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**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination  
against Women**  
Pre-session working group for the thirty-second session  
10-28 January 2005

**List of issues and questions with regard to the consideration  
of periodic reports**

**Italy**

**Introduction**

The pre-session working group examined the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Italy (CEDAW/C/ITA/4-5).\*

**General**

1. Please provide information on the process of preparation of the report, including whether non-governmental organizations, particularly women's organizations, were consulted.
2. The report does not provide information on developments in the implementation of articles 8, 9, 14, 15 and 16 of the Convention since the consideration of the third periodic report. In accordance with the reporting guidelines of the Committee, please provide information on progress made and the current implementation of each of these articles or, alternatively, please indicate whether there is nothing new to report under these articles since the consideration of the last report.
3. Please provide information on the implementation of constitutional and legislative guarantees of gender equality, including details of any court cases which have been filed by women who face discrimination.
4. The report, on pages 19 and 20, discusses "positive action" to increase the number of women in public life. Kindly indicate what is meant by the term "positive action" and whether the term is used as a synonym for temporary special measures

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\* References to page numbers of the report are based on the English text.

under article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation 25.

5. Kindly describe the responsibilities of various ministries, including those of the Ministry for Equal Opportunities, for implementation of the provisions of the Convention and elaborate on monitoring mechanisms in place to achieve results in all realms of Government.

## **Political participation and decision-making**

6. The Committee, in its previous concluding comments, encouraged the Government to take "specific affirmative actions", in particular in political and public life, where women's de facto equality had not been improving at the desired pace. Since the adoption of those concluding comments, the presence of women in politics and decision-making has remained limited and the political participation of women has in fact fallen in recent years. The report identifies a number of steps that could be taken to address this problem (see pp. 19-20) but does not indicate what steps have in fact been put in place to increase women's participation in political and public life. Please provide information on what concrete measures have been taken, or are envisaged, including temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention and general recommendation 25, to increase the number of women, including women from the south and rural women, in public life and especially in all branches and levels of Government.

7. Please provide further information on the impact of the new text of article 51 of the Constitution and its implementation. In particular, kindly clarify whether this new article will permit the use of numerical quotas as temporary special measures and what legislative and regulatory initiatives are in place, or planned, to give effect to it. If initiatives are still in the planning phase, kindly provide information about the timetable for their enactment.

8. The Committee, in its previous concluding comments, emphasized the importance of measures to sensitize judges, lawyers and law enforcement officers to Italy's international obligations under the Convention. Please provide information on the measures taken to increase awareness of these professionals about international human rights law and, in particular, the Convention and the obligations of the State party in this respect.

## **Stereotypes and education**

9. The report refers to the prevalence of stereotypes which are major obstacles to women's advancement in Italy (see, for example, p. 18). The Committee, in its previous concluding comments, expressed its concern at the persistence of patriarchal norms and stereotypes in Italian society and urged the Government to take large-scale measures to combat the widespread acceptance of stereotypical roles of men and women. Please provide details on whether a comprehensive strategy exists to address the prevalence of stereotypes which inhibit the full participation of women in Italian society and the efforts the Government has taken to eliminate stereotypes across all sectors and spheres, in accordance with article 5 (a) of the Convention.

10. In its previous concluding comments, the Committee noted with concern the absence of efforts or programmes to encourage Italian men to share in domestic responsibilities. Please provide information on initiatives to target men and to ensure that they contribute actively to the achievement of gender equality, including through sharing of family responsibilities.

11. The report, on page 10, states that in order to carry out a survey on how women are represented by the mass media, the National Commission for Equality has drawn up guidelines which set out some basic principles that should be followed in order to correctly represent and foster a positive image of women. Please provide detailed information about the portrayal of women in all media, as well as details about the guidelines and any results achieved in their implementation, including whether the role of the media in perpetuating stereotypical views and attitudes about women has changed as a result of the guidelines.

12. The report, on page 28, describes plans to develop a code of self-regulation for schoolbook publishers to achieve equal representation of both sexes in school books. Please provide information on the use and impact of this code to eliminate discriminatory or stereotypical portrayals of women and, in particular, elaborate how, in addition to the elimination of such portrayals, the education system at all levels actively promotes gender equality and the eradication of gender-based stereotypes.

## **Employment**

13. While there is an increase in the number of women in the labour market in the north, the employment level of women in southern areas remains at 26 per cent (see p. 30). Please give details of strategies or measures in place to address the unemployment level of women, particularly in the south.

14. The Committee, in its previous concluding comments, was concerned about the lack of sex-disaggregated data relating to part-time work. Please provide updated sex-disaggregated data of categories of part-time work and indicate whether there is proportional payment of pensions and social benefits to part-time workers.

15. Law 53/2000 recognizes, inter alia, the right of the father as well as the mother to take leave from work to care for a child during early infancy. Please provide information about the practical results of this law and, in particular, whether men are taking advantage of this right and of measures to encourage them to do so.

16. The report states, on page 33, that judicial action in case of ascertained gender discrimination (already laid down by article 4 of Law No. 125/91) has been thoroughly redefined. Please provide details of cases which have come before the courts and their impact on gender equality, including the remedies that the courts have granted.

## **Health**

17. The Committee, in its previous concluding comments, recommended that the Government take steps to secure the enjoyment by women of their reproductive rights. What steps have been taken in response to this recommendation?

18. Please provide information on the impact of the privatized health system on the cost of medication and health care and, in particular, the measures the Government is taking to combat the negative impact this may have on the health of women.

19. Please describe the impact of the National Health Care Plan 2003-2005 outlined on page 47 of the report, aimed at reducing the high number of Caesarean sections in Italy.

## **Violence against women**

20. The Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women has noted with concern that Italy has not yet devised a comprehensive, coordinated and concerted strategy to address the problem of violence against women (see E/CN.4/2003/75). The report, on page 57, notes that, in relation to violence against women, actions lag behind intentions, and measures taken by policy makers over the last few years, if steadily increasing in number, have been developing with discontinuity. Please provide reasons why this is the case and information on steps taken, or planned, to address the problem of violence against women in a comprehensive, coordinated and concerted manner.

21. Please describe the impact of the law on sexual violence (Law No. 66/1996) on reducing the level of violence against women and provide details on the court decisions, referred to on page 56 of the report, that have been made possible by the law.

## **Trafficking**

22. Please provide available data on trafficking in Italy and updated information on the situation and number of foreign women who are victims of trafficking as well as the measures taken by the Government to assist and support these women.

23. The report does not give data on how many stay permits were granted after 2001 (see p. 60). Please provide this information and clarify how many women opted for voluntary return and how many were deported back to their countries since 2001.

24. Please provide information on the impact of the legal provisions that distinguish between the responsibilities of trafficked women and those of the traffickers described on page 59 of the report, including the impact on the number of prosecutions of traffickers since the laws came into effect.

## **Vulnerable groups of women**

25. The report provides little data and information about the situation of Roma women or of measures in place to enhance their employment, health, housing and educational situation and participation in decision-making and to ensure their protection from violence. Kindly provide such information.

26. Please provide information and sex-disaggregated data about the situation of migrant and immigrant women in Italy and, in particular, what measures are in place

to enhance their de facto equality in all sectors, including in employment, health, education and participation in decision-making, and to ensure their protection from violence.

27. Please provide sex-disaggregated data and information on the situation of asylum-seekers and refugees in Italy, including whether gender-related forms of persecution are recognized in determining refugee status.

28. The Committee noted in its previous concluding comments that over 60 per cent of families headed by women are under the poverty line. The report also draws attention to the feminization of the elder population and its higher level of poverty (see p. 42). Please outline what measures and initiatives are in place to tackle the problem of poverty among households headed by women, including older women.

29. In its previous concluding comments, the Committee recommended that the Government take measures to enforce payment of alimony and of a fair share of the matrimonial assets for women, including measures which would enable the courts to set aside provisions intended to or having the effect of concealing assets and income. Please describe the measures that have been taken in this regard.

30. Please provide information about steps taken to make widely known the Optional Protocol, which Italy ratified in 2000.

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