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# **Equal opportunities and collective bargaining in the European Union**

Selected agreements from Greece  
Phase II

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WP/97/17/EN



**EUROPEAN FOUNDATION**  
**for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions**

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by  
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## Summary

The concept of equal opportunities, as understood in our research programme, is not something that Greek collective labour agreements have tended to nurture. Despite the prominent position of female employment in Greek labour relations, the provisions of collective labour agreements - as the language used in their formulation indicates - are notable for their unequal treatment of male and female workers. Equality of opportunity presupposes, as far as labour relations are concerned, the involvement of women in collective bargaining, social dialogue and the decision-making fora. Despite the prominent role of working women in Greece, women as a collective entity are not correspondingly represented in the negotiating process and in the most recent fora promoting social dialogue. Nevertheless, a few exceptions to the prevailing male dominance are finding expression in, and as a result of, the adoption in collective agreements of a number of provisions which do in fact promote equal opportunity. Of the many Greek collective agreements that were studied, only a few met the criteria of our research and the criteria relating to specific content. Of the twenty selected collective agreements that were 'good' with regard to equal opportunities, the only ones that we consider exemplary, in so far as they introduce new concepts and new practices and have advanced equality of opportunity through collective bargaining, are the national general agreements and agreements in the banking sector. The others attempt only to facilitate the performance of domestic tasks which are considered in Greece to be part of the woman's 'natural role' (care of children, the sick, the elderly). In the equality provisions of these other agreements the emphasis is on helping women to cope with family commitments rather than on the promotion of their careers. However, although facilitation of the two roles of women - as workers and as mothers, wives and daughters - perpetuates the inequality of opportunity between men and women in the workplace, the provisions of Greek collective agreements covering these matters are in a sense positive and do deserve mention. Not because they do anything to foster real equality of opportunity, but because they do not ignore the fact that those commitments and tasks are traditionally the preserve of women rather than of men and because they make it 'easier' for women to fulfil the roles allotted to them given the lack of social infrastructure (e.g. crèches) in Greece.

Of the collective labour agreements presented, three are national agreements (1993, 1994-95 and 1996-97) covering all workers in Greece and are rich in content with regard to equal opportunities in Greece. The national general collective agreement of 1993, which has lasting applicability, stands as a reference point on equality of opportunity because the negotiations for it included female negotiators for the first time at national level, because it deals with equality issues at the institutional level - it set up, for the first time, a committee on sexual equality - and contains provisions to enable working men and women to combine their employment with their domestic commitments, thus providing a blueprint for sectoral and single professional agreements, particularly as regards leave (maternal leave, parental care leave, reduced working hours after a birth for either the mother or the father), because it deals with issues relating to part-time employment, and because, also for the first time, albeit in an indirect way, it makes reference to sexual harassment. The 1994-95 national general collective agreement raises certain issues relating to the implementation of the child care leave provisions adopted in the 1993 national agreement. The most recent national general collective agreement, that of 1996-97, is also important in that it contains two articles on equal opportunities: the first refers to the establishment of an agency to promote gender equality issues and the second to the implementation in Greece of the European collective agreement on parental leave.

Eight sectoral collective agreements are presented: two from the banking sector (those of 1994 and 1996), one from the private sector insurance industry, one each from the textile and clothing industries, one from the pharmaceutical industry, one agreement for the staff of local authorities (OTA) and one agreement for workers in agricultural co-operatives (ASO). Six single professional collective agreements are presented: those for staffing the computer industry, beauticians, male and female health visitors, male and female accountants, male and female teachers in foreign language schools and staff employed in hotels run by the Greek Tourist Organization (EOT). Three company collective agreements are presented: the agreements for staff in the Greek Telecommunications Organization (OTE), for staff of the Greek Post Office (ELTA) and for employees in the Macedonia-Thrace bank.

The most noteworthy of the sectoral collective agreements is the 1994 collective labour agreement for banks which contains a number of model provisions adopted for the first time in Greece on equal opportunities at the institutional level: the establishment of sectoral and management committees on equal opportunities, of a committee on social dialogue to deal with gender equality issues and of two pioneering institutions - an employment ombudsman and an educational centre - whose function will be to provide operational support for the committee on social dialogue. These equality issues are further promoted at institutional level by the 1996 collective banking agreement which stipulates the way the committees are to be set up and run and binds the contracting parties to set up such committees. Preparatory to the finalizing of the 1996 collective labour agreement for the insurance industry, proposals have been made for the setting-up of similar equal opportunities committees at the sectoral and management levels in insurance undertakings.

Two main features of the other sectors whose collective agreements are presented are the predominance of female workers in the sectors and the employee specialisation's that the agreements cover. In particular, the textiles and clothing sectors and the sector covered by the collective agreement for Stalin the computer industry are traditionally female-dominated as regards their percentages of females employees (70-90% of all workers), but this does not mean that women hold senior positions. All of these agreements contain provisions on leave entitlement and benefits whose main focus of concern is the family and thus, in general terms, they follow in the steps of the national agreement of 1993. Nevertheless, there are differences in the area of benefits: for example, the extended maternity leave that is provided by the ASO and OTE collective agreements and the greater reduction in working hours provided by the ASO agreement. In practice, these agreements often grant atypical benefits which are more advantageous to workers than those provided for in the national agreement and in the collective contract of employees which is a restatement of the national agreement. The collective agreement in the pharmaceutical industry is a typical example of a Greek private sector agreement in that respect.

The agreements provide other benefits aimed at the family: marriage leave, leave of absence to deal with a serious family problem, as provided by the textile industry agreement, and even a marital allowance. The fact that the single professional collective agreement for staff in the computer industry grants this latter allowance to the unmarried mother as well is a mark of progress in the Greek approach to the single parent family. Certain collective agreements, such as the single professional agreement for beauticians, grant the benefit to both parents, even when they are unmarried, thus recognising that some couples in Greece, though not many,

cohabit outside marriage. The sectoral agreement for male and female health visitors allows employees paid leave to monitor their children's school progress. The company national agreement for staff of the ELTA grants a family allowance to parents who have a handicapped child, thus allotting to the family the welfare role of the state. Several collective agreements make provision for the payment of a child allowance for two children of either sex. However, some sectoral agreements, such as the agreement for male and female accountants, maintain the tradition of differential treatment of boys and girls. Lastly, there is the nursery allowance provided by the company local collective agreement for employees in the Macedonia-Thrace bank.

Other provisions of the collective agreements that are presented which promote equal opportunities are the stipulation in the collective agreement for male and female teachers in language schools that a female teacher who ceases work to give birth must be re-employed and the reclassification clause in the single professional collective agreement for staff employed in hotels run by the EOT.

The collective agreements that are presented cover almost all of the workers in each sector or profession. The most notable exceptions are male and female workers in clothing fashion houses who are considered to work independently and are thus not covered by the sectoral agreement, although their labour is, in fact, dependent, and male and female employees and experts working in various specialisations who provide services to local authorities under a multidimensional labour regime and are not covered by the OTA sectoral agreement.

In a general sense the collective agreements that are presented have begun to generate a new bargaining culture. The national general collective agreements have been primarily responsible for paving the way towards equal opportunities in Greece. The national general agreement of 1993 included and imposed an equal opportunities policy and prepared the ground for the drafting of positive action programmes which we hope will become the subject of negotiation, necessarily with female participation, firstly in sectors, such as banking and insurance, in which the collective agreements already provide for the setting-up of equality committees and, later, in the public undertakings and organisations and in several areas of the private sector where the conditions are propitious.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

"May the passers-by learn whose fate is  
engraved in gold and whose in bronze"

**Elytis**

The presentation of certain collective agreements, within the extremely traditional context of Greek collective bargaining, which - despite the existence of Law 1876/1990 - is still very limited and restricted compared to other Member States of the European Union, is due to the demand for equal opportunities for men and women. Equal opportunity entails a redefinition of the roles of both sexes involving a redistribution of paid and unpaid, and visible and invisible employment.

This of course presupposes, as far as labour relations are concerned, the involvement of women in collective bargaining, social dialogue and decision -making processes. Despite the fact that female employment in the Greek labour market is now more prominent <sup>1</sup>, women as a body are not correspondingly represented - in visible and measurable terms - in the negotiating process or in the most recent fore promoting social dialogue such as the Economic and Social Committee. Nevertheless, there are a few cracks to the male domination of collective bargaining, such as:

(a) the action of the GSEE Women's Committee which played a leading part in signing the innovative 1993 national general collective agreement <sup>2</sup> and subsequent provisions of the 1994 national general agreement and, in general terms, setting up equality committees;

(b) the resolutions of the second panhellenic women's conference (one woman in every workplace, one woman at every negotiating table);

(c) innovatory collective agreements, as far as Greece is concerned, chiefly in the banking and insurance sectors;

(d) provisions in certain collective agreements providing parental leave, even for unmarried men - usually unpaid - or entitling fathers to take leave formerly referred to as "child-rearing leave" which involves working fewer hours so that more time can be spent with a young child requiring special care. Other subtle changes can be identified in the language used, despite the fact that as a rule the language of collective agreements, as is generally the case with legislation, is not gender specific.

Despite the existence of numerous groups of working women and differences between them, the concept of women as a specific group in the field of collective negotiations on labour law and employment relations is beginning to take root and develop in Greece. The experiences of working women are now beginning to have an impact on the formulation of provisions within collective agreements. Feminist research is contributing a great deal - both here and

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<sup>1</sup> See Report, "Collective bargaining and equal opportunities in Greece" of the first phase of this research.

<sup>2</sup> Foteini Sianou, Changing the World through Equality, Women at the Heart of the Trade Union Movement, GSEE, Athens, 1995 (in greek).

elsewhere - to creating this female culture in the workplace<sup>3</sup>. Thus, slowly but surely a collective female consciousness is beginning to appear. Despite the existence of many categories of female workers, the "wealthy" and the "poor" are increasingly covered by the same collective agreements - such as those in the banking and textile industry sectors - as a result of the changes that have occurred in recent years due primarily to the contraction of farming and the movement by women into independent professions in an attempt to escape both old and new barriers.

Although many collective labour agreements, almost all from the last ten years, were consulted and scrutinised, few were considered suitable as they fail to meet the research criteria laid down by Dublin. Nevertheless, some innovations and progress towards equal opportunities within the context of collective bargaining can be found even in Greece. Given that collective bargaining activity has increased only slightly and given the conventional content of such agreements -actually they are atypical agreements and practices which make provision in cash (productivity payments) or in kind (use of company transport for day trips) - we found nothing in these atypical agreements dealing specifically with equal opportunities. It should be noted that companies, which are often dynamic and meet all the criteria needed for signing collective labour agreements, do not become involved in negotiations. Rather, they make use of sectoral or single professional collective agreements which control and regulate workers' demands by means of atypical agreements and practices; or, when they do sign company agreements, they refuse to include additional provisions usually provided as a matter of course such as unpaid maternity leave.

This paper is organised as follows: **Chapter II** discusses the general characteristics of "good" collective agreements; **Chapter III** refers to national general agreements which contain provisions on equal opportunities; **Chapter IV** deals with sectoral national agreements; **Chapter V** with single professional agreements; **Chapter VI** with company collective agreements; and **Chapter VII**, the final chapter, with the synthetic analysis of the content of collective agreements. The provisions dealing with equal opportunities are concerned with facilitating the employment of women with families and not with their professional careers.

This study attempts to provide an overview of good collective agreements within the Greek context of labour relations having regard to its particular characteristics and future potential. In accordance with the guidelines and the indicative questionnaire of B. Bercusson, the collective agreements were analysed in the following way: (A) identification of collective agreement, date signed and trade union and employers' organisations involved, the sector covered and relationship with other collective agreements; (B) the positive aspects of each collective agreement and (C) factors relevant to the national context in which they were drawn up.

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<sup>3</sup> Despite the fact that in Greece the law in general, and labour law in particular, remains indifferent to the development of feminist theories. This obviously does not have a positive impact on collective bargaining for equal opportunities.



## II. COLLECTIVE LABOUR AGREEMENTS PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES: HOW THEY STAND IN THE GREEK

The twenty collective labour agreements we consider good examples of equal opportunities and which are particularly innovative, insofar as they introduce new concepts and new institutions, are fairly limited in scope: national general agreements and agreements in the banking sector. Other agreements of most interest contain provisions which take account of the domestic responsibilities of working men and women and provide for parental leave and leave to rear small children - which follows on immediately after maternity leave - which is sometimes paid. Most of the collective agreements analysed here deal with the same problem of meeting domestic needs - care for children, the sick, the elderly, supervision for children attending school - which is considered in Greece to be part of the woman's "natural" role<sup>4</sup>. Thus, collective agreements aim to combine family care with a woman's duties as wife, mother, daughter and bride. In view of the lack of infrastructure in Greece that exists in certain Scandinavian countries - such as nurseries, crèches, social services - the provisions of collective agreements are extremely useful given the prevailing conditions in Greece. Reference is made to them here not because their main aim is to foster equal opportunities in labour relations, but rather because they acknowledge that working women traditionally, unlike working men, are obliged to fulfil these commitments and tasks which are made easier by the relevant provisions of collective agreements. This is more beneficial for working women than completely ignoring the fact that they have babies or their social role as women (mothers, wives and so on). Nevertheless, there is no doubt that, as demonstrated by studies and research both in Europe and in Greece, attempts to combine and officially recognise both roles played by women creates conditions that breed inequality, perpetuating inequality of opportunities between men and women in the workplace (see the work of the Forum of the European Institute in Florence, "Gender and Use of Time", 1994-95, and the article by Eva Brumlop).

The collective agreements presented are only a fraction (about one-sixteenth) of all the collective agreements and arbitration awards currently in force. These are characterised by the following developments: there has been a small increase in the total number of collective agreements and arbitration awards in Greece, or rather an increase in the number of sectoral collective agreements, a reduction in arbitration awards in accordance with the aim of Law 1876/1990, an increase in single professional agreements, despite legislation to the contrary, and an extremely small increase in the number of company collective agreements, despite legislation to the contrary. To be more specific, in 1994 there was an increase in the total number of collective agreements and a general reduction in the number of arbitration awards. The total number of collective agreements rose from 171 in 1989 to 254 in 1993 and 287 in 1994. The number of sectoral and company collective agreements has risen steadily, while single professional agreements -which constitute a basic bargaining level - declined, after almost doubling at national level, and the total number of collective agreements and arbitration awards, i.e. negotiated agreements, rose from 208 in 1992 to 285 in 1993 and 325 in 1994. The increase in collective bargaining activity is due mainly to the intervention of OMED

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<sup>4</sup> According to research carried out by INE - GSEE entitled "Workers' secondary occupation", the working women, in addition to the three hours she spends on housework, spends 1½ hours per day looking after her children, while her husband spends only 36 minutes. Consequently, the working husband has 3 hours and 35 minutes relaxation time while the working wife has less - due to lack of time - 2 hours and 10 minutes. Both spend 1 hour and 20 minutes each day travelling to and from their place of work, see Eleftherotypia 27 May 1996.

mediators and arbitrators. They assist the parties and sometimes exert pressure to get collective agreements signed rather than having them referred to arbitration. This has resulted in a small increase in activity in direct collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is also conducted in companies although, as pointed out, this form of bargaining is atypical and unwritten. Falling into this category are the collective agreements for local government, the insurance industry and beauticians in which a small number of female negotiators were involved.

Of the collective labour agreements presented, the three first national general agreements cover all workers in Greece. From the sectoral agreements, two collective agreements in the banking sector have been chosen on account of their rich content with regard to equal opportunities in Greece and one agreement "in the making" from the private insurance sector has been chosen for the same reason. Strictly speaking, only the first can be considered «good» for equal opportunities through self-declared intent, while the remainder may be considered good, given a more flexible interpretation. All the other collective agreements (or arbitration awards) are considered to be favourable to equal opportunities in the context of the Greek system of collective bargaining. No collective agreement yet exists with the specific aim of abolishing inequalities through positive actions.

Next, two sectors which traditionally employ a large number of women have been chosen: the textiles and clothing industry which, as in other countries in Europe is experiencing a crisis, and the pharmaceuticals industry, which is one of the most dynamic sectors. Local authorities and agricultural co-operatives were also chosen because, while they belong to the private sector, their employer is not private. In Greece, when the employer is not private, the provisions of collective agreements and benefits are generally much better. The single professional agreements were chosen for two reasons: they cover a high percentage of women and their provisions, wherever possible, aim to establish equal opportunities. The category of company national collective agreements includes the Greek Telecommunications Organization (OTE) and Greek Post (ELTA). These cover staff in companies in the broader public sector which fall into the category of «socialized» companies. There is obviously a lack of company collective agreements despite the fact that in practice benefits such as maternity leave and other benefits to women are provided. However, as noted in our research, these are not written down. In other words, employers still refuse to recognize collective negotiations at company level preferring instead to award "voluntary" benefits to the staff.

In general terms, we were faced with a lack of factual elements because, as is well known, the science of industrial relations has not been constituted in Greece. To carry out the research, we made a meticulous study of periodicals and other publications - mainly over the last five years - which publish collective agreements and arbitration awards: namely, the Labour Law Review, the Labour Law Bulletin, the Insurance and Labour Law Review, the (dynamic but short-lived) Trade Union Review, publications and collections issued by the Ministry of Labour and the Mediation and Arbitration Organization. We also made use of the collective agreements stored in electronic format under the "Logistic" web site on the Internet. As far as we know, these are the only agreements in electronic format in Greece. Of the collective agreements presented here, we preferred, wherever possible, the codified collective agreements published in the two - volume version compiled by OMED<sup>5</sup> (the Mediation and Arbitration Organization) for the following reasons: when a collective labour agreement is signed in Greece - something which

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<sup>5</sup> For foreign readers, see Y. Kravaritou, *European Employment and Industrial Relations Glossary: Greece, 1994*; and *Social Europe, The regulation of labour relations in the EEC*.

happens, except in extremely rare circumstances, every year - previous agreements are not abolished. Furthermore, every collective agreement stipulates that all the provisions of similar collective agreements not explicitly abolished by the new agreement remain in force. As a result, overlapping and confusion often occur. For this reason, OMED decided to classify all collective agreements and arbitration awards so as to give an overall picture of the provisions of collective agreements in force for each sector, single professional category, etc. Despite the fact that this classification is unofficial and is not binding<sup>6</sup>, it is quite useful. Nevertheless, the provisions in which we are interested and have analysed are binding in character. Generally speaking, the scope of Greek collective agreements, even those that are codified, is fairly limited.

*A first reading* of the texts of collective agreements reveals - for all those who have previously dealt with the subject (see Y. Kravaritou, *The system of collective bargaining, restructuring and re-examination*, *Labour Law Review*, vol. 40, 974, 1981, pp. 27-108 and 129-146 (in greek), and *Researching 100 collective agreements concerned with female employment*, *INE-GSEE Information Bulletin*, vol. 6-7, Aug-Sept 1991, pp.37-41(in greek)) - a hopeless lack of consistency: the familiar old content (working hours, pay, benefits), the absence of any creative thinking and the repetition of legal provisions based on conventional ideas dealing with matters such as parental leave (and even this is essentially copied from the relevant Community Directive). With very few exceptions, there have been no innovative or significant developments in the content of Greek agreements, particularly with regard to collective company agreements. This is true even for the most advanced agreements at national level whether they be sectoral or single professional agreements. Limited in scope and style, and usually drawn up annually - on account of the need for the continual adjustment of salaries and wages - Greek collective agreements appear dull and restrained compared to the multi-paged, innovative and detailed collective agreements of other Member States of the European Union, whether from the north or the south. In Greece, it is obvious that it is the law that governs labour relations. Collective agreements are marginal. The culture of collective bargaining is extremely limited and the culture of equal opportunities even more so.

The disappointing fact is that this situation has continued almost unabated even following the long-awaited entry into force of Law 1876/1990 on free collective agreements, and the establishment and operation of OMED, which was supposed to intervene to settle collective differences by introducing fundamental changes into the content and direction of collective bargaining. This has (still) not happened despite the fact that OMED is not a state body, and most of its members - both male and female mediators and arbitrators - in addition to their own experience, have excellent theoretical training, knowledge of other European countries and have previously criticised the content and operation of Greek collective labour agreements. And yet few changes or innovations have occurred. Nor can responsibility for this be blamed on the fact that Law 3239 did not exist, or on the bitter confrontation in the past - which reached its height in 1989 -between trade union factions. Indeed, all collective bargaining

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<sup>6</sup> OMED's aim was this codification to establish a useful tool and for this reason it paid attention to the form in which it was drawn up. The codification was carried out by a team of 20 labour relations experts in two phases (1992-1993), while a scientific committee checked the texts to ensure no provisions were omitted. Research began with texts from 1975. The 132 classified texts which resulted are continually updated with new amendments. It is a pity that the language in all collective agreements has not been unified. Certain provisions are still published in *katharevousa* (purist greeks) - thereby indicating their age - while others are drawn up in demotic.

systems in the Member States underwent a period of profound change as a result of global forces connected with the new technologies and the demands of prevalent rationale of competition which are inevitably reflected even in the Community Directives.

The Greek system of collective bargaining, in response to Community Directives and demands, reflects the dual pressures exerted by them (eg rationalisation of production for competitive reasons leading to redundancies, but also opening up new "progressive" possibilities: representation, participation, equal opportunities. Against this (international and national) background, collective bargaining in Greece has not made major progress, but rather has remained thinly entrenched and out of step with the major changes which have generally taken place both within and outside Greece. Collective bargaining in respect of equal opportunities has followed a similar pattern.

A *second reading* of the texts reveals (in a somewhat modest fashion) the limited extent to which the content of collective bargaining has changed within the traditionally narrow and restricted framework of Greek labour agreements, even if comparisons with other European Union countries, where the historical or legal background is quite different, are ignored. For example, where a strong trade union movement exists as a result of industrial development and historically favourable circumstances (compared to the effect of the civil war on the Greek trade union movement and collective bargaining) or where a strong system of collective bargaining exists because employment conditions are governed by negotiations rather than by the law. Bearing this in mind and having few expectations, reading and examining Greek collective agreements has revealed some quite interesting changes and developments. One notable change concerns the language used in collective agreements: the use of demotic is becoming more the none. Feral collective agreements have been drawn up in katharevousa (purist greek) during the period under study<sup>7</sup>. Certain specialist jobs (pressers, cutters, machinists, cleaners) are still referred to in the feminine gender. Several attempts have been made to eradicate sexism from the language of collective agreements by ensuring that job titles at least do not smack of inequality. In certain cases, however, attempts to establish equality in this manner have - as our *first report* showed - proved to be merely superficial and, in the case of male dominated sectors, rather ingenuous. However, it is worth studying systematically the vocabulary of job specialities as formulated and developed in the texts of collective labour agreements. There is a rich vocabulary to describe the specialist jobs of women - and men - which are often unknown outside the workplace (and have still not been incorporated in the language of labour relations) and which are still developing: some remain, others are disappearing and being replaced by new words directly related to the new methods of production (the textile machinist responsible for garment patterns such as pullovers). In this indirect manner, the texts of collective labour agreements divulge the unequal position of women and, at the same time, reveal the attempts made to overcome this. However, the reverse can also be seen. In other words, in female dominated professions, collective agreements refer to the masculine gender or add the phrase "of both sexes".

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<sup>7</sup> As happened years ago when collective agreements were written in katharevousa (purist greek), which was not understood by workers and was certainly not written with workers in mind, with the results that fathers of trade union chapels - masculine gender only - were needed as intermediaries. Today, at least in theory, there is (much greater) opportunity for direct participation by male and female workers in formulating collective agreements.

### III. NATIONAL GENERAL COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

#### 1. The 1993 national general collective agreement: the main section

“The summits seek the fallen snow and little stream where the centaur lost the path”

**Elytis**

This is the most important collective agreement on equal opportunities containing a section on labour relations dealing with male and female inequality. The negotiations included for the first time at national level female negotiators on both the employees' and employers' side (these were skilled, gender-conscious negotiators with technical know-how). This agreement falls into the category of good collective agreements promoting equal opportunities and containing, *inter alia*, provisions concerned with civic and qualitative issues.

It deals with equality issues at the institutional level and provides a blueprint for sectoral and single professional agreements, particularly as regards parental leave, reduced working hours for parents of small children, maternity leave, part-time employment and sexual harassment. The agreement was signed by employers' and employees' third-level trade union organisations: on the employers' side, the Federation of Greek Industries (SEB), the General Confederation of Greek Small Business and Trades (GSEBEE) and the Federation of Greek Commercial Associations and, on the employees' side, the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE).

It set up, for the first time, a committee on sexual equality. Article 11, one of the most important articles in the agreement on equal opportunities, also makes reference - albeit in an indirect way - to the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace.

**A.** The 1993 national collective agreement was signed on 9 June 1993 and is an annual agreement. It is binding on employers and covers employees, craftsmen and office workers throughout Greece in the private sector, commerce and industry regardless of whether or not they are members of trade unions. The parties to the agreement are the Federation of Greek Industries (SEB), the General Confederation of Greek Small Business and Trades (GSEBEE), the Federation of Greek Commercial Associations and the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE). The SEB covers half the private enterprises in Greece and includes federations of 5 regional and 44 sectoral organisations. The GSEE covers 66 workplaces with 285 000 members and 53 federations including public sector federations.

**B.** In addition to the positive aspects of the collective agreement, such as part-time employment, protection of employees' dignity, support for the obligations and rights of working fathers, the establishment of a bilateral committee on sexual equality stands out as a major institutional achievement. This committee consists of three members from both sides and of both sexes with the aim of monitoring the implementation of legislation on equal treatment for male and female employees with family responsibilities. It reports back to employers and trade unions and makes concrete proposals for measures to eradicate unequal treatment in labour relations. In calling for dignified treatment and behaviour in the workplace in respect of matters connected with gender, an attempt is made to regulate and raise awareness of gender issues, albeit without any specific reference to sexual harassment.

The agreement contains provisions to enable working men and women to combine their employment with their domestic commitments. Provision is made on a case by case basis for men and women to have time off work for childcare reasons. In companies or undertakings with at least 50 employees, a working parent, provided he/she has completed one year's employment with the same employer and the other parent works outside the home, may take unpaid parental leave for a period of three and a half months up until the child reaches the age of three (limited to 8% of the total number of employees in the company each calendar year), work one hour less per day for two years following the birth of a child or two hours less for one year. This applies to both men and women without any loss of pay. Four months maternity leave is also granted and on the birth of each child the father is entitled to leave of one day with pay.

These basic provisions of the 1993 national general agreement, along with those of other national general agreements, have now been ratified and entered into force. They are binding on all employers regardless of whether or not they participate in trade union representation bodies at any level<sup>8</sup>.

The agreement's relevant provisions apply to part-time employees. It grants them the opportunity to participate in professional training within a company under the same conditions as those covering full-time workers and staff. It also provides for equal (proportional) treatment in respect of annual leave, allowances, benefits and additional social security programmes.

It calls on enterprises to avoid employing pregnant women on night shifts. At any time during pregnancy, should a pregnant woman request to be moved on health grounds, she must be moved to daytime employment.

C. The national general collective agreement is published in many legal reviews, such as the Labour Law Bulletin, in which we consulted it. It applies to all employees and employers throughout the country except for crews on merchant navy vessels, dockers, piecework employees, workers with no fixed employer, domestic help and domestic employment in general, workers in agriculture, stock rearing, fisheries and forestry sectors. It lays down the guidelines for sectoral and single professional agreements which open incorporate its basic provisions.

The GSEE women's committee, which was set up in 1989, was responsible for promoting, energetically negotiating and achieving the demands incorporated in the national general agreement. It took full advantage of all the criticisms made against the existing legislation on equal opportunities. The national general agreement is extremely important for a number of reasons. It has mobilized workers within their trade union organisations especially in recent years during which time the spirit of confrontation has decreased. It stands as a reference point for social dialogue between employers and trade unions. It covers all salaried men and women throughout the country, and has direct economic implications for approximately 20% of the total workforce on the lowest wages and salaries. It represents, if not a models at least a point

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<sup>8</sup> It should be remembered that under Greek law a collective agreement made for a specific period of time of more than one year in duration is considered unlimited in length. Consequently, this agreement is still valid today as are subsequent national agreements.

of reference for the legal profession, economists and all who are generally concerned with the practical aspects of labour relations as they affect collective bargaining, salaries and pay. It is also a reference point for the mediators and arbitrators of the Mediation and Arbitration Organization.

## **2. The 1994-1995 national general collective agreement: parental leave does not have negative implications for workers**

The 1994 national general collective agreement clarifies certain issues concerned with the implementation of childcare leave as defined by the previous national agreement. Its aim is to consolidate these new institutions.

**A.** It was signed on 21 March 1994 by the same trade union organisations that signed the 1993 national agreement and runs for a two-year period (1994-1995). Its provisions are linked to Article 9 of the 1993 national agreement (see collective agreement, No. 1, section B).

**B.** The participating parties attempted to clarify the problems arising in respect of the retrospective implementation of parental leave for childcare, as agreed under the collective agreement, urging their members to make every effort to ensure that this leave was granted. It was considered that these regulations would not create difficulties in the workplace and they wanted to consolidate this new regulation which is concerned with the working father.

It also provides for employees engaged in study by increasing to 20 days the leave granted for taking examinations. This provision could theoretically promote equal opportunities by the addition of a simple clause on the equal distribution of leave for both sexes. It failed to meet the demand of female trade unionists for the recognition and regulation of the extremely delicate matter of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Thus, it did not introduce any legislation to tackle the burning issue of sexual harassment despite the severe criticisms made by female trade unionists and their proposed definition of the concept, namely, unacceptable behaviour which affects, demeans, harasses and violates the worker in the workplace. However, it did call on trade unions to recognize the problem, provide moral support for female workers subject to such behaviour and discourage behaviour of this kind (see newspaper Epochi of 30 January 1994).

**C.** The 1994-95 national general agreement is published in many legal periodicals. The text annexed to this report was published in the Insurance and Labour Law Review.

## **3. The 1996-1997 national general collective agreement: includes the European agreement**

**A.** It was signed on 2 April 1996 by the trade union organisations that signed the previous national collective agreements, in other words, on the employers' side, the SEB, the GSEBEE and the National Confederation of Greek Commerce and on the employees' side, by the GSEE.

**B.** It contains a number of important provisions on institutional matters, such as the committee for research into the effects of reduced working hours, support for childcare, measures to combat racism and xenophobia and the environment.

It contains two important articles on equal opportunities. The first refers to the establishment of a body in which employers' organisations and trade unions are to be equally represented. A committee consisting of representatives from both sides will submit to the SEB, the GSEBEE, the National Confederation of Greek Commerce and the GSEE by 30 June 1996 a proposal establishing the legal basis of this body, its specific aims, its modus operandi and resources.

The second article refers to parental leave. The participating parties state that they wish to implement at national level the European agreement on parental leave signed in December 1995 between the social partners at European level as provided for under the Protocol and Agreement on Social Policy of the Treaty of Maastricht.

This will probably be implemented through an agreement annexed to the 1996 national general collective agreement. This agreement will be signed by the trade unions and employers' organisations within three months of the signing of the collective agreement.

Implementing the European collective agreement in Greece on parental leave is important as it will extend the provisions currently in force.

C. Annexed to this report is the text of the collective agreement published in the insurance and Labour Law Review.



## IV. SECTORAL NATIONAL COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

"Midday may break at any minute but  
truth always lies broken"

**Elvtsis**

### **4. The 1994 collective labour agreement for banks: the first to introduce equal opportunities committees**

The collective agreement covers 70% of Greek banks and some foreign banks. The total number of employees covered is approximately 45 000, 38% of whom are women. This percentage varies from bank to bank: for instance, in the National Bank the figure is 60% and, in the Commercial Bank it is more than 50%. The lower overall percentage of 38% is due to the small number of female employees in small private banks, for example the Ergo Bank for some time froze female posts with the result that the percentage of female employees fell to 10%.

**A.** It was signed on 25 May 1994 for a period of two years and entered into force retrospectively from 1 January 1994. The contracting parties were, on the employers' side, the Union of Greek Banks (to which the majority of banks belong except for some newly constituted private banks which only appeared in the last five years such as the EGNATIA bank and the XIOS bank) and, on the employees' side, the Confederation of Bank Employees' Organizations of Greece (OTOE), which is a secondary level trade union organization and brings together the trade union organisations of salaried employees in 20 private Greek banks and the bulk of the public sector. This is a national sectoral collective agreement.

**B.** The positive aspects of this collective agreement are a series of innovatory and model provisions concerning equal opportunities at institutional level. Under the heading "equality issues", the agreement sets up a bilateral sectoral committee on equal opportunities (this is a continuation and extension of the old committee on equality established for the first time under the 1990 agreement) and a company committee on equal opportunities. Sexual equality issues are also dealt with by the committee on social dialogue. It establishes the innovatory and pioneering role of the Employment Observatory, and the Training Centre of the Union of Greek Banks, whose aim is to provide operational support for the Committee on social dialogue on questions of research and evidence on employment matters and labour relations. More specifically, the training centre is responsible for setting up a managerial training centre based on the principles of universality and equal opportunities for all employees.

The agreement contains provisions that indirectly promote a policy to provide (private) crèches: in cases where banks do not have private crèches, financial assistance is given towards childminding for small children (pre -school age). The collective agreement does not include provisions on parental leave, reduced working hours following childbirth and maternity leave, but the general legal provisions of the 1993 national general collective agreement apply.

**C.** The collective labour agreement, which appears in the annex, is codified and published in a special OTOE publication. Since the sectoral agreement covers 70% of staff in the sector, it is binding throughout Greece on employers and covers employees who were not represented and

did not participate in the negotiations. It covers all bank employees (senior grades, assistants and cleaning staff).

The two-year agreement for 1994-1995 is an extremely important agreement for the banking sector which has always been active in the field of collective bargaining. The banking sector is a leader in the field of collective bargaining, together with broader public sector companies, such as Telecommunications Organization and Public Enterprise of Electricity (DEH), whose employees are extremely well paid particularly in comparison to the private sector (the so-called "elite"). Demands for equal opportunities, both at institutional level and in terms of benefits, are directly related to the educational and salary levels of the employees in this expanding sector which offers good conditions, guaranteed employment, no threat of redundancy, the possibility to participate in trade unions and put forward proposals for the improvement of working conditions. The sector is renowned for equal opportunities because it employs a high percentage of women (38%) including women with degrees, good educational backgrounds, an interest in trade union activities and, especially in Athens, an awareness of feminist issues. For years discussion groups on equality issues have been meeting and putting forward demands for equal opportunities and, more generally, making so-called "qualitative" demands. Of the 45 corporate members of the OTOE, only 20 have elected women. On the OTOE general council, the percentage of elected women is 5.3% and on the executive committee 6.6%. The demands for institutional changes were made following the proposals put forward at the OTOE Panhellenic Women's Conference (so far three such conferences have been organized).

The 1994-95 agreement is also important for other reasons: it established a uniform salary and uniform benefits and set up the employment ombudsman, the Committee on Social Dialogue and the bilateral Committee on Equal Opportunities within each bank. The existence of the Observatory, the Committee on Social Dialogue and the other innovative measures underpins the activities of the Committee on equal opportunities. However, it is significant that the (triumphant) statement which followed the signing of the agreement - and no women from the employers' or the employees' side were involved in these negotiations - made no reference to the fact that this committee had been set up with the result that it took a long time to get off the ground. It was doubtless the demands and pressure of female trade unionists within the banks that led to this committee being set up.

The publications of the third OTOE panhellenic women's conference (November 1995) noted the indifference and resistance of male trade unionists to setting up this committee. Committees have been set up only by the Commercial Bank and the General Bank, while the National Bank has taken a decision to set up such a committee.

## **5. The 1996 collective labour agreement for banks: more systematic continuity**

**A.** The 1996 collective banking agreement was signed on 24 April 1996 by the same bank and employees' organisations that signed the 1994 collective agreement referred to above. It is a national sectoral collective agreement.

**B.** It promotes at institutional level equality issues introduced for the first time by the previous collective agreement. It regulates the modus operandi of the bilateral sectoral committee on equal opportunities which consists of five members and operates within the context of the

Committee on Social Dialogue (3 members from the boards and 2 from the OTOE with a three-year mandate and an equal number of substitutes), the aim of which is to study and formulate general principles on equal opportunities in employment and labour relations. Its aim is to deal with every aspect of the internal organization and operation.

The company committees on equal opportunities consist of two representatives from the banks' administration and two from the most representative trade union organisation. It can take decisions on any matter relating to the internal organisation and operation of each bank.

This collective agreement stipulates the way these committees are to be set up and run and binds the contracting parties to set up such committees. It also places major emphasis on protecting employment and protecting employees' salaries in the event of short-time working.

C. This agreement covers the same number and categories of employees in banks as is covered by the previous 1994 agreement to which it is related. The 1996 collective banking agreement is published in a special bulletin produced by the OTOE (attached in the annex).

## **6. The collective labour agreement for the textile industry**

As a result of the sector's inability to respond to radical technological developments in recent years, it has suffered a crisis affecting the majority of workers. There are numerous examples of companies adopting policies which have resulted in workers being employed for a few months without continuous employment.

A. Collective agreements in this sector up to 1993 were classified by OMED. This is the text we are using which contains the proposals promoting equal opportunities. Party to the negotiations and the signing of the agreements were employers' organisations, such as the Panhellenic Union of Textile Industries and the Greek Woollen Industries Union, together with the Greek Federation of Textile Workers. These are national sectoral agreements.

B. A positive aspect of this collective agreement is the leave of absence granted to employees to deal with serious domestic or personal problems, such as death or illness of an immediate relative or change of residence. Up to 10 days' unpaid leave may be granted each year.

In addition to the maternity leave provided for by the national general collective agreement, pregnant women may be granted a further week's leave without pay.

C. The agreement covers all male and female workers and white-collar workers in the textile industry and also homeworkers (façon). Women account for roughly 70% of staff in the textile sector. The agreement does not cover a number of employees in homeworking considered to be independent and those who work without declaring it. The codified text of the collective regulations in the textile industry is published in a special edition of the provisions of collective agreements in numerous sectors drawn up by OMED.

## **7. The collective labour agreement for the clothing industry**

The clothing sector has traditionally had a high percentage of female employees. Since 1999, with the inclusion of homeworking, a large number of women employed in this sector have

been covered by the agreement. The sector is traditionally female dominated, but this does not mean that women hold senior positions, merely that they are a majority of the workforce.

**A.** The text used by us is the one codified by OMED on collective agreements in this sector. This text contains all the regulations promoting equal opportunities in the clothing sector. The parties to the agreement were the SEB, the leading employers' organisation, the Panhellenic Union of Finished Garment Manufacturers, the General Confederation of Greek Small Business and Trades and other organisations from different parts of the country including representatives of the homeworking. On the employees' side, the agreement was signed by the Federation of Greek Textile, Clothing and Leather Workers. The collective agreement covering this sector is a national sectoral agreement.

**B.** The 1994 agreement established a six-member committee (three members from the employers' side and three from the employees' side) to modernise labour relations. The aim of this committee is to study and formulate proposals to restructure jobs and adapt the sector to technological developments. Its aim is to tailor specialist skills to professional requirements (experience, know-how), taking due account of European experience and the outcome of relevant studies in this field by organisations such as CEDEFOP. Already the committee is studying and formulating a mechanism for establishing a system to link pay and productivity.

**C.** The collective agreement covers all employees in the clothing, blanket-making, millinery and mattress-making enterprises and industries throughout Greece, including homeworkers. Women account for some 90% of the total number of workers in this sector. Not covered by this agreement are a number of women homeworkers who are considered to work independently and those who work on the black without declaring it.

## **8. The collective agreement in the pharmaceuticals industry: a typical example of collective agreements in the private sector**

The pharmaceutical sector is interesting because women account for 60% of its employees. Out of a total of some 20 000 employees, women form the majority of unskilled employees, mainly in the manufacturing sector. Output in the pharmaceutical and related industries has contracted severely, resulting in activities being transferred from manufacturing to the commercial sector giving rise to redundancies and their consequences. However, this sector contains certain dynamic and profitable multinational companies. As regards pay, the sectoral agreement is traditionally more favourable than the national general agreement<sup>9</sup>.

Although women are present and active at the highest levels within trade union organisations, indeed a woman has been president of the Federation, the provisions dealing with equal opportunities from a Greek perspective are few and far between.

**A.** The collective agreement in the pharmaceutical sector was signed on 27 June 1995. It is an annual agreement and entered into force retrospectively on 1 January 1995. The contracting parties are, on the employers' side, the Panhellenic Union of the Pharmaceuticals Industry, the Union of Representatives of Pharmaceutical Items and Products, the Panhellenic Union of Cosmetics Industries and Representatives, the Panhellenic Union of Cosmetics Industries and

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<sup>9</sup> This percentage has currently been narrowed down to 5-10%, but wage differences used to be nearer 20%.

Crafts and of Cosmetics Products, the Panhellenic Union of Drugs Wholesalers, the Union of Representatives of Importers and Manufacturers Veterinary Medicine and the Union of Greek Pharmaceutical Enterprises. On the employees' side, the Federation of Greek Pharmaceutical Workers and Related Industries. It is a national sectoral collective agreement which covers a wide variety of manufacturing and commercial enterprises.

**B.** The agreement contains provisions to help working men and women combine their work and domestic commitments.

The provisions referring to parental leave, reduced working hours and maternity leave follow the national general agreement word for word. Employees covered by this agreement may take, with due consent, 6 days' unpaid leave per year to deal with exceptional domestic problems.

**C.** The national sectoral collective agreement in the pharmaceutical industry is published in numerous labour law reviews and in electronic format under the "Logistic" web site on the Internet. It was from here that the annexed text of the agreement was taken. This agreement is binding on all employees in this sector throughout Greece.

It is characteristic of collective agreements in the private sector with a high proportion of female employees. The provisions dealing with equality aim to make it easier to combine employment with family commitments and not to promote women's professional careers. Six days' unpaid leave may be granted to deal with domestic problems. It should be noted that certain dynamic multinational companies "grant", following atypical negotiations, longer periods of maternity leave and childcare leave: management, however, refuse to give written guarantees and employees must necessarily be satisfied with atypical and oral agreements.

## **9. The collective agreement for local authority organisations staff (OTA)**

This agreement deals with private employees (local authorities organizations also employ public employees). In other words, it covers a broad range of employees with different legal status, such as temporary, employees with remuneration by the hour, graduates and non-graduates, in a wide variety of fields (high schools, public buildings, theatres, etc.).

**A.** It was signed on 30 December 1994 for a duration of one year and entered into force on 1 January 1994 retrospectively. The contracting parties were: on the employers' side, the representative of the Ministry of the Interior and the representative of the General Accounts Office and, on the employees' side, the Panhellenic Federation of Local Authority Organizations Employees. It is a national sectoral collective agreement.

**B.** Only mothers - not fathers - with children under six years of age are granted unpaid leave for a total of two years and up to one year for each additional child.

The period of such leave does not count towards the years of actual service.

**C.** The collective agreement covers employees both with fixed-term contract and with contract of indeterminate duration who are members of trade unions (in reality all employees are members, approximately 6000) which belong to the Panhellenic Confederation of Local Authority Employees. However, there are a large number of employees - workers and

scientists - working in various specialities - who provide independent services for local authorities under a multidimensional labour status, either as contractors or subcontractors. A large number of those not covered by the collective agreement are women.

The local authority collective agreement is published in the Labour Legislation Bulletin and a copy of the text of this agreement is attached.

### **10. The collective agreement for agricultural co-operatives employees (ASO)**

About half the total number of employees in this sector (which amounts to 15,000) are women. However, their participation in trade union bodies is limited and the positions they hold in these bodies are relatively unimportant (the Mutual Assistance Fund, the Supervisory Council, management committees in trade unions), with the result that they do not participate in collective bargaining.

However, despite this the agreement is of interest with regard to reduced working hours for the period following maternity leave and to leave for educational reasons.

**A.** The agreement was signed on 5 June 1996 with retrospective force from 1 January 1996 and is an annual agreement. The employers were represented by the Panhellenic Confederation of Agricultural Co-operative Unions (PASEGES) and the employees by the Federation of Employees' Associations in Agricultural Unions (OSEGO). It is a national sectoral agreement.

**B.** Working mothers may work 2 hours less per day for the first three years and 1 hour less per day during the child's fourth year. In addition, mothers with two or more children may work 2 hours less per day during the child's fourth year. A divorced father who has been given legal custody of a child may work the same reduced hours. This clearly demonstrates that the collective agreement is adapted to contemporary social trends<sup>10</sup>.

A male employee or his spouse may be granted unpaid leave for up to one year if they have children who suffer from serious psychological or physical illness.

Married women with under-age children may take early retirement after completing 30 years' pensionable service and reaching the age of 55.

Staff are granted leave to pursue post-graduate studies. During the period of study leave, the employee is covered for insurance purposes by the ASO and receives full pay, or even more than full pay should this prove necessary. After completing the post-graduate course, the employee is obliged to work for the ASO for at least five years.

**C.** It applies to administrative, technical and support staff in agricultural co-operative organisations.

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<sup>10</sup> See D. Konkidou, Single Parent Families. Reality - outlook - social policy, New Horizons, Athens, 1995 (in greek).

The older ASO collective agreements (from 1972) have been codified by OMED. The 1996 collective agreement analysed here was published in the Insurance and Labour Law Review and is contained in the annex.

## **11. The collective labour agreement for employees in the private sector insurance industry**

The constant expansion of the insurance market has led to the dynamic development of the majority of private and banking insurance companies. Out of a total of 10,000 employees, 65% are women and they play an important role in trade union organisations. A woman has been chairman of the Federation and, as a member of the Executive Secretariat, participated in the negotiations.

**A.** The agreements covering employees in private insurance companies have been codified by OMED. Our analysis is based on the codified text which contains all the collective provisions in this sector promoting equal opportunities. The following second-level trade union organisations were parties to the agreement: on the employers' side, the Union of Greek Insurance Companies and, on the employees' side, the Federation of Greek Insurance Companies. It is a national sectoral agreement and covers staff in insurance companies in the private sector with the exception of those employed in the banking insurance sector.

**B.** Should an employer discover, by whatever means, that a female employee is pregnant, under no circumstances may she be removed from her post, unless there is a serious cause.

The family allowance, provided for under the 1989 national general agreement for widows/widowers, divorced men and women and unmarried parents, is paid only to unmarried mothers.

**C.** The agreement was codified and published by OMED. It applies to employees in this sector throughout Greece.

### **A collective agreement in the making**

The Federation's proposal for the 1996 collective agreement may be summarised as follows: signing a uniform collective agreement with a view to combining and improving the regulations of the two existing agreements and eradicating unequal treatment with regard to pay. For the first time, it proposes the establishment of equal opportunities committees at sectoral and company level (like those in the banks). The purpose of the sectoral committee is to study and formulate general principles on equal opportunities in employment, access to employment, sexual harassment in the workplace, career development, in-house training and staff support. The purpose of the company committee is to regulate all matters concerned with the organisation and operation of the company and to ensure that the principles formulated by the sectoral committee are implemented. Its responsibilities are advisory.

## V. SINGLE PROFESSIONAL COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

“They keel over like boats on their side”

Elytis

### 12. The collective labour agreement for staff working with computers in industries

The information sector broadly speaking is dominated by women who account for 75% of staff and work on terminals - in other words, they have replaced typists (an occupation traditionally filled by women) - rather than as computer programmers or analysts, even though they have the skills to do such work. The spread of computers into many manufacturing sectors has not increased the number of registered male and female employees nor their coverage by corresponding collective agreements. What usually happens, especially in the private sector, is that staff are not employed on the basis of a specific job description, but on a contract basis as general office staff (with the exception of employees in solicitors' offices, notaries' offices, etc.). The practice followed by employers is to pay higher wages than those set down in the agreement, albeit without any guarantees, "in exchange for" the abolition of female employees' basic rights, such as maternity leave.

**A.** The text used by us is that codified by OMED which presents the collective regulations promoting equal opportunities. The contracting parties to the agreements were as follows: on the employers' side, the Federation of Greek Industries (SEB) and the General Confederation of Greek Small Business and Trades (GSBEE). On the employees' side, the Federation of Private Employees of Greece. The agreement is a national single professional agreement and covers all private employees using computers in industries and small business throughout Greece including all specialist skills (operators, analysts, programmers).

**B.** A positive aspect of the agreement is that women were involved in the negotiations to draw it up. A female employee in her fifth month of pregnancy may be transferred, wherever possible, from her duties as a computer operator or word processor operator to lighter work until the end of her pregnancy without loss of benefits. Working mothers are not allowed to work nights.

**C.** The collective agreement has been codified and published by OMED. It covers computer staff (programmers, analysts and operators) throughout the whole of Greece.

### 13. The collective agreement for beauticians of both sexes

**A.** The text used is that codified by OMED. The contracting parties are the following: on the employers' side, the Panhellenic Union of Cosmetic and Perfume Industries and Representatives and the Greek Professional Beauticians Association and, on the employees' side, the Greek Beauticians Trade Union and the Union of Qualified Beauticians. It is a national single professional agreement.

**B.** Mothers with a child under the age of six have the right to unpaid leave for up to six continuous months to take care of the child. This right can be exercised only once at the mother's discretion. The time taken for parental leave in this way counts towards years of actual service and is not subtracted from annual leave. On the woman's return to work, the



employer has the right to place her in a post not necessarily the same as the one she had before taking leave. However, it must be in a post equivalent to her speciality (consequently her job is not guaranteed).

C. The agreement applies to trained and qualified beauticians of both sexes employed in the private sector throughout Greece. It does not cover a number of beauticians who work independently - even though they may be employed for part of the time - and those who work on "the black".

#### **14. The collective agreement for male and female health visitors**

A. It was signed on 3 July 1995, is of one year's duration and entered into force retrospectively on 1 January 1995. The contracting parties are: on the employers' side, second-level trade union organisations in the broad manufacturing sector (pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, veterinary medicines) and in the commercial sector. On the employees' side, the Panhellenic Union of Health Visitors. It is a national single professional collective agreement.

B. Because of the specialised nature of health visitors, working mothers, not fathers, covered by the agreement may take paid leave either on two afternoons per week for two years or one day per week for two years.

All employees covered by the agreement with children aged up to 16 years may take 5 days' paid leave per year to monitor their children's school progress.

C. The agreement was codified and published by OMED. The collective agreement covers male and female health visitors throughout the whole of Greece.

The title of the collective agreement refers only to the masculine gender of employees and not to female health visitors.

#### **15. The collective labour agreement for male and female accountants**

The collective agreement for male and female accountants has been chosen because traditionally a large number of women are employed in this field.

A. The text used is that codified by OMED. The contracting parties were as follows: on the employers' side, second-level trade union organisations from the commercial, industrial, technical and service sectors and, on the employees' side, the Panhellenic Federation of Accountants (with 4500 Union members). It is a national single professional agreement.

B. A positive provision of the agreement in favour of equal opportunities states that employees with children up to the age of 16 may take 5 days' paid leave per year to monitor their children's school progress.

Employees covered by the agreement may take, with due consent, 6 days' unpaid leave per year to deal with exceptional domestic problems.

Either the husband or wife may opt to work reduced hours in order to look after a child. This differs from the majority of other agreements where the mother is entitled to work reduced hours and the father only as an alternative.

**C.** The agreement covers male and female accountants in the private sector (commerce, industry and service sector) with the exception of those working in banks, companies and institutions for which there is a special collective agreement, such as collectives, corporate bodies, the public sector, the OTA and public entities (unless their regulations allow for the implementation of single professional agreements). Out of a total of 22,000 employees, the number of women is 10,780 (49%). The title of the collective agreement refers only to the masculine gender and does not mention female accountants.

#### **16. The collective labour agreement for male and female teachers in foreign language schools**

This agreement was chosen because the number of women employed in foreign language schools is extremely high.

**A.** The collective agreement is an annual agreement signed on 1 August 1995 which entered into force retrospectively on 1 January 1995. The contracting parties were: on the employers' side, the Panhellenic Union Federation of Foreign Language Schools Owners of Northern Greece and, on the employees' side, the Union Federation of Private Teachers of Greece (OIELE). It is a national single professional collective labour agreement. The agreement covers approximately 8000 employees, of whom 85% are women.

**B.** As regards equal opportunities, the agreement stipulates that a female teacher who ceases work to give birth must be re-employed for at least three-fifths of the time she was employed while pregnant.

**C.** The agreement covers male and female foreign language teachers employed in language schools throughout Greece. The title of the collective agreement refers only to the masculine gender and not specifically to female foreign language teachers.

#### **17. The collective agreement for staff employed in hotels run by the Greek tourist organization (EOT) and tourist schools**

**A.** The collective agreement is an annual agreement signed on 2 June 1995 which entered into force on 5 January 1995 retrospectively. It was signed by representatives of the Greek state and by the Panhellenic Union Federation of Catering and Tourist Employees. It is a national single professional agreement.

**B.** The collective agreement contains a provision on the reinstatement of employees: chamber maids are placed in category C in accordance with the classification of the 1991 collective agreement on hotel employees.

**C.** It covers male and female employees in all units such as hotels, guest houses, camping sites, tourist offices and tourist establishments throughout Greece.

In addition to publications in legal reviews, the text of the collective agreement is contained under the "Logistic" web site on the Internet. This is the text which appears in the annex.

## VI. COMPANY COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

“You feel motionless, but  
your road carries you on”

**Elytis**

### **18. The collective agreement for staff in the Greek Telecommunications Organization (OTE)**

The collective agreement covers the telecommunications sector with the exception of mobile phones which are currently covered mainly by private companies. The total number of employees (both permanent and temporary) is approximately 26,000, of whom women account for about 15%. Prior to the implementation of social security law 1902/90 (which established less favourable pension arrangements for women), women employees had on average at the age of retirement 22-23 years of service (while the average for men was 26 years) even though the percentage of female employees was higher (roughly 17%). There is a marked difference in the percentage of female employees in urban and rural areas with a higher percentage in urban areas.

**A.** It was signed on 10 May 1996 for a period of one year and was implemented retrospectively from 1 January 1996. The provisions of the previous 1992 collective agreement concerning equal treatment with regard to childcare provisions were maintained. It is a national company collective agreement in the broader public sector. The contracting parties were the following: on the employers' side, the Greek telecommunications organisation and, on the employees' side, the Union Federation of Employees in the Organization (OME OTE) which is a secondary level trade union bringing together OTE trade union organisations (technicians and white-collars workers). In other words, it covers all employees with the exception of those on contract whose numbers are constantly changing.

**B.** Paid maternity leave is limited to a total of five months, in other words one month more than the national general agreement, of which two months must be taken during pregnancy and three months after the birth. In any event, the period of leave following birth may not exceed three months. In the case of premature birth, maternity leave may not exceed four months but this is not subject to the above conditions.

Leave for mothers rearing infants is limited to five months. When the child reaches the age of 60 months, the leave may be taken by the father, by joint declaration of the couple, for the remaining period of leave up to two months.

Up to 2 years' special unpaid leave for educational purposes may be taken by stay and counted towards annual service on condition that the person concerned produces documentary proof of studies to justify the leave and agrees to pay insurance contributions, including those of the employer, during the period of leave in accordance with Law 2084/92. This provision is considered a good principle for promoting equality of opportunities as there are plans in the near future to introduce corresponding quotas for male and female employees.

**C.** The collective agreement is binding on trade unions and employers' organisations and applies to all employees throughout Greece.

It is linked to the national general collective agreement which covers employees on fixed-term contracts. The contracting organisation covers all employees with the exception of those employed on fixed-term contracts. The 13 bodies which belong to the Union Federation cover all male and female salaried staff in the OTE. In particular, the Panhellenic Union of Technicians of the OTE has approximately 12,000 employees and the Confederation of OTE staff has 8000. This excludes employees on fixed-term contract. All specialities are covered: white-collar workers, managerial and technical staff. The text of the agreement is published in a special publication of the Union Federation of OTE Employees.

### **19. The collective agreement for staff in Greek Post (ELTA)**

**A.** The collective agreement of Greek Post was signed on 30 September 1993 for a period of one year and has retrospective effect from 1 January 1993. The employer is ELTA and the male and female employees are represented by the Union Federation of Employees of ELTA which incorporates 61 unions with 11 500 members. It is a national company collective agreement.

**B.** A monthly crèche allowance is provided for each child of pre-school age and ELTA is committed to providing nursery places in its premises in Athens and Thessaloniki.

A family allowance is granted to working parents who have a handicapped child.

Traditionally the special and subsequent company collective agreement of ELTA -which is one of the «socialised» companies - makes provision for substantial benefits and different kinds of leave.

**C.** The agreement covers male and female employees in a public company with a total of 9950 permanent staff of whom 8140 are men and 1810 are women. The agreement also covers approximately 2000 employees who work on a seasonal basis, individuals with special needs and persons who have been re-employed. It does not cover male and female employees in private swift mail companies.

The agreement is published in various places including the Insurance and Labour Law Review from where the copy which appears in the annex was taken.

### **20. The collective agreement for employees in the Macedonia-Thrace bank**

This agreement is interesting primarily because of the large percentage of women employed in private banks which usually follow arcane and protracted recruitment procedures (based on personal career details and quota systems) with the result that female candidates are excluded.

**A.** It was signed on 1 November 1995 by representatives of the bank and the employees' trade union. It is a company local agreement.

**B.** It provides an allowance for children with special needs and nursery allowances. These could be considered an indirect contribution to equal opportunities. It also increases the child allowance for spouses of male employees and the nursery allowance is higher than that of the sectoral agreement which is established on a geographical basis.

**C.** The Macedonia-Thrace bank has 1519 employees of whom 815 (54%) are men and 704 (46%) are women. The company agreement covers all staff. It should be remembered that staff are covered by the provisions of both the national general agreement (collective agreement No. 1) and the OTOE agreement (collective agreements Nos. 4 and 5) thereby enhancing support for the implementation of equal opportunities.

Only in economically viable companies such as these can equal opportunities make progress. In reality, only so-called "wealthy" companies make any real contribution to the development of positive action programmes.

## VII. SYNTHETIC ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT OF COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS

"A small hill can just be glimpsed with  
smooth hollows full of dark verdure"  
Elytis<sup>11</sup>

The national general collective agreements, which encompass and contain all other agreements, have been primarily responsible for paving the way towards equal opportunities in Greece. Of special importance is the 1993 national general collective agreement, which is still in force, as well as the recent national general agreement of 1996 -97 which includes the European agreement on parental leave. Its content, however, is not particularly suited to the contemporary view of equal opportunities, which considers the working woman as an independent individual as well.

The provisions of the collective agreements referred to are based on general assumptions formulated within a bargaining culture. They provide a framework within which women's representatives may bring their own experiences to the negotiating table (insofar as they are aware of gender issues, which is not at all self-evident) opening the way for future demands and preparing the ground for positive action.

The 20 collective labour agreements presented above basically reflect the general characteristics of Greek labour agreements. They reflect the Greek system of industrial relations including the ways in which it has developed and its contradictions with regard to the status of women employees. To be more specific:

### 1. Equality of opportunities in Greece: In focus is the family

For the overwhelming majority of Greek collective agreements, equality of opportunities principally means time off work to deal with domestic demands.

Genuine equality of opportunities does not exist because women's professional development is constantly hindered by their relationship in the private sphere, in other words their social role. Although positive action programmes do not exist, the groundwork has been well prepared in certain cases. Where the issue of equal opportunities has been raised, several collective agreements make provision for equal opportunities committees, such as those in the banks and the insurance sector and in traditional female employment sectors such as the textiles and clothing industry with regard to specialist skills and pay.

As a result of the influence exercised by the 1993 national general agreement, all the collective agreements and arbitration awards above, as well as all those currently in force in Greece, contain provisions on a wide range of leave entitlement and benefits whose focus of concern is the family. A particularly important development of collective agreements is the introduction of the father to leaves for care of young children.

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<sup>11</sup> These lines are taken from the collection of Odysseas Elytis' "Occident of Sorrow", Ikaros 1995.

## **2. The family does not mean the mother alone, but also the father (even if unmarried)**

Traditionally, collective agreements identified the family with the female considering her employment initially as temporary and later as secondary. The collective agreements currently in force have changed this picture.

**(a)** Fundamental proof of this is the fact that a working father now has the right to take what was once called "breastfeeding leave" which has now come to mean reduced working hours and is referred to as parental leave. As noted in the collective agreements for beauticians, female and male accountants, employees in the pharmaceuticals industry, male and female health visitors, male and female employees in the insurance industry (see collective agreements Nos. 13, 15, 8, 14 and 11), the father may take this leave provided that the working mother does not. Regardless of the limited use made of these provisions, their significance is important insofar as the concept of gender is thereby removed and separated from the task of raising a small child. At the same time, it gives the mother the opportunity, especially when her work demands or merely when she herself has need, to call on the child's father to accept his responsibility for childcare.

**(b)** Fathers also have the right to take parental leave to bring up children as we saw in the agreements in the pharmaceuticals industry, for health visitors, beauticians and accountants (see collective agreements Nos. 8, 14, 13 and 15).

However, very few men take advantage of this leave for economic reasons which are much the same in Greece as elsewhere, namely men's pay is usually higher than that of women. This situation is further complicated by the social role women play which leads them to internalise the view that they are responsible for child rearing. Nevertheless, the possibility exists for parents to exchange roles in situations where a working mother has a demanding job and demanding employer, better pay or for some other reason. The gender image given by the texts of these collective agreements is really quite different. These provisions, at least theoretically, enable responsibilities to be shared within the family, which is the central concern of Greek society and which is quite unique (no comparison can be made with the northern countries as regards parent-child relations).

Some of these periods of leave - above all parental leave - may appear to be "foreign imports" brought in by Community law. This is partly true. Despite the fact that many of our labour provisions were not initiated in Greece (e.g. the 8-hour day) but "imported", one should not ignore the major changes which have taken place in Greek society and which traditional collective agreements have failed to understand and give expression to. For instance, in major urban centres, such as Athens and Thessaloniki, the traditional family unit in which child-rearing was undertaken by the considered as unemployed grandmother or mother-in-law, is steadily disappearing. This is because present-day grandmothers and mothers-in-law are of working age (the highest percentage of employed people falls between the ages 25 and 49) while, at the same time, young working parents with small children have to face the problem of childcare given the lack of a corresponding social infrastructure and the statistical fact that 50% of childcare is undertaken by relatives including fathers.

### **3. Other holidays and domestic demands**

The provisions of collective agreements, such as those for the textile industry and accountants (see collective agreements Nos.6 and 15), granting one or more days leave in the event of marriage, death and name-days are also designed to meet domestic needs. While the family is the centre of concern of Greek collective agreements, there are also provisions granting both the father and mother paid leave to monitor their child's educational progress as in the agreements for the pharmaceutical industry<sup>12</sup>, health visitors and accountants. Things might be different if, due to a fall in the birth rate, children were a "rare commodity".

### **4. Maternity leave**

All the collective agreements referred to here provide for maternity leave of at least 16 weeks, in accordance with the 1993 national general agreement, and some of them contain more favourable provisions, mainly extended maternity leave as provided for in the ASO general agreement (see collective agreement No. 10).

### **5. Lack of facilitation's for the professional development of women**

While the family and motherhood are the central focus of collective agreements - which generally deal with pay and leave - the same is not true for women's professional development. Collective negotiations, with the exception of the general national collective agreement for banks and, in the future, the insurance industry, are not concerned with this aspect of equal opportunities. However, the national general agreement has provided (in simple terms) a general framework and promotes another view and another attitude<sup>13</sup> towards career development. In preparing the ground for positive action programmes in the context of collective agreements, women's committees have made a major contribution<sup>14</sup>, as have the equal opportunities committees referred to in the to o collective agreements for the banks (see collective agreements Nos. 4 and 5). In particular, with the establishment of enterprise committees on equal opportunities - which are soon to be set up in private insurance sector companies - it could be said that equal opportunities by means of positive actions had almost arrived, at least in the banking sector. Collective negotiations on positive action measures should be held in enterprises in the broader public sector - especially in «socialized» companies that have a strong tradition of negotiation with staff such as the electricity enterprise and the telecommunications company. However, for the present, they are not concerned with this aspect of equal opportunities and have therefore lost their leading position in the Greek collective bargaining system, which is not the case with the banks. Collective bargaining on positive actions could involve private mass media organisations.

Certain provisions, such as those in respect of leave for educational purposes (see for instance the collective agreements of the ASO, the insurance and pharmaceutical industries), could, with

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<sup>12</sup> This provision also exists in the collective agreement for pharmacists, while in the corresponding agreement for doctors such leave is unpaid.

<sup>13</sup> Positive action programmes may be implemented by the public sector where collective bargaining does not exist, provided the public sector does not prevent such programmes being adopted. This is particularly the case in public administration where there is an equal distribution of the sexes, while in education and the health service the percentage of women is considerably higher.

<sup>14</sup> See report, "Collective bargaining and equal opportunities in Greece" of the first phase of this research.



a small additional clause on the equal distribution of such leave between the sexes, be converted into provisions promoting equal opportunities.

## **6. Graduate allowance and other Greek peculiarities**

The texts of collective agreements give a general overview of Greek labour relations and their development in relation to female employment and equal opportunities.

A traditional characteristic of Greek collective agreements are the allowances paid for a degree or a knowledge of foreign languages. Indeed, degree holders are paid the allowance regardless of whether they use their degree in any practical way in the workplace. This reflects the importance attached to education in Greece and demonstrates the strong influence of the school system in Greek society. It also explains why Greeks tend to be over-educated<sup>15</sup>. The difference today is that, for the most part, those entitled to this allowance are women because the level of education, and generally the percentage of graduates, is higher among women than men.

The same is true of the foreign language allowance. Traditionally, an allowance was granted to those employees with a foreign language degree. Women are also noted for their record in learning foreign languages<sup>16</sup>.

## **7. Allowances and changes in the family and child rearing.**

It is also worth noting the changes that have taken place as regards those eligible for the marriage allowance as incorporated in collective agreements, regardless of their legality. Certain collective agreements, under the continuing influence of traditional attitudes, regard an unmarried mother as eligible, as is the case with the collective agreements for accountants and terminal operators (see collective agreements Nos. 15 and 12). This demonstrates a degree of progress in grappling with the issue of single parent families (it is not so many years since Greek society condemned unmaned mothers as "wayward" and their offspring as "illegitimate"). There are also collective agreements which provide for the marriage allowance to be paid to unmarried parents, such as the collective agreements for banks, beauticians and health visitors (see agreements Nos.4, 5, 13 and 14) subject to the condition that the unmarried father accepts paternity of the child. This signifies a greater degree of acceptance of unmarried couples who live together, despite the fact that the number of such liaisons is limited in Greece.

Also of interest are the provisions of collective agreements with regard to child benefits. Certain agreements follow the tradition of different treatment for girls and boys in keeping with the age-old view that boys are reared for work (a view currently being undermined by unemployment) and girls for marriage at a certain age. Thus, for instance, the collective agreement for accountants provides benefits for boys up to the age of 18 years and for girls

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<sup>15</sup> As demonstrated extremely well in the books of K. Tsoukalas who, nevertheless, does not appear to have appreciated the significance of female employment. Even before Greece entered the European Community, Greek collective agreements made provision to assist workers involved in study, particularly with regard to taking exams.

<sup>16</sup> However, new collective agreements based on European results -oriented concepts stipulate that the allowance may be granted only where the foreign language is used for work, as in the ASO agreement (No.10).

until such time as they marry. On the other hand, other collective agreements - such as the 1995 collective agreement for commercial stores - provide benefits for children of both sexes up to the same age - employing the phrase "regardless of sex" - thereby demonstrating that the age of equality between boys and girls has arrived.

## **8. Collective agreements recognise that the family exercise the role of welfare state**

Certain collective agreements - not always those in the private sector - contain provisions that advance the view of the family's welfare role which is an important characteristic of the family in Greece and of the unacknowledged work performed by women. Thus, the collective agreements of ASO, ELTA, and beauticians (see collective agreements Nos. 10, 19 and 13) make provision for a father or mother to take leave to look after a handicapped child.

## **9. Women at the bargaining table: the necessity**

Women's participation in negotiations, as happened in the 1993 national general agreement on the employees' side, or on the employers' side as in the insurance, beauticians, and OTA agreements (see collective agreements Nos.11, 13 and 9), or even the indirect pressure they exert as members of equality committees<sup>17</sup>, contribute to the formulation of provisions that take into account equality of opportunities in both a traditional and a contemporary sense.

## **10. The cultural situation: sexual harassment**

Of particular importance is the provision of the national collective agreement which refers to sexual harassment, albeit in the following extremely general manner: "care for proper behaviour and conduct in the workplace in matters associated with gender". There are numerous reasons why collective agreements have difficulty in taking further steps to deal with this problem. First and foremost, the complicated nature and delicate personal nature of the problem makes it difficult to pin down. However, this is already being dealt with in other countries and by the European Union itself whose work on the subject - particularly its 1991 report - has attracted interest in Greece. Nevertheless, sexual harassment has not been clearly understood and appreciated by trade unionists normally involved in negotiations. Indeed, sexual harassment is either underestimated or ignored by them<sup>18</sup>, despite the research and scientific investigations

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<sup>17</sup> See report, "Collective bargaining and equal opportunities" of the first phase of this report, Thessaloniki 1996.

<sup>18</sup> A typical statement is that made by a senior female trade unionist who participated in negotiations in a meeting devoted to sexual harassment: "In my opinion, the majority of trade unionists would be ashamed to get involved, they would not want to get involved, pretending that they don't understand the problem". Or again the response of a senior male trade unionist to a journalist on a major newspaper on the subject of sexual harassment: "we mustn't completely do away with tradition" clearly ignorant of the meaning of sexual harassment. This seems to be the case even with men who are extremely sensitive to the particular problems facing female workers in our society. Thus, the journalist who was called up on to present the conclusions of the conference on sexual harassment seemed to confuse the "education" of Greek (and Italian) men "who expressed their appreciation of the fairer sex in the street by bawdy and often insulting behaviour" and sexual harassment in the workplace (Conference of the Women's Democratic Movement, p.178). Similarly, a lawyer taking part in the Conference took a very narrow view of harassment believing that "it must have genetic connotations" (see the research of Joanna Manganara, Union for Women's Rights, according to which 60% of respondents to a questionnaire had experienced sexual harassment).

carried out and - subsequently - the conferences organized on this subject<sup>19</sup>. Despite the fact that numerous cases of sexual harassment in the workplace have been revealed in Greece and elsewhere, there are still major difficulties in identifying it<sup>20</sup>.

All these difficulties underline the importance of these provisions and the need for them to be taken on board by collective negotiations at lower levels in order to raise awareness of the issue. The resistance to acknowledging sexual harassment is shown by the fact that no collective agreement or collective negotiations have ever dealt with this subject despite its practical importance given the high rate of unemployment and foreign female workers (immigrants), contemporary behaviour and attitudes, and the new morality - in the broadest sense of the word - which is developing in Greece and giving expression to a new cultural era for both sexes.

## 11. Language as evidence

More than anything else it is the language of collective agreements - the use of both genders, the references to male and female specialist skills - which reflects the inherent inequality, as well as current developments and attempts to secure equal opportunities. Few collective agreements make systematic grammatical reference to male and female workers, but usually employ the masculine gender to refer to females as well<sup>21</sup>. A notable exception to this is the agreement for beauticians (in which both sexes are referred to). Generally, even when the title of a text refers to both male and female employees or workers, the specific provisions refer to either male or female specialist skills. The person in charge or the boss is always referred to in the masculine gender<sup>22</sup> and (particularly) secretaries are always referred to in the feminine gender.

Characteristic are the collective agreements in the services sector, such as the single professional agreement for accountants which does not use the feminine form of the word accountant despite the fact that women make up almost half the workforce, as is the case for computer terminal operators, insurance staff, health visitors and others. In the industrial sector, as is the case for the textiles and clothing industry, there are still specialist skills which are referred to specifically as masculine or feminine. In the textile industry, the phrase "specialist

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<sup>19</sup> Y. Kravaritou, *Women's Work and Rights*, pub. Sakkoula 1991, pp. 36 and the Democratic Women's Movement (ed. Kaiti Paparriga-Kostavara, *Sexual Harassment in the Workplace*, conference papers, Athens 21-22 January 1994, Athens 1995 (both in greek)

<sup>20</sup> No discussion has taken place nor legislation been passed in respect of sexual harassment in the workplace despite the fact that it is well documented (see the cases referred to passim in the Minutes of the 1995 Conference on Sexual Harassment). The fact that sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace have been around for a long time in Greece is evidenced by old Greek films often shown on TV whose storylines involve a poor secretary and a factory owner or his playboy son who are socially castigated and punished for abusing their power.

<sup>21</sup> The Greek language with its three genders and different masculine and feminine endings and declensions adequately shows up differences which in other languages - mainly English - are not apparent.

<sup>22</sup> With the exception of collective regulations governing male and female midwives in Athens - Piraeas (as a result of female participation in the collective negotiations, we come across the phrases: "male or female managerial allowance", "male or female supervisors allowance"). The text promotes the use of feminine gender, e.g. "hospital allowance for male and female midwives with diplomas" or "employers may not employ qualified male and female midwives in duties which do not fall within the medical field, such as for instance cleaning duties". The only aspect of his agreement that is not "politically correct" is the children's allowance which is granted up to the age of 18 for boys and up to the age of 20 for girls.

technicians" always refers in the masculine gender to "maintenance staff" or "machinists", while the phrase "category A male/female workers" includes numerous specialist skills which are referred to in the feminine gender only: "nappers", "spinners", "winders", "corders". Nevertheless, an effort is constantly made to neutralise the feminine gender as shown by the provision which refers in general terms to "workers employed to spin yarn" (in the masculine gender).

Generally speaking, linguistic sexism - which basically goes unchallenged - is more prevalent in "poor" collective agreements where attempts to establish equality of usage of the masculine and feminine genders are superficial. Attempts to establish equal opportunities is reflected in the linguistic formulation of the provisions of collective agreements which has undergone major changes and increasingly reflects gender with regard to professional activities and specialist skills. However, as yet no agreement displays complete linguistic equality nor, to an even lesser extent, "linguistic" preference for female employees as would be the case if there were positive action programmes.

## **12. Epilogue**

It is clear that Greek collective labour agreements are not imbued with the concept of equal opportunities as understood in the introductory text of L. Dickens and B. Bercusson, nor do they contain agreements similar to those of Volkswagen which are completely unknown in Greece. Equal opportunities policy falls mainly within the context of the 1993 national collective agreement whose provisions, as stated above, are still in force and of the following national agreements. These "good" provisions on equal opportunities must be taken on board - adapted and formulated in a specialized manner wherever possible - by every collective agreement, sectoral agreement, single professional agreement and company agreement. In our view, the equal opportunities committees in banks and the insurance industry must sooner or later end up with negotiations on positive action programmes.

Collective bargaining in respect of "poor" collective agreements within the textile and clothing industry should lead in the same direction given the activity of the committees provided for by the agreements, even though they deal only with specialist skills and pay.

Objective conditions for adopting provisions which contribute to equal opportunities also exist in the «socialised» enterprises and enterprises generally within the broader public sector despite the fact that the gendered process is non-existent and "facilitative measures" are translated into direct financial payments or leave. The objective conditions also exist in dynamic private companies particularly in the services sector.

"Good" provisions promoting equal opportunities are, as we have seen, few and far between in Greek labour agreements which, very hesitantly, are now beginning to cover a small section of atypical employment (homeworking). The language of collective agreements is an expression of the attempt to achieve "good" collective agreements. This attempt to apply the gendered process to language is sometimes successful and sometimes merely superficial. In the closely woven fabric of collective labour agreements, the twenty collective agreements presented here are a small crack - undermining the conventional balance - in the traditional picture of equality and inequality. The time is now ripe for good collective agreements based on a programme of positive action in Greek enterprises.