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**Parallel Report on Greece's compliance  
with the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

2 January 2024

This report was prepared for submission to the **United Nations' Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)** for the review of Greece during its [87<sup>th</sup> Session in February 2024](#). The text below follows [CEDAW's List of Issues Prior to Reporting for Greece](#) adopted during [its 79th session in November 2020](#) and comments on the subsequent [Combined eighth and ninth periodic reports submitted by Greece under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021](#) but submitted only in May 2023, along with its [Annexes](#). References are made to the [Observations by the GNCHR \[Greek National Commission of Human Rights\] on State's draft reply to the list of issues prior to the submission of the combined Eighth and Ninth Periodic Report under the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women \(CEDAW\)](#) dated April 2023 that CEDAW is urged to consult [\[Annex 1\]](#).

**Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM)**, founded in 1993, monitors, publishes, lobbies, and litigates on human and minority rights and anti-discrimination issues in Greece and, from time to time, in other European countries.

**Minority Rights Group - Greece (MRG-G)**, founded in 1992, focuses on studies of minorities, in Greece and in the Balkans.

The **Humanist Union of Greece (HUG)**, founded in 2010, aims to promote secularism and a humanist view of cultural, social and ethical values and to work for social and cultural progress.

The **Coordinated Organizations and Communities for Roma Human Rights in Greece (SOKADRE)** is a network founded in 2001; its members include 50 Roma communities and 5 Greek NGOs that have been working on Roma rights.

They have previously submitted reports to **CEDAW** [in October 2020](#) with an addendum [in November 2020](#) ahead of the **Pre-sessional working group** in November 2012; also [in June 2012](#) ahead of the **Pre-sessional working group** in August 2012, and [in January 2013](#) ahead of Greece's review in February 2013; and, finally, [in July 2006](#) ahead of Greece's review in February 2007; as well as in [July 2002](#) ahead of Greece's review in August 2002.

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## Statistical data

1. The data provided are disaggregated by age, disability, and nationality, but not by ethnicity, and/or minority status, for the simple reason that **Greece** claims that there are no minorities other than a religious **Muslim minority in Thrace** and moreover deliberately does not include questions of language, religion and ethnicity in the census so as to obscure the presence of self-identified minorities and/or provide when necessary arbitrary estimates of the size of those "vulnerable groups" it accepts they exist, i.e. "**Muslims**" and **Roma**. **CEDAW** is requested to note that, in the comprehensive **GNCHR** Observations, there is no reference to the absence of such data, as the **GNCHR** has throughout the 25 years of its operations at least tacitly agreed with the State's denial of the existence of ethnic minorities in **Greece**.

## Impact of the pandemic

2. Our NGOs agree with the **GNCHR** about *“the need to effectively assess the cumulative impact of both austerity measures and restrictive containment measures to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, on specific human rights and on specific vulnerable groups, in order to ensure the unhindered enjoyment of rights, as well as, to strike a fair and proportionate balance towards future challenges.”* **UN Treaty Bodies** have for decades, but unfortunately in vain, urged **Greece** to carry out and report on impact assessment studies for various policies rather than merely describing such policies in the State reports. We also appreciate the reference by the **GNCHR** to the statement by 26 organizations (including **Greek Helsinki Monitor**) that the successive prolongations of the measures restricting the movement of residents in all accommodation centers for asylum seekers after they were lifted for the rest of the population was arbitrary and not based on scientific evidence, contributed to the deterioration in the mental health of applicants for international protection, while movement restriction hindered their access to vital services (medical, legal, etc.) outside the facilities where they reside. In this regard, refugee and asylum-seeker women have been affected disproportionately because of their sex and alien status, both of which multiplied the equality gap. In addition, such widely publicized discriminatory policy fueled racist statements that these persons were a danger for public health.

## Constitutional, legislative and public policy framework

3. Our NGOs agree with the **GNCHR** that Law 4604/2019, which as the State says is the first horizontal law aiming at achieving substantive gender equality, *“excludes both gender characteristics and non-binary persons. Therefore, where the law refers to gender identity, it should make also reference to gender characteristics in order to be in line with equal treatment legislation.”* It is noteworthy that this omission in a 2019 law is a regression as gender characteristics are included in the anti-discrimination Law 4443/2016, while in 2017 the basic anti-racism Law 927/79 had been amended to include gender characteristics after gender identity, while, in the amended then Criminal Code in 2019, Article 82A on racist motivation of crimes and Article 184 on incitement to commission of crimes, violence or discord, both also make reference to gender characteristics. In fact, even the **GNCHR** fails to mention the need to add in the legislation, besides gender characteristics, also gender expression, to be in conformity with the Yogyakarta Principles as amended in 2017. This would not be a novelty as Law 4931/2022 inter alia banning conversion practices and Law 5029/2023 on violence and bullying in schools expressly include in the discrimination characteristics gender expression. Hence, a **CEDAW** is requested to recommend that Greece in all its legislative texts making references to discrimination characteristics, including Laws 927/79, 4443/2016 and 4604/2019 and Articles 82A and 184 CC, includes gender characteristics and gender expression.
4. Our NGOs also agree with the **GNCHR** that **Greece** should *“revise the legislative framework in order for the **LGBTQI+** people to enjoy the right to marriage in its full extent (egg. marital benefits, allowances, parental leave, child custody and parental care, childbirth, retirement, inheritance and other tax issues),”* which in fact [has been announced as an intention of the government to be implemented during the current legislature 2023-2027](#). As well as bring its legislation on legal gender recognition in line with the [Council of Europe Resolution 2048 \(2015\) on “Discrimination against transgender people in Europe”](#) with the changes listed in the **GNCHR Observations** to overcome the serious deficiencies in the legislation and its implementation.
5. **Greece** admits that there effectively is no State compensation to women victims of violent intentional crimes despite the existence of Law 3811/2009. [All seven applications by women victims between 2010 and 2022 were rejected](#) and **Greece** does not offer any assessment as to why the legislation introduced to transpose the **EU’s** victim’s Directive (2004/80/EU) has for all practical purposes failed. **Greece** should be asked inter alia to provide an analysis of these seven

decisions with an assessment of the reasons they were all negative, as well as how it informs all potential victims of this procedure and what means it provides them to seek that compensation.

## Women's access to justice

6. There is no effective state-provided good quality legal aid in **Greece**. Our NGOs agree with the **GNCHR** that *“the procedure remains unapplicable in most cases not only at legislative level but also at implementation level.”* The **GNCHR** came to that conclusion mainly quoting a 2022 report by the [Observatory for Legal Aid in Greece](#) a project of the **Hellenic League for Human Rights** that monitored 265 felony trials where defendants must have a lawyer who when necessary, usually for migrants who lack the means to appoint their lawyers, is appointed by the court. It was observed that only one fifth of the lawyers filed written legal arguments on behalf of the defendants and only one eighth called witnesses for the defence. To this is compounded the fact that the State does not pay the corresponding fees to the lawyers for very long periods after the trials: when such delays reached three years, [the Plenary of the Bar Associations decided on 5 November 2022](#) that its members should abstain from taking up legal aid cases. The only de facto successful legal aid is provided by pro bono lawyers or by NGO lawyers.
7. Our NGOs agree with the **GNCHR** concern that *“the State report does not respond to the Committee’s request for “information about judgments in which the provisions of the Convention were applied, invoked and/or referred to directly, and efforts made to interpret national legislation in line with the Convention”. Moreover, the Committee’s request for information on steps taken “to train legal professionals, including the judiciary, ethnic communities and religious leaders on the Convention and the Committee’s general recommendations” is also left unanswered.”* Moreover, the State provided one summary table about prosecutions and convictions that did not meet **CEDAW**’s request to include disaggregation by sentence imposed and by the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim; in any case, it would have been necessary to also disaggregate the data by first instance and appeals judgments, as often appeal courts overturn first instance convictions or reduce sentences imposed.

## Stereotypes and harmful practices

8. Our NGOs agree with the **GNCHR** that *“sex education has indeed become part of the school curricula, as early as the school year 2021-2022 (and already piloted from 2020-2021), however without including topics that directly speak of sexual orientation, gender expression, identity and sex characteristics.”* Moreover, the implementation of the **National Action Plan against Racism and Intolerance 2020–2023** mentioned in the State report has been abandoned: the best evidence is the fact that in the website of the **National Council against Racism and Intolerance** <https://moj.gov.gr/ncri/> its last activity is a press release dated January 2022 while the **Council**’s composition listed therein also dates from 2021 when the **GNCHR** representative mentioned was an activist who died in October 2021... Similar is the situation with the implementation of the **National Strategy and Plan of Action for the Social Inclusion of Roma 2021-2030**: an **Advisory Committee** was set up in March 2023 and had [its first meeting on 22 March 2023](#) which however turned out to be its last meeting. After the double May – June 2023 elections, the **Advisory Committee** had to be restructured which has yet to happen.
9. **CEDAW** is requested to note that **Greece**’s reply on child and/or forced marriages and the number of prosecutions and convictions of perpetrators in the reporting period was a mere admission that they are in breach of the law but yet prevalent in the **Roma communities** and that a NGO was running an awareness campaign, omitting that it was a two-year project in 2016-2017 whose results are not even published on its website <https://kean.gr/early-marriage/>. In effect, **Greece** is allowing the practice and as a result there are no prosecutions let alone convictions for the violation of its legislation. Our NGOs welcome the link between eradication of the practice and access to education by the **GNCHR** which *“reminds once again with particular concern the*

*ECtHR judgments against Greece regarding the segregation of Roma children, which recognised that the placement of Roma children in special classes located in an annex of the main school building amounted to discrimination, and illustrates the need to take immediate action in order to combat antigypsyism.” In a July 2021 report, GNCHR had stated that “The limited access of Roma children to school and their limited enrolment, despite several actions undertaken by the State authorities, has been a major issue... pertaining to segregation practices in education, the GNCHR reiterates with disappointment that they are unacceptable.”*

## **Gender-based violence against women**

10. This is **Greece’s** major human rights problem related to the mandate of **CEDAW** in view of the great number of victims and the low rate to near absence (for asylum seekers) of criminal prosecution of the perpetrators let alone convictions, especially when victims do not file complaints because they cannot or because they may be afraid of the consequences.
11. Greece did not reply to the **CEDAW** questions *“Please provide information on measures taken to ensure that police officers and prosecutors refrain from turning away alleged victims of gender-based violence. Please also inform the Committee on measures envisaged to revise police practices that may deter women from seeking protection from the authorities in cases where they have been subjected to, or are at risk of, gender-based violence.”* This because there are no such effective measures taken while various circulars mentioned in the State report have little impact on the day-to-day practice especially as, when incidents of deterring or turning away women victims are reported to the competent authorities, the latter do not take any action, let alone sanction the alleged perpetrators police officers. Our NGOs will highlight here highly publicized recent cases of femicides or patricides caused because previous reports of domestic violence had not led to appropriate state action to guarantee the physical and psychological safety of the women and/or children victims of domestic violence.
12. On 31 December 2023, in the Athens suburb of Peristeri, a 35-year-old son killed his 62-year-old father and called police to report it. [As reported](#): *“The president of the Union of Police Officers of Southeast Attica, said on television that the victim was drunk and that the woman had previously reported him for domestic violence. The family had made an official complaint about domestic violence once in the past, namely in 2017, when the father was arrested, following a similar incident against the mother - whom he initially attacked - and the son, who rushed to defend her. “A father, who was an abuser as his wife had reported domestic violence several times, came home drunk at 1am. He found his son in front of the computer and started cursing at him, a behavior which - according to the son - was continuous in the house. Reportedly, the son took the knife, managed to stab him several times and one critical stab in the thigh that brought death to the 62-year-old,” he said.”* Authorities had effectively done nothing after the 2017 complaint.
13. On 22 December 2023, in the Athens suburb of Kalyvia, a 16-year-old killed his 71-year-old father. [As reported](#): *“According to police sources, the 16-year-old claimed that both he and his brother and their mother had suffered abuse and offending behavior from his father for many years. They also reported that this was the reason why the 16-year-old's mother and his 19-year-old brother were forced to leave the house. Something that even a 16-year-old intended to do after coming of age.”* Authorities had effectively done nothing to distance the youth from his abusive father.
14. On 5 December 2023, in the island of Salamina near Athens, a 71-year-old man killed his 43-year-old companion. [As reported](#), *“The man shot her in cold blood and killed her inside her mother's house, where she had gone to stay at the urging of the police in order to protect her life. Three days before the murder, and specifically on 2 December, she had gone to the Police Station to report the abusive behavior against her and their 15-year-old child by her partner of 7 years.”* Authorities had effectively done nothing to prevent the abuser to contact the woman and the child.



15. On 22 January 2023, in the suburb of Athens Nikaia, a 50-year-old man killed his 54-year-old wife. [As reported](#), *"He would get drunk, hit her, then call an ambulance, then hit her again." Neighbors describe systematic abuse of the victim by the perpetrator who was arrested in 2017 and 2019 for domestic violence. However, the 54-year-old stated that she did not wish his prosecution. The perpetrator also abused alcohol while he was hospitalized last May in the psychiatric hospital in Dafni. Their child, a minor, was not present at the tragic incident as her grandmother was hosting her in Salamina, but according to testimonies she had experienced other episodes of violence."* Authorities had effectively done nothing after the 2017 and 2019 complaints, a usual practice when the victims do not want to seek the criminal prosecution of the abusers.
16. Such experience, abundant across years, led the **Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)** to state in the very detailed November 2023 [\(Baseline\) Evaluation Report on Greece](#) on the basis of information received during its evaluation visit in Greece: *"Concerns have been expressed that prejudice and discriminatory attitudes deriving from a predominantly patriarchal culture and enduring prejudices about gender roles persist in many police stations. Indeed, despite the existence of pockets of excellence in some police districts, NGOs and lawyers working with women victims of violence still report ineffective or disinterested police handling of domestic violence cases. GREVIO is particularly concerned about consistent reports indicating that police officers often discourage victims to file a complaint and advise them to return home and sometimes fail to detain perpetrators when needed. In addition, concerns have been brought to GREVIO's attention about the mandatory detention policy in cases of in flagrante delicto. The police in these cases inform the victim that if the perpetrator also presses charges, she may be arrested too until the next day, which has a discouraging effect on reporting. Police representatives informed GREVIO that they were aware of this problem and that they follow a practice of requesting permission from the prosecutor not to arrest women victims of violence. However, this procedure is informal and depends on the assessment by the officers involved."*
17. The **GREVIO** report is very important inter alia also when it concerns underreporting of rapes: *"Moreover, GREVIO finds it particularly problematic that the number of reports of rape appears to be quite low considering the prevalence rates found in the 2014 EU-wide survey. According to data collected by the EIGE: "around 1 in 4 women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner at least once since the age of 15. Further, 5.8% of women reported physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner in the last 12 months. 21% of women who had experienced physical and/or sexual violence by any perpetrator in the past 12 months had not told anyone (8 percentage points higher than the EU average of 13%)". Only 202 women reported rape to the police in 2020 and in 2021. GREVIO is not aware of any research exploring the reasons for the low reporting rates for sexual violence. In the absence of recent population-based studies or surveys there is no effective way of measuring under-reporting of violence against women and domestic violence. GREVIO notes with concern that the lack of data and research seriously impairs the ability of the Greek authorities to assess policies in this area and to monitor and address patterns of violence against women."*
18. Our NGOs would like to underline that in the case of women attempting to come to **Greece** to seek asylum but being pushed back by coast guard authorities, there is large prevalence of rape or other forms of sexual or other physical violence with thousands of victims in recent years. Although these crimes are ex officio prosecutable, no prosecution was launched even after public reports detailing and documenting such acts were published, with the most notable being the November 2021 **Greek Helsinki Monitor** report [Expulsions and pushbacks with drownings, tortures, rapes, robberies: victims' testimonies to GHM \[Annex 2\]](#) submitted inter alia in December 2021 to, and [available on the webpage of](#), **CRC** and the November 2023 **Médecins Sans Frontières** report [In plain sight: the human cost of migration policies at Greek sea](#)

[borders \[Annex 3\]](#). Finally, **GHM** submitted in 2021-2022 to the **Prosecutor of the Supreme Court** and to the **National Transparency Authority** reports about 200+ pushbacks involving 10,000+ asylum seekers together with the evidence including journalistic research, recordings by reliable NGOs and interviews of the victims themselves. The cases were distributed by the **Prosecutor of the Supreme Court** to 19 local prosecutor's offices and to the **Prosecutor of the Naval Court**; the latter as well as the **National Transparency Authority** asked **GHM** for and received additional information. However, as is mentioned in the [Draft mission report following the European Parliament's LIBE mission to Athens, Greece, 6 to 8 March 2023](#) published on 11 April 2023, "*A prominent international NGO has filed 200 complaints with the NTA about the pushbacks, but neither the NGO nor the victims have been invited to testify*". In late December 2023, both the **Prosecutor of the Naval Court** and the **National Transparency Authority** refused to inform **GHM** about the outcome of their investigations, to include such information in the present report. **CEDAW** is requested to ask **Greece** to submit information about any investigation carried out and if so about its results on the basis of these three **Médecins Sans Frontières** (1) and **Greek Helsinki Monitor** (2) reports.

### Trafficking and exploitation of prostitution

19. **CEDAW** is requested to note that in its comments to the draft State report the **GNCHR** observed that there were no replies on **CEDAW**'s questions on "*the progress made in the investigation into the whereabouts of over 500 girls and boys, mostly Albanian Roma, forced to beg in the streets, who had been rounded up by the police in Athens prior to the 2004 Olympic Games and had disappeared from Agia Varvara, a State-run care home*" and on "*international cooperation initiatives taken by Greece in order to protect the rights of migrant and/or trafficked women.*" Despite these **GNCHR** comments, **Greece** persisted in not replying, a confirmation that there was nothing to report and a further indication that foreign women and children, whether street children (like the 500 Albanian Roma), victims of human trafficking or asylum seekers do not effectively enjoy the rights enshrined in the **Convention**, other international treaties or Greek laws that provide a large array of rights because **Greece** wants to appear complying with its international obligations.
20. Especially concerning "*the investigation into the whereabouts of over 500 girls and boys, mostly Albanian Roma, forced to beg in the streets,*" **Greece** has consistently snubbed **UN Treaty Bodies**' recommendations, the latest being the **CRC**'s [dating from June 2022](#), "*to promptly investigate the Aghia Varvara case.*" In view of the snubbing of **CEDAW**, the **Committee** is requested to use as strong language as possible to make **Greece** comply with this obligation which concerns the most vulnerable of all possible minorities, some 500 individuals who are both children and **Albanian migrants**, and either provide credible investigation results or admit it failed its obligation, issue a public apology and an offer to compensate the victims.
21. More generally, our NGOs reiterate **GRETA**'s [March 2023 urgent recommendations](#) "*to take steps to improve the identification of victims of THB, and in particular to: – ensure that the identification of victims of THB does not depend on the presumed victim's complaint (statement) and co-operation in the investigation or criminal proceedings, by amending the relevant legislation. The expertise of relevant organisations and entities, such as specialised NGOs, psychologists, health-care staff and labour inspectors should be duly taken into account during the identification procedure; – ensure that the process of granting the status of victim of trafficking is completed without undue delay; – pursue a proactive approach to the identification of victims of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation by encouraging regular and co-ordinated inspections in the sectors most at risk; – ensure that qualified interpreters are available whenever presumed victims of trafficking are interviewed in the context of the victim identification procedure. The costs of interpretation should be covered by the authorities (paragraph 159).*" The detailed data on trials and convictions in 2017-2021 available in the **GRETA** report were not reported to **CEDAW**. They "*demonstrate that there have been*

*convictions for THB both for sexual and for labor exploitation.” Remaining related concerns are listed by GRETA “insufficient resources allocated to the investigating authorities, length of criminal proceedings, and lack of financial investigations and asset confiscation in THB cases.” Finally, our NGOs agree with the GNCHR “that the Greek authorities should continue paying particular attention to detecting victims of THB among migrants and asylum seekers in reception centers and persons detained as irregular migrants, and provide continuous training to all staff who come into contact with such persons.”*

## **Participation in political and public life**

22. **Greece** is a country of contradictions in the topic of women’s participation in political and public life. Currently, the **President of the Republic**, elected by **Parliament**, and the **Prosecutor** and the **President of the Supreme Court**, as well as the **Presidents of the Council of State** and the **Hellenic Court of Audit** all appointed by the **Government** are all women.
23. On the other hand, [as summarized in October 2023](#) by the **European Network of Legall Experts in Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination**, “for the first time since its establishment in 1985, the term ‘gender equality’ has slipped down the title of the General Secretariat competent for gender equality ... following the parliamentary elections of 25 June 2023 [when] the ‘General Secretariat for Demographic and Family Policy and Gender Equality’ (ex-General Secretariat for Gender Equality) was renamed to ‘General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights’ and was transferred from the Ministry of Labour to the newly established ‘Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family’. This development has been harshly deplored by numerous women’s NGOs, including the ‘Commission on Family Law & Consensual Joint Custody’, a partnership of women’s organizations operating from the end of 2020 to present date and consisting of 24 women’s organizations/collectives. Since 2019, under pressions by conservative groups, there has been an ongoing degradation of the General Secretariat. In July 2019 the ex-General Secretariat for Gender Equality was transferred from the Ministry of Interior Affairs to the Ministry of Labour.”
24. At the same time, in 2022 **Greece** ranked last in the **EU** on the [Gender Equality Index](#), with the lowest scores in relation to women in power. In the 63-member **Cabinet**, there are 15 women, of which 4 are Ministers, 1 is Deputy Minister and 10 are Secretaries of State, a meagre improvement over the 9 women in the 59-member **Cabinet** in early 2023. In the 300-member **Parliament**, women make up below 25% of all 300 seats: 69 in the current **Parliament** elected in June 2023, 72 in the short-lived **Parliament** elected in May 2023 and 56-70 in the **Parliaments** of 2015 – 2019 as mentioned in the State report. After the October 2023 regional and local elections, there is no woman head in any of the 13 **Regions** (compared to 1 and 2 in 2014 and in 2019), while 22 women were elected **Mayors** (compared to 15 and 19 in 2014 and in 2019) in 332 municipalities. Our NGO recommend once more that **CEDAW** encourage **Greece** to apply the 40% quota even among those elected (as many Greek political parties do for their central committees for example).
25. The gender gap is larger in sub-leadership areas. Only 9% of board members of the largest publicly listed companies are women. [A 2021 study](#) by **Koinoniko Polykentro** the research and training institute of **ADEDY** (the **Greek Civil Service Confederation**), noted that women are significantly underrepresented in leadership positions, with only 14% of women holding senior positions in the public sector compared to 26% of men. Similarly, the figures for women holding a master's degree in senior positions are 26%, compared to 43% for men.

## **Education**

26. Sexual education as well as the related training programs for teachers and the activities of the **Educational Policy Institute** do not include subject areas regarding sexual orientation, expression, identity or sex characteristics.

## Employment

27. [In April 2022](#), the unemployment rate for women was 16,2% and for men 9,5%, which means that the gap has not narrowed since the last review of **Greece** by **CEDAW** when it was 31% v. 24%.
28. **CEDAW** is requested to note that **Greece** did not address its requests for “*data on the number of migrant women employed as domestic workers and information on measures taken to ensure that women migrant domestic workers are guaranteed the same level of protection and benefits as other workers*”, as well as on “*steps taken to ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), of the International Labour Organization*”, even though the **GNCHR** in its observations on the State draft report pointed to that omission and recommended that the requested information be provided.

## Health

29. The **Hellenic Society of Obstetrics and Gynecology**’s ongoing two-year study [showed](#) in 2023 that 58% of the births in Greece occur by caesarean section. The absence of any measures taken to reduce that rate is reflected in the State report by the **Greece**’s laconic reply “*the Greek Ministry of Health is aware of the situation and is trying to amend it*”.
30. We recall the detailed reference in our previous report to **CEDAW** that “*There are reports that the annual number of abortions ranges between 100,000-150,000, with 20-25% of them, concerning young girls under 16 years old,*” as adolescents are largely unaware of contraceptive methods, parents and teachers are unable to reach children, who are informed by their buddies. Our NGOs consider the data on abortions in the State report attributed to the **Ministry of Health** of very questionable validity as in fact they are not available on its website.
31. Moreover, **Greece** did not respond to **CEDAW**’s request for information on measures taken “*to ensure that information provided by health-care professionals to women seeking abortion is science-based and covers the risks of having or not having an abortion; and to ensure the confidentiality of the personal data of women and girls seeking abortion*”, an indication that there are no such measures.

## Economic empowerment of women

32. **CEDAW** is requested to ask **Greece** to provide specific information on which measures were taken to tackle gender discrimination faced by persons belonging to vulnerable social groups (migrant women, refugee women, single-parent families, Roma women, older women etc.) with a view to their social inclusion and social cohesion and any studies of the impact assessment of those measures.

## Migrant, refugee and asylum-seeking women

33. The two major problems for this group are the massive and very violent pushbacks affecting thousands of women that the State refused to investigate claiming that they do not occur and the inhuman living conditions in the various reception facilities that have led to a considerable number of **ECtHR** judgments against **Greece** with many more similar applications pending before the **Court**.
34. We refer **CEDAW** to paragraph 18 above detailing the violence involved in pushbacks.
35. The **GNCHR** has also collected information on pushbacks. As it states in its observations, “*in 2021, the GNCHR, noting that there is a complete disregard by the Greek authorities of the relevant recommendations by the GNCHR and other national and international bodies to effectively investigate reported incidents of informal forced returns whereas, based on testimonies, there is a*



*gradual but steady consolidation of the characteristics of the phenomenon through a repeated methodology decided to establish a Recording Mechanism of Incidents of Informal Forced Returns.”* On 13 December 2023, the **GNCHR** published its first comprehensive report covering 2022. The **Recording Mechanism** recorded, between February 2022 and December 2022, testimonies of 50 incidents of informal forced returns. According to the testimonies, the total number of alleged victims in these incidents amounts to a minimum of 2,157 persons, including 214 women and 205 children, as well as 103 persons with special needs, such as persons with medical problems, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, etc. The majority of alleged victims are from countries of origin, from which a significant proportion of persons are recognized as beneficiaries of international protection come, according to data from national and European sources. Among the alleged victims there are five (5) people who were recognized in Greece as refugees and five (5) people who were registered by Greek authorities as asylum -seekers and whose claim was pending. In the testimonies, the alleged victims described acts that amount to extremely serious violations of the principle of non-refoulement and the right to asylum, as well as violations of the prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment and the right to personal liberty, acts that, under Greek law, are criminal offences. The alleged victims reported that they have been subjected to physical violence, verbal violence and threats to their lives and physical integrity, sometimes with the use of weapons, sexual harassment, degrading treatment, removal of personal belongings and identification documents, informal detention in places under degrading conditions, separation of families, and loss of life. The testimonies recorded by the **Recording Mechanism** indicate that the perpetrators were both uniformed and plainclothes persons. In some testimonies it was reported that at the stage of removal from Greek territory, third country nationals speaking the language of the alleged victims were also involved as perpetrators.

36. Moreover, in its observations the **GNCHR** made reference to the **ECtHR** judgment in the case of [A.D. v. Greece](#) published on 4 April 2023 in which a violation of Article 3 **ECHR** was found in favor of a pregnant asylum seeker woman who lived in precarious and unhygienic conditions in the **Samos Reception and Identification Centre** for 2.5 months. Likewise, on 13 June 2023, the **ECtHR** published its judgment [H.A. and others v. Greece](#) in which violations of Article 3 **ECHR** were found in favor of 24 women asylum seekers who lived in degrading and inhumane conditions in the **Moria Lesvos hotspot**, including in a cage, in 2017-2018. Then, on 5 October 2023, the **ECtHR** published its judgment [E.F. v. Greece](#) in which a violation of Article 3 **ECHR** was found for depriving an HIV-positive asylum seeker from access to antiretroviral treatment in the **Moria Lesvos** and the **Polykastro camps**. Subsequently, on 23 November 2023, the **ECtHR** published its judgment [M.B. v. Greece](#) in which a violation of Article 3 **ECHR** was found in favor of a pregnant asylum seeker woman who lived in precarious and unhygienic conditions at the **Samos Reception and Identification Centre** for 4 months. On the same day, the **ECtHR** published its judgment [M.L. v. Greece](#) in which a violation of Article 3 **ECHR** was found in favor of a pregnant asylum seeker woman who lived in precarious and unhygienic conditions at the **Samos Reception and Identification Centre** for 3 months. Finally, on 30 November 2023, the **ECtHR** published its judgment [D.S. v. Greece](#) in which a violation of Article 3 **ECHR** was found in favor of a young, single woman asylum seeker who lived in degrading and inhumane conditions in the **Samos Reception and Identification Centre**.

37. **CEDAW** is also requested to take into account the **Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)**'s **Information Note on interventions and on interim measures granted by the ECtHR in cases regarding pushbacks updated on 3 December 2023**. The summary: *“Since March 2022 the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR) has represented 569 Syrian, 54 Turkish, 37 Iraqi, 15 Afghan and 8 Palestinian refugees, including many children, before the European Court of Human Rights, by filing 37 applications for interim measures (Rule 39), requesting to be granted humanitarian assistance and access to the asylum procedure. The Court granted the requested interim measures for all cases and ordered the Greek government not to remove the refugees from the country’s territory and to provide them with food, water and proper medical care. The ECtHR also requested to be informed by the Greek government, amongst others, on whether the refugees have submitted an asylum*

*application and whether they have access to the asylum procedure and to legal assistance. Some of the refugees of these 37 groups/cases have been formally arrested by the Greek authorities but most of them complain they have been pushed back to Turkey. It should be noted that the refugees, even from the groups that were formally arrested, complain that in the past they had been subjected to violent and informal return (pushback) to Turkey from Greece. Furthermore, both with respect to those stranded on the islets and those in the Greek mainland, the refugees who complain that they have been pushed back to Turkey, also complain that, in the majority of cases, they were informally arrested by the Greek authorities and informally detained in an unspecified detention facility in the Evros region. In all these cases they complain that they were treated with violence, they were transferred to the Evros river bank from where they were forcibly put in boats and pushed back to Turkey.”*

### **Roma women**

38. Despite the adoption of positive plans and specific social inclusion measures for the **Roma**, extreme poverty, inequalities and stereotypes persist, and **Roma** women are even more discriminated because in most cases they bear the burden to raise the often single-parent families that start when they are teenagers, because of the prevalence of early marriages which also means a high school dropout rate before the completion of secondary education. Unemployment rate among **Roma** men is very high and this means almost no work opportunities for **Roma** women, which creates a gender inequality and may cause domestic violence, especially for the large part of the **Roma** population who endure degrading living conditions and effective housing deprivation as well as poverty. Hence, the **Roma** are the most marginalized part of the population and **Roma** women are even more marginalized.
39. **Greece** reported that *“In 2020, the Programme “Social Integration and Inclusion of Roma” was launched with one of its central actions being the relocation of a specific Roma settlement. This pilot housing project included integrated housing, educational, health, employment and empowerment measures”*. This is the umpteenth program launched to resettle the **Roma** from the destitute camps to decent housing. It too has not produced tangible results which explains why not one successful relocation is included in the State report.

### **Women with disabilities**

40. The **Observatory on Disability Issues of the National Confederation of Disabled People of Greece** [reports](#) for all regions of **Greece** alarming structural problems and deficits, as persons with disabilities face high percentages of poverty, low standards of living, unfair treatment, limited access to health services and to education, limitations to access buildings and public transports. On 15 May 2023, that **Observatory** published [a newsletter](#) with following telling headline: *“Increase in persistent poverty and social exclusion for people with disabilities in the last 2 years: bold support measures urgently needed. 50.7% of severely disabled people aged 16-64 are on the spectrum of poverty and social exclusion. In 2022 the proportion of severely disabled people aged 65 and over at risk of poverty or social exclusion rose to 27.4%, up from 22.7% in 2020”*

### **Marriage and family relations**

41. **Greece** reports that matters of family law and of inheritance concerning members of the **Muslim minority** in **Thrace** are ruled by the common civil law provisions and only exceptionally fall within the jurisdiction of the **Muftis**, provided that parties involve agree to submit the case to their jurisdiction or apply Islamic law for their inheritance, while judgments of the **Muftis** are not enforceable unless they are declared so by local civil courts. This reflects the change in the law that made the application of sharia “optional.” However, **Greece** provides not information as to how many still opt for the discriminatory Islamic law which in most cases results from family and/or peer pressure in traditional families or communities; nor is there a report of judgments of civil courts overturning **Muftis**’ judgments.