



# Exchange of good practices on gender equality

**Gender Impact  
Assessment**  
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Comments Paper – Greece

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# Gender Impact Assessment in Greece

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## 1. The policy context

Gender Equality Policy in Greece is influenced by European policies not only in terms of legislation in the labour market and against discrimination, but also in terms of policy tools and respective funding. Gender Mainstreaming was introduced in the European Social Fund (ESF) interventions during the 3<sup>rd</sup> programming period (2000-2006) and continued in the following period (2007-2013). Gender Impact Assessment (part of Gender mainstreaming tools) was introduced in the form of a project funded by the ESF in 2011. It focussed in legislation covering a wide range of policy areas. The results of the study were published in 2013 but no further action was taken in order to establish a more permanent procedure for its implementation.

The current economic and social crisis in Greece (since 2010) and the implementation of the Economic Adjustment Programme has aggravated the general policy context in terms of agenda setting, policy design and type of decision making in the public sector. This affected gender equality policies in a number of ways: position in the agenda, priority beneficiaries, institutional framework, restructuring of the public administration etc.

### 1.1 Institutional background

The main institutional mechanisms and the agencies that promote gender equality issues in Greece are the following:

- the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE).
- the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI).
- the Greek Ombudsman – Gender Equality Department.

More specifically:

The **General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE)** is the competent governmental authority for designing and monitoring of the implementation of policies for gender equality. The GSGE, part of the Ministry of Interior, is charged with promoting and realising the legal and substantive gender equality in all sectors of social, political and economic life. Since the early eighties, the Secretariat has developed several action plans, usually after each elections, when a new political responsible was nominated by the Government. The policies and Projects were widely influenced by the relevant EU policies. The GSGE is in charge of Greek relations to the International and European Institutions as well as for gender equality issues in all Ministries. The Library for Gender and Equality is one of the most popular Units. It gathers important numbers of books and documents as well as a Historical Archive for women's movement.

In 2010 the GSGE prepared and started to implement the *National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality 2010-2015* which comprised three pillars: (a) legislative reform, (b) specific policies for gender equality (combating gender based violence, promoting women in decision making etc) and (c) gender mainstreaming in national, Regional and local level. In this programme the above mentioned project on GIA is included.<sup>1</sup>

The **Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI)**, a Legal Entity under Private Law, was founded in 1994. The basic aims of KETHI's activities have a dual focus: to conduct social research on gender equality issues and to improve women's status and enable their advancement in all areas of political, economic and social life, within the framework of the policies defined by the General Secretariat for Equality.

Monitoring of the implementation the legislation on gender equality in the labour market is significantly assisted by the work of the Greek Ombudsman, an Independent Authority. The **Gender Equality Department of the Ombudsman**, active since May 2008, monitors the application of the principle of equal treatment of men and women in employment and occupation. By way of exception, they may investigate cases of gender discrimination associated with the conditions of service of employees in the civil service, and, with a recent law (2012), they have been given jurisdiction over matters of deviation from the principle of equal treatment between self-employed women and men.

## 1.2 Economic circumstances

Although the institutional frameworks for gender equality policy have been reinforced by acts, action plans, and strategies and the background for implementing gender equality and GM rhetoric seems very positive, when it comes to the implementation serious obstacles and reluctances arise. Under the recent economic crisis and the austerity measures the main threats faced by GE policies are related to both political and administrative aspects:

### 1.2.1 The crisis as an alibi for downgrading gender equality

The economic crisis has turned the policy priorities to economic issues and gender equality has been considered as a secondary goal for public policy. The developmental and economic dimension of gender equality is not well accepted by policy making. It is considered as a luxury policy area which has to be tackled after having tackled poverty and unemployment.

Measures against gender based violence were better accepted as it can be considered (not always justified) as a consequence of the economic crisis. GM and other GE objectives (women in decision-making, the image of women in the Media etc.) were conceived as policy priorities only under the pressures of existing funding (ESF) which would be lost if not allocated to policy action.

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[http://www.isotita.gr/en/var/uploads/HOME%20PAGE/NATIONAL\\_PROGRAMME\\_GENDER\\_EQUALITY\\_2010\\_2013.pdf](http://www.isotita.gr/en/var/uploads/HOME%20PAGE/NATIONAL_PROGRAMME_GENDER_EQUALITY_2010_2013.pdf)

### 1.2.2 Drastic reductions in the public administration

The major on-going administrative reform with the view of reducing public spending according to the fiscal consolidation priorities has affected GE Mechanisms (GSGE and KETHI), as well as the number of personnel dedicated to GE and GM in all Ministries. In this context, almost no austerity measure was designed with a gender perspective in mind. They have been adopted with a view to ensuring fiscal consolidation, while the lessening of the impact of the crisis on specific groups was a secondary consideration.

## 2. Policy debates

### 2.1 Gender mainstreaming methods

Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) is part of a larger process of Gender Mainstreaming (GM) of public policies. In Greece, both strategies are announced but not fully integrated in the policy cycle of public policies. In the *National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality 2010-2013* (funded by the ESF) the tasks for GM are grouped around five types of activities that are being carried out under the programme.

- Development of Methodologies and Tools for Monitoring and Evaluating the Integration of Gender Equality in all public policies.
- Set-up of a Monitoring Structure (mechanism) for the Integration, Monitoring and Evaluation of Gender Equality Policies in public policies.
- Gender Impact Assessment of 100 Laws and Regulations.
- Civil servants gender equality training and capacity building.

The state of the art of the major ESF project *Organisation of Mechanism for Integration, Monitoring and Evaluation of Gender Equality Policies across the breadth of Public Action*, as well as of other GM and GIA related activities are:

#### 2.1.1 Monitoring GM

The Project: aimed at the creation/development and pilot operation of the Monitoring Mechanism for the strengthening of the gender perspective and of the goal of gender equality in public policies. The Mechanism is expected to develop a rating system of policies results regarding to gender (gender impact assessment). The follow-up and evaluation of the policies will be based on statistical data and the development of gender indicators according to the UN and EU criteria. Its implementation is in progress.

#### 2.1.2 Background knowledge (research, surveys)

The Project includes several surveys and research projects on gender equality issues that would support the project operation of the Mechanism. The surveys will focus on several policy areas like violence against women, prostitution and trafficking, unemployment and gender inequalities, the effects of the economic crisis on women and households, men's and women's health in Greece and the use of

health services, gender and language in public administration documents and the development of electronic database toward recording data on the implementation of gender quotas in public administration agencies. A Call for Proposals was published in 2011 but not yet commissioned!

### **2.1.3 Sex-disaggregated statistics**

The GSGE collects and processes of statistical data and methodologies of gendered statistical analysis by the Greek Independent Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), EUROSTAT, OECD by area of policy, recording of gaps and drawing up reviews and reports in specialised issues. A working group was established with members of ELSTAT for the creation of a *National System of Gender Indicators* and for the first time in Greece, a *Time-Use Survey* by ELSTAT is planned (and funded) by the Programme.

### **2.1.4 Guides and tools for the implementation of GM.**

Several guides have been created in order to implement gender mainstreaming in different policy making levels. Three Guides were drafted for implementing GM in the all Ministries, all Regions and in the largest Municipalities. The aim was to assist the design, implementation and gender impact assessment of respective policies so that both men and women benefit equally from all policies and actions. Another guide was addressed to the local and regional governments, who have signed the *European Charter of Gender Equality in Local Life* and helped them to implement, within their territory, the commitments set out within the Charter.

## **2.2. Gender Impact Assessment in legislation and public finance**

### **2.2.1 Legislation**

In Greece, the first attempt to introduce GIA in legislation was made under the implementation of the Project “Gender Impact Assessment of 100 Laws and Regulations”. The project funded by the ESF has conducted a pilot GIA of 100 laws and regulations and has provided tools for the integration of gender equality in ex-ante evaluations of future laws and regulations. The project was implemented from 2012 to 2013. All results are published in a specific website of the project <sup>2</sup>.

More specifically, the project assessed 100 Laws and Regulations in 16 fields of policy making (employment, health, education, rural development, environment, social security and social solidarity, media, tax policy, public finance, family law, migration policy, Justice, consumers, electoral law, development and competition).

The selection was done under 7 criteria (representativity, gender relevance, discrimination relevance, phase of implementation, general interest of legislation, coverage).

The project produced basic questionnaires and check lists for ex ante, on going and ex post Gender Impact Assessment of Laws and Regulations.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.genderimpact.gr/>

The full integration of GIA in Laws and Regulations according the methodology highlighted by the project was not yet completed despite the fact that since 2012 (Law 4048 for good legislation is valid). In this Law, gender equality is mentioned among 12 principles of good legislation together with transparency, subsidiarity, accessibility, effectiveness etc.).

### **2.2.2 Public Finance**

In Greece, gender budgeting was only announced but never implemented. In the *National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality 2010-2013*) a study on gender budgeting was planned (funded by the ESF). The study was commissioned by the Secretariat to the Laboratory on Gender Research of the National Centre for Social Research (EKKE) in 2013. Till today, the funding was suspended.

## **3. Transferability issues**

### **3.1 Transferability of the Austrian good practice (GIA in budgeting)**

Transferability of the Austrian Good Practice on Gender Impact Assessment of budget policy to Greece would face the following obstacles:

The Greek model of the public budget system is not based on project, but on type of expenses. Several attempts were made (including during the implementation of fiscal reforms (2010-2012) to shift to a the model of public budget by objectives or by field of areas without any result. In any case, even if it the model would permit it, it is doubtful if gender budgeting was possible. In the current budget policy making, gender equality (and other social) concerns are the least to be taken into account by policy makers. Even major social concerns are neglected when facing major cuts and austerity measures.

There is no political consensus that gender equality could contribute to economic objectives in the current fiscal situation. Gender equality issues have been downgraded in the central policy agenda and boosting women's employment through policy interventions in favour of women, is not considered as a policy priority.

Necessary gender sensitive data for gender budgeting are scarce as there are not usually taken into account by budget policy makers both in Finance and Economic Ministries.

In conclusion, transferability of the Austrian good example for gender impact assessment of the budget policy could be enhanced (a) if the current public budgeting procedure was restructured, (b) if it was applied at organisations of a smaller scale (Municipalities, Regions, etc.) and (c) if decision making bodies would place it among their political priorities. Technical know-how, and background supportive tools and methods are available in Greece.

### **3.2. Transferability of the Finnish good practice (GIA in legislation)**

Transferability of the Finnish good practice is more probable for the following reasons:

There is already a relevant legislation on good legislation (although not yet implemented). The Law foresees the set-up of specific Units in each Ministry and in the Secretariat of the Government for monitoring the good legislation.

The pilot project is already completed (see above). 100 laws and regulations have been assessed from a gender perspective and therefore there are already plenty of analysis and recommendations to be drawn on the gender relevance. Therefore, gender expertise on GIA in legislation is satisfactory in Greece.

What is missing is primarily political will in order to establish the process of gender impact assessment of each piece of legislation before it is presented in the Greek Parliament by the Ministry in charge.

In conclusion, GIA in legislation could benefit in Greece from (a) a more rational way of legislating procedure (collaboration among competent agencies, time span, continuity in the public sector etc.) and (b) a wider acceptance of gender equality as an economic, social and political objective by the political system (government and political parties).