



MLSP
MINISTRY OF LABOUR
AND SOCIAL POLICY



**DEPARTMENT FOR
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

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ABOUT US



The Department for Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy was founded in 2007 and it consists of a Unit for Gender Equality and a Unit for Prevention and Protection against any

kind of Discrimination. The foundation of this Department meant raising the status of the Unit for Promotion of Gender Equality founded in 1997 with a Decision by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia.

WHY DO WE EXIST

The Department for Equal Opportunities fosters improvement of the status of women in all areas of social living and creating equal opportunities for women and men on both national and local levels. These competences are realised by the Department in cooperation with the competent institutions in the country, as well as in cooperation with the civil sector and the social partners. Furthermore, the Department is responsible for the implementation of the positive legal regulations in the Republic of Macedonia, the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men and the National Action Plan on Gender Equality. Prevention and protection against any kind of violence and discrimination represent part of the Department's activities.

WHAT HAVE WE DONE SO FAR

- In 1999 the Government adopted the National Action Plan on Gender Equality;
- In 2005 a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) was established for the victims of human trafficking;
- In 2006 a Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men was adopted, marking the beginning of the process of establishing mechanisms for creating equal opportunities for women and men on central and local levels;
- In addition, the electoral laws were amended, ensuring increased number of women representatives at the Parliament and at the councils of the local self-government units;
- The second 2007-2012 National Action Plan on Gender Equality was adopted;
- A Committee on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men at the Assembly of the Republic of Macedonia was founded;



- Coordinators for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men at the ministries and the local self-governments were appointed;
- A Programme for re-socialisation and reintegration of children victims of human trafficking was created;
- The legislation concerning the protection of victims of human trafficking has been improved;
- In 2003 Macedonia hosted the Council's of Europe Ministerial Conference on Gender Equality on the topic of "The Role of Women in Promoting Peace and Peaceful Conflict Resolution";
- In September 2007 in Skopje a Regional Seminar was held as part of the Council's of Europe campaign on prevention and protection against violence against women, including domestic violence.
- Since 2007 the Department has realised a number of projects, trainings and seminars on gender equality, protection from discrimination and fighting human trafficking.

A LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

In compliance with Article 23 from the Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men since December 2009 a legal representative has been employed at the Sector, working on establishing unequal treatment of women and men. In compliance with the provisions from the Law, the representative will cooperate with the competent entities (inspection bodies, the Ombudsman and others).

INTERNATIONAL DOCUMENTS

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- European Convention on Human Rights;
- Protocol for prevention, eradication and punishment of trafficking in human beings, especially women and children which it is amended the United Nations Convention against trans-national organized crime (Palermo Protocol)
- Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings.



**“GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EDUCATION PROCESS:
GENDER SENSITIVE EDUCATION”**



In 2008 the Department for Gender Equality in Cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science realised the Gender Sensitive Education Programme for the first to fifth grade teaching staff at the primary schools.

The goal of this programme was to organise trainings that would ensure acquisition of skills and knowledge by the teachers in

primary schools about the basic concepts of gender development and incorporation of the gender concept in schools' syllabus and curriculum.

The Programme covered all the primary schools around the Republic of Macedonia. 15 trainings with a participation of 330 lower grades teachers were organised.

The Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia

Article 9

Citizens of the Republic of Macedonia are equal in their freedoms and rights, regardless of sex, race, colour of skin, national and social origin, political and religious beliefs, property and social status.

Equality of women and men is considered a human rights issue and a pre-condition and an indicator of the sustainable development of the human being as a whole.

DECLARATION ON MAKING GENDER EQUALITY A REALITY

(Adopted at the 119th Session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe - Madrid, 12 May 2009)

...Recalling that gender equality means an equal visibility, empowerment, responsibility and participation of both women and men in all spheres of public and private life. Gender equality is the opposite of gender inequality, not of gender difference;

Recalling that policies should be gender sensitive and that they should take into account the social reality to which they apply, mainly that society is composed of women and men who may have differing needs...



SUPPORT OF THE COMMITTEES FOR EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES OF MEN AND WOMEN AT THE LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT UNITS

The Department for Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in cooperation with the UNDP office has been working on a project dealing with the gender concept in the local policies.

The project is aimed at strengthening the concepts of the committees for equal opportunities of women and men at the councils of the local self-government units as a key element that contributes for the realisation of the gender equality policy on a local level. By providing technical assistance and training for the gender equality machinery on a local level further clarification and implementation of the competences of these committees will be ensured, and their capacity and authority on the efficient and effective coordination of gender equality

policies will be strengthened. It is expected for the project to improve the understanding and the implementation in practice of the gender equality concept and gender mainstreaming (introducing gender equality in the main social areas) when drafting local policies.

The project includes all the municipalities in the Republic of Macedonia. Trainings for all the equal opportunities coordinators are planned, as well as for the members i.e. the councilpersons at the committees for equal opportunities of women and men and of the interested parties in drafting action plans for gender equality for each local self-government unit. Furthermore, the focus will be aimed at making an Internet portal for gender mainstreaming as a tool for network



cooperation both on a horizontal and a vertical level and exchange of experience between the for Department Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the local self-government units and the committees for equal opportunities of women and men at the local governments. The introduction of the gender concept in the work of the local self-government means,

first of all implementation of the Law on Equal Opportunities of Women and Men and the National Action Plan on Gender Equality by all the entities involved in promoting and enhancing gender equality on both local and national levels.

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GENDER SENSITIVE BUDGETING



The “gender sensitive” budgeting as a tool is one of the practical examples for achieving gender equality, and the Republic of Macedonia is the first country in the region that carries out activities related to this issue on a national level.

The Department for Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has

been realising a one year programme aimed at dealing with poverty and unemployment via gender analysis of budget policies supported by UNIFEM and the Austrian Development Agency

The issue of equality and inclusion of gender perspectives in the mainstreams is not a solely social justice issue, but also a very important issue for dealing with poverty and unemployment, ensuring equal opportunities and quality life for all. For these reasons it is necessary to recognise that the achievement of greater gender equality and dealing with the persistent inequalities often means working in a different way with women and men, recognising the different obstacles that they are faced with as well as the different needs, priorities and aspirations.

TRAINING ON INTRODUCING THE GENDER CONCEPT IN THE ACTIVITIES OF SOCIAL WORKERS, POLICE AND HEALTH CARE WORKERS



The introduction of the gender concept in the work of social workers, police and health care workers as well as gender sensibilisation of these services has been emphasised in many reports and recommendations by both domestic and foreign institutions and organisations (the recommendations received after the defence of the CEDAW Committee at the UN).

The problems that these services deal with are in indirect correlation with the promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities

for women and men. Through the trainings the participants gained knowledge and information about the concepts of Gender and Development, inclusion of the gender perspective in the social mainstreaming (Gender mainstreaming), information about the existing international and domestic legal regulations in order to acquire knowledge about the ways of inclusion of gender perspective in all the initiatives of the communities, taking into consideration the different needs of men and women.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Human trafficking is the most serious form of violating human rights. Each year thousands of men, women and children are victims of the human traffickers both in their own countries and abroad. In almost each country around the world there is human trafficking. This phenomenon has profoundly negative impact especially in the states that are in a process of political and economic transition or in a post-conflict period.

One of the tasks of the Department for Equal Opportunities at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy is to fight against human trafficking. The prevention and the protection of the victims of trafficking in women and children is the fourth strategic objective of the “Women and violence” – seventh strategic area of action in the “2007-2012 National Action Plan on Gender Equality”.

In compliance with the interests and efforts of the common activities aimed at uprooting human trafficking and implementation of

the National Programme on Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) has intensified, upgraded and broadened the measures and activities for preventing and protecting the victims of human trafficking, especially women and children.

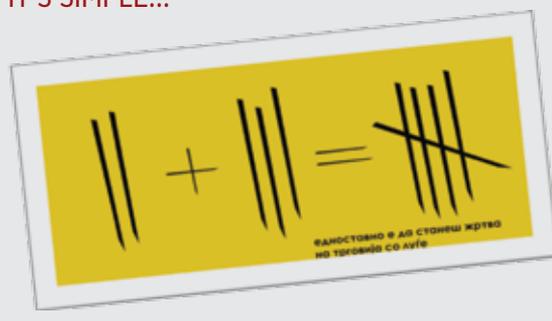
In the Department for Equal Opportunities at the Ministry in 2005 a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) was established for the victims of human trafficking. The main goal of this mechanism is to strengthen the capability of the state for ensuring proper identification, assistance and protection – based on the international standards for human rights – of all victims of human trafficking, especially of minors, regardless of their citizenship, ethnic background, age or gender. The cooperation and coordination between the governmental institutions and the NGOs working on this programme

are especially important in fighting human trafficking. In the last two years the Republic of Macedonia has been assessed most highly by the US State Department as a country that fulfils the standards on fighting human trafficking.

NRN has been constantly improving the existing process of identification of victims of human trafficking by connecting all the relevant partners in order to insure flawless and gap-free system for victims' referral.

The main partners in fighting human trafficking are the National Committee on Fight against Trafficking in Human Beings and Illegal Migration (including the Subgroup for Fighting Trafficking in Children), the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Social Welfare Centres, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the local institutions, the non-formal network of NGOs fighting human trafficking and the Union of Social Workers' Organisations in the Republic of Macedonia.

IT'S SIMPLE...



The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy via the NRN Office with the OSCE's support organised a media campaign for raising public awareness about the risks and threats imposed by human trafficking under the motto "It's simple... „

All citizens were the target of this campaign with a special emphasis on young people, vulnerable groups such as single mothers, victims of domestic violence and financially dependant persons as well as rural areas. The Campaign encompassed preparing and distributing printed materials, posters, leaflets, t-shirts, stickers and calendars. Stickers with a warning content were placed in restaurants and bars. There was a TV video running on the national and local TV stations.

TRAININGS ON FIGHTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING



In order to increase the capacities of the labour inspectors and social workers in identifying human trafficking aimed at labour exploitation, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in cooperation with the State Labour Inspectorate and the OSCE Mission in Skopje organise comprehensive training in the

techniques for identifying the cases of human trafficking aimed at labour exploitation. In the past few years, series of trainings, seminars and other activities have been organised in order to raise public awareness among citizens in fighting human trafficking.

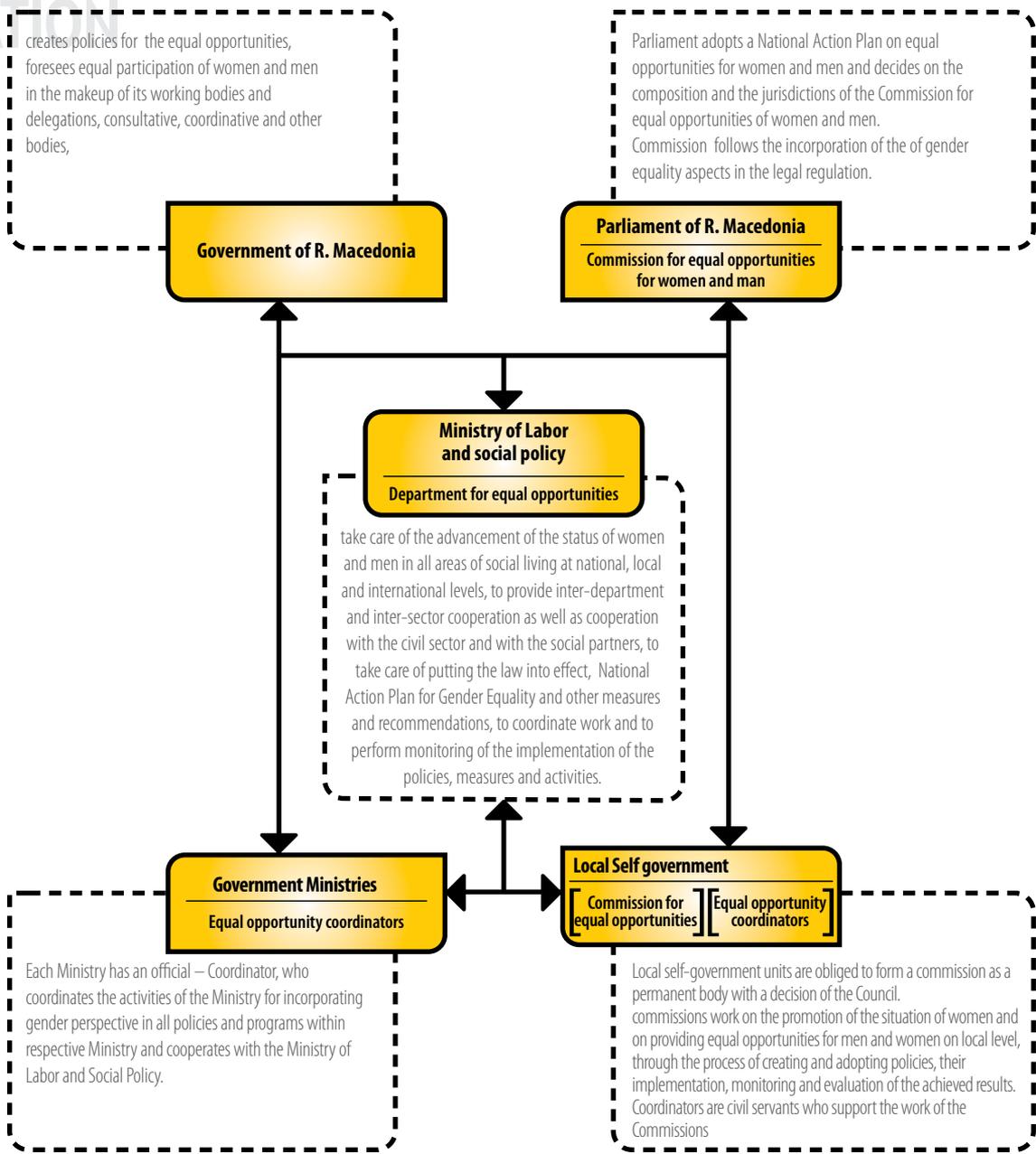
PREVENTION AND PROTECTION AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

The analysis of the situation in reference to anti-discrimination in Macedonia has shown necessity of adopting a special law on the protection from discrimination.

The Department for Equal Opportunities in 2008 started activities for drafting a law on prevention and protection against discrimination on the grounds of gender,

sexual orientation, age, ethnic background, race, disability and double discrimination. It started activities aimed at promoting the European standards on the respect of the rights of individuals who are potential victims of discrimination based on the above stated grounds. For that purpose public debates were organised on a local level.









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