



**Convention on the Elimination
of All Forms of Discrimination
against Women**

Distr.: General
7 January 2011

Original: English

**Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
against Women**

**Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under
article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms
of Discrimination against Women**

**Combined fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh periodic reports of
States parties**

Bulgaria*

* In accordance with the information transmitted to States parties regarding the processing of their reports, the present document was not formally edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

Contents

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction	1–6	3
II. Report on the implementation of the Convention (arts. 1-16)	7–317	3
Article 1	7–15	3
Articles 2 and 3	16–36	6
Article 4	37–41	9
Article 5	42–52	10
Article 6	53–75	12
Article 7	76–121	16
Article 8	122–128	23
Article 9	129–140	24
Article 10	141–163	26
Article 11	164–206	28
Article 12	207–248	36
Article 13	249–266	45
Article 14	267–285	48
Article 15	286–291	54
Article 16	292–317	55
III. Status and implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention	318	60
Annex		
Additional references and tables		61

I. Introduction

1. The present report contains all legislative provisions, judicial, administrative and other measures enacted and adopted in relation to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women since the consideration by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women of the consolidated second and third national periodic reports in 1998.

2. The report presents the up-to-date developments in Bulgaria's national legislation and practice relevant to the implementation of the rights recognized by the above mentioned Convention.

3. Since 1998, there has been an ongoing process in Bulgaria aimed at improving further the democratic system. It involves domestic legislation, judiciary and administrative practices.

4. Several parliamentary, presidential and local elections were held in the period between January 2000 and June 2009. The international community and the Bulgarian citizens assessed them as free, democratic and fair. These elections consolidated the political pluralism which, according to the Constitution (art. 11) is the basis of political life in the Republic of Bulgaria. They stabilized the domestic political situation and asserted the irreversible democratic changes in the country.

5. On 29 March 2004 Bulgaria formally became member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) by depositing its instrument of accession to the North Atlantic Treaty. Later on, with the 2007 European Union (EU) enlargement, Bulgaria officially became a member of the EU on 1 January 2007.

6. Bulgaria has taken a number of additional special measures with a view to harmonizing its domestic legislation with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

II. Report on the implementation of the Convention (arts. 1-16)

Article 1

7. The principles of equality and non-discrimination are embedded in the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria (article 6). The Labour Code categorically forbids any forms of discrimination, privileges, limitations based on gender and introduces the principle of equal payment of men's and women's labour. The Employment Promotion Act, the Social Assistance Act, the Higher Education Act, the Defence and Armed Forces of the Republic of Bulgaria Act, etc. also contain anti-discriminatory regulations regarding the gender and family status. The Family Code is based on the principle of "...equality of man and woman...". The Social Security Code introduces the principles of binding force and generality of the social security and equality of all insured persons. The Penal Code qualifies as crimes against the person rape, the forced involvement in acts of prostitution of others and the trafficking in human beings, as well as forcing to sexual acts through the use of the official or material dependency of the person. The Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Act introduces measures for the prevention and protection of the victims of human trafficking in accordance with the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and complies with the Protocol to Prevent,

Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention. The Protection against Domestic Violence Act regulates the relations regarding domestic violence and provides measures for protection against it, as well as help and support for the victims. According to the Ombudsman Act, the National Ombudsman and his deputy are responsible for investigating violations of civil rights and freedoms, including acts of discrimination based on gender, including those committed by the state or municipal bodies and their administration and on behalf of persons providing public services.

8. The Protection against Discrimination Act (promulgated in the State Gazette No. 86/2003, last amended State Gazette No. 42 of 5 June 2009) is in conformity with the achievements of international law in the area of equal treatment by gender, equal pay, equality in employment, protection of pregnant women and the burden of proof in cases of discrimination. The Act develops further the constitutional principle for prohibition of discrimination and the principle of equality before the law included in article 6 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, by introducing mechanisms for its practical application. The Law provides for enforced administrative measures and administrative penalties, articles 76 to 84.

9. The legal definition of discrimination introduced by the law is in conformity with the definition the Convention provides for. Direct discrimination is defined as any unfavourable treatment of a person on grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, human genome, citizenship, origin, religion or faith, education, beliefs, political affiliation, personal or public status, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, property status or of any other indications established by a law or an international treaty to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party, compared to the way other persons are treated, have been treated or would be treated in comparable similar circumstances. Indirect discrimination is defined in the law as placing a person on the basis of the grounds listed above in less favourable situation compared to other persons through seemingly neutral regulation, criteria or practice, unless such regulation, criteria or practice is objectively justified in view of a legal purpose and the means for its achievement are appropriate and necessary.

10. Any direct or indirect discrimination is prohibited, and the prohibition is effective against anyone upon the exercising and protection of the rights and freedoms the Constitution and the legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria provide for. Thus the definition encompasses:

- (a) Any action leading to unequal treatment;
- (b) Legislative acts, policies and practices which though not intended to discriminate, have such effect and action in practice;
- (c) Discrimination on behalf of private and public institutions and/or physical persons and discrimination in personal and public life.

11. The law introduces definitions for “harassment”, “sexual harassment”, “persecution”, “unequal treatment”, and “multiple discrimination”. It also provides an elaborate list of cases when the unequal treatment is not considered as discrimination and is justified.

12. Under the Act which entered into force on 1 January 2004 the Commission for Protection against Discrimination was established in its capacity of an independent body reporting before the National Assembly. The Commission has powers with

regard to the prevention of, control over and protection against discrimination, establishing violations and imposing sanctions in accordance with the law; preparation of proposals to the executive powers' representatives and local self-government institutions; appeal of administrative acts issued in contradiction to this law; provision of information to persons regarding their rights and obligations imposed by it and upon request financing of their defence, etc.

13. The Commission's annual reports are published on its official internet site. During 2005 the Commission's administrative capacity was built, its Structure and Activity Rules were adopted and panels reviewing the complaints were formed. In the annual report for 2005 the data for the files' distribution by panels were presented together by groups of several grounds. During 2006 the data was presented by individual grounds. According to the annual report for 2006¹ three files were set up under the ground of "gender", one file was set up on discrimination on the ground of "marital status" with the request that the discriminatory practice of being terminated upon use of the parent's leave for pregnancy and giving birth and for raising a young child (maternity leave), and one file on the ground of multiple discrimination, including underlying aspect of "gender", which has been ceased. During 2008 10 files with respect to acts of discrimination on the ground of "gender" were opened. The number of complaints regarding discrimination on the ground of "gender" remained similar to that of 2007. In the initiated files under "multiple discrimination" the indicator "gender" is included in two files. Ad hoc panels created on particular cases regarding indicators not specifically listed in article 4, paragraph 1 of the Protection against Discrimination Act, established in a law or in an international treaty, to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party, review two initiated files under reports by commission's members for "sexual harassment", with women being victims.

14. The proceedings for protection against discrimination may be held both before the Commission and before the court. There is no state fee collected for proceedings before the Commission. The expenses are on the Commission's budget account. Beyond such cases any person whose rights under the present or under other laws settling equality in the treatment have been violated may submit a claim before the regional court, requesting establishment of the violation, sentencing the respondent to cease the violation and to reinstate the situation before the violation, as well as to restrain from any further violations, and damages' compensation. There are no state fees for the proceedings before the court either and the expenses are on the court's budget account.

15. The introduction of the reverse burden of proof is the Act's special merit. From the objective side the burden of proof consists of the right and obligation of the Commission or the court to accept that the right of equal treatment has been violated by the respondent unless he proves otherwise. This adjective principle is adopted in article 9 and stipulates that if the party claiming to be a victim of discrimination provides proof from which it may be established that discrimination exists, the respondent party has to prove that the right of equal treatment is not violated. The principle of transparency and openness is crucial in the hearings held before the Commission in contrast to the proceedings of the files' reviewing. Not only the main parties are summoned to take part in the hearings, but also other interested persons and institutions having relations to the investigation performed and the witnesses as

¹ Initiated files are the ones admitted for review by the Commission.

well. The hearings are open and they may be attended by any person wishing to do so and by media representatives. A schedule of the open hearings is also published on the internet page of the Commission. This is of the utmost importance for promoting the equal treatment and raising the public sensitivity to the manifestations of discrimination.

Articles 2 and 3

16. Since the submission of the second and third consolidated periodic report in 1994 the process of accession of the Republic of Bulgaria to the European Union gave a new impetus for the creation of a national institutional mechanism for the protection of gender equality.

17. In 2000 the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) was appointed as the institution responsible for development, coordination and implementation of the state policy for gender equality. Since 2001, in line with the European Employment Strategy a National Employment Action Plan has been developed and implemented every year, containing programmes and projects encouraging women and men's equal employment opportunities.

18. Measures are stipulated in the Employment Strategy (2004-2010) for creation of legislative, institutional and resource base in order to achieve women and men's equal opportunities.

19. A Women and Men's Equal Opportunities Sector was created in MLSP in the beginning of 2004. Together with the Consultative Commission for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men established in 2003 under the Minister of Labour and Social Policy more efficient actions were undertaken for the creation of an institutional structure for development of gender equality policy.

20. The National Council on Gender Equality within the Council of Ministers was created in November 2004 by Decree No. 313/17 of the Council of Ministers. The Council powers include advice, cooperation and coordination between the governmental bodies upon the development and implementation of the national policy on gender equality. The National Council is chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy, and its members are deputy ministers of all ministries and heads of state agencies, which perform functions on the policy's implementation, including the Governor of the National Social Security Institute and the Director of the National Statistical Institute. The administrative and technical service of the National Council is provided by a Secretariat-Equal Opportunities Department (currently Demographic Policy, Equal Opportunities and Anti-discrimination Department) in the Demographic and Family Policy and Equal Opportunities Directorate) in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

21. According to the Statutes of the National Council on Gender Equality, the Council advises the Council of Ministers, discusses projects for legislative and other acts regarding gender equality and provides opinions on their conformity with the policy goals for gender equality. It coordinates the activities of the state bodies and the non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the national policy for gender equality and the international obligations undertaken by the Republic of Bulgaria in the respective field. Independently or with the Commission for

Protection against Discrimination it offers measures for the implementation of the national gender equality policy of the Republic of Bulgaria.

22. The state policy on gender equality is implemented through national action plans for promotion of gender equality. The National Council on Gender Equality has coordinated the reporting on the implementation of the national plans since 2005.

23. The national action plans for promotion of gender equality are aimed at harmonizing the Bulgarian legislation and case law with the *aquis communautaire* and the good practices of Member States for promotion of gender equality.

24. They encompass activities in different areas of the public, political and economic life, aimed at the implementation of the commitments of Bulgaria for the implementation of the third United Nations Millennium Development Goal “Promote gender equality and empower women”.

25. The measures set in the National Action Plans contribute to the establishment of the necessary conditions for observance of the international standards for gender equality.

26. The reports on the implementation of the National Action Plans for 2005, 2006 and 2008-2009 reflect the national experience and the achievements of the country in the area of gender equality in several main sections:

- (a) State policy for promotion of gender equality;
- (b) Promotion of gender equality in economic activities, education, health care and culture;
- (c) Promotion of reconciliation of professional and family obligations of women and men;
- (d) Promotion of gender equality in decision-making;
- (e) Eradication of gender violence and human trafficking;
- (f) Actions for overcoming the gender stereotypes existing in the society.

27. The activities laid down in the National action plans are implemented in the framework of the budget of the responsible ministries and agencies and where necessary with financing from other sources as well.

28. In 2008 the uniform national policy for achieving gender equality was formulated in the National Strategy for Promotion of Gender Equality 2008-2015, approved by the Council of Ministers on 10 December 2008. The Strategy is in conformity with the EU Roadmap for Equality between Men and Women (2006-2010), approved by the European Commission on 1 March 2006, the European Pact for Gender Equality and the new social vision for Europe. The Strategy is in conformity with the engagements undertaken by the Republic of Bulgaria for promotion of equal treatment of women and men: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), etc.

29. The leading vision of the Strategy is achieving an actual public change through anti-discriminatory legislative measures and strengthening the institutional mechanisms for reaffirming gender equality and equal treatment, combined with

special encouraging measures for the adoption of new models of behaviour. The Strategy's main goal is the establishment of guarantees for equal rights, equal treatment, equal access to the public resources and equal participation of women and men in the decision-making process in the Republic of Bulgaria in order to assure successful personal and social realization and stimulating the equality between women and men in all spheres of public, economic and political life in the country.

30. The specific goals contributing to its implementation are: not allowing any discrimination on the ground of gender in any area of public life; overcoming consequences of past discriminative activities through adopting active measures regarding groups of women and men, on which the transition to a market economy has had an adverse effect; equal rights not only for the Bulgarian citizens protected in the Constitution and the country's legislation, but equal opportunities for all residing in the national territory to enjoy such rights.

31. It is within the terms of reference of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy to design, organize, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the state policy in the area of gender equality. In accordance with the current national legislation the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is assigned as a leading institution working for the promotion of equal opportunities.

32. During the period March-April 2006 pursuant to Article 10 of the Statutes of the National Council on Gender Equality within the Council of Ministers, 22 coordinators and experts were assigned in the respective ministries. Following the appointment of these coordinators/experts on equal opportunities in the respective ministries or agencies, no additional functions have been added to their job descriptions. Their functions related to the implementation of the gender equality policy and the coordination among them are controlled by the National Council on Gender Equality within the Council of Ministers, but in most of the institutions they are secondary to the main duties of the respective civil servant, explicitly described in their job descriptions.

33. Since 2005 until now in the frameworks of projects financed by the state budget or by external resources, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has performed multiple short-term trainings of over 1,000 experts from the central, regional or local executive bodies, aimed at increasing the administrative capacity for the implementation of gender equality policies, adopting an integrated approach for equal treatment of women and men (gender mainstreaming) and elaborating methods for gender analysis in the process of development, monitoring and assessment of policies and legislation.

34. Despite the constitutional and legal equality between women and men, the results of the gender equality's review² in different areas of the public life in Bulgaria demonstrates inequality between women and men in the areas of employment and participation in political life. Those differences reflect some formal limitations influencing directly or indirectly the dimensions of gender equality.

² Data of the NSI, collected under the project of MLSP "Building up effective institutional capacity for gender mainstreaming" (2008-2009), published in *"Women and Men in the Republic of Bulgaria — analysis of the demographic and socio-economic picture"*, unless other source indicated.

However most of them are indirect, reflecting understanding of notions and/or practical considerations.

35. The difficulties in the identification of the inequality areas to a great extent is due to the absence of comprehensive and detailed statistics, disaggregated by gender, indicating the differences between women and men in the different sub-groups: by age, ethnic origin, education level, employment status, income, marital status and composition of the households, etc. More comprehensive and wider range applications of indicators by gender in the current and periodical information provided by the national and administrative statistics (National Statistical Institute; National Social Security Institute; ministries; state agencies, and other institutions) are being introduced.

36. In 2008 the National Statistical Institute took part in the discussions on a system of internationally comparable indicators for all forms of violence against women. In 2008 the range of indicators was increased including all data by gender, connected to the compensations and subsidies by the state social security, including for parental leave, aiming at monitoring the gender equality and enriching the national statistics and EUROSTAT with gender disaggregated social security data. In connection with the preparation of a world development programme for gender statistics the gender statistics in Bulgaria has been reviewed and since 2008 the National Statistical Institute is providing all gender disaggregated data as required by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

Article 4

37. The Protection against Discrimination Act introduces the concept for encouraging measures aiming at achieving full gender equality and protection against discrimination on the ground of gender. The encouraging measures are provided for in Article 24 of the Protection against Discrimination Act, and reflect two possible areas of discrimination and oblige the employers to undertake encouraging actions in order to guarantee equal opportunities to women and men:

(a) Upon hiring; and

(b) Regarding the professional development of workers and employees belonging to the less represented gender.

38. The Protection against Discrimination Act for the first time distinguishes between special protection and encouraging measures, thus creating the basis for the correct understanding of the equal treatment between women and men. The goal of this regulation is to ensure the establishment of an equal manpower diversity, in which both genders shall be represented. That envisages the employers to prepare an assessment of the number of women and men employees, which they should keep and constantly update in order for it to be used both during the hiring of new employees and during the labour relationship. It should be noted that the employer should, at the time of hiring, when necessary for the achievement of the goals of this law, favourably consider candidates belonging to the less represented gender or ethnic groups, for execution of a certain job or performing certain functions, according to the provisions of Article 24. At the same time the employer is obliged, in cases of equal circumstances, to encourage the professional development and participation of workers and employees, belonging to a certain gender or ethnic

group, when they are less represented among the workers or employees performing certain work or holding certain position.

39. The same principle is also stipulated in Article 38 of the Protection against Discrimination Act, providing that the state and public bodies, as well as the local self-government, shall implement a policy promoting a balanced participation of women and men. However the law does not provide a definition for “balanced participation” of both genders.

40. The Protection against Discrimination Act entitles the Commission for Protection against Discrimination to impose compulsory administrative measures and to issue obligatory prescripts in case of non-compliance with this Law. Data for the cases which were referred to the Commission are publicly available in its annual reports. The Bulgarian government makes efforts to formulate the overall concept for implementation of the encouraging measures, which shall encompass all areas of gender inequality.

41. Within the framework of the annual plans for the implementation of the National Demographic Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2006-2020), the MLSP reports on the progress achieved with respect to gender equality following a system of gender indicators.

Article 5

42. Based on a sociological study on the public opinion and the condition of the equality between women and men in Bulgaria in the different areas of public, economic and political life, ordered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in 2008, the majority of the respondents stated adherence to the basic rules and values of the democratic society, namely — equality before the law and equal rights regardless of gender. However, there are still stereotypes on the role of women in the society, related to expectations that women should spend more of their time taking care of children and men providing the bigger part of the household income.

43. However, the prevailing attitude towards the participation of women in different managerial positions is not subject to exclusion and rejection; on the contrary, it is accepted as a part of today’s reality. Over two thirds of the respondents share the opinion that the responsibility for child upbringing is not individual, but collective, and respectively should be shared by both parents regardless of their gender. 67.1 per cent of the respondents support the use of a leave for raising a child by the father instead of the mother. Regarding the children’s upbringing following a divorce/separation, 52.7 per cent of the interviewed share the opinion that the mother should assume the care of the child. Only 34.3 per cent consider that both parents should have equal responsibilities. 76.1 per cent of the interviewed consider that women should retire earlier which shows a steady tendency established in other researches as well. Such opinion is due both to memories from a practice in Bulgaria before 2001 and to certain traditional notions of the woman’s role accepted as “natural privileges”. The children’s upbringing and the respective leaves prevent the women from working on “equal terms with the men” regarding the duration of the service length; her role in the household is more important and in the standard case women are taking more upon themselves because they work “after work” at home and that is why they are “entitled” to stop earlier

with the paid labour outside the household. Regarding domestic violence, three quarters of the interviewed categorically reject violence for whatever reason.

44. The state's efforts to change men and women's social and cultural models of behaviour are focused on the adoption of legislative and administrative measures, and on the organization of widespread campaigns violence and human rights abuse.

45. The Protection against Domestic Violence Act (PADVA) was adopted by the National Assembly on 16 March 2005. It regulates the provisions on domestic violence and provides measures for protection against it, defines legally the term "domestic violence" and obliges the state to create conditions for the implementation of programmes for prevention and protection against domestic violence and of programmes providing help and support to the victims.

46. The protection against domestic violence under the present law is implemented through an administrative act imposed by the regional court, called a "protection order", which requires the abuser to refrain from any acts of domestic violence, evicts the abuser from the jointly inhabited residence, forbids the abuser to come close to the residence, workplace and the social contacts and recreational places of the victim, requires the abuser to attend specialized programmes, and imposes penalties in the amount from BGN 200 to BGN 1,000.

47. During 2009 the protection under PADVA was strengthened with an amendment of the Penal Code (Article 296, Paragraph 1), introducing punishment for non-compliance with a protection order against domestic violence, issued by the court under PADVA.

48. On 17 June 2009 the Council of Ministers adopted changes in the Protection against Domestic Violence Act, according to which each year by 31 March the government should adopt a national programme for prevention and protection against domestic violence, and the State Budget Act shall provide means for its realization, including means for non-profit legal entities, which shall develop and implement programmes for support provision to victims of domestic violence, for re-educating the abusers, etc. The amendments were passed by the National Assembly in December 2009.

49. On 19 October 2006, the Government approved the first Programme on Prevention and Protection against Domestic Violence for the period 2007-2008. It is in compliance with § 2 of the Concluding Provisions in connection with Article 6, Paragraph 1 of the Protection against Domestic Violence Act and in accordance with the international standards and the commitments of the Republic of Bulgaria under international conventions and EU requirements. The Programme's objectives are prevention and protection against domestic violence. They are implemented through popularization of the problem and the means to handle it, information on the primary and secondary prevention, on how to improve the qualification of persons charged with the protection under PADVA, as well as on the establishment of a base for development of programmes for recovery of persons who have been victims of domestic violence and specialized programmes for the abusers. One of the commitments of the Ministry of Interior under the Programme provides for the development of a reference guide for protection against domestic violence, with advice for victims on the provision of fast and effective protection in cases of domestic violence. The information leaflet for victims of domestic violence is published on the internet site of the Ministry of Interior on the Section Programme

against Domestic Violence, as is information on how the police can provide support in such cases. There are samples of Claims to the Head of the Local Police Office and the Regional Court that inform the victim on how to start the legal protection procedure.

50. In August 2009 a national 24-hour free hotline (0800 186 76) was opened. The line provides the opportunity get the advice of a psychologist, information and legal support for victims of violence.

51. The mechanism for allowance of financial resources is embodied in the Social Assistance Act according to which social services may be assigned to private providers through a municipal tender through state delegated activity. Another possible source of financing of such services is the Social Assistance Fund under the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. The Fund allots resources, also on a project basis, for financing any and all types of social services provided by the municipalities.

52. Currently, three shelters and five crisis centres for women are functioning in the country, managed by non-governmental organizations with partial financing from the municipal budgets and partial financing from the state budget and from other resources, under projects and programmes.

Article 6

53. The Republic of Bulgaria has signed and ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the two Protocols supplementing it: the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air and the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (ratified by law, promulgated in the State Gazette No. 42 of 27 April 2001). The appropriate international standards have found expression in the national legislation of the Republic of Bulgaria: the special provisions on human trafficking in the Penal Code of the Republic of Bulgaria, the adoption of the Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Act and the Regulations on its Implementation, of the Protection of Persons Threatened in Connection with Criminal Procedure Act and the Regulations on its Implementation. The Legal Aid Act was adopted in 2005, and the Crime Victim Assistance and Financial Compensation Act in 2006 (in effect from 1 January 2007).

54. With the Penal Code amendments in force since 1 October 2002, the Republic of Bulgaria criminalizes human trafficking as a specific form of organized crime activity. In chapter II, "Offences against the person", Special Part, an independent Section IX on "Human Trafficking" was created. Bulgarian legislation is not limited to their particular indication (as done in Article 3 (a), sentence one of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children). According to the regulations of Article 159 (a)-(d) of the Penal Code punishable acts are any and all cases of gathering, transportation, transfer, hiding or accommodating people for the purpose of the exploitation, regardless of the means used for the achievement of such purposes, as well as the use of a person being victim of human trafficking for lewd activities, forced labour, deprivation of body organs or to be kept in forced subordination.

55. Human trafficking is punishable in any and all cases when executed for the purpose of exploitation in all its possible forms, including in the trade of body organs (in accordance with Article 3 (a), sentence two of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children). The consent of the victim to be “trafficked” is an irrelevant fact for its punishability in all cases, not limited to cases when the victim is a child. Both transborder and domestic trafficking are punishable; a separate, and a heavily punishable composition for transnational traffic is established. It should be noted that human trafficking is also punishable in cases where it has not been executed by an organized criminal group or does not represent complex or organized criminal activity.

56. Punishable under the Penal Code are also:

- (a) Rape — Article 152;
- (b) Inducement to prostitution — Article 155;
- (c) Forced copulation based on the use of official or material dependency — Article 153;
- (d) Kidnapping and illegal imprisonment, including with the purpose of forcing the kidnapped persons to participate in lewd activities — Articles 142, 142 (a), 156.

57. The Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings Act (in force from 20 May 2003) provides for the status and the tasks of the shelters, centres and commissions under it for protection and support to the victims of human trafficking; the measures for prevention and counteraction of the human trafficking; the measures for protection and support of victims of human trafficking, especially women and children; the provision of a special protection statute to the victims of human trafficking cooperating with the investigation. One of the main goals of this Act is to ensure the cooperation and coordination between the state and municipal authorities, as well between them and the non-governmental organizations for prevention and counteraction of the human trafficking and establishing the national policy in this area.

58. The Bulgarian National Anti-trafficking Commission with the Council of Ministers is created under the Act. A Deputy Prime Minister selected by the Council of Ministers is appointed as Chairman of the National Commission. At the time of writing the Chairman of the Commission is Mr. Tzvetan Tzvetanov, the Minister of Interior. The Commission includes as members the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Policy, the Deputy Minister of Interior, the Deputy Minister of Justice, the Deputy Minister of Health, the Deputy Minister of Education and Science, the deputy head of the State Agency for National Security, the deputy head of the State Agency for Child Protection, and the deputy chairman of the Central Commission on Control of Juvenile Anti-social Behaviour, appointed by the respective ministers and chairmen. The National Commission includes also representatives of the Chairman of the Supreme Court of Cassation, the Prosecutor General and the Director of the National Investigation Service, appointed by them. Representatives of non-profit legal entities and international organizations having representation in the country, which carry out activities on prevention against human trafficking and protection of victims, may participate in the meetings of the National Commission as well.

59. Under the Act the National Commission should create local commissions at the regional level, which shall pursue the state policy and strategy in the area of the fight against human trafficking on the territory of certain municipalities which, based on studies, are identified as risky. Six towns in which local commissions should be created have been determined in the National Programme for Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings for 2005. Currently there are commissions in five towns: Pazardzhik, Bourgas, Varna, Sliven and Sofia.

60. The Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings Act provides for the establishment of two types of specialized institutions: shelters for temporary housing and centres for protection and support of the victims of human trafficking. The indicated institutions for social services are established under the provisions the law provides for.

61. The following bodies have the authority to open shelters: the National Anti-trafficking Commission on a proposal by the regional commissions or municipalities; physical persons, registered under the Commerce Act; and judicial non-profit bodies providing shelter to the victims of human trafficking. They provide the victims not only with shelter, but also social, medical, household services and psychological help, as well as conditions for establishing contact with their relatives and with the specialized institutions and organizations. Currently such shelters are opened and kept only by non-profit judicial bodies.

62. The financing of such services is not provided for in the state budget except through state delegated activity, similar to the crisis centres for women who are victims of domestic violence. The non-governmental organizations receive means from the state budget on a project base during different periods, but there is no summarized information regarding this.

63. Information for non-governmental organizations maintaining shelters is published on the internet page of the National Anti-trafficking Commission. A standard for the support provided in the shelters is under development by the Commission in view of future provision of opportunities for state financing of the shelters. The first state-financed shelter to the regional commission was opened in April 2009 in Varna.

64. The centres for protection and support of victims of human trafficking are created with the regional commissions. Their obligations are reduced to provision of information using understandable and clear terminology for the victims regarding the administrative and legal procedures settling their support and protection; provision of specialized psychological and medical aid; and support and reintegration in the family and social environment. The provisions for opening, the work organization, management and control of these specialized institutions are stipulated in a by-law (regulation): Regulation for the Shelters for Temporary Housing and Centers for Protection and Support of Victims of Human Trafficking.

65. The national coordination mechanism for referring and supporting women victims of trafficking, which includes all bodies engaged in the fight against human trafficking and in the victims' reintegration, is in the process of development jointly with the non-governmental organizations working in the area. Two working groups set up by experts, representatives of public institutions and NGOs have been established for the elaboration of the national mechanism, advice and feedback.

66. Except for the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), a document with unified criteria has been elaborated for the identification of the victims of trafficking that will be used by all institutions and organizations in the country that identify the victims of human trafficking or could be in a position to do so. Three other important documents are being developed as well:

- (a) Evaluation criteria for risk assessment of the victims of trafficking;
- (b) Standards for provision of psychological support of the victims of human trafficking;
- (c) Minimum standards for the provision of social services for the victims of trafficking.

67. The documents above are all integral parts of the national mechanism for referral and care for victims of human trafficking in Bulgaria. The financing of the national mechanism shall be provided by the republican budget through the budget of the National Anti-trafficking Commission, as well as by the budget of other projects and/or programmes.

68. According to Article 4 of the Rules on the Organization and Activity of the National Anti-trafficking Commission, the National Commission prepares annually a National Programme on Prevention and Counteracting Human Trafficking and Protection of its Victims and submits it for approval to the Council of Ministers. Such programmes were approved for 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009. They envisage the establishment of administrative structures, provided for in the Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings Act, at the national and regional levels, increasing the public awareness on the problem of human trafficking and regarding the mechanisms of its limitation and the creation of public intolerance towards it. The measures are directed towards encompassing the risk groups, training experts, working in the area of human trafficking, carrying out studies on the topic, elaboration and promotion of informational products, and implementation of informational campaigns. The National Anti-trafficking Commission carries out annual awareness-raising campaigns with a view of prevention of trafficking amongst the groups at risk.

69. Campaigns are carried out at the national and local levels by the relevant local commissions for combating human trafficking. The National Anti-trafficking Commission also cooperates with non-governmental and international organizations for their campaigns in Bulgaria. Six campaigns have been carried out by the National Commission individually or jointly with other organizations or institutions since 2007.

70. Since the establishment of the National Anti-trafficking Commission and its functioning (2006-2009) the administration and the members of the Commission have carried out 50 trainings for investigating magistrates, prosecutors, police officers, social workers, municipal employees and NGOs on the work in the transnational cases of trafficking in human beings; trainings were also offered to teachers and pedagogical counsellors, as well as border police.

71. In the period 2008-2009 the National Commission carried out several statistical studies at the national level, available on the website of the Commission (www.antitraffic.government.bg), results of which are used for the evaluation of the tendencies with regard to the trafficking in human beings in Bulgaria — the main

roots, the main groups at risk, the main methods of implication. On this basis activities of prevention have been planned, related to the improvement of the capacity of specific groups of specialists, as well as activities related to the bilateral relations with institutions and organizations of the countries that are final destinations of Bulgarian victims of human trafficking. All listed activities are an integral part of the National Programme on Prevention and Counteracting Human Trafficking and Protection of Victims.

72. The information on the impact of the policies and measures for the fight against human trafficking is consolidated in the annual activity report of the National Commission.

73. The identification of the groups at risk on which the effort of the National Anti-trafficking Commission is focused for raising awareness on the potential risks is carried out based on an analysis of the cases of human trafficking, where the responsible bodies are involved — Ministry of Interior, Prosecution Office, Courts and the institutions in charge of the care of victims of human trafficking. The Commission obtains data on the analyses also from the-non governmental organizations working in the country.

74. A database on victims of human trafficking is elaborated and regularly maintained in the National Anti-trafficking Commission. The database contains five sections with more than 50 indicators, summarized under a special questionnaire, used by all the partners. Analogical computer configuration with data base on traffickers is maintained in the Supreme Prosecutor's Office of Cassation of the Republic of Bulgaria.

75. The statistics of the Supreme Prosecutor's Office of Cassation (SPOC) shows the following facts:

<i>2009</i>	<i>2008</i>
Number of victims — 297	Number of victims — 250
Foreign citizens — 0	Foreign citizens — 1
Women — 220	Women — 202
Men — 31	Men — 10
Minor girls — 4	Minor girls — 38
Minor boys — 2	

Article 7

76. According to the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria “all elections and national and local referendums shall be held on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot” (Article 10). This right is developed further in the legislation on the elections. The right of all people to elect and to be elected with no whatsoever limitation by gender is guaranteed also by multiple individual acts: Act on the Election of President and Vice President of the Republic, Act on the Election of Members of Parliament, Act on the Election of Members of the European Parliament from the Republic of Bulgaria, Local Elections Act.

77. Neither the election laws nor the Political Parties Act provide for quotas for women for electoral positions.

78. Women's electoral activity is higher as a rule and following certain data of the sociological agencies that follow electoral activity, it exceeds the number of men who vote. The electoral activity of women is high in all age groups and in all locations, including small towns and villages in less developed regions. Political parties and non-governmental organizations carry out campaigns for promotion of women's participation in the elections.

79. The illustration of the high activity of women in the election process is their participation in the organization of all kinds of elections — for President, for national and European Parliament, for local authorities.

80. More than 40 per cent of the members of the Central Election Commission (CEC) appointed for the respective elections are women. During the 2009 parliamentary elections the CEC was chaired by a woman and one of its speakers was a woman.

81. Women traditionally and in large scale are represented as rank members or chairwomen of the regional and section election commissions. The number of women chairs of the local election commissions was 10 out of 31 Commissions in the whole country for the parliamentary elections in 2009.

82. The Protection against Discrimination Act is aimed inter alia to guarantee equal treatment and equal opportunities to all for participation in public life (Article 2, Item 2) and requires that the state and public bodies and the bodies of the local self-government pursue a policy encouraging the balanced participation of women and men, as well as the representation of persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities, in the decision-making process (Article 38).

83. The Political Parties Act stipulates in Article 20, paragraph 2, that the political parties are entitled to establish their youth, women's and other organizations.

84. The political parties pay special attention to promoting women's participation in party life. Some political parties, including parliamentary represented, are led by women or have had women as chairpersons during different periods following 1994 — the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union, Union of the Democratic Forces, United People's Party, the National Movement for Surge and Stability, the Party of Bulgarian Women, which during the period 2001-2005 was a mandate holder. Currently, women participate in the leadership of all main political parties, holding high positions as vice-chairpersons or other high-ranking posts.

85. Over the last 15 years a range of political parties encouraged women's participation in the political process through appointments of women at high positions within the parties' structures, through women participation at high positions within the executive and through placing female candidates as leaders on the candidate lists during the elections of the National Parliament. There is already a group of women political figures from different political parties who have significant experience and biographies thus making them competitive in the political race.

86. Following the regular surveys carried out by the National Institute for Public Opinion Research, the attitude of the population is changing in the direction of higher approval of women in politics, regardless their specific positions. For

example the Bulgarian EU Commissioner upon the EU accession of the country (2007) was a woman. The present Bulgarian EU Commissioner (2009) is a woman as well.

87. During the last 10 years the process of establishment of women's organizations within the political parties was stepped up. A number of such women's organizations established their local structures and networks of politically active women countrywide, who regularly participate in the elaboration of parties' policies, nomination of candidates, in raising the awareness of the whole population about the parties' policy, the training of their members and establishment of conditions for career building within the party. Similar structures have been established at a different scale within the Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP), the Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), United Agrarians, Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria (GERB), VMRO-National Movement etc.

88. Women's organizations of the main political parties are very active and are able to organize individually or with gender NGOs a range of social events, focused on women and society at the national and local levels. Many of them maintain a range of Internet sites, regularly publish newsletters or other information materials and actively participate in the international life of other similar political formations. Many of these women's organizations carry out specialized trainings for their members focused on the involvement of women within the election process, human rights, etc. Their financing is provided by the budgets of the political parties or on a project-based principle.

89. The increased number of women members of Parliament is an illustration of the active civil and political position of Bulgarian women. Since the mid-1990s their number grew twofold and keeps on growing. The number of women Members of Parliament is more than 50 out of 240 Members of Parliament. In the last three mandates of the National Assembly (2001-2005; 2005-2009; 2009-2013), the proportion of women compared to men was respectively 28 per cent to 72 per cent, 21 per cent to 79 per cent, and 22 per cent to 78 per cent. During the July 2009 elections 26 per cent of the 31 elected majority candidates were women.

90. The representation of women elected members of the European Parliament in June 2009 was much more convincing — 47 per cent out of 17 representatives of the Republic of Bulgaria. The women's representation in the political parties and coalitions' lists for the European Parliament elections is averaging 33 per cent, as most of the political forces took into consideration the recommendations of the international institutions for balanced representation of women and men in the decision-making bodies and included, with little exception, over 40 per cent women at first to fifth places on their electoral lists. Out of 13 parties and coalitions which took part in the elections, 4 had women as leaders on their lists. For the first time a political party (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria/GERB) arranged its candidates by the so called "zip" or "zebra" system — with successive alternation of woman/man, which is considered as the best approach in the international practice for compliance with the principle of gender equality in the election process.

91. The Chairperson of the current 41st National Assembly, following the elections on 14 July 2009, is a woman. The ratio of women to men vice-chairpersons (according to the number of the parliamentary parties) is 1:5. The number of the women vice-chairpersons of the 40th National Assembly (under rotational principle) was equal to the number of men during the period 2005-2009.

92. Women are acting as Chairpersons of the permanent parliamentary commissions. Currently women chair 6 of the 17 commissions — Budget and Finances Commission, Legal Commission, Labour and Social Policy Commission, Ecology Commission, Agricultural Commission, Culture Commission, Civil Society and Media. That is outstanding progress considering that in the previous parliamentary mandate only 2 out of the total 26 commissions were chaired by women. However, women members of Parliament do not hold high-ranking positions in the parties' parliamentary groups. Only one parliamentary group has a woman as co-chair.

93. Since the mid-1990s until now women have been occupying high political and governmental positions: prime minister (1994-1995); deputy prime minister in different mandates; ministers, chairwomen of state agencies, etc. Women constitute a majority in the state and municipal administration's employees, as their number in certain bodies exceeds 65 per cent.

94. In the Council of Ministers formed after the July 2009 elections, three of the Ministers are women — the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Education, Youth and Science and the Minister of Environment and Water. One third of the deputy ministers are women. The entire leadership (minister and deputy ministers) of the Ministry of Environment and Water consists of women.

95. Women prevail at the level of director and head of department within the central administration, except for the Ministries of Defence, Interior, and Foreign Affairs, as well as the Ministry of Culture. The gender ratio within the Public administration is described below.

96. Ministry of Justice:

(a) Gender balance of employees in the central administration — at managerial positions — 27 women/7 men, civil servants — 191 women/51 men;

(b) Gender balance of the employees at the Legal Department — at managerial positions — 4 women/1 man, civil servants — 14 women/7 men;

(c) Gender balance of the employees at Security DG — at managerial positions — 4 women/18 men, civil servants — 210 women/1,200 men;

(d) Gender balance of the employees at the Directorate General Execution of Judgment — at managerial positions — 25 women/111 men, civil servants — 916 women/3,542 men;

(e) Gender balance of the employees at Registry Agency — at managerial positions — 12 women/10 men, civil servants — 482 women/39 men;

(f) Gender balance of the employees at the Central Registry of the special guarantees — at managerial positions — 4 women/1 man, civil servants — 28 women/1 man.

97. Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions — directors: 28.5 per cent women/71.5 per cent men; heads of departments 30.6 per cent women/69.4 per cent men;

(b) Gender balance of the employees having diplomatic rank — 201 women/309 men;

(c) Gender balance of the employees who have no diplomatic rank — 504 women/514 men.

98. Ministry of Interior:

(a) Gender balance of people at managerial positions — 15 per cent women/85 per cent men;

(b) Gender balance of civil servants at the central executive administration — 50 per cent women/50 per cent men.

99. Ministry of Defence:

(a) Gender balance of employees within the central administration — at managerial positions — 23.95 per cent women/76.05 per cent men, civil servants — 44.33 per cent women/55.67 per cent men;

(b) Gender balance of the employees within the structures directly subordinated to the Minister of Defence — at managerial positions — 22.8 per cent women/77.20 per cent men, civil servants — 36.1 per cent women/63.9 per cent men;

(c) Gender balance of the employees within the Bulgarian Army — at managerial positions — 100 per cent men, civil servants — 20.2 per cent women/79.8 per cent men.

100. Ministry of Health:

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the central administration — 43 women/17 men;

(b) Gender balance of civil servants within the central administration — 217 women/63 men

101. Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works:

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the central administration — 71 women/29 men;

(b) Gender balance of civil servants within the central administration — 319 women/148 men.

102. Ministry of Culture:

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the central administration — 14 women/16 men;

(b) Gender balance of civil servants within the central administration — 85 women/38 men.

103. Ministry of Education, Youth and Science:

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the central administration — 43 women/17 men;

(b) Gender balance of civil servants within the central administration — 337 women/93 men;

(c) Gender balance at managerial positions within the regional inspectorates of education — 52 women/28 men;

(d) Gender balance of civil servants within the regional inspectorates of education — 421 women/129 men.

104. Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism:

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the central administration — 65 women/24 men;

(b) Gender balance of civil servants within the central administration — 319 women/147 men.

105. Ministry of Finance:

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the central administration — 66 women/29 men;

(b) Gender balance of civil servants within the central administration — 416 women/152 men;

106. Ministry of Environment and Water:

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the central administration — 29 women/17 men;

(b) Gender balance of civil servants within the central administration — 287 women/101 men.

107. Ministry of Agriculture and Food:

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the central administration — 34 women/24 men;

(b) Gender balance of civil servants within the central administration — 334 women/119 men.

108. Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the central administration — 14 women/3 men;

(b) Gender balance of civil servants within the central administration — 234 women/81 men;

109. Ministry of Transport, Information Technologies and Communication:

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the central administration — 28 women/19 men;

(b) Gender balance of civil servants within the central administration — 207 women/86 men.

110. Ministry of Physical Education and Sports:

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the central administration — 25 women/10 men;

(b) Gender balance of civil servants within the central administration — 10 women/54 men.

111. Supreme Court of Cassation:

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the administration of the Supreme Court of Cassation — 55 per cent women/45 per cent men;

(b) Gender balance of Court employees within the administration of the SCC — the general number of the employees is 222 — 80 per cent women/20 per cent men, out of which at managerial positions — 56 per cent women/44 per cent men;

(c) Gender balance of judges at the SCC — total number of judges 91 — 79 per cent women/21 per cent men, out of which at managerial positions — 54 per cent women/46 per cent men.

112. Supreme Administrative Court:

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the administration of the SAC — 10 women/4 men;

(b) Gender balance of Court employees at the administration of the SAC — the total number of the employees is 159 — 140 women/19 men;

(c) Gender balance of judges within the SAC — the total number of judges is 80 — 62 women/18 men, out of which at decision-making positions — 6 women/5 men.

113. Sofia Regional Court (SRC)

(a) Gender balance at managerial positions within the administration of SRC — 2 women/5 men;

(b) Gender balance of court officials within the administration of the SRC — the total number of the officials is 445 — 412 women/33 men;

(c) Gender balance of the judges within the SRC — the total number of judges is 634 — 531 women/103 men.

114. Supreme Prosecutor's Office of Cassation (SPO):

(a) Gender balance of court officials in the SPO administration — the total number of the employees is 2,912 — 2,310 women/601 men, out of which in decision-making positions — 326 women/37 men;

(b) Gender balance in the SPO — the total number of prosecutors is 2028 — 867 women/1161 men, out of which at decision making positions — 113 women/190 men.

115. Women are actively represented within the management and administration of the local authorities. 30 per cent of municipal counsellors in 264 municipalities in the country are women. To date only 6.9 per cent of the mayors of municipalities are women; however three of them are mayors of large municipal centres; one is the mayor of the capital. In the administration of regions and municipalities women represent up to 70 per cent of employees, where they prevail at the decision-making level. For example in the capital 4 out of 7 deputy mayors are women. The head of the capital inspectorate is a woman as well.

116. Women actively participate in the associations and unions employees within the local authorities and local self-government. The National Association of Municipalities of the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB) is headed by a woman mayor. The NAMRB has its standing Committee on gender issues within the local self-

government that actively cooperates with the NGOs working for gender equality. 25 per cent of the members of the National Association of Chairs of Municipal Councils are women and they represent its leadership.

117. Women judges represent two thirds of the magistrates at all levels and in all kinds of Courts in Bulgaria. In the decision-making of the judicial system, however, men prevail. The union of Judges in Bulgaria (professional association of magistrates) was chaired by a woman until recently as well

118. 43 per cent of the magistrates in the Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria are women, and since 2009 one of the Deputy Prosecutors General is a woman.

119. Women are very active in the non-governmental sector. They prevail among the members and heads of different NGOs, the number of which has varied between 5,000 and 8,000 (depending on their activity) over the last 10 years. They participate in different consultations with the legislative and central executive and are members of different consultative bodies that could be directly involved in the formulation, monitoring and appraisal of the policies.

120. Gender equality NGOs are represented as associated members of the National Council for Gender Equality within the Council of Ministers, where they participate with opinions and recommendations. They are also partners in the Consultative Commission for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and the disadvantaged groups on the labour market with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. They are actively involved within the work of the National Anti-trafficking Commission. The main legislative initiatives in the area of gender equality and protection of women's rights have been initiated and elaborated jointly with the representatives and experts of the gender equality NGOs.

121. Women prevail among the members of trade unions and they are actively involved in their activity. Women prevail in the management of local structures of trade unions but men dominate in the leadership of trade unions at the central level. In the structures of the two largest national organizations of workers in the country there are gender equality unions/organizations. Workshops are organized for discussions on issues of interest for the workers in a dialogue with the employers and the NGOs and the central executive. They organize gender equality trainings for their members.

Article 8

122. In Bulgaria there are no legal or institutional obstacles to women representing the country at the international level, neither to women's participation in international organizations. For example, Bulgaria's permanent representative to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Mrs. Irina Bokova, was elected in 2009 Director-General of UNESCO. There are a lot of women diplomats representing Bulgaria as members of governmental delegations at sessions of the United Nations General Assembly and meetings of other United Nations bodies, the Council of Europe and other international organizations. Many women are working within the Secretariats of the United Nations, CE, EU and other international and regional organizations.

123. For seven years, prior to and after Bulgaria's accession to the EU, the post of the Minister of European Affairs was held by women.

124. The participation of women MP in parliamentary delegations at international forums constitutes about 15 per cent. The leadership of the standing delegation of the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) is comprised by women only.

125. Since 1989 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been headed twice by a woman minister (1997-2001 and 2009).

126. Data about the share of women at decision-making positions within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are provided under Article 7 above. The Ministry's spokesperson is a woman. Women within the diplomatic service in the system of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are about 40 per cent of the personnel with diplomatic rank. Women ambassadors are 5 out of more than 70 heads of Bulgarian diplomatic missions around the world (2009).

127. There are no institutional or other gender-based obstacles facing young women who want to obtain professional experience in the field of foreign policy and international relations. They have the opportunity to study international relations in several universities of the country, as well as to obtain professional qualifications within the Diplomatic Institute of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

128. Women judges in Bulgaria are well represented at the international level: for a third mandate the Bulgarian judge to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg is a woman. Bulgarian women are Members of the Constitutional Court in Kosovo and the International Criminal Court.

Article 9

129. According to the general norm embodied in Article 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, "A Bulgarian citizen shall be anyone born of at least one parent holding a Bulgarian citizenship, or born on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, should he not be entitled to any other citizenship by virtue of origin. Bulgarian citizenship shall further be acquirable through naturalization". As evident from the above, there are no differences for acquiring Bulgarian citizenship based on parent's gender.

130. This principle of equality for acquirement of Bulgarian citizenship is further developed in the Bulgarian Citizenship Act (BCA), which regulates the acquirement, the loss and reinstatement of Bulgarian citizenship as well as the related proceedings. The Act entered into force on 19 February 1999, and was amended in 2001 and 2002.

131. The Constitution provides for equal rights of children upon acquirement of Bulgarian citizenship regardless as to whether the parent having Bulgarian citizenship is the mother or the father.

132. According to the Constitution and the Bulgarian Citizenship Act Bulgarian citizenship may be acquired in three ways:

(a) By virtue of origin, when at least one of the parents is a Bulgarian citizen, regardless of the way the citizenship was acquired and whether that it is the father or the mother;

(b) By place of birth — any person born on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, unless acquiring other citizenship by virtue of origin;

(c) Under naturalization, when meeting the conditions the law provides for and under the discretion of the Citizenship Council to the Ministry of Justice.

133. The two basic ways for Bulgarian citizenship acquirement (by virtue of origin and by place of birth) are regulated by imperative regulations, which pursue their action immediately under the Constitution. These two ways for Bulgarian citizenship acquirement are also in accordance with Article 6, paragraph 1, item A and respectively Article 6, paragraph 2, item A of the European Convention on Nationality and the Act on Ratification of the European Convention on Nationality (promulgated in the State Gazette No. 102 of 20 December 2005).

134. According to Article 8 of the BCA “Bulgarian citizen by virtue of origin shall be every person that has at least one parent with Bulgarian citizenship”. Children whose mother is a Bulgarian citizen and who reside abroad are Bulgarian citizens by law.

135. The acquirement of Bulgarian citizenship by naturalization is also based on the principle of equality: for a child under the age of 14, the application should be submitted by both parents, whereas for persons between 14 and 18 years of age the application should be signed by both parents. In case of disagreement between the parents the court’s ruling is applicable.

136. Under the Constitution, Bulgarian citizens by virtue of birth can not be deprived of citizenship (Article 25, paragraph 3). The regulation is imperative. The hypotheses for giving up of Bulgarian citizenship are based on the principle of equality and on the person’s free choice without any discrimination whatsoever.

137. The Bulgarian Citizenship Act also adopts the principle that the citizenship right of any of the spouses shall not be changed ex officio in cases of marrying or dissolving a marriage with a foreign citizen, as well as in the cases of a change in the citizenship of one of the spouses (Article 5 of the Bulgarian Citizenship Act). This democratic regulation is in correspondence with the international conventions the Republic of Bulgaria is a party to. The Constitution provides for dual citizenship. This legal status is further developed in Article 3 of the Bulgarian Citizenship Act. Thus a child having parents with different citizenship is entitled to acquire the citizenship of both parents, according to the Bulgarian legislation, provided that the foreign legislation regulating the citizenship of one of the parents allows it.

138. Adoption also does not change the citizenship of the adopted child (Article 6 of the Bulgarian Citizenship Act) and this norm has a direct relation to the hypotheses of international adoption. The principle of free choice of citizenship is established regardless of the gender.

139. Children are entitled to travel abroad with their own passports, and in case they travel only with one of the parents a notary certified agreement by the other parent is required. In case of disagreement between parents, the disputes between them shall be settled by the court.

140. Bulgarian women have the right to obtain identity documents, including international passports and to travel independently abroad whenever they wish without the need to have the consent of anybody.

Article 10

141. The education policy and practice of the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the effective statutory framework regulating access to education and qualification, do not allow gender discrimination in the Bulgarian educational system.

142. According to Article 4, paragraph 2, of the Public Education Act, no limitations or privileges are permitted on grounds of race, nationality, gender, ethnic or social origin, religion and social status. One of the main goals of the education policy of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (MEYS) is to provide equal access to quality education for all Bulgarian pupils. Ordinance No. 11 on the Admission of Pupils to State and Municipal Schools establishes the terms and procedure for the admission of pupils to state and municipal schools, according to their wish. No gender quotas are admissible in the admission of pupils to the schools.

143. Almost 100 per cent of girls are enrolled in the first grade of primary school. As of 2009, preschool education of children before admission to primary school became compulsory for all children. At present 73.8 per cent of children aged 3 to 6 attend kindergartens, whereas the gender ratio is almost 50:50.

144. According to national statistics, the share of girls in general school enrolment was about 50.6 per cent for the period 2002-2008, while in all types of secondary schools it was 48 per cent for the same period.

145. Girls prevail in arts schools, where their share reached 64 per cent for the same period. At the same time, their share increased notably in the vocational colleges as well: from 47 per cent to 54 per cent.

146. The biggest share of pupils — 3.6 per cent of the total in the school year 2007/2008 — left school after finishing their basic education (8th grade), most often for “family reasons”. The Government is taking steps to counteract early school leaving through tailored programmes such as the National Programme for Fuller Coverage of Pupils of Compulsory School Age, the Programme for Provision of Additional Training for Pupils to Improve the Level of General Educational Attainment, etc.

147. The Vocational Education and Training Act ensures all citizens the right to vocational education and training in accordance with their personal interests and capacities. The vocational education system provides training by occupation from a List of Occupations for Vocational Education and Training. The vocational school network is evenly distributed across the territory of the whole country. It provides access to vocational education and training for all, including to pupils from outlying and small settlements, as well as to pupils with special educational needs.

148. The total enrolment in vocational schools is 167,780, of whom 102,280 are men and 66,500 are women. During the last school year (2009/2010), 40,045 pupils were admitted to vocational schools, of whom 23,963 men and 16,082 women. The prevalence of men is due to the orientation of men to secondary vocational education and technical occupations in transport, mechanical engineering, construction, crop husbandry and animal husbandry, electrical engineering and electronics, etc. Women prevail in occupations in the area of business management and administration, light industry, tourism, social services, etc.

149. While pursuing secondary education, pupils have the opportunity to be actively involved in extracurricular activities financed mainly on a project basis by the executive budget and other sources. These activities focus mostly on sports and the arts.

150. School games in nine different sports are organized annually (basketball, volleyball, handball, track-and-field athletics, table tennis, badminton, chess, swimming, football), in which the girls-to-boys ratio in the senior age group was 45:55 for 2008 and 40:60 for 2009. The lower participation of girls was due above all to the characteristics of their age group (15-18 years).

151. The Government encourages gifted pupils, providing them with special scholarships under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science Programme for Protection of Children of Manifest Talent. Since 2005 the share of girls who receive scholarships under this Programme has increased from 23 per cent in 2005 to 52 per cent.

152. At the same time, it should be noticed that it is necessary to develop and strengthen further the programmes and the teaching methods and forms in order to enhance pupils' knowledge in the area of sexual and reproductive health. The number of school-aged girls (under 19) who give birth has tended to increase, albeit very slightly. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Science, jointly with the Bulgarian Society of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and the Bulgarian Family Planning Association, has developed teaching aids on early birth risk for pupils, which are already used in most of the schools in the country.

153. With regard to teachers, Bulgaria has similar characteristics as many other countries — the teaching profession is strongly feminized. The share of women teachers in kindergartens is almost 99 per cent, and 86 per cent of teachers of the 1st to the 12th grade in all types of schools are women. At the same time, about one third of the total number of school principals are men.

154. The gender ratio of teachers in vocational schools is: 28 per cent men to 72 per cent women. According to the MEYS, the larger number of female teachers in the system of secondary vocational education in the last 10-15 years, is due to the fact that most men who graduate opt for jobs in private business rather than in education.

155. Article 4 of the Higher Education Act states that privileges and limitations related to age, race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, social origin, political views and religion are not allowed in higher education.

156. According to Article 9, paragraph 3, item 6 of the Higher Education Act, the Council of Ministers annually approves the number of students enrolled in public higher-education schools by professional trends and educational degrees. The Council also approves the number of students in the private higher-education schools, the number of doctoral students enrolled in the higher-education schools, the Bulgarian Academy of Science, the National Centre for Agrarian Sciences and other scientific organizations.

157. The allocation of gender quotas approved by the Council of Ministers is justified by the academic autonomy of the higher-education schools and by the necessity of a particular ratio between women and men in specific fields of education, considering their subsequent career development and the needs of the

country (for example, the need to maintain a quota for men in the humanities in order to encourage them to become teachers).

158. According to Article 21, paragraph 1, Item 3 of the Higher Education Act, higher-education schools have discretion to determine the research and teaching staff, the conditions for admission and the forms of instruction of students, doctoral students, and post-graduate students.

159. The quota principle, however, is not applied in the Fine Arts higher-education schools. In the Theatre Academies the gender balance is 50-50, thus achieving gender equality when students are cast in theatre stagings during their study.

160. In the period 2002-2008 the share of women students increased from 52.8 per cent to 55.6 per cent. They are mostly represented in the following areas of education: teacher training and pedagogical sciences (83.9 per cent in 2008); social work (85.1 per cent in 2008) and journalism, mass communication and information (77.4 per cent in 2008) — at the professional bachelor degree level. The situation is quite similar for the degrees of bachelor and master, where the gender balance is 71.3 per cent, 74 per cent and 73.6 per cent, respectively, in favour of women.

161. Men instructors in higher education prevail by 4 per cent to 7 per cent, unlike teachers in secondary education. During the period 2002-2008, the representation of women instructors increased from 42.6 per cent to 46.2 per cent. The number of women professors doubled during the same period, but remained under 25 per cent of their total number. This could be explained by the rather outdated statutory framework, held over from the totalitarian period. This framework long hindered women's career development in science, requiring them to earn a doctoral degree before attaining the age of 35. The reform of the statutory framework of science had a favourable impact on women, with the number of research associates nearly trebling for the relevant period.

162. With regard to the participation of women in the research and development activities, it can be noted that the gender balance in this sector is almost 50:50 for the period 2002-2008.

163. A Master's degree programme in Gender Studies is available to the students at the Gender Studies Centre with the Faculty of Philosophy of the St Kliment Ohridski University of Sofia. This is the only programme of its kind in the country; other higher-education schools offer separate courses in the subject within the degree programmes in Sociology, Culturology, Interdisciplinary Research, etc.

Article 11

164. Bulgaria has ample experience in respect of gender equality policies, and the country has achieved comparatively high levels of women's economic activity and employment. In recent years and especially since the start of the processes of integration with the European Union, Bulgaria has improved its national legislation, transposing the EU directives on equal treatment of women and men in employment and occupation and in social security, and created institutions and policies for application of the gender principle and for gender equality.

165. The country has achieved significant progress regarding the development of active labour market policies with a gender dimension and regarding specific

policies for equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market and in society. Public awareness and sensitivity in this area have increased significantly, largely thanks to the work of many non-governmental organizations on women's issues and gender equality, mostly established after the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.

166. The country's legislation is consistent with and subordinate to the international conventions to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party: International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 122 concerning Employment Policy, 1964; ILO Convention No. 111 concerning Discrimination in Respect of Employment and Occupation, 1958; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and others; the European Community directives on the application of the principle of gender equality and equal treatment of women and men in employment and occupation and in social life, etc.

167. There are number of anti-discriminatory regulations in Bulgarian legislation, described under Article 1 above.

168. During the past 10 years, significant improvements have been made in labour and social legislation, intended to prevent labour discrimination. Of great importance are the provisions of the Act to Amend and Supplement the Labour Code, drafted with the active participation of the social partners, including trade union experts, regarding the provisions prohibiting direct and indirect discrimination on a number of grounds³ as well as in relation to the right to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value for women and men.

169. Bulgarian constitutional, labour and criminal legislation contain important regulations guaranteeing the right to work and labour freedom and protection. The State is obliged to create conditions for the exercise of this right, including to persons with physical and mental disabilities (with completely or partially preserved capacity to work). The latter finds expression in other specific laws (for example, in the Protection, Rehabilitation and Social Integration of Disabled Persons Act, the Integration of Persons with Disabilities Act of 2005), secondary legislation, particular programmes and measures of the executive authorities. They most often give employers economic incentives to hire persons who for one reason or another have difficulties finding work, or are not competitive enough on the labour market, including because of gender. Employers must comply with the requirements of the laws and other statutory instruments, use when possible and if they wish the economic incentives provided, and in the management of their personnel ensure observance of the basic rights of factory and office workers, and not to allow any discrimination at work, to provide the necessary conditions for work, rest and leave.

170. Women enjoy any and all rights established in general for workers. At the same time, there are additional rights established for them, as well as more rigorous requirements to working conditions to take into account the anatomical and physiological specificities of the female organism and the position of the woman as a future mother or a mother of young children. These additional rules fall into two categories:

³ Together with the grounds listed in Article 6 of the Constitution, skin colour, age and marital status were added as well. For the first time the term "indirect discrimination" was introduced in Bulgarian labour legislation.

(a) Regarding the work of all women — concerning: prohibition of arduous work or work harmful to women’s health and maternal functions; furnishing and maintenance of rooms for women’s personal hygiene; establishment of lower threshold levels of physical load compared with those for men;

(b) Regarding the work of female workers who are mothers: furnishing and maintenance of rooms for rest of pregnant women; occupational rehabilitation of pregnant and breastfeeding women who perform work inappropriate for their condition; prohibition of secondment of pregnant female workers and female workers with children under 3 years of age without their consent; pregnancy, childbirth and child care leaves (Articles 163-168 of the Labour Code); opportunity for home work while keeping the employment relationship of female workers who are mothers of children up to 6 years of age; special advance protection against dismissal of pregnant female workers and female workers with children under 3 years of age (Article 333, Paragraph 1 of the Labour Code).

171. Bulgarian legislation sets certain requirements for the occupation of specific positions and exercise of certain occupations which are not considered discriminatory (within the meaning of ILO Convention No. 111). These cases, too, prohibit differences, exceptions and preferences on grounds of gender, race, colour, religion, national origin. It is about the prohibition of certain types of jobs for women (Article 307 of the Labour Code). The prohibition covers work which is arduous or harmful to the health or the maternal functions of the woman. This list is established by an act of government (Ordinance). In such cases, the prohibition is regarded as a means to protect women’s life and health and not an exception (in the sense of discrimination) on grounds of gender. Such understanding has been adopted and established both in the practice in Bulgaria and in the practice of the International Labour Organization (Convention No. 45 concerning the Employment of Women on Underground Work in Mines of All Kinds, 1935).

172. The system of pregnancy, childbirth and child care leaves is regulated in the Labour Code. Maternity leaves count as length of employment service. Eligibility for maternity leave is limited to workers under an employment relationship. Only the time equal to the pregnancy, childbirth and child care leave counts as length of employment service for non-working women.

173. As mentioned above, the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria prohibits any abridgement of rights, or creation of privileges based on race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, origin, religion, education, persuasions, political affiliation, personal or social status or property status (Article 64, paragraph 2); all citizens and legal persons enjoy equal legal conditions for economic activity (Article 19, paragraph 2); everyone is free to choose their religion and to have religious or atheistic opinions (Article 37, paragraph 1); spouses have equal rights and obligations in matrimony (Article 46); children born out of wedlock enjoy equal rights with those born in wedlock (Article 47, paragraph 3); citizens have the right to work, to pay commensurate with the work performed and to a free choice of an occupation and a place of work (Article 48).

174. The Labour Code includes provisions prohibiting discrimination in the area of employment relationships, and in particular: prohibition of direct or indirect discrimination on grounds of nationality, origin, gender, race, skin colour, age, political and religious convictions, affiliation to particular trade unions, marital, social and property status and disability when citizens exercise their labour rights

and duties (Article 8, paragraph 3); women and men are entitled to equal pay for equal work or work of equal value (Article 243). The Code furthermore provides a legal definition of the term “indirect discrimination” (§ 1, Item 7 of the Supplementary Provisions) and specifies that differences or prerequisites based on qualification requirements for performance of particular work do not constitute discrimination, and provides for special protection of certain factory and office workers (underage, pregnant and mothers of young children, people with disabilities, occupational rehabilitees, others), established by statutory instruments.

175. The Civil Servants Act expressly provides that upon entry into civil service discrimination, privileges or restrictions based on race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, origin, religion, membership in political, trade unions and other public organizations or movements, personal, social or property status are prohibited (Article 7, paragraph 4).

176. The Employment Promotion Act expressly prohibits direct or indirect discrimination based on gender, nationality, race, skin colour, age (Article 2); provides an opportunity for any Bulgarian citizen regardless of his or her nationality, gender, age to register as unemployed (Article 18).

177. The Consumer Protection and Rules of Trade Act defines as “unfair” any advertising which contains elements of discrimination regarding gender, race, religion, nationality, political convictions, age, physical or mental abilities (Article 34, item 1).

178. The Social Assistance Act prohibits discrimination (Article 3), excluding any direct or indirect discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, skin colour, ethnic identity, religion or faith, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status or origin, membership of trade unions and other public organizations and movements in the implementation of social assistance.

179. The Radio and Television Act prohibits the broadcasting of commercials based on national, political, ethnical, religious, racial, sexual or any other form of discrimination (Article 76, Paragraph 2), and any violation of the prohibition on broadcasting discrimination-motivated commercials is punishable by a pecuniary penalty of BGN 2,000 to 15,000 (Article 126). The pecuniary penalty is doubled for a repeated violation.

180. In pursuance of Article 7, paragraph 1, item 2 of the Protection against Discrimination Act, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy adopted Ordinance No. 4 of 30 March 2004 on the Types of Occupations or Activities in which, by Reason of their Nature or of the Context in which they are Carried Out, Gender Is a Genuine and Determining Occupational Requirement, and the Minister of Defence jointly with the Minister of Labour and Social Policy issued Ordinance No. 14 of 18 October 2005 on the Activities upon Performance of Voluntary Military Service in the Armed Forces in which, by reason of their Nature or of the Context in which they are Carried out, Gender Is a Genuine and Determining Occupational Requirement.

181. The Employment Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2004-2010) and its updated version (2008-2015) seek to contain and reduce the cases of discrimination on grounds of gender, expand the social inclusion of the risk groups on the labour market, especially of particular groups of women, including ensuring access to the labour market and productive employment. Achieving gender equality is one of the

main directions of the national Employment Strategy. It is consistent with the European Employment Strategy and it adopts national strategic objectives and policies for equal opportunities of both genders in employment. The development and implementation of annual national employment plans is intended to facilitate the achievement of the goals of the national Employment Strategy, support an increase in employment and reduction in unemployment in general and in particular of women and men. Each of these plans includes a number of particular programmes with named participants and contractors, resources and arrangements.

182. The guidelines for achieving equal opportunities for women and men in the labour market mainly include policies for: narrowing the differences between the employment and unemployment rate of women and men through an increase in women's employment; achievement of balanced representation of women and men in all sectors; reducing the pay differentials between women and men; care of all dependents and use of different schemes for granting childcare leaves.

183. The achievement of women and men's equal opportunities for access to the labour market passes through achieving equality for all population groups. The measures aimed at elimination of the inequality of particular population groups in the labour market on grounds of gender, age, health, ethnicity or other grounds fall into two basic groups of measures: general and specific. The general measures include the creation of a legislative, institutional and resource framework guaranteeing equal opportunities to particular social groups. These measures include: information provision; institutional arrangements and assessment of the impact of a certain policy on the status of the members of both genders (gender mainstreaming).

184. The policy for achieving equal opportunities for men and women within the broad interpretation of the Strategy includes the policies and particular plans, programmes and activities in all other areas, including the economy, social policy, employment and reducing unemployment, among others.

185. Integrating the gender principle in employment policies is an indisputable achievement in Bulgaria, both in the adopted Employment Strategy and in the annual national employment plans. They all have ensured a sustained focus on the matter at the national level. Such an approach, as well as the training sessions held, undoubtedly lead to a change in decision-makers' mentality, to changes in the administrative practice, and to changes in work with the social partners, the media, and the public.

186. The changes in the level of economic activity, employment and unemployment, as well as the reduction of the differences between these rates for women and men, come as a result of economic development, as well as of the pursuit of general and specific employment policies, limiting discrimination and social exclusion from the labour markets and employment. The policies for reducing the differences in the levels of economic activity, employment and unemployment between women and men in recent years have been implemented through development of special programmes for an increase of employment and reduction of unemployment of women belonging to particular social groups (the elderly, single mothers, etc.).

187. Women's role in the labour market in Bulgaria is significant and is measured by their share in the economically active population in employment and by their

participation in all sectors and branches of the national economy. Currently women represent 45 per cent of the officially employed people in the country⁴ and in practice they are involved in all economic activities and branches. Women's employment rate in the country in the 15-64 age group at the end of 2008 came closer to the target set for women's average employment rate in the EU in the Lisbon Strategy: 60 per cent in 2010.

188. The difference in the level of economic activity and employment between women and men in comparison to many states, including in the EU, is not as large but shows a stable trend (9-12 points) regardless of the increase in the total rate of the country's economic activity and employment. In 2009, the economic activity rate in the most economically active age (15-64) of women was 62.8 per cent, compared to men's 72.8 per cent, and the employment rate was 69.2 per cent and 59.6 per cent,⁵ respectively. To a certain extent the differences are due to the existing difference in the age at which members at each gender acquire entitlement to pension (from approximately 5 years to 3 years in 2009).

189. In recent years the unemployment rate has decreased substantially for both genders and in the fourth quarter of 2008 the difference between the genders was insignificant (6.2 per cent for women and 6.5 per cent for men).

190. The age at which, under effective national legislation, women acquire entitlement to retire is a determining factor of the lower female employment after age 55, and in particular the ongoing pension reform which during this period reduced the difference in the retirement age between the genders, albeit insignificantly, and increased more substantially the age at which women acquire entitlement to pension.

191. Better educated and vocationally trained women are more economically active, better motivated to work, and demonstrate higher activity in the labour market. They also tend to be involved at a very high level of remunerative employment. That is especially valid for women with higher education. Education level is not only an important factor of economic activity and employment, but also a significant factor of gender differentiation. With the increase of the education level, the difference in the employment rate between women and men is decreasing, and women with higher education often have even a higher employment rate than men. In the period since 2003, the employment rate peaked for women with higher education (73.6 per cent for the first quarter of 2007, compared to men's 71.7 per cent and to a country total of 52.4 per cent). For the whole period the difference in the employment rate by gender for persons with higher education during most of the years was less than 1 percentage point, and as an exception it reached 3.3 per cent, i.e. the employment rate was practically equal.

192. Surveys categorically confirm that the higher education level of women leads to better security both regarding the type of job contract and regarding job security and career development. Education is a determining factor to a much greater extent for women than for men. Mostly women's better education predetermines their higher employment and security in the sphere of remunerative work.

⁴ Calculations are made on the basis of data of the NSI for a wide dynamic range.

⁵ Source: National Statistical Institute: "Employment and Unemployment", Sofia, 2009.

193. The main factor of reducing gender discrepancies in employment is the expansion of women's participation in the labour market, for which the stable economic growth until 2008, as well as the implementation of adequate policies having a direct and indirect impact in this sphere, take most of the credit.

194. Specific measures and projects for sensitizing Bulgarian society to the problems of equality and for reconciling family and professional life are implemented within the framework of the implementation of the National Action Plan for Employment, which the government has been adopting annually over the last eight years. They are directed towards raising the awareness of the public and employers of the principles of gender equality aimed at elimination of the barriers to labour realization. Other implemented projects intend to promote the participation in the labour market of groups which incur a risk of impeded access to employment or of keeping their jobs (such as the programmes entitled "Encouragement of Women's Independent Economic Activity for Provision of Child Care Services" and "Back to Work").

195. The established policies and practices have been followed up in recent years. 2005 saw the start of the implementation of the first National Action Plan for Promotion of Gender Equality, whose measures are directed towards increasing the economic activity (start-ups) of women and creation of conditions for achievement of equal opportunities for access to the labour market and remunerative employment. The National Employment Agency implemented projects for raising women's economic activity in the labour market, such as: "Family Centers for Children" project, National Programme "Support for Motherhood", "Assistants for People with Disabilities" Programme, National Programme "Support for Retirement". An opportunity is provided for the enrolment of women of risk groups in the labour market (young women, parents taking care of disabled children, women aged over 50) in courses for professional qualification and retraining, in order to enhance their employability, including self-employability.

196. Women remain concentrated in a narrow group of activities, especially in education and the health sector, the tailoring industry, where the pay rate is lower than the country average. Men tend to work in the expanding industrial activities of the manufacturing industry and construction, where relatively more jobs and occupations are created and the pay rate is higher. Women without higher education mostly work in activities requiring lower skills, that are paid less and that usually provide a more limited access to training and qualification.⁶

197. The effective legislation provides for equal pay for equal work or work of equal value, which presupposes that there should be no difference by gender in the remuneration received for work places (functions or positions) which require work which is equal in complexity and responsibilities at one and the same level of education and professional qualification and performance. The pay systems, rules for formation and distribution of the wage bill, including supplementary payments and incentives (bonuses), which exist countrywide and at particular organizations, do not provide for any difference in the pay based on gender. The same applies to collective agreements and individual employment contracts.

198. The differences in the unemployment rate between women and men according to official statistics are insignificant, even though this difference is sensitive in

⁶ "Structure of Wages", National Statistical Institute, Sofia, 2004, 2008.

terms of women's age, family status and education. On the whole, women are affected by a higher unemployment rate than men, but this difference is most significant for women with lower education, and for divorced and single mothers.⁷ The fact that this group cares for the children and the family is presumably the probable reason for difficulties in hiring or in finding work. The low level of countrywide distribution of flexible employment schemes, the lack of places in the child day-care facilities in the large cities and others also have an effect. Due to the same reasons, women take up a larger share than men in the group of the inactive persons, who have temporarily withdrawn from the labour market.

199. The policy for reconciliation of professional and family life implemented by the State promotes the development of flexible forms of employment, as well as services for child care or care of dependent family members.

200. According to the effective national legislation, fathers are also eligible to use child care leaves, but the social practice is still very different. The so-called "parental" leave was introduced as well. The principal changes adopted on 17 December 2008 and effective as from 1 January 2009 find expression in the following: lengthening from 315 to 410 days (of which 45 days before the confinement) of the period during which the pregnancy and child birth benefit is payable; providing an opportunity for the father, if socially insured against general sickness and maternity, to use, in lieu of the mother, the remainder of the leave up to 410 calendar days after the child is 6 months old and receive a cash benefit during that time; the vesting period covered by social insurance contributions required for the entitlement and for calculation of the amount of the cash benefit for pregnancy and childbirth, was increased from 6 to 12 months.

201. With a view to promoting equality regarding the social insurance rights of women and men in taking parental care, incentives were introduced for the socially insured fathers to become more active involved in parental commitments, as well as to improve the reconciliation of professional and family life for socially insured fathers and mothers. As from 1 January 2009 fathers who are socially insured against general sickness and maternity are entitled to use a 15-day leave calculated from the discharge of the child from the maternity hospital and to a benefit from Public Social Insurance upon childbirth. A strengthening of the father's responsibility to take care of the child right after his or her birth is thus encouraged. An important step towards overcoming gender stereotypes was made by this reform. The same effect is achieved by the provision extending the entitlement to leave and benefit to a father who is not a spouse but a de facto co-habitee with the mother in the same household. The object of the care is the child, and it is irrelevant whether it is born to a married couple or to a couple of de facto co-habitees.

202. In 2009 the Protection against Discrimination Act was amended, introducing the right of a woman who is on pregnancy, childbirth and child adoption leave or on a child-care leave until the child is 2 years old, to assume the same position as the one prior to the leave or another equivalent position after returning from the leave within time limits and on terms which are not less favourable for her and to benefit from any improvement of the working conditions to which she would have been entitled during her absence (which achieves application of the principles of equal

⁷ "Employment and Unemployment," NSI, published periodically.

opportunities and equal treatment of women and men). The same applies to women who submit to in vitro fertilization procedures.

203. The same entitlement is extended to a parent when on a paternity and/or adoption leave and a child-care leave until the child is 2 years old. Following expiration of the leave, the parent is entitled to return to his job or to an equivalent position under terms and according to a procedure which are not less favourable for him and to benefit from any improvement of the working conditions to which he would have been entitled during his absence.

204. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, together with the National Employment Agency, the Social Security Agency and State Agency for Child Protection, have adopted measures for promotion of flexible employment forms for parents raising young children or taking care of a dependent family member. The scope of the effective programmes “Personal Assistant” and “Social Assistant”, the “Social Services Against New Employment (SANE)” Project and the “Family Centers for Children” Project was amplified and expanded, so as to facilitate women’s return to and inclusion in remunerative employment and, at the same time, reduce unemployment among certain groups of women.

205. The high and steady economic growth for the period 2000-2008, the increased employment and significantly decreased unemployment (from 19 per cent at the end of the 1990s to below 6 per cent at the end of 2008), along with the reforms implemented in the social sphere and the decisions adopted to increase pensions — in general and more substantially for certain groups, have contributed to a reduction of the scope and level of poverty countrywide, and to a reduction of social exclusions.

206. Notwithstanding the achievements, the differences in the income and poverty between women and men and especially for particular groups of them remain significant. They are such both for the employed persons and for the pensioners, and for elderly people. These differences are largely attributable to present or previous employment, to the levels of wages received for the work performed. On a country average, the monthly wages received by women in October 2006 was 22.8 per cent lower than men’s.⁸ The lower level of wages predetermines the lower levels of the pensions received by women as well. The still lower women’s retirement age compared to men’s due to a shorter length of employment service also contributes to the higher level of poverty among women.

Article 12

207. The Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria proclaims the right of women and men to health insurance guaranteeing them affordable medical care and the right to free use of medical services under terms and according to a procedure established by a law (Article 52, paragraph 1). Health care is financed by the state budget, by employers, by personal or collective insurance contributions and from other resources (Article 52, paragraph 2).

208. A reform in the health-care system is in progress in Bulgaria. A completely new legislation, as well as a number of strategic documents and ethical rules for the

⁸ Source: “Structure of Wages 2006”, National Statistical Institute, Sofia, 2004.

medical professions, have been adopted in recent years. The Health Act (2004) defines the protection of citizens' health as a national priority through the application of a range of principles, including the principles of equality in use of health services. The Act lists patients' rights, including a right to affordable medical care (Article 81, paragraph 1); a right to equal treatment regardless of gender, sexual orientation and other grounds (Article 85), accessible and quality health care; the right to a second medical opinion regarding the diagnosis, treatment and prognosis of the disease; protection of the concerning the health status, (Article 86); a right to informed consent (Article 87) and others.

209. The Health Insurance Act (1998) introduced health insurance in the non-hospital care system, and in 2001 was extended to cover the hospital sector as well. The National Health Insurance Fund is the only institution implementing compulsory health insurance in Bulgaria. Citizens may also take out supplementary insurance with private health insurance funds. The compulsory contributions are calculated as a percentage of the wage and are shared equally between employer and employee (3 per cent from each). Self-employed persons pay their health insurance contributions by themselves, while the contributions for pensioners, children under 18, students and persons in social care establishments are paid by the State or by the municipalities. All Bulgarian citizens have compulsory insurance, covering a package of health services, guaranteed by the budget of the National Health Insurance Fund.

210. The system of general practitioners has been introduced in non-hospital care. General practitioners are principal providers of primary medical services and provide health services to the population in the form of individual or group practices.

211. With the introduction of the compulsory health insurance model and the establishment of the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF), until 2005 the financing of health care was shared between the NHIF and the executive budget with a steadily increasing share of the Fund. The financing of the health-care system in Bulgaria at present is provided mainly by public sources and the health insurance contribution rate is relatively low (6 per cent). The state budget expenditure on health care is about 4 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) annually (4.2 per cent for 2009), and the tendency is to reaffirm and to improve the transition from budget financing to financing according to a health insurance principle. For improvement of the financing of the health-care system, it is planned to enhance the compliance rate of health insurance contributions, to develop voluntary health insurance, to increase public spending on health care etc.

212. The government recognizes the pressing need of improving health care in Bulgaria. The overall updating of the health policy is subject both of the National Health Strategy (2008-2013) and of the policies in other sectors, formulated in the following strategic documents:

- National Demographic Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2006-2020)
- Health Strategy for Disadvantaged Members of Ethnic Minorities⁹
- National Programme for Control of Osteoporosis (2006-2016)

⁹ As part of the implementation of the National Action Plan under the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015.

- National Programme for Prevention, Treatment and Rehabilitation of Drug Addictions in the Republic of Bulgaria (2001-2005)
- National Programme for Prevention of Hereditary Diseases, Diatheses and Congenital Anomalies (2000-2005)
- National Anti-Drug Strategy (2003-2008)
- National Strategy for Children (2008-2018)
- National Report of the Republic of Bulgaria on the strategies for social protection and social inclusion (2008-2010)
- Mental Health Policy of the Republic of Bulgaria (2004-2012)
- National Action Plan for Implementation of the Mental Health Policy (2006-2012), etc.

213. Women's access to health care is guaranteed through compulsory health insurance and the choice of a general practitioner. Health-insured women have access to a basic package of health services, guaranteed by the budget of the National Health Insurance Fund, which consists of: disease prevention and early detection procedures performed by doctors and dentists; non-hospital and hospital medical care for clinical diagnostics and treatment vis-à-vis a disease under clinical pathway; medical rehabilitation; emergency medical care; medical care in pregnancy, childbirth and maternity; therapeutic abortions and abortions to terminate pregnancy resulting from rape; dental and dental mechanics care; home treatment medic care; prescription and dispensation of medicines licensed for use, provided for home treatment within the territory of the country, etc. As a rule, the package covers rudimentary examinations and tests, and the patient pays extra for the more sophisticated ones. Access to health care is problematic when health insurance contributions are not paid or are paid irregularly, which may be a result of a number of circumstances: continued unemployment, work in the gray sector without paying health insurance contributions, lack of information, etc. Uninsured women have access to the following state-guaranteed emergency medical care financed by the executive budget: obstetric care for uninsured women regardless of the manner of delivery; in-patient psychiatric care; provision of blood and blood products; transplantation of organs, tissues and cells; obligatory treatment and/or obligatory isolation; expert examination for extent of disability and permanent loss of working capacity; payment for treatment and medicines for diseases according to a procedure established by the Minister of Health; provision of medical transportation.

214. The quality of health care for women is guaranteed by the following instruments: medical standards (25 standards were approved by the Minister of Health until 2009), clinical pathways, diagnostic-therapeutic protocols and health-care charts, medical-treatment facilities' accreditation. The standards approved by the Minister of Health in the following areas are expressly relevant to the quality of medical care for women: Obstetrics and Gynaecology (2008), Neonatology (2003), and Assisted Reproduction (2007).

215. The total registered morbidity rate in recent years remains as high as around 13 per cent (13.36 per cent in 2002). This morbidity is due to a disrupted access to health services and a poor quality of health care, as well as to an unhealthy lifestyle.

216. The annual reference publication of the NSI and the National Center of Health Informatics with the Ministry of Health lists the following more significant factors in this respect: unbalanced food intake, use of tobacco products, decreasing physical activity, and increasing number of underage alcohol consumers. Underweight is widespread in certain population groups, especially among young women aged 19-30 (16.8 per cent) and girls aged 10-14 (9.4 per cent).¹⁰ At the same time, overweight and obesity are widespread both among adults and among the children, which is mostly due to unhealthy food intake and lack of exercise. Overweight is a serious problem for children, but shows a positive downward trend, especially for girls. Consumption of tobacco products is increasing. During the last decade the share of regular smokers has increased, especially among women and young people. There are about 3 million smokers in Bulgaria, and more than two thirds of the children are exposed to second-hand smoking. Expert assessments show that about 280,000-300,000 Bulgarians are problem users of alcohol. Alcohol consumption among adolescents is expanding, as the initiation has dropped to 12.5 years. In order to prevent alcohol and tobacco use among children, some legislative measures have been taken, such as a ban on selling such products to persons aged under 18, including criminalization of the sale of alcohol (Article 193 of the Penal Code).

217. The main causes of women morbidity are: diseases of the circulatory system; neoplasms, including malignant tumours; diseases of the respiratory system; diseases of the digestive system, and endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases and immunity disorders. With the exception of endocrine, nutritional and metabolic diseases and immunity disorders, the incidence among women is lower on the whole than among men.

218. The number of registered cases of active tuberculosis is increasing (from 106 per 100,000 persons in 1990 to 145 per 100,000 persons for 2004). Especially alarming is the upward tendency of this indicator among children under 17. The prevalence and incidence of malignant neoplasms among women is also increasing (from 297 per 100,000 women in 2000 to 383 per 100,000 women in 2007). The incidence of mental diseases rose from 2,656.7 per 100,000 in 1990 to 2,892.1 per 100,000 in 2004. For 2007 the indicator showed a lower value: 2,255.0 per 100,000.

219. Women's mortality rate is lower than men's. The gender gap is especially wide for deaths as a result of external causes (accidents, incidents), where men's mortality rate is several times higher than women's.

220. The maternal mortality rate in Bulgaria is steadily decreasing. In 2006-2007 it levelled out at 12-11.9 per 100,000 women.

221. For achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in Bulgaria, the following targets have been formulated under MDG 5: Target A. Considerable reduction of maternal mortality with a single indicator: Maternal mortality (women deceased during pregnancy and childbirth per 100,000 live births) and Target B. Considerable improvement of health-care services for pregnant women, with the following indicators: (a) Abortions (per 1,000 women); (b) Pregnant women under medical monitoring (until the third month of pregnancy) (per cent); (c) Proportion of births assisted by qualified medical personnel (per cent).

¹⁰ National Study, 2004.

222. With regard to MDG 5, Bulgaria has good achievements with low maternal mortality and exceedingly rare out-of-hospital births. The abortion rate is within acceptable limits.

223. There is room for improvement in the indicators of the proportion of pregnant women under medical monitoring (89.4 per cent in 1990, 76.1 per cent in 2003, and 64.5 per cent in 2006), premature birth rates, stillbirth rates, and prenatal infant mortality. That is why the target set for 2015 is to recover the proportion of pregnant women under medical monitoring to its level of 1990.

224. An annex to a special Ordinance of the Ministry of Health (Ordinance No. 39 on Preventive Examination and Outpatient Monitoring) provides for preventive examinations of pregnant women. The NHIF also has a “Maternal Health Care” Programme. The effective clinical pathways for pregnancy and childbirth give doctors a logarithm for action. At the same time, there is an aspiration to encourage the training of specialists in obstetrics and gynaecology and general practitioners. The adoption of an amendment to Article 82 of the Health Act is a major achievement because it guarantees free examinations and tests of pregnant women without health insurance (most maternal deaths occur among non-monitored minority and socially disadvantaged groups). For that reason, the Ministry of Health implements a policy of free preventive examinations of the Roma through mobile outreach clinics in outlying and inaccessible areas. The Ministry of Health takes into consideration the difficulties and in 2010 the measures are subject to public discussion.

225. After 1997, when it reached its lowest value since 1964, 7.7 per cent, the birth rate has been edging up and has approximated 9 per cent over the last ten years. Among the newborns in the last ten years, boys outnumber girls.¹¹ The mean age of women at childbearing and at first birth slowly increases as well. Births are shifting from the 20-24 to the 25-29 age group of mothers. While this tendency is tangible in urban areas, in rural areas the most fertile age is still 20-24. In rural areas most women still tend to give birth in the 15-19 age interval.

226. Recent years have seen an improvement in the sexual culture of the population regarding the risks to reproductive health associated with sex, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and avoidance of unwanted pregnancy. According to the national representative population survey, modern contraceptives and mostly condoms are used by young people and better educated persons: persons with primary education using contraceptives are 33.2 per cent; those with lower than secondary or basic education, 36.4 per cent; those with completed secondary education, 50.9 per cent; and those with tertiary education, 54.7 per cent. However, the studies still indicate that less than half of the population is aware of the modern methods of contraception and applies them conscientiously. The approach to improving the culture in the area of sexuality and reproductive health is not systematic, but predominantly relies on programmes provided by non-governmental organizations (Bulgarian Family Planning and Sexual Health Association), mostly with international financing (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP) and of limited duration, which are not sufficient to meet the needs in that area. Recent studies found that the first sexual contacts occur at an increasingly lower age.¹²

¹¹ See www.nsi.bg/Population/Population.htm.

¹² Kotzeva, T., D. Kostova (2003), *Factors and tendencies in the sexual life debut of young people in Bulgaria*, Naselenie, issue 1-2, page 68-85.

Sexual education of teenagers is not an element of pupils' general health education (see Article 10, above).

227. The Health Act provides for a wide access of pregnant women and mothers of young children to health services intended to ensure an optimal health condition of the woman and the foetus from the initiation of the pregnancy to the 42nd day after delivery. These are: promotion aimed at preservation of the health of the mother and the foetus; preventive care regarding the risk of abortion and premature birth; active medical monitoring of the pregnancy performed on an outpatient basis by the medical-treatment facilities for primary and specialist non-hospital care; prenatal detection and prevention of genetic and other diseases under terms and according to a procedure established by an Ordinance of the Minister of Health; outpatient monitoring and health care for the puerpera and child; free access for the pregnant woman or the puerpera to medical-treatment facilities for specialist non-hospital care; free access of the pregnant woman to medical-treatment facilities for specialist non-hospital or hospital care for conditions endangering the pregnancy; right of the pregnant woman to choose a medical-treatment facility for hospital care for delivery.

228. The Ministry of Health announces that neonatal screening programmes cover 95 per cent of all newborns. Especially effective are the screening programmes for detection of severe hereditary diseases. A recently introduced prenatal programme for assessing the risk of the most widespread chromosome diseases and malformation syndromes is actively implemented (more than 7,606 pregnant women have been examined, and all pregnant women will be covered until completion of the programme). According to Bulgarian specialists, while access to qualified childbirth medical care is practically not a problem, the situation with the monitored pregnant women after the third month of pregnancy is extremely alarming. About 99 per cent of women traditionally give birth at hospitals (data for the 1990-2006 period), regardless of social status and ethnicity.¹³

229. The data show that abortion is resorted to by women of all age groups and especially by young ones, aged between 20 and 35. The share of abortions among the youngest, girls and women under 20, remains large. In 2005, 9.3 per cent of the registered abortions were performed on girls under 19 (3,890), of whom 211 were girls under 15. Abortion by choice is permissible until the 12th week of the pregnancy after passing certain medical tests. The package of health services paid for by the National Health Insurance Fund includes abortion. The medical standard on obstetrics and gynaecology includes standards for safe abortion as well.¹⁴ However, the decreasing number of abortions since 2000 (in absolute numbers and as a proportion of births) indicates that the significance of abortion as a contraceptive tool is diminishing. In 2001 a more significant difference was noted in favour of births: 51,165 abortions against 68,680 births.¹⁵ Since that year, the number of births has been growing steadily while the number of abortions has declined substantially.

¹³ See National Center of Health Informatics.

¹⁴ <http://www.mh.government.bg/Articles.aspx?lang=bg-BG&pageid=397>.

¹⁵ Jekova, V., *Social Norms and Traditions in Reproductive Behaviour in the Second Half of the 20th Century*, Sofia 2002.

230. According to a study conducted in 2003, over 250,000 couples in Bulgaria were sterile.¹⁶ In 60 per cent of the cases the reason for the sterility is in the men. However, the women often undergo interventions without their partner being examined in advance. The reasons are unavailability of health information and qualified medical personnel, especially in the small towns, public intolerance of sterility, which prevent families from seeking timely medical attention and often make them feel a sense of guilt and inferiority.¹⁷ That is why there is a critical need for awareness campaigns, as well as for improving the quality of the services and the qualification of the medical personnel engaged in the testing, detection and treatment of sterility. As of 2009, Sterility Treatment Centers equipped with almost all modern technologies for sterility treatment functioned in Sofia (9), Varna (2), Plovdiv (2), Pleven (1) and elsewhere.

231. The first programme for treatment of female sterility was launched in 2005, financed by the National Health Insurance Fund, with limited capacity (for 1,000 health-insured women with reproductive problems) under certain eligibility conditions (age: 18-40, one trial and reimbursement of the cost of treatment up to a set amount). The assisted reproductive methods included in this programme represent clinical and biological procedures allowing in vitro fertilization, embryo transfer and artificial insemination. An Assisted Reproduction Fund was established in 2008 by amendments to the Health Act, financed by state budget resources initially amounting to BGN 10 million, which went into operation in April 2009. The Fund performs the following principal activities: pays for 3 in vitro procedures within one calendar year up to BGN 5,000 per procedure; establishes and maintains a unified register of the persons with reproductive problems; participates in updating of the assisted reproduction standards; implements media and information campaigns related to the opportunities for prevention and treatment of reproductive problems. The campaigns should reach the maximum number of people, prioritizing small and medium-sized settlements, so as to ensure equal access to high-quality medical services.

232. Implementing MDG 6, Bulgaria pursues a long-term policy targeting the containment of the spread of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and blood transmitted infections and tuberculosis and mitigation of the health, demographic and socio-economic effects for society. Bulgaria is a good example of an effective state policy and efficient measures at national and local level for the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

233. Bulgaria is situated in an area of a fast growing number of HIV-infected people. HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and blood transmitted infections such as viral hepatitis have become an increasingly serious problem in recent years. The epidemiologic situation in Bulgaria and in the neighbouring Black Sea states and in Western Europe necessitates the definition of two new tracing indicators: HIV spread among injecting drug users and among men who have sex with men. The idea is to prevent the development of concentrated epidemics in those groups, e.g. to contain the level of the spread of HIV to under 5 per cent in each of the groups. Containing the HIV spread at a low level among the highest risk groups by

¹⁶ UNFPA Study performed in 2003 by the Bulgarian Sterility and Reproductive Health Association and the Bulgarian Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

¹⁷ [http://www.zachatie.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=780&Itemid=45](http://www.zachatie.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=780&Itemid=45?option=com_content&task=view&id=780&Itemid=45)

2015 is possible through interventions that have proved their effectiveness, ensuring their sustainability, and allocation of national resources for HIV prevention.

234. At this stage, the spread of HIV/AIDS in Bulgaria is low. As of the end of 2008, there were 926 HIV-positive persons registered at the Ministry of Health.¹⁸ The number of registered men was quintuple the number of newly registered women. All age groups were affected, with a critical drop of the lower age limit. 50 per cent of the newly registered (2008) were in the 15-30 age group (respectively, 55 per cent of the newly registered in 2007). Since the beginning of 2008 there have been no registered HIV-positive children born by HIV-positive mothers, but two HIV-positive pregnant women have been registered.

235. In June 2008 Bulgaria received excellent marks for the implementation of the National Programme for Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases, launched in 2004. Under an agreement between the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and the Ministry of Health, Bulgaria receives a continuing financial grant of EUR 32.4 million for the period 2009-2014. The Programme's main goal is to contribute to the containment of the HIV spread among the population and an improvement of the quality of life of people living with HIV. The Programme's target groups include prostitutes, young people exposed to risk and people living with HIV/AIDS. Free antiretroviral treatment is provided on state budget resources for all people living with HIV/AIDS who need such treatment, as well as monitoring and preventive care of HIV-positive pregnant women. Resources of the grant from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria finance free-of-charge treatment of opportunistic infections. A year-long treatment of an HIV/AIDS patient costs BGN 12,000-16,000, and annually the Ministry of Health allocates BGN 5 million for the treatment of people affected by this disease.

236. In 2003-2005, with the financial support of UNDP and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, 15 centres for anonymous, free-of-charge counselling and testing for HIV/AIDS have been opened in the large regional capitals countrywide. Three of the newly opened centres offer free-of-charge consulting and treatment of sexually transmitted diseases. In addition to free counselling and testing for HIV, as from this year all 15 centres also offer free-of-charge testing for hepatitis B, hepatitis C and syphilis.

237. The campaigns have already proved effective: the use of condoms has increased in recent years, especially among younger people, which has led to a steep decline in the incidence of syphilis and gonorrhoea.

238. Compulsory registration of malignant diseases in Bulgaria dates back to 1964 and was improved in 1990 and 2005, when the International Classification of Diseases was introduced. Specifically, women tend to develop certain malignant neoplasms at a higher frequency: the prevalence of female breast carcinoma has increased 1.5 times compared to 1990, of cervix uteri carcinoma 1.6 times and of corpus uteri carcinoma 1.5 times; the incidence of tuberculosis, venereal diseases and mental diseases is growing.

239. Mammary gland carcinoma is the most frequent malignant tumour in women in Bulgaria (25 per cent of all malignant neoplasms) and ranks second among the

¹⁸ <http://www.unaids-bulgaria.org/index.php?magic=1.40.0.0>

causes of death from oncology diseases. On the average, 72 per 100,000 women develop mammary gland cancer in Bulgaria, and about 30 women per 100,000 die as a result of this disease. The National Health Insurance Fund pays for one preventive examination annually for health-insured women over 18 years of age who are not under outpatient monitoring.

240. The first national campaign against breast cancer was held in March 2001 on the initiative of the National Cancer Institute, the Fight against Cancer Foundation, the National Cancer Registry and AstraZeneca Bulgaria. At present all oncology dispensaries in Bulgaria have specialized equipment.

241. Cervical cancer accounts for 7.6 per cent of the total share of women's cancer diseases, with breast cancer (about 25 per cent) and skin cancer (10.4 per cent) occurring more frequently. The incidence of cervical cancer in Bulgaria increased from 10.3 to 17.3 (per 100,000) between 1981 and 1999, and the mortality rate has doubled. In late 2009 the gravity of the problem compelled the government and Parliament to consider measures to reverse that tendency in a broad public consultation.

242. The prevention and treatment of osteoporosis in Bulgaria are among the priorities of the national health policy in Bulgaria. For that purpose, a National Programme for Control of Osteoporosis in Bulgaria (2006-2010) was set up. The activities are jointly implemented by the Ministry of Health, the Women without Osteoporosis Association and the Bulgarian League for the Prevention of Osteoporosis.

243. The largest scale epidemiological study of osteoporosis in Bulgaria was conducted in 2001. It showed that in Bulgaria about 820,000 women and 150,000-160,000 men incur a higher risk of fractures. About 90,000 women sustain vertebral fractures. Around 4,500 femur necks are broken annually.¹⁹ The average hospital stay after a femoral neck fracture and an ensuing surgical intervention is 30-35 days. The causes are in the lifestyle and diet patterns: Bulgarian women consume a very small quantity of dairy products, and the abuse of smoking and coffee drinking is common.

244. According to NHIF data, health-insured people over 18 with osteoporosis are placed under outpatient monitoring by specialists in endocrinology or traumatology and remain under lifetime observation. They are supposed to undergo two outpatient examinations and one consultation with an obstetric gynaecologist and an orthopaedist annually.

245. According to Ordinance No. 38 of the Ministry of Health, defining the list of diseases for the home treatment of which the NHIF wholly or partially reimburses the cost of medicines, seven medicinal products, for which the NHIF pays between 25 per cent and 75 per cent, have been contracted and included in the medicines list.

246. The national health policy in Bulgaria in the field of narcotic drugs is governed by a special National Anti-Drug Strategy (2009-2013). It is based on an integrated and balanced approach in which demand reduction and supply reduction are mutually supporting elements of the drugs policy. The Strategy was elaborated in accordance with the EU Drugs Strategy for the period 2005-2012 and conforms with the other national strategies and programmes: the National Health Strategy; the

¹⁹ Bulgarian Menopause and Andropause Association: <http://www.climacterium.com/bama/>.

Programme for Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS, financed by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the Mental Health Policy; the Policy for Reduction of the Use and the Harm from Alcohol Use; the Strategy for Transparent Governance and for Prevention and Counteraction of Corruption for the Period 2006-2008; the National Anti-Crime Strategy; the Strategy for Integrated Border Management of the Republic of Bulgaria. An Action Plan is elaborated for the implementation of the National Anti-Drug Strategy.

247. Narcotics use among citizens aged 15-64 is still low compared to a number of European countries. However, the number of people who have tried a narcotic at least once is increasing, especially among the young.²⁰ The share of persons who have tried a narcotic at least once is 14.6 per cent in the 18-24 age group, 10.2 per cent in the 18-34 age group, and 2 per cent for the total adult population (aged 18-60). Another alarming fact is the increasing tolerance of drug addiction: 38 per cent share the opinion there is nothing wrong with smoking “grass”, and 17 per cent state that if narcotic drugs are used just “occasionally”, there is no risk of addiction. Data for 2003 show that one in three pupils (aged 15-18) has smoked cannabis, and 27.1 per cent of eleventh and twelfth graders have tried cannabis at least once. Studies show that in Bulgaria drugs are used more by men than by women (7.8 per cent of men and 2.5 per cent of women), and by the more affluent people; the residents of the large cities rather than those living in small towns. Women, however, seek treatment less frequently than men: in 2005 only 16.9 per cent of the people who sought treatment were women.

248. Twenty-seven Regional Narcotic Substances Councils and 22 prevention and information centres with them have been set up countrywide. Rehabilitation and resocialization of dependent persons is provided through seven rehabilitation programmes. Sheltered housing schemes are opened for patients who have successfully passed through in-patient programmes for treatment of dependencies of therapeutic communities.

Article 13

249. Acquisition of entitlement to family allowances and the forms and procedure for their grant is regulated by the Family Allowances for Children Act (effective since 2002, last amended in 2010).

250. The Act provides for the following family allowances: lump-sum cash allowance for pregnancy; lump-sum cash allowance for child birth; lump-sum cash allowance for raising twins until their first birthday; lump-sum cash allowance for raising a child until its first birthday by a mother who is a full-time student; monthly allowances for a child until the child completes secondary education but not later than attainment of the age of 20 years; monthly child care allowances payable until the child’s first birthday; targeted allowances for pupils. The allowances can be provided in cash and/or in the form of social investment on terms and according to a procedure established in the Regulations for Application of the Act. Entitlement to family allowances for children vests in: pregnant women who are Bulgarian citizens; the families of Bulgarian citizens in respect of the children they raise in the country; the families in which one of the parents is a Bulgarian citizen, in respect of

²⁰ http://www.ncn-bg.org/docs/reports/Report_NFZ_2006.pdf.

the children who hold Bulgarian citizenship and who are raised in the country; immediate and extended families or foster families for deinstitutionalized children who are placed for raising in a family environment; pregnant women who are foreign citizens and families of foreign citizens, who are permanently resident and raise their children in the country if the receipt of such allowances is provided for in another law or in an international treaty to which the Republic of Bulgaria is a party.

251. To be eligible for family allowances, families and pregnant women must have an average monthly income per family member for the preceding 12 months lower than or equal to the income fixed for this purpose by the State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria Act for the relevant year. The mother is entitled to a lump-sum allowance upon live birth, regardless of the family income, provided the child is not surrendered to public care. The allowance is paid to the mother and if she is unable to receive it, it is paid to another legal representative of the child. If an extent of permanent disability of 50 per cent or more is ascertained in the child before its second birthday, a lump-sum supplementary allowance is paid to the mother. The amount of this allowance is fixed annually by the State Budget of the Republic of Bulgaria Act for the relevant year but may not be lower than the amount for the preceding year.

252. The lump-sum child care allowance is alternatively provided in cash to the single father (adopter). The monthly allowances for children of divorced parents are provided in cash and/or under in the form of social investment to the parent who has been awarded the exercise of parental rights.

253. Families whose children are enrolled in the first grade of a state or municipal school are granted a lump-sum targeted allowance to cover part of the costs at the beginning of the school year.

254. Family allowances for children under this Act are financed by resources from the executive budget.

255. The support to citizens who cannot meet their basic necessities of life unaided is regulated by the Social Assistance Act (effective since 1998, last amended in 2010). According to Article 3 of the Act, implementation of social assistance excludes any direct or indirect discrimination based on gender and family status, in addition to a list of other grounds.

256. Social assistance finds expression in the provision of benefits and services. According to the Social Assistance Act, social assistance benefits are monthly, targeted and lump-sum. Entitlement to monthly social assistance benefits is contingent on performance of socially useful labour, except in cases of maternity or where the age and/or the health status of the beneficiary make this impossible and for the unemployed, when enrolled in employment programmes. Enrolment in employment programmes is optional for: mothers (female or male adopters) and single parents or tutors taking care of children aged under 3 years; pregnant women after the third month of their pregnancy; persons taking care of a sick family member or of ascendants or descendants up to the second degree of consanguinity, who are disabled and permanently need assistance. The social assistance resources are allocated from the executive budget, the municipal budgets and national and international programmes, donations of resident and non-resident natural and legal persons, etc.

257. For example, according to the Report of the Social Assistance Agency, in 2009:

(a) 18,158 mothers who have given birth or adopted and raised three and more children aged over 1 received lump-sum benefits for travel by bus;

(b) 19,818 pregnant women received lump-sum benefits for pregnancy;

(c) 77,002 mothers, who gave birth to 77,900 children, received lump-sum childbirth benefits, and of these, 438 mothers received a supplementary lump-sum benefit for children with disabilities;

(d) On an average monthly basis, 571,416 families received monthly benefits for 841,728 children;

(e) On an average monthly basis, 22,089 mothers received monthly child care benefits until the child's first birthday;

(f) Lump-sum targeted benefits were paid for 40,883 first graders;

(g) 1,434 student mothers received lump-sum cash benefits for raising a child until its first birthday while remaining a full-time student.

258. Consumer protection upon extension of consumer credit through creation of equal conditions for receiving it (Article 2, Paragraph 2) is provided by the Consumer Credit Act (effective since 2006). The observations of some commercial banks that extend consumer credits show that 60 per cent of the users of commodity credits are women (according to 2008 data).

259. Loan financing is an established form of support for female entrepreneurship. 2007 data of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) show that over 62 per cent of women entrepreneurs have started their business on their own funds or a loan, and one third (33 per cent) took over the management of a family business.

260. To ease access to funds for own business start-ups, over the last five years the MLSP has implemented, independently or in cooperation with partners, a range of initiatives:

(a) A "Guarantee Fund for Micro Crediting Project" was set up with a view to creating new jobs through allocation of financial resources that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and newly established enterprises need for development and expansion of their activity. A cash guarantee is furnished for the credit, preferential terms, as well as free of charge consulting. In 2007, 36 per cent of the people who used such credits were women;

(b) A Job Opportunities through Business Support (JOBS) Project. A network of 42 business centres was established to support women in setting up and developing SMEs in regions with high unemployment. In addition to existing enterprises, the project supports start-up entrepreneurs and unemployed with good ideas for business. After appropriate training in entrepreneurship and business plan drafting, candidates can receive for purchase of technical equipment under the financial leasing scheme;

(c) A Project 100 "Creating Competitive Start-up Enterprises" is implemented jointly with the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism. The project supports people with thoroughly justified business ideas to start a competitive small business. After crash training, candidates have the opportunity to develop their ideas in business plans and to enter a competition for the award of grant financing.

(d) Support for female entrepreneurship is also provided in the form of subsidies for own business start-ups by unemployed persons.

261. Funds for SME start-ups are provided by commercial banks and the State under various programmes, as well as by other creditors such as joint-stock companies, incorporated as NGOs for support of SMEs in urban and rural areas through micro crediting. A survey of the Institute for Market Economics found that 40 per cent-70 per cent of the credit recipients from such institutions were women (2008 data).

262. Some of these credit institutions prioritize supporting women entrepreneurs (for example, in 2010 the Municipal Guarantee Fund for SMEs in Sofia).

263. Women in Bulgaria do not face legal or institutional barriers to rest and recreation, to sport pursuits, or to involvement in cultural life.

264. Women have the opportunity to actively practise sports in their leisure time or to pursue a sporting career. A range of active female athletes with honours from Olympic Games, world and European championships are popular and after retiring from professional sports enter politics and professions in various areas of public and economic life or in the sports management. For example, the President of the Bulgarian Olympic Committee is a woman.

265. The State makes efforts through specialized programmes and initiatives to activate physically inactive women. According to sociological surveys conducted over the last 3-4 years, 60-75 per cent of women have low physical activity at work and, accordingly, 48 per cent-70 per cent of women have low physical activity in their leisure time as well. In 2010 the Ministry of Physical Education and Sports implemented a project through health information campaigns to activate the physically inactive women and to improve their health status and mitigate the adverse effects on their health. The raising of public awareness will create prerequisites for an improvement of their personal motivation and responsibility regarding their own health, and the measures for the promotion of physical exercise, sports and tourism will ensure the opportunity to make this activity part of people's everyday life, as a key component of the modern model of a healthy lifestyle.

266. Bulgarian women are very actively involved in the cultural life of their settlements through the activity of a typically Bulgarian traditional local institution: the chitalishte. It combines the functions of a library, theatre, provider of courses in optional subjects as foreign languages, dancing, music, a venue for discussions and talks, a cinema auditorium, and a hobby club. At present over 3,400 chitalishtes are registered in Bulgaria, and 90 per cent of their managers are women. Women are also the main target group of many of the cultural initiatives organized by chitalishtes. Traditional folklore is supported and a range of folklore festivals are organized mainly through the chitalishtes, and women of all age groups are the principal performers in such events.

Article 14

267. The gender equality and non-discrimination principle, which is enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and is a leading principle in the EU, is also enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Bulgaria, the national legislation, the statutory framework, the National

Strategy, mechanism and measures for ensuring in practice equal opportunities for men and women, and it is fully applicable to rural women as well. In the process of acceding to the EU, Bulgaria adopted special policies and measures for rural women within the context of the Convention and since 2000 the national policy on gender equality has found expression mostly in the implementation of EU directives, principles and measures upon preparation of national plans and programmes for agricultural and rural development and for regional development, viz:

(a) National Agriculture and Rural Development Plan for 2000-2006 under the EU Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (SAPARD). Measure 2.1 expressly states that the measure “will not tolerate any discrimination towards potential beneficiaries based on religion, sex or physical disability. Women and disabled persons will receive special attention, organization and training should they decide to start or develop activities in the ‘in-house’ craftsmanship area”.²¹

(b) The Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 sets the principle of equality between men and women and non-discrimination (item 15) upon applying and implementation of projects under the various axes and measures of the Programme. Additional ranking scores are given to projects presented by women as a part of the criteria for evaluation of projects under measures 311 and 312²² of the Programme.

(c) The National Council on Gender Equality was engaged in the preparation of the Rural Development Programme (2007-2013) in order to guarantee gender equality in the development of the measures for rural development, and a representative of the Council is a member of the Programme Monitoring Committee so as to make sure that the equitable participation of women and men in projects under the Programme’s measures is implemented in practice.

(d) Operational Programme “Regional Development” (2007-2013) is also based on the principle of equality between men and women (item 3.3.7.) from the point of view of overcoming regional disparities and prioritizing municipalities of regional and micro-regional importance.

268. In Bulgaria rural women traditionally contribute significantly to the rural economy, especially in agriculture, the household economy, crafts, and in recent years in rural tourism as well. Women were harder hit by the transition, they are subjected to higher unemployment, have fewer opportunities or choice of employment and personal development, more limited access to resources, social and other services.

269. Since 2000, with the acceleration of the process of Bulgaria’s accession to the European Union, national legislation has been harmonized with Community law and implements the directives and mechanisms of one of the basic principles of EU policy for equal participation of women and men in the agricultural sector and rural development. Rural women become a focus in the programmes and pilot projects of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, aimed at equal treatment and inclusion of rural women in the country’s economic, political and public life. In 2001, within the

²¹ Measure 2.1 — “Development and diversification of the economic activities, provision for multiple activities and alternative income”, National Agriculture and Rural Development Plan: 288; <http://www.mzgar.government.bg/Sapard/Merki/Bg%20Measure%202.1-27.05.03.htm>.

²² Measure 311 “Diversification into non-agricultural activities”; Measure 312 “Support for the creation and development of micro-enterprises”.

framework of the Population Census and Housing Census, the first one since 1989, the National Statistical Institute took a census of agricultural farms and since then the AgroStatistics Directorate of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has been collecting data annually on employment by gender in the different types of agricultural farms.

270. Under EU criteria, 81 per cent of the territory of Bulgaria qualifies as rural areas. Of a total of 5,340 settlements, 5,051 are villages. According to data provided by the National Statistical Institute, in 2007 the rural population was 29.3 per cent of the Bulgaria's total population with a sex ratio of 1,026 women per 1,000 men. The demographic indicators in rural areas are increasingly worsening: the natural increase rate is high negative (-12.4 per cent), compared to (-2.1 per cent) in urban areas, due to the lower birth rate (8.5 per cent) and the higher death rate in rural areas (20.7 per cent), more among men (16.1 per cent) than women (11 per cent). However, the fertility rate in rural areas is higher (1.60 children per 1,000 women of child-bearing age) than in urban areas (1.31 children) as a result of the larger number births among the ethnic minorities, especially the Roma.

271. Ageing is a process affecting the entire country, but it is more pronounced in rural areas where the mean age of the population is 45.4 years, compared to 41.5 years for the country (2007). In all age groups women in rural areas have a smaller share than men, except in the oldest age group (over 60), where women outnumber men. The average life expectancy of rural women (75.6 years) is higher than men's (67.9 years) (National Statistical Institute, 2006).

272. In 2008 the number of contracted marriages in rural areas tended further down: 6,184 marriages were contracted there in 2007 and 5,878 marriages (approximately 20 per cent of all contracted marriages) in 2008.²³ The decrease in the number contracted marriages is due both to a decline in the number of the total rural population of marriageable age and to an increase of the desire of young people to co-habitation without contracting a civil marriage. The average woman in rural areas enters into her first marriage 4 years younger than the average man, who marries when he is 28 years old. In rural areas unmarried men heavily outnumber unmarried women. The mean age of women at first birth in rural areas is lower (22.7 years) than in urban areas (25.2 years). Large families are mostly the rural families of the minority groups, mainly among the Roma. The average family size in rural areas is 2.7 members (2001). In terms of marital status approximately half of the households in the villages are married couples, and the share of rural households consisting of widows exceeds that of households consisting of single men.

273. Rural women participate in decision-making and hold managerial positions mainly in local government as mayors, lieutenant mayors and municipal councillors. In recent years their participation in local government has increasing, according to statistical surveys.²⁴ On the other hand, the data indicate that women employed full time in rural municipal administrations in most rural municipalities countrywide (in all regions) represent a majority.²⁵ The LEADER approach²⁶ (Axis 4) of the Rural

²³ Population and demographic processes in 2008: <http://www.nsi.bg/population/Population08.htm>.

²⁴ Local Self-government Bodies in the Republic of Bulgaria 2008", National Statistical Institute, 2008.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ The abbreviation "LEADER" stands for: "Relation among Rural Economic Development Activities" — translation from French — "Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale".

Development Programme 2007-2013, financed by the EU Structural Funds, encourages local self-government, creates greater opportunities for rural women to be attracted to and participate in collective activities related to development and implementation of local development strategies and plans based on the partnership principle,²⁷ stimulates the establishment of structures promoting gender equality.

274. Since 1999 rural areas have had only primary medical care, i.e. general practitioners. All health-insured women in rural areas are entitled to use primary medical care. Girls under 18 and women pensioners receive primary medical care free of charge.

275. National legislation guarantees equal social security rights and protection to all persons working under an employment relationship. Rural women have equal rights, provided by law, to use maternity leave counting as length of service for the purposes of retirement insurance, use the benefits for temporary disability and occupational rehabilitation, permanent disability, maternity and unemployment provided for in the Social Insurance Code (Chapter Four of the Social Insurance Code).

276. Registered agricultural and tobacco producers are obliged to pay social insurance contributions for disability through general sickness, for old age and for death. The rate of the social insurance contribution covering these risks is 23 per cent of a monthly income which may not be less than a minimum (BGN 240) and more than a maximum (BGN 2,000)²⁸ fixed by the Public Social Insurance Budget Act for the relevant year. A preference for registered agricultural and tobacco producers who carry out agricultural activity only is that they may pay the social insurance due until 31 March of the year following the calendar year for which they apply, as well as to have their obligations to Public Social Insurance rescheduled over a longer period of time.²⁹

277. According to statistics, rural women have a slightly lower educational status than men, as only men with completed primary education have a larger share than women (2001).³⁰ Access to higher educational levels is more difficult for women in rural regions due to the distance to the educational institutions, as well as for economic reasons, and due to their significant labour contribution to the household economy and social family functions. Huge ethnic-specific discrepancies exist in the educational status of women in rural areas: the minority groups have the lowest educational attainment (above all among Roma women and girls), as well as the highest illiteracy rate. With a view to eliminating the unequal access to education especially of Roma girls and women, invoking the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1999, in particular article 4.2 and article 6) and pursuing the objectives of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, a Strategy for Educational Integration of Children and Students belonging to Ethnic Minorities (2004) was developed, and national programmes have been implemented (Education and Roma programmes of the Open Society Institute-Sofia, etc.), as well as regional and local

²⁷ Article 6 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1698/2005 *on support for rural development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development*.

²⁸ Article 8 of the Public Social Insurance Budget Act (promulgated in the *State Gazette* No. 99, 15 December 2009, effective 1 January 2010).

²⁹ § 9 of the Supplementary Provision of the Public Social Insurance Budget Act effective 1 January 2010.

³⁰ Population Census and Housing Census of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2001.

projects (Promotion of Roma Integration Project financed by the Phare Programme, Second Chance — Social Integration through Initial Literacy Project, Auxiliary Schools Project, Support for Roma Integration Pilot Project of the Council of Ministers administered by the Step by Step Programme Foundation, etc.). They all promote in practice the equal opportunities of Roma girls and women and their full-fledged inclusion in various areas of public life, above all through improvement of their educational level, integration of Roma children in schools, initial literacy courses and programmes for awareness raising and career guidance, etc.

278. In the process of implementation of the National Rural Development Plan 2000-2006 and especially of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, the access of women from rural areas to the services of the municipal agricultural services, as well as to the regional agricultural advisory services, has improved significantly. This is largely achieved through participation of rural women in training courses and courses for improving their technical expertise upon applying for project financing under these programmes, implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food through various campaigns. Since 2006 women's participation in various forms of training and with actual projects under different measures has increased. Thus, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's information campaign entitled "Travelling Agricultural Advisory Teams: Door to Door" for promotion of the measures under the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013, which are open for application, includes seminars in the regional capitals and open information days in all municipal centres (including the large villages) according to schedules published on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. More than 10,000 people in aggregate took part in all training and information activities, and women showed a heightened interest in Measure 141 on Supporting Semi-Subsistence Farms Undergoing Restructuring and Measure 112 on Setting up of Young Farmers. An analysis of the projects approved for 2008 under Measure 112 shows that 32.8 per cent of the approved applications were submitted by young women farmers.

279. Under Measure 111 on Training, Information and Diffusion of Knowledge, the Programme provides an opportunity for free training (including travelling, board and accommodation expenses) for women and men working in agriculture.

280. The National Agricultural Advisory Service with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food implements activities under Measure 143 on Provision of Farm Advisory and Extension Services of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. Projects prepared by the National Agricultural Advisory Service for beneficiary women increased by 13 per cent in 2008. A total of 2,604 sets of advisory services were prepared between June 2008 and January 2009 under the Measure 214 on Agri-environmental Payments and Measure 112 on Setting up of Young Farmers, with the data showing a significant growth of projects submitted by beneficiary women — agricultural producers, as follows:³¹

³¹ National Action Plan for Promotion of Gender Equality for 2008-2009, for the period until 31 December 2008 (interim report).

<i>Projects</i>	<i>June 2008</i>	<i>September 2008</i>	<i>January 2009</i>
Total	1,603	449	552
By women, number	466	184	230
By women, %	29.7 %	40.9 %	42.7 %

281. The National Agricultural Advisory Service works actively and cooperates closely with the non-governmental sector on matters of the gender equality. In 2009 the Ministry of Agriculture and Food envisages to collect additional data on the proportion between women and men, participating in explanatory campaigns, training seminars and projects implemented under financing programmes.

282. The share of rural women of working age is 44.7 per cent of all persons in this category, while the share of rural women past working age is significantly higher: 61.8 per cent.³² This proportion also affects the employment structure in rural areas, in particular women's employment and the contribution of rural women to the rural economy. According to statistics, in 2007 1,521,100 women were working in agriculture, hunting, forestry and fisheries, which represented about 46 per cent of all persons employed in these sectors. Despite the overall decrease of women's employment in these sectors, they still remain leading in terms of women's employment in rural areas. Rural women have returned to employment in agriculture (411,460) in the private sector (especially in farms of natural persons, unregistered under any laws, where 397,161 women work), in cooperatives or other forms of associations³³ for economic reasons. The share of rural women holding managerial functions in agriculture is significantly lower than men's, which places them in a disadvantaged position in the management and decision-making process in the sector. The share of women who manage agricultural farms increased, although by a small margin, from 17.7 per cent in 2004 to 20 per cent in 2007.³⁴

283. Nevertheless, unemployment among rural women is the highest compared to the national average and men's. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy's National Action Plan for Employment contributes substantially to the practical realization of the equal opportunities of women and men for inclusion in employment, to overcoming unemployment, through various programmes and projects, including in rural areas. Rural women are the main beneficiaries in these programmes and measures for employment and training, especially in the programme "From Social Assistance to Provision of Employment", which was launched back in 2003, in the Assistance for Retirement Programme and other such initiatives.

284. Bulgarian legislation does not discriminate against rural women in respect of their rights to ownership of land, and of the rights to inherit land. These rights are guaranteed according to the general legal procedure provided by the Agricultural Land Ownership and Use Act. Nevertheless, ownership of the land is more often registered in the name of the man.

³² Statistical Reference Book of the Republic of Bulgaria. National Statistical Institute, 2007: 16.

³³ Structure of Agricultural Farms in Bulgaria 2007. Work force. Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatistics Directorate, 2007.

³⁴ Statistical research "Structure of agricultural farms in Bulgaria during the economic 2004/2005" and "Structure of Agricultural Farms in Bulgaria 2007". Work force. Ministry of Agriculture and Food, Agrostatistics Directorate, 2006, 2007.

285. Contracting farm credit is still a risky undertaking and in practice is still resorted to by few people, especially women who own or manage agricultural farms. This is due to the complicated and time-consuming procedures for extension of credit, as well as to the inability of agricultural producers to furnish the collateral required by the banks (e.g. land and rural properties are ineligible for mortgage).

Article 15

286. The Code of Civil Procedure (effective since 1 March 2008) lays down the rule that the court affords the parties an equal opportunity to exercise the rights conferred on them and applies the law equally in respect of all (Article 9). The principle of equality between the parties is established in all effective laws and codes. Thus, a de facto gender equality is ensured de jure by national legislation.

287. The law grants women the freedom to contract, to acquire property, to acquire movable and immovable property, to incorporate and represent commercial corporations, to enter into contracts for consumer credit or mortgage loans.

288. Women have the right to dispose of their property independently. When the property is acquired during marriage, except in specified cases, it constitutes matrimonial community property under the hitherto effective Family Code. This means that the property belongs in equal quotas to the husband and the wife, with a legal provision making it possible to prove a larger share according to a judicial procedure. The disposition of property in a matrimonial community property regime requires that both spouses be parties to the transaction. The new Family Code, which entered into effect on 1 October 2009, introduced three regimes of property relations between the spouses: matrimonial community property, separate property, and contractual regime agreed under a marriage contract. The Family Code makes it possible to rearrange property relationships under pre-existing marriages in accordance with the new opportunities for regulation of property acquired during the marriage.

289. According to Article 6 of the Constitution, women and men are equal before the law. The principle is elaborated in Article 56, which states that "Every citizen, whose rights or legitimate interests are violated or jeopardized, shall have the right to remedy. Appearing before any institution of State, every citizen may be represented by legal counsel".

290. The same principle is also endorsed by the three procedural laws: the Code of Civil Procedure, the Penal Procedure Code and the Administrative Procedure Code. The equality is furthermore a fundamental principle in the Tax and Social-Insurance Procedure Code. Women enjoy equal rights with men regardless of the capacity in which they participate in the procedure. Equality is also ensured upon the exercise of the legal profession, with women being entitled to exercise freely and without discrimination all legal professions. Legislation is completely consistent with the requirements of Article 15 of the Convention.

291. Bulgarian legislation does not provide for any restrictions whatsoever related to freedom of movement and choice of residence. The effect of the constitutional principle of gender equality is ensured, and women are not restricted in their choice regardless of their marital status. National statistics show that women change their residence four times more often than man for various reasons: marriage, etc.

Article 16

292. On 12 June 2009 the National Assembly adopted a new Family Code, which is the third one for Bulgaria, (promulgated in the State Gazette No. 47 of 23 June 2009 and effective since 1 October 2009). The new Family Code retains the principles of gender equality in matrimony and family life, as proclaimed by the Family Code of 1985 as superseded. The new law lists the following principles on which family legislation and interspousal relationships are built: protection of marriage and of the family by the State and society; equality between women and men; voluntary nature of matrimony; special protection of children; equality between children born in wedlock, out of wedlock and adopted; respect for the personality in the family; respect, care and support among family members. Equality between women and men implies equality upon entry into marriage, in marital relationships, as well as equality regarding parental rights and obligations.

293. The Family Code proclaims the right of every person to marriage and family, in compliance with the conditions established in the law. There is no impediment to a religious solemnization of matrimony as well, but the religious rite has no legal effect.

294. Contracting a marriage requires that a man and a woman declare their consent personally and simultaneously before a registrar. The consent must be mutual, free and explicitly expressed upon entry into marriage. If there is no consent, the marriage is invalid. Marriage in Bulgaria is available to heterosexual couples only. The new Family Code reproduces completely the hitherto effective impediments to entry into marriage (existence of another marriage, sickness and kinship), which are applicable to both spouses.

295. The minimum age for marriage is 18 years and applies to members of either sex. As an exception, there is an opportunity for entry into marriage by persons who have attained the age of 16 years as an absolute minimum and after permission by the Regional Court, which should determine whether there are important reasons for the marriage to be contracted. A marriage contracted with a minor under that age is invalid. Under the law, an underage spouse has a remedy; he or she may approach the court with a motion to dissolve the marriage by annulment. Such an action may be brought within 6 months after attaining majority and provided that no children were born from the marriage and the wife is not pregnant. Early marriages in Bulgaria are typical of the Roma ethnic group and of certain other groups practising orthodox Islam. Early marriages (between a person or persons under 16) as a rule are not contracted before a registrar because this is legally impossible, but are usually solemnized through a religious rite which, as mentioned above, has no legal effect.

296. The prevention of early marriages is implemented through measures for improvement of children's access to school and keeping them there, health and sexual education at school, the child protection policy, support for leadership and community activities for Roma women and girls, training of health mediators for the communities and fight against trafficking of human beings.³⁵

297. Cohabitation with an underage person is a criminal offence under the Penal Code. Any sexual encroachment, including intercourse, on a child aged under 14 years is also a criminal offence.

³⁵ National Strategy for Children (2008-2018).

298. The new Family Code facilitates access to marriage by lifting the requirement to declare the intention to enter into marriage within 30 days before the solemnization, as well as the restrictions on a place where the marriage may be contracted. The persons entering into marriage are free to choose the municipality where the marriage is to be contracted.

299. The old framework regarding the spouses' surname is retained. Any of them may choose whether to keep his or her surname or adopt the spouse's surname, or add the spouse's surname to his or her own. Upon divorce, the surname may be restored. According to the Civil Registration Act, parents determine together the forename of the child, but when the child has an established father the names are determined according to the father's forename and surname. If paternity is not established, the child's name is determined according to the forename and surname of the mother or of the mother's father.

300. The new Family Code keeps completely the framework for the personal interspousal relationships with equality of rights and obligations in matrimony being the guiding principle. Spouses live together unless important reasons necessitate that they live separately. Each spouse enjoys a freedom of personal development and of choice of occupation. The family obligations of the spouses are common and equal, through mutual understanding and joint efforts and according to their abilities, property and income to provide for the family's welfare and to take care of the raising, upbringing, education and maintenance of the children.

301. The new Family Code introduces three matrimonial property regimes. The hitherto effective framework provided only for matrimonial community property of the things and money acquired during the marriage by both spouses under the conditions of joint contribution. The new Code affords the husband and wife with an opportunity to select between two legal regimes — of community property or of separate property, and a contractual regime. The legal regime of community (hitherto effective) applies mandatorily in case the persons entering into marriage are underage or limited interdicts, as well as when the spouses have not chosen a regime of their property relationships or have failed to settle certain relations by their marriage contract. Under this regime, the rights in rem acquired by any of the spouses during the marriage as a result of a joint contribution belong to both spouses in common. The spouses' joint contribution is presumed until proven otherwise and may find expression in investing financial resources and work in care of the children and in household work. Spouses enjoy equal rights to the community property and jointly dispose of it. Spouses share the expenses on satisfying the family needs.

302. In case a regime of separate property legal regime is chosen, the rights acquired by a spouse during the marriage become her or his personal possession, but the expenses and obligations for the family are common to both spouses.

303. Spouses have an alternative option to settle at their own discretion their property relations by contract, including regarding the rights to pre-matrimonial and matrimonial property, household expenses, the maintenance, the property consequences of a divorce and other property relations. The marriage contract may be terminated by an action brought by any of the spouses if a material change of circumstances has occurred, whereupon the contract seriously jeopardizes the interests of the spouse, of the underage children or of the family.

304. The Family Code provides specific and equal economic protection to the husbands, legitimizing the presumption of equal contributions to the matrimonial community property, the settlement of the maintenance among the family members and the opportunity for an ex-spouse to receive, after the divorce, part of the value of the property and receivables of the other spouse if the former has contributed to their acquisition by work, by financial resources, by care of the children, by household work or in another manner. The standard of disposal of the family residence when it is personal property of one of the spouses is protected as well. The spouse who is the owner may dispose of the residence only with the consent of the other spouse. If there is no consent, the residence may be disposed of with the permission of the regional court only if it is established that this is not detrimental to the underage children and to the family.

305. The new Family Code facilitates access to divorce by eliminating the condition for duration of the marriage for a divorce by mutual consent. Every spouse has the right to bring an action for divorce. The fault for the breakdown of the marriage is investigated by the Divorce Court only if any of the spouses has requested this upon the divorce due to a deep and irremediable breakdown of the marriage.

306. Parents have equal rights and obligations with regard to the raising and upbringing of the children regardless if they are married or not. The new Family Code encourages parents to exercise jointly their parental rights and in case of differences to try to reach agreement, including by through mediation, and to approach the court only as a last resort. Each of the parents may represent their underage child on their own and give consent to the legal actions of their underage child only in the best interest of the child. In case of a divorce by mutual consent, the parents decide all matters concerning the raising and upbringing of the underage children of the marriage in their interest. The agreement must be endorsed by the court. If no agreement is reached, the court determines ex officio the parent with whom the children will live, the parent to whom the exercise of the parental rights is awarded, and determines the measures regarding the exercise of these rights and regarding the personal relationships between children and parents and the maintenance of the children. The mother is the parent who more often exercises the parental rights after the divorce, especially if the children are young or female. The new Family Code regulates in detail the matters of guaranteeing personal contacts with the parent with whom the child does not live. If the contacts are impeded, the court orders appropriate protective measures to ensure enforcement of the judgment such as:

- (a) Carrying out personal visits in the presence of a designated person;
- (b) Carrying out personal visits in a designated place;
- (c) Assuming the travelling expenses of the child and, if necessary, also of the person who accompanies the child.

307. Child maintenance is regulated in a new way. The Code lays down the rule that each parent is obliged to ensure living conditions necessary for the child's development according to the parent's abilities, property status and financial capacity. After the divorce the parents owe maintenance of an amount which must ensure the living conditions of the child which it had before the divorce, unless this would cause special difficulties to the parent incurring the maintenance obligations. There is no change in the framework regarding the performance of maintenance

obligations. The obligation may be enforced coercively, and the parent incurs criminal liability for non-payment of maintenance. Maintenance which is awarded and unpaid may be paid by the State.

308. The exercise of parental rights after the dissolution of the marriage is also provided with economic protection. If the parent who raises the children experiences difficulties as a result of this, he or she may receive a larger share of the common property. When there are underage children of the marriage and the family residence is not owned by the parent with whom the children will live, the court may grant use of the residence to that parent for the duration of the exercise of parental rights (if the owner of the residence is the other parent) or for a period of up to one year (if the family residence is owned by members of the other spouse's extended family). When spouses have a joint right of ownership or of use to the family residence, the court confers the use of the residence on one of the spouses, taking into consideration the interests of the children, the fault, the health condition and other circumstances. In case of change of the circumstances which are relevant to the conferment of use under paragraph (4), each of the former spouses may motion for a change in the use of the residence.

309. The filiation of the children is established by the methods provided for in the Family Code. Filiation to the mother is established by the birth. The mother of the child is the woman who gave birth to the child, including in all cases of assisted reproduction irrespective of the techniques used. The conditions, techniques and procedure for performance of assisted reproduction are determined by the Health Act. Bulgarian legislation does not regulate the institution of surrogate motherhood. A woman who has provided biological material may acquire the parental rights and obligations concerning the born child only by means of adoption, if the woman who gave birth to the child gives her consent to this.

310. Both the previous framework and the new Family Code does not draw any distinction between a man and a woman for the purposes of adoption, tutorship and curatorship with regard to children.

311. There is no change in the rules regarding inheritance. The gender difference is legally irrelevant upon determining the heirs and their shares by the law.

312. A Protection against Domestic Violence Act was adopted in Bulgaria in 2004. The Act regulates the rights of victims of domestic violence, the measures for protection and the procedure for their imposition. The term "domestic violence" is introduced for the first time in Bulgarian legislation and its principal forms are listed: "domestic violence is any act of physical, mental and sexual violence as well as any attempt of such violence, coercive restriction of personal liberty and privacy, committed against persons who are or who have been in a family relationship or kinship, in a de facto co-habitation, or who reside in one and the same dwelling". The Act defines a broad range of persons against whom the victims may seek protection. It goes beyond the limits of the family relationships in the narrow sense, i.e. interspousal relations. No distinction is made on the basis of the victim's gender, and all persons who have suffered from domestic violence are eligible for protection. Any person who has suffered from domestic violence committed by a spouse or a former spouse; a person with whom the victim is or has been in de facto co-habitation; a person from whom the victim has a child; an ascendant; a descendant; a sibling; an affine up to the second degree of affinity; guardian; a tutor, a curator or a foster parent, may seek protection under this Act.

313. Protection against domestic violence is provided by an immediate protection order or by a protection order issued by the court; they cover the following measures at the discretion of the court: ordering the offender to refrain from committing domestic violence; removing the offender from the jointly occupied dwelling for a period determined by the court; prohibiting the offender to approach the dwelling, the place of work and the places for social contacts and rest of the victim under conditions and for a period determined by the court; placing the child provisionally with the parent who is the victim or with the parent who did not commit the violence, under conditions and for a period determined by the court if this does not prejudice the interests of the child; ordering the offender to attend specialized programmes; referring the victims to rehabilitation programmes. Liability under this Act does not exclude civil and criminal liability of the offender under other laws.

314. Protection measures against domestic violence are imposed according to a judicial proceeding, and the court is furthermore competent to impose a protection measure if a case between the victim and the offender or regarding any of them on grounds specified in the Family Code is pending before it. The court proceedings are initiated on a petition by the victim; on a petition by the Director of the Social Assistance Directorate; on a petition by a sibling or by a lineal relative up to any degree to the victim - in the cases of immediate court protection. In the cases of immediate protection, the petition is submitted care of the nearest precinct police department.

315. The Act broadens appreciably the powers of the police in its capacity as the first institution which is usually approached by the victims for help after the act of domestic violence. Compliance with the protection order is monitored precisely by the police authorities in the cases when the offender is obliged to refrain from committing domestic violence, is removed from the jointly occupied dwelling for a period determined by the court, as well as when the offender is prohibited from approaching the dwelling, the place of work and the places for social contacts and rest of the victim under conditions and for a period determined by the court. In case of non-compliance with the court order, the police authority who has ascertained the violation apprehends the offender and immediately notifies the prosecuting authorities. The role of the State has been enhanced with the adoption of the Act, as it will create conditions for the implementation of programmes for prevention and protection against domestic violence and programmes providing help to the victims. The executive authorities select and training the persons in charge of protection under this Act. They work jointly with non-governmental organizations for the protection of victims of domestic violence.

316. The latest amendments to the Protection against Domestic Violence Act, adopted in 2010, are intended to guarantee a higher degree of protection of children, to improve prevention and to provide financial resources for the implementation of the Act. The bill supplemented the definition of the notion of violence, adding emotional and economic violence to physical, sexual and mental violence. It is presumed that domestic violence committed in the presence of a child will be considered as violence against the child.

317. The new provisions extend the range of persons against whom the victim may seek protection, to collateral relatives up to the fourth degree of consanguinity and affines up to the third degree of affinity. Provisions are also made for the forcible removal of the offender from the jointly occupied dwelling by police authorities if

the offender does not leave it voluntarily in compliance with such a measure imposed by the court. Annually, by 31 March, the government must adopt a national programme for prevention of and protection against domestic violence and resources for its implementation must be allocated for its implementation under the State Budget Act. Resources will also be planned for non-profit legal entities which elaborate and implement programmes for support of domestic violence victims, for training of people who provide protection against domestic violence and re-education of offenders etc. The bill also proposes some other technical amendments to the Act, drafted as a result of the three-year survey of its application in the regional courts.

III. Status and implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention

318. The Optional Protocol was ratified by a law adopted by the National Assembly on 19 July 2006 and promulgated in the State Gazette No. 62 of 1 August 2006. The Optional Protocol was promulgated in the State Gazette No. 17 of 2 March 2010. It provides an opportunity to women or groups of women claiming to be victims of a violation of any of the rights set forth in the Convention and who have exhausted all available domestic remedies for protection of these rights, to submit their complaints to the Committee and, in case the latter finds that such violations have been committed, it obliges the State Party to take measures to ensure exercise of these rights and to ensure a legal framework guaranteeing the non-violation of these rights.

Annex

Additional references and tables

Article 1

The Government report of the Republic of Bulgaria in relation to the implementation of the Beijing Platform was presented before the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in October 2004 (<http://www.mlsp.government.bg/equal/index.asp>).

Articles 2 and 3

Table 1

Reference on the number of civil lawsuits under Act for Protection against Discrimination, heard in Regional Courts for the period 2006-2009.

Types of civil disputes	Year	Non-closed suits at the beginning of the reporting period	Lawsuits registered				LAWSUITS CLOSED /quantity 6 = col. 7 + 8 + 9 + 10 + 11							Non-closed lawsuits at the end of the reporting period	Appeal suits
			New suits open	Registered by jurisdiction in	Sent back for rehearing	Total lawsuits to be heard /col. 1 + 2 + 3 + 4/	TOTAL	The claim is upheld in total	The claim is upheld partially	The claim is rejected	Lawsuits suspended		Completed in a three-month period		
Under the Act for Protection against Discrimination	2006	2	44	—	—	46	18	5	0	3	0	10	11	28	3
Under the Act for Protection against Discrimination	2007	35	97	5	—	137	119	98	0	4	0	17	106	18	8
Under the Act for Protection against Discrimination	2008	18	36	4	0	58	37	15	1	2	0	19	31	21	6
Under the Act for Protection against Discrimination	2009	21	22	0	0	43	19	1	0	6	0	12	9	24	7

Article 5

Table 1

Number of suits annually under the Act for Protection against Domestic Violence

Types of civil disputes	Year	Lawsuits registered					Suits closed /col. 6 = col. 7 + 8 + 9 + 10 + 11							Non-closed lawsuits at the end of the reporting period	Appeal suits
		Non-closed suits at the beginning of the reporting period	New suits open	Registered by jurisdiction in	Sent back for rehearing	Total number of suits to be heard /col. 1 + 2 + 3 + 4/	TOTAL	The claim is upheld in total	The claim is upheld partially	The claim is rejected	Lawsuits suspended		Completed in a three- month period		
Columns		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Under the Act for Protection against Domestic Violence	2006	86	1 988	15	3	2 092	1 502	866	24	85	15	512	1 252	590	215
Under the Act for Protection against Domestic Violence	2007	301	1 750	3	4	2 058	1 703	754	38	123	37	751	1 422	355	153
Under the Act for Protection against Domestic Violence	2008	337	1 018	6	4	1 365	976	377	12	90	19	478	778	389	93
Under the Act for Protection against Discrimination	2009	21	22	0	0	43	19	1	0	6	0	12	9	24	7

Article 6

A map of NGOs providing services to victims of human traffic and domestic violence victims: http://antitraffic.government.bg/images/info_files/1257407275.PDF.

Article 12

Table 1

Budgetary expenditures for Health Care as a share of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Year	Share of GDP
2001	3,7 %
2006	4,4 %
2007	4,3 %

Table 2

Main demographic indices regarding women

Year	Perinatal mortality	Child mortality	Total mortality	Maternal mortality
2001	12.2	14.4		19.1
2006	10.7	9.7	14.7	10.6
2008	11	8.6	14.5	11.9

Table 3
Morbidity rate among women

<i>Type of disease</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>
2001			
1. Diseases of the organ of circulation (insultus, heart attacks, ischemic heart disease etc.)	76 297	37 536	38 761
2. Morbid growths	15 343	6 548	8 795
3. Respiratory diseases	4 500	1 760	2 740
4. Digestive System Diseases	2 974	873	2 101
5. Endocrine Diseases	2 135	1 210	925
2006			
1. Diseases of the organ of circulation (insultus, heart attacks, ischemic heart disease etc.)	75 332	37 573	37 759
2. Morbid growths	17 710	7 354	10 356
3. Respiratory diseases	4 181	1 576	2 605
4. Digestive System Diseases	3 196	1 054	2 142
5. Endocrine Diseases	2 237	1 209	1 028
2007			
1. Diseases of the organ of circulation (insultus, heart attacks, ischemic heart disease etc.)	74 380	37 610	36 770
2. Morbid growths	17 992	7 526	10 466
3. Respiratory diseases	4 540	1 720	2 820
4. Digestive System Diseases	3 493	1 133	2 360
5. Endocrine Diseases	2 166	1 214	952

Table 4
Morbidity rate among women per age groups

<i>Year</i>	<i>0-4</i>	<i>5-14</i>	<i>15-24</i>	<i>25-34</i>	<i>35-49</i>	<i>50 +</i>	<i>60 +</i>
2001							
2006							
2008							

Table 5
Morbidity rate of malignant diseases for women

<i>Year</i>	<i>Breast cancer — newly found</i>	<i>Over 100,000 women Mortality</i>	<i>Cervical cancer</i>	<i>Over 100,000 women Mortality</i>
2000	3 097	73.9/ total 801.2	5 707	69.9/ total 603.6
2006	3 407	85.9/ total 1 093.1	1 162	29.3/ total 339.9
2008	3 398	86/ total 1 124.8	1 069	27.1/ total 342.1

Table 6
Birth rate

Year	Total coefficient	Total coefficient of fecundity	Girls per 1,000 boys	Average age of the mother at giving birth to a first child	Share of children born out of marriage
2001	8.6%	1.24		23.8 years old	42.1%
2006	9.6%	1.38		25.2 years old	49%
2008	10.2%	1.48	943	25.4 years old	51.1%

Table 7
Live born children at fertile age per place of residence

Woman's age	Total live born per 1,000 women			Of them in the towns			Of them in the villages		
	2000	2006	2007	2000	2006	2007	2000	2006	2007
Total	36.7	39.8	40.9	35.0	38.5	39.7	42.2	44.1	44.6
15-19	47.1	41.9	43.0	38.2	33.8	35.0	70.2	64.5	64.4
20-24	89.7	79.5	77.9	80.6	67.1	66.4	120.2	126.5	120.7
25-29	72.9	84.2	85.6	74.8	85.8	86.1	67.0	78.5	83.9
30-34	32.3	52.5	56.1	34.9	56.5	61.0	24.7	37.4	39.2
35-39	9.5	16.3	18.4	9.9	17.9	20.0	8.4	10.9	12.9
40-44	1.9	2.2	2.8	1.9	2.4	3.0	1.9	1.6	2.1
45-49	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.1	0.1

Table 8
Child mortality per 1,000 live-born in Bulgaria

Year	Year 2000	Year 2001	Year 2002	Year 2003	Year 2004	Year 2005	Year 2006	Year 2007
Child mortality (per 1,000 live-born)	13.3	14.4	13.3	12.3	11.6	10.4	9.7	9.2

Source: National Statistical Institute.

Table 9
Registered diseases of syphilis in Bulgaria per 100 000 people.

	2001	2006	2008
Diseases	119.7	62.2	
Incl. newly found	19.4	6.6	

Table 10
Births and abortions

Year	Births	Per 1,000 women at fertile age	Abortions	Per 1,000 women at fertile age
2001	68 680	35.2	51 165	26.2
2006	74 495	40.0	37 272	20.0
2007	75 915	41.2	37 594	20.4

Table 11
Marriage rate

	2001	2006	2008
Marriage rate	4.0	4.3	3.6
Average women age for concluding a marriage	24.8	25.9	26.1

Table 12
Deaths by causes for death during 2007

Causes for death, ICD - X revision*	Total			Per 100 thousand people of the population		
	Number	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total	113 004	59 823	53 181	1 475.3	1 612.3	1 346.5
Some infectious and Parasitic diseases	710	461	249	9.3	12.4	6.3
Morbidity growths	17 992	10 466	7 526	234.9	282.1	190.6
Including:						
Malignant growths of digestive organs	6 450	3 767	2 683	84.2	101.5	67.9
Malignant growths of respiratory organs and the chest	3 914	3 236	678	51.1	87.2	17.2
Diseases of the blood, hematoplastic organs involving the immune mechanism	179	86	93	2.3	2.3	2.4
Endocrine diseases, disorders of nutrition and metabolism	2 166	952	1 214	28.3	25.7	30.7
Mental and behavioural disorders	76	45	31	1.0	1.2	0.8
Nervous System Disorders	975	550	425	12.7	14.8	10.8
Diseases of the eye and its appendices	3	2	1	0.0	0.1	0.0
Diseases of the ear and the mastoid process	1	1	—	0.0	0.0	—
Diseases of the organs of circulation	74 380	36 770	37 610	971.0	991.0	952.3
including:						
Hypertensive diseases	8 282	3 817	4 465	108.1	102.9	113.1
Ischemic heart disease	15 322	8 604	6 718	200.0	231.9	170.1
including:						
Acute myocardial infarction	6 646	4 174	2 472	86.8	112.5	62.6

<i>Causes for death, ICD - X revision*</i>	<i>Number</i>			<i>Per 100 thousand people of the population</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Cerebrovascular diseases	23 105	10 635	12 470	301.6	286.6	315.7
Respiratory diseases	4 540	2 820	1 720	59.3	76.0	43.6
including:						
Flu and pneumonia	1 773	959	814	23.1	25.8	20.6
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	1 927	1 328	599	25.2	35.8	15.2
Digestive system diseases	3 493	2 360	1 133	45.6	63.6	28.7
Diseases of the skin and the hypodermic tissue	35	17	18	0.5	0.5	0.5
Diseases of the Bone Muscular System and the connective tissue	54	22	32	0.7	0.6	0.8
Diseases of the Genitourinary system	1 320	744	576	17.2	20.1	14.6
Pregnancy, birth and post-birth period	9	—	9	0.1	—	0.2
Some states, occurred during the perinatal period	293	174	119	3.8	4.7	3.0
Inborn anomalies (development defects), deformations and chromosomal aberrations	169	85	84	2.2	2.3	2.1
Symptoms, signs and deflections from the norm, found at clinical and laboratory tests	2 812	1 409	1 403	36.7	38.0	35.5
Internal causes for the morbidity rate and mortality	3 797	2 859	938	49.6	77.1	23.8
Including: traffic accidents	1 070	803	267	14.0	21.6	6.8

* International classification of the World Health Organization of diseases and health-related problems.

Source: National Statistical Institute.

Table 13
Main demographic indices

<i>Indices</i>	<i>2005</i>			<i>2006</i>			<i>2007</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>In the towns</i>	<i>In the villages</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>In the towns</i>	<i>In the villages</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>In the towns</i>	<i>In the villages</i>
Density of population (per sq.m)	69.5	.	.	69.3	.	.	68.9	.	.
Natural increase (per 1,000 people)	-5.4	-2.4	-12.7	-5.1	-2.1	-12.4	-5.0	-1.9	-12.3
Gender proportion (number of women per 1 000 men)	1 062	1 077	1 028	1 064	1 078	1 030	1 065	1 080	1 030
Structure of the population by place of residence (%)	100.0	70.2	29.8	100.0	70.6	29.4	100.0	70.7	29.3
Age Dependency Rate (%)	44.5	37.5	64.0	44.3	37.5	63.8	44.3	37.8	63.1
Birth rate (per 1 000 people)	9.2	9.6	8.1	9.6	10.1	8.3	9.8	10.4	8.5
Total fecundity rate of	1.31	1.24	1.56	1.38	1.31	1.60	1.42	1.35	1.62

Indices	2005			2006			2007		
	Total	In the towns	In the villages	Total	In the towns	In the villages	Total	In the towns	In the villages
Mortality (per 1,000 people)	14.6	12.0	20.8	14.7	12.2	20.7	14.8	12.3	20.7
Men	16.2	13.5	22.4	16.2	13.6	22.3	16.1	13.6	22.1
Women	13.2	10.7	19.2	13.3	11.0	19.2	13.5	11.1	19.4
Child's mortality (per 1,000 live-born)	10.4	8.9	14.6	9.7	8.6	13.1	9.2	7.9	12.7
Average life duration (in years) ¹	*72.6	72.9	71.6	**72.6	73.0	71.5	***72.7	73.0	71.5
Men	69.0	69.3	68.1	69.1	69.4	67.9	69.2	69.6	68.1
Women	76.3	76.6	75.7	76.3	76.5	75.6	76.3	76.6	75.5
Marriage rate (per 1,000 people)	4.3	4.9	3.0	4.3	4.8	2.9	3.9	4.3	2.8
Divorce rate (per 1,000 people)	1.9	2.2	1.2	1.9	2.2	1.2	2.1	2.5	1.2
Average age (in years):									
Of the population	41.2	39.5	45.2	41.4	39.7	45.3	41.5	39.9	45.4
Of mother at birth:									
Of first child	24.8	25.6	22.5	25.2	25.9	22.7	25.3	26.0	22.8
Of child	26.2	26.8	24.4	26.4	27.0	24.5	26.7	27.3	24.8
Upon concluding a marriage:									
Men	29.1	29.4	28.0	29.3	29.6	28.1	29.0	29.3	28.0
Women	25.8	26.2	24.5	25.9	26.3	24.5	25.9	26.4	24.4
Upon divorce:									
Men	41.1	40.8	42.1	41.3	41.1	41.9	41.4	41.3	42.3
Women	37.6	37.4	38.4	37.7	37.6	38.3	38.0	38.0	38.4

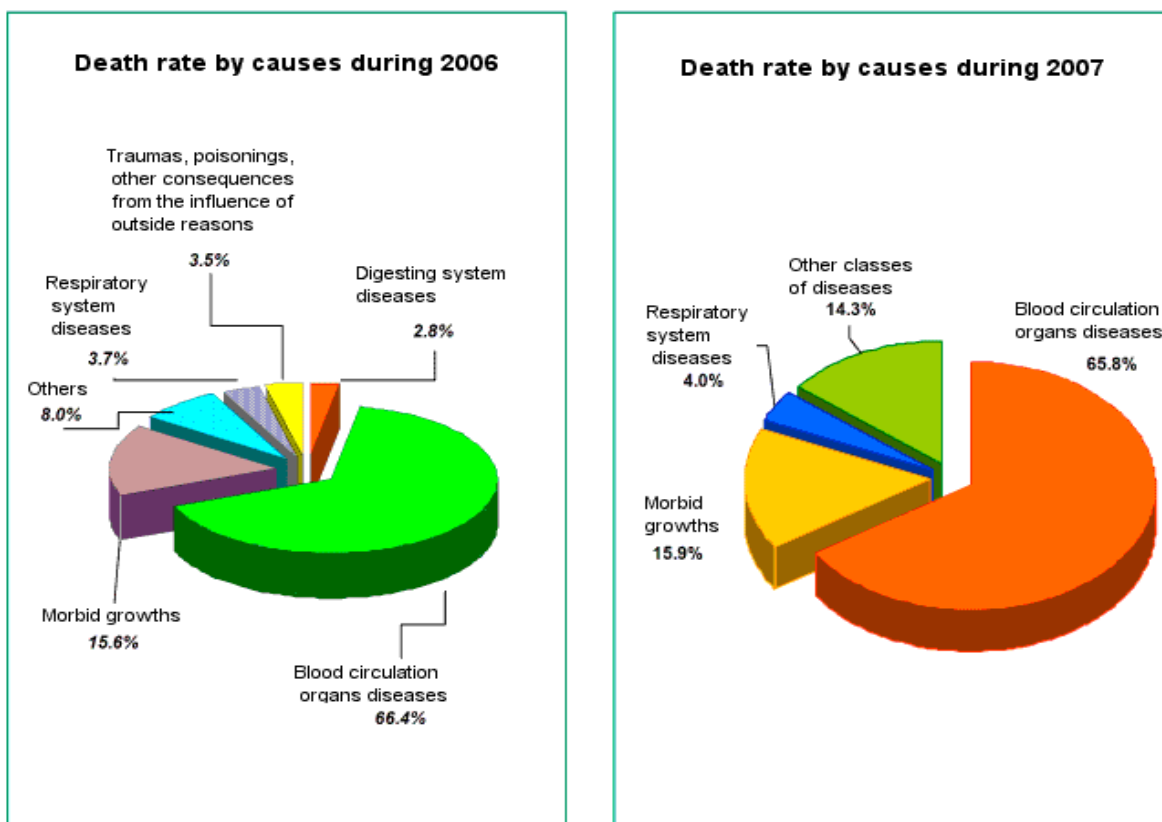
¹ The data about the average duration of life is respectively:

* For the period 2003-2005

** For the period 2004-2006

***For the period 2005-2007

Source: National Statistical Institute.



Article 14

Table 1

Rural population per gender and age as of 31.12.2007 (in %)

<i>Gender</i>		<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Total (thousand)*	2245.5	1106.1	1139.4
Total (%)	100	49.3	50.7
Age (in years)			
Total	100	100	100
0-14	14.9	15.5	14.3
15-29	17.8	19.2	16.5
30-59	35.5	37.1	33.9
60 and over	31.8	28.2	35.3

* Average annual number, 2007.

Source: Statistical Year-book of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2008: 57

Table 2
Households per place of residence and per number of members as of 1.03.2001

<i>Place of residence/Number of members in households</i>	<i>Years of census</i>					
	<i>1946</i>	<i>1965</i>	<i>1975</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>1992</i>	<i>2001</i>
Structure — percentage						
In the villages	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Single member	4.3	9.9	11.6	17.9	21.4	24.4
Two members	10.7	24.7	30.6	32.2	33.6	34.2
Three members	18.0	19.5	17.6	15.2	14.9	15.8
Four members	22.6	19.6	16.7	14.9	13.9	13.6
Five members	18.9	13.4	11.6	9.6	8.0	6.9
Six members	12.6	8.7	7.9	6.8	5.3	3.2
Seven or more members	12.8	4.4	4.1	3.5	2.9	1.9

Source: Census of the population and residential fund of the Republic of Bulgaria, NSI, 2001.

Table 3
Population of 8 and more years in the villages per gender and education as of 1.03.2001

<i>In the villages</i>	<i>100,0</i>	<i>100,0</i>	<i>100,0</i>	<i>100,0</i>	<i>100,0</i>	<i>100,0</i>
Higher	0,1	0,4	0,5	0,8	1,3	1,6
Secondary and semi-higher	1,9	4,7	8,5	15,8	21,6	28,0
Primary	14,8	26,3	32,1	38,0	40,0	40,6
Elementary	83,2	68,6	58,9	45,4	37,1	29,8
Men	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Higher	0,2	0,6	0,7	1,0	1,6	1,5
Secondary and semi-higher	2,6	5,0	9,3	17,9	24,1	31,0
Primary	18,9	31,9	37,3	42,0	42,7	42,6
Elementary	78,3	62,5	52,7	39,1	31,6	24,9
Women	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Higher	0,0	0,2	0,3	0,6	1,1	1,7
Secondary and semi-higher	1,2	4,4	7,7	13,8	19,1	25,2
Primary	10,7	20,8	26,8	34,0	37,3	38,6
Elementary	88,1	74,6	65,1	51,6	42,5	34,6

Source: Census of the population and residential fund of the Republic of Bulgaria, NSI, 2001.

Table 4
Work force, employed and unemployed per place of residence and gender in 2006

<i>Place of residence per gender</i>	<i>Work force</i>			<i>Economic activity rate %</i>	<i>Employment rate %</i>	<i>Unemployment rate %</i>
	<i>Total thousand</i>	<i>Employed — thousand</i>	<i>Unemployed — thousand</i>			
Total	3415.7	3110.0	305.7	51.3	46.7	9.0
In the towns	2471.6	2409.4	195.3	55.8	51.6	7.5
Men	1350.5	1253.3	97.2	60.8	56.4	7.2
Women	1254.2	1156.1	98.1	51.2	47.2	7.8
In the villages	811.0	700.6	110.4	40.8	35.2	13.6
Men	458.6	399.5	59.3	47.2	41.1	12.9
Women	352.4	301.1	51.2	34.6	29.6	14.5

Source: Statistical reference book of the Republic of Bulgaria, NSI, 2007: 70.