



**RESOLUTION OF THE  
VERKHOVNA RADA OF UKRAINE**

**On Recommendations of Parliamentary Hearings on  
Equal Rights and Opportunities in Ukraine:  
Realia and Prospects**

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine hereby **resolves**:

- 1.** To approve Recommendations of the Parliamentary Hearings on Equal Rights and Opportunities in Ukraine: Realia and Prospects (as attached).
- 2.** The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine shall inform the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on the status of execution of the Recommendations based on the results of the parliamentary hearings on Equal Rights and Opportunities in Ukraine: Realia and Prospects by 1 May 2008.
- 3.** The Verkhovna Rada Committee on Human Rights, Minority Rights and International Relations shall be responsible for overseeing the execution of this Resolution.

**Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada  
of Ukraine**

**O. MOROZ**

**Kyiv, 27 June 2007  
No.1241-V**

*APPROVED BY  
Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine  
No. 1241-V of 27 June 2007*

**RECOMMENDATIONS  
of the Parliamentary Hearings on  
Equal Rights and Opportunities in Ukraine:  
Realia and Prospects**

The participants of the parliamentary hearings on Equal Rights and Opportunities in Ukraine: Realia and Prospects held on 21 November 2006 (*hereinafter referred to as the «participants of the parliamentary hearings»*) noted that Ukraine has in recent years achieved noticeable progress in the sphere of gender policy.

On 26 June 2005 the President of Ukraine issued the Decree on Improving the Work of Central and Local Executive Bodies on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men, and on 8 September 2005 the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted the Law of Ukraine on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men, which defined the institutional and legal grounds of gender relations in society.

A gender expert examination of the effective legislation is currently underway, the gender component is being introduced into science, education and informational political activity, a mechanism of managing gender processes in the system of legislative and executive power

is being developed and national legislation on gender equality is being further harmonized with international legal standards.

At the same time, the rate of growth and the quality of implementing gender policy do not meet the requirements of time, which impedes further democratization and social development.

The participants of the parliamentary hearings believe that activity in the sphere of gender transformation requires a thorough and substantiated analysis of state policy in all spheres of social life through the application of gender indicators. Such important issues as how state strategies, programs and events in all spheres influence the status of men and women, how the interests of both groups are taken into account when establishing state institutions and whether or not the principle of equal rights and opportunities is being observed in the course of defining state priorities must be clarified.

The need to conduct a gender analysis of the State Budget of Ukraine is of no less importance, as this will reveal and help mitigate approaches that polarize gender differences, a gender imbalance and discrimination.

The participants of the parliamentary hearings emphasized that despite the absence of the full picture of the current state of ensuring gender equality in Ukraine, a number of priority tasks must be fulfilled.

The first task is promoting women's rights by executing the recommendations of the parliamentary hearings of 2004 on the Status of Women in Ukraine: Realia and Prospects and the Law of Ukraine on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men with the aim of eradicating any manifestations of gender discrimination and expanding women's opportunities in political, economic and social spheres.

Gender imbalance is succinctly expressed in the following indicators: the share of women in the legislative branch of power is 8.5%, while there is not a single woman that holds a post in the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. In the economic sphere, all large property is owned by men that control 90-95% of the country's economic resources. The share of female entrepreneurs engaged in their own business is 38%. They are in charge of 26% of small enterprises, 15% of medium enterprises and 12% of large enterprises. Women account for 2% of the top executive positions in industry. Women's salaries are 1/3 less than those of men. In the social sphere, experts forecast that women's pensions compared to men's will continue to fall over the next 20-30 years. There is also a huge gender gap in the migration system where women make up the largest number of emigrants. The escalation of this trend will have serious and unforeseen economic, social and cultural repercussions.

Taking into account the above indicators, temporary positive measures in those spheres in which gender imbalance is most tangible would be well advised.

The protection of men's rights is no less of a priority which has yet to be discussed as a separate issue. The failure to consider the need to activate efforts aimed at protecting men's rights will merely discredit the notion of gender equality and result in a stereotype that gender equality issues are strictly «women's issues».

Among the most acute problems in this respect are reducing the level of psychological and physical violence among men, protecting their health and fighting detrimental habits that have an adverse effect on their quality of life and health.

The average life expectancy of men in Ukraine is 10-12 years lower than that of women. The mortality rate among men of working age (28-45 years) is 4 times higher than that of women. The gap between the life expectancy of women and men is first and foremost related to insufficient attention paid to preserving men's health and preventing negative consequences. For example, the problems that Ukrainian men face in terms of reproductive health are in some cases even greater than those that women face. Overcoming economic hardships is psychologically more difficult for men than for women. Among such hardships are unemployment, which in Ukraine has been at the level of 8-10% for quite a number of years now, unsuccessful career advancement, low salaries, etc.

A significant deterioration of the ecological situation in the aftermath of the Chornobyl nuclear accident and the high rates of the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and

sexually transmitted diseases also had a negative impact on men's health, in particular their reproductive functions. The State Program «Reproductive Health 2001-2005» approved by the Decree of the President of Ukraine of 26 March 2001, No. 203/2001 did not envision any specific targeted measures in conducting scientific studies and the development of concrete state mechanisms for the protection of men's reproductive health. Based on the results of sociological studies conducted in Ukraine, 40-50% of 868,000 couples are infertile due to male sterility. Men account for 60% of all persons carrying sexually transmitted diseases (e.g. 6 out of 10 HIV-positive patients are males).

Men more often than women tend to resort to physical violence and commit crimes, which affects both their psychological and physical health and reduces their life expectancy. Men also tend to lead a riskier way of life often resulting in injury, death or alcohol and drug abuse.

Reform of the Ukrainian army is also closely related to the protection of men's rights. Proper attention is not paid to the problem of suicides in the army and violence (the so-called «humiliating treatment of new recruits»), which is mentally, morally and physically traumatic for young men.

The marginalization of men as a result of termination of their professional activity due to extenuating circumstances beyond their control is another serious problem. In Ukraine military servicemen discharged due to downsizing of the

armed forces and miners laid off due to the shutting down of mines are categorized as marginalized men.

The protection of men's rights must be factored into the activities of government bodies aimed at implementing a policy of equal rights and opportunities of women and men, particularly in the development and execution of the relevant target programs.

In their speeches the participants of the parliamentary hearings noted that there is a significant gender imbalance in the process of child upbringing in Ukraine. About one third of children in Ukraine are brought up by single mothers and therefore do not feel the care and presence of a father in their lives. The share of families in which there is only a father is about 1 percent.

The father's right to take care of his child, which is guaranteed by the Constitution and Family Code of Ukraine, is often violated in practice. 95-97 percent of children live with their mothers after their parents are divorced. The desires of parents that have declared equal rights are rarely taken into account. Children remain with the father only in those cases when their mothers voluntarily give them up.

Irrespective of the type of family, mothers and fathers face difficulties in combining productive work and parental duties. The participants of the parliamentary hearings consider it expedient to foster the participation of both parents in a child's upbringing and establish effective mechanisms of protecting the professional interests

of fathers and mothers with young children through state support programs, adaptation, professional skill enhancement, loans and privileges for individuals hired after absence from work to take care of a newborn child.

Education is another important sphere that requires attention and the consideration of gender approaches. Despite the clearly positive experience in implementing the gender component in education and science, quite often there are discriminatory stereotypes in the educational system that have a negative impact on the formation of the mentalities of young boys and girls.

To this very day schools practice gender segregation, particularly in vocational schools. School textbooks in practically all disciplines contain gender stereotypes, which sow the seeds for gender discrimination becoming a common practice.

The information sphere also deserves special attention. The replication of pornography, scenes of open violence against women and advertisements with discriminatory statements by the mass media incite negative social trends. Understanding the value of freedom of expression, the participants of the parliamentary hearings emphasized that the state must develop democratic mechanisms of overcoming gender discrimination in the information sphere and influencing the development of a gender culture.

These observations led the participants of the parliamentary hearings to confirm that there are

manifestations of open or hidden gender discrimination aimed at restricting the rights and opportunities of one or the other gender. The participants emphasized that the gender situation in Ukraine requires the activation of a gender policy, intensifying gender transformations aimed at overcoming gender inequality in the social development of Ukrainian society, differences in the status of women and men in different spheres and regions, overcoming the gender gap in all spheres of life, eliminating differences in the equality of women and men before the law and giving women and men access to financial, economic, social and other resources.

The participants of the parliamentary hearings offer the following recommendations to the state authorities within their capacity:

### **1. To the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine:**

- 1) to provide for provisions on ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men in the new Labour Code of Ukraine (reference number 0913);
- 2) to make amendments to certain legislative acts due to adoption of the Law of Ukraine on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men; and
- 3) to allow for a gender factor in the formation of delegations for participation in international events.

## **2. To the Commissioner for Human Rights:**

To monitor the observance of equal rights and opportunities of women and men.

## **3. To the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine:**

1) to provide for allocation of funds for financing events aimed at ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men in the course of the development of draft laws on the State Budget of Ukraine for 2008 and the following years in accordance with the established procedure;

2) to initiate changes to the current legislation of Ukraine in accordance with the results of the gender and legal expert examination of the current legislation of Ukraine;

3) to study the gender aspects of the migration of Ukrainian citizens abroad and develop proposals concerning demographic stability and the prevention of emigration;

4) to develop a mechanism of economic incentives for employers to achieve a balanced ratio of women and men in all spheres of labour activity;

5) to adhere to the principle of ensuring gender equality in the appointment, recruitment and promotion of personnel to positions as public servants and ensure the equal rights and opportunities of women and men; and

6) to direct the activity of relevant executive bodies responsible for taking measures on ensuring the equal rights and opportunities of women and men, namely:

**To the Ministry for Family,  
Youth and Sports —**

To contribute to the development of state target programs and regional programs on ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men in different spheres of social life;

To monitor the performance of actions envisaged by the State Program on Strengthening Gender Equality in Ukrainian Society until 2010 adopted by the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 27 December 2006, No. 1834;

To draft a synopsis of the positive experience of central and local executive bodies in the implementation of gender policy and apply that same experience in the regions;

To ensure the review of appeals of citizens on issues of gender discrimination and a synopsis of their problems;

To engage non-government organizations in the implementation of gender policy;

To conduct training courses on gender equality for employees of central and local executive bodies;

To coordinate an information campaign in the mass media aimed at precluding risky behaviour among men and

encouraging men to take care of their health and lead a healthy and safe lifestyle;

**To the Ministry of Health of Ukraine —**

To ensure implementation of the provisions of the State Program «Reproductive Health of the Nation» until 2015 adopted by virtue of the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of 27 December 2006, No. 1849;

To assist in establishing centres of reproductive health of men and women in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and in all regions of Ukraine;

To conduct research into factors that have an adverse effect on the reproductive health of men; and

To ensure that a gender component is factored into the programs for preventing the spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases, namely programs for HIV-positive pregnant women and prisoners;

**To the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Ukraine —**

To foster the development of a gender culture in Ukraine, support (initiate) the production of national documentary and feature films and hold contests and exhibitions devoted to issues of ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men, develop responsible parenthood, take precautionary measures to prevent risky lifestyles of men and raise the social status of women;

### **To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine —**

To inform Ukrainian society of the activity of international organizations aimed at strengthening gender equality;

To foster the study of international experience in the adoption and implementation of gender legislation;

### **To the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine —**

To develop actions aimed at enhancing the population's legal culture in gender equality;

To ensure that a gender and legal expert examination of draft legislation and regulations is conducted;

### **To the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine —**

To ensure that an examination of educational programs, textbooks and work-books for learning institutions is conducted to verify their compliance with the principle of ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men;

To increase the volume of publications on gender equality, especially scientific publications;

To include disciplines on equal rights and opportunities of women and men in the educational programs of higher education institutions and re-training courses; and

To begin training specialists on how to conduct a gender analysis in the socio-economic sphere;

## **To the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Ukraine —**

To facilitate the inclusion of provisions ensuring equal rights and opportunities of women and men in general, regional, sector and collective agreements;

## **To the State Statistics Committee of Ukraine**

To ensure collecting, processing, analyzing, storing, protecting and using sex-disaggregated statistics on indicators of the status of women and men in all spheres of social life including level of income, allocation of budgetary funds, participation in political decision-making, access to healthcare services, education, culture, housing, transport, public services and observance of rights and freedoms;

## **To the State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting of Ukraine —**

To develop a system of effective methods of engaging the mass media in covering gender problems and issues;

To create and ensure broadcasting of special TV and radio programs on the equal rights and opportunities of women and men on the terms and conditions of state request;

To ensure the dissemination of social awareness advertisements aimed at exercising the equal rights and opportunities of women and men;

To monitor the compliance of the content of TV and radio programs with the Law of Ukraine on Ensuring Equal Rights and Opportunities of Women and Men;

**To the Council of Ministers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, oblast, Kyiv and Sevastopol City State Administrations —**

To develop and adopt programs on gender equality and ensure their implementation; and

To strengthen cooperation with non-government organizations dealing with the issues of gender equality and support their activity.