

Intervention by the delegation of Greece
(Working Group II: Equal Participation of Women and Men in
Political Parties)

Thank you Madam Moderator,

Forty years ago Greek society began to undergo drastic changes of modernization, which led to an open society where the role of women was greatly enhanced. And yet as in the cases of other European countries presented earlier, women's participation in political parties, in the Parliament and in local government did not follow the same trend. In Parliament the number of women MPs, although steadily rising, never exceeded 20% of the seats and in local government the numbers are often even lower. In many ways this constitutes a paradox: in a country where 65-75% of new judges are women, one would expect substantial increases in the number of women politicians. We believe that our Introducer and many of the previous speakers have gone a long way in explaining the deeper causes of this phenomenon.

Successive Greek governments have addressed the issue from all different angles discussed here today: Greece has been implementing quotas both at the municipal elections and the parliamentary elections levels. The appointment of women in 1/3 of the Ministerial seats (5 out of 15) in 2009 can be seen as a high visibility decision in the context of a top-down approach. But there have also been measures taken as elements of a bottom-up approach: training programmes, a European programme of promoting gender equality through development and an emphasis placed on the visibility of women in the Regional and Municipal Elections in 2010, as well a gender mainstreaming component of the "Kallikratis Programme" of administrative reform at the local level follow this logic. In 2013 emphasis shall be given to national and European elections, preceded by a related European Conference on "Women in Leadership".

As regards the Muslim Minority in Thrace, it is true that it is not easy being both a woman and a member of a minority, especially when we are talking about particularly closed and conservative communities. The Greek Government feels very strongly about and supports the participation of the women of the minority in public and political life. We expect that among other measures, the gender mainstreaming of the new administrative reform of local government will also help significantly in that direction.

Thank you.