**Issues that concern women and girls
with disabilities in Greece**

**For the 79 (Virtual PSWG)
Pre-Sessional Working Group (09.11.2020 – 13.11.2020)**

**by the**

**National Confederation of Disabled People of Greece (NCDP)**

For the attention of the UN Secretariat of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

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# **Background Information about NCDP**

This report with the list of issues has been drafted by the National Confederation of Disabled People of Greece (NCDP) Observatory on Disability Issues.**[[1]](#footnote-1)** NCPD is an umbrella organization founded and established in 1989. Its founding members were federations and associations representing various disabilities, chronic diseases, and family members. It is a democratically run and structured organization. Only persons with disabilities, persons with chronic diseases, and family members have the right to vote and be elected in all organs of the Confederation, as delegates to the National Congress, as members of its Board, and as members of the Confederation’s Executive Secretariat.

The NCDP’s vision and mission are to protect the interests of persons with disabilities, promote their rights, and monitor the law and policy-making of the Greek state on issues concerning themselves and their families. In order to achieve this, the NCDP from the very first day of its existence has systematically set out to be recognized as the representative umbrella organization of the Greek disability movement by the state. This has been mainly achieved, and the Confederation actively participates and is involved in the decision-making process at all levels of the organization of the Greek state. The motto “Nothing about persons with disabilities without persons with disabilities” is a guiding principle in the NCDP’s work to make disability rights fully visible and respected. The Confederation is a founding member of the European Disability Forum (EDF), and the NCDP’s President is also the President of EDF. The NCDP has been very active in EDF’s work and through EDF in the work of the International Disability Alliance (IDA). Also, the NCDP took actively part in the negotiations for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and thereafter for its implementation both in Greece and at the EU level through EDF. Lastly, the NCDP is a member of the Greek National Commission for Human Rights, of the Greek Economic and Social Council, and the European Economic and Social Committee.

# **Short Description Regarding the Situation of Women With Disabilities**

Unfortunately, women with disabilities are in a more vulnerable situation than women without disabilities. The challenges they have to face in their daily lives are numerous and extended in many areas of their life and policy fields. The challenges and the vulnerability that women with disabilities face in Greece has already concerned the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, where through its Concluding Observations (published in October 2019) has stressed the areas that actions should be taken for promoting and protecting the rights of women and girls with disabilities.

Through this report, we would like to bring to the attention to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women a number of questions that are of primary concern for women with disabilities in Greece in order the Committee to take them into consideration when it drafts its List of Issues. A more analytical report will be submitted before the next session.

# **Article 1: Definition of ‘Discrimination Against Women’**

Women with disabilities are at a greater risk to be discriminated -either multiple or intersectional- as a woman and as a person with disabilities. However, women's involvement with the ‘disability’ is not only limited to their bodies, e.g., because of an impairment that might have. Considering their role in society as mothers, partners, daughters, sisters, etc. they are also loaded to take care of their children, parents, partners, etc. Because of this association, they are at risk to be discriminate by association. Currently, no specific measures are in place to prevent and protect women against discrimination.

## **Suggested question(s)**

* Does the state plan to develop and implement a strategy for ensuring the protection against discrimination of women and girls with disabilities?
* What concrete measures are the government going to take to effectively prevent and combat/tackle multiple and intersectional discrimination and discrimination by association against women with disabilities and women as mothers, daughters, children, partners of persons with disabilities?

# **Article 2: Policy Measures**

One essential issue that needs to be stressed here is the lack of statistical data regarding women and girls with disabilities. It is unclear how many girls and women with disabilities live in Greece. Also, there is a lack of mainstreaming disability into all gender equality policies and programs. For example, in the recent National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020, there was almost none action that concerned explicitly women with disabilities.

## **Suggested question(s)**

* Considering the lack of specific laws that refer to girls and women with disabilities and their rights as well as the absent in the recent National Action Plan on Gender Equality, 2016-2020 of any actions targeted towards to women and girls with disabilities, does the state intend to include in the next National Action Plan on Gender Equality actions for promoting the rights of women with disabilities?
* How does the Greek State plan to i) mainstream and include in all gender-related policies the rights of women and girls with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities, and ii) to promote the effective participation of women with disabilities in all decision-making processes?
* Considering the lack of statistical data regarding women and girls with disabilities, what kind of actions will the Greek state undertake to collect and publish statistical information on women and girls with disabilities, e.g., in State’s official records?
* What actions does the state plan to take for informing women and, specifically, women with disabilities about their rights and in accessible ways of communication, e.g., easy-to-read documents or posters, videos available in sign language, and with captioning?
* How does the Greek state provide training to the relevant actors of the judiciary system, such as lawyers, judges, police officers, and other administrative staff, on the rights of persons with disabilities and especially on the rights of women with disabilities?

# **Article 3: Guarantee of Basic Human Rights and Freedoms**

## **Suggested question(s)**

* What concrete measures have the Greek state implemented so far for ensuring that women and girls with disabilities in institutions and other closed-settings (psychiatric hospitals, asylum centers, and centers of detention) are not victims of abuse, inhuman, or degrading treatment?

# **Article 4: Special Measures**

## **Suggested question(s)**

* Considering the European Migrant Crisis and the high influx of refugees in Greece and the extreme conditions because of the COVID-19 pandemic, what actions has the state taken to ensure access to healthcare services, personal assistance, etc. to women and girls with disabilities?
* Considering the vulnerable situation of refugees and migrant women and girls, and let alone refugees and migrant women and girls with disabilities, what actions does the state implement for preventing violence, abuse, and sexual exploitation against refugees and migrant women and girls with disabilities?

# **Article 5: Roles Based on Stereotypes**

## **Suggested question(s)**

## What measures is the state planning to take to combat stereotypes faced by women and girls with disabilities, based on their gender and disability in employment, family life, and political participation?

# **Article 6: Trafficking and Prostitution**

Women and girls with disabilities are at a greater risk of being victims of violence, domestic violence, incident, or rape. Currently, no official strategy is in place which aims to prevent all forms of violence, exploitation, and abuse against women. Also, in the case of women and girls with disabilities, it is unclear if the professionals -either the health professionals or police officers- have received the necessary training on how to treat girls and women with disabilities who are victims of violence.

## **Suggested question(s)**

* What measures have the Greek state adopted and implemented so far for supporting and assisting women and girls with disabilities who are victims of violence, domestic violence, indecent assault, or rape?
* Does the Greek state plan to develop a strategy for preventing all forms of violence, abuse, and exploitation, both in public and private domains, against women and girls with disabilities?
* Does the Greek State collect and publish data on violence, abuse, exploitation, and trafficking towards women and girls with disabilities?
* What actions has the Greek State implemented, so far, and will continue to implement for ensuring that the training of health professionals, police officers, and judicial services is adequate on how to treat women and girls with disabilities who are victims of violence and how to handle their testimonies?
* Is there any accessible mechanism in place for women and girls with disabilities to report incidents on violence, domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape, etc.?
* Does the Greek state plan to develop a campaign for women and girls with disabilities in order to inform them regarding their rights, e.g., the CEDAW Convention and the Istanbul Convention, and in accessible formats?
* Do women and girls with disabilities in Greece have free access to information and training in regard to sexual health and emotional literacy?

# **Article 7 & 8: Political and Public Life Participation at the International Level**

The participation of women with disabilities in political and public life in Greece is very limited. Until today there has been no specific action or initiative to raise awareness and promote the right to political participation for women with disabilities. For example, in the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020, while there is a reference to the importance of women's involvement in power structures and/or decision-making positions, there is no action targeting women with disabilities.

## **Suggested question(s)**

* What measures will the Greek State adopt for promoting and encouraging the participation of women with disabilities both in political and public life?
* How the Greek state plan to eliminate the accessibility barriers, such as in the electoral material, voting procedures, and facilities that prevent persons with disabilities and especially women with disabilities, to exercise their right to vote?
* As mentioned below, specifically on Article 15 of this report and concerns the “Equality before the law,” according to the existed legal framework, an adult who cannot take care of his/her affairs because of his/her intellectual or physical disability, then s/he should be assisted in judicial support. However, when someone loses his/her legal capacity, then s/he can no longer exercise his/her right to vote or stand for elections. What measures will the Greek state implement for ensuring that all persons with disabilities, and especially women with intellectual or psychosocial disabilities, will be able to exercise their fundamental right to vote?

# **Article 10: Education**

## **Suggested question(s)**

* Has the Greek state official data regarding i) the number of girls and women with disabilities and/or special educational needs that are in vocational education and training, and tertiary and postgraduate education, and ii) the school drop-out rate of girls with disabilities and/or other special educational needs?

# **Article 11: Employment**

According to the findings of a study conducted by the Observatory on Disability Issues of the National Confederation of Disabled People of Greece[[2]](#footnote-2) in 2018, the access of persons with disabilities to the existing labor market is limited. This finding also raises more concerns in regard to women with disabilities and their inclusion in the labor market since women face more barriers than men to enter the labor market.[[3]](#footnote-3)

## **Suggested question(s)**

* What concrete measures will the Greek state adopt for promoting and encouraging the participation of women with disabilities in the labor market, e.g., by increasing their recruitment both in the public and private sectors?
* Has the Greek state official data regarding the number of women with disabilities employed in the public sector?
* Are there any vocational program(s) for women and girls with disabilities in order to guide them for receiving the necessary educational support and training?

# **Article 12: Health**

The access to healthcare services and facilities -let alone these days where there is high demand because of the pandemic- is one more barrier that persons with disabilities face in Greece. Especially -as stressed at the report by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe-[[4]](#footnote-4) women and girls with disabilities in Greece face barriers to access healthcare services, such as sexual and reproductive health services, on an equal basis.

## **Suggested question(s)**

* What measures has the Greek State implemented so far for ensuring that women and girls with disabilities have access to sexual and reproductive health services both in urban and rural areas?
* Does the Greek state plan to conduct training to the healthcare practitioners for ensuring that they are aware of the rights of persons with disabilities, and particularly women and girls with disabilities, and for providing appropriate advice to them?
* What concrete measures have the Greek state implemented so far for ensuring that all hospitals and other health facilities and medical technologies are accessible to all persons with disabilities and particularly to women and girls with disabilities?
* Which is the procedure for taking informed consent from women with disabilities? Is the information given to the patient adequately and understandably and in accessible formats, e.g., information in Braille or easy-to-read?

# **Article 13: Economic and Social Benefits**

## **Suggested question(s)**

* Does the Greek state collect, analyze, publish data regarding women with disabilities economic and social conditions?
* What action will the state adopt for improving the economic and social condition of women with disabilities in Greece?

# **Article 15: Equality Before the Law**

Considering the Constitution of Greece, which says that all Greeks “are equal before the law,” as well as the Greek Civil Code, which states that “an adult shall be assisted in judicial support when his/her mental intellectual or physical disability cannot take care of his/hers affairs,” this means that many women with disabilities are not treated equally before the law. Specifically, because of the type of their disability, they can lose their legal capacity and their right to decide about themselves, to be able to raise their family, and to be able to vote and stand for election, a situation which is also against Article 12 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

## **Suggested question(s)**

* What actions does the state plan to adopt to ensure that all persons with disabilities, especially women with disabilities, are treated equally before the law?

# **Article 16: Marriage and Family Life**

As stated above, on Article 15, because of the legal scheme of judicial support -which is a form of guardianship- not all persons with disabilities are treated as rights holders and equal before the law. For example, when a woman with disabilities is under the provisions of this system, then s/he is not allowed to have her own children or to raise her own family. Another barrier that women with disabilities or mothers of children with disabilities face is the limited number of inclusive and accessible community support services for assisting them with their children.

## **Suggested question(s)**

* What measures will the Greek state adopt to abolish legislation and practices, e.g., deprivation of legal capacity, that discriminate against persons with disabilities, and particularly women with disabilities to raise her family?
* Does the Greek state plan to develop and implement accessible and inclusive community support services to assist mothers with disabilities and mothers of children with disabilities?
1. The ‘Observatory on Disability issues’ is an initiative launched by the National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP) of Greece which is financed by the European Social Fund and National Funds under the auspices of the operational program "Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning 2014-2020". [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. NCDP Observatory on Disability Issues. (2018). [*2ο Δελτίο Παρατηρητηρίου Θεμάτων Αναπηρίας της ΕΣΑμεΑ: Δείκτες απασχόλησης και πληθυσμός με Αναπηρία-Μέρος Α΄*](https://www.paratiritirioanapirias.gr/el/results/publications/16/2o-deltio-parathrhthrioy-8ematwn-anaphrias-ths-esmea-deiktes-apasxolhshs-kai-plh8ysmos-me-anaphria-meros)[2nd Bulletin of the NCDP Observatory on Disability Issues: Employment Indicators and population with disabilities, part A]. Athens: NCDP Observatory on Disability Issues. Retrieved February 8, 2019, from [in Greek]. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See, also, the CRPD Committee Observation/Recommendation on this matter (paragraphs 38 and 39) of its [Concluding Observations](http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhskOcZ9cO6iPa1r3wEJzoMtZPRlsn2F8be6qzYChDHrmBTMH%2bqHKEyy9lkIKsnfl7vYm%2b%2fX3mXiOTCPBgssnHiOpTdzNgr31DcGr9iV91p4N2). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [Report](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/CommDH%282018%2924%20-%20Greece%20report_EN.docx.pdf) by Dunja Mijatović Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe following her visit to Greece from 25 to 29 June 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)