



## **DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS**

### **HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING**

Working Session 7  
(Thursday, 2 October 2008)

Further to the EU statement to which we fully subscribe, my delegation would like in its national capacity, to say a few words on the policies and steps taken by the Cyprus Government in order to promote gender equality and prevent the violence against women.

The Ministry of Justice and Public Order is the competent Ministry in Cyprus for the overall promotion of gender equality and protection of women's rights. The implementing body is the National Machinery for Women's Rights, which advises the Council of Ministers on policies, programmes and laws promoting women's rights, monitors, coordinates and evaluates the implementation and effectiveness of these programmes and laws, carries out information, education and training programmes on relevant issues, supports and subsidizes women's organisations, contributes to the mobilization and sensitization of the Government Sector on equality issues and serves as a cooperation channel between Government and NGOs working in this field. The participation and joint contribution of the competent Government services, Greek and Turkish Cypriot NGOs, women organisations and trade unions, guarantees a more result oriented work that responds to the special needs of each group of the society.

The Ministry of Justice has contributed to the elaboration and improvement of the Law on Violence in the Family – Prevention and Protection of Victims, and cooperates closely with the relevant Consultative Committee that monitors and coordinates the implementation of this Law. The Ministry is financing and providing support to NGOs that work in this field and implement programmes for the protection of victims of violence. It supports for example the operation of victims' shelters, such as the one created by an NGO working in the field of prevention and combating of violence in the family, and one created by an NGO active on issues of trafficking victims. The National Machinery for Women's Rights is providing special training programmes to the Police in the field of violence against women and protection of victims. In this framework, an expert group of policemen and policewomen is created in order to address relevant issues in a professional and effective way.

Another example of good practice in the field of women rights in Cyprus, is the recent creation of the Women's Multicultural Centre. The Centre constitutes a new forum for contact, networking and cooperation for the women of the country. In the framework of this forum, the women of Cyprus, Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, and women of every nationality and origin, may easily exchange opinions, knowledge and experiences, strengthening their voice and promoting women's perspectives and their consensual approaches.

The OSCE Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality, as well as other international instruments, have highlighted the importance of women participation in efforts to promote peace and security, and to contribute to conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict reconstruction. Women's organisations in Cyprus, both Turkish and Greek Cypriots, have traditionally proclaimed the resolution of the political question and the reunification of the island, and are actively contributing to the on-going efforts by promoting reconciliation and creation of a culture of peace in our country.