

NATIONAL PROGRAMME ON PREVENTING AND COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

2009 – 2013

Violence against women is the most blatant, systematic and widespread violation of human rights all over the world. It is a threat against all women and an obstacle to any attempt of development, peace and gender equality in all societies. The phenomenon of violence against women is multidimensional: its dimensions are judicial, psychosocial, financial, are related to health, development, human rights and gender equality.

Despite the recent establishment and implementation of the Laws 3064/2002 and 3500/2006, the situation in Greece has not changed regarding the degree and extent of illegal trafficking in women aiming to sexual exploitation, and regarding domestic violence. On the contrary, the number of women murdered by their partners, the number of crimes of honour and physical and psychological abuse of women has increased.

Indicatively:

In the year 2009 (including September), the Women's Consultation Centres of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) in Athens and Piraeus received 1.661 telephone calls and had 657 appointments with women who were seeking and finally received psychosocial support and legal counselling regarding issues of abuse.

For the first time, a complete Action Programme is elaborated in Greece for combating gender-based violence. This Programme is no longer part of the Gender Equality Programme and it is **financially supported by the National Strategic Reference Framework**.

The recent transfer of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality to the **Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights** operated as springboard for the development of this Programme. The relevance of the target of the Programme with the Ministry's scope and mission constitutes a requirement for its implementation.

The Programme constitutes part of the **following political priorities of the government**:

- targeting to the **most vulnerable** population groups
- giving priority to the provision of **services to the citizens** (i.e. women in this particular case)
- **supporting women in respect to their employment** (women are not able to work when they face problems of violence)
- attempting to **achieve good governance** (public expenses with transparency and accountability)
- protecting of **human rights** ("the rights of women are human rights")
- adopting the **UN policies** (UN has launched an international campaign regarding violence against women for the period 2008 – 2015 and it has already promoted trafficking in persons as a central policy (Convention and Appendix on Trafficking of 2000).
- complying with the priorities of the **Council of Europe** in the framework of gender equality and human rights (it elaborates the Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence with primary target to cover all types of violence to which women are traditionally subject).
- Adopting the **European policies** for gender equality (including combating domestic violence and trafficking with the creation of **indicators and data collection** through EUROSTAT)

ACTION PLANS OF THE NATIONAL PROGRAMME

1. LEGISLATION - Improvement and reinforcement of legislation
2. STRUCTURES - Creation of Consultation Centres and Shelters
3. SERVICES – Development of support services, legal assistance, electronic information.
4. PREVENTION – Awareness of the public opinion
5. TRAINING – Training of the Public Administration staff
6. DOCUMENTATION – RESEARCH
7. CIVIL SOCIETY
8. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION

1. **LEGISLATION – Improvement and reinforcement of legislation**

Due to the fact that the Ministry of Justice is the competent Ministry for the promotion of legislative regulations, it is able to improve and reinforce the institutional framework regarding the combating all types of violence against women. In the framework of revising the Criminal Code, the laws on domestic violence (Law 3500/2006), the law on rape and trafficking in humans – women will be also reviewed and examined. The ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of 2005 remains an immediate priority.

It is considered necessary that the institutional framework on combating violence against women should be inspired by **the dimension of gender, which means that it actually constitutes gender-based discrimination and violation of the principle of gender equality.**

2. **STRUCTURES –Consultation Centres and Shelters**

- Creation of **twelve (12) Consultation Centres** of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE), one in every administrative region of the country, and upgrading of the **2 Consultation Centres** of the GSGE which already operate in the region of Attiki, one in Athens and one in Piraeus. The Centres will be staffed by a scientific personnel of 4 persons (a psychologist, a social worker, a lawyer, an administration officer)
- Creation by the Local Administration Authorities, of **thirteen (13) Shelters**, one at each capital of the 13 Regions, where the Consultation Centres of the GSGE will be established and also upgrading of the Shelter which already operates. Each shelter will offer the capacity of 20 accommodation places for women with their children, with personnel specialized on violence issues.
- Establishment of **one nationwide SOS telephone line** of the GSGE for the immediate advisory support of women victims of violence on a 24 hours/365 days basis. The line will be available in many languages in order to meet the needs of immigrants.

3. **SERVICES – Development of support services, legal assistance etc.**

- Support and assistance by the Consultation Centres of the GSGE and the Shelters of the Local Administration Authorities:
 - Updating and specialized Information

- Psychosocial support of abused women and their children
- Legal counselling and information regarding their rights
- Referral and escorting of victims to Police Authorities and Public Prosecutors' Offices, hospitals and other services.
- Rendering of **legal aid** in cooperation with the Bar Associations
- **Self-service electronic information and counselling** (e-services) through the portal of the GSGE.

4. **PREVENTION – Awareness of the public opinion**

Information campaigns for the public opinion about forms of gender-based violence (domestic violence, trafficking, rape etc.), which address:

- On the one hand, to women, so that they will be encouraged to address to Consultation Centres and ask for assistance.
- On the other hand, to men so that they will be encouraged to state that they are not violent, i.e. “white ribbon” campaign.

5. **TRAINING – Training of the Public Administration staff**

Training of Public Servants

Public Servants to whom the victims of violence address to ask for help (police officers, professionals of health and welfare, public prosecutors, judges etc.) as well as penitentiary officers in women's prisons will be specially trained in order to handle in a better and more sensitive way those who are involved in acts of violence against women. The training programmes will be implemented in cooperation with the National Centre of Public Administration and Local Government.

Training of the staff of the Consultation Centres and Shelters

The staff of the Consultation Centres and Shelters (social workers, psychologists etc.) will be trained on the ways of modern approach of the victims in cases of violence so that they can sufficiently deal with the problems that may emerge.

6. **DOCUMENTATION – RESEARCH**

- A sampling research of the population all over Greece, in an attempt to investigate gender-based violence variables and its consequences in the life and employment of women and men.

- A Sociological research about crimes of honour, murders of women as partners and rapes in order to examine the conditions promoting aggressive behaviour.
- The Development of gender-based violence monitoring tools (indicators, reports of the co-competent Ministries – events reported by the Police, hospital incidents, medical protocols about abuse etc.)

7. CIVIL SOCIETY

Women's Organizations and civil society organizations in general may reinforce the public policies responsible for tackling with violence and thus gender equality. In the framework of the programme of supporting the Non-Governmental Organizations for gender equality, additional emphasis will be rendered on concrete actions planned to combat violence against women.

8. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION

- Commencement of **joint ministerial cooperation** with the co-competent Ministries of Citizen Protection (cooperation in combating trafficking and domestic violence) and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (assistance to the victims), aiming to coordinate the actions and the incorporation of the element of gender in their policies (gender mainstreaming)
- Activation of the National Observatory that has been established in 2003 by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality with the participation of feminist movements that are active in this field.

Athens, 25.11.2009

