



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

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**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 sixth and seventh periodic report of States parties

Cyprus*

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

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List of abbreviations

ACPCDV	Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence
AP	Action Plan
APHFV	Association for the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence
APATHB	Action Plan Against Trafficking in Human Beings
CPC	Cyprus Productivity Centre
GECEVT	Gender Equality Committee on Employment and Vocational Training
HDRA	Human Resource Development Authority
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MIGS	Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies
MJPO	Ministry of Justice and Public Order
MLSI	Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MCGCTHB	Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
NAP	National Action Plan
NAPATHB	National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings
NAPE	National Action Plan on Employment
NAPGE	National Action Plan on Gender Equality
NAPPHFV	National Action Plan on Prevention and Handling of Family Violence
NAPSPSI	National Action Plan on Social Protection and Social Inclusion
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIPHR	National Institution for the Protection of Human Rights
NMWR	National Machinery for Women's Rights
PCGE	Police Committee for Gender Equality
PDVCAO	Police Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office
POCD	Police Office for Combating Discrimination
SWS	Social Welfare Services
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings

I. Introduction

1. The sixth and seventh periodic report of Cyprus on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (hereinafter the “present Report”) was prepared in accordance with the Revised Guidelines for the Preparation of Reports by States Parties of 3 June 2009 (HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6). It addresses the issues and recommendations raised in the Concluding Comments of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) during the consideration of the third, fourth and fifth periodic report of Cyprus (hereinafter the “previous Report”) and covers the developments on elimination of discrimination against women and gender equality during the period 2004–2010. The present Report is accompanied by an updated core document.

2. The present Report has been prepared by the Law Commissioner of Cyprus who, pursuant to a decision of the Council of Ministers, is entrusted with ensuring compliance by Cyprus with its reporting obligations under international human rights instruments. It was compiled on the basis of information and data provided by the Ministry of Justice and Public Order (MJPO) through the National Machinery for Women’s Rights (NMWR), competent authority for the purposes of the Convention, as well as the Ministries and Services having competence for specific matters. Information was also obtained from the Ombudsman, the Equality Authority, the Anti-Discrimination Body, as well as relevant NGOs, especially women’s organizations. The present Report has been communicated to women’s organizations and NGOs dealing with human rights issues as well as to professional associations.

3. During the period under review, a number of National Action Plans (NAPs) and strategies have been developed that, either specifically address issues of gender equality or, routinely incorporate gender mainstreaming. These include the National Action Plan on Employment (NAPE) (2004), the National Action Plan on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (NAPSPSI), the National Action Plan Against Trafficking in Human Beings (NAPATHB), (2010–2012), the National Action Plan on the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence (NAPPHFV) (2010–2013) and, most significant, the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (NAPGE) (2007–2013), which was initiated by the NMWR.

4. The Government of the Cyprus regrets that due to the continuing illegal occupation and effective control of 37% of its territory by Turkish military forces, the Government is unable to ensure the full realization of women’s rights and gender equality in the whole of its territory and that, therefore, it is also deprived of its ability to apply gender equality laws, policies and programmes to those living in the part of the country under foreign occupation. Due to the above described situation, no reliable information and data are available regarding the enjoyment of the relevant rights by the Cypriot population living in the area that is not controlled by the Government. Therefore, all information and data presented in the present Report concern Government-controlled areas.

II. Report on the implementation of the Convention

Article 1

Interpretation of discrimination

5. The Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training (Amendment) Law, 2009 [L.39 (I)/2009], amending Law 205(I) of 2002, for harmonization with European Directive 2006/54/EC, prescribes the following:

- “Direct discrimination based on sex” shall exist where one person is treated less favourably on grounds of sex than another is, has been, or would be treated in a comparable situation
- “Discrimination based on sex” shall mean every direct or indirect discrimination, including sexual harassment or harassment and any less favourable treatment based on a person’s rejection of, or submission to such conduct, as well as any less favourable treatment of a woman related to pregnancy, childbirth, nursing, maternity, or sickness due to pregnancy or childbirth, but not including positive actions, whereas any instruction or order to discriminate against persons, on grounds of sex, shall be discrimination based on sex
- “Indirect discrimination based on sex” shall exist where an apparently neutral provision, criterion, or practice would put persons of one sex at a particular disadvantage compared with persons of the other sex, unless that provision, criterion or practice is objectively justified by a legitimate aim, and the means of achieving that aim are appropriate and necessary

6. The Equal Pay Between Men and Women for the Same Work or for Work of Equal Value (Amendment) Law, 2009 [L.38(I)/2009], amending Law 177(I) of 2002, for harmonization with European Directive 2006/54/EC and the Equal Treatment of Men and Women (Access to and Supply of Goods and Services) Law, 2008 [L.18(I)/2008], for harmonization with European Directive 2004/113/EC, prescribes the principle of equality in pay, discrimination based on sex, as well as direct and indirect discrimination.

Article 2

Elimination of legal and real discrimination

7. During the period under review, the legal framework safeguarding women’s rights has further improved, with a number of legislative provisions, particularly in the sphere of family, employment, violence and trafficking in women. Legal reform, aiming at the elimination of discrimination and the further safeguarding of women’s rights in all fields has been pursued, bringing legislation in line with relevant international instruments, in particular the Convention. (For a full list of legislative measures which have been enacted during the period under review, see Annex).

8. There has been a commendable effort on behalf of the NMWR, relevant government authorities, equality bodies and NGOs to inform women of their rights, including how to obtain support and assistance in pursuing them. In an effort to raise awareness regarding the Convention, the NMWR has republished it, together with its Optional Protocol, and the previous Report, in English and Greek.

9. Women are increasingly taking advantage of the extra-judicial mechanisms (equality bodies), set up by legislations with the mandate to investigate complaints of discrimination and violations of human rights. This is a positive development, as evidence has shown that women are reluctant to bring cases of sex discrimination before the courts.

10. Further, the period under review has been critical for the development of a national policy on gender equality. A number of NAPs and strategies have been developed, that either specifically address issues of gender equality or incorporate gender mainstreaming. The NAPs that specifically target issues of gender equality are those on Employment (2004–2006), Gender Equality between Women and Men (2007–2013) and Trafficking in Human Beings (2010–2012). Additionally, the NAPSPSI (2008) incorporates gender mainstreaming and addresses policy areas such as health care, reconciliation of work and family life, pension plans and long-term care.

11. The governmental strategy in the field of gender equality is a dual approach, i.e. implementing specific actions for women and, in parallel, promoting gender mainstreaming in all areas of policies.

12. In addition to the inclusion of gender perspective in the National Development Plan, it is noted that, within the scope of utilization of the funds granted to EU member states from the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund, the promotion of equality between women and men is considered in an essential and comprehensive way during all stages: programming, selection of projects, implementation and evaluation.

13. Specific actions and measures taken within this process include:

- Analysis of the current socioeconomic situation of Cyprus based on quantitative analysis of key economic and social indicators, including the gender dimension, both in qualitative and quantitative terms, based on specific indicators
- Identification of main weaknesses and setting up of priorities of Cyprus regarding gender equality, both in an economic and social spectrum
- Design of interventions, both in the form of positive actions for women in areas where shortages have been identified, as well as horizontal measures
- Quantitative targets by gender are specified and are monitored throughout the implementation
- Studies undertaken at the EU level and at a national level, in evaluating the contribution of interventions in the support of gender equality

which have contributed in gaining experience in promoting gender mainstreaming in policy making.

14. During the period under review, in addition to the NMWR, other bodies/structures have been put in place promoting gender equality in the public sector, according to their specific sphere of competence, such as the following:

(a) *Ombudsman/Anti-Discrimination Body and Equality Authority*

(i) As of May 2004, the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman) was appointed by law the competent body (an independent authority) to deal with and decide upon discrimination matters in Cyprus. As a result, two separate Authorities were created, namely the Cyprus Anti-Discrimination Body and the Equality Authority, which together comprise the “Cyprus Equality Body”;

(ii) The Anti-Discrimination Body investigates complaints of discrimination on all grounds, in relation to access to goods and services, social security, social protection schemes, education and health care, while the Equality Authority investigates complaints on the grounds of sex in the area of employment and vocational training, including sexual harassment, implementation of maternity protection and rights, discrimination in access to employment and employment and working conditions (including dismissal and pay). In 2008, the Equality Authority expanded its mandate further to cover the Equal Treatment of Men and Women (Access to Goods and Services) Law of 2008;

(iii) From May 2004 until the end of 2010, 230 complaints regarding possible violations of the equality principle in relation to sex were submitted to the Equality Authority. These complaints, concerned discriminations due to pregnancy, delivery of a baby, motherhood or family situation as well as discriminations on hiring, promotion, payments, professional training and sexual harassment. 17 complaints

regarding discrimination on the grounds of sex were filed to the Anti-Discrimination Body.

(b) *National Institution for the Protection of Human Rights (NIPHR)*

The status of the NIPHR established in 1998 with a broad mandate to protect human rights, fell short of the Paris Principles, in that it was not independent from the Government, both in human and financial resources. Efforts have been made to eradicate this; recently a decision was taken to transfer its competence to the Ombudsman whose independence from the Government is safeguarded by Law.

(c) *Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training (GECEVT)*

In 2009, the GECEVT was further strengthened by adding to its powers the provision of independent assistance to victims of discrimination. This includes giving legal advice and legal representation for victims of discrimination in judicial or administrative procedures. Furthermore, the staff of the Committee was strengthened with the addition of an Administrative Officer and an Expert Advisor. Lastly, the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Occupational Training (Amendment) Law of 2009, [L. (39(I)/2009] added elements of further independence in the GECEVT's mandate, allowing it to decide on and control more freely matters relating to its better operation.

(d) *Equality Inspectors-Department of Labour/Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance*

Since July 2008, the Equality Inspectors underwent targeted legal training relating to discrimination issues and became active in the investigation of complaints. The Equality Inspectors' knowledge of the law and their practical experience in the examination of complaints has grown considerably. The body of Inspectors will be improved by hiring additional inspectors.

(e) *Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence (ACPCDV)*

The ACPCDV continues to work intensively in order to monitor the implementation of the relevant law on family violence and to raise awareness among professionals and the public in general. During the period under review, the ACPCDV has been very active and has played a vital role in raising awareness, carrying out research, strengthening interdepartmental cooperation, monitoring implementation of the relevant law, evaluating existing services, providing training to relevant professionals and most importantly, in developing the NAPPHFV, which was approved by the Council of Ministers in 2009.

(f) *Coordinating Multidisciplinary Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (see under Article 6 below)*

(g) *Parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women*

Established in June 2006 by a decision of the House of Representatives. Its aim is to monitor the policies and actions on the issue of equal opportunities between men and women. More specifically, it monitors and supports the implementation of the NAPGE (2007–2013), the NMWR and the efforts of governmental and non-governmental organizations which promote gender equality. This is done through its legislation work, as well as the exercise of parliamentary control on relevant issues.

(h) *Police Committee for Gender Equality (PCGE)*

Established in 2008 by a decision of the Council of Ministers. Its main tasks are the full implementation of legislation on gender equality in the Police, the promotion of equal

treatment and the development of a new attitude, based on the principle of gender equality. It consists of 4 senior police officers (2 men and 2 women); one of its members is the Assistant Chief of Police in charge of Training, the first woman who has reached the highest promotion post in the police hierarchy.

(i) *Police Office for Combating Discrimination (POCD)*

It operates at the Police Headquarters and is in charge of promoting within the Police issues related to combating racism, discrimination, intolerance, and xenophobia. During 2010 it realized a project titled “Cyprus Police for Diversity, Against Discrimination”, for a budget of €110,000, co-financed by the Government and the E.U. (Progress Program). Among others, a study on the history and role of women in the Police was published, a relevant police documentary was released and a national conference on the issue was realized.

(j) *Commissioner for the Protection of Children’s Rights*

It was established in 2007 pursuant to the Commissioner for the Protection of Children’s Rights Law, 2007 [L.74(I)/2007], as an independent authority on the basis of the Paris Principles and General Comment No.2 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child. Its general mandate is to protect and promote children’s rights; in this, it has a very wide spectrum of competences, including monitoring respect by any public or private authority of children’s rights, promoting awareness raising of the society on children’s rights and representing children in procedures (including judicial proceedings) as provided by law or when the Court deems appropriate for securing the best interest of the child. The Commissioner accepts complaints regarding violations of children’s rights and monitors the handling of the case by the relevant authorities. In this context, the Commissioner deals with gender issues, the right of the child to parental communication and care, as well as issues of reconciliation of family and professional life, which affect both the child and the parents, particularly the mother.

Article 3

National machinery for women’s rights

15. During the period under review, the NMWR pursued a number of projects and activities, including:

- Implementation of the project “European Policies and Strategies on Gender Equality and the necessary mechanisms for their implementation,” 2003–2004
- Implementation of the project “Women in the Business World: Enhancement of Female Entrepreneurship,” 2004–2005
- Implementation of the project “Gender Equality: Responsibility of Both Sexes,” 2005–2006
- Wide dissemination of the Concluding Comments of the CEDAW Committee, as well as the Convention, its Optional Protocol, the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action
- Implementation of the project “Gender Equality – The New Dimension in Local Development,” 2006–2007
- Preparation of the NAPGE (2007–2013) and promotion/monitoring its implementation

- Awareness-raising campaigns, aimed at increasing representation of women in political and public life, in view of the 2006 and 2011 Parliamentary and Municipal Elections
- Development and funding of research in areas affecting the lives of women, including family violence, trafficking in women, women in education, migrant women, women in political and public life, gender and the media
- Supporting women's groups and initiatives and most recently the establishment of Women's Multicultural Centre
- Contribution of law reform, particularly in the area of family law, violence against women and employment
- Promotion of gender mainstreaming in public policies and the development of relevant action plans
- Coordination of the preparation of reports, including the CEDAW country report and the Beijing Platform for Action in 2009 (Beijing+15), which have been published

16. The NMWR plays a leading role in ensuring the introduction of gender mainstreaming in all national policies and programmes. This is done through the encouragement of training of relevant professionals within the public service on gender equality issues, the support of the development of research on gender-related issues, the promotion of data collection and gender-disaggregated statistics and the organization of relevant training workshops, seminars, and conferences with the participation of international experts.

17. It also participates in a number of multidisciplinary committees under other ministries, dealing with issues such as family, children, violence against women, trafficking, social inclusion, and employment and contributes substantially in ensuring a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of relevant policies. The Government has developed much stronger ties with women's organizations by involving them in relevant spheres of policy formulation and decision-making processes.

18. During the period under review, the most important achievement of the NMWR was the development of the NAPGE (2007–2013), adopted by the Council of Ministers in August 2007. It is essential in that it incorporates a holistic approach to gender equality addressing 6 priority areas, namely: employment, education, decision-making, social rights, violence and gender stereotypes. Its development was a collective achievement due to close collaboration with all government departments, the Union of Municipalities, as well as women's organizations, NGOs, academic institutions, and human rights bodies.

19. Pursuant to a decision of the Council of Ministers (no. 61.649, dated 24/2/2005), the NMWR has been involved in the procedure for ensuring that gender mainstreaming is incorporated in all stages of the utilization of the funds granted to Cyprus from the Structural Funds (programming, selection of projects, implementation and evaluation). In particular, the NMWR is responsible for evaluating and certifying that proposals for projects funded by the Structural Funds comply with national and EU legislation/policies on gender equality.

20. With the initiative and collaboration of the NMWR, the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA) organized for the period 2007–2010 a number of seminars and training programmes, aimed at increasing awareness on European gender equality policies among civil servants and, in particular, the Focal Points for Gender Equality, appointed in every Ministry and comprising the Interministerial Committee of the NMWR.

21. A Ministerial Committee for Gender Equality between Women and Men, under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Justice and Public Order and consisting of the Ministers of Labour and Social Insurance, Interior, Finance and Education and Culture, has also been set up by the Council of Ministers (decision no. 69.623, dated 26/11/2009). It aims at strengthening collaboration among the various ministries on gender equality issues and, in particular, the implementation of the NAPGE (2007–2013).

22. The Ministerial Committee is assisted in its work by a Technical Committee of technocrats/experts from the relevant Ministries. Among its priorities is the elaboration of a study on the existing gender equality bodies, with the aim of exploring the possibility of creating a unified body on gender equality, with a broad spectrum of responsibilities, including the investigation of complaints of sex discrimination. The Equality Unit of the MJPO provides secretariat support to it.

23. The budget of the NMWR has been constantly increasing in recent years, namely from €366.000 in 2003 to €980.000 in 2008 and €870.000 in 2009. In 2010, it was reduced (€435.000), in line with the Government policy to reduce the budget deficit, but for 2011 it will rise to €760.000. The budget covers operational expenses of the Equality Unit, as well grants and subsidies to women's organizations and NGOs constituting the biggest part of the annual budget. These grants cover two categories of sponsoring: a) an annual subsidy to cover operational cost on specific conditions according to regulations, which are in force since January 2006; and b) the subsidies for the implementation of particular projects and activities, such as conferences, training workshops, information seminars and research on gender related issues.

24. The staff of the Equality Unit of the MJPO has also increased from two to three professionals. The Senior Administrative Officer is serving as the Secretary-General of the NMWR, and two Administrative Officers are assisted by external experts/consultants, such as an external consultant for the issuing of Certificates of Conformity with national and EU legislation and policies on gender equality, regarding projects funded by the Structural Funds.

25. In order to be in line with the NAPGE and contribute substantially in its implementation, the NMWR has mobilized all its Subcommittees and has set up new ones, namely:

(a) *The Subcommittee on Women and Labour* has organized seminars, workshops and events, including a seminar with the subject "Women and Employment" in 2008, and workshops on equal pay, the reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities, the integration of inactive women into the labour market, etc. In addition, in collaboration with local communities, it launched in 2008 a campaign in rural areas aimed at informing and sensitizing people, in particular women, on relevant issues, including the gender pay gap and the reconciliation of family and working life. In the framework of this campaign, seminars have been organized in collaboration with local communities and informative leaflets and other material have been prepared and disseminated, including the Convention and its Optional Protocol;

(b) *The Subcommittee on Women and Mass Media* has launched a campaign aimed at the elimination of gender stereotypes in the media and the projection of a positive image of women. In that respect, a meeting with representatives of mass media and the members of the NMWR was organized in May 2010. Further, it is planning a workshop on "The Gender Dimension in Mass Media", in 2011;

(c) *The Subcommittee on the Participation of Women in Decision-Making Positions* (see article 7 below);

(d) *The Subcommittee on Education* has prepared the position of the NMWR regarding the ongoing Educational Reform, stressing the need for integrating gender equality at all levels of education and, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC), is preparing the organization of a seminar on Gender Equality Perspective in Education;

(e) *The Subcommittee on Women and Economy* has organized a seminar in November 2008 on Gender Budgeting, aiming at integrating gender perspective in all government policies and programmes. The keynote speaker was Sheila Quinn, an expert-advisor from the Council of Europe. The Minister of the MJPO, the Director of Budgets from the Ministry of Finance (MOF), and the President of the Parliamentary Committee for Finance and Budgets also spoke. The Subcommittee is planning a conference on the global economic crisis, the European Union's vision for 2020 and gender equality policies;

(f) *The Subcommittee on Bi-Communal Programmes* contributed substantially to the establishment of the Women's Multicultural Centre, as foreseen by the NAPGE, aiming at bringing together women from all communities in Cyprus in the promotion of gender equality, reconciliation, and peace. It continues to be actively involved in the promotion of reconciliation and peace through the organization of bi-communal activities and projects;

(g) *The Subcommittee on Violence in the Family* and *the Subcommittee on Trafficking in Women* were set up to contribute to the implementation of the NAPPHFV (2010–2013) and the NAPATHB (2010–2012), respectively;

(e) *The Subcommittee on Vulnerable Groups of Women* has been set up to study and give visibility to the problems of the most vulnerable groups of women. Its latest conference held in March 2009 on "Women with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases: Better Opportunities in Life", included a large number of women with disabilities as participants and speakers. The findings of the conference have also been translated, in collaboration with the School for the Blind, in Braille system.

Article 4

Special temporary measures – positive-action programmes

Economic life

26. The Department of Labour's Intermediate Body of Subsidies is implementing a scheme for providing incentives for hiring disadvantaged individuals. The term "disadvantaged individuals" includes recognized victims of human trafficking and single parent families, who are predominantly women. The aim of the scheme is the full-time employment of disadvantaged individuals, with financial aid reaching 65% of the annual wage cost for the first 12 months of employment. The implementation of the scheme started in March 2010 and will last until 2014.

27. The Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) and the Cyprus Productivity Centre (CPC) are implementing a series of programmes to advance women's employment opportunities and aid their stay in the labour market. In the programming period 2007–2013, the HRDA is implementing schemes for the promotion of training and employability of economically inactive women, as well as for young secondary education school graduates, with special priority given to women, while the CPC is also implementing a scheme promoting flexible forms of employment, targeting mainly women.

Female entrepreneurship

28. Within the framework of the Strategic Development Plan 2007–2013, the Industrial Development Service of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism implemented a

Grant Scheme for the Strengthening of Women Entrepreneurship. A total amount of about €5.000.000 has been available for the needs of the Scheme, implemented from 2008 to 2013. The first call of the Scheme was announced in 2008. 149 applications were submitted and 89 applications were approved. The amount given as a grant was €3.1 million. The second call was announced at the end of 2009. 229 applications were submitted.

Political life (see article 7 below)

Article 5

Changes in social attitudes – violence against women

29. The NMWR contributes to the changing of social attitudes and the elimination of gender stereotypes, which are still identified as the major obstacle for the advancement of women. This is one of the priorities of the NAPGE and an issue, which is pursued in the framework of the educational reform aiming at incorporating diversity, multiculturalism and gender equality, which is currently under way.

30. The NAPGE places particular emphasis on education and the elimination of gender stereotypes through activities under the Chapter on Education and the Chapter on Mass Media, such as research on gender equality in these fields and the sensitization and training of teachers, parents and students, as well as journalists and policy-makers in the mass media.

31. Two specific projects have been implemented by the NMWR (2004–2006), the first aiming at encouraging girls to pursue education which leads to wider career choices, such as entrepreneurship; and the other aimed at encouraging boys to become more involved in family and private life.

32. Based on the NAPGE, the MOEC has drafted its own AP on gender equality, which has as its primary aim the achievement of a comprehensive and systematic approach to gender equality policies in education and training, in order to tackle and prevent stereotyping attitudes, with regard to gender roles in the family and society. A three-member Committee has been appointed within the Pedagogical Institute, in order to pursue and coordinate its implementation.

Violence against women

33. The issue of violence against women continues to be a priority for the Government and commitments towards its eradication have been taken at the highest level.

34. During the period under review, major developments have taken place. The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims)(Amendment) Law of 2004, [L.212 (I)/2004], amending L. 119(I)/2000, inter alia, condemns any act of violence within the family, raises substantially the penalties for violence, provides protection to victims mainly by empowering the Court to issue restraining orders, clarifies that rape can be committed within marriage, facilitates the reporting of violent incidents, provides for the appointment of Family Counselors, the setting up of the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence (ACPCDV) to monitor the implementation of the Law, the taking of testimony of victims of violence by electronic means, the protection of victims and witnesses, makes the spouse a compellable witness and makes an omission to report a case of violence against a minor or a person with severe mental or psychological deficiency, a criminal offense punishable with imprisonment.

35. Another development of particular importance is the drafting of the NAPPFV (2010–2013) by the ACPCDV, approved by the Council of Ministers on 3/12/2009. The

aim of this NAP is to monitor the extent of family violence in Cyprus; raise awareness and sensitize society, including professionals, on all aspects of family violence by, inter alia, special conferences, seminars, information campaigns and other programmes; promote scientific research on family violence; promote services dealing with all aspects of the problem and specifically, for support and protection of victims; monitor the effectiveness of services and the enforcement of the relevant legislation.

36. The preparation of a Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures, which provides a framework for the cooperation of relevant departments of family violence, including the Social Welfare Services (SWS), the Police Force, the Ministry of Health, the MOEC, the Law Office of the Republic and relevant NGOs is of special significance. It is currently being revised, following evaluation and recommendations by all relevant stakeholders.

37. During the period under review, there has been a systematic effort by governmental authorities and NGOs alike, to raise awareness and sensitize the public on all forms of violence against women, their causes and consequences. The NMWR has played an important role in funding a number of projects implemented by women's organisations and NGOs, including research, training workshops, information seminars, conferences, exhibitions etc.

38. More specifically, Cyprus took part in the Council of Europe Campaign to Combat Violence against Women, including Domestic Violence (2006–2008). Moreover, the NMWR, the ACPCDV, the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence (APHFV-NGO), along with the House of Representatives and other stakeholders including the media, organized a series of public events and other activities under the slogan “No to Violence against Women”. The President of the House, Ministers and other high officials participated, reaffirming their commitment to the issue, as well as raising the profile of the event so as to increase media coverage.

39. The ACPCDV has published information material, including a booklet about Cyprus legislation concerning family violence, analyzing important aspects of the law. Posters, leaflets, and other material have also been published, which are disseminated widely among relevant authorities and the public. It has also been involved in the organization of training seminars and workshops for professionals, aimed at providing information and training on handling cases of family violence.

40. The ACPCDV has taken a leading role in commissioning research on family violence, the most recent being “Dimensions and Forms of Violence against Children within the Cypriot Family”. It has also taken the lead in the development of a unified data collection system for family violence, as well as in the completion in the mapping of the issue. (1998–2005).

41. An intervention programme named “Love without Hurt” was launched in 2006 by the APHVF, designed to help people who practice domestic violence (perpetrators), as well as victims of domestic violence. This programme is subsidized by the SWS and the NMWR.

42. During the period under review, data collection has improved and recent statistics show an increase in the number of cases reported to the Police, that is, from 505 in 2004, to 1053 in 2007 and, 809 in 2009. 80% of victims were women and girls.

43. The Police Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office (PDVCAO) has been strengthened and is playing a very important role in the investigation of domestic violence cases, the collection of statistical data, the provision of assistance to all Police Stations and the professional police training, in collaboration with the Cyprus Police Academy, which is considered of paramount importance. Such training is organized at four different levels, i.e.:

- (i) The Basic Level, where new recruits at the Police Academy are given a series of sessions covering legal, procedural, and other formalized or structured aspects of policing, general awareness and sensitization (Social Sciences perspective), and child sexual abuse;
- (ii) The Advanced Level, which is a 5-day (40 hrs.) course on domestic violence attended by investigators, offered on a continued basis depending on training needs analysis. Since 2008, additional 3-day (24 hrs.) courses on child victims are organized annually;
- (iii) The Specialized Level, which is a 3-week long training of police investigators on child sexual abuse cases or on interviewing vulnerable witnesses and on obtaining video recorded statements organized periodically;
- (iv) The Refresher Courses, which are short-span training sessions, conducted to update and refresh the knowledge of in service personnel. (Sergeant, Inspectors, CID personnel, Community Police Officers, Heads of Police Stations, etc.).

Each Police Station has on average four (4) specialized police officers.

44. The complex and difficult task of police officers when called to respond and handle cases involving domestic violence and/or child abuse is regulated by the relevant legislation, Police Standing Orders, Circulars of the Chief of the Police, as well as other official documentation codifying policing procedures and define obligations and responsibilities, all issued in a "Police Manual", first published in 2005 and revised in 2006, with funding approved by the NMWR.

45. Emphasis is also given to the mobilization of NGOs concerning the prevention and handling of violence in the family. Through the Grants-in-Aid Scheme, financial and technical support is provided to the APHVF for the support of the Crisis Centre, the Shelter and the Training Seminars run by the Association.

Article 6

Trafficking in women, exploitation and prostitution of women

46. A major development has been the enactment of the Combating of Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings and the Protection of Victims Law, 2007 [L.87(I)/2007], which fully harmonizes national legislation with the European acquis¹ and better implements Cyprus's international obligations and commitments.² In the new law, the term "trafficking", in addition to sexual exploitation of women and children, covers a wide spectrum, including forced labour and removal of human organs.

47. The law contains specific provisions for the prevention of trafficking, for the identification and protection of the victims and for the prosecution of those involved in trafficking, such as:

- (i) The establishment of a victim's referral mechanism;

¹ See European Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA of 19 July 2002 on combating trafficking in human beings.

² United Nations Convention against Transnational Crime, especially the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others; Council of Europe Convention on Action Against Trafficking in Human Beings.

- (ii) The provision, by governmental and non-governmental organizations, of information to any person that may fall into the scope of the law, of the possibilities offered by the law;
- (iii) The granting of a 1-month reflection period to victims allowing them to recover and escape the influence of perpetrators of the offences so that they can take an informative decision as to whether to cooperate with the competent authorities;
- (iv) The issue of a temporary residence permit to the victims wishing to cooperate with the authorities for the prosecution of the traffickers;
- (v) The clear definition/ statement of the rights of the victims (provision of allowance to the victims who do not have sufficient resources, access to emergency medical treatment, psychological support, protection, free translation and interpretation services when needed, free legal aid, access to labour market, to vocational training and education according to the relevant legislation);
- (vi) The signing of Protocols for cooperation with non-governmental organizations.

48. An important development in the area of trafficking in human beings has been the establishment of the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (MCGCTHB), as provided for by the said Law. Its purpose, among others, is to monitor the implementation of the Law, as well as to take all necessary measures, to monitor and evaluate the national referral mechanism of the victims and to collect and exchange information with regard to the offences provided by the Law. The MCGCTHB is comprised of the Minister of Interior, as President, who is also the National Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings and representatives of the Law Office of the Republic, the MJPO, the NMWR, the Police, the MFA, the Department of Labour, the SWS, the MOH, the MOEC, the Civil Registry and Migration Department, the Asylum Service and two NGOs (the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) and STIGMA).

49. The NAPATHB (2010–2012), prepared by the MCGCTHB and approved by the Council of Ministers in April 2010, covers prevention, protection of victims and prosecution in 9 thematic areas, i.e.: co-ordination, prevention, identification and recognition of victims, protection and support of victims, suppression and prosecution, data collection, training, international coordination and evaluation. The MCGCTHB monitors its implementation.

50. A significant development was also the establishment of a shelter for female victims of sexual exploitation, under the responsibility of the SWS, in November 2007.

51. The Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures for the Handling of Cases of Victims of Trafficking is under revision by the SWS in cooperation with government departments and NGOs who contributed to its development, in order to improve interdepartmental cooperation and provide assistance to all victims regardless of the type of exploitation.

52. Since 2004, the Police has been operating an Office for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, which has a central role in coordinating the anti-trafficking activities of the Police and in the identification of the victims.

53. An identification process manual has been published by the Police to guide and facilitate contact with potential trafficked persons, to describe the impact of the trauma and possible behavior of victims, to recognize indicators that may refer to a trafficking case, to outline general rules and prerequisites for first contact interviews, to be prepared to respond to victims reluctance to co-operation with law enforcement and to use criminal indicators relevant to identify human traffickers.

54. A new policy for the entry, residence, and employment of third country nationals in the Republic as 'artists' was approved by the Council of Ministers on 29/10/2008. The new policy consists of the following:

(i) *Abolition of special visas for artists:* All third country nationals entering the Republic to be employed as artists are issued employment permits as creative artists (writers, composers, painters etc), or as performing artists (actors, dancers, singers, etc);

(ii) *Procedures for the issue of temporary residence and employment permits:* Applications for employment of third country nationals in these fields are submitted to the Department of Labour by the employer and are examined by an interdepartmental committee, on the basis of specified criteria concerning their qualifications, previous experience, reputation abroad, etc. The aim is to avoid exploitation of the system. After approval, the employer has to apply to the Civil Registry and Migration Department for the issue of an entry permit. Upon arrival, the third country national applies for a temporary residence and employment permit, which is issued on the basis of conditions set in the Aliens and Immigration Law. The procedure is now similar to that applicable for all alien workers;

(iii) *Revision of the contracts of employment:* The contracts of employment have been revised to comply with the standard contract of the Department of Industrial Relations, which applies for all foreign workers. These contracts are valid for one year and fix the remuneration, benefits, working hours, annual leave and sick leave of the employee, as well as the general obligations of both parties. Alleged breaches of contracts of employment are investigated by the Department of Industrial Relations.

(iv) *Revision of the legislation regulating Private Employment Agencies:* New legislation regulating the operation of private employment agencies is pending before the Parliament. Its aim is to set the prerequisites and the qualifications of the persons operating such agencies, The criminal record of the applicant (natural person, legal person or cooperation) will be examined, in order to safeguard that the persons involved in the operation of such agencies, have not been convicted for offences, such as sexual exploitation, or trafficking of human beings, or any other serious criminal offence.

55. The Ministry of Interior (MOI) in collaboration with the MCGCTHB launched, in December 2008, a Cyprus-wide, 4-month awareness-raising campaign. It included the display of posters at main roads, highways, airports and prominent locations, the dissemination of informational leaflets to universities, colleges, airports and through the daily press and the airing of TV spots.

56. Awareness raising activities have also been carried out by women's organizations and NGOs, in particular on the occasion of the European Day against Trafficking, often with the support of the NMWR. Research, aiming at mapping the extent of the problem has been undertaken by NGOs, such as the research on "Trafficking in Persons for Sexual Exploitation in Cyprus (2005)" and the research "Mapping the Problem of Trafficking of Women for Sexual Exploitation in Cyprus (2007)," both conducted by the MIGS.

57. Members of the Police receive training on Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) constantly, participating in seminars and other training programs in Cyprus and abroad, offered by different services, departments and organizations. They also participate in meetings, working groups and conferences organised by international and European bodies, such as the E.U. Expert Group on THB, the Interpol Steering Committee, the Frontex Experts Group, the Europol Working Groups, etc.

58. THB training programmes are incorporated into several training courses of the Police Academy at various training levels. This aims at promoting sensitization and awareness of police officers, as well as at providing them with specialized skills in investigative matters and in handling victims of trafficking. Also specialized training courses are organized for immigration officers and investigators.

Article 7

Political and public life

59. Despite the increasing numbers of women actively involved in public and political life, women are still underrepresented at the decision-making level. However, it is worth mentioning that, in terms of political appointments, high-ranking posts have been filled by women including the Law Commissioner, the Commissioner for Administration (Ombudsman), the Auditor-General, the Accountant-General, the Commissioner for the Protection of Personal Data and the Commissioner for the Children's Rights. There are also two women out of 11 Ministers in the Council of Ministers, the Minister of Labour and Social Insurances and the Minister of Communication and Works, and one woman out of five members in the Public Service Commission (the constitutional body competent for appointing civil servants).

60. The number of judges, including in the Supreme Court, has increased to 104, of whom 44 are women (42%). In the District Courts, 22 judges are women (54%) and 19 are men. As at the end of 2010, out of 2,203 lawyers, 959 are women (43.5%).

61. The presence of women among senior civil servants increased with their participation reaching 26.8% in 2007 and 31.2% in 2009, and there are now three female Permanent Secretaries (out of 11), the highest ranking post in the civil service. Out of 51 Departments/Services of Ministries, seven are headed by a woman.

62. In local councils, the percentage of women increased from 18.6% to 20.7%. Three out of 33 mayors are women, with one of them being the Mayor of the capital of Cyprus, for the first time. There was a significant increase in women candidates for the 2006 Parliamentary elections from 10.7% to 23.2%. The percentage of women in the House of Representatives increased from 10.7% in 2001 (6/56) to 12.5% in 2009 (7/56). Two out of six members of the European Parliament from Cyprus are women (1/3).

63. In the field of international institutions, three women hold key positions, namely the EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, a member of the UN Committee against Torture and a member of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA).

64. Balanced participation of women and men in political life continues to be high on the agenda of the NMWR. In 2006, as part of its campaign for more women in politics, the NMWR drew the attention of the leaders of the political parties to the recommendation contained in the Council of Europe Rec. 2003(3) on Balanced Participation of Women and Men in Political and Public Life. This recommendation, translated into Greek and widely distributed in the form of a booklet by the NMWR, gave rise to lively debate on various measures including positive actions in the field of public and political life.

65. The NMWR through its Subcommittee on the Participation of Women in Decision-Making Positions, in view of the Parliamentary and Local Authorities elections of 2006, launched a campaign, partly devoted to contacts/meetings with the leaders of all political parties, to discuss positive action measures to accelerate *de facto* equality in political life. These contacts and discussions were widely covered by the media. The campaign included contacts with the mass media in an effort to give visibility to women's issues and women

candidates, especially during the pre-election period. The NMWR came to an agreement with the major media owners/directors for the screening of a TV spot urging citizens to vote both genders. In addition, the NMWR subsidized the production of a short film on the same lines to be used by NGOs and the media, during the pre-election period. A booklet for women in the 2006 Parliamentary Elections was also prepared by the NMWR and widely distributed.

66. The NMWR, in view of the local elections of 2006, implemented a European programme on “Women in Local Authorities”, which included meetings of women candidates, in all major cities with the general public, giving them the opportunity to present their commitments and vision, regarding the role of the local authorities in addressing gender equality issues.

67. In view of the Euro-Parliamentary Elections of 2009, the NMWR lent its support to the European Women’s Lobby to a campaign for promoting the election of women.

68. The said Subcommittee of the NMWR, in view of the Parliamentary and Local Elections of 2011, organized in October 2010 a Seminar on “Positive Action Measures and Good Practices in European Union Regarding the Advancement of Women in Public and Political Life”, with keynote speaker Eva-Britt Svensson, Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality and will continue its campaign in 2011, aiming at increasing the number of women in Parliament as well as in Local Councils. The campaign includes contacts with political leaders, informative seminars and collaboration with the mass media in order to contribute in this direction.

69. NGOs have been very active in recent years in promoting the participation of women in political and public life, and to this end, have organized campaigns and seminars and carried out research in this area, often with the support of the NMWR. A research study of particular interest was on the gender preferences of the Cypriot electorate during the 2006 elections, carried out by the Cyprus Gender Research Center. Others regarding the participation of women in public, political and economic life and sponsored by the NMWR, were:

- “The Position of Women in the Cypriot Contemporary Enterprise”, Employers and Industrialists Federation (2004)
- “Gender in the Business World – A comparison study between business men and women”, Cyprus Federation of Business and Professional Women (2005)
- “Women in High Ranking Positions of Financial Institutions and Semi-Governmental Organizations”, Employers and Industrialists Federation (2006)
- “From Voters to Citizens” — Participation of Women in Public and Political Life — The case of Cyprus (University of Cyprus – Jean Monnet) (2006)
- “The profile of Cypriot Women holding key positions in Public Life”, Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus (2007)

70. In order to respond to the issue of underrepresentation of women in public life, the Union of Municipalities established, in February 2005, the Committee of Elected Women of the Union of Municipalities. The Committee’s objectives include the promotion of equality and equal representation of men and women in local life through the participation of women in the local councils. Specifically, they campaign for the signing of the European Charter on Gender Equality in Local Authorities by all Municipalities. Based on that, the Municipality of Nicosia has developed its own Plan of Action on Gender Equality (2010–2012), in line with the NAPGE (2007–2013).

71. Towards this direction, most political parties have introduced the quota system to favour the participation of women in their decision-making bodies. Some also have quotas

for their candidate lists. This has been made possible through the parties' memorandum/constitution and not through legislation. In addition, under the NAPGE and in particular under its special chapter on the "Balanced Participation of Women and Men in Political/Social and Economic Life", measures for the introduction of targets and quotas have been included, such as the target of 40% for the participation of women in political life, quota of 30% for women in ballots in local, parliamentary and euro-parliamentary elections, and a quota of 30% for women in the appointments in all public committees and boards. These are discussed with the civil society at various fora, taking into account the critical perception regarding the use of quotas prevailing in Cyprus, even among women's organizations.

72. The Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT) is the competent authority responsible for the compilation and the publication of most of the official statistical data in Cyprus and its aim is to provide reliable and up-to-date statistical information. The NMWR gives great visibility to those statistical data through its webpage, reports, publications, informative leaflets, campaigns and speeches made by the Minister and the Permanent Secretary of the MJPO and the Secretary General of the NMWR on various occasions.

73. The Statistical Portrait of Women in Cyprus (Cyprus Statistical Service, 2008) which provides gender disaggregated data for all sectors including employment, education, health, poverty, and public life will soon be updated and republished.

Women and peace

74. Women continue to be actively involved in the promotion of reconciliation and peace through bi-communal activities and projects, but also more recently to address issues of common concern, such as environmental issues and violence against women. The establishment of Women's Multicultural Centre, as foreseen by the NAPGE, aiming at bringing together women from all communities in Cyprus in the promotion of gender equality, reconciliation, and peace, is a noteworthy initiative. The NMWR also plays an important role in bringing women from both communities together by providing support to bi-communal initiatives and through the involvement of Turkish Cypriot women's organizations as full participants in its activities and funding schemes.

75. In September 2008, full-fledged negotiations on the Cyprus problem under the auspices of the United Nations commenced between the leaders of the two Communities. The reunification of Cyprus is to be based on a bi-zonal, bi-communal federation as envisaged by the 1977 and 1979 high-level agreements, with a single sovereignty, single citizenship, single international personality, territorial integrity and political equality, as defined by the relevant Security Council resolutions. The women of Cyprus have expressed their full support for the current negotiations.

Article 8

Representation at the international level

76. The representation of women in the foreign service of the Republic has further improved. Whereas, there were nine women ambassadors until 2004, 30 more women have been appointed to ambassadorial posts, raising the total number to 39. Further, whereas there were 27 women diplomats until 2004 out of the total number of 137, the number has increased to 56 out of the total number of 198 diplomats, constituting 28.3% in comparison to 19.7% in 2004. Furthermore, two out of six Directorates in the Ministry, namely, the Political Affairs and the Protocol Directorates, are headed by women. Six Departments out of 14 are headed by women, while two more women as non-diplomatic staff are heading Directorates.

Article 9 Nationality

77. There is nothing new to report.

Article 10 Education

NAPGE in education

78. The MOEC, in close coordination with the MJPO and the MLSI, and in the framework of its competences has drawn up an AP in order to contribute to the full implementation of the measures suggested by the NAPGE for 2007–2013.

79. The content of the AP was defined by a cross-departmental team, coordinated by a steering committee, which will monitor the process of implementation and evaluation of the measures in the area of education. Its basic aim is to achieve a comprehensive and systematic approach to gender equality policies in education and training, with a view to combating and preventing stereotyping attitudes about gender roles in the family and society. This corresponds to the broader framework of the ongoing Educational Reform, which focuses on creating a progressive, humane and democratic school through the establishment of equal opportunities for all students and the formation of active citizens, capable of responding to the challenges posed by the new realities. Within this perspective, challenging traditional stereotypes on gender roles have been regarded as a crucial point in renovating the school curricula, in teacher training, in career advising and in the cultural programmes.

Women in decision-making

80. Significant progress has been made regarding the presence of women in senior posts in the MOEC. At present, the Permanent Secretary of the MOEC, the Director of the Centre of Scientific Research, the Director of Secondary Education, the General Inspector of Primary Education and the Acting Director of the Centre for Educational Research and Evaluation are women. Progress appears at various decision-making posts, as follows:

- From 2006–2009, two women were appointed as members of the Public Education Service Commission (Ratio 2:5), whereas in the previous Commission (1999–2004) there was only one woman
- In 2009, a woman was, for the first time, appointed as a member of the Secretariat of POED (Primary School Teacher's Organization) (ratio 1:7)
- In 2008, a woman was elected for the first time as the President of the Central Council of OELMEK (Secondary General Education. Teacher's Organization)
- Nonetheless, women's representation has to be further enhanced in view of the following data:
 - In 2008, in the Council of the University of Cyprus, the ratio was one woman to 14 men. The same ratio existed since 2004
 - In 2008, five women were elected to the Board of POED (Primary School Teacher's Organization), (ratio 5:25) whereas six women had been elected in 2005
 - In 2009, the number of women elected at the Board of OEDE (Primary Inspectors Association) was reduced from 2 to 1, bringing the ratio to 1:5

- In the Central Council of OLTEK (Secondary Vocational School Teacher's Organization) there are 2 women (ratio 2:11). The vast majority of teaching staff in secondary vocational schools is men

Pre-primary education

81. In 2008/2009, the number of children aged 3–5½ years old enrolled in kindergartens was 18,494, of which 9,041 (48.89%) were girls.

82. Kindergarten teaching is still a female domain as reflected in the proportion of male and female teachers. In 2008/2009, out of 2,125 kindergarten teachers, 98.9% were female and 1.1% were male. Out of the 389 principal positions in pre-primary education, women held 376 (96.7%).

Primary education

83. In 2008/2009, the number of children enrolled was 55,552, out of which 27,024 (48.6%) were girls. The representation of female teachers in primary education increased from 74% in 2000/2001 to 83,6%. The percentage of female teachers holding principal and assistant principal's position increased from 53% in 2000/2005 to 74, 6%.

Secondary education

84. In 2008/2009, the number of students enrolled was 49,444, out of which 25,832 (52%) were girls. Women's participation at decision-making positions (e.g. School Inspectors, First Education Officers) has increased from 55% in 2000/2001, to 63.7% in 2008/2009. The percentage of female teachers holding positions as Principals increased from 30% in 2000/2001 to 54% in 2008/2009.

Tertiary education

85. Cyprus has a high proportion of tertiary education graduates. In 2009, 44.7% of Cypriots aged 30–34 held tertiary education qualifications.

86. In 2005/2006, there were 21,621 (51.8%) female students registered in tertiary education institutions in Cyprus and abroad, whereas 20,125 (48.2%) were male students. In 2008/2009, 25,869 (49.3%) were female and 26,590 (50.7%) were male.

87. Some fields appear to have remained gender segregated. However, in 2008/2009, the percentage of women studying in engineering, manufacturing, and construction programmes increased to 24.7% from 21% in 2005/2006, and in humanities and the arts, female enrolment decreased to 70.8% from 75%, thus the gap appears to be on the diminishing trend.

Technical vocational education

88. In 2009/2010, the number of girls in technical secondary schools was 622 (25.15%) out of a total of 4,105 students.

Adult education

89. The Adult Education Centres of the MOEC offer evening classes throughout the country, to persons over 16 years of age. Classes include subjects such as Public Relations, Gymnastics, Gardening, Computers, Foreign Languages, Theatre, Psychology, etc. The percentage of women attending these courses is over 73%. More specifically, in 2008/2009, the number of women attending adult classes was 17,458, whereas the number of men was 6,911.

Universities

90. The UNESCO Chair in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment at the University of Cyprus was established in 2009 with the aim of promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women in the region. It undertakes an incorporated system of research, training, information and documentation activities in the field of women and gender studies in general. This includes:

(i) “*The gendered map of Cyprus Tertiary Education*”, a 2-year research project which began in 2009, funded by the NMWR and expected to investigate record and critically present the qualitative and quantitative Gendered Map of Cyprus Tertiary Education;

(ii) “*An indirect harmful effect of violence: Victimizing the child and Re-victimizing the woman-mother through her child's exposure to violence against herself*”, another research project in progress, funded by the 2008 DAPHNE III (action grants) program of EU with a twofold aim: (1) to address the problem of the indirect harmful effect of domestic violence against women mothers upon their children exposed to it; and (2) to address the problem of lack of research-based information on the issue, as well as of sensitization.

91. The Research Centre for Gender Studies was recently established at the University of Cyprus as an interdisciplinary research centre under the aegis of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Education and the Faculty of Humanities. It aims to conduct research, intervene and produce new knowledge as well as theoretical frames of respect and promotion of diversity in an environment of equality in the social, economic, political and scientific sector, in addition to unfolding the questioning and political frames in the issue of gender.

92. The Open University of Cyprus includes gender perspective in its research projects. In addition, it provides the opportunity to women to continue their studies through distance learning, thus contributing to the promotion of reconciliation of family and working responsibilities.

93. The University of Nicosia has a strong record of researching gender issues and in 2004 established the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS). MIGS aims at combating gender inequality through research, advocacy and lobbying, as well as trainings, conferences, and other activities.

94. The European University of Cyprus has established the Centre for the Study of Childhood and Adolescence, which aims to inform social policy in ways that enhance the lives of children and their families through research, education and consultation. It has carried out a number of projects on domestic violence and single-parent families, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of children and adolescence.

95. Frederick University has also implemented a number of projects on gender issues, specifically in the areas of family violence and reconciliation of work and family life.

Article 11 Employment

Gender pay gap

96. Although still considered to be relatively high, the gender pay gap in Cyprus, has decreased significantly since 1995 (29%) and keeps following a downward trend, from 24%

in 2006, to 22.8% and 21.8% in 2007 and 2008 respectively.³ Continuous annual increases of the minimum wage in recent years, have significantly contributed to the reduction of the pay gap, since the minimum wage order covers occupational categories in which women are overrepresented. The Government appreciates that bridging the gender pay gap is a gradual and complex process, and that no legislative framework is adequate, unless combined with comprehensive and targeted measures, which it is pursuing.

97. A study prepared for the MLSI in 2007, regarding the pay gap in Cyprus, revealed that gender stereotyping, as regards the “male” and “female” occupations, the overrepresentation of women in non-skilled occupations and low-wage sectors (labour market segregation), and the underrepresentation of women in collective bargaining are the main causes of pay gap. Moreover, the shorter periods of accumulated professional experience of women, caused by more frequent interruptions to their career paths due to family-related leave contribute in the creation of glass ceiling in their access to top management positions, therefore contributing to wage gaps. Lastly, the greater presence of women in temporary and part-time employment also explains part of the pay gap between employed men and women.

98. Drawing on the results of the said study, the MLSI is implementing the Project “Actions for Reducing the Gender Pay Gap”, co-financed by the European Social Fund. It consists of a broad mix of measures and includes specialized training programmes for inspectors, with the purpose of establishing an effective inspection mechanism for the enforcement of equal pay legislation, the establishment of a Gender Equality Certification Body, the preparation of a study concerning parental leave benefit, as well as measures for eliminating occupational and sectoral segregation, which include interventions in education issues. It includes awareness raising campaigns on equal pay, training programmes for trade unions and employers associations, and the development of manuals, guides, self-assessment tools, codes of practice and job evaluation tools for managers/human resource professionals.

Employment rate

99. In 2009, as a result of the global economic crisis, female employment demonstrated a smaller increase as compared to previous years, whereas the female employment rate decreased as compared to 2008. According to the Labour Force Survey, it accounted for 45% of total employment, remaining at the same levels as compared to 2004.

100. In 2009, the employment rate⁴ for both men and women reached a level of 69.9% as compared to 69.1% in 2004. The female employment rate (62.5%) was still lower than the male employment rate (77.6%). The gender gap decreased to 15.1 percentage points in 2009; from 21 percentage points in 2004 (the female employment rate was 59% and the male employment rate 80%). This decrease was the result of the declining trend exhibited by the male employment rates during 2008 and 2009 and the increasing trend of female employment rates.

101. In 2009, the services sectors absorbed 87% of the female employment and 63% of the male. Almost 50% of employed women are concentrated in the sectors of trade, education, hotels and restaurants and in private households, while almost 50% of the male employment is concentrated in the sectors of construction, manufacturing, and trade.

³ *Source:* Structure of Earnings Survey, Statistical Service of Cyprus. Calculated according to the EU definition of the Gender Pay Gap indicator.

⁴ Measured here as employment of people aged 15–64 as a proportion of the population aged 15–64, according to the Labour Force Survey.

102. The continuous increase of the educational level of both male and female workers resulted to a rising share of employment in higher skilled occupations, such as managers, professionals and technicians, in total employment. In 2004, employment in these occupations accounted for 27.8% of the total employment (28.5% of the male employment and 26.9% of the female employment). In 2009, the employment share in these occupations increased to 31.4% of total employment (32.8% of the male employment and 29.8% of the female employment).

103. Female employment in higher skilled occupations, accounted for 43% of all those working in these occupations in 2009, remaining at the same level as in 2004 (42%).

104. Flexible forms of employment, started to develop during the last years. In 2004, female part-time workers accounted for 13.4% of the total female population, whereas male part-time workers for 4.7%. In particular, part time employment accounted for 8.4% of total employment, in 2009. Part-time employment appears to be more popular amongst the female employed population where, in 2009, 12.5 of employed women were working on a part-time basis, compared to 5.2% of the male employed population.

Unemployment rate

105. During the period 2004–2008 Cyprus was enjoying conditions of almost full employment and demonstrated a low unemployment rate. Specifically, the unemployment rate⁵ decreased from 4.7% in 2004 to 3.7% in 2008. However, in 2009, as a result of the global economic crisis, the unemployment rate increased to 5.3%. An increase was observed both among men and women; however, the number of unemployed men demonstrated a larger increase and for the first time in many years was higher than the number of unemployed women. The number of unemployed men reached 11,409 persons (increase by 64%) and the number of unemployed women 9,916 persons (increase by 31%). This is attributed to the fact that the financial crisis had a stronger effect on sectors which traditionally concentrated high number of employed men (e.g. the construction sector).

Pilot subsidy scheme

106. A pilot subsidy scheme for the promotion of flexible forms of employment was implemented in order to attract into the labour market unemployed or economically inactive women (2007–2008). The Scheme, as a positive action measure for women, was very successful and by far exceeded the original target of placing 60 women in the labour market, since a total of 195 women were employed.

107. Based on the results of the Pilot Subsidy Scheme, a new scheme has been launched in May 2010 within the framework of the promotion of flexible forms of employment, aiming at a wider public and embracing group at risk of social and economic exclusion.

Reconciliation of family and working life

108. Within the framework of enhancing the measures to reconcile work and family responsibilities, Cyprus places great emphasis on the area of care services for dependent persons. Through the Grants-in-Aid Scheme, the SWS provide technical and monetary support to Community Councils and NGOs, operating programmes of social care services.

109. Furthermore, emphasis is laid on the involvement of local authorities in the provision of social care services at local level, who are for the first time eligible for funding

⁵ Source: Labour Force Survey.

under the Grant's in Aid Scheme for the implementation of care services for dependent persons (children, elderly people and people with disabilities).

110. In the same line, the SWS have implemented the Project "Expansion and Improvement of Care Services for Children, the Elderly, Disabled Persons and Other Dependents", co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF), which started in 2005 and was completed in 2008. The pilot implementation of this Project, aimed, among other things, at the more active involvement of local authorities in the field of social care and the development of closer cooperation with voluntary organizations at the local level.

111. Due to the great success of this project and within the context of the 2007–2013 programming period of the EU Structural Fund, the SWS are implementing a project entitled "Provision of Services for Covering Social Care within the Framework of Family and Employment Reconciliation". Within the framework of this Project, the SWS will subsidize the cost of day care for children, elderly or persons with disabilities. Beneficiaries of the Project are women who are responsible for the care of their children, elderly or persons with disabilities. With this subsidy women will be able to enter or re-enter the labour market since the cost of day care will not be disproportional to their earnings.

112. A Tripartite Technical Committee was formed with participation from representatives of employees' and employers' organizations and representatives of the MLSI. A report on the current situation was completed in July 2009, with suggestions for improvement. Based on these, a strategic plan aiming at the effective implementation of measures for the reconciliation of private and family life is currently under way.

113. All day schools are gradually being introduced intending to facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life. 130 all day schools are operating on a voluntary and 15 on a compulsory basis, in all major districts.

114. Finally, recognizing that women often carry the burden of transporting their children to and from school, the Ministry of Communications and Works has initiated an ambitious programme for the enhancement of public transport in Cyprus. In this context, a plan was successfully launched at the beginning of the 2008/2009 school year, offering free transportation to high school students. As from school year 2010/2011, the plan covers all public and private schools throughout the island.

115. Within the EQUAL Community Initiative, which finances projects developed through partnerships between the broader public sector and the private sector, projects addressing the issue of reconciliation and family life were carried out, such as:

- Pandora: Converting reconciliation between work and family life into a competitive advantage for businesses. Its main scope was to create the required background for implementing good practices that facilitate the reconciliation between working and family life.
- New Pathways for Female Employment in Cyprus focused on issues directly related to female employment and attempts to introduce reconciliation between working and family life, reduce professional gender disparities, incorporate equality principles throughout the working environment, raise public awareness through open consultations regarding gender equality and establish a framework that could prevent behaviors and attitudes within workplaces that discriminate against women. Through it, guidelines and related programmes were prepared that support the necessary training of women for entering and remaining active workforce members. Additionally, educational packages were prepared for businesses and a study was carried out to identify vocational training and other supportive structure needs that could support female employment.

- Open Doors: its main target was to identify ways to accommodate women to enter, remain or re-enter the active workforce and facilitating a balance by removing barriers that were related to the conflict between family and working life. A documented guideline was prepared on how to introduce the gender dimension in collective labour agreements.

116. The results of the projects were disseminated and taken into consideration in designing the strategic plan for the reconciliation of professional and family life.

Employment offices

117. Policy measures were taken in order to favour access to employment groups most exposed to or affected by unemployment. This led to the modernization of the Public Employment Services and to enhancing its capacity to deal with special groups, such as persons with disabilities, long-term unemployed, women, older persons and other vulnerable groups. In this framework, the geographical access to services was improved through the creation of 8 more Local Employment Offices and the upgrading of 4 District and 2 Local Employment Offices. Since April 2006, 18 specially trained Employment Counselors have been providing individualized services to the unemployed, including occupational guidance. Women are constantly encouraged to participate in initial and continuing training programmes and to enter new fields of occupations.

Article 12

Health and HIV/AIDS

118. Health care is provided generally without discrimination. Migrants (legal or illegal) receive free medical care in Accident and Emergency Departments. Asylum-seekers receive free medical services and take part in public Health programmes (vaccination, screening tests, maternity follow up etc) pending the examination of their application. Upon approval of their application they are entitled to full free medical services. Even those whose application is rejected, they continue to receive medical services which commenced while their application was pending. Families with three or more children also have free access to the public hospitals and health centres and to pharmaceutical care.

119. The quality of health care is high as the health indicators, which are comparable to those of other developed countries, reflect this. Women enjoy a high level of health, with a life expectancy at birth estimated for the period 2006/2007, at 81.9 years, compared to 78.3 years for men. In 2008, 39 female doctors and 92 male were involved in decision-making in the area of health. The absence of a National Health System could be considered a major obstacle although its development and implementation is one of the priorities of the National Health Care Strategy 2008–2010, which is already in an advanced stage of implementation.

120. The new Nicosia General Hospital has been operating since 2006 and provides upgraded services in all sectors of health.

121. In terms of sexual and reproductive health, the Archbishop Makarios III Hospital continues to provide high quality services for the mother and child. The Ministry of Health (MOH) is also aiming to contribute to the well-being of couples with fertility problems, by offering economical support for two trials of IVF (in vitro fertilizations) and the medication for a third trial. The new strategic plan includes the implementation of a national screening programme for cervical cancer funded by the MOH. This will decrease the incidence and mortality of the disease. Women aged 30–60 years are examined by the Papanikolaou smear test. A number of awareness-raising activities on women's health and safe

motherhood have been organized within the framework of the European Programme Interreg 3B Archimed (WHEALTH Promoting Women's Health and Safe Motherhood).

122. Advice on family planning is also offered through the Maternal and Child Health Centres and by doctors of the public and the private sector. Pregnant women are generally attended by either midwives or obstetricians and all deliveries take place under supervision by trained personnel. Breast feeding is actively promoted by the relevant services. Finally, doctors, health visitors and nurses in cooperation with the local authorities visit various rural areas and educate women on sexual and reproductive health.

123. Cyprus remains a low prevalence country for HIV/AIDS, particularly for women who are outnumbered by 1 to 6 by men with regard to HIV infection. This ratio may be even higher, because according to official figures, women have a higher likelihood of being tested if their partner is found to be HIV-positive and therefore, more likely to be diagnosed if they are infected. According to the criteria of WHO, it is estimated that the number of people with HIV infection among the adult population in Cyprus is not more than 500. The main concern of the MOH has been to prevent the further spread of the virus.

124. Prenatal transmission is kept at extremely low levels. This is due to the low prevalence of HIV infection in women and to the measures taken for the prevention of prenatal transmission of the virus in isolated cases of women found to be positive. All pregnant women are offered testing and counseling for HIV and all seropositive pregnant women are provided free regimens and advice to prevent the transmission to their babies.

125. The National AIDS programme has continued to be implemented according to the principles for prevention of transmission of the virus and the reduction of the social and personal consequences of HIV infection. A new strategic plan for prevention of AIDS was prepared for the period of 2009–2012, based on the same principles.

126. In relation to cancer, the MOH has prepared a national strategic plan in order to reduce cancer in the population. Since 1995, a national breast screening programme provides women aged 50–69 years a mammography. The active role of an NGO, Europa Donna, has a complementary role to play in the campaign of the programme, as it contributes with fund and awareness raising, as well as with continuous psychological support to women.

Article 13

Economic and social life

Women and poverty

127. Women are at a higher risk of poverty compared to men, with a difference of 4%. The risk of poverty for women of the general population, irrespectively of age, is 18%. Single parent families (the majority of which are women) with at least one dependent child run double the risk of falling below the poverty line, in comparison to the rest of the population.

128. Policies for reducing the risk of poverty are focused on the population age group of 65 years and over, single parent families and other vulnerable groups. The planning of a new allowances policy for the period 2008–2010 aimed at increasing the income of social groups carrying the highest indicators of poverty risk placing them below the poverty line. This sought to reinforce the income of particular groups, allowing for selective readjustment of allowances and benefits, while taking into account the adequacy of available financial resources and aiming at the containment of the various consequences of high poverty risk in which pensioners and single parent families find themselves.

129. By a decision of the Council of Ministers (no. 62.106, dated 10/12/2003), a Special Allowance was granted to pensioners receiving pensions below the threshold and to social pension pensioners, 97.48% of which are women.

130. Although there have been no amendments in the pillar of financial benefits since 2007, it is important to stress that these amounts are annually adjusted.

131. Public assistance ensures the right to a decent standard of living through the provision of financial assistance and/or social services to persons, who legally reside in the Cyprus, face serious socio-economic problems, and whose resources are not sufficient to meet their basic and special needs. With the Public Assistance and Services (Amendment) Law, 2006 [L.95/ (1)/2006], public assistance recipients were financially reinforced and their integration into the labour market was encouraged.

132. This legislation especially favours persons with disabilities and single parent families. Half the income from employment of single parents or €256.29 — whichever is higher — is not taken into account when benefits are calculated. Single parents may receive public assistance even though they are gainfully employed. Through public assistance, a care allowance may be provided to a family member who is obliged to withdraw from employment, in order to care for a dependent elderly relative. In July 2008, an increase of 12% was enacted, which is by 7.8% higher, comparing to 2007.

133. The Grants-in-Aid Scheme for Voluntary Welfare Organisations, a mechanism of the system of social protection, aims at the support and activation of the volunteer movement in the area of social welfare and the coverage of social needs at the local level. Through subsidizing voluntary agencies, the Government aims to enhance state policies dealing with the demographic problem and reversing the continuing low birth rate trend, to develop services aiming at the prevention of social problems, to support the family through both primary and secondary intervention, and to encourage the integration and reintegration of women and other vulnerable groups both in society and the labour market.

134. Through the Grants-in-Aid Scheme for 2008, 210 voluntary Social Welfare Organisations were subsidized for the operation of 292 programmes of social care at the local level, with the amount of €8,063.823. These subsidies were provided to 55 programmes for pre-school aged children, 55 Centers for the protection and occupation of school aged children, 52 programmes for persons with special needs, 88 programmes for the elderly and 42 programmes aiming at covering the needs of other vulnerable population groups.

135. The present Government has made a commitment to address vulnerable groups of women such as migrants, women with disabilities, elderly women, single mothers and others more systematically. In terms of migration, Cyprus has witnessed an increase in the number of migrant workers in recent years, the majority of which are women (63% in 2006). One particularly vulnerable group is female migrant domestic workers third country nationals. Efforts have been made by NGOs and women's organizations to map the specific needs of migrant domestic workers and raise awareness among relevant stakeholders. A Ministerial Committee has been set up to revise the employment policy concerning migrant domestic workers including their salaries. Furthermore, NAPS including the NAPGE and the NAPPSI propose specific measures to take into account the needs of such vulnerable groups of women.

136. 2010 has been declared by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. An integral part of the communication campaign designed for the European Year 2010 was the public participation of specific individuals who were designated as National Ambassadors, chosen for their influence in today's society and their interest in the issues of poverty and social exclusion. Within this framework, 10 National Ambassadors were selected, out of which 8

were women. These played an important role in reaching the objectives of the European Year for 2010. They acted as spokespeople at national level, providing endorsements and examples of the key messages of the European Year through a variety of activities and appearances throughout the year. Their participation enhanced the objectives of the campaign by sending the message that building a more cohesive society is a shared responsibility.

Migrant women

137. The main issue regarding the policy regulating the employment of migrants (third country nationals – non-members of the European Union) is the equal treatment with nationals, as regards terms and conditions of employment. In this respect, collective agreements covering employment in the various sectors of the economy, also apply to migrants. This policy is also applied in agriculture, while for domestic workers, where no collective agreement exists, terms of employment are set by a Committee of Ministers, after consultation with all stakeholders.

138. The terms and conditions of employment are included in the contract (personal contract) of employment. The contract is signed by the employer and foreign employee when he/she is in Cyprus. The terms of employment are checked by the competent authorities of the MLSI in order to ensure that they are compatible with the relevant Collective Agreements. Upon completion of the examination the contracts are stamped. A stamped copy of the contract is given to the foreign employee by the District Alien and Immigration Branch of the Police. For domestic migrant workers there is a standard model contract stating the terms and conditions of employment agreed by the competent Ministerial Committee which is checked and approved by the Migration Authority.

139. Policy, procedure and terms of employment of domestic workers are under evaluation in order to tackle the problems that have risen so far. Pursuant to a decision of the Council of Ministers (no.71.057, dated 8/10/2010), an increase in the salary of domestic workers by 5% as from 1 January 2011 and another 5% as from 1 July 2011 was approved.

140. The correct enforcement of terms and conditions of employment are closely monitored by the MLSI through inspections. In the case of submission of a complaint, the complaint is examined by the Labour Relations Department of the MLSI. During the hearing of the complaint, the person concerned is entitled to be accompanied by a representative of their embassy, an attorney, translator or any other person they may wish to represent them. In 2010, 1,515 cases of complaints from foreign nationals were examined, of which 1,210 concerned domestic workers. After the examination of the case, a report is prepared and sent to the MOI where specific actions are taken according to each individual case. A Labour Disputes Committee is formed in order to study the report sent by the Labour Relations Department. The above mentioned Committee is composed of a representative of the Civil Registry and Migration Department, a representative of the Department of Labour Relations and a representative of the Aliens and Migration Unit. The Committee then submits its suggestions to the Director of the Civil Registry and Migration Department. In case the complaint is valid the complainant is free to find another employer.

141. The ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, requires further consideration among the competent Ministries, bearing in mind the obstacles posed by the European Union jurisdiction with regard to migrant workers, arising from the fact that the Council of the European Union is competent to adopt measures on immigration and on the protection of the rights of third country nationals, in particular with regard to conditions of stay. Consequently, no State member of the European Union has signed the Convention to date.

Asylum-seekers and refugees

142. The Refugee Laws of 2000–2009 include provisions prohibiting any kind of discrimination. The Asylum Law provides for the protection of persons persecuted in their country of origin because of one of the reasons prescribed in the 1951 Geneva Convention for Refugees and offers protection to persons persecuted because they belong to a particular social group, i.e. women. International protection includes refugee and subsidiary protection.

143. Under the Refugee Laws, a refugee means a third country national who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it.

144. As to subsidiary protection, a person is eligible, if he/she does not qualify as a refugee but substantial grounds have been shown for believing that, if returned to his/her country of origin, or in the case of the stateless person, to his/her country of habitual residence, would face real risk of suffering serious harm.

145. A person granted international protection enjoys the rights and privileges provided for in national legislation. In the field of health care, education, social welfare, such person enjoys the same benefits as those offered to nationals. The right to a fair treatment and non discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, religion, membership of a particular social group, political opinions and beliefs, as well as freedom of movement and residence in the territory of the Republic, access to integration facilities and programmes, free exercise of their religion, etc, are safeguarded.

146. Pursuant to the Refugee Regulations of 2005–2009, single women asylum-seekers have priority of access to the Reception Centre. The competent authorities take into consideration the vulnerable condition of persons in need of special treatment, e.g. unaccompanied minors, minors, single women, victims of torture or other form of degrading treatment or punishment, elderly, etc. Their dietary and any other needs are taken into consideration. Persons in that category, are entitled to medical care, psychological, social or any other support.

147. Asylum seekers have access to particular sectors of employment 6 months after the lodging of the application for international protection. Refugees have access to employment in any field according to their preference, education and skills. Beneficiaries of subsidiary protection have access to particular sectors of employment as decided by an Order of the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance, but a year after the granting of subsidiary protection status, have full access to employment as persons granted the refugee status.

Internally displaced persons

148. On 3.6.2010 the House of Representatives enacted an amendment to the Registry Laws and to the Housing Assistance to Displaced and other Persons Law which are interrelated, so as to include in the definition of “displaced” persons, children of a displaced mother. This meant that the children of a displaced mother would be able to possess a refugee identity card, and that all financial benefits granted to children of a displaced father would be accorded to children of a displaced mother as well.

149. The President of the Republic by virtue of Article 140 of the Constitution referred the 2 laws to the Supreme Court for its opinion, as to whether they were inconsistent with the Constitution. The Supreme Court on 1.12.2010 ruled in favour of the referral, in that the

Laws amount to an increased in the budgetary expenditure and were, therefore, contrary to Article 80.2 of the Constitution. The issue remains unsolved.

Article 14

Rural women

150. According to the data of 2008 of the employment in the agricultural sector, 9,222 were females and 16,068 were males. Out of 9,222, 516 women were insured as self-employed.

151. Within the framework of the “Rural Development Programme 2007–2013”, women can use all the support opportunities in equal terms with men. Some measures aim at the female rural population, e.g. the measure “Processing of agricultural products” which gives special attention to the promotion of small scale processing units which are usually managed by women.

Article 15

Equality before the law

152. Cyprus is a state party to core international human rights instruments (UN and Council of Europe) covering the principle of gender equality.

153. During the period under review Cyprus ratified the following:

- The Convention concerning the revision of the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), in 2004 [Law 54 (III)/2004]
- The European Convention on the Exercise of Children’s Rights, in 2005[Law 23(III)/2005]
- The Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, in 2006 [Law 6(III)/2006]
- The Council of Europe Convention on Action, Against Trafficking in Human Beings, in 2007 [Law 38(III)/2007]

154. Considerable legislative measures relating to gender equality were enacted, e.g.:

- The Maternity Protection (Amendment) Laws, 2007 and 2008 [L.109 (I)/2007, L.8 (I)/2008 and L. 43(I)/2008] extending the maternity leave from 16 to 18 weeks.
- The Parental Leave and Leave on Grounds of Force Majeure (Amendment) Law, 2007 [L.111(I)/2007] amending L.69 (I)/2002 to clarify that the total period of parental leave is 13 weeks per child even in the cases of multiple births, as well as specifying that the employee is protected from termination of his/her employment upon applying or taking parental leave, for the period starting on the day of application until the end of the parental leave period. The Law was further amended by L.11(I)/2010, to improve its functions and encourage both parents, especially fathers to make use of it through extending the right of parental leave until the child reaches the age of 8, or in case of children with disabilities, the age of 18, the extension of the annual maximum period of parental leave for each parent, the right of the father to parental leave immediately after the birth/adoption of a child, the right of the father to transfer two weeks of the total duration of his parental leave to the mother.

- In the field of violence against women (see article 6 above), the Combating of Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings and the Protection of Victims Law, 2007 [L.87 (I)/2007].
- The Equal Treatment between Men and Women (Access to and Supply of Goods and Services) Law, 2008 [L.18 (I)/2008], transposing the EU Directive 2004/113/EC, implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services.

For a comprehensive list of the relevant legal measures taken during the period under review, see annex.

Article 16

Family law

155. During the period under review, new provisions were enacted in an effort to further improve existing legislation, e.g.:

- (a) The Spouses Property Relations (Regulation) (Amendment) Law, 2008 (L.67 (I)/2008);
- (b) The Parents and Children Relations (Amendment) Law, 2008 (L. 68(I)/2008);
- (c) The Evidence (Amendment) Law, 2009 (L. 14(I)/ 2009).

156. By laws (a) and (b) above which relate to maintenance of children and alimony of spouses respectively, a 13th and 14th annual payment, an automatic 10% increase every 2 years of the amount fixed by the court order and the possibility for the court to order direct monthly payment by the employer or from the bank account of the responsible spouse by standing order, were provided. By law (c), a wife became competent and compellable witness in criminal proceedings against her husband thus, enabling the institution of criminal proceedings by a wife against her husband, to remedy situations where husbands have committed fraud in relation to their wives' property, a matter for which there have been many complaints.

157. The bill on Family Mediation was laid before Parliament, but is still under consideration.

Annex

Legislative measures

Legislative measures adopted during the period under review and relevant to the Convention include:

A. International Instruments

1. The Convention concerning the revision of the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised) (Ratification) Law, 2004 [L.54 (III)/2004].
2. The European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights (Ratification) Law, 2005 [L.23 (III)/2005].
3. The Optional Protocol to the Convention of the United Nations on the Rights of the Child, on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (Ratification) Law, 2006 [L.6 (III)/2006].
4. The Convention of the Council of Europe on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (Ratification) Law, 2007 [L.38 (III)/2007].

B. National legislation

(1) Family law

Children

5. The Children (Relation and Legal Status) (Amendment) Law, 2006 [L.78 (I)/2006].
6. The Children (Relation and Legal Status) (Amendment) Law, 2008 [L.69 (I)/2008].

Relations between parents and children

7. The Parents and Children Relations (Amendment) Law, 2004 [L.203 (I)/2004].
8. The Parents and Children Relations (Amendment) Law, 2008 [L.68 (I)/2008].

Property relations between spouses

9. The Spouses Property Relations (Regulation) (Amendment) Law, 2006 [L.62 (I)/2006].
10. The Spouses Property Relations (Regulation)(Amendment) (No.2) Law, 2006 [L.169 (I)/2006].
11. The Spouses Property Relations (Regulation) (Amendment) Law, 2008 [L.67 (I)/2008].

Family courts

12. The Family Courts (Amendment) Law, 2006 [L.63 (I)/2006].

(2) Labour law

Equal pay

13. The Equal Pay between Men and Women for the same Work or for Work of Equal Value (Amendment) Law, 2004 [L.193 (I)/2004].
14. The Equal Pay between Men and Women for the same Work or for Work of Equal Value (Amendment) Law, 2009 [L.38 (I)/2009].

Equal treatment

15. The Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education (Amendment) Law, 2004 [L.191 (I)/2004].
16. The Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education (Amendment) Law, 2006 [L.40 (I)/2006].
17. The Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education (Amendment) Law, 2007 [L.176 (I)/2007].
18. The Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education (Amendment) Law, 2009 [L.39 (I)/2009].
19. The Provision of Independent Aid in Victims of Discrimination Regulations, 2009 [P.I. 176/2009].

Maternity protection

20. The Maternity Protection (Amendment) Law, 2007 [L.109 (I)/2007].
21. The Maternity Protection (Amendment) Law, 2008 [L.8 (I)/2008].
22. The Maternity Protection (Amendment) (No. 2) Law, 2008 [L.43 (I)/2008].
23. The Public Service (Granting of Leave) (Amendment) Regulations 2005, [P.I. 295/2005].

Parental leave

24. The Parental Leave and Leave on Grounds of Force Majeure (Amendment) Law, 2007 [L.111 (I)/2007].
25. The Parental Leave and Leave on Grounds of Force Majeure (Amendment) Law, 2007 [L.11 (I)/2010].
26. The Public Service (Granting of Leave) (Amendment) Regulations, 2009, [P.I.366/2009].

(3) Social insurance – social benefits

27. The Public Assistance and Services (Amendment) Law 2006 [L.95 (I)/2006].

Child benefits

28. The Child's Benefits (Amendment) Law, 2007 [L.136 (I)/2007].
29. The Child's Benefits (Amendment) (No.2) Law, 2007 [L.194 (I)/2007].
30. The Child's Benefits (Amendment) Law, 2010 [L.55 (I)/2010].

Mother's allowance

31. The Mother's Allowance (Amendment) Law, 2006 [L.23 (I)/2006].
32. The Mother's Allowance (Amendment) Law, 2007 [L.135 (I)/2007].
33. The Mother's Allowance (Amendment) (No.2) Law, 2007 [L.193 (I)/2007].
34. The Mother's Allowance (Amendment) Law, 2010 [L.54 (I)/2010].

(4) Violence against women*Violence in the family*

35. The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) (Amendment) Law, 2004 [L.212 (I)/2004].

Trafficking of persons and sexual exploitation of minors

36. The Combating of Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings and the Protection of Victims Law, 2007 [L.87 (I)/2007].

(5) Miscellaneous*Equality of men and women in access to goods and services*

37. The Equal Treatment of Men and Women (Access to and Supply of Goods and Services) Law, 2008 [L.18 (I)/2008].

Evidence against a spouse

38. The Evidence (Amendment) Law, 2009 [L.14 (I)/ 2009].

Ombudsman

39. The Commissioner for Administration (Amendment) Law, 2004 [L.36 (I)/2004].
40. The Combating of Racial and Certain Other Discriminations (The Commissioner for Administration) Law, 2004 [L.42 (I)/2004].
41. The Equal Treatment in Employment and Occupation Law, 2004 [L.58 (I)/2004].
42. The Equal Treatment (Racial or Ethnic Origin) Law, 2004 [L.59 (I)/2004].

Children's rights commissioner

43. The Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights Law, 2007 [L.74 (I)/2007].

Refugees

44. The Refugee Law, 2004 [L.9 (I)/2004].
45. The Refugee Law, 2007 [L.112 (I)/2007].
46. The Refugee Law, 2009 [L.122 (I)/2009].
47. The Refugee (Amendment) Regulations, 2005 [P.I.598/2005].