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The Integrity Advisor as a Reference Point in Cases of Violation of the Principle of Gender Equality in the Greek Public Administration †

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Abstract: Gender equality is a fundamental principle that forms the basis of modern society. In the context of the Greek Public Administration, the promotion of gender equality is highlighted as a priority. However, despite efforts, incidents of violation of this principle continue to occur. In this context, the Integrity Advisor is emerging as an important tool for addressing incidents of gender equality violations, being the guardian of coherence and transparency in the public sector. The Integrity Advisor represents the 'guardian' of values and ethical principles within the public administration. His/her role focuses on ensuring that public organizations comply with the principles of transparency, accountability, and ethics. In this context, the violation of the principle of gender equality emerges as a specific area of intervention for the Integrity Advisor. The institutionalization of the Integrity Advisor is an innovative attempt to create an institution capable of helping any public body to 'confide' problems that have been identified in its environment and to mediate their management, the possible finding of a solution, or their referral to the appropriate authorities. The Integrity Advisor is required to develop a strong channel of communication with public sector employees and executives to establish a sense of security and trust among all.

Keywords: gender equality; violation of the principle of gender equality; integrity advisor; Greek public administration

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1. Introduction

One of the most important obstacles women face in the workplace is inequality. In many societies, women still receive less money than men for the same or equivalent work. This pays inequality affects not only women's finances but also their self-esteem and overall social status. It is vital to take steps to eliminate this inequality, not only by establishing effective legislative frameworks but also by shaping a cultural change in terms of how gender roles are perceived in society.

The principle of equal pay for equal work or work of equal value has been a cornerstone of the Treaties since 1957 and is firmly embedded in EU law. This principle provides legal recourse in cases of discrimination. Nevertheless, Eurostat data from 2020 highlights persistent disparities: the difference between women's and men's employment rate is 11.6%, as well as, women's earnings are, on average, lower than men's, with the EU gender pay gap standing at 15.7% [1]. These disparities, compounded by lifelong inequalities in employment and pay, exacerbate the pension gap, leaving older women at a significantly higher risk of poverty than men. The gender pension gap in the EU is notably high at 30.1% [1]. In addition, gender equality in the workplace includes access

to positions of responsibility and participation in decision-making bodies. In many cases, women continue to suffer discrimination in terms of promotion to senior positions and participation in strategic decisions.

Promoting equality at this level requires not only companies but also society to recognize and address the stereotypes that prevent women from moving up the career ladder. Despite the evolution of social perceptions and legislative frameworks, women still face multiple challenges in accessing the labor market and in progressing through the stages of their careers. Equality in the workplace is not only a matter of justice, but also of sustainable economic development [2].

Gender equality is a fundamental value that enhances democracy and human development. In the workplace, equality means that men and women have equal opportunities for career advancement, equal pay for equal work, and equal opportunities for promotion. Discrimination against women is any segregation, exclusion, or restriction based on gender that has the purpose and/or effect of limiting women's enjoyment or exercise of human rights, fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, and any other sphere [3].

It is necessary to adopt policies that promote equality in the labor market. Employers should be encouraged to adopt fair hiring and promotion practices, and governments should ensure that equality laws are enforced, and that support is provided for programs that promote equality in the workplace. Achieving gender equality in the workplace requires the cooperation of all stakeholders, including governments, businesses, trade unions, and civil society. Only through collective effort can a fair, equitable, and people-centered workplace be created.

This paper aims to examine how the Integrity Advisor will deal with gender equality violations that may occur in a public administration body. Through a presentation of the legislative texts and the new institution of the public administration, that of the Integrity Advisor, this article focuses on the gender inequalities that may exist in the public administration and highlights the ways in which the Integrity Advisor can deal with them effectively. Through appropriate policy measures, training programs, and awareness raising among agency employees, the Integrity Advisor can play a key role in promoting gender equality and eliminating racial discrimination.

In the context of the research on this topic, the lack of relevant literature was identified both in Greece and abroad. Although gender equality is a vital issue and an object of interest for many researchers, the specific aspect concerning gender equality violations and their treatment by the Integrity Advisor seems to have not received sufficient attention. This lack of literature underlines the importance and need for further research to seek and find effective approaches to promote gender equality.

A literature review was conducted, and this article firstly lists the international legislative texts on gender equality, followed by the European Union legislative texts, and finally the Greek legislative texts on gender equality. This article concludes with a literature review on gender equality in public administration and the Integrity Advisor in the Greek Public Administration.

2. Historical Background

The path toward gender equality is a complex and continuous evolution, intertwined with the history of humanity. Although the concept of equality began to develop gradually, many movements and events have helped to shape the current situation.

In ancient Greece and Rome, society was characterized by strong racial discrimination. Women were often excluded from political activities and participation in public events. However, there were some exceptions, such as Sappho in ancient Greece, who stood out for their contribution to culture. In Rome, the idea of the 'political and domestic sphere' left women out of the public sphere.

During the Middle Ages, the status of women did not improve significantly. Society was strongly influenced by religion and ancient Greek philosophy, which sometimes

reinforced gender inequalities. The Renaissance and the Enlightenment marked some positive developments in the field of gender equality. The ideas of equality and human rights provided the theoretical basis for independent women who promoted education and participation in society [4].

During the 19th and 20th centuries, the quest for women's rights brought about the "suffragette" movement, which promoted the right to vote for women. Women's access to education increased and many women transcended their traditional roles, "entering" professions that were considered exclusively male and evolved the women's rights movement [5]. Furthermore, as they were also influenced by the principles of liberalism, they considered that the similarities between the two sexes are greater than the differences, and this is because both are human beings who are simply separated based on their biological characteristics. Thus, the two sexes are "complementary" to each other, meaning that both have an equal role, especially in the reproductive process. Finally, they believed that biological difference was not an important factor in their treatment as inferior individuals [1].

Nowadays, the challenge is to ensure that this march toward equality continues. Despite the progress that has been made, inequalities still exist in the workplace, in the political sphere, and in society in general. These challenges require continued efforts to promote equality and ensure a fair and equal world for all individuals, regardless of gender.

3. Legislative Texts on Gender Equality

3.1. International Legal Texts on Gender Equality

There are several international legal texts dealing with gender equality, which are important milestones in the effort to strengthen women's rights and gender equality at the global level.

- The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights: adopted in 1948 by the United Nations, is the only universal human rights document in existence that identifies the thirty fundamental rights that form the basis of a democratic society. Article 1 states that all human beings are born equal in dignity and rights. Article 2 prohibits discrimination on the grounds of sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or any other status. It also recognizes equality before the law in Article 7.
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966): it guarantees the right to equality of men and women in the enjoyment of civil and political rights, Article 3. In Article 19, it prohibits the discrimination and harassment of individuals according to their opinions, and in Article 23, it recognizes the equality of the rights and responsibilities of spouses in marriage, both during and at the dissolution of marriage.
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966): it guarantees the right to the equality of men and women in all economic, social, and educational rights, in Article 3. In Article 13, it recognizes the provision of higher education to all people equally, according to each person's ability and by all appropriate means.
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination: adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1965 and entered into force in 1969. The States Parties to the Convention are obliged to prohibit and eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone to equality before the law without distinction as to race, color, or national or ethnic origin, regarding the enjoyment of fundamental rights.
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women: adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, it is one of the most important international legal instruments recognizing women's rights. It aims to eliminate discrimination based on sex and promotes equality in all areas of life. Articles 1 and 2 of the Convention require Member States to condemn discrimination against women in all its forms. The impact of discrimination or its purpose may jeopardize or destroy the recognition and enjoyment by women, irrespective of their marital status, of their human rights, and political, economic, social, cultural, and civil liberties. The Optional Protocol to

the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was introduced in 1999. Under this Protocol, mechanisms were added to implement the Convention allowing women and girls (individually or collectively) to submit complaints directly to the CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) if they consider that their rights protected by the Convention are being violated.

- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: the 2030 Agenda is a global initiative adopted by UN member states in 2015. It includes Goal 5, which is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- International Labour Organization's Labour Convention Nos. 100 and 111: Convention 100 deals with equal pay for men and women for equal work, while Convention 111 deals with the elimination of discrimination in the workplace.

Indicatively, these legislative texts are the means to promote gender equality at the global level and reflect the international commitment to promote women's rights and eliminate discrimination based on gender.

3.2. European Legislative Texts on Gender Equality

The European Union (EU), both at the level of primary and secondary legislation, has established legal rules aimed at combating discrimination. It is based on the values of respect for human dignity and rights, democracy, the rule of law, freedom, and equality, as described in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU).

- The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights (1950): the ECHR is the first among modern human rights treaties to be based on the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The implementation of the ECHR is monitored by the European Court of Human Rights, and since its adoption it has undergone various amendments and additions through documents known as "protocols". According to Article 14 of the ECHR, discrimination based on sex, race, color, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, membership of a national minority, property, and birth or other status is prohibited.
- The Treaty of Rome (1957): Article 119 provides equal pay for equal work for men and women workers.
- The Maastricht Treaty (1992): this Treaty, also known as the Treaty on European Union, in Article 2 confirms the importance of gender equality in the EU. It emphasizes that the Union is based on the values of respect for human dignity and human rights, equality, freedom, the rule of law, and democracy.
- Regulation (EC) No 1922/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006, establishing a European Institute for Gender Equality.
- The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2009): the principles of equality and non-discrimination, notably on grounds of sex, color, race, ethnic or social origin, religion, genetic features, language, political opinions or any other opinions, membership of a national minority, disability, property, age, or sexual orientation are set out in Articles 20 to 26. Article 23 also mentions that equality between women and men must be ensured in all areas, including employment and pay.
- Directive (EU) 2019/1158 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on work–life balance for parents and carers, repealing Council Directive 2010/18/EU.
- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions—A European Union of Equal Opportunities: A Strategy for Gender Equality 2020–2025 [1].

Numerous Directives and Regulations within the European Union promote women's rights and gender equality, addressing both direct and indirect discrimination. Additionally, various forms of harassment are identified and clearly defined through these legislative measures.

3.3. Laws on Gender Equality in Greece

In Greece, the laws concerning gender equality cover various sectors of society, aiming to ensure equal opportunities and tackle gender discrimination. These laws express the country's commitment to promoting equality and tackling discrimination, in accordance with the principles laid down in the Constitution and the international agreements to which Greece is a signatory. An important area regulated by the laws on gender equality is employment. There are laws prohibiting discrimination in employment based on gender and establishing measures to promote equality in the workplace. There are also provisions relating to equal pay for equal work, and protection against bullying and sexual harassment in the workplace.

In the field of education, measures have been adopted to promote equality in educational institutions. These laws provide for the prohibition of discrimination and support for programs promoting gender equality in education.

There are also laws concerning the protection of the victims of violence against women and children, providing for measures to prevent, protect, and support victims. Overall, gender equality laws in Greece reflect society's efforts to ensure equal opportunities and fair treatment for all, regardless of gender.

- The Constitution of Greece in Articles 4 and 116 recognizes gender equality in the Greek territory. Paragraph 2 of Article 4 states that Greeks and Greek women have equal rights and obligations. Also, Article 116 in the second paragraph emphasizes what does not constitute discrimination. It therefore stipulates that it is not discrimination on the grounds of sex to take positive measures to promote equality between men and women. It also goes on to say that the State shall ensure that inequalities that exist in practice, particularly to the detriment of women, are eliminated.
- Bylaw 1342/1983 "On the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) was ratified and entered into force in our domestic law.
- This was followed by Law 1414/1984 "Implementation of the principle of gender equality in labor relations and other provisions", according to which gender equality services for labor relations were established. This legislation was amended by Law 3896/2010, "Implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of labor and employment—Harmonization of the existing legislation with Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 and other relevant provisions" and Bylaw 3488/2006, "Implementation of the principle of equal treatment of men and women as regards employment, vocational training and promotion, working conditions and other relevant provisions".
- Subsequently, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was ratified by Law 2952/2001.
- With Law 3304/2005, "Implementation of the principle of equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, religious or other beliefs, disability, age or sexual orientation" the Greek legislation was adapted to the provisions provided for by Council Directives 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 and 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 in order to ensure the implementation of the principle of equal treatment.
- Law 3769/2009 "Implementation of the principle of equal treatment between men and women in access to and supply of goods and services and other provisions", as provided by the provisions of Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004.
- Law 4075/2012 "Issues of the Insurance Regulation of IKA—ETAM, Insurance Institutions, adaptation of legislation to Directive 2010/18/EU and other provisions", which in Chap. F, (Articles 48–54), incorporates Council Directive 2010/18/EU of 8 March 2010 on the implementation of the revised Framework Agreement on parental leave.
- Law 4097/2012 "Implementation of the principle of equal treatment of men and women in the exercise of self-employed professional activity—Harmonization of legislation with Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament" in harmonization

of the legislation with Directive 2010/41/EU, establishes the implementation of the principle of the equal treatment of men and women in the exercise of self-employed professional activity.

- Law 4443/2016 "Implementation of Directive 2000/43/EC implementing the principle of equal treatment of persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation and Directive 2014/54/EU on measures facilitating the exercise of workers' rights in the context of the free movement of workers, and other provisions", which was repealed almost a decade after Law 4443/2016. 3304/2005 (Article 22). This law improves and strengthens the existing legislative framework for the implementation of equal treatment and non-discrimination in employment and labor in general. To this end, a broader scope of the application of the principle of equal treatment is developed by introducing new grounds for discrimination, such as 'color', 'descent' and 'national origin', 'chronic illness', 'marital status', and 'social status'.
- N. 4531/2018 "Ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence and adaptation of Greek legislation... and other provisions", which is ratified and has the force and effect provided for in Article 28 par. 1 of the Constitution. This Convention includes provisions to strengthen criminal legislation to address crimes committed against women.
- Law 4604/2019 "Promotion of substantive gender equality, prevention and combating of gender violence—Regulations for the granting of citizenship Provisions related to elections in local government—Other provisions", which regulates all legal rules of public and private law of natural persons, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity, which can be a trigger for gender discrimination.

4. Gender Equality in Public Administration

Gender equality is a core principle of modern society and is essential across all aspects of life, including public administration. Promoting equality between men and women in this sector is not only a matter of justice but also a driver of economic and social progress.

Gender equality is not a women's issue. It is a universal, social, political, and economic issue that concerns all societies. Gender equality wants a society where men and women share equally in goods, responsibilities, and rights in all areas: in work, politics, leadership, leisure, care, family, and personal life [6].

As an institutional system that manages resources and provides services to citizens, public administration must reflect the diversity of society. Despite the advances made in gender equality, gender inequalities and disparities persist, particularly in public administration.

One of the key pillars for promoting equality in public administration is the creation of a working environment conducive to equal opportunities. This means implementing policies that eliminate discrimination and promote equality in recruitment, promotion, and mutual recognition of professional "achievements". In addition, training, and awareness raising of staff on the importance of equality is essential to create an environment that respects 'diversity'.

Gender equality in public administration is closely linked to the composition of decision-making bodies (Figure 1). The active participation of women in senior management and decision-making positions ensures that the views and needs of the female population are considered when decisions affecting society are made. Strengthening gender equality in public administration requires concerted efforts by the state, the private sector, and society. Only in this way can we create a more just, equal, and dynamic society in which gender equality is the rule and not the exception [7].

Addressing gender inequalities in access, pay, and participation in decision-making bodies therefore requires strategies that enhance equality and help create more equitable and dynamic work environments.

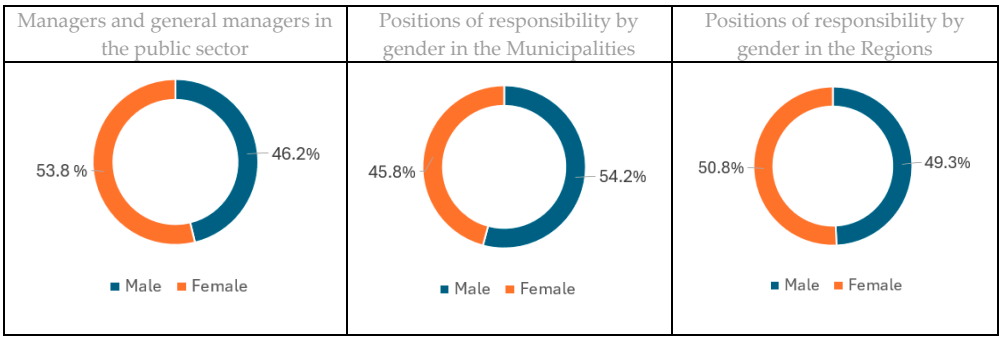

Figure 1. Positions of responsibility by gender in public administration (8 March 2021). Source: Parliament on the Pigeonhole Magazine.

5. The Integrity Advisor in the Greek Public Administration

The Integrity Advisor "appears" in the Greek Public Administration in April 2021, with Law 4795/2021, in Articles 23–30 "Internal Audit System of the Public Sector, Integrity Advisor in the Public Administration and other provisions for the public administration and local government". There was no previous legislative regulation for this institution, while according to the Explanatory Report of Law 4795/2021, relevant international practices were considered for its formation. Taking as a model good international practices in the public and private sectors, including international organizations such as the UN and the OAS, Integrity Advisors are introduced in the Greek Public Administration, in the context of the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Fight against Corruption. They are a "part" of the National Integrity System and a structural element of the Internal Audit System.

Each Ministry has an Independent Office of Integrity Advisor, which is an organizational unit under the Minister, except for the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Citizen Protection and National Defense, where as in other General Government bodies, an Independent Office of Integrity Advisor may be established, if deemed necessary, depending on the responsibilities of the body, the employees serving and in accordance with the provisions of Article 80 (transitional provisions) of the same law [8].

The central mission of the Integrity Advisor is to ensure a coherent framework for the protection of employees who identify, suffer the consequences of, or wish to report integrity violations. The Integrity Advisor receives and evaluates complaints. He or she is responsible for receiving and evaluating reports, in effect, handling the internal reporting-complaint channel that all public bodies are required to have in accordance with para. 3 of Article 25 of Law 4990/2022. At the same time, it also has an advisory role, as it provides advice on ethics and integrity issues to employees, such as, for example, gift policy, conflicts of interest, or harassment [8].

After the introduction of the institution of the Integrity Advisor in the Greek Public Administration, employees and executives of the public sector will be able to report to him/her incidents of corruption, abuse of power, serious anti-social behavior, sexual harassment, and general violations of integrity or gender equality by their colleagues or superiors [8].

The Integrity Advisor shall mediate to bring the matter before the institution's bodies or external bodies responsible for investigating the reports. They shall monitor the process of investigation and inform the reporting official accordingly. Each year, it shall prepare and submit a report to the head of the body and to the National Transparency Authority on the effectiveness of the integrity policies and procedures used by the body, the work carried out, and the progress of the cases handled. In general, the activity of the Integrity Advisor is more preventive than repressive or punitive in nature.

The establishment of the relevant office is foreseen in each Ministry and, under certain conditions, in Independent Authorities, Municipalities and Regions, autonomous agen-

cies, Decentralized Administrations, as well as in N.P.D.D. and N.P.I.D. belonging to the General Government.

According to the plan, one Counselor is to be assigned to each public body—including Ministries, local government organizations and the National Transparency Authority itself—while in the case of bodies with a large number of employees, the assignment of more than one Counselor will be considered. This new professional role, with a three-year term of office, can only be filled by existing civil servants. In fact, the consultants may not come from the institution to which they are assigned. However, this is not just another control mechanism; it will be the person who clarifies the "gray areas". It should be stressed that the Advisors are assessed and disciplined by the National Transparency Authority and not by the head of the body in which they exercise their responsibilities, which further ensures their independence [9].

6. Responsibilities of the Integrity Advisor—Specialization in the Supporting Axis—Management of Reports—Complaints

The support axis concerns the responsibilities of the Integrity Advisor, which are geared toward the employees of the organization. Employees are empowered to seek individualized advice on ethics and integrity issues faced by the employee in the performance of his/her official duties and to confidentially report misconduct within the organization.

The Integrity Advisor shall provide personalized advice on ethics and integrity issues faced by the staff member in the performance of his/her official duties. In particular, he/she shall provide advice on the following: (a) ethics and integrity issues and guidance on handling specific conflict of interest situations and ethical dilemmas; (b) workplace violence and harassment issues; (c) policies and procedures that support and promote the right of individuals to respect, dignity, and equal treatment in the workplace.

The Integrity Advisor shall also provide advice in cases where an employee is subjected to retaliatory or retributive behavior prior to making a report or during its investigation. The Integrity Advisor shall provide counseling assistance between the staff members involved/disputing, with their prior agreement, by facilitating discussion, contributing to mutual understanding, and proposing appropriate solutions to resolve the dispute. The Integrity Advisor shall provide appropriate information on the possibility of reporting within the organization, the relevant legislation, how to structure the report, and the procedure to be followed.

In accordance with Decision No. DIDAD/F.58/1007/oik.5559 of the Ministry of the Interior and the National Transparency Authority, (Official Gazette 2207/06-04-2023), the Integrity Advisor receives and manages reports from the employees of the institution on incidents of integrity violations or corruption and mediates in order for them to be addressed by the institutions of the institution or external bodies competent to investigate them.

A. Submission of reports: The report shall be made by the official orally or in writing, anonymously or in writing, in the following ways [10]:

(a) In-person meeting with the Integrity Advisor.
(b) With the Compliance Officer in person or by telephone or other voice messaging systems.
(c) Use of video conferencing.
(d) Conventional mail.
(e) E-mail to the Integrity Advisor's e-mail address.
(f) Via a dedicated reporting platform that the entity may have available, accessible to persons with disabilities.

In cases (b), (e), and (f), the petitioner is informed by an automated response that in case of anonymity, there is no possibility to be informed about the progress of the petition. The contact details of the Integrity Advisor are posted on the official website of the entity, the Ministry of Interior, and the National Transparency Authority.

B. Receipt of Reports: The receipt and initiation of reports shall be carried out directly by the Integrity Advisor's Office and the process shall ensure that the confidentiality and

protection of information is respected, in accordance with the provisions of this decision and the applicable personal data protection legislation. For the identification of employees, the unit responsible for administrative support and human resources shall provide the Integrity Advisor with an updated list of all employees of the entity and the organizational unit to which they belong. In the case of a lack of competence, the Integrity Advisor shall refer the report to the competent bodies of the institution.

C. Management of reports: The following steps shall be followed in the management of reports [11]:

- Consideration of the Integrity Advisor's competence: At this stage, the Integrity Advisor shall review the petition for admissibility and notify the petitioner within ten (10) days of receipt of the petition. It shall consider whether the following application: (a) The report is manifestly vague or unintelligible. Where the report is named, the Integrity Advisor shall contact the petitioner to provide further clarification or information. If no sufficient clarification is provided or no further information is provided, the report shall be filed with reasons, and the reporting party shall be informed at the same time. (b) The report is repeated in an abusive manner. Where the report is repeated in terms of content after it has already been processed, it shall be filed with reasons, and the petitioner shall be informed at the same time. If the petition has already been filed, the petitioner may come back with new evidence [11].
- Action/Transfer: At this stage, it is examined whether the following apply to the report: (a) It relates to a criminal offense/disciplinary misconduct. In this case, it is examined whether criminal offenses and/or disciplinary misconduct are reported. This criterion is fulfilled if a natural person acting either individually or as a member of a collective management body of a legal person and representing it in any way is named, or his or her status is clearly indicated in such a way that he or she can be identified and is reported for criminal offenses and/or disciplinary offenses in accordance with the applicable legal framework [11]. In this case, the Integrity Advisor forwards the report, as the case may be, as follows: (aa) to the body/unit of the organization responsible for the control, (ab) to the competent bodies outside the organization, or (ag) to the competent public prosecution authorities. In particular, if the complaint concerns incidents of violence and harassment, under Article 4 of Law 4808/2021, the procedure is set out in the following points DIDAD/Φ.64/946/oik.858 /19.1.2023 decision of the Minister of Interior (B' 343). (b) When it does not concern a criminal offense/disciplinary misconduct, the Integrity Advisor shall provide individualized counseling to the petitioner and/or make relevant recommendations to the head of the organization, as referred to in Articles 3 and 14. (c) In the event that the report submitted raises objections against the body responsible for investigating reports within the entity or against the Integrity Advisor, the latter shall forward the report to the National Transparency Authority, informing the reporter accordingly [11].
- Follow-up—Update: The Integrity Advisor shall diligently monitor the process of the investigation of the report by the institution to which it was forwarded, by all appropriate means. The Integrity Advisor shall maintain communication with the reporting party, keep the reporting party informed of the case, and if necessary and feasible, request further information from the reporting party. The provision of information to the petitioner shall be carried out within a reasonable period. When the case is closed, in accordance with the procedure laid down by the competent bodies to which the report has been forwarded, the Integrity Advisor shall be informed in writing, who shall notify the petitioner of the outcome, and the report shall then be filed [11].
- Keeping records of the reports: The Integrity Advisor shall maintain a record of each report received in accordance with confidentiality requirements. Reports shall be stored for a reasonable and necessary period of time in order to be retrievable and to comply with the requirements imposed by this decision, union, or national law and in any event until the conclusion of any investigation or legal proceedings initiated as a result of the report against the reporting party, the reporting party or

third parties. Where a telephone line or other telephone messaging system is used to make a report, the recording of the conversation shall be permitted, provided that the reporting party has given his or her lawful consent [11]. The Integrity Advisor shall have the right to substantiate the oral reporting either by recording the conversation in a stable and retrievable format or by a complete and accurate transcript of the conversation, providing the reporting party with the opportunity to verify, correct, and agree to the transcript of the conversation by signing it. Where a telephone line or other telephone messaging system without a recording of the conversation is used to make a report, Integrity Officers shall have the right to document the oral report in the form of an accurate transcript of the conversation, which they shall prepare, giving the reporter the opportunity to verify, correct, and agree with the transcript of the conversation by signing it. When a person requests an in-person meeting with the Integrity Advisor to make an oral report, complete and accurate minutes of the meeting shall be maintained in a fixed and retrievable format, either by recording the conversation in a fixed and retrievable format or by accurate minutes of the meeting, prepared by the Integrity Advisor, giving the reporting person the opportunity to verify, correct, and agree with the minutes of the meeting by signing them. In the event of a refusal to sign the minutes as planned, a notation to that effect shall be made by the author of the minutes.

7. Conclusions

Despite extensive efforts to promote gender equality, incidents of violations continue to occur. Challenges include the existence of stereotypes and discrimination, pay inequality, and the effective participation of women in decision-making. The Integrity Advisor plays a central role in resolving incidents of gender equality violations. They investigate complaints, provide advice, and suggest improvements, contributing to an environment that promotes equality.

The Integrity Advisor, with his or her ability to investigate and address violations, can serve as a driver for change. The Integrity Advisor is emerging as an indispensable tool in the fight against the violations of the principle of gender equality. With its ability to provide support, enhance transparency and investigate incidents, it contributes to a more equal and just society. Challenges remain, but with the right implementation and support, the Integrity Advisor can shape an environment where gender equality emerges as a fundamental value of the Public Service.

The Integrity Advisor is key to ensuring gender equality in the public administration. By being transparent in the way it handles complaints, its investigations, and advisory support, it enhances the capacity of organizations to effectively address gender equality issues, promoting a fair and equitable society.

The novelty of the institutionalization of the Integrity Advisor therefore means the adoption of a new concept that creates added value in public administration. It is an innovation that offers new opportunities for development. The creation of a culture that promotes gender equality in the workplace is crucial to promoting diversity and eliminating discrimination. This includes promoting education and awareness among employees about the inequalities that may exist, creating policies and good practices that promote equality, and developing mechanisms within the organization to address any instances of discrimination. Through these efforts, employees can strengthen the workplace community and create an environment that welcomes equality, tolerance, and mutual respect. The complex structure of public organizations and the reluctance of public sector employees and managers to take risks are key obstacles to the adoption of innovative actions in the public sector. The effective adoption and development of this innovative institution in the public sector requires the active participation of the administration, both in a planning and supporting role, the allocation of the necessary resources for the financial support of the new institution, and the adoption of successful examples and good practices from similar institutions in other countries, mainly in the European Union.

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