EGGE – EC’s Expert Group on Gender and Employment

Assessment of the National Action Plan for Employment 2002 from a Gender Perspective

Greece

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ASSESSMENT OF THE 2002 NAP FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

- Greek Report -

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Introduction

The Greek National Action Plan for 2002 was prepared by a Committee set up by the Minister of Labour including independent experts and civil servants. The General Secretariat for Equality was involved in the preparation process. However, its role was limited to providing information on the implementation of measures announced in previous NAPs and on-going policy initiatives. This is compatible with the general impression one has from the NAP 2002. The main policy options and actions regarding gender equality were determined in 2000-2001, in direct relation to the shaping, negotiations and approval by the EU of the 3rd Community Support Framework (2000-2006). Most of the new policy initiatives announced in the NAP 2002 thus consist of extensions or specifications of measures and actions decided in the two preceding years. This should not necessarily be viewed as a disadvantage of the Greek NAP 2002, since medium-term planning and perseverance on strategic options are clearly preferable to a year-to-year design of piecemeal policy measures.

A. National Employment Policy in Context

This first chapter of the NAP adequately addresses gender gaps in employment and unemployment. It comprises a report of 2001/2000 changes in employment and unemployment rates by gender and in female employment rates by broad age groups. It is also underlined that the gender gap in employment has been reduced more in Greece than in Italy and Spain over the 1995-2000 period.

Gender appears in the analysis of 2001/2000 changes in two additional cases a) when the steep fall in the number of assisting family members is associated with the decline of female unpaid family members aged 45 and more in agriculture and b) when women’s intensive activation is demonstrated by measuring inflows to employment and unemployment of women declaring themselves as housewives.

B. National Action to Raise Employment Rates and Improve Quality at Work

In this chapter the authors of the NAP have taken into consideration the gender dimension in their effort to identify the unexploited reserves of labour, which is essential to the design of a policy aiming at raising employment rates. They have suggested possible reasons for gender gaps in employment rates for each broad age
group (20-29, 30-44, 45-65) and have analysed and commented on statistics referring to the inactive who are unwilling to work by gender and by reason of reluctance to work. From their analysis they have drawn the following gender-relevant conclusions a) family obligations and gender stereotypes are important determinants of the low female activity rate b) the high share of “other reasons” invoked by the inactive (especially women) as responsible for their unwillingness to work is indicative of the need for providing more opportunities of atypical employment to the inactive and for reform of the tax and benefit systems, if employment rates are to be raised.

These conclusions are used in the section dedicated to the challenges to employment policy, namely in the paragraph dealing with how to increase the appeal of work. They have been linked to proposals of ‘reconciliation’ measures, such as the promotion of part-time work and working time flexibility, the possibility of taking a ‘protected absence’ from the labour market, the improvement of care infrastructure, the reform of the social insurance system, so that it does not penalise those whose working lives have been interrupted or included periods with reduced working hours.

In the same section, the paragraph dealing with the quality of work has taken account of the differential access of men and women to employment, but has ignored gender inequalities in pay, employment security, working conditions and career prospects.

Last but not least, the Greek NAP 2002 does not set any medium-term targets in terms of overall or female employment rates.

C. Response to Recommendations

In December 2001 the Employment and Social Policy Council recommended that ‘Greece should take effective and comprehensive action to reduce the employment and unemployment gender gaps. To this end, care facilities for children and other dependants should be extended’.

The response of the authors of the NAP to this recommendation is rather well-founded. Among the key measures stated are women’s high participation shares into active labour market programmes (higher than their share of unemployment) and recent progress in care infrastructure which is planned to be continued in 2002 and subsequent years.
D. Progress Report

Gender mainstreaming: mechanisms and tools

Progress report for key initiatives announced in previous NAPs:

a) Inter-ministerial Committee for Equality, in charge of introducing the gender equality perspective in all policies. Set up in 2000, the Committee has met once - March 2001 - to approve the National Action Plan for Equality (2000-2006) prepared by the General Secretariat for Equality.

b) Regional Committees for Equality – Set up in the 13 regions of the country.


d) Equality officers appointed at the Managing Authorities of each CSF Operational Programme to monitor positive action measures and other actions – Implemented.

e) 30% quota for the representation of women on administrative boards and promotion panels in the public sector – Law 2839/2000.

f) Integrated National Action Programme for ‘Women belonging to Special Social Groups’ – Has been prepared.

g) Specifications set by the Pedagogical Institute for the reform of content of school textbooks so as to remove discrimination and stereotypes – Have been issued.

h) Devotion of 11.8% of European Social Fund funding to positive action measures in favour of women – Established through the design and approval of the 3rd CSF Operational Programmes by EU authorities.

i) Development of indicators for monitoring measures promoting gender equality - Pending.

j) Assessment of on-going policies from a gender equality perspective – Pending.

New initiatives announced in the NAP 2002:

a) Creation of an Observatory for Equality Issues;

b) Reform of undergraduate curricula and creation of inter-departmental programmes, seminars or lessons with the aim of integrating the equality perspective and promoting gender studies in higher education;

c) Incorporation of the gender perspective into the new teaching material for primary and secondary education;
d) Pilot implementation of new pedagogical procedures/lessons in primary school;
e) Reform of the vocational guidance lesson at high school in order to remove stereotyped attitudes to men’s and women’s professions.

From the new initiatives announced by the NAP 2002, we highlight the importance of the development of gender studies in higher education, which is fundamental for the accumulation of expertise on gender equality issues and the implementation of the gender mainstreaming strategy. This expertise is currently lacking in Greece.

**Gender mainstreaming in the first three pillars**

There is minimal reference to gender in the first three pillars of the Greek NAP 2002. This is no surprise, in view of the fact that, since 1999, the authors of all Greek NAPs have preferred to list under the first two guidelines of the fourth pillar most of the gender equality measures belonging to the guidelines of the first three pillars.

The only measures in favour of gender equality mentioned under the first three pillars of the NAP 2002 are included in Guideline 7 (Combating discrimination and promoting social integration through access to employment). These are the following:

a) **Actions continued**: Special incentives for women in job creation schemes targeted to groups menaced by social exclusion.

b) **New measures**: Reversing the burden of proof in favour of working women.

**Analysis of the fourth pillar**

We have already analysed the measures of the first guideline of the fourth pillar referring to gender mainstreaming mechanisms and tools under the first heading of this section of the report. In what follows we analyse the remaining measures of the first guideline (gender mainstreaming) as well as all measures included in the second (tackling gender gaps) and third guidelines (reconciling work and family life).

It should be noted that almost all the measures of the first and second guidelines of the fourth pillar which will be described below could be included in the guidelines of the first three pillars and are therefore examined together.

**Guidelines 16 and 17. Gender mainstreaming and tackling gender gaps**

Progress report for key initiatives announced in previous NAPs:
a) Quota (60%) and/or higher amount of subsidy in favour of women in all employability programmes of the Public Employment Service – First announced in the NAP 1999 – Implemented ever since.

b) Increase in the number of women participating to active labour market programmes – Announced in the NAP 2001 – Law 2956/2001: Implementation of an individualised approach in the assistance provided to the unemployed by the Public Employment Service.

c) Training of Employment Promotion Centre officers on the counseling of unemployed women – Announced in the NAP 2001 – Pending.

d) Founding of two new regional ‘Information and Counseling Units for Women’ by KETHI – Announced in the NAP 2001 – Canceled.

e) Programme to strengthen female entrepreneurship in manufacturing (Ministry of Development) – Announced in the NAPs 1999 and 2000 – Implemented.


g) Encouragement of female entrepreneurship in rural areas through the Community Initiative LEADER Plus – Announced in the NAP 2001 – Under implementation.


i) Participation in the European Network WES for the promotion of female entrepreneurship – Announced in the NAP 2000 – Implemented.

j) Integrated interventions in favour of women who participate in the programme ‘Young entrepreneurs’ – Announced in the NAP 2001 – Implemented.

k) Removal of administrative and other obstacles to business start-up and operation – Announced in the NAP 2001 – Under implementation.

l) Development partnerships to promote measures for equality at the workplace and employment of women in new economic sectors under the Community Initiative EQUAL – Announced in the NAP 2001 – Under implementation.

m) Rendering part-time more attractive and creating job opportunities for the low-paid – Announced in the NAP 2001 – Measures included in the Law 2874/2000 that came into effect on April 1st 2001.

n) Social dialogue on the promotion of equal opportunities – Announced in the NAP 2001 – Pending.

o) Programme enabling the access of women to technical occupations – Completed.
New initiatives announced in the NAP 2002:

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<tr>
<th>a)</th>
<th>Positive action measures in favour of women in programmes of lifelong learning (Ministry of Education).</th>
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<td>b)</td>
<td>Tapping new sources of employment in the service sector and social economy, by encouraging local networks and collaboration between Local Government agencies, cooperatives and firms.</td>
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<td>c)</td>
<td>Integrated actions in favour of women facing multiple social exclusions, with minimal formal qualifications or long-term unemployed.</td>
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<td>d)</td>
<td>Studies on gender equality in sciences and technology and the linking of education with female entrepreneurship (Ministry of Education).</td>
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<td>e)</td>
<td>Study on positive actions to promote equal opportunities within firms (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs).</td>
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<td>f)</td>
<td>Three studies to be carried out by KETHI on the gender pay gap.</td>
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Guideline 18. Reconciling work and family life

Since 1998, a great project is undertaken by the authorities to expand and improve the care infrastructure for children and the elderly, which is underdeveloped, and extend opening hours of nurseries, kindergartens and schools in order to facilitate reconciliation of work and family life and increase the female labour supply. This strategic option is maintained ever since and is reflected in all Greek NAPs as well as in ESF funding under the 3rd Community Support Framework. ‘New initiatives’ in the NAP 2002 correspond to extension of measures decided in previous years.

Progress report for key initiatives announced in the NAP 2001:

- Reform of the social security system so that women with intermittent participation in paid employment do not lose their insurance rights – Special provision (care bonuses) in the new bill on Social Security currently discussed in Parliament.
- Creation of new nurseries run by local government – Under implementation.
- ‘Creative Activity Centres for Disabled Children’ (new institution) – Under implementation.
- ‘Day Care Centres for the Elderly’ (new institution) – Under implementation.
• Operational support and improvement of care infrastructure: safeguarding viability of Creative Activity Centres for Children (KDAP) and Home-Help Units and setting up of new units – Implemented.
• Integrated actions for single-parent families, including training, access to employment and accompanying support services – Implemented.
• Pilot implementation of ‘Citizens’ Bureaus’ (new institution): including 10 public service departments and opening hours from 8:00 to 20:00 daily and between 8.00 and 14.00 on Saturdays – Successful operation of 9 Bureaus in various cities.

New initiatives announced in the NAP 2002:

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<tr>
<td>• In 2002-2003, creation of 192 new nurseries and Creative Activity Centres for Children (including 30 Centres for disabled children) as well as 381 new home-help units and 79 new Day Care Centres for the elderly.</td>
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<td>• For school year 2002-2003: New classes will be established, operating with an extended hours schedule, in 500 primary schools and 300 public kindergartens and 100 new pilot ‘all-day schools’ will be created.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Actions will be undertaken within the Network of Social Support Services, in collaboration with the Central Association of Municipalities and Communes: 400 social scientists will be hired in various municipalities to provide support to persons suffering from or menaced by exclusion from the labour market.</td>
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<td>• Progressive extension of the number of Citizens’ Bureaus in all municipalities of the country (about 1000).</td>
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<td>• Afternoon opening hours in public nurseries (extension in more nurseries).</td>
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E. Statistical Information

The following indicators are calculated: EO3, EO4, EO7, EO8, EO9 (Annex 3). Other context indicators of Pillar 4 are included in Annex 2. Table 7 in annex 2 provides - for the first time - reliable data on care infrastructure, which had been lacking so far.

F. Example of Good Practice

The example of good practice refers to innovative measures taken to upgrade the vocational training system. The enumerated measures consist of institutional changes improving the quality of the system and are not relevant from a gender point of view.