



European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination

NEWS REPORT

Country:	Cyprus
Title:	Annual report of the Equality Authority for 2014
Date:	22 December 2015
Expert:	Corina Demetriou
<u>Context</u>	
Issue at stake:	The Equality Authority publishes its annual report for 2014, covering the fields of employment and social provision.
Ground of discrimination:	Gender, race/ethnic origin, national origin, disability, religion/belief
Source:	Report of the Equality Authority for the year 2014
Field:	Employment, access to welfare
Applicable law:	The combating of racial and other forms of discrimination (Commissioner) N. 42(I)/2004

Content

Case: In December 2015 the Ombudsman presented the annual report for the year 2014 of the Equality Authority, one of the two bodies comprising the national equality body specialising in employment and social welfare discrimination. The opening statement of the ombudsman referred to the decreasing trend in the number of complaints received, which started in 2012 and which can only be attributed to the impact of the economic crisis on labour market conditions, mainly the deregulation of labour relations and high unemployment. The Ombudsman noted that the same phenomenon has been observed by equality bodies in other EU countries in crisis and that in practice, employees today appear to be more tolerant to exploitation and discrimination when faced with the risk of losing their jobs. The Ombudsman regretted the fact that professional organisations and trade unions did not utilise the opportunities offered to them by the equality laws to file discrimination complaints on behalf of their victims, noting that only one complaint had been received during 2014 from such an organisation.

Ever since the economic crisis surfaced in 2012 and unemployment rose, the number of complaints dropped sharply from 144 in 2011 to 63 in 2013 and 62 in 2014. More analytically, in 2004 33 complaints were filed; in 2005 84 complaints were filed; in 2006 68 complaints were filed; in 2007 115 complaints were filed; in 2008 93; in 2009 103; in 2010 121; in 2011 144; in 2012 106; in 2013 63 and in 2014 62. Complaints against the public sector reached 84%, while complaints against the private sector, where most discriminatory acts take place, reached only 16%.

Out of all 62 complaints submitted in 2014, 52% (or 32 complaints) concerned gender discrimination, 24% (or 15 complaints) concerned disability¹ or special needs, 10% (or six complaints) concerned the ground of national origin, 5% (or three complaints)

¹ Disability related complaints are also examined by the Ombudsman's office in its capacity as independent mechanism for the implementation of the CRPD.

concerned age, 5% (or three complaints) the ground of language, 1% (one complaint) concerned the ground of religion and 1% on other grounds. Out of all complaints submitted, 87% were in the field of employment, 6% in the field of vocational training, 5% in access to welfare and 2% in other fields.

The report presents summaries of eight reports compiled and published during 2014, four of which concerned gender, three concerned national origin (Union citizens and third country nationals) and one concerned race/ethnic origin, involving migrant domestic workers. The differentiation between national origin and race/ethnic origin may seem arbitrary, however the Equality Body takes a liberal approach in interpreting the scope of the Equality Directives and holds the view that national origin is not excluded from the scope of the Directives.²

Internet link source: The report is available at
[www.ombudsman.gov.cy/Ombudsman/Ombudsman.nsf/All/9B52BD3F8AF79B31C2257F14003F805C/\\$file/1Book%20ISOTITAS%202014%20GR%20Electr%20Edition%20for%20web.pdf](http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy/Ombudsman/Ombudsman.nsf/All/9B52BD3F8AF79B31C2257F14003F805C/$file/1Book%20ISOTITAS%202014%20GR%20Electr%20Edition%20for%20web.pdf)

Last accessed 21/12/2015.

² Letter from the Ombudsman's office to the expert 13 November 2015, in response to the expert's query.