

# Greece

## About

Articles 4, 22, and 116 of the Greek Constitution enshrine the principle of gender equality, including positive measures in favour of women, where necessary. Article 4 states that ‘Greek men and women have equal rights and obligations’, while Article 22 notes that ‘All employees, regardless of gender or other discrimination, are entitled to equal pay for work of equal value’ and Article 116 proclaims that ‘There is no discrimination on grounds of gender if positive measures are taken to promote equality between men and women. The State shall ensure that the inequalities which exist in practice, particularly against women, are removed’.

The first efforts to implement gender mainstreaming in Greece were in the 2000s, when the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) actively participated in the planning process of the third Community Support Framework (CSF) 2000–2006, which is Greece’s development programme financed by the European Union’s (EU) European Structural Funds (ESF). The subsequent CSF 2007–2013 presented gender mainstreaming as an improvement factor for the quality of public policies in the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF). In 2010, a national integrated gender mainstreaming strategy was launched within the framework of the National Programme for Substantive Gender Equality 2010–2013. Building on that National Programme, the most recent principles and objectives to improve gender equality in Greece can be found in the National Action Plan (NAP) on Gender Equality 2016-2020, introduced in 2017 in the wake of the last recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to Greece in 2013.

At that time, the Committee noted that it was ‘concerned that budget cuts and the ongoing restructuring of the administration and government may limit its independent status and further reduce its budget and its capacity to ensure that gender equality policies are properly developed and fully implemented throughout the work of all Ministries and Government offices’ [1].

The approach to gender equality in Greece is characterised by an emphasis on legal matters, with little attention paid to quantitative indicators. The production of sex-disaggregated data is quite limited, although the new Law 4604/2019 aims to enhance the dissemination of sex-disaggregated statistics by public services and legal entities. Gender equality - in respect of issues such as the gender pay gap (the most recent official estimate is from 2014), differences in retirement behaviour, and even harassment in the workplace - has yet to be placed at the core of political discussion.

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## Legislative and policy framework

The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) published the [NAP 2016-2020](#) in February 2017 as a roadmap for gender equality policy for the coming years. The Plan builds on the principles and strategic objectives set by the National Programme for Gender Equality 2010-2013 and takes particular note of the challenges that arose during the economic crisis. As a nationwide strategy, it covers all regions. The Plan is structured into six areas:

- Social inclusion of women facing multiple discrimination;
- Combating violence against women;
- Labour market, reconciliation of professional and family life;
- Education, training, stereotypes, media, culture, sports;
- Health;
- Equal participation in decision-making.

The NAP 2016-2020 sets out objectives and describes/proposes actions for each of these six areas. It encompasses a variety of horizontal interventions in public policy and vertical actions/policies targeting women and men in areas where inequalities prevail. Actions in the outlined in the NAP to tackle gender discrimination include:

- 1 | Protection against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity (in consistency with the labour law on collective contract regulating the protection against discrimination on the grounds of pregnancy or maternity -Law 1483/1984, as amended by paragraph 1 of article 36 of law 3996/2011);
- 2 | Networking with the competent authorities (Ombudsperson and Labour Inspectorate) to monitor complaints of dismissals or discrimination against childbearing rights;
- 3 | Signing a Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Education, Research and

Religious Affairs, KETHI (the Research Centre for Gender Equality – Κέντρο Ερευνών για Θέματα Ισότητας), ECHR (National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government – Εθνικό Κέντρο Δημόσιας Διοίκησης και Αυτοδιοίκησης) and GSGE (General Secretary for Gender Equality – Γενική Γραμματεία Ισότητας των Φύλων) to design and deliver awareness-raising training for pre-primary and primary school teachers on gender equality and gender-based discrimination.

The NAP 2016-2020 does not set specific targets or indicators for the assessment of its goals, however.

An intersectional approach to gender equality is possible within the scope of the NAP 2016-2020, as it includes a focus on women who suffer multiple discrimination (gender, disability, deprivation of personal freedom, experiences of imprisonment, drug addiction, etc.) and on the basis of risk due to specific situations (long-term unemployed women, Roma women, refugee women, single-parent families, etc.). Actions to serve this objective include:

- Drafting legislation, circulars etc. for women belonging to vulnerable social groups or who face multiple discrimination, and formulating proposals for better law and administrative practices;
- Investigating, recording and processing Roma women's needs through a gender-based assessment study of the Roma and Vulnerable Social Groups' Support Centres Programme in collaboration with local government;
- Granting vouchers to nurseries for hosting Roma children, homeless women or refugee women.

Law 4604 on promoting substantive gender equality, preventing and combating gender-based violence, adopted in March 2019, could contribute to the promotion of gender mainstreaming. The Law stipulates legislative measures to strengthen the national gender machinery, as well as diverse government actions directed towards gender mainstreaming. Accordingly, each Ministry should:

- develop quantitative and qualitative indicators on gender issues for the purposes of the assessment of gender mainstreaming in all relevant measures and policies;
- analyse the consequences of draft laws through mandatory gender impact assessments; and
- publish an online progress report on gender-based discrimination.

The Law sets out a comprehensive set of measures, including: use of gender-neutral language in official documents of the public administration; provisions against gender stereotypes and discrimination in mass media and advertisements; a quota system (minimum 40 % women candidates) for each electoral district in parliamentary and European elections (the same regulation already exists for municipal and regional elections, Law 4555/2018) [2]; and the establishment of an Autonomous Equality Office in each of the 13 regions of the country (Article 7, while the Municipal and the Regional Equality Committees are upgraded in Article 8). The impact of the Law will depend on the implementation of these policies, with little information to date on how (and when) these policies will be put into practice.

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## Structures

### Government responsibilities

The GSGE was established in 1985 as the government body with responsibility for planning, implementing and monitoring policies on equality between women and men in all sectors. The GSGE consisted of two directorates and one independent department affiliated with the Ministry of the Interior. Its structure was described in the organisation of the Ministry of Interior, in particular Presidential Decree 141/2017 (Government Gazette 180 / A / 23-11-2017), which, however, is not in force anymore. In July 2019, according to [Article 4 of Presidential Decree 81/2019](#), the GSGE was transferred to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and renamed the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality (GSFPGE). After the 2019 elections, the remit of the former GSGE was transferred to the new General Secretariat, together with its responsibilities, positions, staff and supervised bodies.

Combating gender-based discrimination is the primary objective of the new GSFPGE. Other forms of discrimination (e.g. race, ethnicity, age) are not addressed at the same level. Nevertheless, the intersection of gender with other forms of discrimination is prioritised by the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality, to ensure social inclusion and equal treatment of women facing multiple discrimination (in line with NAP 2016-2020). Policies include four axes and corresponding goals: promoting the employment of women and combating the equality gap in the labour market; preventing and combating violence against women; combating stereotypical perceptions of the roles of women and men through education; and strengthening women's participation in decision-making.

The National Council for Gender Equality (Εθνικό Συμβούλιο Ισότητας των Φύλων) was established in 2019 under Law 4604 (Article 9), as an advisory body composed of the most representative women's and feminist organisations (two representatives of women or feminist organisations, will alter in each subsequent composition), movements and social actors in the public and private sectors, and representatives of local governments and independent authorities. The Council discusses and evaluates existing gender equality policy, as well as proposing policies and actions to the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality. Article 10 of Law 4606 on promoting substantive gender equality, preventing and combating gender-based violence also introduced the establishment of an Autonomous Gender Equality Office in each Ministry. Autonomous Gender Equality Offices are tasked with

- collecting and processing data on the incorporation of gender equality into the Ministry's policies, and formulating gender indicators;
- drawing up a gender impact assessment report of each bill; and
- providing an overview of activities for the annual report of the government to parliament.

The provisions of the Law will have to be implemented by the new institutional structure established after July 2019.

Finally, the national mechanism for gender equality includes the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI). Established in 1995, this is a legal entity under private law. It was supervised by the Ministry of Interior until July 2019, at which time it was transferred to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. It aims to eliminate gender-based discrimination and inequality and to promote and conduct research on gender equality topics defined by the General Secretariat.

## Independent gender equality body

With respect to the monitoring and implementation of the equal treatment principle, the Greek Ombudsman (Συνήγορος του Πολίτη) is responsible for equal treatment of women and men on issues such as access to employment, working conditions, and access to and provision of services by public institutions.

## Parliamentary bodies

There is no system of regular reporting to the government or representative elected bodies in respect of the progress achieved on gender equality initiatives in Greece. Nevertheless, a parliamentary committee ([Special Permanent Committee on Equality, Youth and Human Rights](#)) addresses gender equality as a specific topic.

## Regional structures

At NUTS-2 regional level, there are 13 Regional Committees for Gender Equality (one in each regional administrative entity) (Article 186 of Law 3852/2010) [3]. These five-person Regional Committees are not established as (independent) government bodies. The 13 Regional Committees incorporate a gender equality perspective in planning development measures at regional level, as well as implementing specialised programmes for women. They make proposals to the regional councils on measures to promote effective gender equality in all areas of economic, political and social life.

Similarly, at local level, a Committee for the Promotion and Monitoring of Gender Equality Policies in Local Government was established in March 2017 to formulate proposals and legislative interventions for gender equality in local government and to monitor local action plans. In 2017, Municipal Committees for Gender Equality operated in 94 of 325 municipalities [4]. In 34 of these municipalities, Service Units work on social policy and gender equality. Additionally, 211 of 325 municipalities (64 %) have signed the [European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life](#), with a commitment to developing and implementing action plans for gender mainstreaming in policy-making. Similar to the Regional Committees for Gender Equality, the Local Committees for the Promotion and Monitoring of Gender Equality Policies in Local Government are not administrative bodies.

According to Article 8 of Law 4604 on promoting substantive gender equality, preventing and combating gender-based violence, Independent Offices for Gender Equality are to be established in the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece (ΚΕΔΕ, Κεντρική Ένωση Δήμων Ελλάδας) and the Association of Regions (ΕΝ.ΠΕ. Ένωση Περιφερειών Ελλάδας). These Offices will have the following tasks and responsibilities:

- inform the municipal and regional councils on the establishment of the Regional and Municipal Committees for Gender Equality, respectively;
- cooperate with municipalities and regions to formulate and implement local and regional projects and activities on gender equality;
- cooperate with elected and candidate women in local authorities to develop networks of partnerships with local bodies in order to enhance active participation of women in decision-making in local government; and
- inform women on the activities of the Independent Offices for Gender Equality, the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality and other bodies active in the field of gender equality.

## Methods and tools

Note: the methods and tools listed under this section were the focus of EIGE's 2018-2019 assessment. If certain methods and tools are not mentioned in this section, this does not necessarily mean that they are not used at all by Greece.

### Gender budgeting

To date, gender budgeting has not been used in Greece. However, Article 11 of Law 4604 on promoting substantive gender equality, preventing and combating gender-based violence attempts to incorporate a gender perspective into public budgets. Each ministry and public enterprise has to incorporate the gender dimension into the preparation of its general budget and accompanying actions. The relevant public entities are required to report the data and information that contribute to achieving that objective, together with their plans for the coming year, to the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality. This should be done within a month of approval of their budget. No action to implement these initiatives has been announced and there are no guidelines or intergovernmental group dedicated to gender mainstreaming as yet.

### Training and awareness-raising

The National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government delivers training to civil servants on gender equality on an annual basis, in collaboration with the GSFPG. No awareness-raising and training initiatives on gender equality are in place for public service staff.

### Gender statistics

There is no specific unit responsible for promoting the production of sex-disaggregated data within the national statistical institute (ELSTAT). Each department (division) of ELSTAT produces some sex-disaggregated data, according to the provisions on dissemination of statistics of the Greek statistical law (3832/2010) and those on the dissemination of European statistics (Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 on European statistics, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2015/759).

Most frequently, 'gender blindness' is applied to statistics, especially when it comes to administrative data. For instance, no sex-disaggregated statistics are provided on new pension practices, despite the existence of a regular monthly report developed by the Ministry of Labour (HELIOS system). The same is true of administrative data on waged employment (ERGANI) or other aspects of social and economic life.

The newly introduced Law 4604 on promoting substantive gender equality, preventing and combating gender-based violence stipulates that public services and legal entities should collect gender-based statistics on areas falling within their responsibility. Each year, these data shall be sent to the Department of Informatics, Research and Digital Support (Observatory) of the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality.

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## Good practices

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## References

General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) (2017). National Action Plan on Gender Equality in Greece 2016-2020 ([Εθνικό Σχέδιο Δράσης για την Ισότητα των Φύλων στην Ελλάδα 2016-2020](#)). Ministry of the Interior.

General Secretariat for Gender Equality (2018). Annual Report 2017: The progress of gender equality policies in the country. Implementation of equality policies in municipalities ([Ετήσια Εκθεση 2017: Η πρόοδος των πολιτικών ισότητας των φύλων στη χώρα. Η εφαρμογή των πολιτικών ισότητας στους δήμους](#)).



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Ministry of Interior (2019). Law 4604/2019 on promoting substantive gender equality, preventing and combating gender-based violence ([Πρώθηση της ουσιαστικής ισότητας των φύλων, πρόληψη και καταπολέμηση της έμφυλης βίας](#) - Ρυθμίσεις για την απονομή Ιθαγένειας - Διατάξεις σχετικές με τις εκλογές στην Τοπική Αυτοδιοίκηση - Λοιπές διατάξεις).

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Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI) (2018). Guide for mass media to eliminate sexism and gender-based discrimination ([Οδηγός προς τα Μέσα Μαζικής Επικοινωνίας για την εξάλειψη του σεξισμού και των έμφυλων διακρίσεων](#)).

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## Endnotes

[1] Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2013). [Concluding observations. CEDAW/C/GRC/CO/7](#), p.3.

[2] Law 4555/2018 on reform of the institutional framework of local government ([Μεταρρύθμιση του θεσμικού πλαισίου της Τοπικής Αυτοδιοίκησης](#)).

[3] Law 3852/2010 on new architecture of local government and decentralised administration - Kallikrates Programme ([Νέα Αρχιτεκτονική της Αυτοδιοίκησης και της Αποκεντρωμένης Διοίκησης](#) - Πρόγραμμα Καλλικράτης).

[4] The latest available report referred to 2017. GSGE (2018). Annual Report 2017: The progress of gender equality policies in the country. Implementation of equality policies in municipalities ([Ετήσια Έκθεση 2017: Η πρόοδος των πολιτικών ισότητας των φύλων στη χώρα. Η εφαρμογή των πολιτικών ισότητας στους δήμους](#)).

