

Despite the **continuing de facto inequality between women and men in educational decision-making**, in 2011 the House of Representatives voted in favour of **Law 24(I) 2011** amending Article 35 of the Law on Public Educational Service so as to grant **additional points of seniority to men educators who have served in the military** (compulsory for all men for a period of two years) for the purpose of **promotion**.

This amendment was proposed in response to a report by the Commissioner for Administration (Equality Authority) in 2005 (No. 27, 28, 47 & 52/2005) that found that there is **discrimination against men in the system of admission of teachers/educators into the public educational service** due to the delayed entry into the admission catalogues (in relation to women) due to their compulsory service in the military. In her report, the Ombudsman recommends that measures be taken to correct this discrimination through **the changing the system of admission or through an amendment to Article 28B of the Law on Public Educational Service**.

Despite the recommendations made by the Commissioner for Administration, the amendment to the **does not solve the issue of men's delayed entry into the system of admission into the public education service** but instead amends the procedures for **promotion in the educational service** in such a way as to constitute **unjustified discrimination** against women. The change in the law directly affects the result of the promotional procedure, giving men with the same qualifications as women, an **automatic and unconditional lead** over their female colleagues. The amendment also makes one's gender (to which the compulsory military service is related) an essential criterion for promotion, even though gender is not related the nature of the work.

Not only does the aforementioned amendment to the Law on the Public Education violate the principle of equality between women and men, the additional points awarded to men **leads to further under-representation of women at higher levels of the Public Education Service**. Data published by the Public Education Committee¹ for the period 2005 to 2010 educational and teaching staff and promotions by gender, shows that while the **percentage of women working in education stands at 70.3%, at managerial and supervisory level, their representation drops drastically to 59% and 37%**. On the other hand, **men represent on average 30% of educational and teaching staff they represent 41% of managerial staff and 63% of supervisory staff**.

It is clear therefore that the amendment to **Article 35 of the Law on Public Educational Service is in violation of Article 1, Article 2, Article 4, and Article 10 of the CEDAW Convention**. In no way can this amendment be considered a positive action measure as defined by Article 4 of CEDAW, but constitutes **discrimination against women and violates the principle of equality** as defined by Article 1. We urge the Cyprus Government to proceed without delay, with the repealing of **Law 24(I)2011** and the implementation of the recommendations made by the Commissioner of Administration (Equality Authority) in her decision (No. 27,28,47 & 52/2005) in relation to **the system of admission into the public education service** as well as her report (AKI 138/2011 and AKI 139/2012) that found that **Law 24(I)2011 is in violation of the principle of equality and constitutes discrimination against women**.

¹ www.eey.gov.cy