Law

On Gender Equality in Society
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ON GENDER EQUALITY IN SOCIETY

Based on articles 78 and 83 item 1 of the Constitution, upon proposal of the Council of Ministers,

THE ASSEMBLY
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

DECIDED:
PART I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1
Object

This law regulates fundamental issues of gender equality in public life, the protection and equal treatment of women and men, equal opportunities and chances to exercise their rights, as well as their participation and contribution in the development of all social fields.

Article 2
Aim

The aim of this law is:
  a) to provide effective protection from gender discrimination and any other form of behaviour that encourages gender discrimination;
b) to define measures that provide for equal opportunities among women and men, to eliminate any form of gender based discrimination in any of its forms; c) to define responsibilities of central and local state authorities for developing and enforcing normative acts, as well as policies in support of encouraging gender equality in society.

Article 3

Fundamental principles

1. This law is based on the principle of equality and non-discrimination, and on other principles provided by the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, by the Convention “On the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women”, and by all other international acts ratified by the Republic of Albania.
2. The provisions of this law shall not be interpreted or applied so that they restrict or reduce the guarantees in achieving gender equality provided by international acts ratified by the Republic of Albania, by the EU acquis communautaire, by the Convention “On the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women”.

Article 4

Definitions

In the understanding of this law, the following terms shall have the following meanings:
1. “Gender Equality” is the equal participation of women and men in all spheres of life, equal position among them, equal opportunities and chances, in order to enjoy their rights and to fulfil their obligations towards the society, by equally benefiting from the achievements of its development.
2. “Gender” refers to the opportunities and the social attributes related with being a woman or man, as well as the relations between them.
3. “Gender-based discrimination” is any gender-based distinction, exclusion or restriction, aiming at or resulting in damaging, failure to recognize, enjoy or exercise equally, by both genders, the fundamental human rights and freedoms provided by the Constitution and the legislation, in the political, economic, social, cultural and civil fields.

4. “Gender mainstreaming” is the process developed between women and men, as a process that does not belong to one gender only as a separate group, but to the society as a whole. As such, gender mainstreaming is the way to achieve gender equality in society, by including the perspectives of all genders in all the legislative, policy-making, planning, implementing or monitoring processes.

5. “Equal gender representation” is the representation of every gender with not less than 30 percent in any institution, management level, appointed organ, political party.

6. “Temporary special measures” are the measures taken by state organs that aim at accelerating the factual establishment of equality between men and men in the society.

7. “Employee dealing with gender equality issues” is the central or local public servant, who has special formation and knowledge on gender equality and uses his/her working time to achieving gender equality and gender mainstreaming in the sector or territory she/he is working.

8. “Equal value work” is the paid activity, which, compared with the same indicators or unit of measure of another activity, displays similar or equal knowledge and professional skills in achieving equal or almost equal physical and intellectual efforts.

9. “Gender-based harassment” is any kind of unwelcome conduct related to the person’s gender, aiming and/or resulting in violating personal dignity or creating a threatening, hostile, humiliating, disparaging or insulting environment.
“Sexual Harassment” is any kind of unwelcome conduct, by means of words or actions, physical or symbolic, of a sexual character, which aims at or leads to the violation of personal dignity, especially when creates a threatening, hostile, humiliating, disparaging or insulting environment.

Article 5
Application of the law

1. This law provides protection from gender discrimination to all persons living and residing in the territory of the Republic of Albania.

2. Albanian citizens with a temporary or permanent residence abroad enjoy protection provided by this law in their relations with Albanian government organs.

3. The foreign natural or legal persons living residing or with an office abroad enjoy protection provided by this law in their relations with Albanian government organs.

Article 6
Prohibition of gender discrimination

1. Any unfavourable treatment of a person because of his/her gender, compared with the treatment that is made, was made or would have been made to a person of the opposite gender in a similar situation, shall constitute direct gender discrimination and shall be prohibited.

2. The compilation, implementation, encouragement, and the drafting of the provisions, conditions, criteria or practices, which seem neutral, but put a person of a certain gender in a situation less favourable compared with persons of the opposite gender, constitutes indirect gender discrimination and shall be prohibited. This prohibition shall not apply when such provisions, conditions, criteria and practices are justified by a legitimate purpose, and the means and ways to reach that purpose are necessary and appropriate.
Article 7
Necessary measures for ensuring gender equality

In order to ensure gender equality and eliminate gender-based discrimination, state organs in compliance with their competencies, shall:

1. Ensure the practical implementation of the gender equality principle either by means of legislative measures or by other suitable means.
2. Ensure the prevention of any type of gender-based discrimination either by means of legislative measures or by other suitable means accompanied with sanctions as the case may be.
3. Ensure that any legal act, custom or practice which constitutes gender discrimination is changed or repealed, by means of legal and sub-legal measures or by other suitable means.
4. Take the appropriate measures to create the necessary and legally justifiable facilities aimed at guaranteeing equal chances and access to both genders.
5. Ensure, through public institutions and national courts, the effective protection for both genders against any discriminatory action.

Article 8
Temporary special measures

1. Temporary special measures shall include the quota for reaching equal gender representation, increasing the participation of the less represented gender in decision-making and public life, empowering persons from both genders economically and in terms of their status and employment, equally improving their education level, as well as other measures in every field, where persons of one gender do not enjoy an equal status with persons of the opposite gender.
2. Temporary special measures, including legal provisions, which aim at accelerating the establishment of a factual equality between women and men, shall not constitute gender discrimination. Such measures must terminate as soon as the gender equality goals for which they were created, have been reached.

Article 9
Special measures

It shall not constitute discrimination when the state takes special measures, including legal provisions, which aim at:

a) Providing a special protection to women during their pregnancy and childbirth, to young mothers, as well as to young parents as a result of their natural childbirth or adoption of a child, creating conditions for their protection and comfort at work; social insurance and social aid; ensuring the necessary healthcare assistance to mother and child; ensuring and encouraging the social services system, favouring the development of a network of day nurseries and kindergartens.

b) Facilitating and assisting persons who have special responsibilities in their families, due to their daily care for disabled members of the family, due to their age, physical and mental disabilities or other causes of disability.

c) Limiting certain sectors of heavy and dangerous work for pregnant women and breastfeeding mothers. Such limitations shall be reviewed regularly depending on the scientific and technical knowledge, as well as on the needs arising.
RESPONSIBLE ORGANS FOR ATTAINING GENDER EQUALITY AND THEIR DUTIES

Article 10
Council of Ministers


2. Draft laws prepared by the Council of Ministers and submitted to the Assembly for approval shall be accompanied by an analysis of their effects on both genders as the case may be.

Article 11
National Council on Gender Equality

1. The National Council on Gender Equality is an advisory organ established by order of the Prime Minister, with the proposal of the minister responsible for issues of gender equality. Its composition is approved based on the principle of equal gender representation.

2. The National Council on Gender Equality is chaired by the minister responsible for gender equality issues and is composed of ten representatives appointed by the government and three by the civil society. Civil society representatives should be Albanian citizens that have completed higher education and are recognized for their activity in the field of gender equality.

3. The mandate of the members of the National Council for Gender Equality is 4 years with the right to re-appointment, with the exception of members elected because of their duties. Renewal of all the council members at the same time shall be prohibited, in every case.
4. Procedural rules for the functioning of National Council for Gender Equality, as well as the remuneration of its members, are approved by the Council of Ministers in the regulation of the National Council for Gender Equality;

Article 12

Duties of the National Council on Gender Equality

1. The duties of the National Council on Gender Equality are:
   a) advises the government in defining the area of state policies on gender equality, with the exception of issues that fall within the mandate of the National Labour Council. The National Council on Gender Equality may hold joint sessions with the National Labour Council, on Labour.
   b) ensures gender mainstreaming in all fields, especially in the political, social, economic, and cultural fields;
   c) proposes to the Council of Ministers main programs for encouraging and achieving gender equality in Albania.
   ç) evaluates the present situation of gender equality in the country, issuing guidelines on the structure of gender equality issues in the ministry responsible for gender equality issues, and issuing proposals and recommendations to the government on the improvement of the situation.
   d) approves the annual report on gender equality issues compiled by the ministry responsible for gender equality issues.

Article 13

State Authority responsible for the implementation of the law and of the state programs on gender equality

1. The State Authority responsible for the implementation of this law and the state programs on gender equality is the minister responsible for gender equality issues.
2. The minister responsible for gender equality issues:
   a) implements and supervises the implementation of this law, the National Strategy and action plan on achieving gender equality as well the international obligations of the Republic of Albania in the field of gender equality;
   b) proposes to the Council of Ministers, upon consultation with the National Council on Gender Equality, amendments to laws and secondary legislation, signing of international acts in the field of gender equality and women’s rights, and also the undertaking of other measures, aiming at eradicating distinctions between genders with regards to the enjoyment of rights and opportunities;
   c) cooperates and offers support to non-for profit organizations active in the gender equality field;
   ç) organizes vocational and professional training of employees on problematic gender equality issues;
   d) establishes mechanisms for gathering gender disaggregated statistics in collaboration with the Institute of Statistics and other state institutions, as well as supervises data gathering and processing;
   dh) organizes gathering, analyzing and dissemination of information on gender issues;
   e) elaborates and implements, alone or in cooperation with other state institutions, activities on education, training, information and awareness raising of citizens, as well as public administration and justice system employees and officials, on the concept of gender equality, non discrimination of women, elimination of gender stereotypes, the proper understanding of the role of women and men, of mother and father in family and in society.
   ē) within the first quarter of each year presents to the National Council on Gender Equality the previous year’s report on the activity of the office, the progress made to attain gender equality, problems encountered and the means for overcoming them;
f) organizes the meetings of the National Council on Gender Equality and prepares the necessary materials, acts and documents preceding or following these meetings.

3. Central and local state institutions shall have the legal obligation to collaborate with the respective minister for exchanging information and facilitating the accomplishment of the minister’s function. For this reason there shall be a gender equality employee appointed in every ministry.

4. The minister fulfils the obligations provided by item 2 of this article and shall supervise the activity on gender equality issues through the structures set up for this purpose. The head of this structure shall run this activity and shall represent this structure in its relations with the third parties.

5. The ministry responsible for equal opportunities issues shall have the following financial resources:
   a) State Budget;
   b) various donors;

Article 14
Local government organs

1. Local government organs shall cooperate with central government organs for the implementation of the legislation in force and state policies on gender equality.

2. Local government organs shall cooperate closely with non for profit organizations for achieving gender equality in various fields within the territories covered by them.

3. Local government organs gather and process gender disaggregated statistics in local level.

4. Local government organs shall appoint one or several local gender equality employees in their structures.
1. Equal gender representation in all legislative, executive, judicial organs, as well as in other public institutions, shall be achieved when:
   a) a representation of above 30 percent of both genders, including their steering organs is ensured;
   b) equal observation of competition procedures and criteria for both genders for the assignments in these organs is ensured;
   c) a participation of above 30 per cent of both genders in the list of candidates for the local government elections is ensured.
   ç) a participation of not less than 30 per cent of each gender in the candidates’ proportional system list presented by the political parties for the general Assembly elections is ensured.
   d) a participation of above 30 per cent of each gender in the central and local elections process administration organs is ensured.

2. Political parties shall define methods and measures to comply with the requirements provided in item 1 of this article.

3. Should they violate the provisions of this article, political parties shall pay a fine of up to one tenth of the state funds for the electoral campaign until the violation ceases.
Article 16

Obligations of the employer in labour relations

In order to actively promote gender equality, before and during labour relations, the employer, as well as any other individual acting on his behalf, in the capacity of mediator, agent or representative, shall be obliged to:

1. Not include gender discrimination elements in the job vacancy announcement and to guarantee equal opportunities for women and men to apply for the job vacancies;

   When a vacant position or a certain job category has an uneven distribution of women and men, the fact that the announcement underlines the aim to establish equality principles, shall not constitute discrimination.

2. Apply equal criteria in all recruitment procedures, with the exception of special cases as defined by article 9 of this law.

   The employer shall not disfavour an applicant by applying rules, criteria or procedures which may seem neutral but in practice are disfavouring the persons of the other gender, other than for objective and justified reasons.

3. Employ individuals without distinction to gender in any position or vacancy in all levels of professional hierarchy.

4. Promote equal distribution between women and men in different job positions and within various categories of employees, through training and development of professional skills and other temporary measures.

5. Create equal and appropriate working conditions, equal opportunities for information, training and qualification, as well as equal treatment of employees during labour relations.
6. Apply equal criteria in evaluating work quality. The employer cannot apply seemingly neutral evaluating criteria which in practice disadvantages the persons of the other gender.

7. Provide equal payment for work of equal value.

8. Take measures to stop discrimination, harassment, and sexual harassment towards employees;

9. Not place in a disfavoured position or take disciplinary measures against an employee rejecting or complaining discrimination, harassment, or sexual harassment, or any employee witnessing discriminatory actions, harassment, or sexual harassment done by the employer or other employees.

Article 17

Discriminatory actions of the employer

1. The actions of the employer in public or private sector are discriminatory if, because of the employer’s gender:

   a) uses differentiated standards and/or procedures towards employees with regards to recruitment, training, retraining, promotion, professional encouragement, work management and distribution, duration and terms of the probation, social insurance and benefits in case of retirement, unemployment, illness, disability, incapability to work, the right to leave and paid leave, protection of health and safety at work, payment for equal value work, participation in trade union organizations, other than for objective and justified reasons provided by article 9 of this law;

   b) creates differentiated working conditions for employees of the same level;

   c) takes disciplinary measures against the employee, changes the working conditions, transfers the employee into another job, makes redundancies, dismisses or lays off from work or terminates the employment contract;
ç) places the employee in a disfavoured position because of a complaint against the above mentioned actions of the employer.

2. It is prohibited to discriminate a candidate during the job selection process or dismiss an employee because of maternity, potential pregnancy in the future, pregnancy, parental responsibility, civil status, family responsibilities. It shall not be considered discrimination, if the work position is classified by the Council of Ministers as difficult or as dangerous for the health of breastfeeding mothers and pregnant women.

3. During the process of reorganization and reformation of job positions, the employer shall observe the rules of equal gender representation in terminating the work relations.

Article 18
Responsibilities of the employer for protecting the employee from discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment

1. Any discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment in the working place committed by the employer and/or employee, shall be prohibited.

2. In order to protect the employee from discrimination and especially from sexual harassment, the employer shall be obliged to:

   a) Take preventive measures and define disciplinary measures (sanctions) in the internal regulations concerning prevention of harassment and sexual harassment towards employees, in compliance with this law;

   b) When the employer is informed indirectly or when he/she receives information or a complaint from an employee who claims to have been discriminated, harassed or sexually harassed by another employee, after being convinced about that, the employer should take the proper organizational measures to stop the continuation and prevent discrimination, harassment or sexual harassment and apply the disciplinary sanctions;
c) Inform all the employees on the prohibition of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment in the working place.

3. The employer shall establish in the collective bargain, rules on preventing gender discrimination and on the way to resolve complaints filed by persons affected by such actions.

4. Every individual agreements or collective bargains which contradict the provisions of this law shall be invalid.

5. The provisions of this law are applicable for the self-employed as well as the employees performing work at home.

Article 19

The public authority responsible for gender equality in the labour field

1. The public authority responsible for implementing and controlling the enforcement of this law in the field of labour and employment shall be the Minister responsible for gender equality issues.

2. In order to implement the measures aimed at improving equal opportunities between women and men and eliminating direct and indirect gender discrimination, the Minister responsible for gender equality issues shall organize the supervision and exercise control on the institutions under his/her authority, who deal with issues of gender equality, as follows:

   a) The National Employment Service shall ensure the implementation of the measures for supervising the equal opportunities and treatment between man and woman in the areas of employment service and vocational training, as well as in the unemployment social welfare assistance; controls on whether the employer has taken and implemented the special and temporary measures and submits to the minister responsible for gender equality issues, proposals for amendments in legal and sub-legal acts, any initiatives and projects, studies and other collaborations in the gender equality area;
b) The State Inspectorate of Labour shall ensure the supervision of the implementation of gender equality measures with regards to labour relationships and employment, social and health insurance, health and safety at work provided by the employer and the employees in the public and private sector, as well as controls whether the employer has taken and implemented the special temporary measures;

c) The State Social Service shall inspect and is responsible to observe the gender equality principles in the areas of policy implementation and economical aid legislations, payments for people with disabilities and social care services countrywide.

3. The Minister responsible for gender equality issues shall cooperate with the Minister of Finance so as to provide that the Social Insurance Institute ensures the implementation of measures on overseeing gender equality in the field of administration and management of the public pensions’ system and with regard to the other rights related to social insurance rights.

4. The means, forms and the concrete fields of cooperation in the area of gender equality, between the institutions under the Ministry responsible for gender equality issues and the other ministries, shall be defined through sub-legal acts.

Article 20

**Discriminatory announcements**

1. A job, education, qualification or training advertisement is considered discriminatory when it contains requirements or preferences which give priority to applicants of one specific gender, with the exception of those cases provided by article 9 of this law due to the special character of the work.

2. A job or education advertisement which contains irrelevant requirements for the job position or the education which may exclude a woman or man from applying or an advertisement which gives the impression it contains preferences towards
a specific gender, shall be considered discriminatory, except for objective and justifiable reasons.

3. Specifications, requirements or preferences on family or marital status, or family obligations shall comprise discrimination.

4. It shall be prohibited for the announcer to ask for information on private or family life of the applicant.

5. An announcement shall not be discriminatory when the gender having the lowest level of representation is encouraged to apply (considering the working place and the job position).

Article 21

The rights of the employees to the observation of gender equality principles

Female and male employees shall have the following rights without any gender discrimination:

a) to have the same pay for work of the same value, including remunerations, equal treatment for work of the same value as well equal treatment concerning the evaluation of work quality;

b) to have the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same employment selection criteria;

c) to be informed by the employer on vacancies and on their rights for equal opportunities in labour relations;

c) to have the same pay for work of the same value, including remunerations, equal treatment for work of the same value as well equal treatment concerning the evaluation of work quality;

d) to have social insurance especially in cases of retirement, unemployment or temporary loss of the ability to work.
dh) to enjoy health protection and safety at work, including protection of the reproductive function.

e) not to be discriminated or dismissed from work because of marriage or, in case of women, because of pregnancy or maternity, and to be guaranteed the effective right for work.

ë) to have the right to benefit allowances for dependent children.

f) to have the necessary support and the encouragement of the social services system in order to allow the employed parents to combine family obligations with professional responsibilities.

g) to receive written information by the employer after having presented a request, on the nature and purpose of the training, work experience and other qualifications of the person of the other gender who won the right, was selected, or promoted to a position or a vacancy.

gj) to become members and active participants in trade union organizations and in any other professional organizations.

Article 22

**Temporary special measures in the area of job relations**

1. In order to ensure equal gender representation in the area of job relations, the job vacancies advertisements stating preferences for candidates from the less represented gender shall not constitute discrimination.

2. In order to ensure equal representation in the job relation area including the selection process, promotion, development of professional capabilities when the candidates have achieved equal results or are at the same level, the employer shall give priority to the candidates of the less represented gender.
Article 23

Evaluation of unpaid work

1. The unpaid work of women and men shall be considered as a contribution to the family and the society in cases when he/she:
   a) takes care of the wellbeing of the family;
   b) takes care of the children;
   c) takes care of the other members of the family;
   č) does agriculture work and home economy.

2. The subjects provided by item 1 of this article shall benefit from the community services, work and employment policies and vocational training based on the legislation in force.
Article 24

Prohibition of gender-based inequality

1. Gender based discrimination by/in the educational institutions of all levels, public or private, shall be prohibited.

2. The following cases constitute discrimination:
   a) when there are restrictions anticipated based on gender discrimination and hindrances in the creation of necessary facilities to be educated in public or private institutions which offer education or other qualification and training services.
   b) when objectively unjustified different opportunities for men and women in the selection of a special field of study, training or graduation, as well as duration of classes are created.

Article 25

Gender Equality Education

1. Subjects offering education, qualification and training, as well as subjects which develop texts, programs and other educational materials in all levels shall ensure the teaching of necessary knowledge and the use of teaching, qualification and training methods in such a way to help promoting and building an equality mentality and preventing gender discrimination, negative stereotypes, prejudices, and canon practices or any other practices violating the principles of gender equality.
2. Higher education institutions, especially according to specified areas, undertake initiatives to carry out studies in the area of gender equality, or include it in the actual study curricula, to ensure material with relevant information, as well to proceed to the practical and scientific development of this area. përkatës, si dhe për t’i paraprirë zhvillimit praktik e shkencor të kësaj fushe.
Article 26

Gender equality in the media

1. The media helps in increasing the general awareness of equality between women and men by:
   a) not discriminating on a gender basis in its reporting;
   b) by applying gender-neutral terminology;
   c) by avoiding gender stereotypes throughout its activities.

2. Broadcasting, printing and publication of information and material that contains or implies differences that are humiliating or disparaging on the basis of gender, or that display exclusive or offensive attitudes towards either gender shall be prohibited.
RESOLUTION OF disputes AND SANCTIONS

Article 27

Disciplinary measures

The violation of article 18 item 2, letter “b” of this law shall bring disciplinary responsibility. The disciplinary measures are taken by the direct supervisor, pursuant to the legislation in force.

Article 28

Penalties

1. The violation of articles 16, 17, 18 item 2, letters “a” and “c” and article 20 item 3 of this law shall be punishable by fine from the State Inspectorate of Labour.
2. Violation of article 24 item 2 and article 26 of this law constitute administrative violation and shall be punishable by fine from the State Inspectorate of Labour.
3. Any person who has violated the provisions of this law shall be fined as follows:
   a) a natural person, from 30 000 up to 60 000 lekë;
   b) a legal person, from 60 000 up to 100 000 lekë;
   c) a natural person part of a legal person, which is responsible for the violation from 30 000 up to 80 000 lekë;
   č) a person exercising public functions and who is responsible of violations of the provisions of this law, from 30 000 up to 80 000 lekë;
4. Violations of the provisions of this law when constitute a criminal act, are punishable as provided by provisions of the criminal Code.
Article 29

Compensation of damage

The compensation for any damage, material or moral, caused by the violation of the provisions of this law, including the recovery of the violated rights, shall be made through the court based on the Civil Code.

Article 30

Procedures for the Resolution of Disputes

1. Any complaints on violation of gender equality according to this law shall be examined or tried by administrative organs, in compliance with the provisions of the Administrative Procedures Code. The administrative organs shall decide based on the provisions of this law.

2. The parties, on their free choice, as the case may be, may carry out any mediation procedures, or reconciliation procedures provided by the legislation in force, for addressing the violations according to this law. The accomplishment of such procedures shall not take away from the appellant the right to follow the case at the administrative body or the competent court.

3. In case the violation has been done by public administration employees, the provisions of law no. 8510, dated 15.7.1999 “On the extra-contractual responsibility of the state administration organs” shall apply.

4. The non-for-profit organizations which are licensed for providing social services, may represent or provide support in legal proceedings on behalf of the appellant, in accordance with the provisions of this law.
FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 31
Abrogation

Law no. 9198, dated 1.7.2004 “On gender equality in society”, as amended and all sub-legal acts issued pursuant to and in accordance to it, shall be abrogated.

Article 32
Sub-legal acts

1. The minister responsible for gender equality issues shall be tasked to issue all the sub-legal acts pursuant to article 13 letter “d” and article 19 item 4 of this law, within 3 months from the date this law enters into force.

2. The Council of Ministers shall be tasked to issue sub-legal acts pursuant to article 11 item 1 and 4 of this law, within 3 months from the date this law enters into force.

Article 33
Entry into force

This law enters into force 15 days after its publication in the Official Journal.

Promulgated with decree no. 5850 date 30.07.2008 of the President of the Republic of Albania, Bamir Topi.