventions in favour of Women” implemented by GSGE to support women’s employment, GSGE has already secured its on-going implementation in co-operation with the Ministry of Employment, having significantly raised the amount of funds destined for the regions hit. Its aim is to double its actions for the consultative support of unemployed women, support them in taking on entrepreneurial initiatives, including promotion to jobs in the specific prefectures.

-Furthermore, GSGE requested the further enhancement of specific actions included in the Operational Programs by the Ministries of Employment, Development and Rural Development, which are now implemented and addressed to women of the aforesaid areas, to prevent them from being socially & financially excluded and urge them to stay at their home towns, both themselves and their family members.

-Finally, by a document sent to the 200 enterprises that participate in the programme implemented to subsidise enterprises applying Equality Plans to the benefit of women they employ, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality requested them to take immediate action and contribute to the fight to deal with the severe situation the Country faced at that time.

PART THREE: Institutional Development

- a)** The General Secretariat for Gender Equality at the Ministry of the Interior is the governmental organization, which is in charge of the promotion of the principle of equal opportunities between women and men in Greece. In addition, a number of bodies constitute the national mechanism: National Committee on Human Rights (Independent Agency), Special Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Gender Equality, Regional Committees on Gender Equality at each of the 13 Administrative Regions of the country (Law 2839/2000, art.6), the Equality Offices at Municipal Level, the Research Center on Gender Equality Issues with its regional offices (a legal entity supervised by the Ministry of the Interior – GSGE), the Equality Offices within Ministries, the Special Division at the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, and the Ombudsman-Gender Equality Division (independent agency).
- b)** The Equality Offices within Ministries cooperate with the General Secretariat for Gender Equality for the promotion of gender equality in every policy field. There is need for further activation of these Offices and intensification of cooperation among all competent authorities.
- c)** Parliament plays a key role in the advancement of gender equality issues in every aspect of the public life of the country. In addition, women's NGOs and social partners give a further impetus to that topic. The competent governmental authorities should be always in accordance with international obligations and society as well.
- d)** The General Secretariat for Gender Equality has already implemented the project on gender mainstreaming in public administration in cooperation with the National Center of Public Administration. The project has been cofunded by the PROGRESS E.U Program (2008-2009) and national economic resources.
- e)** The issue of indicators is being handled by the National Statistics Service, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality-Documentation Department, the research Center on Gender Equality Issues and the National Center for Social Research. There is still an intense need, though, for sex-aggregated statistics.
- f)** Parliament plays a key role in the advancement of gender equality issues in every aspect of the public life of the country (Special Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Gender Equality). In addition, women's NGOs and social partners give a further impetus to that topic (e.g. Women's Political Association). The competent governmental authorities should be always in accordance with international obligations and society as well.

PART FOUR: Challenges and Actions

On 2 November 2004 the Government's Committee approved the General Secretariat for Gender Equality four year Action Plan entitled "NATIONAL POLICY PRIORITIES AND AXES FOR ACTION ON GENDER EQUALITY (2004 – 2008)", which links issues of gender equality to the national priorities of the country, (Development, Employment, Social Cohesion) and places emphasis on their economic, developmental and political dimensions. The Action Plan focuses on the following axes of special actions: **a.** combating the equality deficit in the labour market – **b.** stereotypic perceptions and educational procedures – **c.** preventing and combating violence against women – **d.** women's participation in decision-making. Our general policy on gender equality issues is also incorporated within the scope of these axes.

The General Secretariat for Gender Equality at the Ministry of the Interior is in close cooperation with civil society and women's non-governmental organisations, aiming at the advancement of the status of women in all fields of public and private life in Greece. In addition, there is an active participation in working groups, committees, conferences, and fora both at european and international levels (e.g. European Union, U.N.O., Council of Europe, I.L.O., O.E.C.D.).