

## **Gender participation in the Peace talks**

The involvement of women in the peace talks is an international obligation. On October 31, 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) called for the implementation of a gender perspective that included the needs of women during resettlement, repatriation and post-conflict reconstruction by unanimously adopting Resolution 1325; after recalling resolutions 1261 (1999), 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000) and 1314 (2000).<sup>1</sup> Resolution 1325 was the first official legal document from the United Nations Security Council that mandates parties in a conflict context to respect women's rights and to support their participation in peace negotiations and in post-conflict reconstruction. Consequently parties in a conflict must formally incorporate a gender perspective entailing the special needs of women and girls in the key stages of conflicts. Thus the Resolution obliges sides to a conflict to respect women's rights and support their participation in peace negotiations during processes of repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and reconstruction.

UNSCR 1325 calls on all countries to ensure the effective participation of women in negotiations, including at decision-making levels, envisioning the appointment of more female Special Representatives and envoys, at the diplomatic level, and more prominent roles in peacekeeping roles and rehabilitation functions. The resolution emphasizes the responsibility of all countries to prosecute perpetrators of gender-based violence, including rape and other forms of abuse. In parallel the resolution requires the United Nations (UN) to ensure gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping missions and post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Sustainable peace requires good will and participation. In the spirit of Resolution 1325, the international community emphasizes the need for inclusivity. President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, the Liberian activist Leymah Gbowee and the Yemeni journalist Tawakkol Karman were awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize for “their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peacebuilding work. In acknowledging the efforts of these outstanding individuals the Nobel committee declared that “[w]e cannot achieve democracy and lasting peace in the world unless women obtain the same opportunities as men to influence developments at all levels of society.”<sup>2</sup>

UNSCR 1325 must be incorporated into the formal negotiation framework of Cyprus. In May 2010, the report of the UN Secretary-General on his mission to the good offices in Cyprus (S/2010/238) suggested the need to pursue projects “aimed at...enhancing the role of women in the

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<sup>1</sup> Security Council, unanimously adopting resolution 1325 (2000), calls for broad participation of women in peacebuilding post-conflict reconstruction. United Nations. October 31, 2000. <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2000/20001031.sc6942.doc.html>

<sup>2</sup> The Nobel Peace Prize 2011 - Press Release. Nobelprize.org. 5 Mar 2012  
[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/2011/press.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2011/press.html)

peace process” (S/2010/238, paragraph 8)<sup>3</sup> This was followed by Ban Ki-moon’s subsequent report that encouraged “the sides to continue their engagement with the Gender Advisory Team, consisting of civil society activists and scholars from across the island, and to seriously consider its gender-focused recommendations on the main areas under discussion in the peace talks” (S/2010/603, paragraph 43).<sup>4</sup>

In Cyprus the exclusion of the wider public and of women in particular in the peace talks remains a problem. Negotiations have spanned for decades without significant inputs from society. A point of departure for all civil society initiatives in Cyprus is the absence of inputs into the political process, be it at the level of policy making or with respect to the formal ‘Cyprus Problem’ negotiations. Regarding the latter, Cyprus Problem negotiations have been a Track 1 affair since their inception in 1968, following inter-communal violence between the Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots. In the decades since, numerous rounds of inconclusive negotiations under UN auspices have entailed very little societal input.

The current set of negotiations that began in 2008 held the promise to mark a departure from this legacy. A group of women from both communities in divided Cyprus joined to form a Gender Advisory Team (GAT) that sought a mandate to pursue two strands of work: First, a civil society oriented agenda, aiming for grassroots outreach, advocacy, networking and awareness-raising with women’s organizations on gender issues and the peace process. Second, a more technical agenda oriented toward providing input to the negotiations. In response, a gender consultant was engaged by the UNDP-ACT to encourage more consistent reflections on a gender perspective in the process in close consultation with local stakeholders and the UN Good Offices team.

Despite high hopes, political support from the United Nations and the appointment of ‘focal points’ from the respective negotiation teams, as well as financial commitment from donors, the project has yet to be implemented. Had the UNSCR 1325 project been implemented, it would have introduced a new dimension into talks that have circumvented any deliberation on social needs and social identities.<sup>5</sup> Various projects have been attempting to inject a societal perspective, through polling and other means of bringing public concerns to the attention of negotiators and mediators

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<sup>3</sup> “Paragraph 8: Following up on the initial assessment of the peace process made in the fall of 2009 under Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), a gender consultant was engaged by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to encourage more consistent reflections of gender perspective in the process, in close consultation with local stakeholders and the Good Offices team. In this respect, in early March 2010 the consultant met with a “gender core group” of Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot women, supporting their efforts to contribute a gender perspective to the negotiating chapters under consideration by the leaders. The group made a first contribution in this regard to the two leaders, providing inputs on the issue of gender in the context of governance and power-sharing. UNDP is currently considering project proposals aimed at further enhancing the role of women in the peace process.”

<sup>4</sup> “Paragraph 43: The active participation and engagement of civil society in the effort to reach a solution and in its implementation are also a crucial aspect of the negotiations. Now, more than ever, as public support is flagging, civil society can play an important role in supporting the leaders and the process. In addition, mindful of the important role of women in peace negotiations, as recognized by the Security Council in resolution 1325 (2000), I would encourage the sides to continue their engagement with the Gender Advisory Team, consisting of civil society activists and scholars from across the island, and to seriously consider its gender-focused recommendations on the main areas under discussion in the peace talks.”

<sup>5</sup> It is also important to highlight that UNSCR 1325 is broad in scope, envisioning gender perspectives in all aspects of conflict, from conflict prevention to conflict management to conflict resolution. This rendered some articles more appropriate than others for the context in Cyprus, a ‘frozen conflict’ where major incidences of violence occurred in prior decades. For instance, Articles 1-4, obliging the involvement of women in peace and security decision-making processes, as well as Article 8, calling for the incorporation of a gender perspective when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, proved to be a strong rationale in the context of Cyprus.

alike. However, none of these initiatives has the backing of a UN Security Council Resolution. It is significant to note here that, whereas UNSCR 1325 implementation is an obligation, it is not covered by Chapter VII of the UN Charter, hence it is not subject to enforcement and non-compliance is not penalized. Until the Secretary General's intervention through the aforementioned paragraphs in his Good Offices Mission reports, UNSCR 1325 never featured in any documents related to the Cyprus Problem.

The current impasse in the formal negotiations posits one silver lining: an opportunity to redesign the formal negotiation process to broaden social participation. In anticipation of the resumption of formal negotiations in 2013 on the heels of the Greek Cypriot presidential election, various organizations have been sharing ideas on how to implement Resolution 1325 in Cyprus. A discussion involving the participation of 18 non-governmental organizations was held at the "Cyprus Open Day 2012: Barriers to women's participation in decision-making" on 21 September 2012. The discussion led to the elaboration of a set of recommendations that were shared with the United Nations Good Offices mission. Chief among these was the recommendation to the UN to assign a UN Women representative to the negotiations who would liaise between NGOs and stakeholders in order to support public consultations on policy matters. Another recommendation entailed the need for the UN to support a campaign on human security training on gender issues. Finally the UN has been called upon to provide technical support to a women's dialogue on the Cyprus problem. For their part, The Secretary General's Special Representative Lisa Buttenheim and The Secretary General's Special Adviser for Cyprus, Alexander Downer expressed support and called for greater representation of women in the respective negotiation teams lamenting their under-representation.

The under-representation and exclusion of women in formal peace negotiations has long-term negative societal effects, because the specific problems that women in conflict situations are confronted with are being disregarded and overlooked. Yet, in conflicts and war-torn countries across the world, women are often at the forefront of peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts. In patriarchal societies, the wealth of experiences that women have with conflict mitigation, peacebuilding and social, economic and democratic reconstruction is under-utilized, at the expense of the people.

In the case of Cyprus, despite the rapid economic growth and development that took place over the past decades, at the socio-political level the two communities are yet to overcome their former – 'patriarchal' – selves. The exclusion of women is evident at various levels, particularly in senior executive positions in the private sector, in public administration and in the peace process itself. In

her recent research, Hadjipavlou<sup>6</sup> has shown that women find themselves in a transitional phase between traditionalism and modernity, with patriarchal structures still remaining in place.

According to the latest report by the official Cyprus Statistical Service (Cystat)<sup>7</sup>, the number of women in Cyprus attending tertiary education is significantly higher than the respective numbers of male students, with the deviation increasing over the years. Despite this reality, the participation of women in the labour force as well as their representation in decision-making process is dramatically low across the board<sup>8</sup>. In the northern part of Cyprus, the public awareness of the gender gap and domestic violence against women have only recently surfaced through the efforts of civil society who have sponsored legislation to fulfil mandates of gender equality.<sup>9</sup> However, gender inequality and a gender perspective do not feature in the formal peace talks.

The exclusion of women from the peace talks serves to reinforce the status quo. Giving women and other groups of people a voice at the negotiation table would allow for reflection on how gender affects perceptions. Over the past several years, the Cyprus 2015 initiative has conducted a series of polls<sup>10</sup> related to the ongoing negotiation process. Gender differences surface in some notable instances. In the absence of a broader strategy for engaging women in the peace process in line with UNSCR 1325, we highlight some of these differences below to serve as an initial assessment of needs.

### **Perceptions on the Cyprus problem**

Cyprus 2015 recently conducted a series of extensive surveys<sup>11</sup> in both communities in an attempt to understand the values of Cypriots as well as their “hopes” and “fears” concerning their aspirations from a future settlement. In addition, different solution proposals were set forward to evaluate public preferences and priorities. Altogether 72 questions were used for the purposes of the current analysis which in turn were aggregated into broader dimensions (Values: 19 questions, 5 dimensions. Hopes: 25 questions, 4 dimensions. Fears: 30 questions, 5 dimensions. Outlook of the peace process: 17 questions, 4 dimensions. Solution Models: 5 options tested)<sup>12</sup>. We present key gender and community differences in these dimensions, in the pages that follow.

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<sup>6</sup> Hadjipavlou, M. (2010). *Women and Change in Cyprus, Feminism, Gender in Conflict*. London: I.B. Tauris.

<sup>7</sup> Cystat (2008), *The statistical Portrait of Women in Cyprus*. Available online at: [http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/All/812E5C1BA7E22562C225741A00353FC4/\\$file/Potrait\\_of\\_Women\\_in\\_Cyprus.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/All/812E5C1BA7E22562C225741A00353FC4/$file/Potrait_of_Women_in_Cyprus.pdf?OpenElement)

<sup>8</sup> Currently, the Member of the Parliament in the Greek Cypriot community consist of 50 male and 6 female members only.

<sup>9</sup> *Feminist Atölye* <http://feministatolye.org/>

<sup>10</sup> The polls covered an extensive list of topics surrounding the Cyprus problem but only a fraction of that information is presented here for the purposes of this analysis. For more information regarding the polls please visit [www.Cyprus2015.org](http://www.Cyprus2015.org).

<sup>11</sup> Sozen A., Christou S., Lordos A. and Kaymak E. (2009), *Investigating the Future: An in-depth study of Public Opinion in Cyprus*, Cyprus. Geneva: Interpeace.

Sozen A., Christou S., Lordos A. and Kaymak E. (2010), *Next steps in the peace talks: An island-wide study of public opinion in Cyprus*. Geneva: Interpeace.

Kaymak E., Lordos A. Sozen A., and Filippou G (2012), *Understanding the Public Dimension of the Cyprus Peace Process: An in-depth investigation of Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot public opinion*. Geneva: International Peacebuilding Alliance,

<sup>12</sup> For the development of the dimensions, an exploratory factor analysis approach was used, using maximum likelihood as the extraction method and promax rotation. All factors had very high reliability indicators ( $\alpha > .7$ ). For more information regarding the polls please visit [www.Cyprus2015.org](http://www.Cyprus2015.org).

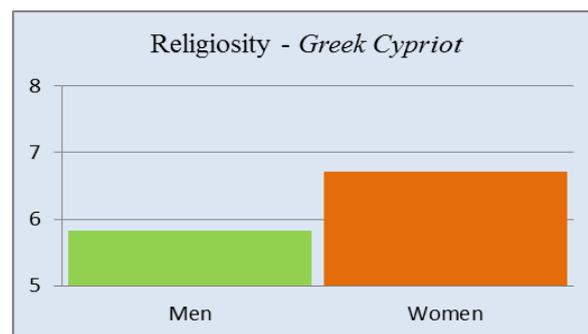
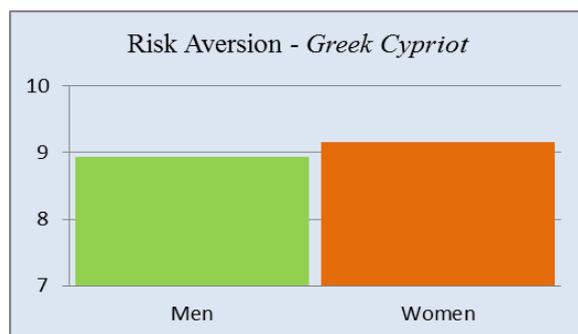
Overall, it appears that men and women do not differ significantly in respect to their personal **values**. However, as it can be noted from table 1 and graphs below, women in the Greek Cypriot community are more likely to ponder potential negative consequences of any choice (risk averse behaviour) while at the same time they are significantly more religious than men. Within the Turkish Cypriot community, although some gender discrepancy is present, it was not found to be statistically significant.

**Table 1: Values**

Dimension	Community	Gender	Mean <sup>1</sup>	Mean Difference
Risk Aversion	Greek Cypriot	Men	8.94	0.23*
		Women	9.16	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	7.73	0.12
		Women	7.85	
Materialism	Greek Cypriot	Men	4.25	-0.14
		Women	4.11	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	5.33	0.05
		Women	5.39	
Ethnocentrism	Greek Cypriot	Men	8.46	0.12
		Women	8.58	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	8.36	0
		Women	8.36	
Religiosity	Greek Cypriot	Men	5.83	0.89***
		Women	6.72	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	5.58	-0.03
		Women	5.55	
Trust	Greek Cypriot	Men	7.19	-0.12
		Women	7.07	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	6.80	0.03
		Women	6.83	

\*\*\*p < .001 , \*\*p < .01, \*p < .10

1: (1= Not a motivator/fear, 10 = Extremely important motivator/fear)



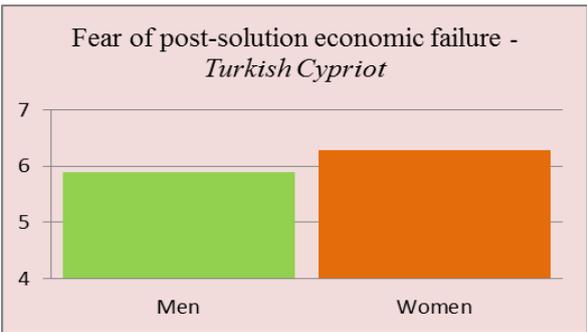
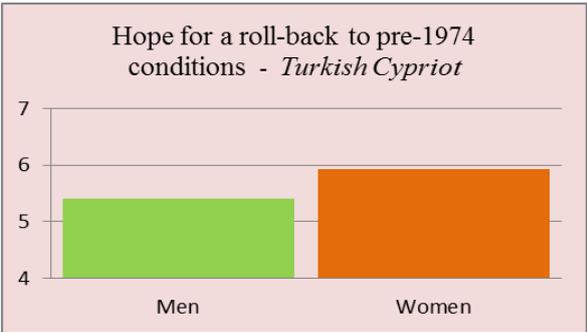
Moving on to the next set of dimensions, **hopes**, (see table 2), Greek Cypriots are primarily motivated by the prospect for a roll-back to pre-1974 conditions, a desire for peace and social normalization and the prospect for post-solution economic gains. On the other hand, Turkish Cypriot are more motivated by the prospect of EU membership, post-settlement peace and social normalization and the prospect of economic gains. Overall, gender differences are not significant in either community with the only exception being that of Turkish Cypriot women being significantly more supportive of a roll-back to pre-1974 conditions than Turkish Cypriot men.

**Table 2: Hopes**

Dimension	Community	Gender	Mean <sup>1</sup>	Mean Difference
Hope for a roll-back to pre-1974 conditions	Greek Cypriot	Men	9.30	0.01
		Women	9.28	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	5.40	-0.21***
		Women	5.93	
Hope to integrate the Turkish Cypriots and Turkey into the EU	Greek Cypriot	Men	6.28	0.10
		Women	6.03	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	7.20	-0.05
		Women	7.33	
Hope for peace and social normalization	Greek Cypriot	Men	8.80	-0.01
		Women	8.85	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	7.40	-0.04
		Women	7.50	
Hope for post-solution economic gains	Greek Cypriot	Men	8.28	0.01
		Women	8.25	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	7.68	0.09
		Women	7.45	

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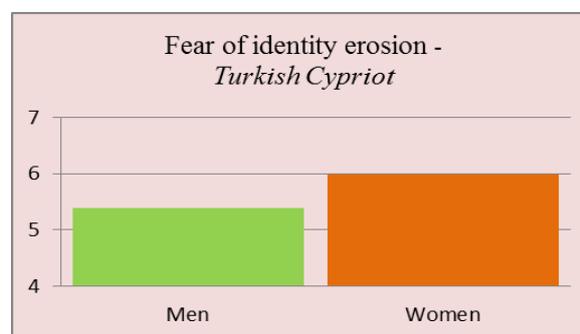
Pertaining to **fears** (see table 3), there seems to be a consistent gender discrepancy across the board. Turkish Cypriot women seem to be particularly afraid that a settlement might lead to an economic failure, while Greek Cypriot women in particular seem to be afraid of renewed conflict and domination by the other side. Fear of identity erosion is a greater concern among women when compared against men, especially within the Turkish Cypriot community.

**Table 3: Fears**

Dimension	Community	Gender	Mean <sup>1</sup>	Mean Difference
Fear of post-solution economic failure	Greek Cypriot	Men	5.95	-0.03
		Women	6.03	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	5.88	-0.16*
		Women	6.28	
Fear of renewed conflict and domination by the other side	Greek Cypriot	Men	8.08	-0.12*
		Women	8.38	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	6.65	-0.04
		Women	6.78	
Fear of identity erosion	Greek Cypriot	Men	5.10	-0.09
		Women	5.33	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	5.38	-0.23**
		Women	5.98	
Fear of implementation failure	Greek Cypriot	Men	8.33	-0.07
		Women	8.50	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	7.63	0.08
		Women	7.43	
Fear that plan will diverge from the established Greek Cypriot thesis ( <i>Greek Cypriots only</i> )	Greek Cypriot	Men	8.75	-0.04
Women		8.80		
Fear that plan will diverge from the established Turkish Cypriot thesis ( <i>Turkish Cypriots only</i> )	Turkish Cypriot	Men	7.00	0.08
Women		7.98		

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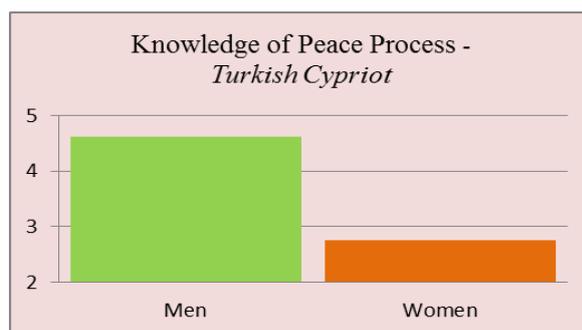
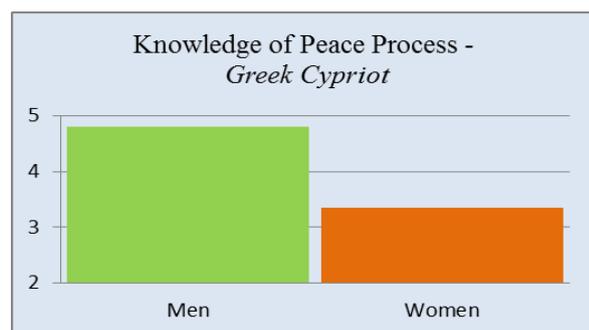
Moving on to an **outlook of the peace process** (see table 4), the most evident gender discrepancy, which in fact seems to be consistent in both communities, is the knowledge about events of the peace process. Even though we should underline the fact that knowledge was relatively low for both genders in both communities, women were found to be at a significantly lower level than men. Pertaining to openness to reconciliation, the Greek Cypriot community appears to be more acceptive to the idea, than the Turkish Cypriot, with Greek Cypriot men exhibiting higher levels than Greek Cypriot women. At the same time, we notice how the Greek Cypriot community is considerably more afraid of the out-group, understood as an aggregate fear of Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot community, than the Turkish Cypriot community being afraid of Greece and the Greek Cypriot community.

**Table 4: Outlook of the peace process**

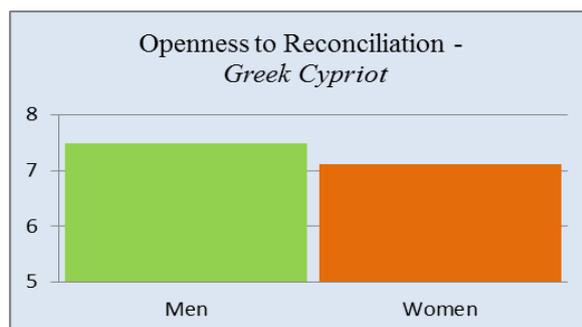
Dimension	Community	Gender	Mean <sup>1</sup>	Mean Difference
Openness to reconciliation	Greek Cypriot	Men	7.48	-0.37*
		Women	7.11	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	5.99	-0.04
		Women	6.01	
Fear of out group	Greek Cypriot	Men	8.23	0.22
		Women	8.45	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	7.80	-0.04
		Women	7.77	
Fear of deadlock	Greek Cypriot	Men	7.77	-0.13
		Women	7.64	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	7.37	-0.16
		Women	7.22	
Knowledge of peace process	Greek Cypriot	Men	4.80	-1.45***
		Women	3.35	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	4.61	-1.85***
		Women	2.76	

\*\*\*p < .001, \*\*p < .01, \*p < .10

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Finally, looking at the **solution models** (see table 5), the setting is somehow more complex, with the gender dimension operating differently in the two communities. The most significant gender discrepancy across both communities was in the case of a solution model based on bi-zonal bi-communal federation, receiving the clear support of men over women, especially in the Turkish Cypriot community. As for alternative models, Greek Cypriot women displayed greater support for models pertaining to greater mono-communal sovereignty (i.e. confederation of two sovereign states, two separate and internationally recognized states).

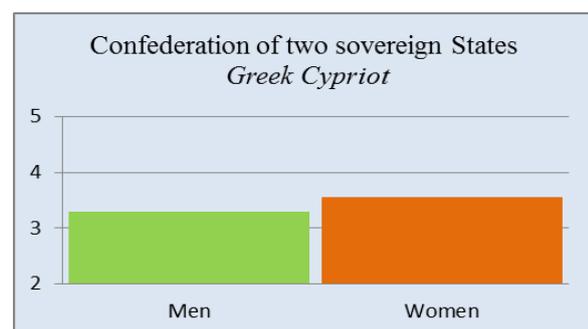
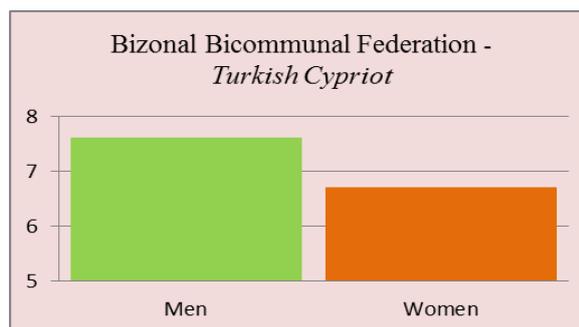
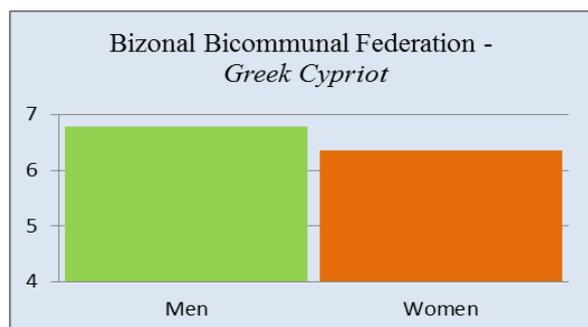


**Table 4: Solution Models**

Dimension	Community	Gender	Mean <sup>1</sup>	Mean Difference
Bi-zonal bi-communal federation	Greek Cypriot	Men	6.79	.171*
		Women	6.36	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	7.6	.371***
		Women	6.7	
Confederation of two sovereign states	Greek Cypriot	Men	3.30	-.104*
		Women	3.56	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	5.4	-.043
		Women	5.5	
Two separate and internationally recognized states	Greek Cypriot	Men	3.25	-.245***
		Women	3.86	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	9.2	.056
		Women	9.1	
One unitary state and central government for the whole of Cyprus	Greek Cypriot	Men	9.78	.073
		Women	9.60	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	4.7	-.096
		Women	4.9	
Continuation of the current situation	Greek Cypriot	Men	3.95	-.079
		Women	4.15	
	Turkish Cypriot	Men	6.4	.065
		Women	6.3	

\*\*\*p < .001 , \*\*p < .01, \*p < .10

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## **Recommendations**

The inclusion of women in peace negotiations is an international obligation. Formally this requires the adoption of National Action Plans (NAPs). In the context of Europe 13 EU member states and 17 European countries in total are currently implementing NAPs. In most countries, the formal mechanism for the development of a NAP and its implementation is spearheaded through the establishment of a working group. Additionally a number of government ministries are also involved where the working group takes a role in coordinating policy objectives and implementation across government agencies. In the case of Cyprus the empowerment of representative women's groups through a formal working group in the formal negotiation process can be achieved through the establishment of another 'chapter' in the negotiations alongside the conventional issue areas under negotiation. The latest round of negotiations that commenced in 2008 entailed the input of a number of working groups that dealt with the substantive dossiers of the Cyprus problem. For working group recommendations to be adopted as a mutually binding NAP, the negotiation framework that foresees that "nothing is agreed to till all is agreed to" would need to be modified to accommodate gender mainstreaming mandates.

Coordination with government requires technical consultation. Thus the working group would also require representation in the technical committees, especially considering the division of Cyprus into de facto administrations and the political context of implementing bi-communal matters. However, the authority of the working group should not be limited to areas of bi-communal cooperation, since the agenda of mainstreaming gender must be incorporated into policy at all levels of governance in both communities.

Such a working group would require funding that would also serve to underline the commitment of the respective leaderships to the adoption and implementation of NAPs. Through these resources the working group would serve a forum function that would entail the broad participation of civil society and relevant stakeholders in the elaboration of NAP objectives and deliverables. The mutual funding of a NAP project would require the establishment of a joint board of trustees appointed jointly through the leaders and civil society organizations.

As Resolution 1325 requires international cooperation and coordination the working group would benefit from close coordination with the European Affairs Working Group so as to align NAPs with international norms and practices, especially in the EU context.

The implementation of NAPs requires oversight and the pre-determination of specific objectives that are elaborated in the form of specific targets. Whereas the political division of Cyprus renders oversight complex, there is the need for formal reporting. Under the circumstances, the working group secretariat would be obliged to produce an annual report to the board of trustees.

Specific areas of focus must be determined by the authorized working group in consultation with civil society actors and inputs from the broader public. One source of information to inform the agenda of the working group would be the poll work referenced above.

The poll results presented above highlight the fact that important differences exist in the way each gender perceives aspects of the peace process: This particularly pertains to differences in the profiles of expectations and fears, but also, crucially, differences in the way the overall solution framework is being evaluated. With such differences in evidence, the need for an inclusion of women into the peace process, already formally mandated through UNSC Res 1325, becomes all the more apparent.

A number of specific fears have been identified:

- a) *Fear of post-solution economic failure*: Addressing this concern requires an extensive public communication campaign based on sound economic analysis, following a detailed audit of the perceptions of women regarding the economic conditions they believe would prevail after a settlement.
- b) *Fear of identity erosion*: To address this fear, it is crucial to help women of both communities to experience themselves both as members of their own community, but also as members of a more inclusive polity, that is tolerant enough to include the other community in the context of a multi-cultural society. Such experiences can best be achieved through direct contact with members of the other community, in a context which respects differences while also acknowledging communalities.
- c) *Fear of renewed conflict and domination by the other community*: To accommodate these concerns, processes of national dialogue are required, where women will be engaged in all walks of life and across the two communities. Such dialogue processes will reveal in depth the underlying anxieties that exist over the prospect of co-existence, making it possible to resolve issues through targeted policy actions.

Given that the agreed solution model itself – a bi-zonal bi-communal federation – appears to elicit greater scepticism in women of both communities, and given that women will eventually be called to vote in a future referendum and help make a solution sustainable, it is imperative that ways be found for women to have a seat at the negotiating table. Another important element that needs to be taken on board is the significantly lower level of knowledge regarding the peace process that women in both communities exhibit. Direct engagement of women in the peace process will go a long way towards addressing existing fears, and would alleviate the underlying scepticism towards a federal settlement that women in both communities seem to exhibit.

In and of itself, the development and implementation of a NAP in Cyprus may not transform relations overnight, but it will serve to galvanize advocates of a new set of norms, reinforcing democratization and participatory processes, both of which will prove invaluable assets in guiding Cyprus out of conflict into the realm of sustainable peace.