

Committee on the Elimination  
of Discrimination against Women  
Thirty-seventh session  
Consideration of reports submitted by States parties  
under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination  
of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

## **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

by

the Head of the Delegation of Poland

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**in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy  
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I am honoured and pleased to present to th

Women, Family and counteracting Discrimination, subordinated to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

The Department is the successor to the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Status of

– **‘STEREOTYPES and equal opportunities of women and men in rural communities’** addressed to women living in rural areas in view of their especially difficult situation and living conditions.

– **‘How good it is to be an enterprising woman!’** has as its goal the animation of active socio-economic attitudes amongst women by presenting good practices and making available broad and understandable information on various aspects of business practice.

**‘Flexible forms of employment - combining occupational life and parenting’** has as its purpose promoting information on flexible forms of employment amongst women, thereby increasing their motivation to maintain and expand their contacts with the job market during their temporary absence.

– **45+ Wanted: reliability, involvement experience’** –is meant to help eliminate the stereotypical perception of female employees over 45 and foster the implementation of planned systemic solutions aimed at the gradual equalization of the retirement age of women and men and equal access of both genders to employment and permanent training.

**The ‘Woman – Family – Job’ media campaign’** is aimed at creating a social climate promoting broader access of women to the job market.

Moreover, the Department’s specialists participate in the work of many **European milyro**

- The Committee to implement the Common Framework Strategy for Gender Equality programme.

The Department's representative is also a member of the Council of Europe's Working Group for the Equality of Women and Men.

The Department is also in charge of implementing 2007 as Equal Opportunity Year for All. The European Year will involve six types of discrimination: due to gender, race or ethnic origin, religion or worldview, disability, age or sexual orientation as well as repetitive discrimination and broadly conceived equal opportunities. We are preparing both the domestic strategy and the priorities of the European Year in full cooperation with NGOs defending and representing the interests of individuals potentially threatened by discrimination and unequal treatment.

Intensive work is also under way on the draft of a horizontal law implementing directive 2004/113/WE introducing the principle of equal treatment of men and women in access to goods and services and in providing goods and services. This also applies to the supplementary implementation of directive 2000/78/WE (establishing general framework conditions for equal treatment in employment and the workplace) and 2000/43/WE (introducing the principle of equal treatment regardless of race or ethnic origin).

The Department also gives legal advice to private individuals who feel discriminated against. It informs them of the rights they are entitled to and, in more complicated situations, undertakes intervention.

It also supports non-governmental organizations whose activities include combating discrimination against women. It organizes contests providing financial resources to

organizations to carry out such activities. On 16<sup>th</sup> August 2006, the results of yet another financing contest were announced.

The Department has developed a network of Plenipotentiaries for Women's and Family Affairs in individual voivodships (provinces): Łódzkie, Lubelskie, Opolskie, Podkarpackie, Pomorskie, Zachodniopomorskie, Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Mazowieckie. They conduct numerous activities benefiting women and families in their areas and are in constant touch with the Department.

### **Violence against women**

Regulations pertaining to counteracting domestic violence are contained in the **2005 Law on Counteracting Violence in the Family**. From the standpoint of the victim of domestic violence, the most important is the provision ordering the perpetrator out of a jointly inhabited dwelling and banning that individual from approaching the victim or witness to the violence.

Cognisant of the scope and weight of the phenomenon of domestic violence, including that against women, the Polish Government has been undertaking systematic endeavours of an inter-institutional and often international nature to strengthen cooperation of all institutions able to contribute to the limitation of violence and lend support to the crime victims. In recent years, a number of initiatives have been launched including:

#### **1. The National Programme to Counteract Domestic Violence**

In the implementation of the Programme five priorities have been set:

- / Systematic diagnosing of the phenomenon of domestic violence;
- / Enhancing social awareness of and sensitivity towards domestic violence;
- / Training staff dealing with domestic violence;
- / Efforts to protect and assist individuals affected by violence;
- / Exerting influence on the perpetrators of violence.

The programme bolsters the protection of victims of domestic violence by such measures as:



objectives include combating all forms of violence (physical, sexual and mental) towards children, juveniles and women. This includes preventing and combating sexual abuse, domestic violence and school violence as well as providing support for victims of violence and risk groups. One of the basic elements of the 'Daphne III' programme is support for institutions implementing the programme's objectives. Subsidies are granted for concrete supranational projects of interest to the EU, submitted for consideration by entities in at least two member states. The Daphne III programme is open to all public and private organizations and institutions involved in preventing and combating violence against children, juveniles and women.

**The Polish Government**, under the Daphne III programme to counteract violence against children, juveniles and women, will participate in the planning of annual schedules of its implementation (including Poland's important priorities in this area). It will support efforts to enhance public awareness of violence, disseminate the results of European Commission research as well as information among authorized Polish entities on the possibility of applying for EU funds under Daphne III.

**Preventing domestic violence, including that directed against women** as well as prosecuting its perpetrators is one of the priority statutory tasks of the police. Statistics show



The Polish Government attaches great importance to the issue of combating and preventing trafficking in humans. The Polish Government has concluded a number of bilateral agreements to cooperate in combating, preventing and prosecuting organized crime and other forms of crime, in particular as regards trafficking in people and their sexual exploitation. **Moreover, on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2005, a Council of Europe Convention on efforts against trafficking in humans was adopted in Warsaw.** (Preparations are now under way to ratify the Convention.)

The Polish police belongs to Europol and cooperate with police forces in other EU countries in combating trafficking in humans, including women. The European Police Bureau has developed a strategy to combat human trafficking for member states. The Polish police also participate in the 'Baltcom' Task Force on Organized Crime of the Council of Baltic Sea States. As part of that Task Force's Organizing Committee, a Group of Experts devoted to combating human trafficking has been set up to coordinate operations by the services in the Baltic Sea region.



a screening programme for early detection of cervical cancer and combined treatment of ovarian cancer.

/ According to data collected during research on the State of Health of Poland's Population in 2004, more than 65% of women aged 15-49, who admitted to engaging in sexual intercourse, made use of contraceptives. In 2006, 38 different medicaments used as contraceptives were permitted on the market, the cost of three of which was refunded (30%).

/ All women in Poland are encompassed by prenatal care and, according to studies, only 1% of women do not consult a physician during pregnancy.

/ The reasons for registered terminations of pregnancy were: a threat to the life or health of the pregnant woman, the result of prenatal testing and a pregnancy resulting from a crime. The number of spontaneous miscarriages has remained stable for a number of years.

### **The situation of women in the social-welfare system**

- **The Social Welfare Act of 2004** defines the measures taken in crisis intervention as a complex of interdisciplinary activities undertaken to benefit individuals and families in crisis. The purpose of crisis intervention is to restore mental equilibrium and an ability to independently cope. Mothers of underage children and pregnant women affected by violence or finding themselves in other crisis situations may find shelter at crisis-intervention centres, and support in homes for mothers with underage children and pregnant women.

**The Law of 13<sup>th</sup> June 2003 on social employment** has as its objective the social and occupational reintegration of individuals, including women, threatened and afflicted by social exclusion. The institutions carrying out these tasks are social-integration centres and social-integration clubs which may be set up by the regional authorities and non-governmental organizations. Some social-integration clubs are mainly geared to setting up various types of self-assistance groups for women living in rural communities or small provincial towns. Child care, group outings, skill-improvement courses and other activities aimed at the socio-occupational activation of women are organized.

**The Law of 27<sup>th</sup> April 2006 on social cooperatives** regulates the principles by which social cooperatives are set up and function as a way of promoting the socio-occupational activation of

the unemployed, including women. As practice to date has shown, the first cooperatives are set up by women from small localities.

In addition, the Minister of Labour and Social Policy is now conducting several government

