

GREECE

CEDAW A/42/38 (1987)

65. The Committee considered the initial report of Greece (CEDAW/C/5/Add.28) at its 86th, 87th, and 91st meetings, held on 31 March and 2 April 1987 (CEDAW/C/SR.86, 87 and 91).

66. In her introduction, the representative of Greece informed the Committee that since 1981 the Government's policy in matters related to the equality of the sexes had changed. While in the past the problem of equality had been of concern only to women's organizations, State agencies had been created to deal with the problem. However, in spite of the significant progress in various fields, the country had not achieved its aims. Much work remained to be done.

67. She said that although the 1975 Constitution provided for the protection of equal individual and social rights and obligations, it also allowed for deviations from the general principle of equality. Currently, the General Secretariat of Equality was working to eliminate the few discriminatory provisions that remained in the legislation. Equality of the sexes had been included in the country's five-year Economic and Social Development Programme for the first time in 1983.

Apart from the willingness of the Government to take special temporary measures, a programme was set up for the development of activities that had been unknown in Greece until recently. The major difficulty, however, continued to be social prejudices. That was also the main reason for the low level of participation of women in the country's political life.

68. An endeavour was being made to inform the population on the subject of equality, and the social infrastructure was being developed gradually. The representative enumerated specific mechanisms that had been created to promote and monitor the new situation, such as the position of Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on Women's Affairs, the Council and the General Secretariat for the Equality of the Sexes and decentralized equality offices in all prefectures of Greece.

69. As the fields of education, work, employment, social security, health, welfare and family were considered particularly important for the promotion of equality, the representative informed the Committee of the latest developments in those fields and of related positive action programmes and gave a summary of the activities planned for the near future. She also included in her detailed presentation recent statistical data.

70. The representative explained that the education system was passing through a period of transition. Several positive action programmes had been undertaken in that field, such as the adaptation of all school texts to the principle of equality. She mentioned, *inter alia*, that one of the aims of vocational guidance was to ensure that sexually stereotyped roles did not affect the professional choices of young people. A sex education programme had been set up to come into effect in 1987 and an equality guide had been prepared in order to make school teachers aware of equality issues.

71. With regard to the work-force, she said that considerable effort had been made, principally through positive action, to eliminate all forms of discrimination concerning equality of opportunity and treatment and specifically access to employment and remuneration. Women, however, did not exercise their right to work on the same terms as men did. In 1985, women constituted only 35.4 per cent of the work-force, while accounting for 53.3 per cent of the unemployed.

72. Social security for employees and the right to health care were constitutionally guaranteed and granted without discrimination. She drew attention to measures that had been taken recently, such as the granting to each parent of three months parental leave for the upbringing of small children, a right which was not transferable to the other parent. The representative also drew attention to preventive medicine and pre-natal care and mentioned the existence of provisions, for the first time, for the prevention of mental illness and the treatment of mentally-ill women and their social rehabilitation. Greece's first reception centre and shelter for abused women would become operative soon.

73. The representative mentioned that a bill concerning the control of advertising and the unacceptable exploitation of the human body by the advertising media had been presented to the Parliament. The representative made special reference to women farmers and said that, as farm workers, women were paid less than men, not with regard to the same work, but because the jobs they did were not as well paid. There was also a distinct division of labour between women and men. Finally, she enumerated the new adjustments made in family law to ensure equality in the family.

74. The members of the Committee congratulated the government representative on her presentation of the report and underscored unanimously its excellent quality. It followed meticulously the general guidelines regarding the form and content of reports received from States parties under article 18 of the Convention and gave detailed comments on each article of the Convention in addition to providing substantial information. The experts praised its frankness and its critical tone and welcomed the fact that it showed the country's strong commitment to the status of women. Most experts were impressed with the efforts made by the country in trying to eliminate discrimination against women and with the establishment of the appropriate mechanisms in related fields. They also encouraged the further development of programs that were already set up to alter traditional attitudes or to widen the educational choices of girls, to achieve equal employment opportunities and to involve women in political and administrative decision-making in all sectors. The report of Greece showed to what extent a strong political will was able to change attitudes and how important the massive support given by women's organizations was. Some experts expressed the view that Greece, a country recently under a military dictatorship and located in the southern part of Europe, was now in the vanguard of Europe.

75. A question was raised as to whether the orthodox faith changed in any way the attitudes towards the equality of the sexes.

76. It was asked whether the Convention was stronger than national laws in Greece and whether a judge had to rely on treaty provisions. More information was requested on the relationship

between social prejudices and the awarding of justice. Experts asked for examples of administrative measures that were adopted to penalize infringements of laws of equality.

77. Another question was whether the nationwide information network on all aspects of the equality issue also incorporated rural women.

78. It was asked whether public opinion in Greece was hostile to the women's movement and how the women's movement could be protected against political changes in future; whether article 116 (2) of the Constitution rendered discrimination possible or even legal; and what means of recourse were available in court or through other public authorities if legal provisions were not in accordance with the Constitution. It was asked whether institutions, such as the recourse of amparo or a "constitutional recourse action", existed or whether women had access to legal aid.

79. Concern was expressed as to whether the monitoring function of the specialized authorities to promote the principle of equality really reached all women in the country and whether women were aware that new laws improved their situation.

80. As to the mechanisms set up in the country to ensure equality, it was asked whether the Council for the Equality of the Sexes replaced similar existing mechanisms, what links existed between the Council and the General Secretariat for the Equality of the Sexes and whether any special committee in the Parliament of Greece dealt with women's problems. Another inquiry concerned the funds available to provide grants to encourage women's initiatives, and more information was sought on the functions of the consultative committee within the General Secretariat for Equality. A question was also asked about the way in which the General Secretariat participated in national development programmes and how those programmes related to the promotion of women. It was also asked whether equality bureaux existed for all levels of government administration.

81. Reference was made to the importance of temporary special measures, and more information was sought about them and on the evaluation of the results. It was asked whether employers showed interest in employing more women if they received special subsidies. It was asked whether training programmes for women in co-operatives were subsidized or whether the women concerned had to contribute to their financing.

82. One question concerned the existence of programmes for the education of young couples and whether those programmes penetrated married life. It was asked what the proportion was of men that participated in the seminars and conferences organized by the General Secretariat for the Equality of the Sexes and to what extent men were involved in the work towards equality. The work carried out in order to change gender roles was also welcomed. Other questions were asked about the achievements in making the media aware of the promotion of women and about the percentage of women working for the national radio company and the press.

83. The problem of pornography was addressed, and details were requested on the proposed bill of law to eliminate the exploitation of the female body for publicity purposes.

84. Experts were concerned about the low representation of women in Parliament and in political parties and asked why the percentage of women in 1985 was lower than four years earlier, why women had not yet attained important positions in political life in spite of all the efforts made and whether the question had not been looked into by the General Secretariat. They also inquired how the political parties viewed the struggle for women's equality and if they took any action to increase women's representation within the parties. Astonishment was expressed at the low percentage of women representatives in smaller towns and the higher percentage in larger communities, whereas in some countries the opposite was true. Clarification was sought on the statement that the State was unable to influence the degree of female participation in non-governmental organizations. Concern was expressed about the low participation of women in trade unions, and more information was requested on clashes occurring between women's organizations and political parties.

85. It was asked about the restrictions on women entering the army and why women were not admitted to military academies. It was also asked whether social prejudices were the obstacles to the political participation of women.

86. As there was no discrimination with regard to appointments in public administration under the Civil Service Code, information was sought about the position of women at decision-making levels and about the number of women ambassadors.

87. A number of reasons for the low representation of women at the international level were suggested: it might be related to different entry conditions for women under the Public Function Code; it could stem from the lack of sufficient high-ranking women in Greece; or it could be related to the fact that women were unable to attend committee meetings outside normal working hours because of family duties. The question was raised whether a monitoring committee dealing with the entry of women into public responsibilities existed in each ministry, and whether, in the case of a married couple, both spouses were allowed to work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

88. Praise was expressed for the progressive legislation in matters of nationality. Clarification was sought on the provision which related to what age a child born out of wedlock could be recognized as a lawful child.

89. The achievements made by the country in the field of education were particularly commended. Questions referred to the reasons for the high rate of illiteracy among women and to the number of women who directed institutions of higher education. Additional information was sought on concrete steps taken to attract more women to technical education, on the curricula for home economics and whether they were the same for boys and girls, on the prospects for religious academies to accept girls in the future and on the intention of the Government of Greece to terminate the existing sex discrimination in the schools of the Ministry of Public Order.

90. With regard to the elimination of discrimination in employment, the large gap between the de jure and the de facto situation was mentioned. There was an inquiry about the number of cases concerning infringements of the legal provisions and whether the differing minimum ages for appointment to the public sector based on sex led to segregation. It was asked whether Greece

indeed intended to abrogate the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention No. 45 on women and underground mining work and Convention No. 89 banning certain night work for women, in order to create equal working conditions for both sexes.

91. Other questions referred to the situation in practice as regards the rule on equal pay for work of equal value. Figures on differing wages for male-dominated jobs compared with female-dominated jobs were requested. Clarification was sought on the frequency of job evaluation schemes and on the results of cases of sex discrimination that were taken to court. Experts asked which jobs were prohibited for women and for what reasons. The revision of over-protective legislation was welcomed. It was asked why, under the work-force employment agency programme, the subsidy for each man taken on was 900 drachmas a day and for each woman 1,000 drachmas a day.

92. Information was sought on the proportion of women migrant workers compared to men and on whether the employment situation of women migrant workers returning to Greece from abroad was any different from that of men.

93. Statistics referring to the unemployment rate of women, in general, and of divorced women, in particular, were requested.

94. While the institution of a non-transferable right to parental leave was particularly commendable, it was asked whether and to what extent it was utilized by fathers. The ratification of the ILO Convention No. 156 concerning equality of opportunity and workers with family responsibilities was welcomed.

95. It was asked whether the Government undertook any measures to influence the private sector as regards the provision of social security measures for women. Other questions referred to the functioning of crèches and to the general attitude of Greek employers to such facilities. It was asked whether maternity leave meant leave with or without pay.

96. Experts asked whether married female civil servants could include their husbands in their medical insurance coverage and whether single people also had the right to retire after 15 years of service and, if not, why not. It was asked whether the existing system of unemployment benefits discriminated against women.

97. Whereas in one part of the report abortion was said not to be a method of family planning, it was referred to as being a means of birth control in another part thereof. Information was requested on the rate of abortion, whether it was being reduced as a result of family planning measures, whether abortion services were available for rural women and whether AIDS (Acquired immune deficiency syndrome) was becoming a problem in the country.

98. Clarification was requested on family allowances and pensions for married and unmarried women.

99. Information was sought on the programmes envisaged by the Government to do away with the sex discrimination inherent in national collective labour agreements with regard to marriage

allowance.

100. Questions were asked about co-operatives in the agricultural and the tourist sectors and about the ownership relation, referring to property of rural women. Experts also asked whether rural women could take out mortgages and bank loans and whether they could make contracts in their own name. Co-operatives for women only were welcomed; it was asked whether mixed co-operatives were allowed.

101. It was noticed that no data were provided on women in prison and on the education of women in prison. It was asked if it was difficult for women in practice to produce evidence for a claim in justice, even in a case of sex discrimination. It was also asked whether the fiscal and tax systems affected married and divorced women in different ways.

102. Experts wanted to know whether an infringement of the rule of equality before the law had legal consequences.

103. It was asked whether families still gave dowries, what the situation in rural areas was and what happened to such gifts in case of divorce. It was also asked whether women were adequately protected during the transition period from the old dowry system to the modern system.

104. Other questions referred to the sharing of property after divorce: whether women who left marriage suffered penalties with regard to maintenance, custody and property and whether divorced women who were working to maintain themselves experienced prejudice in seeking custody. It was asked whether domestic violence constituted a problem in Greece, whether women had the possibility to obtain protection and whether the number of refugees was sufficient. Information was sought on the options of a divorced wife as regards her surname. It was asked whether a single mother who had children was legally protected if her relationship had lasted for more than five years, as was the case in one expert's country.

105. In replying to questions asked by members of the Committee, the representative of Greece first explained that the fundamental legislative, social and political changes did not give rise to opposition among the people of Greece, although measures related to divorce, marriage and abortion had elicited strong reactions in conservative circles and in the orthodox church. Because of the general awareness of the problem of equality between women and men, the recently implemented measures had been well established in everyday life, in spite of initial fears raised by conservative political forces.

106. Policy measures to eliminate discrimination were the setting up of 54 decentralized equality offices, which were co-ordinated by the General Secretariat. The Council for Equality had been upgraded to the level of a General Secretariat with its own budget and staff and belonging to the Ministry of the Prime Minister. It distributed many publications on women's legal rights throughout the country. Discrimination in favour of women was legitimized by the Greek Constitution only in matters related to maternity and child care. Women had never campaigned to serve in the armed forces.

107. The representative said that the General Secretariat had participated in the drawing up of the five-year national development programme of the country. It also supported activities of the women's movement. Its Consultative Committee was composed of members of the largest women's organizations. But it could not currently subsidize women's organizations, although they were able to apply to the Ministry of Culture for assistance.

108. The representative said that women were being trained in traditionally male occupations with the support of the Work-force Employment Agency and the General Secretariat for Equality, and the percentage of women in those occupations was rising. Vocational training was also given to female co-operative members.

109. The representative said that family planning centres and municipal health care offices throughout the country provided family planning advice. The General Secretariat was involved in the selection of programmes in the mass media and in the preparation of a new mass media bill to prevent the reproduction of sex stereotypes. Exact figures for the number of women employed in the media were not available. Only few held technical jobs.

110. The representative also said that the General Secretariat had drafted proposals for specific measures and women's organizations were asked to assist in the drafting of a bill on the exploitation of the female body in advertising and prostitution.

111. She said that the number of women in trade unions was not known, but it had been slightly increasing. She stated further that recent changes in the electoral law had had negative effects on women. The participation of women in political life was smaller in rural than in urban areas because of deep-rooted traditions.

112. The decentralization process in the country since 1981 had been helping women to become more active in local bodies. However, the political parties and government bodies had a sad record in promoting women in political life. The same applied in the diplomatic sphere. In 1981, 24 out of 120 new diplomats had been women and, in 1985, 39 out of 415 diplomats had been women. In reply to a specific question, she said that married couples could be employed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and serve at the same mission.

113. The representative explained that compulsory education, changing social attitudes and the rule banning children below 15 from working restricted illiteracy to adults, especially the elderly. The actual rate of illiteracy was lower in reality than in the statistics. She gave some statistical data on women in the teaching profession and said that programmes of women's studies had been introduced at one university. Their purpose was to raise consciousness and to bring about a feminist perspective in education. Girls were encouraged to take up technical career options thanks to the abolishment of stereotypes in school textbooks and to vocational guidance in school. She further explained that curricula for home economics courses were the same for girls and boys and included subjects such as nutrition, child-care, health, hygiene and environment. No girls were admitted to religious schools because the graduates had to be ordained priests.

114. The representative said that while the law on equal pay for work of equal value applied only

to the lower-income groups, discrepancies existed in many sectors in the higher levels. She supplied some valid examples in the clothing and metallurgical industries. In 1986, some 13,498 complaints had been made with respect to employment. Protective legislation could not be repealed, as the country was bound by international covenants from which the country could not derogate before their expiry.

115. The representative further explained that many improvements had been made in social security in the private sector. A self-employed mother on maternity leave was paid a childbirth allowance and a post-natal allowance as well as a salary. A mother who was not employed but covered by her husband's social security received only the two allowances. An unemployed mother was covered by grants from the Ministry of Health before and after giving birth to a child. The transfer of a pension from wife to husband was possible only if the husband was destitute or an invalid. However, proposals to change that rule existed already. Unmarried mothers were entitled to a lump-sum allowance, followed by monthly grants until the child was 16 years old. She stated that, in 1986, 264 women and 116 men had made use of parental leave.

116. The representative said that, although abortion had never been considered as a means of contraception, it had been used as such. With family planning centres currently in service, it was hoped that the number of abortions could be reduced. No statistics were available yet. AIDS was not yet a problem in Greece. Relevant information material was being distributed. She also said that the Ministry of Cultural Affairs organized seminars for women in prison.

117. She also said that there was no discrimination regarding women's access to bank loans or other credits. Spouses were taxed individually on their personal income. Alimony was taxable, and single mothers received a discount according to the age of their children.

118. The representative further explained there were 114 women's co-operatives working in agro-tourism and handicrafts. The Government gave subsidies, and banks and regional authorities and other organizations provided support. In supporting them, the General Secretariat aimed at enhancing women's experience in management and financial control. It was hoped that women would eventually become equal partners with men in the decision-making process in the production field.

119. The representative said that many judges were still influenced by traditional beliefs leading to discrimination against women. Seminars for judges were organized jointly by the General Secretariat and the Ministry of Justice to inform them of international conventions, family law and other legal provisions relating to equality between the sexes. She said that neither sex had access to legal aid services in Greece, but that women could get help from regional equality offices.

120. Equality bureaux existed in major government bodies throughout the country. In 1986, 104 cases of discrimination against women in employment were heard by the courts.

121. An amendment to the Penal Code, she said, led to automatic prosecution and longer imprisonment of rapists. Sexual abuse was, in general, punished by imprisonment. Having recognized the social problem of battered women, the General Secretariat took the initiative of

opening shelter houses. In May 1987, a refuge and an information and counselling office would be opened as a pilot project.

122. The representative stated that between 1980 and 1985 many women expatriates had returned to Greece and 70 per cent of them had become housewives. The Work-force and Employment Agency organized seminars for them to smooth out their repatriation.

123. The representative said that children born out of wedlock could be recognized voluntarily or through court procedures. They enjoyed the same rights and obligations as other children. The length of time of a de facto union of couples was no reason for granting them fringe benefits.

124. Although fathers were no longer obligated to provide their daughters with dowries, the system as such was not yet fully abolished. However, the taxation benefit, which was one of the main reasons for the giving of a dowry, had been replaced by the right of parental donation to girls and boys equally, which led also to a reduction in tax. Assets given to husbands as dowries had to be returned to the women.

125. Several members of the Committee congratulated the representative on her extensive replies and proposed the holding of a seminar in Greece at which the methodology for drawing up reports under article 18 of the Convention in compliance with the requirements contained in the guidelines could be discussed.

126. In answering additional questions posed by experts, the representative replied that no general statistics were available as regards requests for paternity leave by fathers. In one municipality, however, 106 men and 240 women had made such requests. The rate of unemployment was higher among single than among married women because of the higher number of demands.

127. As to the legal force of the Convention in comparison with national laws, it was said that in Greece, as in other countries, international conventions once ratified by Parliament became part of national legislation and, thus, superseded any contradicting and earlier national laws. Therefore, citizens could appeal to the courts directly on the grounds of the Convention.

128. The Committee thanked the Government of Greece and expressed its appreciation and satisfaction for the manner in which the report had been prepared, particularly as regards its organization and content, as well as for the detailed statistics, which supported the information presented, and its open acknowledgement of the obstacles women continued to face in Greece.

129. The Committee requested that the next report of Greece should contain further information about programmes directed towards changing attitudes to the role of women and men in society.

CEDAW A/54/38/Rev.1 (1999)

172. The Committee considered the combined second and third periodic reports of Greece (CEDAW/C/GRC/2-3) at its 415th and 416th meetings, on 28 January 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.415 and 416).

(a) Introduction by the State party

173. The representative of Greece noted that the principle of gender equality had been established in Greece by the 1975 Constitution. The legislative and other measures adopted since then, including relevant directives of the European Union, to consolidate the elimination of discrimination against women in all sectors, had brought about significant changes in the status of women and their increased presence in all sectors. The equality policies adopted since 1994 had been aimed at further reducing inequalities, eradicating their causes and changing existing concepts and attitudes regarding the role of women and men in the family, at work and in politics and social life. Emphasis was also placed on the development of support mechanisms and structures to enhance implementation of such measures. As a sector of the Ministry of the Presidency, the General Secretariat for Equality, established in 1985, was the State agency responsible for equality issues.

174. The representative noted that notwithstanding the positive impact of those measures, gender inequalities continued to exist. The representative then reviewed the most important actions taken in favour of gender equality. She noted that the legislative framework in Greece was considered to be one of the most advanced and progressive in the world. Among recent legislative changes, she highlighted the revision of family law and new legislation concerning women's access to continuing education, vocational training and employment and labour relations. Enrolment in elementary and high school education was obligatory in Greece, and therefore illiteracy rates, in all parts of the country, had decreased significantly in the past decade.

175. The representative identified the elimination of violence against women and women's equal and active participation in all socio-economic development policies as the highest priorities for the General Secretariat for Equality for the period 1997-2000. Owing to a lack of adequate data, no clear picture on the extent and forms of violence against women existed. Among new actions taken to address the problem was the establishment of an expert committee to develop recommendations on further legislation, measures and strategies. The Research Centre for Equality Matters was conducting nationwide research on violence against women. Forced prostitution and trafficking had also become a serious problem in Greece.

176. The changes occurring in the economic and social system in recent years had particular consequences for women. The achievement of equal opportunities for women and the integration of women into the labour market required that attention be paid not only to quantitative but also to qualitative aspects in order to ensure the economic and social cohesion of the country. The General Secretariat for Equality promoted the adoption of an action plan for 1998-2000, which had as its centrepiece the mainstreaming of the equal opportunities policy into all governmental policies.

177. The representative noted the positive trends in women's participation in the labour market, including the increased participation of women in the labour force, an increase in women's economic activity rate and the fact that three quarters of newly created jobs were occupied by women.

178. While women had begun to participate more actively in political life, the percentage of women in the higher echelons of political power remained small. Various policies and affirmative action measures were sought to increase the number of women in public life, including through awareness-raising and training.

179. The right of Greek women to health care was guaranteed in the Constitution and was realized through a uniform and decentralized national health system, as confirmed by various indicators and demographic data. Specialized health care was available to all women, including immigrants and refugees, but more programmes are also planned to address women's special health problems, including teenage abortion, and health issues related to menopause. A drop in AIDS cases among women had been reported.

(b) Concluding comments by the Committee

Introduction

180. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of Greece for submitting a well-written and comprehensive combined second and third periodic report. It commends the Government for its oral presentation of the report and for the extensive and frank replies to the questions posed by the Committee, which enabled it to obtain a clear picture of the situation of women in Greece.

181. The Committee notes favourably that the Government of Greece considers that the implementation of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women is substantially linked to the implementation of the Convention.

Positive aspects

182. The Committee commends the Government for creating a comprehensive constitutional and legislative framework for achieving equality between women and men. It notes in particular that the Constitution of 1975 enshrines the principle of equality between women and men and that a series of laws and policies have been put in place over the years to translate this principle into practice. The Committee notes the favourable legal situation, including with regard to employment, vocational training and health. It also notes that Greece has ratified the major conventions of the International Labour Organization (ILO) concerning women workers and workers with family responsibilities.

183. The Committee commends the Government in particular for its important new legislative measures concerning family law.

184. The Committee notes that the General Secretariat for Equality, the national machinery for the advancement of women, continues to function as a section of the Ministry of the Presidency. It also notes the existence of additional institutions that work on equality issues, such as the Research Centre for Equality Matters.

185. The Committee welcomes the fact that a large number of women's non-governmental organizations are active in the country, and that good relationships exist between those organizations of civil society and the governmental machinery for the advancement of women. In this context, it welcomes the fact that a national committee, with the participation of government representatives and civil society, was established for the preparation of the combined second and third periodic reports.

186. The Committee welcomes the efforts undertaken by the Government to create equal opportunities for women in the labour market and the positive trends concerning the women's employment situation. It commends the Government of Greece for conducting a pilot survey on time use that aims at quantifying the unpaid household work of women. It also commends the Government for its strategies to use the mass media to improve the image of women.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

187. The Committee notes with concern that the prevailing patriarchal structures and societal attitudes concerning the roles of women and men perpetuate discrimination against women in all spheres of public and private life and constitute an obstacle to achieving equality.

188. The Committee notes that the impact of the prevailing global and regional economic policies and trends is an impediment to the implementation of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

189. The Committee expresses concern at the continuing existence of violence against women and notes the absence of comprehensive legislative measures to address violence. It is also concerned about the attitude of law enforcement personnel, especially the police, towards women victims of violence. It is also concerned that, notwithstanding a high incidence of sexual harassment in the workplace, its legal regulation remains unclear, and women do not avail themselves of available complaint mechanisms.

190. The Committee recommends that the Government strengthen the legislative and policy framework to prevent, eliminate and prosecute violence against women, in accordance with its general recommendation 19, and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. It recommends that data and information on the prevalence and types of violence in the family in general, and against women in particular, be gathered as a matter of priority. Urgent measures should be taken to institutionalize the training of police and law enforcement personnel to ensure the appropriate handling of cases of violence against women. Efforts should also be made to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of complaints mechanisms against sexual harassment

in the workplace.

191. The Committee is concerned that the revision of the laws on rape has not led to the recognition of rape as a serious infringement of a woman's human right to personal security.

192. The Committee recommends that the law on rape, including marital rape, be reformed, and that forensic investigation be introduced in the light of general recommendation 19, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and recent developments in the laws of other European countries that face similar problems of violence against women.

193. The Committee notes with concern that, following a number of recent court cases, the legality of affirmative action and temporary special measures in accordance with article 4.1 of the Convention is unclear.

194. The Committee recommends that the Government clarify the compatibility of its legislative provisions with article 4.1 of the Convention to ensure its implementation.

195. The Committee notes with concern that, notwithstanding the availability of legal remedies to seek redress for discrimination and the fact that some court cases have been filed to challenge discrimination, very few women avail themselves of this right and are often reluctant to do so.

196. The Committee recommends that the Government develop programmes to raise awareness of the constitutional remedy among women and women's groups so that individual acts of discrimination will be consistently challenged and so that the Constitution will have an impact on government action and policy and on the private sector.

197. While noting positively the fact that prostitution is decriminalized and instead is dealt with in a regulatory manner, the Committee is concerned that inadequate structures exist to ensure compliance with the regulatory framework. The Committee is also concerned about the increase in trafficking in women. In this regard it notes that insufficient attention is given to possible links between lack of enforcement and trafficking in and migration of women.

198. The Committee recommends that compliance with the regulations governing prostitution be monitored effectively and adequate measures to address trafficking in women be introduced.

199. Noting the already low level of participation of women in political and public life, the Committee voices its concern at the apparent decrease in the percentage of women in elected office. It points to the consequences of this situation for the adoption of gender-sensitive legislative and policy measures.

200. The Committee urges the Government to adopt innovative measures to raise the percentage of women in all public bodies, including in the legislature, the executive and the judiciary. Efforts should also be made to encourage other entities, such as political parties and the private sector, to increase the number of women at senior and decision-making levels.

201. The Committee is concerned that there is a relatively high level of functional illiteracy in Greece, in particular among elderly and rural women.

202. The Government is urged to intensify its efforts to prevent and to remedy functional illiteracy among women. The Government should also conduct a comprehensive review of all educational curricula at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels with a view to eliminating remaining discriminatory aspects, remedying the stereotypical portrayal of women and girls and creating an educational environment that is conducive to girls' and women's education and learning. The Government should include the achievement of equality between women and men and between girls and boys as a societal goal in its educational policy. The Committee urges the Government to establish degree-granting women's studies programmes to provide academic support to political and practical changes aimed at creating a non-patriarchal society.

203. Noting that there are positive trends in the employment situation of women, the Committee remains concerned about the situation of women in the formal and informal labour market, including the high percentage of unemployed women and the continuing pay gap between women and men. It is also concerned that many of the new jobs occupied by women might provide only low pay and limited career prospects. The Committee is further concerned that the employment prospects for women in rural areas, for women who are migrating from the agricultural sector into other employment areas and for immigrant women remain precarious, especially for those with low skills or who are functionally illiterate.

204. The Committee urges the Government to assess, in a comprehensive manner, the changing realities of women's work and to develop policies that aim at structural and long-term improvements in the employment situation of women. Particular attention should be paid to supporting women who work without pay in family enterprises and on family farms. It also urges the Government to address the issue of women migrant workers.

205. The Committee is concerned that insufficient attention is given to gender-specific causes and consequences of illness and disease and that, consequently, the country's health policy is insufficiently responding to gender factors associated with health.

206. The Committee recommends that all health-related data and statistics be disaggregated by sex and age so that health policies, service delivery and allocation of resources can be assessed in terms of their outcomes for women and men. It also recommends that governmental health policies, research and resources be adjusted so as to respond adequately to the rights of women and men to a high standard of health care and to the gender factors associated with health.

207. The Committee expresses its concern about the high rate of abortion in Greece, and especially of abortions by teenagers. The numbers are indicative of insufficient use of contraceptives, a lack of sex education and information about contraceptives, as well as insufficient or unfocused family-planning efforts. The Committee is also concerned in this respect about the extent of funding for contraception, given the comprehensive coverage of health insurance and funding for health services in Greece.

208. The Committee recommends that the Government introduce sex education as part of the school curriculum. It also recommends the improvement of family-planning policies and measures so that all women and men have access to information about and measures of contraception. It also urges the Government to target men in its family-planning efforts and to stress the shared responsibilities of women and men in this regard.

209. Given the sometimes traumatic flow of immigrants and refugees in the region and constant changes in their composition, the Committee is concerned at the low level of continuous attention given to them by the Government. Likewise, the Committee notes that while attention is given to the situation of certain groups of minority women, such as gypsies, insufficient information is available concerning the situation of other ethnic and religious minority women, such as Turks and Albanians.

210. The Committee urges the Government to develop a general policy to address the particular needs of immigrant and migrant women with regard to their protection, health, employment and educational needs. The Committee also urges the Government to ensure that repatriation efforts are consistent with women's safety and protection needs. The Government should also consider entering into bilateral agreements with women migrants' countries of origin to ensure adequate protection of women's rights and safety. The Committee encourages the Government to assess the situation of all minority women with a view to ensuring adequate support for them.

211. The Committee recommends that the Government, when preparing its next report, engage in consultations with groups that represent minority women.

212. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Greece of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Greece, and in particular its government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de jure and de facto equality and the further steps required in this regard. The Committee also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

CEDAW A/57/38 part III (2002)

256. The Committee considered the combined fourth and fifth periodic report of Greece (CEDAW/C/GRC/4-5) at its 585th meeting, on 19 August 2002 (see CEDAW/C/SR.585).

(a) Introduction by the State party

257. In introducing the fourth and fifth periodic report, the Secretary-General of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality stated that gender equality was one of the State party's major goals and that its gender equality policy reflected the State party's political will, which was based on democracy, economic and social integration, participation, non-discrimination, tolerance and social justice.

258. The representative noted that the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, which functioned as the government body responsible for women's rights and gender issues, had been established within the Ministry of Interior, Public Administration and Decentralization. Its six-year action plan for gender equality concentrated on four major areas of concern: women and politics, women and the economy, social rights and stereotypes.

259. Work in the area of gender equality had broadened to accommodate new and emerging issues brought about by globalization, such as trafficking in human beings, the new information technology and migration, as well as new strategies, such as gender mainstreaming.

260. Since the presentation of its second and third periodic reports in 1999, the representative stated that the State party had taken measures to strengthen its legal and policy framework. It had been among the first 23 countries to sign the Optional Protocol to the Convention on 10 December 1999, which it ratified in 2001. In addition, the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention had been accepted domestically and was awaiting action at the international level. Article 116, paragraph 2, of the Constitution had been revised to ensure fully the legal basis for positive measures and policies for the elimination of gender inequalities. The revised provision had been adopted by Parliament on 16 April 2001.

261. Taking note of the importance of women's participation in the decision-making process, the representative indicated that two laws had been adopted, in 2000 and 2001, which established the following:

(a) Balanced participation of a percentage equal to at least one third of each sex in decision-making councils, committees of public administration, public organizations and local authorities;

(b) Balanced participation of a percentage equal to at least one third of each sex in the candidates' lists for municipal and prefectural elections.

262. In the education sector, the representative noted that, in 2001, 61 per cent of the graduates from Greek universities had been women. The representative also noted that the General Secretariat, through its Research Centre for Gender Equality and in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, had produced a large number of studies and pilot projects which were being used for the advancement of women in education and future gender mainstreaming policies.

263. The General Secretariat, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, had been working on the issue of violence against women for many years. The representative informed the Committee that the General Secretariat had also been cooperating with the National Centre for Public Administration on the design and implementation of new awareness-raising seminars on violence against women for police officers, judges, social workers, hospital doctors and civil servants in the health and welfare areas.

264. Trafficking in persons was a complex problem that had been given high priority on the political agenda. In April 2001, a Special Committee Against Human Trafficking had been established to study, design and oversee the impact of specific anti-trafficking measures to combat the problem. The Special Committee consisted of high-ranking police officials, representatives from relevant Ministries, the academic community, the International Organization for Migration, and the General Secretariat for Equality. Its main objective had been to update the State party's anti-trafficking legislation to bring it in line with existing international legal instruments. Greece had signed the United Nations Convention on International Organized Crime and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, and draft legislation on trafficking had also been submitted to Parliament in July 2002.

265. In concluding, the representative assured the Committee that the State party was making systematic efforts to promote gender equality and mainstream gender, generally, at all stages of the policy-making process, and in its policies.

(b) Concluding comments of the Committee

Introduction

266. The Committee commends the Government of Greece for its combined fourth and fifth periodic report. It also commends the State party for the written replies to the questions of the Committee's pre-session working group, and the oral presentation of the delegation that sought to clarify the current situation of women in Greece, and provided additional information on the implementation of the Convention.

267. The Committee commends the State party on its delegation headed by the Secretary-General of the General Secretariat for Equality. The Committee appreciates the frank and open dialogue that took place between the delegation and the members of the Committee.

Positive aspects

268. The Committee welcomes the 1999 revision of the Constitution, particularly the revision of

article 116, paragraph 2, which legalizes the use of temporary special measures as provided for by article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention in order to achieve substantive equality between women and men.

269. The Committee appreciates the close links between the General Secretariat for Equality, other governmental bodies, civil society and the Research Centre on Equality Matters.

270. The Committee welcomes the growing number of non-governmental organizations that play a prominent role in promoting women's empowerment in Greece.

271. The Committee notes with appreciation the numerous policies implemented through the six-year action plan in order to promote gender equality and the advancement of women. It particularly commends the State party for its successful policies in reducing the illiteracy rate generally and among women in particular.

272. The Committee also commends the State party for having ratified the Optional Protocol.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

273. While noting initiatives to eliminate stereotypes, the Committee is concerned that deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes persist.

274. The Committee recommends that the State party intensify its efforts, inter alia by strengthening specific programmes targeting men and boys, to change stereotypical roles and discriminatory attitudes and perceptions about the roles and responsibilities of women and girls and men and boys in the family and in society.

275. The Committee expresses concern at the prevalence of violence against women, and at the lack of specific provisions on domestic violence and marital rape in the current legislation on violence. The Committee is also concerned that no comprehensive plans to address all forms of violence against women have been adopted by the State party.

276. The Committee requests the State party to place a high priority on the introduction and implementation of comprehensive and holistic measures to address violence against women and girls in the family and society in accordance with its general recommendation 19. It calls on the State party to include specific provisions on domestic violence, including marital rape, in the new draft legislation on violence against women and to ensure its speedy enactment. The Committee recommends that the State party increase its awareness-raising measures, including zero-tolerance campaigns through the media and public education programmes, to ensure all forms of violence against women and girls, including domestic violence, are regarded as morally and socially unacceptable.

277. The Committee is concerned about the absence of specific legal provisions and measures to address sexual harassment, especially in the workplace.

278. The Committee urges the State party to take all necessary measures, including introducing specific legislation, in order to empower women to take action with regard to sexual harassment.

279. The Committee is concerned that the State party is increasingly becoming a country of transit and destination for trafficked women and girls, inter alia for purposes of sexual exploitation, and that the draft legislation on “the elimination of trafficking in human beings, of crimes against sexual freedom, of pornography against minors, and generally sexual exploitation and assistance to victims of these crimes” insufficiently protects the human rights of women and girls who have been trafficked.

280. The Committee urges the State party to design and implement a holistic approach to combat trafficking in women and girls. It urges the State party to review the draft legislation in order to strengthen the provisions on assistance and to ensure the protection of the human rights of trafficked women and girls. It also urges the State party to further strengthen provisions related to the sexual exploitation of trafficked women and girls.

281. The Committee is concerned about the limitations women face in gaining access to employment in the police and the fire brigade.

282. The Committee recommends that the law governing women’s employment in police and the fire brigade be reviewed in order to eliminate discrimination against women.

283. While noting a major decline in unemployment during 1999-2001, especially among women, the Committee expresses concern that women, especially young women holding university diplomas, still constitute the majority of the unemployed in the State party. It is also concerned about the persisting wage gap between women and men, and that women are paid lower salaries than men for the same work and work of equal value.

284. The Committee urges the State party to continue developing policies and adopting proactive measures to increase the employment rate of women, in particular young women, and accelerate the elimination of the wage gap between women and men. It also requests the State party to provide more information in its next periodic report on measures taken to eliminate the wage gap.

285. The Committee is concerned that fathers are not taking childcare leave and that this reinforces negative stereotypes regarding working matters.

286. The Committee requests that the State party introduce individualized paid paternal leave for childcare.

287. While noting the high rate of women acquiring degrees, the Committee is concerned about the underrepresentation of women in decision-making and political bodies, particularly in Parliament, the economic sector and academia.

288. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures, inter alia in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention, in order to realize women’s right to participation in all

areas of public life and, particularly, at high levels of decision-making. It also urges the State party to adopt proactive measures to encourage more qualified women to apply for high-ranking posts in academia and to implement temporary special measures, such as quotas, with goals and timetables, where necessary.

289. The Committee is concerned at the low number of women in the diplomatic service, particularly in postings abroad, and the fact that few Greek women work in international organizations.

290. The Committee recommends that the State party take measures, including in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention to encourage women to enter the diplomatic service and to provide opportunities to access the highest rank of the diplomatic service. It also recommends the introduction of measures to provide information to women on options for employment in international organizations.

291. Noting that the rate of abortion has decreased by 30 per cent during the years 1994 through 2000, the Committee is concerned that abortion is still perceived as a means of birth control. It also notes with concern that an unusually high percentage of women deliver through Caesarean section.

292. The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the availability and accessibility of affordable contraceptive means for both women and men as part of a comprehensive health policy, including reproductive health. The Committee encourages the State party to promote programmes of sex education for both girls and boys. It calls on the State party to encourage responsible sexual behaviour and take all appropriate steps to eliminate the use of abortion as a means of birth control. The Committee also recommends that the State party implement awareness-raising programmes on the benefit of natural birth in order to decrease the number of deliveries through Caesarean section.

293. The Committee expresses concern at the discrimination against minority women living in Greece, particularly Roma women, including with respect to access to education, who suffer from double discrimination based on both their sex and ethnic background, in society at large and within their communities.

294. The Committee urges the Government to take effective measures to eliminate discrimination against minority women. It urges the State party to respect and promote the human rights of women and to take effective and proactive measures, including awareness-raising programmes, to sensitize public opinion at large, and particularly the police, on the issue of minority women. It also urges the State party to address the forms of discrimination including with regard to access to education, by minority women through its legal, administrative and welfare systems.

295. The Committee is concerned about the marginalization of Muslim women with regard to education, employment, and by the non-application of the general law of Greece to the Muslim minority on matters of marriage and inheritance, resulting particularly in the practice of polygamy and repudiation. The Committee is concerned that this situation leads to discrimination against Muslim women and negatively impacts on the realization of their human rights as protected under

the Greek Constitution and the Convention.

296. The Committee urges the State party to accelerate its efforts aimed at improving Muslim women's education and employment opportunities. The Committee also urges the State party to increase the awareness of Muslim women of their rights and remedies and to ensure that they benefit from the provisions of Greek law.

297. The Committee urges the State party to deposit, as soon as possible, its instrument of acceptance of the amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Committee's meeting time.

298. The Committee requests the State party to respond to the concerns expressed in the present concluding comments in its next periodic report under article 18 of the Convention.

299. Taking account of the gender dimension of declarations, programmes and platforms for action adopted by relevant United Nations conferences, summits and special sessions (such as the special session of the General Assembly to review and appraise the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (the twenty-first special session), the special session on children (the twenty-seventh special session), the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance and the Second World Assembly on Ageing), the Committee requests the State party to include information on the implementation of aspects of these documents relating to relevant articles of the Convention in its next periodic report.

300. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in Greece of the present concluding comments in order to make the people of Greece, and particularly government administrators and politicians, aware of the steps that have been taken to ensure de jure and de facto equality for women and the future steps required in that regard. It also requests the State party to continue to disseminate widely, in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention and its Optional Protocol, the Committee's general recommendations, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the results of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".