



HAUT-COMMISSARIAT AUX DROITS DE L'HOMME • OFFICE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
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REFERENCE: YH/follow-up/Greece/63

13 May 2016

Excellency,

In my capacity as Rapporteur for Follow-up on Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), I have the honour to refer to the examination of the seventh periodic report of Greece at the Committee's fifty-fourth session, held in February 2013. At the end of that session, the Committee's concluding observations were transmitted to your Permanent Mission (CEDAW/C/GRC/CO/7). You may recall that in the concluding observations, the Committee requested Greece to provide, within two years, written information on the steps undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 31 and 35 of the concluding observations.

The Committee welcomes the follow-up report received with an eight-month delay in October 2015 (CEDAW/C/GRC/CO/7/Add.1) under the CEDAW follow-up procedure. At its sixty-third session, held in February-March 2016 in Geneva, the Committee examined this follow-up report and adopted the following assessment.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 31** of the concluding observations that the State party “improve and increase access, as well as use of effective and affordable methods of contraception, including by subsidizing them, in order to starkly reduce the practice of abortion as a method of family planning”: The Committee considers that it **did not receive sufficient information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “reduce the rate of caesarean sections performed without medical necessity by training or retraining medical personnel on natural birth and introduce strict control of medical indications for caesarean sections in order to reach the WHO recognized rates”: The State party indicated that the Directorate for Public Health has suggested the enactment of Law 4316/2014 that has been voted by the Parliament, which provides, inter alia, for the mandatory monitoring of high-risk pregnant and ready-to-give-birth women who are to be referred to public perinatal centres (to be established in all health-care regions), the development of medical protocols for doctors responsible for selecting high-risk pregnancies and deliveries, and the formation in the Central Health Council of a Permanent Committee on Perinatal Care. It added that these foreseen measures are aimed at providing efficient and high-quality perinatal care services to all pregnant women and consequently raise awareness on the benefits of natural birth and avoidance of caesarean section where it is not necessary. The Committee notes the adoption by the Parliament of Law 4316/2014 which includes

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provisions to improve perinatal care services to pregnant women and raise awareness on the benefits of natural birth. It notes, however, that the State party did not take concrete measures to reduce the rate of caesarean sections performed without medical necessity by training or retraining medical personnel on natural birth and introduce strict control of medical indications for caesarean sections in order to reach the WHO recognized rates. The Committee considers that the State party took some steps towards the implementation of the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation **has been partially implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “improve the quality and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services and guarantee their access to disadvantaged groups of women”: The State party mentioned the establishment of a Primary National Health Network (PEDY), which provides for equal access to primary health care services, including family planning and health care services for mothers and children, regardless of their economic, social, professional, insurance status, etc. It also reported that, by virtue of a circular entitled “Development of a single platform for planning appointments at national level”, citizens have been enabled to make an appointment with a doctor or other health services via Internet free of charge for primary health care. The Committee notes the steps taken by the State party to improve accessibility to primary health care services. It notes, however, that the State party did not take specific measures to improve the quality and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services and guarantee their access to disadvantaged groups of women. The Committee considers that the recommendation **has been partially implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “promote education on sexual and reproductive health and rights, especially targeting adolescent girls and boys, in order to foster responsible sexual behaviour, prevention of early pregnancies and of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV-AIDS”: The State party reported that, in the context of developing the Pilot Network of Family Planning Units and Mother-Child Care Units, several information and awareness-raising campaigns targeting particular groups, such as women, students and couples, have been conducted on issues relating to reproductive and sexual health, contraception, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and gynaecological neoplasia, promotion of breastfeeding, etc. It further mentioned the production of printed and electronic health education material on relevant issues, as well as the participation of health professionals from PEDY health units in health education programmes organized by the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs at the primary and secondary school levels. Moreover, it indicated that health education programmes were being developed by the competent units of Primary and Secondary education Directorates of Greece, which are aimed at pupils and focus, inter alia, on issues relating to sexual relations, sexually transmitted diseases and gender equality. In addition, it stated that the General Secretariat for Gender Equality has started cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs and the General-Maternity District Hospital Helena Venizelou to provide counselling and information on issues of contraception and sex education to students of secondary education. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to promote education on sexual and reproductive health and rights for pupils as well as adolescent girls and boys. The Committee considers that the State party took significant steps towards the implementation of the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation **has been implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “increase the percentage of the health budget allocated to sexual and reproductive health services”: The Committee considers that it **did not receive sufficient information** to assess whether the recommendation has been implemented.

The Committee recommends that, in relation to paragraph 31 of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

- 1) Improve and increase access, as well as use of effective and affordable methods of contraception, including by subsidizing them, in order to starkly reduce the practice of abortion as a method of family planning;

- 2) Reduce the rate of caesarean sections performed without medical necessity by training or retraining medical personnel on natural birth and introduce strict control of medical indications for caesarean sections in order to reach the WHO recognized rates;
- 3) Improve the quality and accessibility of sexual and reproductive health services and guarantee their access to disadvantaged groups of women; and
- 4) Increase the percentage of the health budget allocated to sexual and reproductive health services.

Regarding the recommendation made in **paragraph 35** of the concluding observations that the State party “take measures to reduce the number of women in detention, including through targeted prevention programmes aimed at addressing the causes of women’s criminality”: The State party mentioned that, in the context of the administrative return procedure, the measure of detention is not applied in a general and indiscriminate manner and that efforts are being made to apply alternative measures to detention, such as regular appearance before the competent authorities, the deposit of a financial guarantee, the submission of specific documents or the obligation to stay in a specific place. It also indicated that the enactment of Law 4322/2015 seeks, among other things, decongesting prisons in order to improve both their function and the living conditions of prisoners, without gender discrimination. It further reported that the aforementioned law provides for beneficial calculation of detention days for mothers, as each day of detention is counted as two days for the period during which they keep their minor children with them. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to decongest prisons and reduce the number of mothers in detention. However, it notes that these measures do not cover all women in detention. Moreover, it notes that the State party did not indicate whether concrete steps were taken to develop targeted prevention programmes aimed at addressing the causes of women’s criminality. The Committee considers that the State party took some steps to implement the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation **has been partially implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “address the situation of women and girls in detention through the development of comprehensive gender-sensitive policies, strategies and programmes aimed at facilitating their access to justice and ensuring compliance with their fair trial guarantees; and providing educational, rehabilitative and resettlement programmes for women and girls”: The State party reported that, regarding the resettlement and overall psychosocial empowerment of women in detention, several educational, linguistic, vocational training, therapeutic and artistic programmes, as well as sports activities and recreational and cultural events have been taking place in women’s detention centres. The Committee welcomes the implementation of educational, rehabilitative and resettlement programmes in women’s detention centres. However, it notes that the State party did not indicate whether it took concrete steps to develop comprehensive gender-sensitive policies, strategies and programmes aimed at facilitating women and girls’ access to justice and ensuring compliance with their fair trial guarantees. The Committee considers that the State party took some steps towards the implementation of the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation **has been partially implemented**.

Regarding the recommendation that the State party “improve the conditions of women’s detention facilities in accordance with international standards, to solve the problem of overcrowding in prisons, guarantee separate accommodation for different categories of detainees; and ensure the provision of adequate health facilities and services, in accordance with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules)”: The State party mentioned that, in accordance with Presidential Decree 141/91, the Hellenic Police took measures to improve conditions for women in detention, including by accommodating them in separate detention areas (wings). It also indicated that female pre-trial detainees are kept in the Women’s Independent Department Detention Centre of Korydallos, while convicted women are detained in Women’s Detention Centre of Eleonas

Thebes. Moreover, it reported that all necessary measures have been taken to ensure that the Hellinikon migrants' detention facility is exclusively used for women. It also recalled the enactment of Law 4322/2015 which seeks, among other things, decongesting prisons in order to improve both their function and the living conditions of prisoners. In addition, it stated that medical treatment is provided to aliens on a daily basis either by the nearest general hospital or by doctors and nursing staff of NGOs working in pre-removal detention centres. Furthermore, it reported that, in order to ensure the protection of detainees' health and hygiene, explicit orders and instructions have been given to all regional services for the strict implementation of Presidential Decree 45/2008 on "Health and safety measures for the uniformed personnel of the Hellenic Police", and that guidelines for preventing the transmission of infectious diseases have been developed. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to improve the conditions of women's detention facilities, including those aimed at solving the problem of overcrowding in prisons, guaranteeing separate accommodation for different categories of detainees, and ensuring the provision of adequate health facilities and services. However, it takes note of alternative information according to which detention centres are still overcrowded and the provision of health facilities and services remains inadequate, especially in migrants' detention centres. The Committee considers that the State party took some steps to implement the recommendation. It considers that the recommendation **has been partially implemented**.

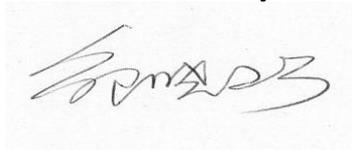
The Committee recommends that, in relation to paragraph 35 of the concluding observations, the State party provide, **in its next periodic report**, information on further actions taken to:

- 1) Reduce the number of women in detention, including through targeted prevention programmes aimed at addressing the causes of women's criminality;
- 2) Address the situation of women and girls in detention through the development of comprehensive gender-sensitive policies, strategies and programmes aimed at facilitating their access to justice and ensuring compliance with their fair trial guarantees; and
- 3) Improve the conditions of women's detention facilities in accordance with international standards, to solve the problem of overcrowding in prisons, and ensure the provision of adequate health facilities and services, in accordance with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules).

The Committee looks forward to pursuing its constructive dialogue with the authorities of Greece on the implementation of the Convention.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



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Rapporteur on follow-up  
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women