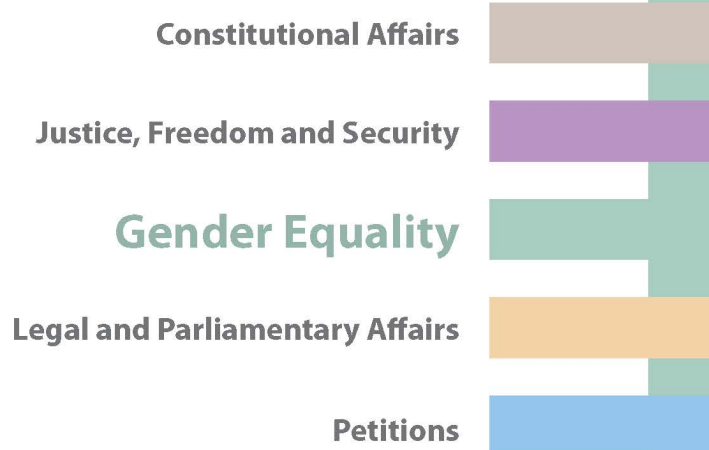


DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT **C**
CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS



The Policy on Gender Equality in Greece

NOTE





DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES
POLICY DEPARTMENT C: CITIZENS' RIGHTS AND
CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

GENDER EQUALITY

The Policy on Gender Equality
in Greece

NOTE

Abstract

This note provides an overview of the itinerary of equality legislation and policies in Greece since the 1980s in the areas of employment, work/family reconciliation, decision-making, health and violence against women. The achievements and gains of the pre-2009 period are at risk in the current climate of the most severe recession which the country has known since the end of World War II. Special attention is paid to the aspects of equality most affected by the austerity measures requiring intervention.

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BACKGROUND AND AIM OF THE NOTE

The aim of the present study is to present an overview of policies regarding gender equality in Greece since the 1980s, as well as the current context of the economic crisis. In doing so it looks into female participation in decision-making, examines issues of gender-based violence and addresses the position of women in the labour market and the possibilities of work/life reconciliation. The methodology consists in extensive literature review of scientific articles, statistics, press articles on the one hand but also websites of institutions and women's associations in order to present a balanced picture and highlight the gaps between rhetoric and practice and the impediments in implementing the relevant legislation and policies. It concludes that the crisis has severely impacted on the position of women and on the progress in gender equality through severe austerity policies such as dramatic cuts, massive layoffs and restriction of access to benefits and services. Women have been particularly affected by austerity and the breakdown of institutional structures and the gains that had been the joint product of EU equality legislation and the contribution of the feminist movement and civil society.

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1. Background

After a turbulent Civil War period, two waves of emigration in the 1950s and the 1960s and a dictatorship period (1967-1974), Greece entered the period of 'Metapolitefsi' when the establishment of democracy was followed by the **EU-accession** (1981). During that period the Greek state started making legislative and policy steps to promote gender equality in response to the legislative reforms within the EU and the obligations of Greece by its membership but also because of the contribution of dynamic feminist and women's organisations within a general climate of euphoria and political activity which marked the 1980s.

The Civil code had not taken into account women's multiplicity of needs and social relations but imposed a reality of a wife/mother subordinate to her husband. The welfare state completed the picture facing men as agents with rights and women as subjects with needs, either as mothers or as dependants. It is not a coincidence that women were granted **social rights** before political rights.

Papadopoulos (1998) speaks of the attachment of Greeks to the **nuclear family form**, and their ideological commitment to the institution of the family, which is very high by EU standards. Family in Greece is placed in a broader context of kin and is the main provider of care. The latter can take much broader forms than caring for a child or an adult, such as accommodation, emotional support etc. Since the 1980s, however, a series of changes have taken place in Greece concerning gender roles and the structure of the family. The migration to the urban centres broke the extended family pattern and nuclear family became the rule. This was followed by a shift in family values from collectivist to more individualistic and by a **more egalitarian sharing** of household functions and increasing female employment participation.

The financial crisis and the economic downturn

Since 2009 Greece has been faced with the worst fiscal and financial crisis since WWII. In March 2010 the Greek government agreed with the "Troika" of European Commission, the IMF and the European Central Bank a bailout deal package (the so-called "Memorandum") to cover borrowing requirements for the following three years on condition that major structural reforms, notably in the tax system and the public sector were undertaken. Severe **austerity measures** followed which led to massive layoffs, business closures and economic recession. The deepening crisis put into question the efficacy of the bailout plan, which was seen as not amenable to growth; a second bailout agreement, which included a 21% reduction on the face value of the bonds held by private bondholders, was signed in July 2011 to stabilise the escalating debt. These bailout deals led to a broad **deregulation** of employment, including the relaxation of collective agreements and enforced reduction in the minimum wage, severe cuts in pensions, as well as benefits and subsidies (Karamesini 2010, Petmesidou 2012). Accompanied by high inflation and various special property taxes (imposed under threat of having the electricity cut in one's household if they do not pay) they have pushed large numbers of families to **poverty** conditions and deteriorating living standards.¹ These developments have had far-reaching adverse effects on daily life, often

¹ A 20% of the population is considered to be below the relative poverty threshold, but it is believed that the absolute poverty rate is much greater (Labrinidis and Maniatis 2012).

touching on mental **health problems**, depressive symptoms, and increases in suicide rate (Economou et al. 2011). At the same time, provision of public services, not least health, has seriously declined.²

1.2. An overview of gender equality in law and social policy

The evolution of gender equality legislation and policy in Greece has been informed both by a Greek feminist and women's movement and a series of steps in relevant EU legislation. The autonomous, radical **feminist movement** of the 1970s and 1980s contributed to the development of new initiatives through their imaginative publications to feminist ideas and transferred the intellectual production of other feminist movements to the country exerted mostly a limited influence. However, their **theoretical analysis** inspired feminist members of the political parties of the Left who were not in a position to promote genuine feminist claims since they faced patriarchal barriers within their parties. Although aware of those impediments, those women could not fully engage in the feminist struggle outside conventional politics and structures (Davaki 2001).

The socialist party PASOK which came to power in 1981 took advantage of the party women's organisations to institutionalise the feminist movement. This mutation deprived it from its dynamic quality but provided the background of a series of equality policies in the 1980s, as well as the establishment of a General Secretariat for Gender Equality in 1985.

1.2.1. Family Law reform

A landmark in the evolution of gender equality legislation was the **Family Law reform** of 1983 which despite not incorporating all the claims of women's associations, it constituted a very advanced for the Greek context piece of legislation and was one of the most 'woman-friendly' ones in the EC. The new Law emphasised the social protection of the family. Civil wedding was introduced by virtue of Law 1250/82 and the legal institution of the dowry was abolished. Article 1329/1983 determines that women are obliged to keep their maiden name after marriage and even pass it on to their children and abolishes the Civil Code provision that the legal residence of women is that of their spouses (Davaki 2001).³

Moreover, the surname of the children is determined by common declaration made before the wedding by both parents and can be the surname of either or of both parents. In addition, paternal authority has been replaced by **parental care**, which is exercised by both parents and includes managing the property of the child and representing it in any legal affair concerning the child or its property. Children born out of wedlock have equal rights as those born within marriage, with the exception of the surname and parental care.

² Officials estimate that apart from bed cuts and intensive-care unit reductions, about 26,000 employees (of which up to 9,100 doctors) will lose their jobs and an overall curtailment in health care expenditure will be implemented as part of the second bailout package (Triantafyllou and Angeletopoulou 2011).

³ The dowry was defined in the Civil Code as property given to the husband by or on the behalf of a woman and was considered an obligation on the part of the bride's parents and as a precondition of the marriage. Moreover, according to Article 1387 the spouses decide together on any issue of married life and are obliged to contribute in accordance with their capacities to family needs (Article 1389). Contribution can be seen both in terms of income or property or work within or outside the household. This regulation sought to recognise women's unpaid work both in housework and in child care, both as to their right to increases in property during the marriage and to alimony³. Nevertheless, the ideology behind it remained that women are the main carers (Davaki 2001).

Fathers must provide maintenance for out-of-wedlock children after a court decision (Carlos and Maratou-Alipranti 2000).

Divorce by mutual consent was introduced and both spouses became liable for alimony, while Law 1469/84 provided to divorced wives and widows health insurance through their husband. In the case of divorce, the care of the children is assigned to one of the two parents without sex or other discrimination.

Regarding same sex marriage, the Greek Constitution protects family and marriage as institutions distinct from each other. **Family** in the constitutional sense includes the community of spouses (and their children, both in and out of wedlock, to the extent they exist); there is no distinction between different types of family, but **same sex partnership** is recognised only as union, not as marriage (Fessas 2011).

1.2.2. Employment relations

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'. Many legislative steps have been taken by the Greek governments in the 1980s towards at least the creation of an officially fairer labour market, which provides the opportunity for women to stand up for their statutory rights⁴ (Kyriazis 1994). The contribution of EC membership in terms of **employment policies** has been very important; yet, direct discrimination has not been eradicated, while indirect discrimination has not been adequately addressed by institutions, employers or employees.

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. It also includes provisions for protection against displacement for maternity reasons. Legislation covers private sector employees, the self-employed and those who provide independent services. Public sector employees are exempted but they are covered by article 119 of the Treaty of Rome, which prohibits indirect discrimination in wages (Agalopoulou 1992). **Directives** adopted were 86/378 (which has been repealed and replaced by Recast Directive 2006/54EC) and 86/613 on equality in social security, 92/85 on social and health security of pregnant women, 96/34 on parental leave and 97/81 on part-time work.

More recently, Law 3488/2006 and harmonisation with Directives 2000/78 and 2004/113 on sexual harassment and equality in access to goods and services are expected to have greater impact (Stratigaki 2006). They promote equal treatment between men and women in access to employment and in employment relations, as well as defining and tackling sexual harassment in the workplace. Law 3896/2010 modifies 3488/2006 and prohibits gender discrimination in employment. Specifically, it covers issues such as equal pay, equal treatment by social security and equal access to employment and opportunities for professional development between men and women. Recently Law 4097/2012 was passed, which targets the application of equal treatment of women and men in self-employment in harmonisation with the 2010/41/EU Directive (www.isotita.gr).

⁴Equality among farmers of the two sexes (Law 1257/82) was introduced, rape and sexual harassment were established as statutory offenses, Law 1424/1984 ratified the International Employment Agreement (Article 111) on discrimination in employment, Law 1426/1984 ratified the European Social Charter, Law 1576/1985 ratified the International Employment Agreement on equal treatment of male and female employees with family obligations.

National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality 2010-2013

The recently designed National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality 2010-2013 has four strategic goals:

- To defend the rights of all women through promotion of gender equality and interventions targeting in particular women facing multiple discrimination;
- To prevent and fight all forms of violence against women;
- To support employment and economic independence of women; and
- To make use of cultural creativity for the purpose of promotion of gender equality.

The programme has been informed by best practices and international experience so as to implement legislation and special equality policies in areas where women (or men) are under-represented; as well as horizontal interventions to tackle gender discrimination in all public policy; and gender mainstreaming. The funding for the programme has come from the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) 2007–2013, which constitutes the reference document for the programming of European Union Funds at national level for the period 2007–2013 (<http://www.isotita.gr>).

1.2.3. The General Secretariat for Equality (GGI)

Anti-discrimination legislation in Greece is quite complex. To safeguard its implementation and to promote equality the **General Secretariat for Equality (GGI)** was set up in 1985, a Centre for Research on Equality Issues (KETHI) in 1989, as well as Bureaux and Committees at the regional level. In 2005, the **Greek Ombudsman**⁵ was designated as the national body to handle complaints with regard to discrimination on the grounds of race, belief, disability, and religion in the private sector and regarding gender in both the public and the private sector. Implementation of the legislation has rested with the Ombudsman, together with the Labour Inspectorate of the Ministry of Labour and the Equal Treatment Committee of the Ministry of Justice, which has made effective implementation quite difficult. In accordance with Law 3094/2003, the intervention of the Greek Ombudsman is generally permitted in cases where anti-discrimination laws do not apply. A positive development has been the recent amendment of the Penal Code to sentence the existence of racial, religious, disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity motivation (Greek Ombudsman 2013).

⁵ A constitutionally established independent authority active since 1998 and mediating between public administration and citizens to ensure the protection of citizens' rights, ensure legal compliance and control maladministration.

2. THEMATIC DISPOSITIONS

2.1. Equal participation in decision-making

Political decision-making had been predominantly male until the first **actions** aimed at increasing women's representation in the period 1991-95 following the Council Recommendation 96/694/EC. Such actions comprised raising awareness campaigns, studies and European conferences. The first visible results were the increased representation of women in the European Commission and the European Parliament in that period. In Greece first Law 2839/2000 introduced that 1/3 of all employees in the public sector, local authorities and related institutions and enterprises had to be women. Afterwards, Law 2910/2001 stipulated that 1/3 of all electoral lists at the national and local elections had to be women. Mobilisation of women's organisations contributed to increase in female representation in the election of 2004 (Stratigaki 2006).

In spite of an amelioration of the situation, female representation at the **top positions** in politics and business remains low, something that is the case in other EU member states: in January 2012 only 13.7% of board seats of the EU's largest publicly listed companies were occupied by women. In Greece, the figure was still lower, at 7.4% in 2012 and also consistent over time (European Commission 2012).

The total number of women MPs in the current Greek parliament is 56 out of 300, a figure that is considered historically very high; still only one cabinet member out of 21 in the current cabinet is a female (see www.hellenicparliament.gr).

A relatively recent survey of **attitudes** towards women politicians and involving some 1200 citizens demonstrated that the higher the educational level of the respondents the higher the chance of their voting for women. In addition, the higher the political post the lower the chance citizens would vote for a woman. Respondents (73%) also thought that the largest obstacle for women politicians is the scepticism they are faced with because of their gender (KETHI 2006).

Other research has shown that the majority of Greek women are of the opinion that things would be better for women if there were more women MPs and even more if women were better represented in local councils. Politics on a local level seems to be more popular amongst women and more suitable to their interests and lifestyles. There is a tendency among young people – especially young women – to reject traditional politics; this may mean that they would be active in **more alternative or novel forms** of political participation. This may also explain why women are always considered underrepresented in politics, perhaps because they are included according to the criteria of their male colleagues (Pantelidou-Malouta, 1992).

2.2. Eradication of gender-based violence

The economic crisis has aggravated gender-based violence, a term which is taken to include domestic violence, rape, human trafficking and sexual harassment. Violence against women (VAW) can occur in the family, the community, in conflict situations or in police custody including violence committed by armed forces (United Nations 2009). Due to space

constraints, this section only deals with domestic violence, whereas trafficking is the topic of Annex 1.

Domestic violence is a multi-layered, complex issue which has been prominent in gender studies and which often goes unreported in Greece. It constitutes violation of individual freedom and dignity but also the expression of women's unequal position. The GGI estimated that only 6-10% of domestic violence victims contacted the police, and only a small fraction of those cases reached trial.

In 2006 Law 3005/2006 was introduced, which charges spousal **rape** as a felony, prohibits spousal rape (including rape in a free union), prohibits corporal punishment of children, and provides for *ex relatione* prosecution (prosecution by force of law) for all domestic violence crimes. Conviction rates for rape were low for first-time offenders, but sentences were harsh for repeat offenders. The enacted legislation provides for victim-offender mediation in case of misdemeanours. Separate juvenile delinquency laws were enacted focusing on support services (Gavrielides and Artinopoulou 2013).

The new law was criticised for not referring at all to **violence against women** but **against family members**, without publicly acknowledging the fact that women are predominantly the victims of domestic violence. The GGI claimed that **police** tended to discourage women from pursuing domestic violence charges, instead encouraging them to undertake reconciliation efforts, and that courts were lenient when dealing with domestic violence cases. The GGI, in cooperation with the Ministry of Public Order, continued courses to train police on ways to deal with domestic violence victims.

There are **shelters** for battered women and their children offering services including legal and counselling services. The GGI operates a 24-hour emergency telephone hotline for abused women which during the first two years of operation received 10,176 calls⁶ (TO VIMA 2013).

Domestic violence has been exacerbated by the economic crisis. There has been a gender backlash manifesting itself in disproportionate job losses in the public sector and cuts to services women are more likely to require; **loss of socio-economic autonomy** makes them more vulnerable to male abusive behaviour and leaves them without any option but to return to abusive partners (McCrobie 2012).

A recent study by the Hellenic Society for the Study of Human Sexuality and the Andrology Institute of Athens analysed 1,000 **telephone interviews** to conclude that the Greek rate of domestic violence has gone up by 47% in the past few months. Out of all men who behaved violently, 44% were unemployed, whereas the main characteristics of the offenders were increased financial obligations, job stress and low sexual activity. In order of prevalence, the most common forms of domestic violence were verbal abuse (72%), financial blackmail (59%), sexual humiliation (55%), beatings (23%) and rapes (18%) (*Kathimerini*, 23 May 2013).

⁶ Half of them made by the victims out of which 4.629 were domestic violence cases, 48% of victims were married and aged 25-54. 43% of the callers wanted to receive psychological support, 33% legal advice, 12% legal aid and 8% shelter

2.3. Women in the labour market

This section primarily focuses on labour market legislation and policies, touching also on education, as the two are inextricably linked. Labour market policies have been at the heart of EU legislation and actions when it comes to equality policies, given the economic priorities of European integration.

The traditionally patriarchal Greek family views **education** as a paramount priority for its members. Until World War II it used to promote education of its male members. Afterwards, however, modernisation of ways of thinking, state education policies and socio-economic advancement led to increased participation of women in the education system (Asimaki and Vergidis 2013). Still, despite their educational level and chances for a prosperous career, Greek women until the 1950s had been trapped in the ideal of domesticity. Education and the practice of multi-occupation – often an educated member of the family with a public employee post had increased chances for getting an extra job – subsequently contributed to their financial autonomy (Avdela, 1997). Increasing participation of Greek women in the labour market since the 1950s can be attributed to economic **development** and the need for more **labour force**, demographic trends like later marriages and birth control, increasing education levels and consumption needs, differentiation in the structure of the labour market with rise in services, provision of child care facilities and evolution of attitudes and norms (Symeonidou-Alatopoulou, 1980).

Greek women's labour participation until the end of the 1970s had been characterised by concentration in traditionally 'female' occupations or they had been seen as 'contingency workforce' in the form of temporary and occasional contracts (Mousourou 1985). In the 1990s the European initiative **NOW** contributed to further promotion of equality at work but also to broadening the understanding of gendered analysis of employment policies and introducing new specialisms like equality counsellors (Stratigaki 2006).

2.3.1. Financial crisis and economic downturn's effects on the labour market

Following the austerity measures imposed, in 2011 a large number of full-time contracts were converted into **flexible contract** types, which led to over 50% pay reductions; the introduction of a single payment grade system for all public sector in 2011 also imposed significant **cuts in public sector salaries** (reducing gross salaries by at least 25%), while layoffs of 150,000 public sector employees by the end of 2015 is underway, something which will affect predominantly women. In the private sector, cuts in earnings of 15% were introduced in 2011 and more are expected (Karamesini 2010, Petmesidou 2012).

Laws 3863 and 3865 of 2010 introduced significant changes in the **pension system**, including waiving favourable pre-existing regulations for early retirement of women with under age children in the public sector: their retirement age was gradually raised from 50 years (2010) to 65 years (2013) for qualification of full benefit, without any counter measure for supporting motherhood. The Mid-term Fiscal Strategy Framework (2011-2015), which accompanied the second rescue deal of July 2011, introduced further pension cuts and a number of other measures cutting down on benefits. The list of arduous and unhygienic occupations was shortened in November 2011, with about 180,000 workers removed; this included occupations such as hair stylists, supermarket cashiers, cleaners, predominantly populated by women. The second bailout package also involved the "haircut" of bondholding, seriously affecting social insurance funds, as they had to lose over 12

billion euros held in government bonds. On the other hand, pension cuts have contributed to increasing poverty risk, particularly for people 75 years and older; gender differences are pronounced, with about 30% of women aged 65 and over at risk of poverty and exclusion in 2010, compared to about 23% for men (Petmesidou 2012).

2.3.2. Unemployment and pay differentials

Recession has led to rampant unemployment, which has affected both men and women. In 2008 male and female unemployment stood at 5.1% and 11.4% respectively, with the EU-27 equivalents being 6.6% and 7.6%. In **2013** the respective figures in Greece were 21.4% and 28.1%, diverging significantly from the EU-27 averages of 10.4% and 10.5% (Eurostat 2013). Measured in full-time equivalent rates, in 2010 the employment rates for men and women were 70.7% and 46% respectively (European Commission 2012).

Nevertheless, **part-time work** is not fully included in the statistical data, since a substantial part of it is hidden within the dark area of the flourishing **informal economy** (Nikolakopoulou-Stefanou, 1994). A large number of women do not appear in the official statistics, as they are either paid cash in hand or do piece work or are unofficially employed in family enterprises (see Annex 2).

A number of studies on **gender wage gaps** have estimated that in Greece the ratio of female to male earnings had declined from about 35% in the 1970s to roughly 25-30% in the 1990s. The pay gap between women and men in Greece in 2010 was 22% (compared to the 16.4% EU-27 average) (European Commission 2012).

This gap has been frequently attributed to discrimination, in the absence of other determining factors, such as, for instance, **education**: overall, Greek women seem to do quite well in education compared to men. In 2010 and for the age group 30-34 tertiary educational attainment was 31.4% for women (25.7% for men) with EU-27 averages standing at 37.2% and 30% respectively (European Commission 2012). However, more recent studies have switched attention from discrimination to the **educational choices** of university graduates that differ between women and men, the former selecting the less rewarding subjects of Humanities and Social Sciences, as opposed to Engineering, Science and Medicine for the latter (Livanos and Pouliakas 2012).

State employment

Other studies have shown that deregulated institutional mechanisms and weak union presence have detrimental effects on gender segregation and pay equality in European economies (e.g. Rubery 1992). Building on these, Koskina has looked into the institutional features of state employment in Greece, which has historically been based on patronage relations directed by political parties, and has argued that 'while there are forces at national level that support equal career progression and thus equal pay, there are also hindering and constraining forces that not only limit career development but also foster the widening of wage disparity between female and male civil servants' (2009, p.607). Such forces are related to the **nature of public administration**, which is tightly woven with a highly centralised institutional framework determining structured salaries that are at best only a fraction higher than minimum wage in the private sector regardless of skill and family status; other institutional features are related to the types of work (often atypical and temporary) that are granted to employees (the majority of which are women), the working hours (which are shorter and enable more work/family balance, undertaken by women) and

the opportunities that used to be provided for early retirement for women with under-age children (after 15 years of service).

In the context of the **NOW** initiative, some positive actions included increased quotas of women taking part in publicly funded training seminars, establishment of more nurseries and pre-school care centres, longer school hours and special training schemes for women over 40. All these aimed at closing the pay gap and increasing women's return to the labour market after maternity leave (Stratigaki 2006). All those positive effects did not last long.

2.3.3. Discrimination against women

The economic crisis has had a considerable impact on **employment relations** and work conditions, which have affected women more than men. According to data provided by the Greek Ombudsman there have been cases of discrimination against women, particularly regarding conditions of pregnancy and motherhood needs. These categories were more at risk of unemployment or conversion of their employment into part-time status or of being generally discriminated against despite protective EU legislation. The crisis is often used as an excuse for **unfair and unlawful practices**. In 2012 there was an increase by about 118% (compared to 2011) of cases where the labour contract was converted to part-time, after unilateral decision on the part of the employer; in these cases women are often called for one to three days of work weekly. Often women have resorted to the Ombudsman but have subsequently been reluctant to pursue their case for fear of dismissal. Fines have been imposed by the Labour Inspectorate upon suggestion of the Ombudsman in several cases. Indicative of the persistence of gender inequalities is that only in one case, related to the professional development of a male employee, was discrimination reversed (Greek Ombudsman 2012).

Furthermore, austerity has also intensified issues of discrimination against women in the **labour market**. Stereotyping seems to be well-grounded in a number of male-dominated sectors (e.g. police, the army), but also in the education, public administration and health services sectors and has been impeding promotion and professional development of women disproportionately. It has become quite common that young women are often asked not to start a family if they are to get a job in the private sector. In other cases, maternity leave intervals were not taken into consideration as periods of service in cases of promotion in the education sector. Discrimination has been also manifested through the reduction in pay and benefits during periods of maternity leave or sick leave in the light of oncoming pregnancy, although legislation is supposed to prevent discrimination of this sort in the public sector (Greek Ombudsman 2012).

2.4. Reconciliation of private and professional life

Care has always been a considered women's work in the Greek context, provided mainly in the domestic sphere informally as one of the main functions of the family.

Development of personal social services has historically been slow and piecemeal, with child and elderly care provided (before the crisis) increasingly by migrant women (see Index 1). Not many data are available, but elderly care expenditure, for instance, was in 2008 0.09% of GDP compared to the EU-27 average of 0.41% (Petmesidou 2012). Systematic data on care needs and differences in access to services by gender, age, health

status, ethnicity etc. are lacking. As the health of **elderly people** has been declining in recent years there are growing needs for better health and social care services. The logic of austerity, however, emphasises cost containments at the expense of provision.

As social insurance funds present high inequalities regarding the quality of services provided and as local authorities are increasingly unable to run care programmes under austerity conditions⁷ the need for the **family** to compensate in some way is perpetuated. But a vicious circle is formed, as gradually, families are unable to afford informally paid care. Currently fewer families can continue paying migrant women for provision of care than in the recent past, which means that increasingly the burden of domestic child and elderly care falls on the shoulders of women members of the family. Under these circumstances, it is small wonder that in 2010 68.6% of total female population had **care responsibilities**, compared to 28.3% for the EU-27 (European Commission 2011). This constitutes a backlash after the progressive legislation passed in 1983 and has reinforced the stereotype of the 'nikokyra', i.e. the female home-maker, who has to undertake all the **unpaid care work** since public and private resources are scarce. In the most severe cases, families, including single-mother ones, were driven by economic necessity to give up their child to designated 'SOS Children's Villages' (Greek Election Blog 2012).

In 2010, the rates of males and females aged 75 and over at the bottom income quintile severely limited in their daily activities were about 42% and 40% respectively and these percentages were about double than the equivalent in 2005. At the same time, kinship carers (predominantly women) have expressed their need to be helped financially or being offered flexible work arrangements to combine employment with care work (50% in a recent Eurobarometer survey) (Petmesidou 2012).

The reconciliation of work and family life is still a challenge at the EU level, as has been manifested in the recent unsuccessful attempt to amend the Maternity Leave Directive by extending maternity leave to up to 20 fully paid weeks and by introducing a fully paid two-week paternity leave. In Greece Law 4075/2012 established the right to **parental leave** by introducing the right of each parent to participate in the upbringing of the child until the age of 6. Progressive developments in recent Greek legislation include Law 4097/2012 (article 6), which caters for the provision of maternity benefit to self-employed women. This has not been implemented, though, due to a pending approval from the Ministers of Finance and Employment (see www.filosykis.gr).

As a survey mentioned above has shown, the problem of reconciliation of work and family commitments seem to be considered (by 74.7% of the citizen respondents) a key factor preventing women from entering politics; measures to facilitate this **reconciliation**, together with positive representation in the **media**, are seen as significant in promoting female political participation in high posts (KETHI 2006).

⁷ The provision of care has been transferred to local authorities in 2010 through the so-called Kallikratis governance plan; however, cost containment measures and agreements regarding layoffs of local authorities' temporary personnel seriously hinder any meaningful provision of social care services.

2.5. Reproductive rights and health

Recession has started taking its toll on Greek people's **mental and physical health**.

Mental health in particular has been shown to be affected by unemployment. In 2011 the Greek Health Minister announced rise in **suicide rate** by 40% over the first semester of that year. Apart from a sharp increase in the percentage of suicides, the severe cuts in the hospital sector as well as the overall cuts in the health budget in countries like Greece have **restricted access to care**. Recessions pose risks to health but it is the interaction of fiscal austerity with economic shocks and weak social protection which escalate health and social crises (Karanikolos et al. 2013).

The Troika's demand was that health expenditure should be **lower than 6% of GDP**. Cost containment took place in the hospital and pharmaceutical sectors, salaries of medical professionals were reduced, user charges were increased in primary and ambulatory care services which may lead to rise in the use of services which remain free of charge but are labour intensive, such as emergency care (Karanikolos et al. 2013).

A recent study showed that self-reported health deteriorated between 2007 and 2009 (Kentikelenis et al. 2011). People needed care but could not access it due to financial constraints and private health insurance was no longer affordable. Reasons for this may be the restricted access to health care but others have argued that it was the strong impact of the recession on mental health which led to **prevalence of risk behaviours** (alcohol, drug abuse) and consequently to physical health deterioration (Vandoros et al. 2013). Moreover drug shortages and delays in reimbursement of pharmaceuticals by health insurance funds resulted in accumulation of **debts**, which made the pharmacists asking the patients to pay for their drugs out of pocket (Karanikolos et al. 2013).

The reaction of the local authorities and some medical professionals is noteworthy. Community clinics have been established in 2012 to help those who do not have access to free health care and cannot afford medicines (Kremer and Badawi 2013).

With regard to women's **reproductive health**, austerity policies have impacted significantly. On the basis of Ministerial Decision 93443/11/ 18-8-2011), poor and uninsured women (who are mainly the unemployed ones), are required to pay 600 Euros for natural delivery or 1200 Euros for Caesarean, whereas uninsured immigrant women (non EU nationals) are charged double (B 3096 23-11-2012). All ante-natal tests are charged for and, as a result, many women deliver without any prior test or doctor's appointment. If women are not able to pay, they pay through their tax bill, which may lead to confiscation of their belongings. Babies are not issued with birth certificates until the fees have been paid. Greece's birth rate will fall further and having children will not be an option for some categories of women. Civil society has reacted with mobilisations and protests which are going on but so far to no avail (www.fylosykis.gr).

All this happens in a country with a traditionally low birth rate which has been falling since the onset of the crisis (currently 1.39) and a population of 11,290,067 inhabitants (Eurostat 2012) and in which abortion became legal in 1986 when the socialist party PASOK was in power. Abortion had been common practice before then but secretly in private practices or clinics. There were two main problems for women, the financial cost as well as the conditions under which terminations took place, which put their health at risk. The topic had never been debated until the second wave of the feminism in mid 1970s. However, in politics,

the abortion issue was presented as a health risk to women and it would be performed in hospitals and covered by the insurance funds. No feminist elements were included. Feminists had fought for free abortion together with free contraception, something that would have constituted some form of recognition of their struggle. Law 1609/86 - 'a law for women's health and termination of pregnancy'- instead, sees abortion as belonging to state's responsibility for women's health and not as women's right to self-determination. The abortion legislation was a major disappointment for women's movement and proved that apart from its concern with equality, PASOK had an anti-feminist attitude on issues which could not be translated into electoral gain. PASOK equality policies were not the expression of its views but use of left-wing rhetoric which aimed at modernisation and the integration of another 'non-privileged' social group (Davaki 2001).

The number of abortions has increased by 100,000 yearly over the last 10 years which put Greece first in the EU in the number of abortions. The effect of the economic crisis is evident and family-planning has been extremely difficult in this climate of uncertainty (Ertel 2011). It is worth noting that the number of abortions may be even higher due to the fact that some go unrecorded, as they are still done privately and that contraceptives have been taken off the list of drugs requiring prescription (Tsiaoussi 2013).

Very little research has been done to date on the effect of the economic crisis on people's health and neither have public health experts been consulted by the Directorate-General for Health before the Commission imposed those measures (Karanikolos et al. 2013).

3. CONCLUDING REMARKS

All gains in the field of gender equality since the 1980s have been put at serious risk by the economic and political developments of the last few years. Whilst the Greek autonomous feminist movement has been responsible for the generation of ideas and mobilisations which led to positive changes, most of this has been absorbed or mutated into women's groups that tend to be attached to political parties and trade unions and are thus less independent and powerful.

Feminism in Greece has never had a positive image among the wider public and women-friendly policies are something that organised feminists are not very much connected with (Greek Election Blog 2012).

On the institutional level, the crisis has meant **restructuring** and **reduced service provision**. Indicative of these trends is the recent restructuring of the General Secretariat of Gender Equality in March 2013 (25 units were reduced to 8, 3 out of the 5 directorates were closed down, 19 departments were reduced to 6 and the post of the Director General was abolished, all in an era in which Greek women could benefit the most by the Secretariat.

These state practices have been counteracted to some extent by **informal networks** and **civil society**, which had traditionally been entrenched in state mechanisms or strong professional associations. In this respect, it seems that the crisis has strengthened the Greek civil society and social cohesion.

While the legal framework provides for part-time employment arrangements as a vehicle for helping enterprises cope with financial difficulties and keeping their labour force, it seems that this is increasingly used against **labour legislation** that protects women and promotes equal treatment between men and women.

Austerity policies have systematically targeted public sector employment (i.e. affecting predominantly women employment) and have curtailed benefits (again generating work/family balance challenges predominantly for women as mothers and carers). The state does not seem to be able to **safeguard gender equality** in the current climate; on the contrary it pursues policies that constitute a backlash to gender equality. Moreover, civil society and feminist organisations are growing from strength to strength and aim at preserving what can be rescued; in collaboration with their counterparts in other debt-stricken EU countries they rise to one of the biggest challenges in one of the most important historic moments in contemporary Greek history.

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ANNEX 1: TRAFFICKING OF WOMEN IN GREECE

Human trafficking is a worldwide phenomenon which has been the topic of debate since the 1990s around three themes: as parallel to slavery, as a human rights violation and as security risk to states' autonomy. Women and minors represent the majority of its victims with, according to estimations, women constituting 80%, and recognised as a form of gendered violence. It is an organised crime which goes beyond borders and national authorities and in this way it becomes a threat to state sovereignty and requires concerted action among States. There are several purposes of human trafficking of which two are outstanding: trafficking for the purpose of labour and sexual exploitation.

Links have been established between sexual exploitation of women and children, trafficking and prostitution. Consequently, feminists have taken two stances: one strand is for abolishment of legal prostitution (aligned with some religious groups), while the other favours prostitution to remain legal and focuses on coerced and unequal work conditions (Miller and Wasileski 2011; Fitzgerald 2013).

On the EU level, the new Directive 2011/36/EU adopts a broader perspective on the issue of human trafficking proposing reinforced measures to discourage demand. It has to be acknowledged that poverty enhances women entering prostitution to earn their living and makes them more vulnerable for being trafficked. In this regard, the Aretusa Work Programme acknowledges the lack of gender dimension in anti-austerity measures and the significant absence of sufficient support services and NGOs for women (Aretusa 2012).

Furthermore, it has to be taken into account that Greece's geographical position at the edge of Europe surrounded by sea and a long and porous frontier with Turkey as well as the size of its informal economy renders it particularly attractive to clandestine entry of immigrants. As undocumented women are not entitled to work, they are particularly vulnerable to be sexually exploited in the sex industry.

In the light of rising inequalities and female poverty in the current economic climate, the incidents of violence against women are on the increase, sex industry (both legal and illegal) has been thriving and women are becoming more and more vulnerable. In 2010 women in Greece faced a risk of poverty of 20.9% when the EU-27 equivalent was 17% (Aretusa 2012). This has definitely risen, given the cuts that have been introduced since.

Already officials, such as the Mayor of Athens, state that the increase in prostitution has outreached the 1.500% and there has been an enormous rise of sexually transmitted diseases (Aretusa 2012).

Anti-trafficking legislation introduced in 2002 and the mobilisation of NGOs to combat trafficking improved Greece's position from a Tier 3 country to a Tier 2 country according to the classification by the US State department in 2006. Nevertheless, in recent years, no reliable data have been provided by the state, neither on trafficking nor on immigration and it seems that the situation has deteriorated with undocumented migrant women being the most affected (Miller and Wasileski 2011). In the new controversial legislation on domestic violence and rape, undocumented migrant women are trapped in silence because they cannot leave their aggressors' home (whether they are their employers or their partners) out of fear of deportation; because of economic dependence on them; but also because of the limited support provided by the state.

Undocumented battered women have three possible legal remedies: a) applying for legal residency can be granted according to Law 3386/2005, as for instance in shelters. The problem is that shelters are underfunded. The second is for 'exceptional reasons' through a three-member Migration Committee making recommendations to the Ministries of Interior. Finally, the last resort is applying for refugee status which is the hardest to get, as Greece has one of the lowest records in granting refugee status. However, a pending application for refugee status grants the immigrants the right to stay and work in Greece (Miller and Wasileski 2011).

Only civil society can play a very important role in the battle against human trafficking but is weakened because NGOs depend on state funding. However, there are some timid signs of strengthening of civil society and social cohesion under the pressure of the rampant recession. As Aretusa member organisations put it, one of the biggest challenges for them is to ensure the enforcement of EU fundamental values of dignity, equality and solidarity for victims of trafficking (Aretusa 2012).

Unless gender perspective and impact analyses become part of the planning of new austerity and social policy measures, the effectiveness of the EU anti-trafficking legislation in debt-ridden countries will bring about no improvement in women's labour and sexual exploitation, unless the material basis of trafficking is also eroded.

ANNEX 2: PECULARITIES OF WOMEN'S POSITION IN THE GREEK LABOUR MARKET

Female employment in Greece has historically presented certain particularities. Firstly, the familistic welfare regime (Papadopoulos 2006) assumes that care will be mostly provided by women members of the family. As such, it has been a determinant of the types and patterns of female employment and of the generation of a **segmented labour market**, with male jobs carrying continuity, security, recognition, and high wages and female employees being reduced to insecurity, flexibility, and low pay. This segmentation is related to an occupational distribution, according to which there are female-dominated professions (e.g. telephone operator, secretary, cleaner, nurse etc.), while women are under-represented in other sectors. This pattern has been enhanced by the introduction of part-time work in the labour market, which has either been associated with these "female jobs" or with women employees in otherwise male-dominated service sectors, e.g. banking. Part-time work has also been the employment pattern for women in industries like clothing, where 'piece-work' has delegated women to something resembling a "reserved army of labour".

Secondly, female participation in the **agricultural sector** in Greece has also been significant. Women in the countryside have often participated in agricultural production alongside male members of agricultural families and in the reproductive part of the agricultural household. However, their work has not been recognised as equivalent to that of male members (Cavounidis 1983) nor was it reflected in the employment statistics, mainly because it was hidden under 'auxiliary family members'. Increasing mechanisation of agricultural work has since the 1990s contributed to a change in the division of labour in the structure of the agricultural household, with women either remaining at home or engaging in extra-agricultural activities. This has, in turn, been a backlash on women's identity, which has increasingly been associated more with home-making than with work.

The persistent crisis of the agricultural sector and the rising unemployment, which targets women more, has given rise to an interesting recent spin-off, namely the engagement of women with new **entrepreneurial activities**, often in co-operatives. The Greek countryside has indeed experienced recently a rise in small businesses run by women working in the agricultural sector, such as agrotourism, traditional craft-making, or agrofood production. The latter, in particular, has been embraced by dynamic and innovative women keen on responding to the demands of changing food markets using a variety of local resources, such as family recipes, farm building and so on. Significantly, this emerging sector and the relevant entrepreneurial activities bear familiar characteristics of women employment overall: ideological and cultural barriers, including stereotypes of entrepreneurship, isolation in peripheral regions, often with limited facilities and absence of child care, or gender-based inequalities in accessing resources (information, or credit). Still, these developments have been significant in increasing the visibility of women as employees and in empowering them. Moreover, they have introduced a new entrepreneurial ethos (less competitive, more about contribution), which instead of being perceived as innovative and entailing female empowerment, has to some extent re-linked women with reinforced stereotypes about motherhood, rural life and tradition (Anthopoulou 2010).

The familistic regime has, additionally, been a shaping force in **migrant employment**. Migrants came to Greece (as in other South European countries) in the middle of economic

restructuring of the 1980s and 1990s when the agricultural workforce shrunk, the middle class expanded and the economy moved towards service consumption but also experienced a boost in the construction sector. Migrants have been integrated in the Greek economy through by and large informal employment arrangements.⁸ They provided cheap (predominantly male) labour which enabled small and medium sized businesses to continue being profitable despite other rising costs (Maroukis 2013).

In addition, migrants have contributed to the reproduction of the familistic regime and have compensated for the lack of institutional arrangements which were among the lowest in EU in the 1990s (e.g. child care facilities for employed women, or elderly care) (Maroukis 2013; Lyberaki 2011). Arriving in large numbers from 1992 onwards, migrant women provided cheap and unregulated labour, which enabled indigenous women to be released from domestic labour roles, as well as from responsibilities related to the running of small family businesses. In particular, entry to the labour market for Greek women was facilitated, while pressures on them to leave employment and care for young children and/or to use early retirement schemes for the purpose of caring for husbands and elderly members of the family have been eased; at the same time the "family model" was converted into **the "migrant in the family" model**. The presence of migrant women in the Greek family and the domestic care sector has also had benefits for them, through building relationships and creating chances for upward mobility (Lyberaki 2011).

This picture is bound to change under the current circumstances with family income severely reduced and rising women's unemployment; **care duties will be increasingly assumed by women in the family** as there will be no means to continue hiring migrant women. Consequently, the hard-earned but obviously fragile gains of Greek women are at serious risk.

⁸ In the 2001 Census, migrants comprised 7% of the population and officially accounted for 9.5% of employed workers. Women were 45.5% of all immigrants and participated in the labour market at a rate of 58.8%, slightly higher than Greek women (54.8%); however, this data should be treated with caution due to under-reporting (Lyberaki 2011).

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

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