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NOTE VERBALE

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, referring to his letter, dated 30.11.2016 with regard to the Report on ways to bridge the gender digital divide from a human rights perspective, has the honour to attach herewith the contribution of the following Hellenic authorities:

1. Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media, Secretariat General for Media and Communication
2. Ministry of Interior, Secretariat General of Gender Equality

The Permanent Mission of Greece to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.



Geneva, January 16, 2017

To: **The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**
registry@ohchr.org

Att. 10 pages



Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media
Secretariat General for Media and Communication

Observations on the questions raised by the United Nations Human Rights
Commissioner regarding the gender digital divide from a human rights perspective
(the case of Greece)

**Questions 1-2: Obstacles-barriers/Disaggregated data on the basis of sex regarding
access-internet use**

Over the recent years the internet use in Greece is intensified as there is an observed development in the consumption models while individuals are turning increasingly to internet, considering it a main **leisure activity** as well as a dominant source for their **information**.

Taking into consideration the **gender dimension**, we do not find **significant discrepancies between women and men regarding the use of ICT technologies**. More specifically, the **Hellenic Statistic Authority (HSA)** announces each year the results of a *study on the use of information and communication technologies by households and their members* with a special focus on e-commerce as well as on privacy and protection of personal data of users. According to the latest research¹ (November 2016) and taking into account the population of Greece (8 million, aged 16-74 years), HSA provided the following data:

5,5 million internet users are reported

- a) 3,4 million internet users with a mobile device using Wi-Fi
- b) 2,5 million internet users with a mobile device using mobile phone network
- c) e-government: 3,9 million (48,9%)
- d) indicative list of internet activities for all users:

¹ The survey was conducted on 4.774 private households and equal number of household members, throughout Greece, with the only prerequisite the existence in the household of, at least, one member aged 16-74 years old (relevant info graphic in english: http://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/2454858/infographic_ict_en.pdf/5c501175-6888-4daa-861c-6ce60f980734?version=1.0).

85,3% online news,

81,9% information on goods and services,

74,7% e-mails,

67,5% social networking.

After a specific request regarding the **patterns of internet use**, on the basis of gender, we received some additional and interesting data, such as:

(use for educational purposes)

- 50,7 % of the population that signed up for online educational seminars were women and 49,3 % were men
- 52,1% of the population that used educational material from educational sites or portals were women and 47,9% were men
- 45,7% of the population that communicated online with their teachers were women and 54,3% were men

As also: (privacy issues)

- 49,9% of the population that opted for limited access on their personal data regarding their geographical location were women and 50,1% were men
- 53,5% of the population that ensured that there was limited access to their profile, personal data and photos posted on social media were women and 46,5% were men
- 49,6% of the population that checked the safety of a website before they inserted their personal data were women and 50,4% were men
- 52,7% of the population that denied the use of their personal data for advertising purposes were women and 47,3% were men

As the above data indicate, there are **very limited** (and statistically insignificant) **differences** in terms of patterns of internet use (at least for the issues examined here). Moreover, women appear to be adequately informed and in some cases even **more sensitive** than men regarding **e-privacy issues**.

Nevertheless, as the **Secretariat General for Gender Equality points out**, there are differences associated with the level of education and the purpose of ICT use by the two sexes and also among women (e.g. young people up to 29 years old use the PC up to 80% daily, men with tertiary education background use internet for

entertainment up to 56%, while for women with the same background the relevant percentage falls to 42%).

Questions 3 to 6: Policies, measures and challenges

Given the structural inequalities that still exist between women and men and can be reflected on the ICT sector as well, **the Hellenic Ministry of Digital Policy, Media and Telecommunications and the Secretariat General for Media and Communication**, within the area of their competence, have undertaken certain measures that aim at the promotion of a **fair digital environment** as well as at the **empowerment of women** to navigate through it and profit from the benefits that arise from the technological developments in the media sector:

Memorandum of Cooperation with KETHI

In February 2016 Secretariat General for Media and Communication **signed with KETHI (Greek Research Centre for Gender Equality) a Memorandum of Cooperation** that includes the exchange of expertise and the planning of concrete actions for the promotion of gender equality and the elimination of gender stereotypes in the media. This initiative -of unlimited duration- is driven by the increased perception of the challenges that women face in the media (as users, consumers, employees) and the consequent **imperative for the formation of a digitally informed citizen** that can respond to the needs of the modern high-technology and information society, achieving a balance between the risks and the opportunities that are inherent to it.

Beyond the issue of access, the Memorandum is oriented to issues of unbiased and **gender-sensitive content**. In this framework, a research will be conducted in Greek media in order to **identify any sexist stereotypes** in news discourse. Based on the outcomes of this research a manual for journalists and other media actors will be developed with guidelines regarding fair representation and the equal inclusion of women and men. Furthermore, series of awareness raising **seminars in the areas of non-discrimination, equality and information literacy** will be organized, targeted to professionals working in the media.

Massive Open Courses in Online Media and Information Literacy (MOOCs)

This is a twofold initiative that includes the design and implementation of online courses addressed a. to minors (as part of the «National Plan for the Protection of children's right») and b. to young people. This action that falls into the category of **media (and digital) literacy** is based on educational material provided by UNESCO. With the collaboration of the Department of Communication, Media and Culture of Panteion University, the beforementioned material will be adapted in Greek media reality aiming to provide children and young people with the necessary tools to

understand the way media operate, identify the risks that derive from their use (and thus be immune to them) as well as participate actively in the digital environment, leading to an active citizenship. It is worth noting that the education material includes a **separate section dedicated to gender issues in media**. The basic objective of this section is to **empower** girls and women in order to acknowledge their rights to equal access and participation in the digital media environment, to identify stereotypes and biased discourses as well as to react against these negative phenomena, while enjoying the benefits of the digital era.

Member of the Global Alliance on Media & Gender (GAMAG)

In 2016 the Hellenic Secretariat General for Media and Communication joined the **Global Alliance on Media & Gender of UNESCO**. Moreover, in December 2015 the Secretariat co-hosted the International Development Cooperation Meeting on Gender and Media in Geneva.

"Women & Girls Go Digital, National Action Plan for increasing the female talent in digital jobs"

The Hellenic Secretariat General for Media and Communication took part in the initiative **"Women & Girls Go Digital, National Action Plan for increasing the female talent in digital jobs"** and hosted the **Conference** in its premises (April 2014). The Conference was organized in Greece in the framework of the Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the European Union (January-June 2014) with the collaboration of the Secretariat General for Gender Equality and the European Centre for Women and Technology.

As the Secretariat General for Gender Equality stated, the Conference aimed at the demonstration of the link between e-Skills, Gender Diversity and ICT as a key factor for economic growth based on the creation of digital jobs in the context of Europe 2020 Strategy and the implementation of the Digital Agenda for Europe. The Conference raised awareness and addressed the digital skills gap supporting the added value that comes with the entry of female talent in the digital industry, research and innovation. Special emphasis was placed on the promotion of new opportunities for young digital entrepreneurs.

In conclusion, the Hellenic Ministry of Digital Policy, Media and Telecommunications and the Secretariat General for Media and Communication support strongly any action that aims at ensuring the **equal and unobstructed access and participation** of women and men in the digital media environment, that is why it has taken the above-mentioned **initiatives**, as there is also a provision for the **monitoring** of their

full implementation. We also evaluate as crucial to integrate the gender perspective in the ICT Sector as well as to strengthen the international cooperation in the area of access and active participation of all citizens in the new digital sphere. The digital divide constitutes a **new form of social inequality** in contemporary societies that needs to be addressed and eliminated, leading thus to active individuals that can reap the benefits of the innovative -and rapidly evolving- media environment. By providing tools for a **lifelong capacity building** -in terms of digital skills- we are breaking new grounds for the emergence of new forms of actions, such as digital activism, that is closely associated with substantive achievements in the field of promotion of gender equality. Above all, the main imperative is to provide a free, safe and pluralistic environment where all women and men can express themselves and where human rights are fully respected.

Hellenic Ministry of Interior
Secretariat General of Gender Equality

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“Contribution by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality on ways to bridge the gender digital divide from a human rights perspective”

Athens, December 2016

1. The current situation in Greece

On the 11th of November, 2016 the Hellenic Statistical Authority (HSA) announced data on the use of information and communication technologies by households and their members and more specifically on e-commerce and privacy and protection of personal data of users. The data derive from the sample Survey on the Use of Information and Communication Technologies by households and individuals, conducted for 2016. The survey was conducted on 4.774 private households and equal number of household members, throughout Greece, with the only prerequisite the existence in the household of, at least, one member aged 16–74 years old (relevant infographic in English: http://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/2454858/infographic_ict_en.pdf/5c501175-6888-4daa-861c-6ce60f980734?version=1.0).

Here are the key findings:

population of Greece aged 16-74 years: 8 million;

5,5 million internet users

- a) 3,4 million internet users with a mobile device using Wi-Fi
- b) 2,5 million internet users with a mobile device using mobile phone network
- c) e-government: 3,9 million (48,9%)
- d) indicative list of internet activities for all users:
 - 85,3% online news,
 - 81,9% information on goods and services,
 - 74,7% e-mails,
 - 67,5% social networking.

It is noted that there are not tremendous differences between women and men in relation to the ICT use (data publicised by the HSA in 2015), but there are differences associated with the level of education and the purpose of the ICT use by the two sexes and also among women (e.g. young people up to 29 years old use the PC up to 80% daily, men with tertiary education background use internet for entertainment up to 56%, while for women with the same background the relevant percentage falls to 42%).

2. A comprehensive list of policies and actions initiated by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality on the promotion of digital agenda

A. The drafting of a new National Action Plan on Gender Equality has been just completed. Our intention is the new Action Plan to be endorsed by the Ministers' Council, so that it can serve as the roadmap for the governmental policies on equality between women and men in Greece during the period 2016-2020.

In particular, the priorities of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016-2020 are in accordance with the guidelines of the European Commission to the 28 EU Member-States and concern the following policy areas:

- 1) social cohesion, poverty, immigration and multiple discrimination
- 2) gender-based violence
- 3) labour market and reconciliation of family and professional life
- 4) education, training, culture, sports and mass media
- 5) health
- 6) decision-making.

The issue of digital literacy in favour of women and girls has been emphatically incorporated in all policy areas for the period 2016-2020 through further development of synergies among competent stakeholders from the public and the private sector.

B. A Protocol of Cooperation has been activated between the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE), the Research Centre for Gender Equality (an entity supervised by the Ministry), the National Centre for Public Administration & Local Government and the Ministry of Education, Research & Religious Affairs on the promotion of gender equality in the primary education (a number of training seminars to the educational personnel of primary schools are in the process of implementation throughout the country, so that the principles of equality and non-discrimination between the two sexes are perceived by the young generation at a very early stage); the issue of digital literacy can be included in the curricula of the training seminars aiming at the development of methods and tools for the advancement of gender equality from an early stage.

It is noted that the bilateral cooperation between the GSGE, i.e. the governmental organization in charge of equality between women and men in Greece, and the Ministry of Education has been extended to all three educational levels (primary, secondary and tertiary education).

C. The political leadership in charge of gender equality has contacted a number of representatives of Ministries, Agencies and social partners aiming at a holistic approach to the implementation of gender equality policies. In the framework of these initiatives, the final draft of a Bill on substantive gender equality has already submitted to the competent Minister of Interior, which is expected to be forwarded to the Hellenic Parliament for further elaboration and adoption; the issue of female digital empowerment is covered by the provisions of the Bill.

D. An "Observatory on Gender Equality" has been set up in the General Secretariat for Gender Equality. The Flagship Project is entitled "Service organization for the integration, monitoring and evaluation of Gender Equality Policies in all aspects of Public Sector's Actions (Observatory)"; its aim is to support Public Administration and Local Governments to design, implement and evaluate policies concerning gender equality through detailed gender-segregated data on equality issues (statistics and surveys) deriving from the development and function of relevant tools. The issue of digital literacy and ICT is concisely included in the competences of the GSGE Observatory.

It has to be underlined that the specific project has been selected by the European Commission as a national good practice in the Annual Report on Equality between Women and Men in the European Union 2015 (Brussels, March 2016): page 40 of the Report

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/annual_reports/2016_annual_report_2015_web_en.pdf.

E. Cooperation between the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, i.e. the governmental organization in charge of equality between women and men in Greece, and the National Centre for Public Administration & Local Government, i.e. the national strategic agent for the development of the human resources of the public administration and local government, has been set up aiming to gender mainstreaming in the curricula and the activities of the National Centre for Public Administration & Local Administration (digital literacy and ICT included).

F. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality has supported the creation of methodologies and toolkits aiming to gender mainstreaming in public policies of the 13 Regions and the 15 most populated Municipalities of Greece (Programming Period 2007-2013 co-financed by the European Union). The issue of female digital empowerment has been incorporated in the outcome of the specific Project.

G. In the framework of the Hellenic Presidency of the Council of the European Union (January-June 2014), the General Secretariat for Gender Equality organised, in collaboration with the European Centre for Women and Technology and in cooperation with National and European Stakeholders, the Conference entitled "Women & Girls Go Digital, National Action Plan for increasing the female talent in digital jobs" (Athens, 4-4-2014).

In the context of Europe 2020 Strategy and in particular of the implementation of the Digital Agenda for Europe, the objective of the Conference has been to demonstrate the link between e-Skills, Gender Diversity and ICT as a key factor for economic growth based on the creation of digital jobs. The Conference addressed the digital skills gap and raised awareness about the added value by including female talent in digital jobs, research and innovation. Emphasis was given to the promotion of new opportunities for young digital entrepreneurs and to the challenges of the role of the media in the new digital era.

The Initiative "Women & Girls Go Digital in Greece – WGGDG" aims to increase the female talent in Digital Jobs based on the European Commission's Initiative Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs and elaborated in collaboration with national and European stakeholders.

Positive reference to the Greek initiative is made in the 2015 Report by the European Parliament entitled "Empowering women on the Internet" (pages 16-17): [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/536473/IPOL_IDA\(2015\)536473_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2015/536473/IPOL_IDA(2015)536473_EN.pdf).

Thanks to the specific Initiative, Greece won a major international award in the category of "digital opportunity". The WITSA Global ICT Excellence Awards is a biannual event for the recognition of excellence in digital technology, established by the World Information Technology and Services Alliance. The award for the "Women and Girls Go Digital" Initiative in the category of "digital opportunity" was announced on September 30th 2014, as part of the 19th World Information Technology and Services Conference held in Mexico. The WITSA Global ICT Excellence Awards are granted to institutions and enterprises that capitalize on ICT innovation for the benefit of the public sector and the citizen, creating new opportunities for employment and sustainable development (press release in English: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016805969a9>).

A very concrete positive outcome of our coalition is the fact that on the 8th of September, 2016 the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) announced a public call for five scholarships to Greek female graduates for attending the Postgraduate Programme in Business

Administration offered by the Hellenic Management Association (EEDE) in Athens: <https://www.wegate.eu/public-call-five-scholarships-greek-female-graduates-attend-postgraduate-programme-business>.

H. The General Secretariat for Gender Equality has been a partner of the Project entitled "Innovation and Employability for Women, E-Women" co-financed by the European Economic Area (EEA Grants 2009-2014). Its aim is to identify the current evolution of technology in relation to women's participation and sensitization, especially for young women, associated with ICT and employment (employment/employability and entrepreneurship). The leader of the Project is the National Center for Scientific Research DEMOCRITOS (relevant website in English of the largest multidisciplinary research center in Greece: <http://www.demokritos.gr/Contents.aspx?CatId=48>). The Project E-Women started in January 2016 and is expected to conclude in March 2017.

3. The issue of gender-based violence on line

A. The basic characteristics of the "National Programme on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women", which refers to all forms of gender based violence (e.g. domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, trafficking in women), are the following:

- fourteen Counseling Centers operated by the General Secretariat for Gender Equality at the capitals of the corresponding Regions of the country
- twenty five Counseling Centers operated by the twenty five largest Municipalities nationwide
- nineteen shelters for Abused Women operated by 19 large Municipalities, which started their operation within the period 2013-2014; they provide bilingual (Greek and English) services of shelter, psychological and social support to women victims of violence and their children
- two Shelters for Abused Women operated by the Ministry of Labor, Social Security & Social Solidarity / National Centre for Social Solidarity in the cities of Athens and Thessaloniki
- the bilingual (Greek and English) SOS helpline 15900 accompanied by the email-address sos15900@isotita.gr, which has been in operation since March 2011; it provides services of advice, support and counseling to women victims of gender based violence, 24 hours a day and 365 days a year (a low-cost, nationwide, confidential helpline)
- implementation of an awareness raising campaign including relevant seminars, a thematic conference, informational material in four languages (Greek, English, French and Albanian), TV and radio spots, cultural events, publicity on public transport, entries in national and migrant Press, a webpage and a facebook page as well as banners in web pages; the information leaflet for the Counseling Centre of Komotini –Thrace is also published in the Turkish language
- training is offered to counselors who are recruited in the Counseling Centers, the Shelters and the SOS telephone helpline, to lawyers who participate in the legal aid programmes of women-victims of violence, as well as to professionals who deal with such cases (i.e. policemen/policewomen, judges, health professionals, etc.).

B. A Preparatory Committee has been established by the GSGE since 24-9-2015 for drafting the Bill for the ratification by the Hellenic Parliament of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. The CoE

Convention includes provisions on the "GBV on line", so, after its ratification, Greece will acquire a comprehensive framework for preventing and combating the new forms of digital gender-based violence.

C. The GSGE has widely publicized in Greece successfully the key findings of the UNESCO Report on violence against LGBT persons in education (May 2016), as well as the Belgian campaign on the sensitization of the young people against LGBT stereotypes (July 2016).

D. The GSGE participates at the Working Group set by the Ministry of Education, Research & Religious Affairs on the implementation of the Project "No Hate Speech Movement" initiated by the Council of Europe.