

REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA
MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL POLICY
SECTOR FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

**RESPONSE TO A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BEIJING
DECLARATION AND ACTION PLATFORM (1995) AND THE RESULTS OF THE 23RD
SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2000) FOR PREPARATION OF A REGIONAL
REVIEW AND EVALUATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE 15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
ADOPTION OF THE BEIJING DECLARATION AND ACTION PLATFORM IN 2010**

**For preparation of a regional review and evaluation in the context of
the 15th anniversary of the adoption of Beijing Declaration and
Action Platform in 2010**

Part one: Review of the achievements and challenges in the promotion of gender equality and emancipation of women

Republic of Macedonia is a democratic and social country where all people are equal before the law, and one of the basic values of the constitutional order of the Republic of Macedonia is the gender equality, among others.

The Constitution contains several provisions regarding the basic human and civil rights and freedoms. In terms of civil and political rights and freedoms it has been established that “citizens of the Republic of Macedonia have equal rights and freedoms notwithstanding their sex, race, color of skin, national and social background, political and religious affiliation, property and social position” (Article 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia).

These provisions establish the principle of equality and guarantee equal rights notwithstanding sex. By incorporating the gender equality in the provisions of the Constitution, the political will of the highest legislative body has been expressed that the Republic of Macedonia belongs to those democratic countries, which build their own order by full recognition and promotion of equal opportunities between women and men, as necessary precondition for sustainable development. This confirms the political principle that parity democracy is solely real democracy, thus establishing the foundations of further legislative regulation, which creates the conditions for execution of equal opportunities for women and men and consistent application of this regulation.

Namely, in its own basic provisions, the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia lists the basic human and civil rights and freedoms recognized in the international law and established by the Constitution, as the most relevant constitutional-legal values, i.e. as basic values of the constitutional order of the Republic of Macedonia. Furthermore, basic human and civil rights and freedoms are uppermost in the normative part of the Constitution. Namely, the provisions regulating the basic human and civil rights and freedoms are placed before the provisions for the organisation of the state administration in the Constitution.

Besides being regulated by the Constitution, legal position and status of women in the Republic of Macedonia is also regulated by international agreements, which Republic of Macedonia has signed and ratified, and which, are component of the legal order of the Republic of Macedonia in accordance with Article 118 of the Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia.

In January 1997, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia adopted Decision on Establishing a **Unit for Promotion of Gender Equality** (hereinafter referred to as UPGE) in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, following the modern, democratic and civil concept, and in accordance with Beijing Declaration and Action Platform.

Main responsibility of UPGE is to influence positively on the promotion of women’s position in accordance with the international conventions and documents, which the Republic of Macedonia has ratified, or where it has accessed in accordance with the activities for creating clear concept and strategy for solving the problems with which women confront in the country, as well as monitoring women's position and promotion of the gender equality.

In accordance with Beijing Declaration and Action Platform, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy drafted the first National Action Plan on Gender Equality, adopted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia in December 1999.

In 2006, the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men within the frames of compliance and adjustment of the legislation of the Republic of Macedonia regarding the equal opportunities for man and women.

The second National Action Plan on Gender Equality was adopted in 2007 and it will cover a period from 2007 to 2012. The National Action Plan is a document which defines policy and measures regarding promotion and protection of woman's rights in all areas of social life.

In March 2007, a Department for Equal Opportunities was established by an Act for Systematization and Organization of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. This Sector treats the issues of promotion of equal opportunity, establishment of equal opportunities, as well as protection and prevention against all forms of discrimination

The Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), one of the most significant international agreements, representing basic legal frame in the area of equal opportunities of women and men, is one of the first documents taken into consideration upon the elaboration of all significant documents relating to the gender equality, equal opportunities and prevention against all forms of discrimination against women.

In sense of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, promotion of gender equality and strengthening of women's rights, and in accordance with the implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities and implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Department for Equal Opportunities works actively on the incorporation of gender equality in main courses, policies and practices, in order to make needs and problems of women and men an integral part of planning, elaboration and implementation of the policies and programs upon providing equal benefits for women and men regarding the achievement of gender equality.

The incorporation of gender equality in main courses, policies and practices is a concept, which, besides the institutions in the country, includes other entities in the promotion of gender equality for the purposes of its implementation. In this sense, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Department for Equal Opportunities cooperates with non-governmental institutions, and it is a partner with donors who significantly contribute to the promotion of gender equality, strengthening of the gender's machinery capacities and establishing of equal opportunities.

Part two: Progress in the implementation of critical areas provided in Beijing Action Platform and other initiatives and actions identified on the 23rd special session of the General Assembly.

In 2006, the **Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men ("Official Gazette of RM" No. 66/6 from 29.05.2006) was adopted.**

In September, the **Law Amending the Law on Equal Opportunities ("Official Gazette" No. 117 from 18.09.2008) was adopted** in accordance with the programme of the Department for Equal Opportunities. Compliance has been made with EU Directives regarding the definitions for discrimination and disturbance and competencies of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy contained in the law, as well as their compliance with the Directive 2007/73/EC, and changes have been made of the criminal provisions in the law.

The Department for Equal Opportunities has drafted a Draft Law on Protection against Discrimination. The initiative for drafting of this law is in accordance with the last recommendations of the European

Commission and incorporation of European antidiscrimination directives in one general law. The necessity of adopting the Law on Protection against Discrimination is determined by the need for creating legal rules, which will forbid and prevent discrimination by any person, group of persons, authorities, public and private, local, national and private institutions and organisations in the civil, political, economical, social and cultural area, as well as in the area of employment, education, housing and access to goods and services. The purpose of the adoption of this Law is to provide mechanism of measures and activities for legal protection in case of occurrence of discrimination on different basis of discrimination stipulated in this Draft Law. In sense of transparent adoption of such delicate Law as Law on Protection against Discrimination, public debates have been held in order to obtain proposals and suggestions, which will be incorporated in the Law on Protection against Discrimination regarding their appropriateness. The first drafted version was given for a review to Venice Commission and Commission of ODIHR, which gave their own opinions that will be incorporated in the Draft Law on Protection against Discrimination.

Within the frames of the implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Department for Equal Opportunities realizes number of projects, which has contributed to the strengthening of the capacities of mechanisms for gender equality on national and local level, responsible for the implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

For this purpose, trainings have been organized for strengthening of mechanisms for promotion of gender equality, which were intended for the coordinators for equal opportunities appointed in the ministries, State Statistical Office, Secretariat for European Affairs and General Secretariat of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

In sense of incorporating the gender perspective and equal opportunities in the local policy, the promotion of women's position on local level and the implementation of one of the strategic goals of the National Action Plan and the Law, the establishment of commissions for equal opportunities for women and men has continued in the local self-government in the Republic of Macedonia by initiating the process of decentralization. From the start, this initiative was supported by the civil sector in the Republic of Macedonia. Regarding their familiarization with their legal obligations and competencies, the Department for Equal Opportunities continuously undertakes number of activities in order to provide strengthening of the same and undertaking activities in accordance with the planned competencies. For the purposes of better communication and cooperation, several working meetings and two round tables have been organised, which contribute to the promotion of gender equality on local level.

Within the frames of incorporating the gender concept in the syllabus in the primary education, 15 trainings have been organised of the primary school teachers. This project includes more than 330 teachers, who can further use these skills in their everyday work in order to eliminate stereotypes and prejudices.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, Department for Equal Opportunities continuously works on the responsiveness of all relevant participants included in the promotion of gender equality on local and national level. In the last period, trainings have been organised, which included representatives of the local self-government units with local institutions, representatives of state administrative bodies and teacher from primary schools. Gaining new knowledge and information provides initiation of activities and successful implementation of legal regulation and strategic documents by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia by all entities responsible for the promotion of gender equality on local and national level. Incorporation of gender concept in the work of social workers, police and health workers

and gender responsiveness of these professional services has been emphasized in many reports and recommendations from domestic and foreign institutions and organisations (recommendations obtained after the defense of CEDAW Committee in UN). Issues treated by these professional services are directly in correlation with the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men.

The promotion of gender budgeting as a tool for a promotion of gender equality is one of the recommendations of the European Commission proposed in the Resolution of the sixth European Ministerial Conference (2006) and indicated in the Map for Gender Equality 2006-2010. The Government of the Republic of Macedonia, initiating this concept shows political will and preparedness for promotion of gender equality and improvement of women's position with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. In 2009, upon the realisation of this one-year programme, the Department for Equal Opportunities will analyze budget programs of the Department for Labor and Department for Social Protection. Upon the analysis of budget programmes, it will be examined whether and how much they included the equality between man and women and contribute to it, thus proposing changes in sense of achieving gender equality. Meanwhile, the gender analysis of the budgets will help the Government and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to decide on the matter how to aim political decisions to achieve maximal influence, as well as on the matter where they should re/allocate resources in order to achieve higher level of human development and gender equality. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy will contribute to much bigger accountability for its own work in front of all citizens by realisation of this activity.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy will intensify, upgrade and expand measures and activities for prevention and protection of victims of trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, in accordance with the interests and efforts of the international community for joint action in the repression of trafficking in human beings and implementation of the National Program for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration. In this context, since September 2005, an office of the **National Referral Mechanism for the victims of trafficking in human beings (NRM)** successfully functions within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, which is formed within the frames of a project that will be realised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the National Commission for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration in cooperation with the OSCE mission in the Republic of Macedonia. This project includes Center for social work, local institutions, non-governmental organisations, Association of Organisations of Social Workers and commissions for equal opportunities for women and man from local self-government units. The Referral Office for the victims of trafficking in human beings promotes one good practice of democratic institutions building by promotion and coordination of the effective relations between state institutions and civil society, and it also informs the public and state authority bodies for the need of changing the perception for trafficking in human beings in order to be realised that the trafficking in human beings is flagrant violation of victim's human rights. Socialwork Centers (SWC) are direct holders of all activities in the area of social protection for prevention and decrease of the trafficking in human beings on local level. Having in regard the fact that the Socialwork Centers are functional institutions, performing number of tasks for the realisation of the preventive activities in the social protection, they meet different categories of citizens, especially women and children who can be potential victims of trafficking in human beings every day.

Services for the victims of trafficking in human beings

Within the frames of its competencies referring to the prevention and protection of the victims of trafficking in human beings, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy provides support and protection of the victims of trafficking in human beings with the assistance of the coordinative office of NRM and the Socialwork Centers, thus undertaking the following measures:

- a) Preliminary evaluation of the needs of the persons supposed to be subject of trafficking in human beings, organisation and coordination of the appropriate support (intervention in crisis, psychosocial support and counseling, food, clothes, medical help).
- b) Referral to shelter of the victims of trafficking in human beings, NGO Open Gate (with which a Memorandum of Cooperation is signed) or to the Reception Center for Foreigners (by the police), their returning to the family or finding appropriate accommodation. In the period from the establishment of the Coordinative Office to December 2007, 13 persons were referred to the Open Gate's shelter.
- c) Collecting necessary documentation for the persons, personal papers, healthcare cards etc.
- d) Coordination of protection (contact with the family, appointment of special guardians for minors, evaluation of the conditions and opportunities for his/her returning back to the family). According to the obtained data from SWC in the office of NRM in the period of December 2006 to December 2007, Socialwork Centers worked on 37 cases, 30 were identified as domestic victims of trafficking in human beings, 2 superiors, and 5 minor foreign citizens accommodated in the Transit Center for Foreigners, procedure for appointing special guardian. In cooperation with the competent ministries, the determination of the possibilities for repatriation of children in the country of origin has been coordinated. All children were safely returned in their countries by September 2007.

The office of NRM coordinated procedure for appointing of a guardian in special cases and for 6 minor girls citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.

There has been a coordination of a procedure for the evaluation of the families and determination of the possibilities for their returning and acceptance in Macedonia for Macedonian citizens. They were identified in other countries (Italy, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia) as victims of trafficking in human beings and were returned in the Republic of Macedonia.

- e) Informing the victims on their rights and status (legal aid, informing on the legal provisions, representation). The legal representative in the National Referral Mechanism was appointed for special guardian of 4 minor victims of trafficking in human beings in the past period. He/She also represented them in the investigation procedure at the Basic Court Skopje and Basic Court Tetovo. Three of the minor victims were represented at the Basic Court Tetovo for which the main hearing was concluded and a verdict was reached. The accused were found guilty; the first accused was sentenced in absence to a prison sentence of 6 years, and the second accused was sentenced to a prison sentence of 4 years.

Several meetings and contacts have been made with the Deputy Public Prosecutor for the purposes of monitoring the court cases.

- f) Preparation and realisation of individual programme for resocialisation and reintegration of the victims of trafficking in human beings. The program is developed on the basis of the individual needs

and capacities of each victim. On the basis of this Programme, SWC prepare individual programmes for resocialisation and reintegration upon their work for each case separately. The programme plans:

- a) Therapeutic activities including: short symptomatic therapy and long (developing) therapy;
- b) Activities for exercise of the rights in the area of healthcare, housing, legal and social assistance, education and employment.
- c) Social-educational activities, which plan two groups: with the child and its primary environment (parents/guardians of the child - victim of trafficking in human beings, as well as “significant others”) for the child.

Capacities building

1. Having in regard the fact that appropriate spatial and technical conditions for work with victims of trafficking in human beings, especially with children, are necessary for successful realisation of these activities, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has provided office furniture and technical equipment for 19 Socialwork Centres and for the office of the Association of Organisations of Social Workers in the Republic of Macedonia where it functions, as well as for a part of the office of the National Referral Mechanism, in cooperation with the OSCE mission in the Republic of Macedonia and the office of UNICEF.
2. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy also continuously organises trainings for strengthening of the capacities of all relevant institutions included in the referral mechanism for the victims in human trafficking. In sense of deepening of the cooperation and the coordination between the involved participants, responsible for the implementation of the Program for resocialisation and reintegration of children victims of trafficking in human beings, three two-days seminars were organised where 65 persons were trained from: Socialwork Centres, social workers appointed to work on this subject, representatives of the Ministry of Interior Affairs on local level, as well as NGOs.
3. Noticing the need for more extensive informing of the directors of the Socialwork Centres, a two-day seminar was held for their responsiveness for this issue. Seminar’s topic was: “The role of the Socialwork Centre in the prevention and the protection of the victims of trafficking in human beings”.
4. Basic trainings have been organised for a fight against trafficking in human beings for the purposes of labour exploitation for the representatives of the State Labour Inspectorate. Sixty seven labour inspectors from all cities of the Republic of Macedonia were trained at three seminars. Additionally, a guidebook has been drafted, which has been distributed to the State Labour Inspectorate. The content of this guidebook represents compilation of the presentations used upon the trainings. They should serve to the labour inspectors for identification of the issue of trafficking in human beings, communication and exchange of information with the social workers and the police, thus leading to an improvement of the process of identification and of the prevention of trafficking in human beings for the purposes of exploitation.
5. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy organises two two-day seminars for 36 coordinators of the municipal organisations of the Red Cross in all cities of RM in cooperation with the Red Cross of the

Republic of Macedonia for the purposes of their inclusion in the fight against trafficking in human beings.

6. In the period from May to July 2008, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Office of the National Referral Mechanism for the victims of trafficking in human beings organised six regional tribunals in Bitola, Kichevo, Struga, Shtip, Kumanovo on the topic: **“Deepening of the cooperation and the coordination in the fight against trafficking in human beings on local level”**. The purpose of these tribunals was to speak for the current situation on local level in the fight against trafficking in human beings, prevention and protection of the victims of trafficking in human beings, mobilization of the available resources, introducing several issues, as well specific proposals and recommendations for their solving. Larger cooperation and coordination of the local institutions with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the Ministry of Interior Affairs, the National Commission for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration, as well as with the non-governmental sector is especially significant.

During this year, three more regional tribunals will be organised in: Gevgelija, Kochani and Kumanovo.

7. Additionally, to the end of 2008, the nominated 58 social workers will obtain specialized training for direct assistance and support of the victims of trafficking in human beings.

8. In June 2008, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the office of NRM will organise a seminar for the journalists and editors of the electronic and written, national and local media. The purpose of this seminar is to understand the role of the media in the fight against trafficking in human beings, and the information of the public should simultaneously be in terms of the protection of the identity and human rights of the victims.

Legal framework

In sense of better information and familiarization of the representatives of relevant institutions and organisations, as well as of the larger public, regarding the legal regulation in this area in the countries of Southeastern Europe, MLSP initiated translation of the “Guidebooks for Revision of the Legal Regulation” with a special review of the region of the Stability Pact of Southeastern Europe in Macedonian and Albanian. The purpose of this Guidebook is to set a framework for comprehensive legal regulation regarding the trafficking in human beings and to assist in the process of making political decisions, especially in the area of SEE, as well as in all OSCE member states. This Guidebook is already distributed to all institutions and organisations in the country.

In 2006, the Office of NRM prepared legal analysis of the legal regulation in order to detect the weakness of the legal system regarding the protection and prevention from trafficking in human beings and initialisation of a criminal procedure against the perpetrators, as well as to give recommendations, which will improve the care of the victims of the trafficking and the whole situation.

On a session of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, a conclusion has been made, which obliges the competent ministries to access the changes of the legal regulation. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy began with the amendments of the following laws: Law on Family, Law on Child Care, and Law on Social Protection. The Law on Family was adopted in July 2008. Other laws are in parliamentary procedure and are expected to be adopted by the end of 2008.

Standard operational procedures

In 2007, Standard Operational Procedures were prepared for treatment of the victims of trafficking in human beings, which were adopted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia in February 2008. Standard Operational Procedures (SOP) have been established in order to provide assistance and protection of all victims of trafficking in human beings by one comprehensive access based on victims' human rights.

Two four-day seminars have been organised for the implementation of SOP by the National Commission for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration with the support of ICMPD and OSCE mission, for all governmental and non-governmental institutions in Macedonia, included in the implementation of the Standard Operational Procedures.

At the seminar participated 72 representatives from:

- Ministry of Interior Affairs: Sector of Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants. Witness Protection Unit, Sector for Border Affairs and Transit Center under its competency, International Police Cooperation Sector and Sector for Foreigners.
- Ministry of Labour and Social Policy National Referral Mechanism; and Socialwork Centres.
- Judiciary and Public Prosecution
- Ministry of Justice
- Non-governmental organisations: Open Gate; and For Happy Childhood.

Preventive measures

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has implemented an economical-educational programme with high risk categories of women, identified and potential victims of trafficking in human beings, registered in the Socialwork Centres, in cooperation with the NGO "For Happy Childhood". Within the frames of this programme 10 girls obtained professional training regarding their affinities. After the training, 3 girls have been employed, and 3 girls have been given opportunities for self-employment, simultaneously a psychosocial support has been provided to them by a psychologist, social worker, pedagogue and psychiatrist. This program was implemented with the financial support of the Embassy of the United States in Skopje.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has organised seven workshops with the vulnerable groups in cooperation with the Association of Organisations of Social Workers in the Republic of Macedonia in Kumanovo, Gostivar, Struga, Veles, Shtip, Prilep and Bitola. At this workshop participated 169 persons, youth, single parents, family violence victims and other persons, beneficiaries of the services of the Socialwork Centre.

Raising public awareness – media campaign

In November 2007, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy began with the implementation of a medium campaign for raising public awareness for the risks and dangers from trafficking in human beings under the motto "**It's simple...**", through the office of NRM and with the support of OSCE. „

Target group is youth, vulnerable groups (single mothers, family violence victims, and financially insecure persons), rural areas, as well as citizens in general. The campaign includes preparation and distribution of printed material, posters, leaflets, shirts, stickers and calendars. A banner has been placed on the web site of On.Net (<http://www.on.net.mk>), which is a link to the web page of MLSP, containing information for protection against trafficking in human beings. Stickers have been placed in taverns and bars with a warning content. TV spot has been made, which is shown on the national and local TV stations.

Data collection and research

In 2007, an ICMPD international project was implemented by the 11 countries of SEU, for establishing National data base for the perpetrators of the crime trafficking in human beings, whose depository will be the Ministry of Interior Affairs, and the national data base for the victims of trafficking in human beings, whose depository will be NRM in MLSP. In December 2007, a training of operators was organised for keeping the national base.

This project enables keeping of standardized statistical database on regional level, thus providing fast and useful exchange of information, as well as simultaneous effective monitoring and research of the trafficking in human beings.

The Coordinative Office of NRM in MLSP has created several documents for a database containing information on the organisations, which enable services for the victims of trafficking in human beings, as well as information on the services provided by the actual Office of NRM. All SWC have been contacted, in order to provide and to constantly deliver the reports on the assistance provided to the victims. Additionally, a standardized questionnaire has been developed for keeping records and working on cases, as well as for analysis of the data and exchange of information in order to obtain more reliable facts for the future processing.

A special component of the intern database in MLSP is also the database of all individuals who have obtained trainings on the issues regarding the trafficking in human beings. This information will be delivered to the Office of the National Commission in order to establish unique database.

In 2007, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy conducted two researches through the office of NRM.

For the purposes of developing a cooperation between NGO and institutions, the coordinative office of NRM has performed an analysis for conditions and capacities of non-governmental organisations, which are working on the fight against trafficking in human beings. The analysis has been performed on the basis of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire has been filled by 16 NGOs, which have programs for fight against the trafficking in human beings.

The second research is for the children on street – street children from legal aspect, which contains recommendations and conclusions for prevention and protection of these children from trafficking in children for the purposes of forcibly begging. The recommendations and conclusions will be delivered to all relevant institutions.

PART THREE: INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

EXISTING NATIONAL MECHANISMS FOR PROMOTION OF GENDER EQUALITY AND EMANCIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

a)

Following the modern, democratic and civil concept, and in accordance with Beijing Declaration and Action Platform, the Fourth International Conference of women was adopted in Beijing 1995. In March 2007, a Department for Equal Opportunities was established in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in accordance with the amendments of the Rulebook on the Systematization. The Sector for Equal Opportunities enables active and clear policy for the promotion of the gender equality, establishment of equal opportunities for women and men and elimination of any kind of discrimination in terms of sex, age, ethnic, sexual orientation, disabled persons, as well as double discrimination of the individuals due to unequal treatment in the area of labor, social protection and social insurance.

Main responsibility of the Sector for Equal Opportunities is to influence positively on the promotion of women's position in accordance with international conventions and documents, which the Republic of Macedonia has ratified, or to which it has accessed, creating clear concept and strategy for solving the problems with which women confront in the country, as well as monitoring of women's position, promotion of gender equality and establishment of equal opportunities for women and men in the Republic of Macedonia. Six persons are employed on indefinite time, three persons are engaged on three years project, and one is a volunteer in the Sector for Equal Opportunities. There are total 10 persons at the moment. The Sector for Equal Opportunities provides funds from the budget of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia and from foreign donors. The largest percent of the finances comes from foreign donors within the frames of projects.

By establishing the Sector for Equal Opportunities, the issue of gender equality and equal opportunities has been raised on higher level, thus providing an opportunity to propose and make decisions referring to the gender equality and the prevention and protection against any kind of violence and discrimination.

Since September 2006, the Commission on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men functions in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, and its task is to monitor the legal regulation proposed by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia from the aspect of gender equality. The Commission is composed of MPs from different parliamentary political parties, but external experts and non-governmental organisations can also participate, which have an experience in the area of gender equality. A representative from the Sector for Equal Opportunities regularly attends the meetings for the purposes of better elaboration of the eventual oversights made in the laws and programs adopted by the Government of RM.

In sense of incorporating the gender perspective in the local policy, the promotion of women's position on local level and the implementation of one of the strategic objectives of the National Action Plan and the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, commissions for equal opportunities for women and men have been established in 79 local self-government units. These commissions have been established by the initiative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and local self-government units in accordance with the Statute of the Councils of the Local Self-Government. From the start, this initiative has been supported by the non-governmental sector in the Republic of Macedonia. Women and men Members of Councils of the municipalities from different political parties are members of the commissions. Main responsibility of the commissions is to positively influence on the local level policy from the aspect of gender equality, in order to solve the specific problems with which women and man confront on local level. The commissions have drafted local action plans with specific objectives and needs for each municipality.

In accordance with the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, 79 persons have been appointed as coordinators for equal opportunities for women and men in the local self-government units who have status of civil servants, responsible for the promotion of gender equality and establishment of equal opportunities for women and men on local level. Coordinators' main responsibility is to assist the commissions for equal opportunities and to establish sustainability of the process, as well as to continuously perform the activities regarding the fact that the commissions for equal opportunities for women and men have only 4 years terms of office, and are replaced each fourth year upon the local elections.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy will intensify, upgrade and expand measures and activities for prevention and protection of victims of trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, in accordance with the interests and efforts of the international community for joint action in the repression of trafficking in human beings and implementation of the National Program for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration.

In this context, since September 2005, an Office of the **National Referral Mechanism for the victims of the trafficking in human beings, especially women and children** successfully functions in the Ministry for Labour and Social Policy.

The Referral Office for the victims of trafficking in human beings promotes one good practice of democratic institutions building by promotion and coordination of the effective relations between state institutions and civil society, and it also informs the public and state authority bodies for the need of changing the perception for trafficking in human beings in order to be realised that the trafficking in human beings is flagrant violation of the victim's human rights.

b)

By entering into force of the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, and in accordance with Articles 13, 11, 16 and 17 of this Law, coordinators for equal opportunities for women and men have been appointed in the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Local Self-Government, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Ministry of Interior Affairs, Ministry of Information Society, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Finance. They are civil servants who in largest part are employed in the sector for human rights, and besides other responsibilities, they have an obligation to monitor the activities from the aspect of gender

equality and equal opportunities for women and men and to inform the Sector for Equal Opportunities on the adoption of certain proposals and solutions in the area of gender equality.

In sense of strengthening the capacities of the mechanisms for gender equality on national level, the Department for Equal Opportunities has organised trainings (basic and advanced) intended for the coordinators for equal opportunities for women and men in the ministries of the Government of RM. An evaluation has been performed of the need of the national mechanisms for gender equality by an engaged expert, on the basis of which the training agenda was designed. Domestic and international expert for gender equality and gender mainstreaming has been engaged for the realisation of the trainings.

Regarding the fact that the coordinators have additional obligations in the ministries, they may not always expeditiously respond to the obligations appointed to them in accordance with the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. However, if we take into consideration the fact that the policy of gender equality and equal opportunities represents long process, we consider that better and more specific results will be achieved on the plan for mutual coordination and undertaking specific initiatives by the coordinators in the following period.

In sense of strengthening the mechanisms for gender equality on local level, activities have been performed in local self-government units, which will improve the coordination and the cooperation between the Department for Equal Opportunities and the mechanisms for gender equality on local level for the purposes of more successful implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men and the National Action Plan on Gender Equality. The weakness and shortcomings have been detected on the organised 10 meetings and round tables, and in meanwhile guidelines and recommendations have been given for their solving.

c)

In sense of monitoring for evaluation of the progress upon the implementation of the national policies, strategies, action plans, as well as international obligations, the Sector for Equal Opportunities has engaged international and local experts, who submit reports regarding the progress and special measures, on the basis of special methodologies for the evaluation of the progress, which should be undertaken in order to improve the gender equality and equal opportunities in the Republic of Macedonia.

In accordance with the Law on Equal Opportunities, the Department for Equal Opportunities has also an obligation to monitor the enforcement of the Law, and in accordance with this Law entities responsible for its enforcement (political parties, state administration bodies, ministries, Ombudsman, local self-government units, means for public information, the Assembly of RM) have an obligation to enforce the Law and to deliver periodic reports on the performed activities in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy – Department for Equal Opportunities from every aspect and competence .

On the basis of these reports, the Department for Equal Opportunities prepares annual information, which it submits to the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

The coordinators for equal opportunities for women and men perform their obligations responsibly and within their competencies as responsible persons for promotion of the gender equality in the ministries of the Government of RM. They are appointed as responsible persons by the competent ministry in accordance with the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

We have to admit that we still have problems with the establishment of coordination between the coordinators, but also with the competent body, i.e. Department for Equal Opportunities, which will direct all of its capacities towards the promotion of this coordination in the following period.

Works and work tasks are being performed in the Department for Equal Opportunities, referring to the promotion of women's status and establishment of equal opportunities for women and men in accordance with the Law on Equal Opportunities, standards and principles of the international conventions and documents, which the Republic of Macedonia has ratified or signed referring to the equal opportunities and to prevention and protection against any kind of violence and discrimination.

- is responsible for the promotion of women's status in all areas of social life;
- is responsible for establishment of the principle on gender equality in the main courses of the reorganisation, promotion, development and evaluation of the political processes on all levels and in all phases on national and local level;
- gives an opinion for the use of positive measures in special areas of the social life;
- submits proposals for adoption or amendment of laws and other regulations for establishment of equal opportunities, as well as for adoption of other measures to the Government or to the competent ministries.
- drafts the draft on the National Plan for Gender Equality and initiates the activities for its implementation;
- monitors the implementation of the international agreements referring to the equal opportunities and the promotion of women's status in cooperation with the Ministry of External Affairs;
- prepares analysis, reports and other documents related to the gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men;
- cooperates with the coordinators in the state administration bodies, as well as with the coordinators and the commissions for equal opportunities for women and men, established in local self-government units;
- cooperates with the associations of citizens, which are active in the area of equal opportunities;
- is responsible for providing legal protection for persons discriminated on a basis of sex;
- coordinates the works in the area of protection against all kinds of discrimination (sex, age, ethnic, sexual orientation, disabled persons, as well as double discrimination of individuals due to unequal treatment in the area of labour, social protection and social insurance)
- submits annual report on the activities for the previous year to the Government, not later than the end of April

d)

In June 2008, the Department for Equal Opportunities began working on a new concept for the promotion of gender equality, gender responsive budgeting. Four-day training has been organised for trainers for gender budgeting, where representatives from the budget sector of several ministries, coordinators for equal opportunities for women and men, representatives of non-governmental sector and several local self-government units attended. Techniques and methods for the understanding of this concept, the way of incorporating the gender equality in the budget policies, as well as the experiences

from the EU member-states and from the region have been given by an international expert for gender budgeting.

This has represented a beginning of the activities directed towards development of this concept and its incorporating in the budget policies of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia. In January 2009, the Department for Equal Opportunities began with the analysis of the budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (programs for employment and social protection) in order to be realised how much the gender concept is incorporated in the budget policy of MLSP and how much is the benefit at women and men from the realisation of the activities related to these budget programs.

On the basis of the established priorities from the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2007-2012, the Department for Equal Opportunities has drafted the Operational Program for 2008 for the implementation of NAPGE. In order to continue the positive trend of transparent work in the Sector for Equal Opportunities, the Operational Program has been promoted and represented in 6 cities of RM before the representatives on local institutions and non-governmental organisations.

In December 2008, four one-day educational workshops were organised for gender responsiveness and incorporation of the gender concept in the work of social workers, health workers and police. The need of gender responsiveness of these expert offices is emphasized in many reports and recommendations from domestic and foreign institutions and organisations. The issues treated by these expert offices are directly in correlation with the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men, especially for the approach towards the users of services, women victims of trafficking in human beings and any kind of violence. Eighty experts have been educated from the above mentioned profiles for this purpose.

In December 2008, MLSP began with the realisation of one year program for strengthening of the capacities of the mechanisms for gender equality on local level. The task of the programme is strengthening of the capacities of the commissions for equal opportunities for women and men in the Councils of Local Self-Government Units as a key element, which contributes to the realisation of the gender equality policy on a local level.

By providing technical assistance and training for the machinery for gender equality on local level, the programme will contribute to further explanation and implementation of the competencies of these commissions; it will strengthen the capacity and the authority for efficient and effective coordination of gender equality policies. It will also improve the understanding and implementation of the concepts of gender equality and gender "mainstreaming" (establishment of equal opportunities for women and men in the main social courses) in the preparation of local policies.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the Information on Specific Needs of Roma Woman and the National Action and Operational Plan for the promotion of the status of Roma woman on the 139th session held on 23.03.2008.

The objective of these tribunals was to speak for the current situation on local level in the fight against trafficking in human beings, the prevention and protection of the victims of trafficking in human beings, mobilization of the available resources, introducing several issues, as well as specific proposals and recommendations for their solving. In these tribunals participated total 157 participants..

In 2008, 2 two-day seminars were organised on the topic: "Fight against trafficking in human beings – assistance and support of the victims of trafficking in human beings"

The seminars represented an advanced training for strengthening of the social workers capacities for direct assistance and support of the victims of trafficking in human beings, especially children,

intervention in crisis, psychosocial support in accordance with the international human rights standards. In these seminars participated total 53 persons.

In 2008, three seminars were organised for the implementation of SOP by the National Commission for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration with the support of ICMPD and OSCE mission, for all governmental and non-governmental institutions in Macedonia, included in the implementation of the Standard Operational Procedures.

At the seminar participated 100 representatives from:

- Ministry of Interior Affairs: Sector of Trafficking in Human Beings and Smuggling of Migrants. Witness Protection Unit, Sector for Border Affairs and Transit Center under its competency, International Police Cooperation Sector and Sector for Foreigners.
- Ministry of Labour and Social Policy: National Referral Mechanism and Socialwork Centers.
- Judiciary and Public Prosecution
- Ministry of Justice
- Non-governmental organisations: Open Gate and For Happy Childhood.

e)

The National Action Plan on Gender Equality contains ten strategic areas and one cross-section area, represented by strategic objectives and activities, which should be achieved in the following period. In order to obtain evaluation of the achieved results in the National Action Plan on Gender Equality, indicators have been introduced for every activity in each strategic area, which represents a possibility to evaluate the way of implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality.

In sense of data and statistics in the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men in Article 20 the obligation has been regulated of the competent entities for the presentation of the statistical data according to gender.

The Assembly, the Government, state administration bodies, legal authorities and other state bodies, bodies of local self-government units, legal entities appointed by law to perform activities of public interest, associations of citizens, foundations, public enterprises, educational institutions, institutions in the area of social protection, healthcare institutions, political parties, means for public information, trade companies and other entities appointed by law to collect, record and process statistical data are obliged to represent these data on human resources according to sex.

The need for data from a gender perspective has been emphasized in the National Action Plan on Gender Equality. These claims are directed towards the entire system in the country, especially towards the State Statistical Office as a coordinator of the statistical system, thus every year a special publication has been published and printed for women and men in the Republic of Macedonia (2008 was fourth). The available data from the Office is being used in these publications in order to emphasize the conditions from an aspect of gender equality.

There is also a special unit in the State Statistical Office, which is responsible for the gender statistics.

There is processed data by sector according to sex in all sectors in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, as well as in largest part of the ministries, however, unfortunately, there is no special database for keeping records and data processing according to sex.

f)

Since September 2006, a **Commission for Equal Opportunities between Women and Man** functions in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia, and it is responsible for monitoring the legal regulation drafted by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia from the aspect of gender equality and emancipation of women. In the last period, the Commission has been actively working on the promotion of gender equality in different areas of the social life, e.g. within the frames of violence against women, including the family violence it has proposed the Assembly of RM to adopt a special Declaration on the Prevention of the Violence against Women, including the family violence, it also has been lobbying for amendments of the Law on Healthcare Protection, it organized many tribunes on different issues. However, the number of members of the commission is small, which are responsive on this issue, and it is very important to work on their responsiveness in the following period. The past cooperation between this commission and other mechanisms for gender equality is very good on national level, but efforts should be made for the establishment of a cooperation and coordination with the commissions in local self-government units.

The associations of citizens, a significant element from the civil society, are one of the key participants in the presentation and promotion of gender equality in the Republic of Macedonia. The cooperation between the Government, as well as other representatives of the authority in the Republic of Macedonia and associations of citizens represents a good basis for further participation of the associations of citizens in the preparation of public policies, exchange of information and *best practices* upon the realisation of the gender equality and providing synergy of the views, policies, capacities and resources. However, their significant role must be emphasized in the promotion of the national and local mechanisms for gender equality in the Republic of Macedonia, as well as in the initiation and lobbying upon the adoption and amendments to a large number of laws in our country. They also participate in the preparation of a report in shadow on the implementation of the Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; they participate in the session organised within the frames of UN when the country defends the state report on this Convention in front of the Committee on Women's Right in New York. NGOs remain our partners in the promotion of gender equality and the establishment of equal opportunities for women and men in RM.

Trade union – A significant partner in preparation and implementation of policies of strategic importance for the country, by its active participation in the process of preparation of strategic documents, participation in the work of the Economical and Social Council etc. In addition, they are one of the social partners in the conclusion of the collective agreements on national level (general, citizen and collective agreements on level of employer), which regulate the labour relation rights. The promotion of woman's status and the establishment of equal opportunities for women and men is part of the program activities of the Trade Union, especially women's sections.

Employers – employers and representatives of the private sector are key partners for the improvement of the situation with woman's rights and equal opportunities for women and man. The progress regarding gender equality and equal opportunities will be endangered or insignificant without their involvement, not only upon the consultations, but upon the adoption and preparation of certain policies and in their implementation;

International organisations, as important partners and cooperators, i.e. important factor in the provision of expertise, financial and technical support.

Upon the preparation and promotion of **the social dialog**, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia will strengthen the cooperation with trade unions, associations of citizens, international institutions and other relevant participants and will strengthen the forms of interinstitutional and intersectoral coordination, in order to create partnership, which will address the critical issues related to the achievement of gender equality by collective negotiating, consultations, partnership and other cooperative methods.

Part four: Other challenges and activities for their solving

A)

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia will undertake number of measures and it will establish and put into function mechanisms for the realisation of basic gender equality. Most important are:

Promotion of the national machinery (institutional structures and mechanisms) for the achievement of gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men in the Republic of Macedonia. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy - Department for Equal Opportunities began with the realisation of the Project on Support of the Commission for Equal Opportunities between Women and Man on local level for the purposes of the realisation of this objective. This project is supported by the Government of Norway through UNDP, it will be realised during 2009, and it will continue in 2010. The task of the project is strengthening of the capacities of the commissions for equal opportunities for women and men in the Councils of Local Self-Government Units as a key element, which contributes to the realisation of the gender equality policy on local level. By providing technical assistance and training for the machinery for gender equality on local level, the project will contribute to further explanation and implementation in practice of the competencies of these commissions, it will strengthen the capacity and the authority for efficient and effective coordination of gender equality policies and it will improve the understanding and implementation of the concepts for gender equality and gender “mainstreaming” (establishment of equal opportunities for women and men in main social courses) upon the preparation of local policies.

The project covers the entire territory of the country, and its activities will be performed in the following related and correlated areas supplementing one another: 1. Evaluation of capacities and needs for training, followed by training of all coordinators for equal opportunities; 2. Training of the members/councilors of the commissions for equal opportunities and the stakeholders for the preparation of Action Plans on Gender Equality for each municipality; 3. Preparation of Internet portal for gender “mainstreaming” as a tool for a net of cooperation on horizontal and vertical level and exchange of experiences between the Department for Equal Opportunities in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, local self-government units and commissions for equal opportunities for women and men in the local self-governments.

➤ Promotion of the keeping the gender divided statistical data in all areas of the social acting and their publication. Statistical and analytical information on gender relations should be a routine part of the analysis of the issue/situation upon the preparation of the political programs and projects of the Government. They are very important for the establishment of the fact whether the gender differences and the inequality is a significant issue in certain area, and for the incorporation of the gender

perspective in all courses, policies and practices. The use of these statistical data and analysis implies application of the principle for account, and devotion in front of the domestic and international public. The Government is obliged to integrate the gender perspective in all analysis (statistical and analytical) and to provide practice of evaluation of the influences of policies and programmes from a gender aspect in all ministries and on all levels in the preparation of policies. It is very important for the Republic of Macedonia to establish a statistical system of separated data collection according to sex as soon as possible, especially after the last recommendations of the CEDAW Committee.

➤ Establishment and implementation of gender responsive education, not only in curriculums, programs and textbooks and elimination of gender stereotypes and prejudices, but also in all areas of living and working. A key precondition for achieving of any measure is responsiveness and level of awareness for gender policies and perspectives. Thus, the need of education is imposed to all entities working on the preparation, adoption and implementation of special measures.

B)

In the last period large number of activities has been realised in several areas of the social life in the Republic of Macedonia :

In 2002, amendments to the ***Law on Election of Members of Parliament*** were adopted in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia. Pursuant to Article 37 of the Law: In the list of nominated candidates, each gender will be represented with at least 30%. This legal provision resulted in an increased number of women MPs in the fourth multi-party Parliament, established after the parliamentary elections held in 2002. Out of total 120 elected MPs, 22 or 18,3% were women.

In June 2004, the amendments to the ***Law on Local Elections*** were adopted. Pursuant to Article 15-a: In the list of nominated candidates for members of the Municipal Council or the Council of the City of Skopje, each gender will be represented with at least 30% in the upper and in the lower half of the list. The results of the local elections which took place in 2004 show that out of total 85 elected mayors, 3 or 3,5% were women. Out of 1391 elected Council Members, 309 or 22,2% are women, which compared to the elections of 2000 is an increase to 13,8%.

The Election Code adopted in 2006 (Official Gazette of RM No. 40/06) Article 64 paragraph 5 regulates that in the submitted list of candidates for MPs of paragraph (2) of this Article for members of the councils of municipalities and the city of Skopje of paragraph (3) of this Article, at least one place to every third place belongs to the represented sex. The results from the parliamentary elections 2006 show that out of total 120 elected MPS, 33 are women. In the moment there are 37 women MPs in the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia as a result of the lists change.

It is planned to achieve single economic development and to open new middle-term workplaces by full concept of strategic development management of the available resources, contained in the Program of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia for the period 2006-2010. ***In this sense, the Government of the Republic of Macedonia adopted the National Employment Strategy 2010, in which the gender concept was incorporated for the first time.*** An Operational Plan is prepared for the active employment policies on a yearly level in accordance with this Strategy. Within the frames of the Draft National Action Plan on Gender Equality, the planned activities are in compliance with the National Employment Strategy and the Program of the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, which are directed towards increasing the employment rate and promotion and strengthening of the economic status of women in the Republic of Macedonia.

The effort for providing equality for male and female school population is obvious in the reform programs for transformation of the educational system.

Statistical data indicate equal representation of the pupils from two sexes in the enrollment policy, as well as in the educational process and obtaining diplomas. The minimal differences arising in the percent ratio between the two sexes depend on the natural birth rate of the generations of pupils in terms of the gender structure.

The family violence began to be treated in the Macedonian civil legislation with the amendments of the Law on Family from June 2004.

Namely, in accordance with the provisions from the Law, it was established that the Republic provides protection against bad relations and violence in marriage and family. Any kind of violence in marriage and family is prohibited.

The Law defines the measures for protection against family violence.

For the purposes of the enforcement of the Law, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has opened seven-day centers for the family violence victims as special organizational units in the competent Socialwork Centers. The Program for development of this form of protection provides enlargement of the net.

In this sense, within the frames of the ongoing cooperation with the UNICEF office in Skopje, between November 2004 and May 2005, a multi-sectoral training was organised on the subject: Work with family violence victims in a community. Within two cycles of this training, it covered a total of 86 professionals from various backgrounds: social protection, police, healthcare, judiciary, and the non-governmental sector.

Meanwhile, in June 2005, a month-long National Campaign on Dealing with Family Violence was realised, in order to strengthen the trust in the state institutions of the potential family violence victims, recognize the issue of family violence and stimulate and encourage family violence victims to undertake measures and to ask for help. The campaign was aimed at the general public, with a special accent to woman and children as most common family violence victims, but also to the media in order to raise the public awareness about the presence of family violence.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy supports national SOS line for the family violence victims, which is a 24/7 service for information and assistance to the family violence victims, in cooperation with non-governmental organisations. This line receives in average 120 phone calls per month.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy will intensify, upgrade and expand measures and activities for prevention and protection of victims of trafficking in human beings, especially women and children, in accordance with the interests and efforts of the international community for joint action in the repression of trafficking in human beings and implementation of the National Program for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration.

In this context, since September 2005, an office of the **National Referral Mechanism for the victims of trafficking in human beings** is successfully functioning within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy – Unit for the Promotion of the Gender Equality, which is formed within the frames of a project realised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the National Commission for Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration in cooperation with the OSCE mission in the Republic of Macedonia. This project includes Socialwork Centers, local institutions, non-governmental

organisations, Association of Organisations of Social Workers and commissions for equal opportunities for women and men from the local self-government units.

The Referral Office for the victims of trafficking in human beings promotes one good practice of democratic institutions building by promotion and coordination of the effective relations between state institutions and the civil society, and it also informs the public and state authority bodies for the need of changing the perception for trafficking in human beings in order to be realised that the trafficking in human beings is a flagrant violation of the victim's human rights. Socialwork Centers are direct holders of all activities in the area of social protection for prevention and decrease of trafficking in human beings on local level.

Having in regard the fact that Socialwork Centers are functional institutions, performing number of tasks for the realisation of preventive activities in the social protection, they meet different categories of citizens, especially women and children who can be potential victims of trafficking in human beings every day.

In the following period they should direct their work towards activities for prevention and protection of the victims in human trafficking upon the realisation of their activities by an interdisciplinary team work, which includes the social workers representing main staff in the Socialwork Centers.

Socialwork Centers will perform their activities by: detecting or recognizing the victims of trafficking in human beings, providing assistance and support, building of a net of cooperation on local level, raising public awareness in terms of preventive activities, and within the frames of direct assistance of the victims they already cooperate with the office of the National Referral Mechanism in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. For the purposes of more successful realisation of these activities and unified access to the expert work of all Socialwork Centers, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy will prescribe certain number of professional documents, for which relevant institutions and experts will be engaged.

Having in regard the fact that appropriate spatial and technical conditions for work with victims of trafficking in human beings, especially with children are necessary for successful realisation of these activities, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy provided office furniture and technical equipment for 15 Socialwork Centers and for the office of Association of Organisations of Social Workers of the Republic of Macedonia where it functions, as well as for a part of the office of the National Referral Mechanism, in cooperation with the OSCE mission in the Republic of Macedonia and the office of UNICEF.

In 2005, for the purposes of implementation of the strategic objectives for women, the Government adopted: Programme for Protection of the Population from AIDS and Programme for Early Detection and Prevention of the Reproductive Systems Diseases in the Women in the Republic of Macedonia.

The Programme for Protection from AIDS promotes the United Nations recommendations for prevention and eradication of HIV/AIDS and includes the following measures and activities: a system of programmed epidemiological researches and monitoring, laboratory tests, education of health-care workers for the entire population in the Republic of Macedonia, and especially for the risk population groups. Programme is implemented within the frames of the funds provided in the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia for 2005, in the amount of 110.000 EUR.

Aims of the Programme for Early Detection and Prevention of the Reproductive System Diseases in the Women in the Republic of Macedonia are: Decreased incidence of the disease and mortality from

cervical cancer and screening for the purposes of early detection of pre-cancerous cervix conditions for about 640.000 women in the Republic of Macedonia.

For 2005, screening is provided for 20% of the total female population aged between 19 and 65. The Programme also foresees preparation of health-promotion material, to popularise the activities of the Programme.

The amendments of the Law on Healthcare Protection (Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia No. 5 from 16.01.2007) provide treatment of issues regarding measures and activities for early detection of the breast cancer in the women and preparation of a programme for early detection, diagnosing and treatment of the breast cancer in women.

On January 22nd and 23rd 2003, the Republic of Macedonia hosted the 5th European Ministerial Conference on Equality between Women and Men of the Council of Europe. The Ministers from 46 member-states of the Council of Europe adopted a Declaration and Action Programme, where they agreed that the activities of the Council of Europe must be focused on the following main objectives: promotion of equal opportunities, prevention of violence against women and of trafficking in human beings. The Conference adopted the Resolution on the Role of Women and Men in Conflict Prevention, Peace Building and the Post-Conflict Democratic Processes – Gender Perspective.

At the Conference, the proposal by the Management Committee on the Equality between Women and Man of the Council of Europe was accepted for drafting the European Convention on Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings, where the gender concept was incorporated. The Republic of Macedonia participates with its representatives in the drafting of the Convention, which was signed by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia at the end of 2005.

A special honor and pleasure for the Republic of Macedonia was the opportunity given by the Council of Europe to present the results of the Ministerial Conference at the special event organized by UNIFEM during the 48th session of the Commission on the Status of Women in the United Nations in 2004.

In September 2007, the Republic of Macedonia also hosted one of the regional seminars for elimination of the violence against women, including the family violence. Within the frames of the campaign of the Council of Europe titled as Stop to the violence against women, experts employed in the Socialwork Centers, healthcare workers and the police participated at this seminar. The purpose of the seminar was to exchange experiences regarding the violence against women and to give recommendations for further activities.

D)

The commitment will be primary of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy for the implementation of Beijing Platform and Action Plan by the National Action Plan on Gender Equality in the promotion of the gender equality and the establishment of equal opportunities for women and men. In this sense, adequate strengthening is needed of the capacities of the governmental institutions, promotion of their cooperation, as well as promotion of the gender equality on local and national level.

For this purpose in the following period the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy will pressure local self-government units, where no commissions for equal opportunities for women and men are established, and no coordinators for equal opportunities are appointed, to begin immediately with this obligation in accordance with the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men.

In 2009, the Sector for Equal Opportunities began with the realisation of one year project for gender responsive budgeting with the support of UNIFEM. The purpose of this project is to analyze the programs in the area of social protection, and the employment from an aspect of gender budgeting, i.e. how many funds are spend for different programs and whether the gender concept i.e. gender budgeting has been taken into consideration.

Within the frames of the Operational Programme of the National Action Plan for Promotion of the Status of Roma Women for 2009, the activities are being specified in the area of human rights, with the mission of OSCE and UNIFEM

During this year, activities for strengthening the capacities of the coordinators for equal opportunities in the ministries with the support of the OSCE mission in RM, by organizing specific advanced trainings in the area of gender equality.

The Ministry of Defense will organize informative seminars for the Resolution 1325 of the Security Council. This activity will include the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

A project will be realised for women from rural areas in the following period. The main responsibility of this project is to inform women from rural areas on their rights, and simultaneously to detect main issues and obstacles, as well as proposals for the improvement of their current marginalized position. This project is supported by the Government of the Kingdom of Norway within the frames of bilateral cooperation with the Government of RM.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, several trainings will be organised on the Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women for its more successful implementation with the judges, attorneys and employees in the judiciary.

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