



Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Concluding observations on the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Greece*

1. The Committee considered the combined eighth and ninth periodic reports of Greece ([CEDAW/C/GRC/8-9](#)) at its 2041st and 2042nd meetings (see [CEDAW/C/SR.2041](#) and [CEDAW/C/SR.2042](#)), held on 6 February 2024.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee appreciates the submission by the State party of its combined eighth and ninth periodic reports, which was prepared in response to the list of issues prior to reporting ([CEDAW/C/GRC/QPR/8](#)), as well as its follow-up report to the previous periodic report ([CEDAW/C/GRC/CO/7/Add.1](#)). It welcomes the oral presentation by the delegation and the further clarifications provided in response to the questions posed orally by the Committee during the dialogue.

3. The Committee commends the State party on its distinguished delegation, which was headed by the Secretary-General for Equality and Human Rights, Zafeiroula Dimadama. The delegation also included representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Education, Religious Affairs and Sports, the Ministry of Citizen Protection, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Migration and Asylum, the Ministry of Justice and the Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva.

B. Positive aspects

4. The Committee welcomes the progress achieved since the consideration in 2013 of the State party's seventh periodic report ([CEDAW/C/GRC/CO/7](#)) in undertaking legislative reforms, in particular the adoption of the following:

(a) Law No. 4604/2019 on promoting substantive gender equality and preventing and combating gender-based violence, aimed at promoting gender equality and addressing issues related to sexual and gender-based violence;

* Adopted by the Committee at its eighty-seventh session (29 January–16 February 2024).



(b) Law No. 4706/2020, providing for a minimum quota of at least 25 per cent of persons of either sex on listed company boards;

(c) Laws Nos. 4648/2019 and 4604/2019, introducing a 40 per cent quota for women candidates on electoral lists in each constituency for national and European elections;

(d) Law No. 4555/2018, introducing a 40 per cent quota for women candidates on electoral lists for regional and municipal elections;

(e) Law No. 4386/2016, establishing a minimum one-third quota for women candidates on the National Council for Research, Technology and Innovation, the sectoral research councils, the Regional Councils for Research, Technology and Innovation, and the scientific committees of research institutes.

5. The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to improve its institutional and policy framework aimed at accelerating the elimination of discrimination against women and promoting gender equality, such as the adoption and establishment of the following:

(a) National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2021–2025;

(b) National Disability Action Plan, in 2020;

(c) National Strategy for Equality of LGBTIQ+ 2021–2027;

(d) National Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons 2021–2023;

(e) National Action Plan for the Protection of Children from Sexual Abuse and Exploitation, in 2023;

(f) National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, in 2023.

6. The Committee welcomes the fact that, in the period since the consideration of the previous report, the State party acceded to the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), in 2018.

C. Sustainable Development Goals

7. **The Committee welcomes the international support for the Sustainable Development Goals and calls for the realization of de jure (legal) and de facto (substantive) gender equality, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, throughout the process of implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee recalls the importance of Goal 5 and of the mainstreaming of the principles of equality and non-discrimination throughout all 17 Goals. It urges the State party to recognize women as the driving force of the sustainable development of the State party and to adopt relevant policies and strategies to that effect.**

D. Parliament

8. **The Committee stresses the crucial role of the legislative power in ensuring the full implementation of the Convention (see [A/65/38](#), part two, annex VI). It invites the Hellenic Parliament, in line with its mandate, to take the necessary steps regarding the implementation of the present concluding observations between now and the submission of the next periodic report under the Convention.**

E. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

Status and visibility of the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations

9. The Committee notes that the State party has devised training and awareness-raising activities for the general public and capacity-building for the judiciary and the police on the Convention and the Optional Protocol thereto. However, it notes with concern that women, especially rural women, women belonging to ethnic minorities, and women with disabilities, are often not aware of their rights under the Convention and the remedies available to claim them.

10. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Raise awareness among women of their rights under the Convention and the legal remedies available to them to claim violations of such rights and ensure that information on the Convention, the Optional Protocol thereto and the Committee's general recommendations is accessible to all women in accessible formats;**

(b) **Consider establishing a comprehensive mechanism for the implementation of the present concluding observations and involve non-governmental organizations promoting women's rights and gender equality in the work of the mechanism, taking into account the four key capacities of a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up, namely engagement, coordination, consultation and information management;**

(c) **Ensure that the Convention, the Committee's jurisprudence and its general recommendations are made an integral part of systematic capacity-building for all judges, prosecutors and lawyers, with a view to enabling them to directly apply or invoke the provisions of the Convention in court proceedings or interpret national legislation in the light of the Convention, and of training for government officials, police officers and other law enforcement officials.**

Legislative framework

11. The Committee notes that the State party has adopted a framework of laws and policies to protect women's rights and promote gender equality and acknowledges its pioneering work in enshrining equality before the law. However, it is concerned about the limited effectiveness and the need for monitoring and evaluation of these laws. The Committee is further concerned about the lack of effective application of the principle of intersectionality to address intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women belonging to disadvantaged groups.

12. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Ensure the effective application of legislation prohibiting sex-based discrimination;**

(b) **Apply the principle of intersectionality in order to ensure access to public services for women facing intersecting forms of discrimination;**

(c) **Devise a comprehensive system to collect data on cases of discrimination against women, disaggregated by age, nationality, disability and socioeconomic status.**

Women's access to justice

13. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) The high rates of legal illiteracy among rural women, women with disabilities and women belonging to ethnic minorities, including Roma women and women belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace, and the reluctance of women to file complaints about gender-based violence and discrimination due to the prevalence of judicial gender bias and gender stereotypes among law enforcement personnel;

(b) The fact that refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women continue to face barriers to access to justice, which are often exacerbated by their lack of trust in the judiciary and law enforcement authorities and fear of retaliation.

14. The Committee, recalling its general recommendation No. 33 (2015) on women's access to justice, recommends that the State party:

(a) **Enhance women's and girls' knowledge of their rights and the remedies available to claim them, including by integrating education on women's rights and gender equality into curricula at all levels of education and conducting legal literacy campaigns;**

(b) **Expand measures to inform refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women of the remedies available to them in cases of violations of their rights, including through dedicated websites and social media, in accessible languages.**

National machinery for the advancement of women

15. The Committee commends the State party for the establishment in 2019 of the National Council for Gender Equality, which acts as an advisory body to the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights and is composed of representatives from ministries, academia and civil society organizations. However, the Committee notes with concern that:

(a) The National Council for Gender Equality, which acts as the national machinery for the advancement of women, lacks sustainable human, technical and financial resources needed to discharge its mandate effectively;

(b) The systematic implementation of gender mainstreaming and the incorporation of gender-responsive budgeting across all government departments remain deficient, notwithstanding the unequivocal mandate, provided under Law No. 4604/2019 on promoting substantive gender equality, to advance gender mainstreaming.

16. Recalling the guidance provided in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, in particular regarding the conditions necessary for the effective functioning of national machineries, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Increase the human, technical and financial resources allocated to the National Council for Gender Equality and provide capacity-building to strengthen the gender-specific expertise of its staff in order to enable it to effectively coordinate efforts to mainstream gender across all government departments;**

(b) **Adopt an integrated gender-responsive budgeting process and allocate sufficient budgetary resources for the advancement of women's rights.**

National human rights institution

17. The Committee welcomes the fact that the Greek National Commission for Human Rights was reaccredited with category A status by the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, in 2017. However, it notes that the Subcommittee on Accreditation encouraged the Greek National Commission for Human Rights to:

(a) publicize vacancies broadly; (b) maximize the number of potential candidates by including a wider range of societal groups and educational qualifications; (c) promote broad consultation and participation in the application, screening and selection process; (d) assess applicants on the basis of predetermined, objective and publicly available criteria; and (e) select members to serve in their individual capacity rather than on behalf of the organization they represent.

18. The Committee recommends that the State party implement the recommendations of the Subcommittee on Accreditation to strengthen the Greek National Commission for Human Rights and ensure that it is provided with adequate human, technical and financial resources to be able to carry out its mandate effectively and independently, in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles, annexed to General Assembly resolution 48/134 of 20 December 1993) and seek the advice and technical support of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in this regard.

Temporary special measures

19. The Committee recognizes the temporary special measures put in place to accelerate the achievement of the substantive equality of women and men in political and public life. It notes with concern, however, the absence of temporary special measures other than electoral quotas, such as temporary measures to address intersecting forms of discrimination against rural women, women belonging to ethnic minorities, including Roma women and women belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace, and women with disabilities.

20. Recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GRC/CO/7, para. 17), the Committee recommends that the State party adopt temporary special measures, in line with article 4 (1) of the Convention and the Committee's general recommendation No. 25 (2004) on temporary special measures, to accelerate the substantive equality of women and men, in particular with regard to rural women, women belonging to ethnic minorities, including Roma women and women belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace, older women and women with disabilities, in all areas under the Convention where women are underrepresented or disadvantaged, including in political and public life, education, employment and health care.

Stereotypes and harmful practices

21. The Committee notes the State party's efforts to combat gender stereotypes and harmful practices by launching awareness-raising campaigns. However, it remains concerned about the persistence of deep-rooted stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, which overemphasize women's traditional role as mothers and wives, thereby undermining women's social status, autonomy and educational and professional opportunities. The Committee also notes with concern the significant number of women and girls in the State party who have undergone or are at risk of female genital mutilation.

22. Drawing attention to the joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices, as revised, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Strengthen measures, including awareness-raising and education campaigns, to eliminate stereotypes concerning the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society;**

(b) **Continue to systematically collect disaggregated data on the incidence of female genital mutilation and other harmful practices in the State party;**

(c) **Provide information to survivors of female genital mutilation on the support services available to them; adequately fund mandatory training for health professionals and social workers on the identification of women and girls at risk of female genital mutilation and their referral to appropriate support services; and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted and adequately punished.**

Gender-based violence against women

23. The Committee remains concerned at the prevalence of gender-based violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, in the State party. It notes with concern:

(a) The absence of a legal definition of femicide in the Penal Code;

(b) The high incidence of domestic violence in the State party, owing to discriminatory social norms legitimizing such violence; the low prosecution and conviction rates in cases of domestic violence and marital rape; and underreporting, owing to victims' fear of stigmatization or reprisals, their economic dependence on abusive partners, legal illiteracy and lack of trust in the law enforcement authorities;

(c) The lack of information on the effective enforcement and monitoring of protection orders, in particular restraining and separation orders, in cases of domestic violence, which exposes women survivors of such violence to a risk of revictimization;

(d) The lack of adequate victim support services for women seeking to escape violent relationships and the insufficient number of adequate shelters across the State party.

24. **In line with its general recommendation No. 35 (2017) on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19, and with target 5.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Amend the Penal Code to specifically criminalize femicide;**

(b) **Encourage reporting of domestic violence against women and girls by raising awareness among women and men, including through educational and media campaigns with the active participation of women's organizations, on the criminal nature of gender-based violence against women, challenge its social legitimization and destigmatize and protect women from reprisals for reporting incidents of gender-based violence;**

(c) **Ensure, through mandatory and continuous capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials, that gender-based violence, including sexual violence against women, is effectively investigated and prosecuted, that perpetrators are adequately punished and that protection orders are effectively enforced and monitored, with sanctions in case of non-compliance;**

(d) **Adequately fund victim support services by strengthening the 20 State-run shelters, subsidizing shelters run by non-governmental organizations and expanding the network of specialized, inclusive and accessible shelters for women and girls who are victims of gender-based violence, taking into account their specific needs; and provide women and girls who cannot safely return to their homes with psychosocial counselling, financial support, education,**

professional training, income-generating activities, affordable housing and, if necessary to ensure their safety, a changed identity.

Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

25. The Committee commends the State party on its efforts to strengthen its legal and policy framework to combat trafficking in women and girls, including the operationalization of the National Referral Mechanism for the Protection of Human Trafficking Victims, in 2019. It notes that the amendments to the Criminal Code that entered into force on 1 July 2019 (Law No. 4619/2019) provide an extended definition of “exploitation”, which also covers the subjection of a person to servitude or servitude-like practices, regardless of the victim’s consent. However, the Committee notes with concern that article 323A of the Penal Code is not fully aligned with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, in particular regarding the issue of consent. It also notes with concern that:

(a) The State party remains a country of origin and destination for trafficking in women and girls for purposes of sexual and labour exploitation;

(b) The risk of trafficking for purposes of sexual or labour exploitation is higher among refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women and girls owing to the lack of adequate protocols for victim identification;

(c) The number of girls exploited in prostitution is high in the State party;

(d) The State party has a lack of adequately funded, inclusive and accessible shelters for victims of trafficking, including women with disabilities;

(e) The number of Roma girls that are being forced to marry and subsequently forced to beg or commit crimes is significant in the State party.

26. **With reference to its general recommendation No. 38 (2020) on trafficking in women and girls in the context of global migration, the Committee recommends that the State party amend article 323A of the Penal Code to fully align it with the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, in particular with regard to the requirement of consent. The Committee is of the view that harmonizing article 323A with the Protocol’s requirements on consent will not only strengthen the legal framework within the State party but also contribute to the global effort to combat trafficking in persons in a manner consistent with established international norms and obligations. It further recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Provide capacity-building for judges, prosecutors, police officers and other law enforcement officials, border police, health-care providers and other first responders in order to ensure the early identification of victims of trafficking and their referral to appropriate protection and rehabilitation services; ensure the implementation of the instructions for the police on early identification of trafficking victims and conduct a comprehensive and systematic assessment of the process of early identification of victims of trafficking, in particular women and girls, and their referral to appropriate services and protection, in particular in refugee camps; provide refugees with adequate information on their rights; and allow civil society organizations and other relevant organizations to be present during the identification procedure;**

(b) **Promptly investigate, prosecute and adequately sentence those responsible for trafficking, ensure that cases of trafficking are dealt with in an acceptable time frame and reduce the burden of lengthy proceedings. The State party should also take concrete steps to expedite the victim certification process,**

irrespective of victim cooperation in law enforcement efforts, and ensure that victims are provided with information and granted an appropriate reflection and recovery period;

(c) Significantly increase the number and funding of inclusive and accessible shelters for victims of trafficking, including women with disabilities, in both urban and rural areas and ensure that they have access to free legal aid, interpretation, adequate medical assistance, psychosocial counselling, financial support, education, professional training and income-generating opportunities;

(d) Combat the exploitation of women and girls in prostitution, prosecute and punish perpetrators, reduce the demand for prostitution and provide exit programmes for women wishing to leave prostitution, including access to alternative income-generating opportunities; combat institutionalized biases that hinder the identification of victims of trafficking and ensure that women forced into prostitution can be identified, treated and protected as victims of trafficking;

(e) Strengthen efforts to protect the rights of Roma girls at risk of forced marriage, crimes or trafficking and take steps to strengthen their position in the education system;

(f) Strengthen efforts, including by allocating sufficient resources, to increase the number of labour inspectors and enhance the training capacity of the labour inspectorate and law enforcement.

Equal participation in political and public life

27. The Committee welcomes the adoption by the State party of Laws Nos. 4648/2019 and 4604/2019 on gender parity, establishing a minimum quota of 40 per cent for women's representation on candidate lists for each electoral constituency for national and European elections. It notes with concern, however, that women currently hold only 24 per cent of seats in the Hellenic Parliament. The Committee also notes with concern the persistence of structural barriers to women's participation in political and public life, in particular with regard to rural women, women with disabilities and women belonging to ethnic minorities.

28. **Recalling its general recommendation No. 23 (1997) on women in political and public life, as well as target 5.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life, the Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Fully implement the law on temporary special measures and ensure gender equality in lists nominating candidates to international bodies and the gender equal representation of women, including rural women, women with disabilities, women belonging to ethnic minorities, including Roma women and women belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace, in Parliament and municipal councils, the Government, the civil service and the foreign service, in particular at decision-making levels;

(b) Provide capacity-building on political leadership and campaigning skills, as well as access to campaign financing for women candidates running for public office, in particular rural women, women with disabilities and women belonging to ethnic minorities.

Nationality

29. The Committee notes that, according to Law No. 3226/2004, protection measures, including free legal aid, are available to stateless women in all civil, criminal and administrative courts proceedings, provided that they have legal or habitual residence in the European Union. However, the Committee notes with concern shortcomings and delays in birth registration procedures and in the registration, issuance and renewal of identity cards for refugee women and girls in the State party. In addition, the Committee notes that the State party has not ratified or acceded to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the 2006 Council of Europe Convention on the Avoidance of Statelessness in relation to State Succession or the 1997 European Convention on Nationality.

30. Recalling its general recommendation No. 32 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, the Committee recommends that the State party facilitate birth registration procedures and access to identity cards for refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls through online procedures, reduce the cost of birth certificates and deploy mobile civil registration units to ensure that all children born in the State party are registered at birth and have access to identity documents. The Committee also recommends that the State party accede to the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, the 2006 Council of Europe Convention on the Avoidance of Statelessness in relation to State Succession and the 1997 European Convention on Nationality.

Education

31. The Committee commends the State party on the adoption of Law No. 4589/2019, establishing gender equality committees in all universities to serve as advisory bodies on promoting gender equality in academic life. However, it notes with concern the disproportionately high levels of illiteracy among rural women, women with disabilities, refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls, and women belonging to ethnic minorities, including Roma women and girls and women and girls belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace.

32. In the light of its general recommendation No. 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education and recalling its previous recommendation (CEDAW/C/GRC/CO/7, para. 27), the Committee recommends that the State party continue to promote the importance of girls' education at all levels, as a basis for their empowerment; reduce illiteracy rates among women and girls, with a focus on rural women, women with disabilities, women and girls belonging to ethnic minorities, including Roma women and girls and women and girls belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace, and refugee and asylum-seeking women and girls; and take targeted measures, including awareness-raising and special scholarships, to increase enrolment, retention and completion rates among girls and women in secondary and higher education.

Employment

33. The Committee notes the legislative measures adopted by the State party, including Law No. 4808/2021, to improve labour standards and align them with international and European Union standards. However, the Committee notes with concern:

- (a) The persistent 10 per cent gender wage gap;

(b) The concentration of women in lower-paid jobs and in the informal economy, where they are exposed to exploitation and have no access to social security systems;

(c) The large number of women engaged in unpaid care work in the State party;

(d) The high unemployment rates among rural women, women with disabilities and women belonging to ethnic minorities, including Roma women and women belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace;

(e) The underreporting of sexual harassment in the workplace owing to limited access to information on newly established reporting mechanisms.

34. In accordance with target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Effectively enforce the principle of equal pay for work of equal value in order to narrow and eventually close the gender pay gap by (i) conducting regular labour inspections; (ii) applying gender-neutral analytical job classification and evaluation methods; (iii) conducting regular pay surveys; and (iv) encouraging employers to publish a narrative with their gender pay gap data, with a view to better understanding the reasons behind the gender wage and pension gap, and to take appropriate remedial measures;**

(b) **Enhance women's access to formal employment, targeting in particular disadvantaged groups of women, and extend social protection schemes to women employed in the informal economy;**

(c) **Recognize, reduce and redistribute the burden of unpaid care work on women by providing affordable childcare facilities and care services for older persons and promoting equal sharing of domestic and family responsibilities between women and men;**

(d) **Improve access to employment and training opportunities for disadvantaged groups of women, such as women belonging to ethnic minorities, including Roma women and women belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace, women with disabilities and migrant women;**

(e) **Provide mandatory training for employers and employees on the criminal nature of sexual harassment and on employers' responsibility to apply a zero-tolerance approach and prevent and report incidents, and ensure that employees have access to information on available confidential complaint mechanisms;**

(f) **Ratify the International Labour Organization Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).**

Health

35. The Committee welcomes the preventive reproductive health-care programme of the State party, which includes breast and cervical cancer early detection and vaccination against human papillomavirus for girls, which are provided free of charge by the Ministry of Health through its national screening programme and its national vaccination programme, respectively. However, it notes with concern that:

(a) The rate of caesarean sections performed in the State party is high, at more than fifty per cent of childbirth procedures;

(b) The State party has high rates of early pregnancy, an absence of mandatory age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights in the school curriculum and insufficient training of teachers in this field;

(c) The access to sexual and reproductive health services and information, including information on responsible sexual behaviour, as well as to family planning and affordable modern contraceptives is limited for women and girls, in particular women and girls with disabilities, women in detention and refugee and migrant women and girls;

(d) The violations that gave rise to the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in the *O.G. and Others v. Greece* case, in which the Court ruled that the State party had violated the right to respect for private life of HIV-positive sex workers by imposing blood tests on sex workers and publicly disseminating their personal data, upon the order of a prosecutor, in 2012.

36. In accordance with its general recommendation No. 24 (1999) on women and health and targets 3.1 and 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals, on reducing global maternal mortality and on ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, the Committee recommends that the State party strengthen women's access to quality health services, in particular for rural women and women with disabilities, including by improving the health-care infrastructure, increasing budgetary allocations for the health sector and conducting informational campaigns on women's health. In particular, it recommends that the State party:

(a) Provide effective access for women to obstetric services, including emergency obstetric services, and ensure that caesarean sections are performed exceptionally and only when medically required;

(b) Take adequate measures to carry out a national survey on reproductive health, adopt and implement a national strategy for reproductive health, sexuality and family planning, and introduce mandatory age-appropriate education on sexual and reproductive health and rights in school curricula, including education on modern forms of contraception to reduce early pregnancy and prevent sexually transmitted infections;

(c) Ensure that women, especially women and girls with disabilities, women in detention and refugee and migrant women and girls, have access to adequate sexual and reproductive health services and information, including safe abortion and post-abortion services and affordable modern contraceptives, to prevent early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections;

(d) Adopt concrete measures to ensure that women and girls with HIV/AIDS have free access to antiretroviral medicines to prevent mother-to-child transmission; promote voluntary HIV testing; raise awareness among women and men, including those who engage in risky sexual behaviour and those living with HIV, of their responsibilities in reducing the transmission of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections to their partners; and integrate a gender perspective into policies to combat HIV/AIDS.

Economic empowerment of women

37. The Committee welcomes the measures taken by the State party to promote the economic empowerment of women, such as the availability of low-interest loans and other forms of financial credit for women entrepreneurs and rural women and the training provided to women entrepreneurs on business management and financial literacy. However, it notes with concern the disproportionately high levels of poverty and limited access to economic and social benefits among disadvantaged groups of

women, in particular women with disabilities and women belonging to ethnic minorities.

38. The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen efforts to reduce poverty among women, with a particular focus on disadvantaged groups of women, such as women with disabilities and women belonging to ethnic minorities, including Roma women and women belonging to the Muslim minority in Thrace, promote their access to low-interest loans without collateral and their participation in entrepreneurial initiatives to empower them economically and provide them with opportunities to acquire the necessary skills to fully participate in economic life.

Rural women

39. The Committee notes with concern that rural women have limited access to health care, social protection and other basic services, including public transportation.

40. In accordance with its general recommendation No. 34 (2016) on the rights of rural women and target 5.a of the Sustainable Development Goals, on undertaking reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that rural women, especially those in remote areas, have adequate access to health care, social protection and other basic services, including public transportation.

Women with disabilities

41. The Committee notes with concern that women with disabilities face intersecting forms of discrimination in the State party, especially with regard to access to justice, education, employment and health care.

42. Recalling its general recommendation No. 18 (1991) on disabled women, the Committee recommends that the State party ensure that women and girls with disabilities are able to access justice, inclusive education, employment and health services, including sexual and reproductive health services.

Refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women and girls

43. The Committee notes with concern:

(a) That refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women and girls face intersecting forms of discrimination and disproportionate levels of gender-based violence in the State party, in particular in border areas, and that undocumented migrant women are exposed to a high risk of sexual exploitation, forced labour and recruitment, including by human trafficking networks;

(b) That third-country nationals, including many women and girls, were allegedly subjected to pushbacks (summary forced returns) or reportedly summarily and forcibly returned to Türkiye without effective access to asylum procedures and protection in Greece, which may amount to refoulement.

44. The Committee reminds the State party of its obligation of non-refoulement under international law and, in accordance with its general recommendations No. 32 (2014) on the gender-related dimensions of refugee status, asylum, nationality and statelessness of women, No. 30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations and No. 26 (2008) on women migrant workers, the Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) **Address intersecting forms of discrimination against refugee, asylum-seeking and migrant women, protect them from gender-based violence, in particular in border areas, and prosecute and adequately punish perpetrators;**

(b) **Ensure that women and girls entering the territory of the State party always have access to asylum procedures and that they are not forcibly returned when there are substantial grounds to believe that there is a real risk of irreparable harm, and protect those women from such practices;**

(c) **Ensure the application of a gender-sensitive approach in receiving refugee and asylum-seeking women and in considering asylum claims, including by training immigration officers on gender-sensitive interviewing techniques, and that gender-based violence against women is recognized as a protection ground.**

Disaster risk reduction and climate change

45. The Committee commends the State party for the implementation of a gender perspective in environmental and climate policies design. However, it is concerned that women, in particular rural women, women with disabilities, women living in poverty and migrant women, are disproportionately affected by climate change, as they often live in exposed areas and lack the necessary coping mechanisms to increase their climate change resilience.

46. **In accordance with its general recommendation No. 37 (2018) on the gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change, the Committee recommends that the State party review its climate change and disaster response strategies, taking into account the negative effects of climate change on the livelihoods of women, and ensure that women and men are equally represented in the development, adoption and implementation of legislation, policies and programmes on climate change, disaster response and disaster risk reduction, in particular by:**

(a) **Collecting disaggregated data on the impact of climate change and natural disasters on women and girls;**

(b) **Ensuring the incorporation of a gender perspective in climate change and disaster risk reduction legislation, policies, financing and programmes in order to address the specific needs of women and girls and build their resilience and effective adaptation to climate change;**

(c) **Increasing climate change and disaster risk management literacy and awareness among communities, women and girls, including rural women and women with disabilities, to empower them with knowledge to demand their rights and effectively participate in climate change-related decision-making and the development of adaptation and loss and damage strategies and actions that build women's and girls' resilience to the impact of climate change.**

Marriage and family relations

47. The Committee is concerned about the prevalence of child marriage in the State party, especially among the Roma community. It notes with concern that, in Thrace, muftis – who are selected by the Muslim minority, are recognized by the State and have jurisdiction over Muslim marriage – perform child marriages that are legally recognized under Greek civil law and, in certain cases, apply Hanafi law, which allows the marriage of girls under 15 years with parental consent.

48. **The Committee urges the State party to review the Civil Code in order to remove all exceptions to the legal minimum age of marriage of 18 years for both**

women and men; pursue its efforts to combat child and forced marriage, including by addressing the root causes of this harmful practice, encouraging the reporting of cases and punishing complicit family members, religious and community leaders or law enforcement officers; and provide support services to girl victims of child and forced marriage, in accordance with joint general recommendation No. 31 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women/general comment No. 18 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child (2019) on harmful practices.

Data collection and analysis

49. The Committee is concerned about the absence of data collection in many areas relevant to the implementation of the Convention.

50. The Committee recommends that the State party promote and build capacity for the collection of statistical data, including on the prevalence of gender-based violence against women, the prevalence of trafficking in women and girls, access to education and the socioeconomic status of women, disaggregated by age and socioeconomic background, for purposes of the design and implementation of tailored and gender-responsive legislation, policies, programmes and budgets.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action

51. The Committee calls upon the State party to use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to further evaluate the implementation of the Convention in order to achieve substantive equality between women and men.

Dissemination

52. The Committee requests the State party to ensure the timely dissemination of the present concluding observations, in the official languages of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (national, regional and municipal), in particular to the Government, the parliament and the judiciary, to enable their full implementation.

Ratification of other treaties

53. The Committee notes that the adherence of the State party to the nine major international human rights instruments¹ would enhance the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms in all aspects of life. The Committee therefore encourages the State party to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure, to which it is not yet a party.

¹ The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families; the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Follow-up to concluding observations

54. The Committee requests the State party to provide, within two years, written information on the steps taken to implement the recommendations contained in paragraphs 24 (d), 26 (a), 44 (b) and 46 (b) above.

Preparation of the next report

55. The Committee will establish and communicate the due date of the tenth periodic report of the State party in line with a future predictable eight-year review cycle and following the adoption of a list of issues and questions prior to reporting, if applicable, for the State party. The next periodic report should cover the entire period up to the time of its submission.

56. The Committee requests the State party to follow the harmonized guidelines on reporting under the international human rights treaties, including guidelines on a common core document and treaty-specific documents (see [HRI/GEN/2/Rev.6](#), chap. I).
