

Cyprus National Report

**on the implementation of the
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third
special session of
the General Assembly (2000)**

in the context of the

**twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2015**

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Ministry of Justice and Public Order

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**CYPRUS NATIONAL REPORT (BEIJING +20) ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING
DECLARATION AND PLATFORM FOR ACTION (1995) AND THE OUTCOMES OF THE TWENTY-
THIRD SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY (2000)**

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Foreword

This Report constitutes a brief comprehensive review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000) in the context of the twentieth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 2015. Apart from this appraisal, the report also aims to identify and discuss current challenges and emerging priorities for the further advancement and empowerment of women and girls in Cyprus.

The report has been commissioned by the National Machinery for Women's Rights (NMWR) of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, and compiled by the UNESCO Chair in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment of the University of Cyprus, in close cooperation with the NMWR, that provided all the relevant material and data submitted both by Government departments and organizations and non-Governmental organizations.

Unfortunately, it had not been possible to reach a solution on the Cyprus problem at the simultaneous referenda before the accession of Cyprus to the European Union in 2004, despite the considerable efforts deployed by the international community and the United Nations Secretary General. The Cyprus Government policy is to keep the road open towards reunification. Therefore, due to the political problem caused by the Turkish invasion in 1974 and the continuing illegal occupation and control of 37% of the territory by Turkish military forces, the Government of Cyprus is unable to ensure full realization of women's rights and gender equality in the whole of its territory. Due to this situation, no reliable information and data are available regarding the relevant critical areas of concern and the fulfillment of the strategic objectives in the area not controlled by the Government. Consequently, all information and data presented in the present National Report concern only the Government controlled areas.

Section I

Overview Analysis of Achievements and Challenges since 1995

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

2. Since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995) and the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly (2000), the Cyprus Government has made a lot of progress and headway in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Although in recent years the financial crisis has affected the rate of progress in certain areas, the general picture remains bright and major efforts have been made to promote gender equality. These efforts have been intensified after Cyprus' accession to the EU in 2004.

3. With regard to education, there are equal opportunities in education for both sexes on a non-discriminatory basis, at all levels, while the number of women participating in tertiary education is increasing over the years with women often outperforming men academically. As far as the priority area of employment is concerned, the employment rate has been increased and the reconciliation of work and private life for women has been largely achieved while there have been efforts, primarily by the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, to tackle the gender pay gap through various actions. Major developments have also taken place in the priority area of health since specialist health care units operate while high standard specialized services (i.e. obstetric/ gynaecological department in the Archbishop Makarios the III Hospital) are provided, so as to address the needs of women.

4. Cyprus has acquired access to a progressive, normative and legislative framework in regards to gender equality and women's empowerment. Legislative reform began in 1990. The initial and second periodic reports of Cyprus on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) stress the importance of the reform and modernization of the Family Law which incorporated the principle of equality between men and women in this field of law and brought domestic law in line with international conventions. Law No. 95/89 on the first amendment of the Constitution introduced civil marriage and relegated power from the Church to the State in family matters. The amendment of article 111 of the Constitution was a very significant step towards the elimination of discrimination against women. Tremendous efforts were made to reform laws related to family matters, including family courts, property rights among

spouses, adoption, marriage and divorce, parents and children relations, legal status of children etc.

5. More recently, many legislative measures relating to gender equality have been passed in order to harmonize legislation in Cyprus and bring it in line with relevant international instruments such as CEDAW. During the current period under review, there have been many impressive achievements and further work has been done to improve the legal framework safeguarding women's rights. A number of new laws and amendment laws have been passed, particularly in the sphere of family, employment and violence against women.

6. These include the Equal Pay between Men and Women for the same Work or for Work of Equal Value Laws of 2000 until 2009, the Parental Leave and Leave on Grounds of Force Majeure Laws of 2002 until 2010, the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Laws of 1994 until 2004, the Combating of Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings and the Protection of Victims Laws of 2007 until 2012, the Maternity Protection Laws of 1997 until 2011, the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education Laws of 2002 until 2009 and the Equal Treatment of Men and Women (Access to Goods and Services) Laws of 2008 until 2013.

7. Cyprus commitment and strong political will towards gender equality is manifested by the ratification of almost all international legal instruments relevant in the context of human rights, including the CEDAW and its Optional Protocol, ratified by Law 1(III)/2002, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol, the Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, ratified by Law 13(III)/2002 and the Council of Europe Convention for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings ratified by Law 87/(I)/2007.

8. The European Charter of Equality of Men and Women in Local Life has also been signed and some municipalities in Cyprus (Nicosia, Limassol) have already been engaged locally in its implementation.

9. The setting up of the National Machinery for Women's Rights (NMWR) in 1988 by the Government of Cyprus has been a pivotal moment in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, since the NMWR is instrumental in tackling gender discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, and has strengthened its outreach and activities over the years. It monitors and coordinates government policies, supports the creation of equality bodies and NGOs, provides funding to NGOs, promotes education and training programmes, supports research and aims at raising awareness on gender issues.

10. The NMWR which comes under the Ministry of Justice and Public Order consists of the Council, the National Committee, the Interministerial Committee and the General Secretariat. The Equality Unit of the Ministry serves as the General Secretariat of the NMWR

11. The Council of the NMWR consists of 19 organizations -which are the main women's organizations, trade unions and other major NGOs-, including two Turkish Cypriot organizations. An additional 68 NGOs (academic institutions, research centres, Organisations working in the field of violence against women, peace, education, agriculture etc) are members of the National Committee, which is the largest body of the four bodies of the

NMWR. In every Ministry there is at least one officer responsible for Women's Rights and all of them form the Interministerial Committee.

12. During the last years the government has developed much stronger ties with women's organisations by involving them in relevant spheres of policy formulation and decision-making processes and their contribution has been vitally important in ensuring that the needs of all women, including vulnerable groups, such as migrants, women with disabilities, elderly women, rural women, divorced women and single mothers are taken into account.

13. The Equality Unit of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order and the NMWR continue to play a leading role in the introduction of gender mainstreaming in all national policies and programmes.

14. This is mainly promoted through its participation in a number of multidisciplinary committees under other ministries dealing with issues such as family, children, violence against women, trafficking, social inclusion, employment, demography and women's entrepreneurship, contributing substantially in ensuring a gender perspective in the formulation and implementation of relevant policies.

15. Besides, pursuant to a decision of the Council of Ministers in 2005 the Equality Unit is responsible for evaluating and certifying that proposals for projects funded by the Structural Funds comply with the national and EU legislation/policies on gender equality.

16. Research on women's issues has been developed during the period under review by academic institutions, social partners, equality bodies and NGOs, with the full support of the NMWR and other agencies, while data collection and gender-disaggregated statistics have been promoted particularly by the Cyprus Statistical Service, playing a leading role in this field. The publication of The Statistical Portrait of Women in Cyprus issued in 2008 and 2012 is a good example of its work.

17. Following the accession of Cyprus into the European Union in 2004 and the enactment of an impressive number of legislative measures related to gender equality, it is clear that the last few years have been a critical period for the development of a national policy on equality between women and men. A number of National Action Plans and strategies have been developed that either specifically address issues of gender equality or routinely incorporate gender mainstreaming. These national action plans address and combat a wide range of issues which predominantly affect women, i.e. gender equality (2007-2013 and 2014-2017), gender equality in education (2007-2013 and 2014-2017), human trafficking (2010-2012 and 2013-2015), poverty, domestic violence (2010-2013) and social exclusion (2006-2008). The National Action Plan on Social Protection and Social Inclusion (2006-2008) routinely incorporated gender mainstreaming and addressed policy areas such as health care, reconciliation of work and family life, pension plans, and long-term care among others.

18. The most significant achievement in terms of the national policy on gender equality was the development of the first National Action Plan on Gender Equality (NAPGE) (2007-2013). The NAPGE was initiated by the NMWR and adopted by the Council of Ministers in August 2007.

19. The NAPGE, which was formulated on the basis of international conventions and recommendations, particularly the CEDAW and the Concluding Comments to the Cyprus Report to the CEDAW Committee in 2006, the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), as well as EU policy frameworks, such as the Roadmap for Equality between Men and Women and EU Directives, is significant in that it incorporates a holistic approach to gender equality, addressing six priority areas, namely: employment, education, decision-making, social rights, violence and gender stereotypes. The development of the National Action Plan was a collective achievement thanks to close collaboration with all government departments and local authorities, as well as women's organizations, NGOs, academic institutions and human rights bodies. The Gender Equality Unit is currently in the process of preparing the new Strategic Plan on Equality between Women and Men for 2014-2017.

20. A Ministerial Committee for Equality between Women and Men, under the Chairmanship of the Minister of Justice and Public Order and consisting of the Ministers of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, Interior, Finance and Education and Culture, has been set up by the Council of Ministers in 2009, aiming at strengthening collaboration among the various Ministries on gender equality issues and, in particular, monitoring the implementation of the NAPGE (2007-2013).

21. The budget of the NMWR has been increasing considerably during the years, namely from 366.000 Euros in 2003 to 980.000 Euros in 2008 and 870.000 Euros in 2009. However, during the last years the budget has been decreased (€435.000 in 2010, €400.000 in 2011, €450.000 in 2012, €400.000 in 2013) due to the financial crisis and the government's attempts to lower the budget deficit. The staff of the Equality Unit has also increased to three professionals and is assisted by external experts/consultants when necessary.

22. A number of equality bodies have been set up or strengthened during the years, giving a new momentum to the promotion of gender equality. Special reference is made to the Parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, set up in 2006, which has been consolidated in 2011 with the Human Rights Committee, and re-named "Human Rights and Equal Opportunities between Women and Men Committee," the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, the Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training and the Equality Inspectors of the Department of Labour/Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance.

23. The Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, in her capacity as an independent Equality and Anti-Discrimination Authority through her investigations, interventions and reports has had an important impact on society, regarding gender equality issues. This explains the continuous increase in the number of complaints submitted by women and men facing discrimination. The Commissioner's mandate has been extended in May 2004 to also act as National Equality Body. Within this body, 2 departments operate: a) The Equality Authority dealing with discrimination in the field of employment and occupation, and gender issues in all fields, and b) The Anti-discrimination Body dealing with all other grounds except gender, in all fields except employment and occupation.

24. As from 2011, the Commissioner started a thorough investigation of the legal and institutional framework for supporting victims of trafficking, as well as for combating and

preventing trafficking of persons in Cyprus. The investigation resulted in the submission to all competent authorities and NGOs of an overall Report (A/N 4/2013 dated October 17, 2013) concerning the anti-trafficking framework and the problematic aspects of its implementation. In 2013, the Commissioner, within the framework of its powers as Equality Body, also secured co-financing through the European Commission's financial programme "PROGRESS" to carry out actions aimed at awareness raising and the promotion of the message of zero tolerance to all forms of violence against women and girls in Cyprus.

25. The Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training established by the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education Law of 2002 (L.205(I)/2002) is also very active in monitoring the enforcement of the equal treatment legislation in employment and undertaking a lot of initiatives in the fields of training, awareness-raising and research. It also has competence to provide to victims of discrimination independent assistance, including legal aid.

26. The Department of Labour has also taken steps to raise awareness and encourage women to seek action against discrimination. Information on sexual harassment was disseminated, a media campaign was launched in 2010 to raise public awareness against discrimination, Officers of the Department of Labour participated in training programmes targeted at Gender Equality Inspectors, and informative material on the promotion of equal treatment and equality rights in the workplace was distributed.

27. Regarding the promotion of equal treatment in the workplace, a lot of informative material has been published and circulated in order to increase and raise awareness (such as the Guide to Protection of Maternity, Pregnancy and Equal Treatment in Employment and Vocational Training – a guide for the obligations and rights of employers and employees), training programmes on codes of practice were implemented for managerial staff, Officers of the Department of Labour, trade unions and employers' associations, the Equality Authority (Commissioner) has raised awareness via the media on legislation against discrimination, and campaigns to raise awareness on equal pay have been launched.

28. It is also worth mentioning that since Cyprus' accession to the European Union, gender mainstreaming constituted one of the main priorities of the European Social Fund through the following co-financed Programmes: a) Single Programming Document for Objective 3 (2004-2006), b) Single Programming Document for EQUAL Initiative (2004 – 2006), c) Operational Programme "Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion" (2007 – 2013), and d) Operational Programme for the Cohesion Policy (2014-2020).

29. In the programming period 2007-2013 two Operational Programmes were implemented for the utilisation of the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund in Cyprus. These Operational Programmes were the "Sustainable Development and Competitiveness," co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund and the "Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion," which was co-financed by the European Social Fund.

30. Gender equality is mostly and foremost promoted within the framework of the Operational Programme "Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion". Under Priority

Axis 2: “Expansion of the Labour Market and Social Cohesion,” a separate Specific Objective targeting women was set, namely “Increasing labour force and employment of women.” This specific objective aims to improve the access of women to the labour market and to ensure sustainable employment through the improvement of the employability of the inactive female workforce and the reconciliation of work and private life.

31. Equality between men and women is ensured in all phases of programming, selection of projects, implementation and evaluation of the Programmes. Based on data obtained by the Directorate General for European Programmes, Coordination and Development, the following interventions are implemented for the promotion of gender equality:

a) Improvement of the employability of inactive female work force. The target group of the project was the inactive female population. In order to improve the employability of the inactive women, special training courses were organised for up skilling their knowledge in relation to the labour market needs, as well as placements in the industry for gaining work experience. By 30 June 2013, 1.986 inactive women participated in training courses.

b) Promotion of care services within the framework of reconciliation of work and private life. The project aims to facilitate the inactive female workforce who faced difficulties due to family responsibilities to enter into the labour market through the promotion of care services for the children, the elderly and the disabled. By 30 June 2013, 63 women benefited by care services actions.

c) Promoting flexible forms of employment for the enhancement of women’s access to the labour market. Through this Grant Scheme, enterprises were subsidized in order to create new job positions for women based on flexible employment arrangements. By 30 June 2013, 333 new jobs were created.

d) Actions promoting the reduction of gender pay gap. The project aims to promote actions in order to reduce the pay gap between men and women in the labour market. Such actions include the improvement of the monitoring mechanisms for the equality in the labour market as well as the training of the equality inspectors and the labour relations inspectors in order to effectively inspect the implementation of the relevant equal pay legislation.

e) Under the Operational Programme “Sustainable Development and Competitiveness,” a Grant Scheme for the Promotion of female entrepreneurship is implemented in order to give incentives to women to create new businesses. By the end of 2013, 78 projects were completed out of 168 applications approved.

32. Apart from the area of employment, major developments have also taken place in the area of violence against women, an issue of a high priority for Cyprus. In the field of violence in the family, these include the enactment of the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law 47(I)/1994, replaced by Law 119(I)/2000, later amended by Law 212(I)/2004, the development of the first National Action Plan for the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence (2010-2013), the development and adoption of a Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures (currently in the process of revision), awareness-raising campaigns addressed to the general public and to women in particular, encouragement to report cases of violence, systematic training of professionals working in the field,

strengthening of the Police Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office, government support to NGOs providing protection and assistance to women victims, particularly through their shelter and helpline, improvement of data collection, and the development of research in this field.

33. The above mentioned Law *inter alia* condemns any act of violence within the family, raises substantially the penalties for violence, provides protection to victims mainly by empowering the Court to issue restraining orders, clarifies that rape can be committed within marriage, facilitates the reporting of violent incidents, provides for the appointment of Family Counselors, the setting up of the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence (consisting of representatives of relevant government departments and NGOs) to monitor the implementation of the Law, the taking of testimony of victims of violence by electronic means, the protection of victims and witnesses and makes the spouse a compellable witness.

34. Awareness raising campaigns have been implemented to encourage women to report incidents of violence and to sensitize professionals and the public. Recently, the NMWR and the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence have carried out an awareness-raising campaign, in the framework of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (November 25th, 2013).

35. Regarding women patients who have suffered violence, health professionals receive continuous education (i.e. workshops organized in collaboration with WHO in 2012). The Ministry of Health has also developed a protocol, especially designed for female rape victims. The protocol is applied at all public hospitals to safeguard optimum health care and the dignity of the victim. In the fields of Public Health, several programmes for women have also been developed. A network of GPs, Health Visitors, and Community Nurses offers Health promoting services, such as public awareness and education campaigns that communicate the strategies of women's health. It is also noteworthy that improvements in the field of health have been noted in rural areas.

36. Trafficking in human beings has also been a priority issue for the Cyprus Government and, as a result, a number of major developments have taken place, including National Action Plans on Trafficking in Women (2010-2012 and 2013-2015), a new legal framework, that is, the enactment of Law L.87/ (I)/2007 (Law Reviewing the Legal Framework Regulating the Special Protection of Human Beings who are Victims of Trafficking and Exploitation and Related Matters), the establishment of monitoring mechanisms and the implementation of awareness raising campaigns.

37. In line with the National Action Plan, a number of actions have been implemented between 2010 and 2012, such as the dissemination of informative leaflets on trafficking by the Ministry of Interior and the Social Welfare Services, the implementation of training seminars for police officers, judges and prosecutors, the organisation of events aimed to raise awareness on trafficking and the participation of the Cyprus Police in conferences and seminars and in EMPACT (European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats)

Operational Action Plan on Trafficking in Human Beings, as well as its co-operation with International Organizations such as INTERPOL.

38. Another important development that has taken place is the abolition of the so called “artist visa,” the training of Government Officers and international cooperation with other EU member-states and third countries. A new law transposing the 2011 EU Directive against Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) came into effect on 15/04/2014. This Law includes, inter alia, the criminalisation of the use of services provided by trafficking victims, upon reasonable assumption.

39. The Ministry of Interior, in collaboration with the Multidisciplinary Group against Trafficking in Persons and the NMWR, has carried out an awareness-raising campaign through the Media against trafficking in human beings for sexual and labour exploitation (November-December 2013).

40. Under the leadership of the NMWR major efforts have also been made towards the increased representation of women in political and public life, including awareness raising campaigns through the media, meetings and contacts with political parties, as well as training programmes for women candidates. Local authorities are becoming more involved in gender equality and have set up the Union of Elected Women in Local Authorities. It can be said that as a result of these efforts, both the number of women candidates, as well as the number of women elected into political office have increased.

41. Despite the fact that the participation of women in the House of Representatives (12.5%: 7 out of 56) and the local councils (17.9%) remains low, we consider very positive development the fact that, at present, out of 6 elected Members of the European Parliament 2 are women. Also, women appear in high ranking independent positions, such as Governor of the Central Bank, Accountant-General, Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, Law Commissioner and Commissioner for Children’s Rights, Chair of the Cyprus Securities and Exchange Commission, Chair of the Commission for the Protection of Competition and Chair of the Board of the Natural Gas Public Company.

42. Further, the President of the Republic has recently appointed women as Commissioner for the Environment, Commissioner for the Reform of the Civil Service, Commissioner for Humanitarian Issues and Commissioner for Gender Equality.

43. Also, in the framework of the renewal of the boards of semi-governmental organizations, women have been appointed as Chairs or Vice-Chairs in the following public organizations: Cyprus Organisation for Standardisation (Chair), Electricity Authority of Cyprus (Vice-Chair), Cyprus Sports Organisation (Chair), Tenders Review Authority (Chair), Tax Tribunal (Chair), Loan Commissioners Fund (Vice-Chair).

44. Furthermore, there is a continuous increase of women at the hierarchy of the civil service where, in 2011, women held 33% of the senior posts, as well as in the Judiciary, where women constitute 44% of the Judges. It is also worth mentioning that the number of women Judges of the Supreme Court has increased to 3 out of 13 Judges.

45. Despite positive developments, a lot more remains to be done until we achieve full de facto gender equality in all walks of life and the full realization of women's rights. Challenges still remain in education, mass media and political participation.

46. In terms of education, a research project conducted by the UNESCO Chair in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment at the University of Cyprus, and titled 'The gendered map of Cyprus Tertiary Education,' has shown that women are a minority in Cypriot tertiary education and that it is mostly men who occupy the position of director or attain higher academic positions. The University of Cyprus collaborates with various NGOs such as the Cyprus Gender Equality Observatory, the Cyprus Gender Research Centre and the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, as well as with several Government Organisations such as the National Machinery. UNESCO Chair has tried to sensitize the public, the mass media, the government and policy makers to the issues of gender mainstreaming and equality through various publications, projects and events. Publications of the UNESCO Chair such as 'Indicators of Gender Mainstreaming in European Union and Comparison with Genders' Depictions in Cyprus Mass Media' and 'Gender Inequality in the Mass Media: Gender Profile in Public Life' illustrate how women are stereotypically portrayed on TV and excluded from economic, professional and political life. This exclusion (and stereotyping) hold true for cultural life also, since there have been very few efforts to showcase the works of female artists and they remain invisible. The national report of the Global Media Monitoring Project (2010) for Cyprus has shown that women are nearly invisible in the media.

47. Gender stereotypes persist and this is the greatest challenge for policymakers. There also seems to be no gender mainstreaming in the area of public policy-making that governs activities related to arts and culture. There have been some interesting initiatives to promote women's arts and crafts, such as the FITA (Females in the Arts) foundation (est.2010), which aims to promote women within the creative disciplines through lectures, workshops, exhibitions and events.

48. Despite the significant positive developments outlined above, traditional perceptions regarding the role of women and men as well as gender stereotypes continue to impede de facto realisation of gender equality. This is reflected inter alia in the underrepresentation of women in political and public life, the continuing problem of violence against women, as well as the significant gender pay gap and gender segregation in employment. Based on this acknowledgment the government policy on gender equality will intensify efforts to eliminate gender stereotypes primarily in the sphere of education as well as the media. In addition, efforts will continue to ensure the full implementation of the existing legal framework safeguarding women's rights.

Section II

Progress in the Implementation of the Critical Areas of Concern of the Platform for Action since 2009

A. Women and Poverty

1. Women are at a higher risk of poverty as compared to men, thus poverty is often 'feminized'; it is often rural women, single mothers and older women who suffer. The risk of poverty for women of the general population, irrespectively of age, was 16.4% during 2012 in comparison to 12.9% for men. It is enough to say that in Cyprus, single parent households, the majority of which are women with at least one dependent child, run double the risk of falling below the poverty line in comparison to the rest of the population. According to recent data, in 2011 there were 9.337 unemployed women (age 15+) living without a spouse/partner, out of which 1847 had a child, while 75.614 women were totally economically inactive. The economic crisis and the limits in monetary policy made things even worse. Cyprus needed two bailout loans, with the extra bailout loan covering the government's fiscal operations throughout 2013-2015, on top of additional funding needs for recapitalization of the Cypriot financial sector. Due to bankruptcy, the branches of Laiki Bank were closed and merged with the Bank of Cyprus. For the activation of the bailout package of €10bn, Cyprus had to meet certain conditions, such as recapitalisation of the financial system, fiscal consolidation to help bring down the Cypriot governmental budget deficit, and structural reforms to restore competitiveness and macroeconomic imbalances.

2. Still, efforts are ongoing with regard to the objective of addressing the needs of those women in poverty. There are certain policies applied, most of them interpreted as financial benefits. More specifically, policies for reducing the risk of poverty are focused on the population age group of 65 years and over, single parent families and other vulnerable groups of women. Apart from the Cyprus Government that has made a commitment to address vulnerable groups of women more systematically, efforts have also been made by some NGOs and women's organisations to map the specific needs of certain categories of women (i.e. migrant domestic workers) and raise awareness among relevant stakeholders. Yet, a Ministerial Committee has been set up to revise the employment policy concerning migrant domestic workers, including their salaries. In addition, the Subcommittee on Vulnerable Groups of Women has been set up by the NMWR to study and give visibility to the problems of the most vulnerable groups of women.

3. In terms of macroeconomic policies, there is public assistance that ensures the right to a decent standard of living through the provision of financial assistance and/or social services to persons who legally reside in the Republic of Cyprus, face serious socio-economic problems, and whose resources are not sufficient to meet their basic and special needs. The Grants-in-Aid Scheme for the Voluntary Welfare Organizations (Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, Social Welfare Services), a mechanism of the Cypriot system of social protection, aims at the support and activation of the volunteer movement in the area of

social welfare and the coverage of social needs at the local level. The Grants-in-Aid Scheme has been replaced by the State Aid for Social Welfare Services in Entities providing services of general economic interest in the field of Social Care, according to Regulation 360/2012 of the EU and Decision 2012/21 on Service of General Economic Interest. In this context, financial support is provided in the form of state aid for the establishment, operation or expansion of programmes within the field of social care services and related programmes such as Homes for the elderly, Day Care Centers, Child Protection Centers, Home Care and Services for Seniors, Programmes for people with Disabilities, and Psychosocial Support Programs. In 2013, a total of € 7.032.000 was provided to 280 programmes.

4. With regard to the Social Pension law that was adopted in 1995, persons, who at the age of 68 satisfied the prescribed residence conditions and were not entitled to a pension from any other source, were entitled to social pension. The majority of recipients of this pension were women. With subsequent amendments of the legislation in 1999 and 2000 the age for entitlement to social pension was reduced to 65. This is very important nowadays since it benefits the most vulnerable groups of women, such as rural women and housewives, who are at greater risk of poverty. In 2010, the risk of poverty for women aged between 50 and 64 was 16.7%, whereas for men it stood at 10.2%. For women aged 65 and above the risk of poverty rate jumped to 43.5% (as opposed to 38.5% for males in the same age bracket). This is a critical area of concern because the elderly and older women in particular are at greater risk of poverty and have to either rely on savings, their pensions, or their families.

5. With regard to access to credit or bank loans, there exists no discrimination against women, as long as they meet certain eligible criteria. However, the financial crisis has left many women at a disadvantage and has generally affected the quality of life. This is especially the case for women between the ages of 55 and above. The Statistical Portrait of Women in Cyprus (2012) shows that in 2010 the labour force participation rates for men aged 55-64 was 75%, whereas for women in the same age bracket it was only 44.9%. The unemployment rate for women is generally higher. Access to credit and loans has become even more limited and constrained.

6. As from 1 January 2012, by virtue of an amendment of the Law on Provision of Housing Concessions to Displaced Persons and other Persons, [L.155(I)/2011], children whose mother is an internally displaced person (IDP) were given the right to certain Housing Schemes. The Council of Ministers decided (Decision No.5.317, dated 19/6/2013) to recognize children of IDP mothers as displaced persons entitled to all rights the children of IDP fathers have regarding all existing benefits (Housing Schemes). The necessary legislative amendment was approved by the House of Parliament and published in the Government Gazette on 27 December 2013.

7. With regard to the development of strategies and/or practices to ensure women's equal rights and access to economic resources it is worth mentioning the Scheme for the 'Enhancement of Female Entrepreneurship'. The specific scheme was part of the Operational Programme 2007-2013 'Sustainable Development and Competitiveness', which was co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Republic of Cyprus. For this

period of time the total amount granted was €7.2 million. The aim of the Scheme was to develop, support and encourage the entrepreneurship of women between the ages of 18-55 who wish to establish an enterprise in any economic activity. Age and sex was not set as a barrier for women who wanted to start up a new business. The eligible investment projects included various professions such as nurseries, hairdressing and beauty salons, law offices, accounting and consulting offices, bakeries, small manufacturing businesses, surgeries, gym and fitness centers.

B. Education and Training of Women

1. Education is free from the age 5 8/12 - 18 (i.e. primary education and secondary – Gymnasium and Lyceum) and compulsory from the age of 5 8/12 until the age of 15 (i.e. primary education and secondary at Gymnasium level). So, there is allegedly equal access to education while there are over 40 State Institutes for Further Education. During 2011-2012, the number of Greek Cypriot girls in primary school was 20.384/42.391 (48%) and of Turkish Cypriot girls 36/90 (40%). The number of Greek Cypriot girls in secondary school was 24.384/46.443 (52.5%) and of Turkish Cypriot girls 10/23 (43%). The number of girls in technical school was 645/4088 (15.7%). With regard to higher education, the number of girls at University level (Bachelor, Master and PhD level) enrolled in Cyprus and abroad, including Cypriot Turkish speaking women and women with disabilities, for the academic year 2010-2011 was 25.939 (58%).

2. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) focuses on ensuring equal opportunities in education for both sexes on a non-discriminatory basis, at all levels of education. The endeavors of the MOEC to enhance a non-discriminatory gender education include, among others, the revision of the curriculum and the teaching materials so that gender issues are included in the various subjects as well as the submission of an Action Plan (2014-2017) for the promotion of gender equality in education, constructed by a cross – departmental committee. Its application is monitored by a steering committee appointed by the General Director of the Ministry. This Committee oversees and coordinates all gender equality issues related to actions taken by the MOEC. The work of the Committee, resulting in the development of the Action Plan, promotes gender equality targeting to the inclusion of gender equality in matters related to the structures of the educational system and to the teacher in-service training.

3. The Action Plan on Gender Equality in Education (2014-2017) of the MOEC includes a number of actions and measures that address gender role stereotypes in the family and in society, such as: a) Actions related to the structure of the Educational System (i.e. programmes to increase participation of girls in technical fields of study and the use of new technologies and construction of a New Modern Apprenticeship scheme to attract girls, b) Actions related to in-service training (i.e. special in-service training and sensitization for teachers of all levels of education and for career guidance counselors on gender equality issues, gender roles and stereotypes, gender and professions and workshops for teachers), c)

Actions related to the school unit (i.e. establishing up-to-date educational material which will include a gender perspective in order to combat gender stereotypes from an early age, particularly by encouraging boys to actively participate in family life and girls in politics/public life and, by developing relationships based on equality and mutual respect between the sexes, and teaching the school subject of Vocational and Social Education), and d) Actions related to parents/family role (i.e. parents' training on communication skills, mutual respect and gender equality issues in order to foster a balance of power within the family). The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute has launched a webpage¹ dedicated to Gender Equality in order to provide easy access to relevant material and good practices for an education in Gender Equality. This webpage includes useful information and material that teachers can use to ensure equal opportunities for both girls and boys in the learning process.

4. With regard to higher education, the number of women participating in tertiary education is increasing over time with women often outperforming men academically. Women seem to prefer to study courses in the Humanities and Social and Behavioural Sciences. The research project titled 'The gendered map of Cyprus tertiary education' (Koutselini, 2009-2011) notes among others that for the years 1992-2011, the mean number of female students in public and private institutions of tertiary education was higher, compared to that of male students. At both undergraduate and Master's level the mean number of women exceeded the mean number of men for the years 2005 - 2011, while at a PhD level the mean number of men was higher than that of women. Although there are fewer female students at the PhD level, as well as in competitive research institutions, the proportion of women researchers with a post-graduate degree increased over the time period 2006 – 2010. In addition, it seems that the proportion of women researchers in the fields of engineering and technology as well as medical sciences has increased in the last few years. In other fields, such as the natural sciences and the social sciences, the proportions of women remain relatively constant over time. For the period 1994 to 2011, the percentages of women students were higher in the sectors of Education, Social Sciences and Humanities, Philosophy, Health, Communication and the Arts in both public and private universities of Cyprus. The percentage of male students was higher in Engineering and Information Technologies.

5. Therefore, more needs to be done in order to break down gender role stereotypes and the preconceptions that women are only fit for specific types of jobs. To this end, the Cyprus Government has set up programmes geared towards attracting more women into the fields of science and technology, which are mostly dominated by men. Attempts have also been made to change social attitudes and perceptions related to gender-specific jobs, such as teaching in primary education. This is indeed one of the greatest challenges.

6. With regard to the representation of women in the sector of education, a woman was appointed as Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2004. At present, the General Director of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Acting Director of

¹ http://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=910&Itemid=383&lang=el

the Centre for Educational Research and Assessment, the Director of the Centre of Scientific Research and the Director of Secondary Education, are women, notwithstanding the fact that in 2011/12 approximately 83% of the teaching personnel at each level of education (pre-primary, primary and secondary) were women. Nevertheless, there is still continued gender-specific segmentation in educational subjects and a low representation of women in decision-making positions, including positions in tertiary education. The project 'The gendered map of Cyprus tertiary education' (Koutselini, 2009-2011) outlines that women comprise a minority in Cyprus Tertiary Education, as their number is smaller than that of men in all academic positions (professors: 22 women, 121 men; associate professors: 48 women, 138 men), while, though, women are the majority in the teaching assistant positions. During 2011/12 40.5% of the teaching and management personnel in tertiary education were women, while 59.5% were men.

7. With regard to activities on lifelong education and gender issues in a wider sense, the University of Cyprus as well as some private universities in Cyprus have very good work to present: (a) The University of Cyprus has established a Centre for Gender Studies and a UNESCO Chair in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment as of 2010 with a focus on research and training activities on gender issues and education with the establishment of a new Gender Studies postgraduate programme offered both in Greek and English, (b) The new Gender Studies postgraduate programme of the University of Cyprus that received its first students in the Fall semester of 2012, is currently organizing a series of public events which aim to intervene in the public sphere and introduce the dimensions of gender equality in issues of public health and intimate citizenship, (c) The University of Nicosia, which has a strong record of researching gender issues, such as 'Women Managers', 'Women Entrepreneurs', 'Women in the Tourist Industry', 'Women in Conflict', keeps supporting the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, which is an NGO aimed at making recommendations on policy and practices on gender issues as well as increasing awareness on gender issues in Cyprus civil society, (d) The Open University of Cyprus includes a gender perspective in its research projects while it provides the opportunity to women to continue their studies through distance learning, contributing in this way to the promotion of reconciliation between family and career, and (e) The Frederick University has established a committee for promoting an action plan on gender equality as well as a scientific committee on gender issues. One of the actions promoted was a conference on combating trafficking that took place in February 2014.

8. Besides, other NGOs promote research in the field of gender equality, such as the Cyprus Gender Research Centre, the Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies and the Cyprus Gender Equality Observatory.

9. Furthermore, especially with regard to the aiming at the development of non-discriminatory education and training, it is worth mentioning that women in prison also receive education and training. Prison administration is continuously trying to increase the range of activities for inmates, such as various educational programmes, workshops and vocational training. In this way, female inmates have the opportunity to receive certificates

in order to be able to work in relevant areas after their release. During the last two years under review, the school programmes have been enriched according to the preferences of detainees. As a result, the number of detainees attending school courses has been increased. Moreover, European programmes like FEFI (Formal Education for Female Inmates 2013-2015), and LeaP (Learning in Prison 2010-2012) came along to increase the chances for education and training within the prison. Yet, in August 2013, the prisons' department, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Education, has prepared a special vocational programme for all the prisoners (men and women).

C. Women and Health

1. Health care in Cyprus is provided to all persons without discrimination on the basis of age, sex, religion, ethnicity or other attribute. According to the Refugee Law (L. 6(I)/2000, as amended), asylum seekers and recognized refugees are also entitled access to Government Medical Institutions on an equal basis with the Cypriot citizens. The quality of health care is high and this is reflected by the health indicators, which are comparable to those of other developed countries. Women enjoy a high level of health, with life expectancy at birth for the period 2010/11 estimated at 82.9 years compared to 79.0 years for men. On the whole, however, 'The statistical portrait of women in Cyprus' (2012) shows that women over the age of 30 are more inclined to report poorer health status than men.

2. The present health care system is a mixed system consisting of Government hospitals, primary health-care facilities, other public health functions and the private health care providers, where financing is based on the individual relation of the doctor/patient and the ability of the patient to pay. The Public Health Services (PHS) are financed out of general taxation. Healthcare benefits are provided to low income families based on the family composition, and to chronic patients.

3. With regard to childbirths, all deliveries take place in private or public clinics and are carried out by obstetricians or midwives under the supervision of obstetricians. In addition, a high standard of hygiene ensures the prevention of complications before, during and after delivery. Maternal mortality for 2010 is at 0.1 per 1,000 live births and at 0 for 2011. Also, prenatal care, which is important for the health of both mothers and babies, is offered on a regular basis. Prenatal, delivery and post natal services are also offered to all migrant women, legal and illegal, who have access to the State Medical and Public Health Services for free. Since 2006, the new Nicosia General Hospital provides upgraded services in all sectors of health while the Archbishop Makarios the III Hospital provides high standard specialized services for the women (obstetric/gynaecological department) and children.

4. At the end of 2011, after a relevant proposal by the Ministry of Health, the Cyprus Ministerial Council approved the establishment of a "National Committee for the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding in Cyprus". The Committee's work started in the beginning of 2012 and the members of the committee come from governmental and non-governmental services, health professional bodies and NGOs. The main goal of the National

Committee is to promote and support breastfeeding (b/f) for all mothers in Cyprus so as to establish b/f as the exclusive way of nutrition for infants for the first 6 months of life. Various activities are organised by the Committee within the framework of the implementation of the National Strategy on b/f, including the development of a National Policy, the promotion of the implementation of the '10 Steps of Baby Friendly Hospitals,' education of the community and health professionals, development of information material, etc.

5. Yet, the Ministry of Health is aiming to contribute to the well being of couples with infertility problems by offering economical support for two trials of IVF (in vitro fertilizations) and the medication for a third one. The new bill on assisted fertilization aims to safeguard women's rights. In addition, families with 3 or more dependent children are eligible to healthcare benefits based on a voluntary contribution according to their total yearly family income.

6. With regard to sexually transmitted diseases, Cyprus remains a low prevalence country for HIV/AIDS, particularly for women, who are outnumbered by 1 to 7 by men with regard to HIV infection. This ratio may be even higher, because according to official figures, women have a higher likelihood of being tested if their partner is found to be HIV-positive and are, therefore, more likely to be diagnosed if they are infected. According to the criteria of WHO, it is estimated that the number of people with HIV infection among the adult population in Cyprus is not more than 600. The main concern of the Ministry of Health has been to prevent the further spread of the virus. The National AIDS programme continues to be implemented according to the principles applying for the prevention of transmission of the virus and the reduction of the social and personal consequences of HIV infection. In addition, over the years there has been a lot of dissemination of pamphlets, leaflets and booklets on HIV/AIDS in order to raise awareness. Prenatal transmission is kept at extremely low levels. This is due partly to the low prevalence of HIV infection in women, and partly to the measures taken for the prevention of prenatal transmission of the virus in isolated cases of pregnant women who are found to be positive. All pregnant women are offered testing and counselling for HIV and all seropositive pregnant women and their newborn babies are provided free regimens. The treatment is based on the European HIV/AIDS Guidelines. The implementation of the prevention programmes regarding HIV infection is based on the National Strategic Plan for the period 2011-2015. Additionally, a national committee is appointed by the Ministerial Board and several actions, according to the National AIDS Plan, targeting vulnerable population groups, have been introduced.

7. Since 2010 a national strategic Cancer plan was also introduced in order to reduce the morbidity and the mortality of cancer in the population. The Ministerial board also appointed a National Cancer Committee. Yet, the national breast screening programme, which was introduced in 2005, provides women between the age group 50 to 69 years with a mammography, free of charge, every two years. Europa Donna, an active NGO, has a complementary role in the campaign of the programme and in awareness-raising. Last year, the mammography centres were provided with Digital Mammography systems, equipped with special software and evaluation instruments for quality control. The new strategic plan

includes the implementation of a national screening programme for cervical cancer in order to decrease the incidence and mortality of the disease. Women between 30-60 years will be examined using the Pap smear test. The programme will be funded by the Ministry of Health. The HPV vaccination will also be introduced to girls in pre-puberty. The implementation of the programme has been delayed due to the economic crisis.

8. It is also worth mentioning the Bank of Cyprus Oncology Centre founded in cooperation with the Republic of Cyprus in 1998. The services that the Centre provides concern radiotherapy, chemotherapy, hormone therapy and diagnostic examinations, including blood tests and radiological investigations. The Centre operates Specialist Oncology Units in certain cancer types, that is, breast cancer, cancer of the brain and central nervous system, gastrointestinal cancer, gynaecological cancer, head and neck cancer, lung cancer, lymphomas and leukaemia, sarcomas, skin cancer and urological cancer. In July 2007, the Centre secured its quality accreditation from the largest accreditation organisation for hospitals in Europe, and it is listed among the most outstanding hospitals for operating and quality standards. In March 2010 the Centre was re-evaluated by the accreditation body and the results were excellent. The Centre is the first hospital in Cyprus and Greece that has been accredited and it remains the only one in Cyprus with such quality accreditation. All services are provided free of charge to all patients, women and men, who present a valid Medical Card issued by the Ministry of Health. All cancer patients who are Cypriot citizens and all EU citizens who have health care benefits in their countries, obtain this Card after completing the relevant application form and submitting it to the Ministry of Health. By 2010 the Centre marked its 12th year of operation, having treated over 20,000 people. Each month, the Centre treats an average of about 170 new patients, and each day between 350 and 450 patients use its various facilities. In order to deal with the challenges it faces, the Centre has recently expanded and upgraded the diagnostic and therapeutic methods, systems and equipment used. A third linear accelerator has been added (380 m² extension in the basement) and the other two linear accelerators have been replaced, as have other systems and equipment.

9. Regarding women patients who have suffered violence, health professionals receive continuous education (i.e. workshops organized in collaboration with WHO in 2012) so as to address and support them effectively. The Ministry of Health has also developed a protocol, especially designed for female rape victims. The protocol is applied at all public Hospitals to safeguard optimum health care and the dignity of the victim.

10. In the fields of public health, several programmes for women have been developed. A network of GPs, Health Visitors, and Community Nurses offers Health promoting services, such as public awareness and education campaigns that communicate the strategies of Women's Health. At the age of 12 years school health services offer lecture series designed to inform girls about puberty issues (menstrual cycle, secondary sexual characteristics, etc.). Programmes to prevent smoking (experiential learning, drama, puzzles) are also offered to all girls (and boys as well) in that age group. At the age of 15, lectures on topics related to reproductive issues-contraception, and information on HIV / AIDS, and sexually transmitted

diseases play a major role in the girl's development and well being. For women in childbearing years health visitors offer their services (family planning and maternity centres) for reproductive and maternity issues.

11. At the local level, local authorities in partnership with local NGOs and the personnel of the rural Health centres, organize lectures on health education, nutrition, and healthy lifestyle. These lectures (especially designed for women) include women's issues, such as pregnancy, menopause, female genital mutilation, and postpartum depression. A number of municipalities and communities, in partnership with NGOs, transfer women for free into mammography centres for breast cancer screening. Women aged over 63 years and with limited ability to travel or/and have mobility problems, receive nursing care at home. The community cares about their diet, which is controlled by a clinical Dietician/public doctor. In seventeen out of the twenty-nine health centres throughout Cyprus only female doctors and nurses and health visitors are employed. Some rural women have also been offered free Pap smear tests free of charge by the local government.

12. Despite the many positive elements of the present health care system of Cyprus, much remains to be done. A National Health Insurance System with a specific roadmap including all the tasks that need to be fulfilled within a specified timeline is in progress. The implementation date based on this roadmap is the second half of 2015 or beginning of 2016 at the latest. The new health system is intended to have its financing structure and coverage based on the principles of solidarity, justice and universality. Still, the present economic crisis and the absence of a National Health system could be considered a major hindrance, especially for the application of further national screening programmes.

D. Violence against Women

1. During the last years, important developments have been accomplished in the area of Violence against Women (VAW), which is an issue of a high priority for Cyprus.

2. In the field of violence in the family, these concern the enactment of the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law of 2000 [L.119(I)/2000], as amended by Law 212 (I)/2004, the development of the first National Action Plan for the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence (2010-2013), the development and adoption of a Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures (currently in the process of revision), encouragement to report cases of violence, awareness-raising campaigns addressed to the general public and women in particular, systematic training of professionals working in the field, strengthening of the Police Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office, Government support to NGOs providing protection and assistance to women victims, improvement of data collection, as well as the development of research in the field.

3. One of the positive provisions of the above mentioned law is that, according to article 35A, any person who omits to report a case of violence against a minor or a person having severe mental or psychological deficiencies, which came to his or her knowledge, commits

an offence. Thus, public officers of the Ministries of Health, Education, Justice and Public Order and Labour and Social Insurance have a mandatory duty to report to the Attorney General's Office any referrals regarding concerns, suspicions or evidence of family violence including VAW.

4. The first National Action Plan for the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence (2010-2013) was prepared by the Advisory Committee for the Prevention & Combating of Violence in the Family. Its aim was to promote measures and policies for the prevention and combating of domestic violence on a holistic, integrated and systematic basis. The fact that there were specific goals and measures, as well as competent bodies to implement them, contributed to tackling the problem more effectively. Similarly, the first National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2007-2013) that was coordinated by the NMWR, aimed, among other priorities, at fostering scientific research on VAW, promoting services dealing with all aspects of the problem (i.e. support and protection of victims), and monitoring the effectiveness of services and the enforcement of the relevant legislation. According to an interim report on the evaluation of this plan's implementation, covering the period 2007-2010, that was carried out by an external consultant, as well as additional statistical data² obtained by the Cyprus police, it seems that significant progress has been made.

5. What is interesting is that during the last five years, statistics show a decrease in the number of reported cases of family violence to the police. Specifically, the number of reported cases decreased from 969 in 2008 to 737 in 2012 with approximately 75% of victims being women and girls. Yet, data collection has been improved with regard to the victims' willingness to contact for help using the national Helpline 1440 that operates daily, including holidays and weekends, free of charge. The Helpline 1440, continuously operated by the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence (SPAVO) since 1990, offers counselling support in times of crisis, information for and communication with other services dealing with domestic violence, and information concerning victims' basic rights and options; thus, more and more women are encouraged to report cases of violence. During the last 5 years, from 2009 to 2013, the Helpline handled 6080 cases with an average of 1216 cases per year.

6. In order to safeguard the rights of the victims, the Advisory Committee has drafted a Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures, which was approved on 16 February 2002 by the Council of Ministers, for immediate implementation. The manual provides a framework of how professionals should collaborate and focuses on interdepartmental cooperation. It is addressed to those who work in the Social Welfare Services, the Police Force, the Health Services, the Educational Services, the Law Office of the Republic and the relevant NGOs. The Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures is currently being amended and the revised one will be submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval by the end of 2014.

7. With regard to the development of awareness-raising campaigns addressed to the general public and to women in particular, many actions have taken place.

² [http://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/5A9011B3BE3E14B1C2257B4F002E6CE7/\\$file/FamilyAbuse%20gia%20web.pdf](http://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/5A9011B3BE3E14B1C2257B4F002E6CE7/$file/FamilyAbuse%20gia%20web.pdf)

During the Cyprus Presidency of the EU in 2012, the Gender Equality Unit of the the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, with the support of the European Commission, organized a two-day conference on Combating Domestic Violence against Women in the EU, on 8-9 November. The aim of the conference was to review progress at the EU level on preventing and combating domestic violence against women and provide a forum for the exchange of good practices and lessons learned in the Member States.

8. Further, in the framework of the Cyprus Presidency a report on "the Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action by the EU Member States: Violence against women: Victim support" has been prepared by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and Council Conclusions on «Combating Violence Against Women, and the Provision of Support Services for Victims of Domestic Violence» were adopted by the EPSCO Council on the 6th of December, 2012. These Conclusions reflected a strong political message for combating violence against women and domestic violence.

9. A conference was also organized by the Cyprus Police, which brought together experts from law enforcement agencies in the Member States, as well as academic experts in the field, who shared knowledge, experiences and good practices in overcoming attrition in domestic violence cases. As a result, an EU police handbook of good practice on the subject was published. The Handbook reviews system and/or person-related factors that contribute to attrition, highlights main strategies that have been applied in overcoming attrition and identifies common features, underlying principles of success in intervention programmes. It ends with recommendations in tackling attrition. Both the handbook³ and its background study⁴ are available online. An informative brochure was also published by the Cyprus Police titled "Useful Advice for the prevention of attacks against women" both in Greek and English in 2012. The brochure covers issues of safety on the road, at home, while walking, on the bus, when out at night and a section which gives advice on what to do if a woman becomes a victim of rape.

10. During the years 2008-2009, 2009-2010 and 2013-2014, Pancyprian campaigns took place in order to educate teachers and parents on issues of domestic violence, communication skills, negotiation between parents – children and between spouses. These actions were organized by SPAVO in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Commissioner for Children's Rights.

11. The Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence organized a conference on Violence in the Family entitled 'Prevention, Protection and Prosecution,' with the financial support of the NMWR. The conference was addressed to professionals working in the field (November 2013).

12. In addition, in the context of the negotiations towards a settlement of the Cyprus problem, the bi-communal Sub-Committee on Domestic Violence was established by the Technical Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, with the aim of combating domestic violence island-wide. The Sub-Committee, which is composed of experts from both communities

³ <http://www.eucpn.org/goodpractice/search.asp?category=7&country=3&keyword=attrition>

⁴ <http://www.eucpn.org/library/results.asp?category=2&pubdate=2013>

(psychologists, psychiatrists, family-law specialists), has agreed on a series of steps on awareness-raising across Cyprus, including the distribution of posters, as well as other information material. Furthermore, they are aiming to establish training seminars and workshops for both professionals and the public, in both communities of Cyprus.

13. Furthermore, the Social Welfare Services has appointed all Social Services Officers as family counselors, who can handle and investigate complaints on domestic violence as well. In order to encourage people to report cases of VAW, family counselors accept anonymous referrals. In cases women want to leave the abusive relationship, they can stay with their children at SPAVO's Shelter (2 new shelters in Paphos and Nicosia will be ready for operation in 2016) until they are able to support themselves and live on their own. Family counsellors appointed by the Social Welfare Services also take all necessary actions for the commencement of criminal proceedings against perpetrators and the accommodation/financial affairs of the family and the perpetrator, if an inhibition order is being considered.

14. From a research perspective, it is worth mentioning the VICTIMS project (2009-2011), that was designed and conducted in four countries (Cyprus, Italy, Romania, Slovakia) and coordinated by the University of Cyprus with co-funding obtained by the European programme DAPHNE III (action grants 2007-2013). The project elaborated on the background of the effects of children's exposure to violence against their mothers. Based on the findings, awareness-raising was aimed at through informational leaflets, educational manuals for teachers, parents and social workers, press conferences in each country, an International conference in Cyprus and a TV Spot on VAW and children's exposure broadcasted for a certain period of time (November-December 2011) by public and private channels in all participant countries. Many NGOs dealing with VAW in Cyprus (i.e. SPAVO, Cyprus Gender Research Centre) participated in the project as associate partners.

15. Yet, in 2012, the first national research⁵ on the prevalence of domestic violence in Cyprus and its consequences on women's health titled "Extent, Frequency, Forms and Consequences of Domestic Violence against Women in Cyprus," was carried out by the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence with the support of the NMWR.

16. The main findings of this survey are the following:

- a) At least 28% of the women of the sample reported some kind of violence: economic violence: 19,4%, emotional/psychological violence:19,3%, sexual violence: 15,5%, social violence: 14,8% and physical violence: 13,4%, while 3% of those women reported termination of pregnancy due to domestic violence.
- b) 57% of those who reported having been victims of violence did not tell anybody about their abuse, only 30% of those asked for help, while only 9% received medical care.
- c) 71% of women who reported that they have been victims of domestic violence were divorced, while 36% were senior women.

⁵ http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/research/erevna_2012oct_viol-ag-women_summary_en.pdf

17. Moreover, a Research Department was established in SPAVO from October 2013, currently operated by one employed Academic Senior Researcher and 4 volunteer researchers, experts in Research Methods and Psychology. The Research Department analyses the database of SPAVO from 1995 and combines data from the Helpline, Shelter and Psychological or Counseling meetings for SPAVO's needs (i.e. presentations in the Media). Court reports are also prepared by the Research Department after requests from SPAVO.

18. With regard to newly established research projects, currently, the Cyprus Police participates as a partner in the Leonardo programme "Standardized tools of domestic violence risk assessment – strengthening the professional capacity of European police officers," which aims to produce an informational booklet for police officers in Europe on risk assessment. Through the programme, the Cyprus Police aims to increase its capacity in assessing the risk in Domestic Violence cases.

19. Additionally, in 2013, the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, within the framework of its power as Equality Authority in Cyprus, received co-financing by the EU for a project submitted under the PROGRESS programme titled "Campaign on Zero Tolerance to Violence against Women and Girls in Cyprus." The time life of the project is between 1/12/2013 until 1/12/2015 within which many activities have been designed to raise awareness and promote the message of zero tolerance to all forms of violence against women and girls in society. These activities concern, among others, a targeted national media campaign on VAW (i.e. TV spots, Radio spots, print ads) and educational trainings of key-professionals, mainly public officers, dealing with VAW, as well as NGOs on women's rights. The Advisory Committee for the Prevention & Combating of Violence participates as an Associate Partner in the project.

20. Combating trafficking in human beings (THB), in general, and trafficking in women and children, in particular, has been another priority for Cyprus. As a result, important developments have taken place, including the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the enactment of a new Law in 2007 [Combating of Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Beings and the Protection of Victims - L.87(I)/2007], which fully harmonizes national legislation with relevant international instruments and European acquis. A new law transposing the 2011 EU Directive against Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) came into effect on 15/04/2014 [L. 60(I)/2014]. This Law includes, inter alia, the criminalisation of the use of services provided by trafficking victims, upon reasonable assumption.

21. The Law Reviewing the Legal Framework Regulating the Special Protection of Human Beings who are Victims of Trafficking and Exploitation and Related Matters [L. 87(I)/2007] covers the offenses of human trafficking and exploitation such as exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery and the removal of organs. It has specific provisions for the prevention of trafficking, the identification and protection of the victims and the prosecution of those involved in trafficking. It also has special provisions for children, including

unaccompanied minors and child pornography. On 9 March 2012, a new amending Law came into force. It provides, inter alia, the increase of NGOs participating in the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group against Trafficking in Human Beings (MCG), as it is believed that cooperation with NGOs and their knowhow is fundamental in developing effective anti-trafficking policies and strategies. MCG, chaired by the Minister of Interior, who is the National Coordinator, is established under the Law 87(I)/2007. As it has already been mentioned above a new anti-trafficking law transposing the 2011 EU Directive against Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) came into effect on 15/04/2014 [L. 60(I)/2014]. The Law includes new forms of trafficking such as begging, forced hawkers, the exploitation of criminal activities, the exploitation of a person making adoption and the exploitation of a person for removal, sale and trafficking of human organs or other biological substances, tissues or embryos. This Law also introduces the criminalization of the use of services provided by victims upon reasonable assumption.

22. In addition, a National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings (2010-2012) was implemented whereas a new one, the 'National Action Plan 2013-2015', was adopted. The new plan, prepared by the MCG, aimed to submit an overall framework, in which real goals and specific actions would be set out in order to confront Trafficking in Human Beings and all its forms of exploitation within the context of Cypriot reality. The Action Plan 2013-2015 resulted from the evaluation of the previous Action Plan 2010-2012 and the recommendations of the working groups appointed for this purpose. It took into consideration the provisions of the Directive 2011/36/EU, the European Strategy against Trafficking in Persons 2012-2016 and the recommendations of the Commission of Experts of the Council of Europe (GRETA). It consists of 9 chapters, concerning co-ordination, prevention, victims' identification, victims' support and protection, suppression, information gathering, education, international coordination, and evaluation. It also includes practical measures and actions implemented and funded by the competent government authorities and the relevant NGOs within specified timeframes. For instance, the Ministry of Interior has financed the issuance of information material, campaigns, seminars, workshops and trainings of government officers. Similarly, the Police has financed and released posters, cards and leaflets to inform and sensitize the public on human trafficking.

23. The setting up of a state shelter for female victims of sexual exploitation, the operation of a Police Office for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, the organization of training seminars for professionals, (including police officers, prosecutors and judges as well as welfare officers), the preparation of a Police Manual on the identification of victims of trafficking, the preparation of a police operational guide to combat THB and the implementation of awareness raising activities (i.e. recent awareness campaign, prepared by the Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights and broadcasted by ten Cyprus wide radio stations for almost two months for minimizing the demand on services provided by victims of sex/labour trafficking), were also pursued.

24. In addition, Cyprus introduced, in 2008, which was amended in 2010 a new system of permits for entry, residence and employment of third-country nationals, thus abolishing the

pre-existing visas for artists, revised the relevant procedures and contracts of employment as well as legislation regulating private employment agencies.

25. Despite the progress made in the field of violence, much remains to be done. Financial difficulties have been encountered since most financial aid by the Government is reduced. In addition, there is room for improvement regarding the coordination between the Government Services (i.e. Police, Social Welfare Services) and NGOs working on the issue whereas there is not yet a unified central database for domestic violence cases, since relevant services (i.e. Police, SPAVO) keep their own statistical data on the matter.

26. During 2014, the Equality Authority plans to start a public dialogue with all relevant stakeholders to introduce a Code of Practice on Sexual Harassment in Public Service. The code aims both at preventing sexual harassment and ensuring that adequate procedures are available to deal with sexual harassment should it occur in all levels of Public Service. In addition, the signing and ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, which provides a complete legal framework for the protection and empowerment of women victims, who suffer all kinds of violence, is under consideration by the Ministerial Committee for Gender Equality.

E. Women and Armed Conflict

1. Women in Cyprus continue to be actively involved in the promotion of reconciliation and peace, through bi-communal activities and projects, but also more recently in addressing issues of common concern, such as environmental issues and VAW. Women marches began after the Turkish invasion in 1974 and it was a great momentum in history since women were fighting for the extinction of legal discriminations and the protection of human rights.

2. In addition, a revision of the legislation aiming to eliminate gender discrimination in higher army ranks, such as non commissioned officers is currently under way. More specifically, the existing legislation will be reformed and a united legislation for both male and female non-commissioned officers will be established. This revision is expected to help the elimination of negative discrimination against either gender in the army.

3. In addition, a Women's Multicultural Center has been established. The establishment of this center was foreseen by the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2007-2013), with the full support of the Government, aiming to bring together women from all communities in Cyprus in the promotion of gender equality, reconciliation and peace. The NMWR also plays an important role in bringing women from both communities together by providing support to bi-communal initiatives and through the involvement of Turkish Cypriot women's organizations as full participants in its activities and funding schemes.

4. Furthermore, women play an important role as members of the negotiating structures, including the working groups and technical committees that have been established in the context of the current negotiating process for the solution of the Cyprus problem. It is worth mentioning that a woman has been appointed as the Greek Cypriot head of the Property Technical Committee.

5. Women have also had significant participation in bi-communal structures, working outside the framework of the negotiations, whose purpose is to facilitate several aspects of people's everyday lives while the occupation of a third of Cyprus' territory continues. The overall objective remains the comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem in a manner that ensures the restoration and observance of universal standards of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for everyone, including gender equality, in law and in practice.

6. The Gender Advisory Team, a group of academics and civil society activists from both sides of the divide working on issues of gender equality from a peace-building perspective, launched a report on 6 December 2012 entitled «Women's Peace in Cyprus». The report comprised an overview of Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) and the contributions made by the Gender Advisory Team since 2009, including recommendations and explanatory notes on the issues of governance and power-sharing, citizenship rights, property rights and economic rights. Of these recommendations, the first three have already been presented to the negotiators and the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General in Cyprus. The Gender Advisory Team was encouraged by the efforts made by the negotiating teams to explore ways in which the work on mainstreaming gender equality could take effect.

7. The representation of women in the Foreign Service of the Republic has further improved. Whereas, there were 9 women ambassadors until 2004, 30 more women have been appointed to ambassadorial posts, raising the total number to 39. Further, whereas there were 27 women diplomats until 2004 out of the total number of 137, the number has increased to 56 out of the total number of 198 diplomats, constituting 28,3% in comparison to 19,7% in 2004.

F. Women and the Economy

1. With regard to the promotion of women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources, Cyprus has a very strong legislative framework. One important measure to combat labour exploitation is the Private Employment Agency Law 126(I)/2012, which came into force on 27 July 2012 and which regulates the establishment and operation of private employment agencies. The offenses described in the anti-trafficking Law 87(I)/2007 have been included in the Private Employment Agency Law 126(I)/2012. The relevant authority may revoke the license of such an establishment, if the person responsible for the operation of the office or any of the Directors in case of company or any of the Partners in case of partnership, has been convicted for an offense related to THB. Recently, there were also amendments in the existing legislation aiming to safeguard women rights from dismissal, in particular due to pregnancy. The amendment of the maternity legislation in 2011 has afforded stricter protection from dismissal of pregnant workers, including cases where the employer was unaware of the pregnancy at the time of dismissal.

2. In addition, concerning the Laws L. 205(I)/2002 for the Equal Treatment of Women and Men in Occupation and Vocational Training Laws, L. 177(I) 2002 for the Equal Pay of Men and Women for Equal Work or Work of Equal Value Laws and L. 133(I)2002 for the Equal Treatment of Women and Men in Occupational Social Security Schemes Laws, aiming to protect victims of sex discrimination, currently are being reviewed in order to afford the reversal of the burden of proof to the employer for complaints investigated by the Equality Authority (under the Commissioner's Office). These amendments will greatly enhance the protection granted to the victim in claims of sex discrimination.

3. Certain measures have also been taken so as to facilitate women's access to resources, employment markets and trade during the period under review. A project/scheme for attracting people in the labour market through flexible forms of employment has been implemented during the programming period 2007-2013. The project was co-funded by the European Social Fund and the Cyprus Government. The objective of the project was to assist individuals, mainly mothers, to find a job with flexible arrangements, in order to be able to balance their family and work life.

4. With regard to this balance, harmonizing work and family responsibilities for women and men seems to have been promoted through certain measures. To start with, a study carried out by the Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training on good practices for promoting gender equality in the labour market with a special focus on reconciling work and family life was published. This objective was mostly and foremost promoted within the framework of the Operational Programme "Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion." Under Priority Axis 2, that is, "Expansion of the Labour Market and Social Cohesion," a separate specific objective targeting women was set, namely "Increasing labour force and employment of women." This specific objective aims to improve the access of women to the labour market and to ensure sustainable employment through the improvement of the employability of the inactive female workforce and the reconciliation of work and private life. The following activities have been designed within the particular programme: a) Promotion of care services within the framework of reconciliation of work and private life through a project that aims to facilitate the inactive female workforce, who faced difficulties due to family responsibilities, to enter into the labour market by providing care services for the children, the elderly and the disabled. By 30 June 2013, 63 women benefited by care services actions; b) Promoting flexible forms of employment for the enhancement of women's access to the labour market. Through this Grant Scheme, enterprises were subsidized in order to create new job positions for women based on flexible employment arrangements. By 30 June 2013, 333 new jobs were created; c) Actions promoting the reduction of the gender pay gap. The project aimed to promote actions for reducing the pay gap between men and women in the labour market. Such actions included the improvement of the monitoring mechanisms for equality in the labour market and the training of the equality inspectors and labour relations inspectors so as to effectively inspect the implementation of the relevant equal pay legislation.

5. With regard to the provision of business services, training and access to markets, information and technology, particularly to low-income women, as well as the strengthening of women's economic capacity and commercial networks, specific actions were successfully implemented. The Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA) organizes and finances some training activities. The training activities of the HRDA responded to the training needs of enterprises and of the labour force, both in urban and rural areas. The proportion of women participants in training activities during the period 2004-2006 remained the same, at around 41%. However, during the period 2006-2011, the proportion of women participants in training activities increased, from 41% in 2006 to 43.4% in 2012.

6. Based on certain key figures and statistics for the 2nd quarter of 2012 (i.e. the increase of unemployment rate reaching 11.3%, the employment rate (20-64) for women reaching 65.2% and for men 76.8%, the economically active population (15-64) for women reaching 66.8% and men 80.7% and the EU 2020 Objective concerning the employment rate reaching 75% and for Cyprus 75-77%), a Scheme for the Improvement of the Employability of the Economically Inactive Female Work Force was designed. The project, co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the HRDA of Cyprus, has started from 1/3/2009 while it is expected to end on 31/12/2015. Economically inactive women are the target group of the project while it aims to provide these women with opportunities for participation in training programmes and work experience in order to assist them to enter or re-enter employment. Thus, placements in the industry are done for gaining work experience while special training courses are organized for up skilling women's knowledge in relation to the labour market needs. By 30 June 2013, 1.986 inactive women participated in training courses.

7. The Ministry of Energy, Commerce, Industry and Tourism implements a scheme for the Enhancement of Female Entrepreneurship. The Scheme is part of the Operational Programme 2007-2013 'Sustainable Development and Competitiveness' that is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund and the Republic of Cyprus with a total amount of €7.2 million. By the end of 2013, 78 projects were completed out of 168 applications approved. The Scheme's aim was to develop, support and encourage the entrepreneurship of women between the ages of 18-55, who wish to establish an enterprise in any economic activity. Age and sex was not a barrier for those women who wanted to start up a new business. The eligible investment projects included various professions such as nurseries, hairdressing and beauty salons, law offices, accounting/consulting offices, bakeries, small manufacturing businesses, surgeries, and gym centers. Yet, there are organizations in Cyprus that are active in the field of promoting female entrepreneurship. Some of them are the Cyprus Business Professional Women (BPW) and the UCLAN (University of Central Lancashire) in Cyprus. More specifically, UCLAN in Cyprus has launched the Cyprus Business Idea Competition 2013, a joint initiative involving various stakeholders such as the Women's Coop Bank, Cyprus Federation of Business and Professional Women and the Cyprus Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors⁶.

⁶ <http://www.uclancyprus.ac.cy/en/enterprise/panorama-entrepreneurship/>

8. Concerning the elimination of occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination, according to the latest statistics (2012), the gender pay gap in Cyprus is 16.2%. But, despite relative inertia in past years, important work is currently being done in addressing the gender pay gap in Cyprus, primarily due to the efforts of the Department of Labour Relations in the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance and a new EU co-funded project, which consists of 15 specific actions to tackle the pay gap on several fronts. The project, titled “Actions for reducing the gender pay gap”⁷, is co-financed by the European Social Fund with a budget of 3 million Euros. The implementation of the Project started in July 2010 and will conclude by the end of 2015. Briefly, the project consists of a broad mix of measures (i.e. training programmes, study visits to other EU member states, interventions) aiming at combating the root causes that create and sustain the gender pay gap. The measures undertaken involve various social groups, such as officers and inspectors of equal pay in employment legislation, career advice professionals, and enterprises.

9. The statistics Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 has also provided equal support to males and females in Cyprus, as indicated by certain data. The measures that have particularly been utilized by women are: ‘Setting up of young farmers,’ ‘Use of advisory services,’ ‘Modernization of agricultural holdings’ and ‘Participation of farmers in food quality schemes.’ In particular, for the measure of ‘Setting up of young farmers,’ the Department of Agriculture received 221 applications, out of which 75 (33.94%) were submitted by women. 50 out of the 75 applications were approved. For the ‘Use of advisory services,’ 128 applications were received, out of which 18 (14.06%) were submitted by women and all of them were approved. Regarding the ‘Modernization of agricultural holdings,’ 873 applications were submitted under the first call (Scheme A), out of which 180 applications were submitted by women (21.31%), while 37 of these were approved. Under Scheme B, a total of 1.185 applications were submitted, out of which 190 were by women applicants (16.03%), while 57 of these were approved. Finally, regarding the ‘Participation of farmers in food quality schemes,’ a total of 647 applications were received, out of which 138 were submitted by women, while 114 of these applications were approved.

G. Women in Power and Decision-Making

1. The balanced participation of women and men in decision-making positions in public and political life has remained a priority for the NMWR in line with the first National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2007-2013). Measures taken towards this direction include awareness-raising campaigns with the broad participation of women’s organizations, meetings and contacts with political parties and media organizations, dissemination of statistical data and research findings, exchange of good practices through conferences and seminars, particularly in view of the Parliamentary and Local elections of 2006 and 2011.

2. At present out of the six (6) elected Members of the European Parliament two (2) are women (33%). Women appear also in high ranking independent positions in Cyprus, such as

⁷ http://www.gender-equalpay.com/english_info.htm

Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, Governor of the Central Bank, Accountant-General, Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, Law Commissioner and Commissioner for Children's Rights, Chair of the Cyprus Securities and Exchange Commission, Chair of the Commission for the Protection of Competition and Chair of the Board of the Natural Gas Public Company.

3. Further, the President of the Republic has recently appointed women as Commissioner for the Environment, Commissioner for the Reform of the Civil Service, Commissioner for Humanitarian Issues and Commissioner for Gender Equality.

4. Also, in the framework of the renewal of the boards of semi-governmental organizations, women have been appointed as Chairs or Vice-Chairs in the following public organizations: Cyprus Organisation for Standardisation (Chair), Electricity Authority of Cyprus (Vice-Chair), Cyprus Sports Organisation (Chair), Tenders Review Authority (Chair), Tax Tribunal (Chair), Loan Commissioners Fund (Vice-Chair).

5. The number of women civil servants as a proportion of the total number of senior civil servants has also increased. During the year 2000 women only represented 13.5% of the total of senior civil servants. Women's percentage has steadily risen to reach 32.7% during 2011 and 37.3% during 2013. Women's participation in municipal councils has also gradually increased, but still only 84 out of 468 members were women during 2013. Moreover, even though in 1980, there were no women judges in Cyprus, there has been a constant increase in their number during the last years. Specifically, during the period 1980-2011, the proportion of women judges increased to 44.3%, while in 2013 44 out of 101 judges were women. The proportion of women members of the Parliament has gradually increased during the last years from 5.4% in 1991 to 14.3% in 2006. Still, at present this proportion decreased (12.5%).

6. Nevertheless, as indicated by the statistics a significant gap between men and women still remains in nearly all decision-making positions. The prevalence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family, in the workplace, in political and public life contributes to this. At present, of great concern is the under-representation of women in the Ministerial Council (1/11), the Parliament (10.7%) and the Municipal Councils (17.9%) as resulted from the 2011 elections.

7. Cyprus has made efforts to strengthen its governmental bodies, to integrate gender perspectives in public policies and legislation, and to disseminate gender-disaggregated data. There are sex-disaggregated statistics on men's and women's participation in political and public life in Cyprus. However, cultural statistics are not, as a general rule, disaggregated by sex. Research and media monitoring should be undertaken more systematically rather than on an ad hoc or sporadic basis while research projects should address the issues of gender and media. Yet, there could be more lobbying activities and campaigns to promote awareness and sensitize the public and relevant stakeholders of the importance of a more equitable representation of men and women in public media.

8. Most political parties have introduced the quota system to favour the participation of women in their decision-making bodies. Some of them also have quotas for their candidates' lists. The NMWR as well as several NGOs have raised the issue of positive action measures and particularly the use of quotas in the candidates' lists, in the framework of their campaigns to increase women's participation in political and public life. Even if they have not yet been used, lately, the government, as well as the civil society seem to have a rather more positive approach for using them.

H. Institutional Mechanism for the Advancement of Women

1. In terms of institutional development, the Equality Unit of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order and the NMWR, with coordinating and advisory functions continue to play a leading role in the promotion of gender equality through various activities/actions. These include law reform, awareness-raising activities, support of NGOs and the promotion of gender mainstreaming.

2. In recent years, the National Machinery has focused its work on the coordination and implementation of the National Action Plans on Gender Equality, as well as the coordination and implementation of the Cyprus EU Presidency programme (2012) in the field of gender equality. In addition, the NMWR keeps funding NGOs, trying not to decrease the annual subsidies even though its budget was reduced during the last years as a result of the economic crisis. The Equality Unit also works to promote gender mainstreaming in public policies and action plans, whereas the Ministerial Committee for Gender Equality, which was set up in 2009 monitors and evaluates progress of the implementation of the National Action Plans on Gender Equality.

3. Of great importance, though, is the fact that NGOs participate in many multidisciplinary groups and interministerial committees, since their knowhow is fundamental in developing effective policies and strategies.

4. A number of equality bodies have been set up or strengthened during the last years, giving a new momentum to the promotion of gender equality. Special reference is made to the Parliamentary Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, set up in 2006, which primarily focused on monitoring the implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2007-2013). This Committee has been consolidated in 2011 with the Human Rights Committee, and re-named "Human Rights and Equal Opportunities between Women and Men Committee," and exercises parliamentary control.

5. The Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, in her capacity as an independent Equality and Anti-Discrimination Authority, through her investigations, interventions and reports has had an important impact on society with regard to gender equality issues. This explains the continuous increase in the number of complaints submitted by women and men facing discrimination. As stated in the Annual Report of the Equality Body, 144 complaints were submitted in 2011, compared to 121 in 2010 (19% increase). The

Anti-Discrimination Authority received 158 complaints in 2012, compared to 134 in 2011 (18% increase).

6. The Equality Inspectors of the Department of Labour (from the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance) play a significant role in combating gender discrimination in employment. By Law [the Equal Treatment between Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law - Law 205(I)/2002], they have competence, inter alia, to examine complaints relating to discrimination issues, including pregnancy and sexual harassment, and to advise employers and employees on their rights and obligations.

7. The Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training established by the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Education Law of 2002 (L.205(I)/2002) is also very active in monitoring the enforcement of the equal treatment legislation in employment and undertaking a lot of initiatives in the fields of training, awareness-raising and research. It also has competence to provide to victims of discrimination independent assistance, including legal aid.

I. Human Rights of Women

1. Many legislative measures relating to gender equality have already been passed in order to harmonize legislation in Cyprus and bring it in line with relevant international instruments such as CEDAW. During the last years, there have been many impressive achievements and further work has been done to improve the legal framework safeguarding women's rights. A number of new laws and amendment laws have been passed, particularly in the spheres of family, employment, and violence against women.

2. 'The Equal Treatment of Men and Women (Access to Goods and Services) Law of 2008' is worthy of mention, since it lays down a framework for combating sex discrimination when it comes to accessing goods and services, with a view to putting into effect the principle of equal treatment between men and women.

3. Furthermore, the Children and Parents Amendment Law, as well as the Property Rights among Spouses Amendment Law of 2008, provide for the mandatory increase in child and spouse maintenance payments. This benefits women mostly, since they are the ones more likely to be awarded parental care and custody of children.

4. Cyprus has ratified almost all international legal instruments relevant in the context of human rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol and the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol. More recently in 2007, Cyprus ratified the Council of Europe Convention for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings. In short, the Government's commitment and strong political will towards gender equality is manifested by its ratification of two very important international legal instruments for women's human rights: The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, ratified by Law 1(III)/2002, and The Protocol No. 12 to the European

Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, ratified by Law 13(III)/2002.

5. A mechanism for resolving complaints has been established in order to protect the legal rights of migrant women employed as domestic workers. This mechanism functions at each District Labour Relations Office. In cases where the Labour Relations Officer identifies trafficking issues or sexual exploitation attempts, the complaint is forwarded to the authorities (the Office of Combating THB of the Police) for further investigation.

6. In addition, the Civil Registry and Migration Department, within the framework of the Cyprus National Programme for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund 2014-2020, has proposed specific actions towards improving its administrative capacity to deal with migration and integration issues. In particular, the first two actions aim at the Department's provision of scientific and supportive services from the private sector. These services are expected to support the administrative procedures of the Department in processing various requests of third country nationals including the issuing of residence permits.

7. There have also been tremendous efforts on behalf of the NMWR, equality bodies, NGOs and relevant government authorities to inform women of their rights and how they can seek out support and assistance when claiming these rights. The NMWR has published the CEDAW Convention in both Greek and English in order to alert relevant stakeholders and to generally raise awareness.

8. Women are also increasingly taking advantage of the extra-judicial mechanisms which have been set up to investigate complaints of discrimination and violations against human rights. This is considered to be a positive development as evidence has shown that women are often reluctant to bring cases of sex discrimination before the courts. According to the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, the most often cited reasons for this are the long duration of the court proceedings, the expenses, the fear of social stigma and the sense that nothing good will come out of it. The Department of Labour has taken steps to raise awareness and encourage women to seek action against discrimination. Information on sexual harassment was disseminated, a media campaign was launched in 2010 to raise public awareness against discrimination, officers of the Department of Labour participated in training programmes targeted at Gender Equality Inspectors, and informative material on the promotion of equal treatment and equality rights in the workplace was disseminated.

9. The Cyprus Government is also highly committed to ensuring that the human rights of vulnerable groups such as female sex workers and domestic workers are not violated. The Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, established by the Commissioner for Administration Law, 1991 (L. 3/1991, as amended), undertakes the extra-judicial control of the administration safeguarding of human rights and has competence to investigate complaints against any public service and its officers, including the police and the army.

10. The Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights has published a report on the issue of the institutional framework of prostitution in Cyprus. Acknowledging that the current legislative framework was extremely deficient, and that many women faced having

their fundamental human rights violated, the Commissioner suggested the drafting of an Action Plan which will aim at the protection of the rights of prostitutes, and also foresee certain prevention measures and the discouragement of demand for sexual services. Reports on the status of domestic workers have also been submitted and it has been noted that such workers have limited access to sexual and reproductive health services. The Commissioner has also submitted a report on the legal and institutional framework that regulates the issue of female genital mutilation (FGM), a practice which constitutes a serious form of gender-based violence with serious and irreversible effects on the human rights of women. Although no incidents of FGM have been reported in Cyprus as of yet, the growing influx of immigrant women and foreign workers could make its appearance a distinct possibility. In Cyprus, although there is provision in the Penal Code that criminalizes the practice of FGM, no suitable infrastructure and effective mechanisms for the protection of victims were detected. For this reason the Commissioner has suggested that simply criminalizing FGM is not in and of itself sufficient to combat the problem and provide support to victims, and that a holistic and comprehensive approach that will cover all relevant sectors is needed. This will create a context which is more suitable for the protection and rehabilitation of victims.

11. The Commissioner also submitted a Report on domestic violence in Cyprus, in which she concluded that the legislative and regulatory framework that governs the issue of tackling domestic violence in Cyprus, despite its undeniably positive elements, presents serious weaknesses for which a thorough assessment is required, in order to make the protection provided, specifically, to women victims of domestic violence real, substantial, and effective. The Commissioner's key suggestion was the ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention, which specifies proper and comprehensive policies and measures that should be adopted in this field.

12. Despite the positive improvements and developments, several challenges and obstacles persist. It has been acknowledged that there should be better enforcement of the legislation safeguarding women's rights through awareness raising programmes, specialized training of relevant professionals, as well as the strengthening of the institutional and legislative frameworks, in particular through the use of additional human and financial resources. Another challenge which remains concerns issues of perception and mentality, as it is often very difficult to change people's perceptions and the stereotypes they may already have about gender. These are often firmly entrenched in the Cypriot society. Such stereotypes will affect critical areas such as the pay gap between men and women, the multiple roles women are expected to have and which prevent or hinder them from pursuing a political and occupational career, as well as the absence of women from high ranking posts such as might be obtained at the Council of Ministers or in Parliament.

J. Women and the Media

1. There have been some positive developments in the field of representation of women in the media, with more women participating in the media at various levels. Although women journalists formed just 25.9% in 1990, their participation in recent years has reached 43.6%.

Research is being done in gender and the media by academic institutions, women's organisations and NGOs, often with the support of the NMWR.

2. Despite progress, women still tend to remain invisible in the media. One male-dominated area is that of chief editors of national newspapers; out of the 23 chief editors only 2 are women.

3. With regard to past and current research in the area of women and the media, it is worth presenting the following:

a) UNESCO Chair in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment of the University of Cyprus published work on gender representations in Cyprus TV ('Gender representations in Cyprus TV and the necessity for their deconstruction'). It is noted that there is a non-balanced and stereotypical portrayal of women on TV. Women are seen as being economically dependent on men and they do not generally have professional roles. If they do, these are seen as being unreliable. Thus TV has actually perpetuated gender stereotypes rather than raising awareness or promoting gender equality. Negative or degrading images of women and bias against women are still depicted through the media, mainly in popular programmes, while their conventional role is promoted. Women are still largely underrepresented in programmes broadcast during prime time zones, especially political ones. Women working for the media still face the glass ceiling effect when it comes to high profile or top-rank administrative positions.

b) The Global Media Monitoring Project of 2010 also reports that women are nearly invisible in the media in Cyprus. The gender profile of presenters, announcers, and reporters across the range of media shows that no equitable profile exists across gender. The survey revealed that the majority of presenters in all the mediums monitored are men (60%). Although women constitute 73% of radio announcers, they are less represented on television with a presence of only 36%. Men also report more frequently on Celebrity, Arts, Media, Sports topics (79%). This makes it even more vital for the public to demand a fairer representation of men and women in the news, and for the media to adopt a non-sexist representation of men and women as a publication/broadcast policy.

c) A research project funded by the Cyprus Research Promotion Foundation, coordinated by the UNESCO Chair of the University of Cyprus and titled 'The profile of the woman politician in Cypriot Television. A gendered analysis' (2011-2014) is also under way. Its target groups are female and male politicians in Cyprus, competent bodies, managers and owners of TV broadcasting corporations and stations, journalists, GOs and NGOs, as well as the general public. The project is intended to sensitize all groups of people who are involved in the media and its dissemination by producing awareness-raising and research based material. 60 broadcasts have already been analyzed, as well as 120 news broadcasts from 6 Cypriot TV stations. The number of participants for the semi-structured interviews has not yet been defined. However, the concrete outputs/results that are expected to come out of the project are: a) A national conference to disseminate results, as well as participation in three international conferences, b) Two workshops, c) Publications in two international journals, and d) A press conference which is aimed at sensitizing politicians, news providers,

journalists, as well as the general public of the need to increase female representation in politics and socio-political life in general.

4. It is thus worth mentioning that many efforts have been made among all relevant stakeholders to sensitize the public on all issues relating to gender equality and women's rights, and that a wide range of means have been used, including documentaries, TV spots, and radio and TV programmes.

5. In relation to the printed media, however, although articles on gender-related issues are published regularly, they rarely make the headlines. More magazines covering issues directly affecting women have also been on the increase, as well as other initiatives such as the Women of the Year Awards that includes categories such as science, education, media, and entrepreneurship among others.

6. The Cyprus Radio Television Authority, which was established as a competent regulatory body and monitors the operation of private radio and television stations throughout the Republic of Cyprus, has examined various cases against radio and television stations concerning discrimination on the grounds of sex and the broadcasting of programmes which present domestic violence or abuse.

7. The National Action Plan on Gender Equality acknowledges the urgent need for eliminating gender and social stereotypes and traditional perceptions of men and women and their roles in society. It also foresees measures to engage the media more effectively in promoting women's issues, including systematic research on how the media represents women in their programmes, and lobbying for the introduction of specific programmes on the radio and television that will promote women's issues.

K. Women and the Environment

1. The environment is an issue that has been taken up by women's organizations and NGOs in recent years, since many environmental issues often intersect with women's issues. Female farmers are participating in food quality schemes and there are initiatives by women's groups to recycle clothing and to send and sell clothes abroad to help the poor.

2. The Cyprus Green Party, which forms a Women's Organization (Women's Branch) that aims to ensure that a gender perspective is incorporated in environmental policies and programmes and that women's roles and contributions to environmental sustainability are taken into consideration, is at the front line regarding environmental issues.

3. In 2013, the Cypriot Government also appointed a female Commissioner for the Environment, and local authorities regularly try to promote environmental issues, such as the introduction of mass recycling and awareness raising campaigns.

4. In Cyprus women are actively involved in all aspects of social and political life. Women's high level of secondary and tertiary education enables them to participate in and contribute to the formulation and implementation of environmental policies. Approximately 80% of the scientific personnel at the Department of Environment (which is the lead government

department dealing with environmental policy and management) are women. In addition, the civil society is actively involved in environmental issues, with women holding important posts in NGOs.

5. However, a lot more needs to be done to implicate women in sustainable development policies and programmes, or to involve them in environmental decision-making. Some obstacles still remain. There is a lack of public awareness about environmental risks and problems and environmental policies and programmes lack a gender perspective, failing to take into account women's roles and contributions to environmental sustainability.

L. The Girl Child

1. In 2007 the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights Law was enacted and this was a major stepping stone and development towards promoting children's rights and effectively implementing the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Commissioner makes important interventions to empower the girl-child.

2. The Commissioner has a wide range of competences, amongst them the responsibility of undertaking information campaigns in order to change antiquated or outmoded perceptions regarding children's place in society, the monitoring of legislative provisions, practices and frameworks and the ratification of international conventions, the supervision and monitoring of the implementation of the UN Convention and the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights, the representation of children and their interests at all levels, as well as the sensitization of the general public on all issues pertaining to the child, and the safeguarding of the child's rights in practice, in the family, in school, in the community and in society at large. Social Welfare Services continue to inspect child day-care centres, at home day-care, as well as protection centres for children.

3. Since the explosion in the use of information technology, and due to the fact that nearly all children between the ages of 12 and 18 own a phone, there have certain concerns regarding exposure to Internet content, the ethical use of mobile phones and internet safety. As a result, a new specialized NGO has been established. It offers services such as help lines, hotlines and Internet awareness nodes.

4. Certain actions have also been included in the Action Plan on Gender Equality in Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC). These relate to the establishment of programmes in order to increase participation of girls in technical fields of study and the use of new technologies, as well as the construction of a New Modern Apprenticeship scheme to attract girls; programmes to prevent and combat violence in the school and family setting; actions related to in-service training and the sensitization of teachers, educators and career guidance counsellors on gender equality issues, gender roles and stereotypes, as well as good practices to combat gender stereotypes; the establishment of up-to-date educational material and curricula which will include a gender dimension in order to combat stereotypes from an early age and encourage girls to participate actively in politics and public life; the implementation of programmes which will inform boys and girls about vocational and social

education, as well as sensitize them towards the possibility of choosing non-traditional 'male' or 'female' professions; the planning and application of classroom activities on gender issues through the use of various teaching techniques and methods; and, finally, parents' training on gender equality issues in order to foster mutual respect and a balance of power within the family.

5. Additionally, at the age of 12 school health services offer a series of lectures designed to inform girls about puberty issues. At the age of 15 lectures on sexual education and reproductive health, as well as information on HIV/AIDS, are offered. The Ministry of Health, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education, has introduced various programmes of sex education in the school curricula. School programmes are also offered on the role of domestic violence. Schools and the media have also tried to raise the girl-child's awareness of and participation in social, economic, and political life.

6. Cyprus does not face problems regarding child exploitation either at the family level or in the field of employment. The well-being of children is generally safeguarded by the socio-economic situation, the educational system and the prevailing culture. Customary practices such as girl genital mutilation or marriages forced upon children have not been reported as yet on the island, but should not be excluded with the increased influx of migrants. Cyprus has already taken legal measures to deal with some of these issues, such as by penalizing FGM and child or forced marriages, imposing a minimal age for marriage and requiring free consent of the individuals, as well as registration of marriages.

1. In this part of the Report, the most important data and statistics are gathered.
2. The majority of indicators presented in the Minimum Set of Indicators are currently being collected by the Statistical Service of Cyprus. The only indicators not being collected at the moment are the following: a) Average number of hours spent on unpaid domestic work by sex, b) Average number of hours on paid and unpaid work combined (total work burden), by sex, c) Percentage of firms owned by women, by size, d) Informal employment as a percentage of total non-agricultural employment, by sex, e) Proportion of population with access to credit, by sex; f) Proportion of adult population owing land, by sex, g) Gender parity index in enrolment at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, h) Graduation from lower secondary education, by sex, i) Contraceptive prevalence among women who are married or in a union, aged 15-49, j) Proportion of women aged 15-49 subjected to physical or sexual violence in the last 12 months by persons other than an intimate partner, l) Percentage of women aged 20-24 years old who were married or in a union before age 18, and m) Adolescent fertility rate.
3. Furthermore, some of the indicators currently being collected only cover the public sector, such as: a) Antenatal care coverage, b) Proportion of births attended by skilled health professional, and c) Women's share of managerial positions. All indicators produced at present are indicators resulting from surveys, censuses or administrative sources. In general, sex is collected in all data sources, in order to have the possibility to disaggregate indicators by sex and make comparisons. Regarding the nine indicators on violence against women, their compilation has not yet started. In fact, this list of indicators can only result from a Victimization Survey. At the moment there are no plans as to whether this survey will be implemented in the future.

Table 1. Population 1975-2012
(000's)

Year	Total	Men	Women
2009	819,1	399,6	419,5
2010	839,8	408,8	431,0
2011	862,0	419,0	443,0
2012	865,9	421,0	444,9

Table 2. Population by Age, 2012

Age	(000's)		Women per 100 Men
	Men	Women	
Total	421,0	444,9	106
0 - 4	25,5	24,2	95
5 - 9	23,4	22,1	94
10 - 14	23,9	22,7	95
15 - 19	30,0	28,6	95
20 - 24	36,2	34,9	96
25 - 29	37,0	38,1	103
30 - 34	33,8	37,4	111
35 - 39	28,4	33,8	119
40 - 44	27,2	32,2	118
45 - 49	27,3	30,3	111
50 - 54	28,0	29,4	105
55 - 59	24,7	25,2	102
60 - 64	23,2	24,0	103
65 - 69	17,8	19,2	108
70 - 74	14,3	15,7	110
75 - 79	9,9	12,1	122
80+	10,4	15,0	144

Table 3. Highest Educational Attainment for Persons aged 20 years and over, 1992-2012

Year	Sex	Total	Not attended/not completed Primary	Primary school	Secondary (General & Technical)		Tertiary
					Men	Women	
2009	Men	100	4	16	51	29	
	Women	100	9	17	43	31	
2010	Total	100	7	16	47	30	
	Men	100	4	15	51	30	
2010	Women	100	9	17	42	32	
	Total	100	6	16	47	31	
2011	Men	100	4	16	50	30	
	Women	100	8	17	41	34	
2012	Total	100	6	16	46	32	
	Men	100	4	13	51	32	
2012	Women	100	7	15	43	35	
	Total	100	6	14	47	34	

Table 4. Cypriot Students in Tertiary University Education in Cyprus and Abroad, 1999/00-2011/12

Year	Total		Cyprus		Abroad	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
2008/09	16.338	20.196	6.417	9.029	9.921	11.167
2009/10	16.809	19.650	7.610	9.397	9.199	10.253
2010/11	16.604	20.684	7.437	10.792	9.167	9.862
2011/12*	17.001	20.356	7.834	10.494	9.167	9.862

* The data for Cypriot students abroad refer to the year 2010/2011. The corresponding data for 2011/12 are not currently available.

Table 5. Cypriot Students in Tertiary Non-university Education in Cyprus and Abroad, 1999/00-2011/12

Year	Total		Cyprus		Abroad	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
2008/09	2.110	3.050	1.916	2.859	194	191
2009/10	1.832	2.855	1.520	2.568	312	287
2010/11	1.579	2.424	1.499	2.364	80	60
2011/12*	1.616	2.424	1.536	2.368	80	60

* The data for Cypriot students abroad refer to the year 2010/2011. The corresponding data for 2011/12 are not currently available.

Table 6. Percentage Distribution of Students in University Level by Field of Study and Year

Field of Study	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12	
	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W
Teacher training & Education	5,6	22,6	4,4	19,6	6,6	18,2	4,7	18,7	4,8	17,6
Business & Administration	31,3	22,0	31,6	24,2	28,8	24,0	29,8	22,7	28,0	23,1
Computing	10,8	3,4	9,9	3,2	8,9	3,2	8,8	2,9	8,5	2,7
Humanities	3,6	12,5	3,4	11,3	3,4	11,7	3,6	10,9	4,2	10,9
Mathematics & Statistics	1,4	1,9	1,0	1,6	0,8	1,5	0,8	1,4	0,6	1,5
Social & Behavioural Science	7,3	12,1	6,0	10,9	5,7	9,8	5,4	9,9	5,0	9,2
Physical Science	3,4	3,2	2,8	2,7	2,2	2,6	2,1	2,4	1,9	2,3
Architecture & Building	6,0	2,6	8,3	3,8	8,4	4,3	9,3	4,4	8,9	4,8

Engineering & trades	18,2	2,1	18,4	2,1	18,1	2,6	18,2	2,6	18,4	2,5
Life Science	0,3	0,7	0,2	0,9	0,4	1,2	0,5	1,4	1,1	2,6
Arts	4,6	6,1	6,2	7,0	5,5	6,4	4,9	5,8	4,7	5,8
Journalism and information	3,4	3,4	1,9	2,0	1,6	1,9	1,6	1,7	1,9	2,0
Law	1,0	1,2	1,1	1,6	1,4	1,9	1,8	2,4	3,5	3,2
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	0,1	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,3	0,6	0,4	0,7	0,4	0,7
Health	2,2	3,8	3,6	5,8	6,5	7,0	6,8	9,0	6,8	8,6
Social services	0,8	2,2	0,9	2,7	1,3	2,6	1,0	2,4	0,8	2,0
Environmental protection			0,1	0,2	0,1	0,5	0,3	0,7	0,6	0,4
Total	100,0									

Table 7. Employment Rates by Age, 2008-2012

Age Group	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012	
	Men	Women								
15-19	11,8	8	9,5	5,5	6,9	6,7	6,5	4,5	4,1	3,8
20-24	64,6	62,7	61,2	61,4	58,4	58,8	52,6	50,9	51,3	46,4
25-29	82,8	80,9	81,7	78,4	81,2	78,8	79,4	79,3	75,9	73,1
30-34	94,4	82,6	89,5	83,2	91,4	81,5	87,2	79,6	83,4	77,4
35-39	93,6	75,9	91,8	79,7	90,8	81,4	89,2	80,8	85,3	76,6
40-44	92,9	77,1	93,9	76,2	92,5	77,6	89,4	77,6	87,9	75,7
45-49	94,2	72,7	90,9	71,2	89,8	71,6	89,6	73	85,5	73,8

50-54	91,4	66,2	89,0	65,9	85,8	67,4	85,7	67,9	83,8	66,1
55-59	83	50,7	83,1	50,2	83,4	56,2	81,2	52	74,9	53,6
60-64	56	25,8	57,8	29,9	56,7	28,0	56,6	29,1	51,4	22,2
65+	21,4	4,5	18,8	6,6	20,4	6,3	17,4	5,8	14,7	4,9
15-64	79,2	62,9	76,3	62,3	75,3	63,0	73,7	62,1	70,4	59,4
All										
ages										
(15+)	70,8	53,5	67,7	53,6	67,0	54,1	65	53,1	61,8	50,6

Table 8. Employment by Age Group, Educational Attainment Level and Sex, 2008-2012

Educational Attainment Level	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012						
	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women					
Less than Upper Secondary	88.4	34.32	93.1	39.19	93.7	42.06	88.8	38.47	73.6	33.129					
Upper Secondary	78.4	63.1	60.6	64.6	53.9	64.12	51.7	37.0	50.32	63.94					
Post-secondary - not tertiary	15.8	62.45	149.964	85.8	64.12	152.066	86.9	65.16	150.918	86.97	63.94				
Tertiary	14.2.2	68.3	73.85	139.794	64.7	75.01	149.70.1	79.25	158.493	71.54	86.95				
Total	38.2.8	212.218	170.6	382.919	204.580	178.3	395.223	208.753	186.4	398.214	208.8	189.3	388.605	203.285	185.320

Table 9. Unemployment Rates by Age Group and Sex, 2008-2012

Age Group	2008		2009		2010		2011		2012						
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total					
15-19	10,8	9,5	12,3	17,4	17,1	17,9	25,2	23,1	26,8	31,4	25,2	37,5	47,3	53,7	39,9
20-24	8,8	8,5	9,0	13,4	13,1	13,6	15,6	15,1	16,0	21,4	23,0	19,8	25,9	26,3	25,5
25-29	4,8	5,2	4,3	6,9	7,2	6,6	8,7	10,2	7,1	10,0	11,2	8,9	15,8	16,4	15,1
30-34	3,2	2,8	3,7	4,1	5,3	3,0	4,5	4,1	4,8	7,3	8,3	6,3	10,6	11,6	9,7
35-39	2,9	2,3	3,7	3,6	3,3	3,9	4,3	4,2	4,4	6,0	6,8	5,3	9,4	10,9	7,9
40-44	2,9	2,9	2,9	3,8	3,0	4,7	4,9	3,9	5,8	5,7	5,5	6,0	8,3	8,6	7,9
45-49	2,3	1,6	3,1	4,5	4,5	4,5	5,6	5,2	6,0	6,3	5,9	6,7	8,6	8,9	8,3
50-54	2,5	1,6	3,7	4,2	4,1	4,2	3,7	4,2	3,1	4,3	4,1	4,6	8,7	9,3	8,0
55-59	2,7	2,4	3,2	3,3	2,8	4,2	4,5	4,9	4,0	4,8	5,2	4,3	9,7	11,2	7,6
60-64	4,3	3,6	5,6	6,0	6,8	4,3	5,1	5,4	4,4	4,9	4,9	4,9	9,6	10,4	7,7
65+	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,6	0,7	0,5	0,2	0,3	0,0	0,6	0,6	0,5	1,1	1,5	0,0

Table 10. Number of Senior Civil Servants by Sex 1990 – 2013

Sex/Year	1990	1995	2000	2001	2006	2008	2011	2013
Men	196	214	154	193	287	273	299	237
Women	4	11	24	51	105	124	145	141
Total	200	225	178	244	392	397	444	378

Table 11. Members of Municipal Councils, 1990 – 2013

Sex/Year	1990	1995	2000	2001	2006	2011	2013
Men	252	292	318	324	330	384	384
Women	35	48	66	74	84	84	84
Total	287	340	384	398	414	468	468

Table 12. Number of Judges, 1980-2013

Sex/Year	1980	1990	1995	2000	2003	2006	2011	2013
Men	24	54	50	66	64	68	59	57
Women	0	3	9	18	23	41	47	44
Total	24	57	59	84	87	109	106	101

Table 13. Number of Ministers, 1980 – 2013

Sex/Year	1980	1990	1995	2000	2003	2006	2007	2011	2013
Men	11	11	10	11	10	11	9	8	10
Women	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	3	1
Total	11								

Table 14. Adults Convicted for Serious Offences, 1976-2010

Sex	2000	2002	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Men	791	896	739	1,433	1,331	1,725	1,471	1,569	1,109
Women	61	68	83	142	110	178	136	154	140
Total	852	964	822	1,575	1,441	1,903	1,607	1,723	1,249

Table 15. Victims, 1990-2010

Sex	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Men	87	189	176	206	272	277	245
Women	23	98	120	92	147	130	107
Total	110	287	296	298	419	407	352

Table 16. Victims of Sexual Offences, 1990-2010

Sex	1990	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Men	0	0	7	11	6	8	4	6	8
Women	8	17	36	66	77	56	54	53	55
Total	8	17	43	77	83	64	58	59	59

Age	Table 17. Risk of Poverty Rate by Age, 2008-2012														
	2008			2009			2010			2011		2012			
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women			
0-17	14,0	13,4	14,6	12,3	12,7	11,9	12,6	13,7	11,4	12,8	13,2	12,5	13,9	14,4	13,2
18-24	12,9	12,1	13,7	10,3	9,4	11,3	12,2	12,6	11,8	11,6	10,2	13,0	11,2	9,8	12,7
25-49	10,1	8,3	11,7	10,0	8,3	11,6	11,2	8,8	13,4	11,1	9,5	12,6	12,6	11,1	13,9
50-64	11,0	7,7	14,2	14,1	10,2	17,9	13,2	9,6	16,6	12,0	8,5	15,5	11,9	9,1	14,6
65+	46,3	41,0	50,7	46,4	42,4	49,6	39,9	36,8	42,4	35,5	31,7	38,8	29,3	24,2	33,6
Total	15,9	13,7	18,1	15,8	13,7	17,8	15,6	13,8	17,2	14,8	12,9	16,6	14,7	12,9	16,4

Section IV: Emerging Priorities

During the period under review, there were significant positive developments in most key priority areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for action and, undoubtedly, the position of women in Cypriot society has improved. This was also the outcome of the interim evaluation of the implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality, which took place in 2010.

2. The interim report on the evaluation of the implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender Equality, covering the period 2007-2010, that was carried out by an external consultant at the request of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order has revealed that, significant progress has been made in the areas of employment and combating violence against women, while little progress has been observed in the areas of education, mass media and political participation, areas which primarily reflect social attitudes and stereotypes. It, further, revealed that the involvement of sectorial Ministries in the promotion of gender equality has increased, the inter-departmental collaboration on gender equality issues has been strengthened and the local authorities have become more active on gender equality issues.

3. Besides, in March 2013, in the framework of the Concluding Observations on the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Cyprus adopted by the CEDAW Committee, it was revealed that although progress has been achieved mainly in the field of law reform and the institutional and policy framework, much remains to be done in areas such as the participation of women in political and public life, the disadvantaged groups of women, the elimination of gender stereotypes, trafficking in human beings and the strengthening of the NMWR.

4. Despite the significant positive developments, traditional perceptions regarding the role of women and men, as well as gender stereotypes continue to impede de facto realization of gender equality. This is reflected, inter alia, in the under-representation of women in political and public life, the continuing problem of violence against women, the gender pay gap and gender segregation in employment. Based on this acknowledgment, Cyprus is determined to intensify its efforts to eliminate gender stereotypes, primarily in the sphere of education and the media.

5. The Ministry of Justice and Public Order (Equality Unit) is now at the final stage of drafting the new Strategic Plan on Equality between Women and Men 2014-2017, in close collaboration with all government departments, women's organizations and other

NGOs, academic institutions and human rights bodies. This new plan would be the successor to the National Action Plan for Equality between Men and Women 2007-2013, if approved by the Ministerial Council.

6. The draft version of the new Strategic Plan on Equality between Women and Men 2014-2017 includes six thematic areas/objectives that could form the key priorities for action over the next three years. These concern: a) The institutional reform for the effective implementation of gender equality; b) The law reform/improvement of legislative framework; c) Balanced participation of women and men in public and political life; d) Combating all forms of violence against women; e) Economic empowerment of women; and f) Elimination of gender stereotypes.

7. Under the objective of 'Administrative/Institutional Reform for the Effective Promotion of Equality between Men and Women,' the following milestones shall be pursued: a) Preparation of a new Strategic Action Plan for Equality between Men and Women 2014-2017; b) Enhancement - Reconstruction of the National Machinery for Women's Rights/the appointment of Gender Equality Commissioner; c) Education of Public Officers on Gender equality and Gender mainstreaming in all policies; d) Revised regulations for funding gender equality projects; e) Effective coordination between Equality Bodies.

8. Under the second key priority area 'Law reform/improvement of legislative framework,' in line with the CEDAW 2013 Concluding Observations, the activities should aim at the enhancement of women's awareness about their rights, including migrant women, removing any impediments faced by women in gaining effective access to justice, including access to judicial remedies and other legal complaints mechanisms. It might also be useful to establish training programmes for prosecutors, judges and lawyers, which focus on the CEDAW Convention, its Optional Protocol and the Committee's general recommendations, so as to establish a legal culture supportive of gender equality.

9. Under the third key priority area 'Balanced participation of women and men in public and political life' the conduct of awareness-raising campaigns on the importance of women's participation in political life, in cooperation with the media, as well as the implementation of positive action measures, including quotas should be also foreseen.

10. Under the fourth key priority area 'Combating all forms of violence against women' actions aiming at the combating of all forms of violence against women will be: a) Signature, ratification and implementation of the Council of Europe (CoE) on the Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, b) Preparation of a new National Action Plan for the Prevention and Handling of Violence

in the Family, c) Prevention of Violence Against Women, d) Protection-Support for victims, and e) Prosecution.

11. The fifth key priority area concerns the economic empowerment of women, for which certain objectives must be emphasized: a) Applying equal pay/fight wage gap between men and women, b) Increasing women's entrepreneurship, c) Supporting vulnerable groups of women, d) Reducing unemployment, e) Reconciliation of work and family, and f) Preparing and adopting the National Plan on Population and Family Policies (2014-2015).

12. In line with this, the programming Documents for the programming period 2014-2020, which are currently under preparation (Partnership Agreement, Operational Programme), foresee the horizontal principle of gender mainstreaming. More specifically, under the thematic objective 'Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility', the investment priority 'Equality between men and women in all areas, including in access to employment, career progression, reconciliation of work and private life and promotion of equal pay for equal work' has been selected. In order to enhance the partnership principle, the participation of relevant stakeholders in the programming, monitoring, implementation and evaluation phases of the Programme will be ensured. In addition, a general ex ante conditionality on gender equality seems to be fulfilled.

13. The elimination of gender stereotypes, which is a sixth key priority, incorporates specific measures aiming mainly at: a) The promotion of equality and the elimination of prejudice through the media, and b) The integration of Gender equality into the educational system/educational programmes.

14. The new Strategic Plan 2014-2017, will be implemented in a period of economic crisis characterized by significant budget cuts. The economic crisis is expected to have an impact on increasing the risk of poverty and the reduction of childcare services, with women increasingly undertaking the burden of caring for their children, the elderly and people with disabilities. However, Cyprus is committed to continue working for the further advancement of women, despite the global economic crisis, which has negatively affected the country's economy and social cohesion. The greatest challenge for the future is to maintain and secure the necessary resources for the effective operation of the institutional mechanisms and the further development of programmes promoting gender equality, so as to prevent any setback in what has been achieved so far. After all, gender equality should not be regarded as an economic burden for the society, but as a prerequisite for social development and growth.