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## **Gender Equality Plan (GEP)**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Commissioner of Communications of the Republic of Cyprus is the Head of the Digital Security Authority (the “DSA”) and of the Office of the Commissioner for Electronic Communications and Postal Regulation (the “OCECPR”), which are both validly and legally represented by the Commissioner of Communications.

The DSA is the competent authority for network and information systems security in Cyprus, established by the Security of Networks and Information Systems Law 89(I)/2020 which was harmonised with the NIS Directive (Directive (EU) 2016/1148) and is the competent authority for upgrading and maintaining high levels of cybersecurity for operators of essential services and operators of critical information infrastructures in the Republic of Cyprus. Part of the organisational structure of the DSA is:

- a) the Regulation, Strategy and Supervision Department, which acts as the NIS competent authority for the implementation of the NIS Directive in Cyprus;
- b) the National CSIRT-CY (Computer Security Incident Response Team) which is the technical department responsible, amongst others, for the handling of cybersecurity incidents at national level;
- c) the National Coordination Centre (NCC-CY), which, amongst others, is responsible for designing calls for proposals to distribute available cascading funds, establishing procedures for the cybersecurity community members, contributing to education and awareness activities in the field of cybersecurity; and
- d) the National Cybersecurity Certification Authority (NCCA), which, amongst others, supervises and ensures the implementation of rules included in the European cybersecurity certification schemes for monitoring compliance of ICT products, ICT services and ICT processes with the requirements of the European cybersecurity certificates issued in the Republic of Cyprus, in cooperation with other market surveillance authorities.

The OCECPR is the competent authority, under Law 112(I)/2004 on the Regulation of Electronic Communications and Postal Services and under Law 24(I)/2022 on the Regulation of Electronic Communications, for the promotion of the interests of consumers in terms of prices, the availability of choice, the promotion of innovation and the development of the economy through the development of efficient competition, the control of the quality of services offered and the guarantee of the provision of a minimum set of Universal Service services, both in the Electronic Communications market and in the Postal Services market.

**The DSA and OCECPR hereinafter shall be collectively referred to as the “Organization”.**

The Organization’s structure comprises of multiple departments and each one is responsible for different competences. The Organization recognizes that the field of electronic

communications and postal services and the field of cybersecurity are highly technical and specialized areas and acknowledges the gender-related challenges within its workplace environment. To this end, the Organization is aiming to support all employees and provide equal opportunities under equal circumstances, regardless of their gender.

In this context, the Gender Equality Plan (the “GEP”) of the Organization contains a set of objectives, actions and commitments aimed at promoting a gender equality culture within the Organization through sustainable ways in multiple levels, such as training, awareness, and relevant processes involved.

## **2. SITUATION AND STRUCTURE OF THE ORGANIZATION**

The Organization functions as a legal entity of public law, abiding by the Laws of Cyprus and European Union, including the Law on Equal Treatment for Men and Women and Vocational Training (Law 205(I)/2002). At the time of publication of this GEP, the Organization employs 106 full time staff members, amongst which 44 are women and 62 are men, appointed by the Selection and Promotions Council of the Organization which is comprised of the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner and the Chairman of the Advisory Committee.

The Organization acknowledges that diversity is one of the core strengths of the Organization. Thus, the Organization works systematically to provide the necessary conditions for everyone to access and enjoy equal opportunities during their employment, and receive training on equal and fair terms. Every person in the Organization, irrespective of their gender, deserves to be respected and is expected to be respectful towards others. Thus, it is expected that all members ensure that the values of equal and fair treatment that govern the Organization are always implemented. The Organization acknowledges that harassment (verbal, written or physical, including sexual harassment) can be based on gender discrimination, therefore it takes a zero-tolerance approach towards the issue.

## **3. THE ORGANIZATION’S GENDER EQUALITY PLAN (GEP)**

The Organization’s GEP, described below, is a formal document approved by the Commissioner of Communications and disseminated within the Organization. It shows the Organization’s commitment to gender equality issues while it sets clear objectives and outlines certain actions and measures to achieve them. In compliance with the Horizon Europe GEP Eligibility Criterion, the Organization’s GEP targets the four mandatory process-related requirements, as follows:

- **Public document:** The GEP is a public formal document published on the Organization’s websites and circulated within the Organization.
- **Dedicated resources:** All human resources experts within the Organization are committed to implement the GEP.
- **Data collection and monitoring:** The Heads of Departments are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the GEP. Data collection is limited to the performance of periodic consultation and discussions with staff members and only data which is absolutely necessary for the purpose is collected.

- **Awareness / Familiarization:** the Organization is committed to organize awareness raising / training actions on gender equality and unconscious gender biases for staff and decision-makers.

Taking into account the above minimum process-related requirements, the following objectives are included in the GEP:

1. Building awareness on gender equality issues among staff members;
2. Promoting a gender equality culture, respect for diversity measures against gender-biased violence including sexual harassment.
3. Encourage women's participation in leadership roles

### **3.1 ACTION PLAN**

The responsible units for the implementation of the Action Plan are the:

- Commissioner of Communications
- Deputy Commissioner of Communications
- Director
- Chief Engineer
- Department Leaders (i.e. CSIRT/SOC Team Leader, Regulatory, Strategy and Supervision Team Leader, NCC Team Leader, NCCA Team Leader, Regulatory of Electronic Communications Team Leader, Regulatory of Postal Services Team Leader, Legal Services Team Leader, Administration Team Leader, Accounting Team Leader, IT Team Leader, Project Coordinator)

### **Training Actions**

**3.1.1.** Building awareness on gender equality issues among staff members, by:

- Circulating the GEP.
- Organizing training seminars and/or courses on gender equality for the staff's empowerment.
- Organizing awareness seminars on discrimination and prevention of sexual harassment for the staff members to attend.
- Sharing online resources (e.g., videos, conference material, scientific papers, research results etc.) that promote gender equality and integrate the gender dimension.

**3.1.2.** Promoting a gender equality culture and respect for diversity by:

- Promoting policies against harassment and violence;
- Publishing job position openings with unbiased language;
- Ensuring equal pay for all genders.

**3.1.3.** Encourage women's participation in leadership roles

### **Actions**

- Encourage gender dimension<sup>1</sup> in key decision making roles / responsibilities.

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<sup>1</sup> Gender dimension: refers to the ways in which the situation and needs of, and challenges facing, women and men (and girls and boys) differ, with a view to eliminating inequalities and avoiding their perpetuation, as well as to promoting gender equality within a particular policy, programme or procedure.

- Encourage the participation of women in project management and participation in key positions in proposals and funded projects for acquiring of managerial expertise in the relevant field.

#### **4. MONITORING**

The Organization will monitor the proper implementation of the GEP, which will be updated and modified from time to time taking into account knowledge received from actual situations occurring within the Organization. During each action, data will be collected to assess the effectiveness of the plan (e.g., for recruitment through the number of applicants and successful candidates, for trainings through questionnaires, etc.).

The Organization understands the importance of monitoring actions both during their implementation and post – implementation, as it will be an indication of whether a transformative dynamic is occurring.