



# 14<sup>TH</sup> CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM REPORT



# CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM REPORT

8 May 2019, 15:00 – 18:00

## *EU Programme Support Office, Nicosia*

The 14<sup>th</sup> Civil Society Forum of Civic Space was held at the European Union Programme Support Office on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2019 with the participation of 25 people from 16 CSOs.

The Forum started with a brief welcoming note and introduction to the Civil Society Forum Agenda by Emilie Crozet, Civil Society Programme Manager from the European Commission. The forum continued with the agenda topics, as presented below. *(Please see Forum Agenda in Annex 1)*

### **PRESENTATIONS ON THE CONTENT AND PROCESS OF THE GENDER EQUALITY AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN REPORT – LIST OF ISSUES BY CYPRUS DIALOGUE FORUM <sup>1</sup> & ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION**

#### **BRIEFING BY CDF ABOUT THE PREPARATION OF THE REPORT**

Cyprus Dialogue Forum (CDF) secretariat is composed of approximately 100 organizations. It brings together organizations working in different areas to discuss issues such as human rights.

In 2018, the CDF Secretariat has submitted to the pre-sessional working group for the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the CEDAW Committee (at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) the "*List of issues on gender equality and anti-discrimination against women report*". The report contains data on both the Greek Cypriot community (chapter A) and the Turkish Cypriot community (chapter B) and tackles issues such as political rights, human trafficking, education, employment health, family and marriage, violence against women, etc.

During the Forum, CDF explained the preparation process of the report. The report has been prepared with the contributions of 19 organisations – 10 Greek Cypriot and 9 Turkish Cypriot – which provided information and data regarding the gender equality situation in Cyprus. These organisations consisted of civil society organisations, political parties and trade unions. The participatory process was constrained by the limited period of time – 15 days for the whole preparation and compilation of contributions and has been conducted through mailing. A list of questions (translated to Turkish and Greek) to be addressed was sent by CDF to the member organisations. The contributions submitted by CSOs to CDF, were compiled as they were, by the Secretariat, with no particular analysis, in order to produce a consolidated report. Although the process was participatory, some key CSOs have not been part of the report. The CDF did not have the time to follow up with each organisation and provide additional support on reporting.

### **ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON THE CONTENT, PROCESS, MONITORING & ADVOCACY OF THE REPORT AND GENDER EQUALITY ISSUES IN GENERAL: COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS**

The current report is a list of issues rather than a shadow report and is not a final report. However, it could serve as the basis for a future improved and completed shadow report.

**The participants discussed and debated ways to enrich the report and develop it into a consistent and representative shadow report.**

The audience pointed out the need to establish a road map for a shadow report which could include the following highlights:

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[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/CYP/INT\\_CEDAW\\_NGO\\_CYP\\_29431\\_E.pdf](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/CYP/INT_CEDAW_NGO_CYP_29431_E.pdf)

### How can we improve participation to the report?

Although the current process has allowed the participation of a group of diverse organizations, who were not necessarily focusing on gender equality field, allowing them to raise their awareness about gender issues, the Shadow Report should definitely target CSOs working on gender equality field. It means that CSOs that are working on gender, on women's rights, and LGBTI+ rights should be the those who write the report. KAYAD (Association of Women to Support Living) is ready to help with reaching grass roots organizations if need be to collect information and ensure participation.

### How can we contribute to the report?

In parallel, the list of issues to be addressed in the shadow report should be discussed and consensus on a variety of issues should be sought for. As such, the report can become a basis for consensus for a wider group of CSOs. For example, a recent research conducted with 52 female international students revealed that 75% of them were harassed. Data such as these, need to be included in the shadow report. Moreover, international students should take part in the process. The process could be conducted by a platform of a women's organizations and CDF can provide technical support to make sure that bi-communal participation and contribution are ensured.

### What do we need?

A lot of international conventions approved by "the parliament" in the northern part of Cyprus are not monitored. There is a need for capacity building on the existing conventions on human rights (including but not limited to gender equality): what are the rights to be promoted, what is monitoring, what are the deadlines for reporting, how to report, ...etc.

CDF has developed a website which will include relevant conventions, their reporting periods, etc. The website will be accessible soon.

Civic Space can provide tools and means (help desk, trainings, in kind support, study visits...) that will help CSOs to access information and support further steps.

### What do we do next?

Bringing together relevant stakeholders of both communities under a same reporting and advocacy goal is required.

Reporting schedules to The Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)<sup>2</sup> and to the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA)<sup>3</sup> could be an opportunity to prepare shadow reports more collectively, comprehensively as well as inter-communally.

Human Rights Committee of the Cyprus Dialogue Forum decided to start working on Human Trafficking which is a crucial problem in both Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities. A meeting will be organised by CDF to identify relevant stakeholders and discuss issues regarding human trafficking.

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<sup>2</sup> Monitoring states parties' implementation of the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

<sup>3</sup> Responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings by the Parties

## ANNEX I – Agenda



The poster features a purple and blue background with a large graphic of a speech bubble filled with many small, diverse human figures. The text is arranged in a clean, modern layout with icons for date and location.

**14<sup>TH</sup> CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM**  
NICOSIA

 **8 May, 2019**  
Wednesday  
15.00 - 18.00

 **EUPSO**  
EU Programme  
Support Office  
Nicosia

**AGENDA**

**15:00 - 15:15** Registration

**15:15 - 16:00** Presentations: Content and Process of the Gender Equality and Anti-Discrimination Against Women Report by Cyprus Dialogue Forum (CEDAW Shadow Report)

**16:00 - 16:15** Questions & Answers

**16:15 - 16:30** Coffee Break

**16:30 - 18:00** Roundtable Discussion: Gender Equality Issues and the Content, Process, Monitoring & Advocacy of the Cedaw Shadow Report

**18:00** Closure

 Accessible

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