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16 FEB 2011

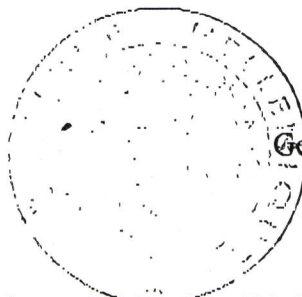
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Ref. No. 6171.2/9/AS 261

NOTE VERBALE

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and, with reference to the latter's Note Verbale bearing the number GVA 0981, dated 17 December 2010, has the honour to forward information, provided by the Greek Government, relating to the question of human rights and extreme poverty.

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration



Geneva, February 15, 2011

To: **The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**
UN Independent Expert on the question of human rights and extreme poverty
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REPLY BY GREECE

On the question of Human Rights and Extreme Poverty

The current Greek government, which was elected on the 4th October 2009 national elections, has set the improvement of men and women's everyday lives as one of its priorities, with an emphasis on mitigating hardship due to the economic crisis. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) has prepared a National Action Plan on Substantive Gender Equality 2010-2013. Its main goal is to achieve substantive equality between men and women across the entire spectrum of social life (political, economic, labour market, family, culture) (see Annex I). Incorporating the actions of the "National Action Plan for Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women 2009-2013", this Program has national appeal. It encompasses a number of planned actions underpinned by the basic principles and theoretical approaches on gender equality. All required economic and human resources have been ensured to implement it. The strategic goals of the Program are grounded in:

- a) protection of women's human rights, with emphasis on the development of actions vis-à-vis groups of women experiencing multiple discrimination,
- b) prevention and combating of violence against women in their family/private life, in the workplace and in society more broadly,
- c) support for women's employment and their economic independence and
- d) enhancement of their artistic creativity that promotes gender equality.

Actions against gender discrimination which were implemented in Greece (2004-2008)

Within the framework of the Project "Funding for the Provision of Holistic Interventions for Women", 8,773 unemployed women were benefited by the OP "Employment and Vocational Training", designed by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality. Priority was given to women who belong to vulnerable social groups, such as refugees, immigrants, domestic violence or trafficking victims and heads of single-parent families. The Program had been implemented in all Administrative Regions of the country (13) by seventeen (17) Action Plans coordinated by the GSGE (in the form of corporate partnerships with approximately 240 agencies). More specifically, the following participated: a) women Muslims within the framework of the Action Plan in the region of Eastern Macedonia-Thrace, b) women refugees, immigrants and Roma within the framework of two (2) Action Plans in the region of Attica. More specifically, the following vulnerable groups of people benefited: a) 116 immigrants, b) 113 refugees, c) 56 violence victims, d) 1 trafficking victim, e) 98 Muslims women/women with "cultural particularities", f) 684 single heads of family and g) 49 disabled women. The Manpower Employment Organization also participated in the Program by supporting more than 5,000 women to gain employment. The Project was selected and presented as a good practice example in the European Conference and the Unofficial Meeting of Ministers on Gender Equality in Lisbon on 04/10/2007. Positive reference was made to the

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regional dimension of the Project, which was carried out by agencies of the local societies active in counselling and employment issues, the Equality Regional Committee, the Manpower Employment Organization, other local government agencies, as well as NGOs.

From January 2007 to September 2008, the Research Centre for Gender Equality designed the Supplementary Support Services Provision Action Plans "Improvement of Conditions of Access to the Labour Market for Vulnerable Groups". The Program aimed at the empowerment of women, their preparation for the labour market, their support in taking business initiatives and their promotion in employment posts. The services provided by the RSGE included: a) employment counselling, b) learning of techniques for finding a job, c) specialized professional orientation, d) entrepreneurship support, e) information, f) psychosocial support, g) approach, information, awareness and activation of interested parties for their participation in programs for pre-training, training and promotion to the labour market, h) information on employment, institutional and legal issues, and i) promotion, information and networking actions. The actions were designed in eight (8) Regions of Greece (Attica, Central Macedonia, Thessaly, Epirus, Central Greece, Eastern Macedonia-Thrace, Peloponnesus and Crete). In total, 2,820 women benefited, coming from the following vulnerable population groups: handicapped persons, immigrants, special cultural groups, repatriates, special groups threatened by social exclusion, long-term unemployed women above 45 years of age, other groups of persons threatened by exclusion from the labour market, other categories of unemployed women in areas or sectors of high unemployment rates.

The General Secretariat for Management of Community and Other Sources of the Hellenic Ministry of Employment undertook a holistic approach to gender equality and raising of women's employment (OP "Employment and Professional Training" 2002-2006). It developed a series of mutually-reinforcing measures and interventions, which aimed at the equal representation of genders in economic development and the removal of inhibitory factors and obstacles that exclude women from the labour market. OP actions were focused on two basic axes: a) affirmative actions, i.e. those that appeal only to women and aim to remove discrimination or equalization of disadvantages which arise from actions, behaviour or the institutional framework, as currently in force, b) the implementation of mainstreaming principle, i.e. the integration of equal opportunities for both sexes in all policies.

Projects aimed at the alleviation of discrimination on the grounds of gender:

- Project: "Holistic intervention in employment for network confrontation of unemployment problem in the broader region of Piraeus and Western Athens", by the DP "Network for Employment (EMPLONET)". Target-group: unemployed persons that face labour market access problems. Specifically: unemployed women, long-term unemployed, heads of single-parent families, unemployed elderly. Its basic goal was to undertake actions in order to assess the needs of the target group on the one hand, and on the other hand to promote gender equality and develop an active employment policy to abolish professional discrimination in the broader area of Piraeus and Western Attica.
- Project: "Innovative employment and social policies at local level. Local Government as supplementary mechanism of active employment and social policies", by DP "CONVERGENCES". Target-group: vulnerable population

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groups. Its main objectives were: a) improvement and modernization of social services offered by local government to citizens, b) creation of new jobs in the field of social services and c) provision of services to vulnerable population groups in harmonization with actual needs of such groups.

- Project "sinPRAXIS – Cooperation for employment" by DP "sinPRAXIS – COOPERATION FOR EMPLOYMENT". Target-group: unemployed men and women. Its basic goal was to create innovative methods and practices, through use and enrichment of existing knowledge and experience, by implementing pilot action including all factors of the "employment triangle", i.e. employment services, employment agencies and unemployed men and women.
- Project "The modern access gate to the labour market" by DP "AISCHINIS". Target-group: unemployed men and women, immigrants, repatriates, refugees. The basic goal was the creation of a functional and useful "access gate to the labour market", technically supported by an internet-based job search system used by unemployed persons and enterprises, to facilitate labour market access and achieve a better balance between labour supply and demand.
- Project "CRESCENT" by DP "Kaleidoscope". Target-group: unemployed men and women, young people, women, disabled people. With reference to tourism in the Peloponnese, it was noted that, mostly during the last decade, tourism has reached "massive dimensions". However, it has decreased, with negative consequences for the economic growth and employment in the Region. The basic goal was to reverse this trend, trying to deal with employment especially for target groups and the local social and economic development in general, with proper configuration, organization, management and promotion of the cultural/ environmental richness of the Region.
- As far as awareness and information on combating discrimination is concerned, the Hellenic Ministry of Employment and Social Protection carried out a series of gender mainstreamed actions. More specifically, within the framework of the Combating Discrimination Community Action Program, in 2007 an information event took place for Social Labour Inspectors in Thessalonica in relation to the new legislative implementation framework for the principle of equal treatment. More specifically, the seminar was related to the implementation of Law 3304/2005 on "Implementation of the equal treatment principle regardless racial or national origin, religion or other beliefs, physical disability, age or sexual orientation" and Law 3488/2006 on "Implementation of the principle of equal treatment between men and women in relation to access in employment, professional education and development, working terms and conditions and other relative provisions". In addition, an information campaign took place in Athens by distributing leaflets on the legislative framework against discrimination (Law 3304/2006 and Law 3488/2006). Furthermore, several actions were taken in the gender field, such as: a) Creation of TV spot on multiple discrimination faced by women "Women's equality in action" and b) realization of a research on regional level: "Equal Opportunities on insurance, representation, entrepreneurship for women in rural areas that are affected by the new common rural policy (Designed by the Pan-Hellenic Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives Union (PCACU))