

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
GREEK NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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<p>Comments on Bill titled ‘Application of the Principle of Equal Treatment Irrespective of Racial or Ethnic Origin, Religious or Other Beliefs, Disability, Age or Sexual Orientation’</p>
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The Commission submitted to the competent Ministries a series of comments on the above Bill which attempts to introduce into Greek law new standards of protection against discrimination, not developed in Greece so far. The Commission underlined that the relevant legislation should be flexible and effective for the protection of especially vulnerable social groups it purports to cover. Thus, the Commission proposed amendments to some provisions regarding, *inter alia*, the following issues:

(a) *Defence of rights*: The law should expressly enable all NGOs with a legal interest to provide legal support to/on behalf of the complainants;

(b) *Burden of proof*: For the effective transposition of the Directives all Greek Procedural Codes need to be amended;

(c) *Criminal sanctions*: The new law needs to be harmonized with the existing anti-racist Law 927/1979;

(d) *Social dialogue and equality bodies*: The Commission proposed that social dialogue should take place with all members of the civil society with an interest in ensuring the observance of anti-discrimination legislation. Furthermore, the equality bodies should have a wider scope of action and adopt policies that will bring them closer to (potential) victims of discrimination;

(e) Finally, the Commission stressed the need for a systematic and comprehensive revision by the competent Greek Ministries of Greek legislation so that the principle of equal treatment becomes effective, especially in cases of discrimination because of religious or other beliefs.

17 December 2003