

OVERVIEW OF GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES IN BULGARIA¹

INTRODUCTION

International Legislation

The basic principles of equality between women and men are proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948. *Article 7* states that “*All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.*”. Based on this fundamental provision the United Nations², the International Labor Organization³ and the Council of Europe⁴ adopted a number of international documents for elimination of discrimination, all ratified by the Republic of Bulgaria.

Bulgaria is a party to United Nations conventions on the rights of women such as: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1997, ratified by Bulgaria in 1981; Convention on the Political Rights of Women, 1952, ratified by Bulgaria in 1955; Convention against Discrimination in Education, 1960, ratified 1962; Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages, 1962; Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951, ratified 1956.

Bulgaria is firmly committed to the principles and goals of the final documents, adopted at the UN World Conferences on Women in: Mexico (1975), Copenhagen(1980), Nairobi(1985), Beijing(1995).

European Union Legislation (*acquis communautaire*)

The legal framework of gender equality and equal opportunities for women and men is proclaimed in the provisions of the *Amsterdam Treaty*⁵ (1997) as a further development of the provisions of *Maastricht Treaty* (1992). The *Amsterdam Treaty* focuses on tackling discrimination of all kinds and providing for equal opportunities for men and women. Further development of the concept are the decisions of the *Treaty of Nice* (December 2000) and the *Treaty of Lisbon* (March 2002), which emphasize on the necessity of national action plans for promotion of gender equality. The legal standards of Amsterdam Treaty find their detailed expression in the European Union Directives on different aspect of the equality between women and men.⁶

National Legislation

The Bulgarian Constitution is adopted in 1991 the 7th Great National Assembly. Equal rights and the principle of non-discrimination are enshrined in the Constitution⁷. However, the Constitution does not explicitly provide specific regulations for gender equality.

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² International instruments on human rights – the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966, ratified 1970; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1966, ratified 1970; the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 1967.

³ List of the ratified Conventions is provided in Annex 1.

⁴ European Social Charter, ratified 2000, European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, ratified 1992.

⁵ <http://www.evropa.bg>

⁶ The list with the Directives is provided in Annex 1.

⁷ *Fundamental principles, Article 6: (1) All persons are born free and equal in dignity and rights.(2) All citizens shall be equal before the law. There shall be no privileges or restriction of rights on the grounds of race,*

Articles 46 and 47 of the Chapter on Fundamental Rights and Freedoms settle family relations and parenthood based on equal rights and obligations.⁸

The Family code (1985, amended 1992) settles the relationship in marriage, relation and adoption, guardianship and trusteeship. The Family Code is based on the principle of "... equality of men and women ..." (Article 3)

The Labour code (1986, amended 2001) prohibits all sorts of discrimination, privileges, limitations based on nationality, origin, gender and race.⁹ The amendment to the Code in 2001 introduced the principle of equal pay to women and men (Article 243). By the end of 2003 certain amendments to the Labour Code introduced the definitions of indirect discrimination (Supplementary Provisions, §1,7). Moreover, when advertising job vacancies employers will not have the right to set requirements relating to gender and age.

The Social Insurance Code (adopted 1999). The state public insurance shall be implemented on the principles of obligatory and comprehensive insurance and equality of the insured persons (Art. 3, 1 and 3)

The Law on Protection against Discrimination (September 2003, in force since January 2004), which aims at transposing *inter alia* the *acquis* on equality of treatment for women and men, including the *acquis* on pregnant workers, parental leave, equal pay, equal treatment in employment and burden of proof. (see below)

The Law on Countering Illegal Trafficking in Human Beings (of May 2003, in force since January 2004) introduces measures to prevent trafficking, improve co-ordination between state bodies and NGOs and protect the victims of illegal trafficking in human beings. The law is drawn up in line with the UN Convention against transnational organised crime and its supplementing Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children. Both have been ratified by Bulgaria. The National Border Police and the National Service for Combating Organised Crime are mandated to fight trafficking. The Law envisages the establishment of a National Commission with the Government and chaired by a deputy prime minister. Apart from the government officials (deputy ministers and deputy presidents of national agencies), this Commission will include also representatives of non-governmental organizations and international institutions working in the field of countering illegal trafficking in people. The National Commission will set up local commissions with the municipalities, chaired by deputy mayors. The National and the local commissions will coordinate the interrelation between the different agencies and develop programs for the implementation of the Law on national and local level. Secondary legislation is to be developed in 2004.

The Law on the Ombudsman (May 2003, in force since January 1, 2004). The Parliamentary Ombudsman and his Deputy will be in charge of investigating violations of citizens' rights and liberties by state or municipal bodies and their administrations, as well as by persons who

nationality, ethnic self-identity, sex, origin, religion, education, opinion, political affiliation, personal or social status or property status.

⁸ Article 46 (2) Spouses shall have equal rights and obligations in matrimony and the family; Article 47 (1) The raising and upbringing of children until they come of legal age shall be a right and obligation of their parents and shall be assisted by the state; (2) Mothers shall be the object of special protection on the part of the state and shall be guaranteed prenatal and postnatal leave, free obstetric care, alleviated working conditions and other social assistance.

⁹ Article 8(3): In the exercise of labour rights and duties no direct or indirect discrimination, privileges or restrictions shall be allowed on grounds of ethnicity, origin, sex, race, skin colour, age, political and religious convictions, affiliation to trade union and other public organizations and movements, family, social and property status and disability.

provide public services. In this context, they are entitled to access and receive any relevant data for inspection. Financial independence is provided for, as well as immunity. The Ombudsman and his deputy are elected for five years by a simple majority of votes in Parliament. They are exclusively answerable to Parliament and have to present an annual report on their activity. Their opinions and recommendations will be made public.

The Bill on Protection against Domestic Violence – approved by the Rapporteur Committee on Legal Affairs of the National Assembly on 29th April, 2004. To be put to the vote. It deals with the penalties against domestic violence and protection of its victims.

The ***Bulgarian National Plan of Action***¹⁰ in implementation of the commitments of the Republic of Bulgaria undertaken at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, (Beijing, 1995) was approved by the National Council on Social and Demographic Issues with the Council of Ministers on July 2, 1996.

The document is a combination of government initiatives and initiatives, suggested by the non-governmental organizations. The results of the implementation of the Plan are mainly achieved by the non-governmental sector, which works consistently in the main directions, outlined in the Beijing Platform and Plan for Action (1995).

The main goal of the measures is the achievement of real equality and development of women in all spheres of social life on the basis of sustainable social and economic development and reaffirmation of the democratic civil society.

The need of institutional mechanisms for providing equal opportunities to women and men is stated in the Plan as well as the necessary steps that should be taken for making amendments to the legal system. The Plan gives account for the responsible institutions and organizations and the necessary resources for the implementation.

A new ***National Plan on Gender Equality*** should be developed in 2004 in alignment with the commitments of Bulgaria on Chapter 13 Social Policy and Employment.

Bulgaria is required to submit periodic **Government Reports**¹¹ detailing the compliance and implementation of international conventions with regard to women's issues: the *Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women*¹², the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*¹³ and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*¹⁴.

Gender equality/anti-discrimination legislation in Bulgaria

The Law on Protection against Discrimination (in force since January 2004), which aims at transposing a number of key directives in this area (equal pay, equal treatment in employment, pregnant women and burden of proof). The comprehensive anti-discrimination

¹⁰ <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf177/natrep/nap1996-bulgaria.htm>

¹¹ More information on the reports is provided in Annex 2.

¹² *First Periodic Report* (1983); *Second and Third Periodic Report* (1994); *The Fourth* (due 1995), *Fifth* (due 1999) and *Sixth* (due 2003) *Periodic Reports* are not submitted.

¹³ Report on the position of women in Bulgaria and on their rights in the public sphere: *First Periodic Report*: Articles 6-9 (1978), Articles 10-12 (1982), Articles 13-15 (1983); *Second Periodic Report*: Articles 6-9 (1984), Articles 10-12 (1987), Articles 13-15 (not submitted); *Third Periodic Report* (1996); *Fourth Periodic Report*: (due: 30 June 2001, not submitted)

¹⁴ *First Periodic Report* (due 1977, submitted 1978)

Second Periodic Report (due 1984, submitted 1993); *Third Periodic Report* (due 1994, not submitted); *Fourth Periodic Report* (due 1999, not submitted)

law is aimed at reaching a large degree of alignment with the *acquis*. It introduces a system of sanctions and envisages the establishment of a Commission¹⁵ for protection against discrimination as an independent body and will report to the National Assembly. The Commission will be comprised of fifteen persons, of which at least three will be lawyers. The National Assembly will select nine and the President of the Republic six members of the Commission. This Commission will appoint permanent panels, dealing amongst others with ethnic and racial discrimination and gender equality.

Some of the activities of the Commission for protection against discrimination will include establishing breaches and imposing sanctions in accordance with the Law; making proposals to the Executive powers and local self-government institutions to annul laws issued in contravention of the Law; appealing administrative laws enacted in contravention of this Law; providing information to persons about their rights and obligations laid down by this Law and, at their request, providing funding for their protection etc.

Bulgaria still has not adopted specific gender equality legislation. ***The Bill on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*** was prepared in the period between August 2000 - February 2001 by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy with which was established a select Consultative Council on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men, including experts from the state administration, academic circles and non-governmental sector. However, it was twice rejected by the National Assembly in 2002 and 2003. The Law would have provided guarantees for non-discrimination in the fields of employment, political participation, education, gender stereotypes, including affirmative measures for women's participation in decision making. Because of the rejection of the draft law the institution of the Ombudsman on Equal Opportunities has not been established as well.

GENDER EQUALITY MACHINERY¹⁶

We cannot speak of established gender equality machinery in Bulgaria yet. Certain instruments which should be set up by the end of 2004 – the Commission for Protection against Discrimination (independent body), the Ombudsman institution, the Commission for Countering Illegal Trafficking in Human Beings (with the Government). However, so far little progress has been achieved in the implementation of this newly adopted legislation. Another problem is the still vague system of correlation between the different institutions that will be established, as well as their funding.

In the ***National Assembly***¹⁷ there is still no separate Committee on Gender Equality. The Committee which deals with the issues is the *Human Rights and Religious Affairs Committee*. This is a Standing Committee and considers bills on human rights and religions, submitted by members of the Parliament or the Council of Ministers. It also considers bills on anti-discrimination, gender equality, rights of children, rights of convicts, rights of refugees, religious freedoms, e.g. the bills on the Ombudsman, on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (not passed), on Protection against Discrimination etc.

The Committee also organizes roundtables and other discussions on these issues together with international institutions and non-governmental organizations.

At ***Governmental*** level there is no specialized gender equality body. The *Ministry of Labour and Social Policy*¹⁸ is responsible for gender issues as well. Since March 2004 there has been

¹⁵ By the end of May 2004 the Commission has not been established yet.

¹⁶ A diagram is enclosed in Annex 3.

¹⁷ <http://www.parliament.bg>

¹⁸ <http://www.mls.gov.bg>

functioning a specialized *Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Sector* within the Policy of Labour Market Directorate. The newly established Sector is responsible for the development of the new National Plan on Gender Equality as well as gender equality indicators. However, more consistent and explicit measures on the part of the state are still necessary.

In February 2003, a *Consultative Commission on Equal Opportunities*, was set up at the Ministry of Labour. The Commission consists of representatives of the state authorities responsible for the elaboration and implementation of the gender equality policy, social partners and NGOs. It is chaired by the Minister of Labour and Social Policy. Deputy chair is a representative of the non-governmental organizations, working on women's issues. Its aim is to improve the coordination in the process of gender and social equalization in Bulgaria and reinforce – the administrative capacity of the states institutions and organisations responsible for the policy of equality. The work of the Commission could be qualified as the first positive step to put equality issues on the agenda. However, having in mind its limited powers, consultative functions and the absence of any controlling functions, such a structure is not able to provide guarantees for achieving factual gender equality and especially to empower women.

The *National Action Plans on Employment* (2002, April 2003, February 2004), developed by the Ministry and adopted by the Council of Ministers, include a section on promotion of equal opportunities for women and men. In this aspect, the National Action Plan for Employment for the last three years expresses the state policy, which introduces several consistent and special measures for encouraging the participation of women on the labor market, reconciliation of work and family life etc.

Gender Statistics

There is still lack of gender disaggregated data in Bulgaria. However, statistics on different issues divided by gender are compiled by the National Statistical Institute (NSI). Since 1998 a special publication of the NSI "Employment and Unemployment" has been published where there are different, primary issues disaggregated by gender through these systems. These issues are: level of employment, unemployment rate, reasons for unemployment, educational level, employment in an independent activity, share in the employment and unemployment, employment by sectors and types of activities, involvement in independent activities (i.e. self-employment), participation in qualification courses, participation in small business alternatives of unemployment, breakdown of unemployment by age groups of women, data about long-term unemployed.

NSI provides also data about some demographic indicators by gender. The most recent data about population, fertility, life expectancy, deaths, migration increase, migration flows, etc. is from the last Census in 2001. In 2002 the NSI published its most detailed evaluation of the equality in social possibilities and positions between women and men so far – *Women and Men in the Republic of Bulgaria*¹⁹, which is based on main statistical data both in the field of demographic and social development, and in the field of employment and unemployment.

Social partners and non-governmental organisations²⁰

The work of the non-governmental sector in the field of equal opportunities for women and men during the last decade is remarkable. Thanks to many organizations (like Women's Alliance for Development, Gender Project for Bulgaria Foundation, Center Nadja Foundation, Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation, Animus Association Foundation etc.) contributed significantly to the adoption of the legislative acts, determining the legal framework for

¹⁹ Women and Men in the Republic of Bulgaria, National Statistical Institute, Sofia, 2002

²⁰ A list of the most active organizations is enclosed in Annex3.

guaranteeing gender equality. Alongside these organizations and following their methodological and structural models, more than 100 organizations grew up, which work actively in the four critical areas of concern – violence against women, trafficking in human beings including forcible traffic for sexual exploitation, participation of women in decision-making and in political life, as well as encouraging women's entrepreneurship.

It should be also stated that these organizations were supported in their activities by a number of international donor organizations, thanks to which these initiatives became possible. The Open Society Foundation (OSF), the Global Fund for Women, Mama Cash, Stability Pact Force, the Netherlands's Foundation and PHARE are only some of the names, traditionally connected with gender issues in Bulgaria.

Women's non-governmental organizations succeeded to formulate and take a particular and specific for their work place in the third sector, and established permanent relationships with representatives of the legislative, the executive and the local governments as well as with the media. The pressure of the non-governmental organizations, working on gender equality issues, is one of the factors changing the state policy for ensuring and guaranteeing a higher status of women in the social, economic and political life of the country. One of the most influential factors for the consolidation of the sector and putting the problems on the agenda plays the Annual Meeting²¹ of non-governmental organizations, addressing women's issues in Bulgaria, which is traditionally organized by the Women's Program of the OSF, and since 2004 – by its successor Center of Women's Studies and Policies Foundation²².

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION WORKING ON PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY

Several universities in Bulgaria already offer gender studies education in their Master's and Doctor's Programs – *Sofia University, New Bulgarian University, American University in Bulgaria, Blagoevgrad*.

A number of NGOs provide training in different aspects of gender issues:

Women's Alliance for Development – training center, offers different possibilities for tuition and trainings aimed at approving gender equality as a preliminary condition for sustainable development of Bulgarian society.

Animus Association Foundation - training centre, developing courses and programmes in three areas - on the problems of trauma, for work in the community and organisational consulting.

CHALLENGES FOR GENDER EQUALITY

The development of policies and mechanisms for gender equality is a requirement for the accession of Bulgaria to EU. Such policies are included in the First National Report on the Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals²³, as well as in the measures provided by the government for the implementation of the commitments on Chapter 13 in the negotiations for the accession of our country to EU. They can be based on:

- ☞☞ Stimulating the political and social sensitivity to gender equality issues.
- ☞☞ Establishing executive bodies, responsible for gender equality.

²¹ In 2004 was held the Sixth Annual Meeting, in which participated more than 100 organizations. The agenda was focused on the new legislation mentioned above and cooperation with the local authorities.

²² For more information: <http://www.cwsp.bg>

²³ Millennium Development Goals, 2003.

✍️ Studying indicators for equal treatment of women and men, providing the necessary information for developing and implementation of relevant gender equality policies.

ILO Conventions regarding the labour conditions of women:

<http://www.ilo.org>

Convention 3: Maternity protection, 1919
 Convention 89: Night work (women) (revised Convention 4), 1948
 Convention 100: Equal remuneration, 1951
 Convention 103: Maternity protection (revised Convention 3), 1952
 Convention 111: Discrimination (employment and occupation), 1958
 Convention 156: Workers with family responsibilities, 1981
 Convention 171: Night Work, 1990
 Convention 175: Part-time work, 1994
 Convention 177: Home work, 1996

European Union Directives on different aspect of the equality between women and men.

<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>

- ?? Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions;
- ?? Council Directive 75/117/EEC of 10 February 1975 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to the application of the principle of equal pay for men and women;
- ?? Council Directive 76/207/EEC of 9 February 1976 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions;
- ?? Council Directive 79/7/EEC of 19 December 1978 on the progressive implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in matters of social security
- ?? Council Directive 86/378/EEC of 24 July 1986 on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women in occupational social security schemes;
- ?? Council Directive 86/613/EEC of 11 December 1986 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity, including agriculture, in a self-employed capacity, and on the protection of self-employed women during pregnancy and motherhood;
- ?? Council Directive 92/85/EEC of 19 October 1992 on the introduction of measures to encourage improvements in the safety and health at work of pregnant workers and workers who have recently given birth or are breastfeeding (tenth individual Directive within the meaning of Article 16 (1) of Directive 89/391/EEC);
- ?? Council Directive 93/104/EC of 23 November 1993 concerning certain aspects of the organization of working time;
- ?? Council Directive 96/34/EC of 3 June 1996 on the framework agreement on parental leave concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC;
- ?? Council Directive 97/80/EC of 15 December 1997 on the burden of proof in cases of discrimination based on sex;
- ?? Council Directive 97/81/EC of 15 December 1997 concerning the Framework Agreement on part-time work concluded by UNICE, CEEP and the ETUC - Annex : Framework agreement on part-time work;
- ?? Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin;

- ?? Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation;
- ?? Directive 2002/73/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 amending Council Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions.

- ?? Council Recommendation 96/694 of 2nd December 1996 on the balanced participation of women and men in the decision-making process;
- ?? Council Resolution of 2 December 1996 on Mainstreaming Equal Opportunities for Men and Women into the European Structural Funds;
- ?? Council resolution of 1995 Image of men and women portrayed in advertising and the media;
- ?? Council Resolution of 20 May 1999 on women and science
- ?? Commission Recommendation of 1998 on the ratification of Convention 177 of ILO of 1996 on home work.

Community Framework Strategy on Gender Equality (2001-2005)

- ?? Gender Balance in Decision-making;
- ?? Reconciliation of Work and Family Life;
- ?? Development Co-operation;
- ?? Women and Science;
- ?? Violence and Sexual Exploitation;
- ?? Education and Training;
- ?? Equal Pay;
- ?? Employment and Labour Market;
- ?? Structural Funds;
- ?? Social Inclusion;
- ?? Continuing the Beijing Platform Action;
- ?? Reflection of Taxation on Women' Employment.

GOVERNMENTAL REPORTS ON GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES PRESENTED TO:

?? Committee on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

First Periodic Report (1983); *Second and Third Periodic Report* (1994)

Concluding observations of the Committee on the Second and Third Periodic Reports (1998):
[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/A.53.38,paras.208-261.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/A.53.38,paras.208-261.En?Opendocument)

The Committee commended Bulgaria for adopting a national action plan and for its efforts in establishing an intergovernmental commission to monitor the plan's implementation. The Committee also commended Bulgaria for withdrawing its reservation to Article 29. One of the main concerns for the Committee, however, was violence against women in both the public and private spheres. The general perception of domestic violence as a private matter persists. Moreover, legal proceedings may only be initiated upon the complaint of the victim. The Committee recommended that stronger laws protecting women be adopted, including a law providing for prosecution independent of whether a victim complains. The Committee also urged the Bulgarian government to develop medical, psychological, and other measures to aid women victims, encourage women to seek redress, and change attitudes. The Committee expressed concerns over victims of trafficking, including Bulgarian women trafficked to other countries as well as foreign women trafficked into Bulgaria. Finally, the Committee noted that achieving *de facto* equality for women was hampered by Bulgaria's historical approach through *de jure* equality; the Committee expressed concerns that there were no special affirmative action laws aimed at bringing about *de facto* equality through Article 4(1) of the Convention.

The Fourth (due 1995), *Fifth* (due 1999) and *Sixth* (due 2003) *Periodic Reports* are not submitted.

?? International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Report on the position of women in Bulgaria and on their rights in the public sphere: First Periodic Report: Articles 6-9(1978), Articles 10-12 (1982), Articles 13-15 (1983); *Second Periodic Report*: Articles 6-9 (1984), Articles 10-12 (1987), Articles 13-15 (not submitted); *Third Periodic Report* (1996);

Concluding observations of the Committee (1999):
[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/E.C.12.1.Add.37.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/E.C.12.1.Add.37.En?Opendocument)

The Committee noted the lack of legal protection against termination of employment based on pregnancy and recommended that Bulgaria prohibit such dismissal. The Committee requested that Bulgaria provide information in the Fourth Periodic Report about child labour, street children and domestic violence against women.

Fourth Periodic Report: (due: 30 June 2001, not submitted)

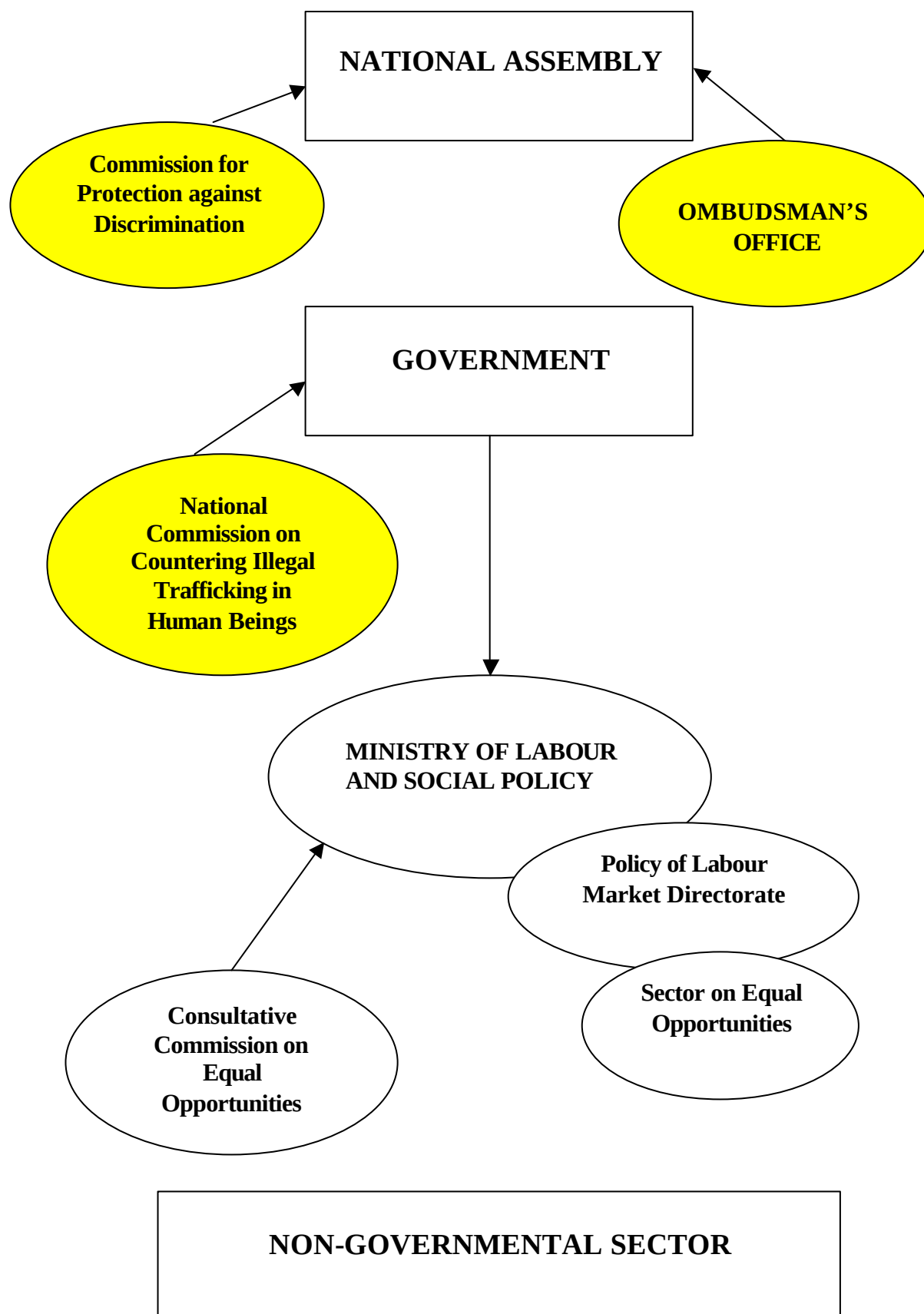
?? International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

First Periodic Report (due 1977, submitted 1978); *Second Periodic Report* (due 1984, submitted 1993);

Concluding Observations of the Committee (1993)
[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/CCPR.C.79.Add.24.En?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/CCPR.C.79.Add.24.En?Opendocument)

The Committee welcomed recent legal reforms that conform to several provisions of the Convention. The Committee noted that the Second Periodic Report provided very little information about the status of women and their participation in public life.

Third Periodic Report (due 1994, not submitted); *Fourth Periodic Report* (due 1999, not submitted)



NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN BULGARIA, WORKING ON GENDER ISSUES[?]

Center of Women's Studies and Policies Foundation - donor in Bulgaria for women's issues – successor of the Women's Program of the Open Society Foundation, Sofia and Bulgarian partner in the Network Women's Program of the Open Society Institute, New York. The goal of the Foundation is to consolidate and strengthen NGOs addressing women's issues (Annual NGOs Meeting), to increase the public awareness of the problems women in Bulgaria face, and to promote the development and adoption of policies guaranteeing gender equality. It also acts as a monitor of the status of women's rights in Bulgaria.

<http://www.cwsp.bg>

Center Nadja Foundation works with victims of domestic violence providing them with psychological help, a shelter for battered women, domestic violence and trafficking. The organization has 16 local groups of the national network on violence against women.

Animus Association Foundation is a women's non-governmental organisation created to help victims of violence.

<http://www.animusassociation.org/>

Women's Alliance for Development (WAD) Foundation is a leading information, consultative and training center, aiming is to establish a strategic alliance of organizations and individuals, working for equal opportunities of women and men in all spheres of life.

<http://www.women-bg.org/>

Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation promotes social equality and women's human rights in Bulgaria through research, education and advocacy programs. The organizations has published a number o reports on the status of women in Bulgaria.

<http://www.bgrf.org/>

Gender Project for Bulgaria Foundation – representative for Bulgaria in the Stability Pact Gender Task Force

Resource centre Open Door Veliko Turnovo - complex information in the sphere of human rights, namely of children and women, services to victims of domestic violence.

Center Maria, Gorna Oryahovitsa, develops programs and provides services for women victims of violence.

<http://www.centermaria.org/>

Women's Association "Ekaterina Karavelova" – branches in Bulgaria, services for victims of domestic violence and other local initiatives.

The Assistance Centre for Torture Survivors - ACET is a Bulgarian non-governmental, non-profit foundation established in 1995. Its main goal is to eradicate the practices of torture and other cruel or inhuman treatment.

<http://www.acet-bg.org/>

[?] Note: The list is not inclusive.

The *Women's Health Initiative* in Bulgaria was established in 1998 with the purpose of promoting a conversation on gender and health through conducting interactive dialogues, educational and counselling programs, and collaborative research projects.

<http://www.whibg.org/>

European Network of Policewomen - Bulgaria, Sofia

Demetra Association, Burgas

P.U.L.S. Foundation, Pernik

Women against Violence Association, Varna

Center Open Door Association, Pleven

SOS – Families in Risk Association, Varna

Gender, Education, Research and Technologies Foundation, Sofia

Bulgarian Association of University Women, Sofia

Party of Bulgarian Women – parliamentary representation within the National Movement “Simeon II”

Civic forum “Bulgarka” – clubs in Bulgaria

Democratic Union of Women

Women's Union with the Trade Union “Podkrepa”

Women's Public Parliament 21 Century with the Trade Union of Bulgarian Teachers, Sofia

Democratic Union of Women

Women in Science Foundation, Sofia

Rural Women's Clubs in Bulgaria, Sofia

Bulgarian Association of Business Women's Clubs, Sofia

Forum for Women's Solidarity – branches in Bulgaria

ORGANIZATIONS OF WOMEN OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC ORIGIN

Armenian General Benevolent Union, branches in Bulgaria

Armenian Benevolent Association H.O.M – Bulgaria, branches in Bulgaria

Women's Association “Birlik – Unity”, Targovishte

Bulgarian Women's Jewish Forum – branches in Bulgaria

Romany Women Independent Organization “Lachshi Romni”, Sofia

“Kadan” Non-profit Organization, Varna

Women's Union with the Turkish Cultural Center 21 Century, Sofia

Human Rights “Step by Step” Association, Varna

OTHER SMALLER LOCAL CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Eterna Business Women Club, Yambol

Save the Woman Association, Varna

Nadezhda Women's Club, Pleven

Women's Club, Pavlikeni

Rodopchanka Women's Club, Smolyan

Women's Club “Europe 21 Century”, Varna

”Proxen” Women's Union, Kazanlak

Women's Association “Nadezhda 2001”, Sevlievo

Women without Osteoporosis Association, Sofia

FGO Diva, Plovdiv

Union of Women – Mothers of Our Children, Ruse

Zhivot Women's Foundation, Blagoevgrad

Mother's Love Association, Sofia

Anima Matris – Association of Single Parents

Independent Women's Association “Self-consciousness”, Bourgas