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HELLENIC DEMOCRACY

HELLENIC MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS

**GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR DEMOGRAPHY AND FAMILY POLICY AND GENDER EQUALITY
(GSDFPGE)**

GSDFPGE Gender Equality Plan (GEP)

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1. Presentation/Introduction of the organization

The General Secretariat for Demographic and Family policy and Gender Equality - **GSDFPGE** (former General Secretariat for Gender Equality - **GSGE**) is the Greek governmental organization whose mission is to promote gender equality in all sectors of political, economic and social life. It was established in 1985 as an independent Public Service, reporting to the Ministry of the Presidency of the Government. In 2010 it was transferred to the Ministry of Interior, as a set of responsibilities, positions and staff. In 2019, it was transferred, as a set of responsibilities, positions, staff and supervised bodies, to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and was renamed to General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality. In 2021, it was renamed to General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality.

The main responsibilities of the General Secretariat are:

- Documenting, planning and implementing national gender equality policies in all policy areas. Specifically, in the context of the strategic goals set by the political leadership, it designs, monitors and evaluates the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAPGE) which aims at integrating the gender equality dimension in policies, both at central and local/regional level.
- submitting proposals, planning, managing, implementing, participating in and monitoring Co-financed Projects to promote equality policies,
- monitoring International and National developments in matters of its competences
- proposing and developing policies and measures to address gender-based violence,
- providing the common framework of operation and ethics of the Counseling Centers and Hostels for abused women and their children as well as the 15900 help-line for women,
- proposing policies, actions and interventions for women who are subject to multiple discrimination (women refugees, immigrants, women with disabilities, drug addicts, long-term unemployed, single parents, etc.),
- cooperating with the E.U and the International Organizations in the field of gender equality.

It must be mentioned that the GSDFPGE is neither a Research Performing (RPO) nor a Research Funding Organization (RFO). There are no researchers among its personnel and the service consists exclusively of administrative staff.

GSDFPGE planned and developed its first Gender Equality Plan (GEP) in the framework of the Horizon 2020 Project “Pilot experiences for improving gender equality in research organisations” (R&I PEERS). The project is coordinated by the University of Salerno since 2018 and it promotes the implementation of Gender Equality Plans in seven countries of the Mediterranean area as “drivers” for systematic institutional changes in research performing organizations (RPOs) and research funding organizations (RFOs).

2. Diagnosis of the situation of women in the institution/state of the art

2.1. Legislative framework, status quo for gender equality in Greece

Before the stage of diagnosis of the state of women in the GSDFPGE, a short report follows on the general legislative framework and the context/status quo for gender equality in Greece.

During the period of the accession to the EU, a number of legislative and policy measures have been adopted in Greece to promote gender equality. Family Law reform (1983) introduced significant improvements in domain of gender equality (protection of family, introduction of civil wedding, abolition of legal institution of the dowry).

According to Article 22 of the 1975 Constitution ‘all workers, irrespective of sex or other distinction are entitled to equal pay for work of equal value’. In the 1980s, many legislative steps have been taken towards at least the creation of an officially fairer labour market. The contribution of EC membership in terms of employment policies has been very important; yet, direct discrimination has not been eradicated; indirect discrimination has not been adequately addressed by institutions, employers or employees (according to the document The Policy of Gender Equality in Greece, 2013,

[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2013/493028/IPOL-FEMM_NT\(2013\)493028_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2013/493028/IPOL-FEMM_NT(2013)493028_EN.pdf)).

Greek women’s labour participation has been characterised by concentration in traditionally ‘female’ occupations. Care for both children and the elderly family members is considered women’s’ responsibility. The provision of childcare facilities is insufficient, and women face obstacles returning to labour market after maternity leave.

Women’s representation in top and decision-making position remains low. The gender wage gaps in Greece had declined from about 35% in the 1970s to roughly 25-30% in the 1990s; in 2010, the gender pay gap stood at 15.0%. This gap has been frequently attributed to

discrimination as well as to educational choices of university graduates (women chose less prestigious and less paid professions).

Since 2009, the economic crisis and austerity negatively affected life quality and status of women in Greece, reversing positive effects of adopted legislative acts. Service provisions have been restructured and reduced. In 2011 a large number of full-time contracts were converted into flexible contract types and significant salary cuts and layoffs in the public sectors, affecting predominantly women. The pension system has changed as well, rising the retirement age for women. Unemployment rates significantly rose: measured in full-time equivalent rates, in 2010 the employment rates for men and women were 77,8% and 47,2% respectively (source: OECD.Stat). Austerity intensified discrimination of women in the labour market and impediment of their promotion and professional development (The Policy of Gender Equality in Greece, 2013). As stated by Karamessini (2015), the female employment rate has fallen to such an extent that it has reached the corresponding rate of 1997, while the female unemployment rate has risen to similar heights. It should be noted that the employment crisis affected mainly middle and high-education women, who mainly worked in the public sector.

The policies implemented in the public sector (reduction of recruitments), legislation on the reduction of labor rights in the private sector but also on the operation and the taxation of small and medium-sized enterprises and self-employed workers have had a significant impact on employment in the public and private sectors for the employees, the self-employed and the entrepreneurs.

These measures disproportionately affected women, young people and migrants, who are more concentrated than men in the lower part of the wage scale and in the secondary sector of work (Karamessini 2015: 261- 2). At the same time, issues such as the gender pay gap and pension gap¹, the glass ceiling, the under-representation of women in specific sectors of the economy, persist.

Employed women have low paid and precarious jobs, often with little room for promotion, unable to develop professionally and educationally, socially stagnant and often unable to join collectives and organized activities, while they undertake large loads of family work and often are victims of domestic violence (GSGE 2015).

¹ Based on the study by Tinios P., Bettio F. and Betti G (2015), which draws data from EU-SILC 2012 on the incomes of 2011, the average gender gap in pensions of all EU Member States is 40%. Greece ranks eleventh among the EU Member States, with a pension gap of 23% at the age of 65-79.

As a result of these findings, a large proportion of the female population experiencing gender discrimination is isolated, while high unemployment rates trap women into poverty, forcing them either to fall into a state of 'permanent poverty' or to be maintained by their friends or families without any professional way out and social perspective (GSGE 2015).

With regard to work-life balance, the distribution of roles in the Greek family based mainly on the model of the “male breadwinner”, begun to be replaced in recent years by the model of dual-career families where both spouses are working. This model is now further eroded by the increase of households without any parent working or with only the mother working.

An important aspect of work-life balance is the status of maternity and parental leave permits for women and men, as well as respect for the legal protection of parenthood. With regard to the latter, during the crisis and in the context of the deregulation of the labor market, there has been an increase in violations of labor rights related to maternity protection (Karamessini, 2015). Employment conditions of this kind are dissuasive to women's decision to have children or to enter the labor market in childbearing age.

Additionally, the Law does not protect all categories of employees in a uniform way. With regard to the public sector legislative framework, problems are identified for those working under a fixed-term private-law contract (a category involving a sufficient number of female employees in the public sector too, such as substitute teachers, trainee doctors, the employees recruited through NSRF, the employees of the Private Law Entities and so on). As regards private sector employees, the fact that the granting of part-time work under an equal period of time depends on the consent of the employer often leads to violation of the law. The GSGE has repeatedly received complaints from working mothers about the fact that the employer refuses to grant an equitable leave and at the same time violates the hours of the employees. Finally, with regard to the status of self-employed persons, issues arise in relation to the amount of maternity allowance granted, as this could be considered to be insufficient in the light of the purpose of the provision (to allow for “temporary interruption of their profession on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity”).

The National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016-2020 (NAPGE 2016-2020) was designed and is currently implemented by The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE), taking into account the particular needs and conditions that emerged and shaped the field of gender equality at the time of the economic crisis. The NAPGE was formulated through a process of consultation with gender equality experts, and representatives of the civil society, the

academia, politics and public administration. It is of national scope and the strategic objectives set for the new period are grouped in 6 Priority Axes, one of which is number 3: “Labour market, family & work life balance”, which has 3 main objectives relevant to the program: encouraging participation of women in the labour market, promoting the principle of equality in businesses and measures for the reconciliation of family and professional life (work-life balance). Furthermore, Priority Axe number 4 is referred to Education, training, culture, sports and the media and the first objective set is “Promoting gender equality in formal education, science and research”, which includes the following objectives: increasing the proportion of female researchers in the academic field by increasing the number of positions available and motivating women researchers; raising awareness within the academic and research community on gender equality; establishing gender equality offices within universities; combating sexual harassment within the academic community, and promoting women in decision making centers within the academic community.

GSGE prepared a Guide for the Use of Gender Inclusive/Non-Sexist language in order to overcome linguistic sexism in public documents. It is an easy to use tool for the recognition and understanding of linguistic sexism and was sent by the Ministry of the Interior to the Directorates of Administration of Ministries and Regional Authorities, as a circular.

2.2. Main legal documents and other GE related initiatives

- Law 1414/84 applies the principle of sex equality in employment relations, abolishes all forms of discrimination against women and differentiation between male and female jobs and creates opportunities for the integration of women in the labour market through participation in training programmes.
- Equal pay law (Article 22 of the 1975 Constitution).
- Law nr. 2839/2000 sets a mandatory 1/3 gender quota in the boards and collective bodies of the Greek central and local government. The compliance is being monitored by the GSGE.
- Law 3488/2006 promotes equal treatment between men and women in access to employment and in employment relations.

- Law nr. 3653/2008 provides for a mandatory 1/3 gender quota on researchers in the National Bodies of Research and Technology, provided that the candidates are qualified for the positions.
- Law 3896/2010 modifies 3488/2006 and prohibits gender discrimination in employment Law targets the application of equal treatment of women and men in self-employment.
- The National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality (2010-2013).
- The National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016-2020 (NAPGE 2016-2020).
- The Istanbul Convention was recently ratified by the Greek Parliament.
- The new labour law (L. 4808/2021) incorporates into national law the EU Directive 2019/1158 on the work-life balance for parents and carers, to share family responsibilities between men and women equally and to facilitate women to remain in the labor market after having children or in parallel to their family responsibilities. Furthermore, with the same law, Greece ratified the Convention 190 of the International Labor Organization to eliminate violence and harassment at work.

2.3. Diagnosis of the situation of women in the organization

An internal diagnosis of the situation of women in the organization was carried out in the framework of the RI-PEERS project in 2018/19. First we prepared a sex-disaggregated report on the number of employees, the senior positions, etc. and then a survey of perceptions of gender equality at **GSDFPGE** was conducted. Almost 60% of the staff responded and completed the on-line questionnaire.

Moreover dialogue through meetings with Directors and Heads of Departments was an important strategy used to obtain feedback and support from the management of the organization as well as the involvement of all colleagues through focus groups.

By definition, the issue of gender equality is closely linked with all of the organizational competences and activities of the **GSDFPGE**. This fact might explain the high percentage of women employees among the staff of the organization (around 75%). The percentage of women in decision-making/higher management positions is also very high (90%).

Moreover, the **GSDFPGE** is subjected to the administrative and civil servants legal framework; Recruitment of staff is based on the rules set for the public sector which are quite formal and gender neutral. These rules also ensure equal career opportunities, equal wages

and equal recognition of achievements. Moreover, there is a gender quota on the composition of collective decision making bodies, which results to the high percentage of women in decision making bodies. Finally, both the high percentage of women employees and the very scope of the organization create a rather gender neutral institutional culture.

However, the questionnaire has revealed differentiations among men and women regarding their needs and perceptions within the daily operation of the organization and the possibility to equally develop their potentials². The responses indicate that even within a gender neutral institutional framework and culture, the traditional gender division of labour in the family still proves to be critical for women's careers. Women are more burdened than men by their obligations resulting from family life and care work and would welcome measures for balancing professional and family life like work from home, flexible work hours/days and children-friendly facilities. They also pointed out their need for mentoring, seminars, trainings, workshops, educational leaves provided by the organization, in order to promote their careers.

Both men and women consider gender equality trainings and awareness raising on relevant national legislation as important, as well as the use of gender neutral language.

3. Overall objectives/goals of the GEP

Subsequently, women constitute the majority of the staff and also the majority of the Heads of Departments and Directorates of the organization. Laws on recruitment and career progression in the public sector, seemingly, guarantee typical, gender neutral practices as well as equal gender pay. GSDFPGE has also reached a quite satisfactory level of gender neutral institutional framework and culture.

Nevertheless, there are differentiations among men and women (revealed by responses to the questionnaire) regarding their needs and perceptions within the daily operation of the organization and the possibility to equally develop their potentials. The responses indicate that the traditional gender division of labor in the family still proves to be critical for women's careers. As women are more burdened than men by family life and care expectations they

² Report on the Questionnaire results (which also includes sex-disaggregated data) is available upon request.

welcome work-life balance measures. They also pointed out their need for seminars, trainings, workshops and educational leaves provided by the organization, in order to promote their careers.

Both men and women consider gender equality trainings and awareness raising on relevant national legislation and unconscious gender bias as important. Use of gender neutral language is also considered necessary.

Thus, a strategic GEP primarily calls for targeted measures to balance the responsibilities at home and at work. It also needs to take into account that both mothers and fathers are the target groups of such measures. Sharing care responsibilities should be the message, not that *“women must be assisted to deal with care responsibilities”*. Further measures as awareness raising on gender equality issues, policies and trends and training through workshops, seminars or conferences as well as use of gender neutral language would create a holistic approach multiplying the impact of the actions and ensuring that gender equality principles are applied within the organization.

The measures established in the GEP should be realistic and feasible taking into account that the financial resources of the organization are limited, human resources valuable. Moreover legislation on public administration function and civil servants sets quite rigid rules on working hours, teleworking, and possibility for flexibility.

Publication of the GEP

A draft of the GEP, was presented on January 2019, first to the General Secretary's office and then to the Head of the General Directorate of Administration and Personnel of the Ministry of Interior that gave us feedback for a refining of the GEP. The Project Team finally sent the final ~~draft~~ GEP to the Vice Minister of the Interior who signed and approved the GEP and its implementation on 28/02/2019. The GEP was published on the public **GSDFPGE** website and disseminated across the organization.

Dedicated resources

As a central government organization the GSDFPGE has an annual budget which is governed by extremely confined strict and specific rules. Moreover it is noted that as a public organization it is not allowed to seek any external financial resources. Hence, we can only really count on

human resources, which are always limited, as we are a pretty small organization, nevertheless there are employees trained on gender equality issues and also willing to undertake action. A working group has been identified to work at the GEP, is made up of various people with skills on gender issues.

4. Structure of the GEP

After collecting the questionnaire data, we made a resume with the main findings that indicated the main strategies and directions. The Project Team also made a desk research to find good practices and examples of measures and actions implemented by other organizations in Greece and abroad that could work in our Organization and worked on finding objectives that would be SMART.

We also realized that, lacking financial or human external resources, we had to utilize ours. A main resource we always had is the different kinds of conferences we organize or participate in, where gender equality issues and policies are presented. We decided that these conferences could be part of gender equality training for our staff and that it was important to have as many employees as possible participate. That would be a good way of utilizing our resources and also of ensuring a level of sustainability.

Towards the goal of utilizing own resources and ensuring sustainability we decided to make use of the seminars organized by the Public School of Public Administration that are directed to all civil servants and to also take advantage of our expertise on the use of gender sensitive/non-sexist language.

The GSDFPGE GEP defined three different thematic target areas following the classification provided by the Horizon Europe Guidance on Gender Equality Plans:

1. Work-life balance and organisational culture

The Questionnaire had shown that the majority of employees find provided services in order to balance professional work and private life satisfactory. However, a higher percentage of women than men disagreed with this, which suggested that strategies to improve work-life balance were particularly relevant for female employees. In addition, survey respondents

pointed to introduction of flexible working hours and possibility of telework as relevant strategies for improving work-life balance, as well as to the need of raising awareness about relevant national legislation in the field of work-life balance.

It is worth mentioning that due to the rigid hierarchical structure and budgetary rules governing public organizations, implementing specific measures in work-life balance is challenging. Specific measures we included (the creation of a playing corner or breastfeeding room) are indeed quite ambitious and the absence of the necessary financial resources may hinder their implementation, but we decided to include them and try our best lobbying with the Financial services of the Ministry, focusing, at the starting point, in those that do not need considerable financial resources.

2. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Given generally unfavourable position of women in Greek society, particularly in the context of the ongoing austerity crisis (as described in 2.1), providing women with additional skills and tools to enhance their career opportunities is outlined as one of target areas in our GEP definition. Strategies to improve women's career opportunities were also recognized as relevant by the survey respondents.

3. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

The General Secretary, as already mentioned, is not a research organization nor a University, but the goal of this target area is to raise awareness on the importance of gender equality issues, about the gender perspective involved in the design of calls for tender relating to researches and evaluation of research proposals and to inform all the staff about the full scope of activities of the organization.

Moreover, having in mind the fact that GSDFPGE has already created guidelines for use of gender sensitive/non-sexist language, as well as the high percentage of respondents to the Questionnaire who believed that official communication and internal documents written in gender sensitive language would enhance equality, the strategies within this GEP target area are directed toward employment of these guidelines in practice, detection and improvement of its weak points.

Below are the tables of our 3 thematic target areas including: GEP Strategies (objectives), Direct Targets, Planned Start and End Dates, Indicators and Thresholds as it has been shaped after the change of political leadership in July 2019, recommendations provided by the external experts and the Advisory Board during the 1st and 2nd Validation Workshop and the suggestions reported in the deliverable D5.2 of the R&I PEERS Project, as well as 2 years of the COVID pandemic.

The tables of the responsible (person in charge) in each strategy follows.

1. Work-life balance and organisational culture

Strategy	Direct Target	Planned start & end Dates	Indicators	Threshold
1. Institutionalizing “an open day” for parents to bring their kids to the office once or twice a year	GSGE staff that are parents	February 2019 – April 2022	Number of days “institutionalised” over a year (1 step) Number of employees that took part (next step)	Unsatisfactory: 0 Satisfactory: 1-2 Very satisfactory: >2 Unsatisfactory: <2 Satisfactory: 2-4 Very satisfactory: >4
2. Introducing the possibility of flexible working hours	Mothers and fathers of babies and young children in GSGE staff	February 2019 – April 2022	Establishment of flexible working hours. Number of beneficiaries/people that are possible/eligible to use them. Number of employees that actually use them.	Unsatisfactory: no introduction Satisfactory: introduction only for mothers Very satisfactory: introduction for both parents Unsatisfactory: <2 Satisfactory: 2-4 Very satisfactory: >4 Unsatisfactory: <2 Satisfactory: 2-3 Very satisfactory: >3
3. Introducing the possibility of telework	Mothers and fathers of babies and young children in GSGE	February 2019 – April 2022	Establishment	Unsatisfactory: no introduction Satisfactory: introduction

Strategy	Direct Target	Planned start & end Dates	Indicators	Threshold
	staff		of telework. Number of beneficiaries/people that are possible/eligible to use them. Number of employees that actually use them.	only for mothers Very satisfactory: introduction for both parents Unsatisfactory: <2 Satisfactory: 2-4 Very satisfactory: >4 Unsatisfactory: 0 Satisfactory: 2-3 Very satisfactory: >3
4. Including relevant information on national work-life balance related legislation to the GSGE's website	GSGE staff	February 2019 – April 2022	Number of posts	Unsatisfactory: <2 Satisfactory: =2-3 Very satisfactory: >3

2. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Strategy	Direct Target	Planned start & end Dates	Indicators	Threshold
1. Regular data collection and statistic reports on demographic structure with data disaggregated according to gender and position.	Key actors, GSGE Team for RI PEERS Project	February 2019 – April 2022	Number of reports prepared and presented annually. Number of	Unsatisfactory: 0 Satisfactory: 1 Very satisfactory: >1 Unsatisfactory: <50% of the staff total Satisfactory: = 50%

Strategy	Direct Target	Planned start & end Dates	Indicators	Threshold
			women in senior/decision making positions	Very satisfactory: >50%
2. Organisation of seminars for employees to improve the skills relevant for their career advancement	Women in GSGE staff	February 2019 – April 2022	Number of seminars	Unsatisfactory: <2 Satisfactory: =2 Very satisfactory: >2
			Number of participants	Unsatisfactory: <5 Satisfactory: = 5-7 Very satisfactory: >7
3. Introducing mechanisms to facilitate leaves for education and research (e.g. sabbatical, nonpaid leave, fellowship abroad)	Women in GSGE staff	February 2019 – April 2022	Number of mechanisms introduced/established	Unsatisfactory: no introduction Satisfactory: introduction only for women Very satisfactory: introduction for both sexes
			Number of beneficiaries	Unsatisfactory: 0 Satisfactory: 2 Very satisfactory: >2
			Number of employees that actually use them	Unsatisfactory: 0 Satisfactory: 1 Very satisfactory: >1

1. Work-life balance and organisational culture

Strategy	Person in Charge
1. Institutionalizing “an open day” for parents to bring their kids to the office once or twice a year	Efi Lyemperopoulou (GSGE policy officer)
2. Introducing the possibility of flexible working hours	Efi Lyemperopoulou
3. Introducing the possibility of telework	Efi Lyemperopoulou
4. Including relevant information on national work-life balance related legislation to the GSGE’s website	Dimitris Platis (GSGE policy officer)

2. Gender equality in recruitment and career progression

Strategy	Person in Charge
1. Regular data collection and statistic reports on demographic structure with data disaggregated according to gender and position.	Dimitris Platis
2. Organisation of seminars for employees to improve the skills relevant for their career advancement	Sofia Nikolaou (GSGE policy officer)
3. Introducing mechanisms to facilitate leaves for education and research (e.g. sabbatical, nonpaid leave, fellowship abroad)	Sofia Nikolaou

3. Integration of the gender dimension into research and teaching content

Strategy	Person in Charge
1. Regular organisation of a training seminars for GSGE staff covering several general GE aspects (including use of non-sexist language-Guide, raising awareness of gender perspective in research content for GSGE staff involved in evaluation of research proposals).	Sofia Nikolaou
2. Analysis of language of GSGE’s documents and official communication and detecting discrepancies with language use suggested in the guidelines developed by GSGE	Sofia Nikolaou
3. Development and implementation of gender sensitive models in communication practices and specific set of documents in GSGE	Sofia Nikolaou

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