Gender inequality and Gender based violence in Cyprus
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This handbook was published in the framework of the project Standing Up Against Gender Inequality and Gender-Based Violence which was implemented by the NGO Aequitas, in 2018, with financial support from the European Youth Foundation. The European Youth Foundation cannot be held responsible for anything mentioned in the handbook or for any usage that might occur.
About us

AEQUITAS is a non-governmental organization in Cyprus that works on promoting human rights education, intercultural education and citizenship education.

OUR VISION

AEQUITAS’ vision is to contribute to the creation of a society in which human rights are understood, protected and promoted with a view to strengthening the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, cultivating a sense of value for human dignity, ensuring gender equality in all spheres, achieving respect for cultural diversity, empowering people to become active citizens and, moreover, enhancing principles such as democracy and solidarity.

OUR MISSION

Aequitas’s mission is to implement all its activities on the basis of human rights principles as enshrined in international human rights documents. Aequitas also aims to raise awareness and educate individuals and groups on issues pertaining to human rights, intercultural dialogue and citizenship. In this light, AEQUITAS provides Human Rights Education, Citizenship Education and Intercultural Education to a wide range of target groups, empowers marginalized communities and individuals to know and uphold their rights, carries out awareness-raising campaigns on a variety of human rights issues, encourages human rights debate and carries out lobbying and advocacy activities for human rights issues. Moreover, Aequitas is the Cypriot NGO which participates at the monitoring exercise of the European Commission against online hate speech.

AEQUITAS has implemented an array of educational, capacity building as well as advocacy and lobbying activities and projects funded by institutions such as the European Commission, the Council of Europe, the Open Society Foundations, the Anna Lindh Foundation, the European Network Against Racism and the Cyprus Youth Board.

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Aims of the handbook

This document has been printed in Greek and English and will be disseminated to competent authorities and relevant governmental and non-governmental organizations.

The main focus of this document is to provide an overview on the theoretical and Legal Framework relating to Gender based Violence within National, European and International frameworks.

It shall provide three case studies on examples of Gender based Violence, presenting national statistics and state actions for combating them, with the topics being Female Genital Mutilation, Domestic Violence and Sexual Harassment.

We hope that competent authorities, NGOs, charitable organizations and other relevant bodies and individuals will find this document to be a useful tool for garnering information on the current state of gender based violence within the Republic of Cyprus.

This manual is being implemented within the framework of the Standing Up Against Gender Inequality and Gender-Based Violence project which was implemented by the NGO Aequitas in 2018 with the financial support of the European Youth Foundation. The program was implemented between September - December 2018 with the main activity being a weekly educational workshop in Tochni, Cyprus with mainly young participants. The purpose of this workshop was to inform and sensitize participants about issues relevant to gender inequality and gender based violence, but also to provide a theoretical introduction to human rights and the role that young people can play in addressing such problems. The methodology which was used was human rights education and non-formal education. Compass and Gender Matters were the basic manuals of the Council of Europe which were used for the activities. During the workshop, SPAVO, MIGS and the Association of Recognized Refugees Cyprus offered a presentation.
Gender Based Violence

What is Gender Violence?

In accordance with the European Commission, gender-based violence can be defined as violence directed against a person because of that person's gender (including gender identity/expression) or as violence that disproportionately affects persons of a particular gender. This exact definition is reflected within the minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime law of 2016 (51 (I) / 2016) of the Republic of Cyprus.

The group which is affected mostly by gender-based violence (physical, sexual and/or psychological) is women and girls, regardless of age and background.

Examples

Examples of gender-based violence include violence in close relationships, sexual violence (including rape, sexual assault and harassment or stalking), slavery, harmful practices (such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation (FGM) and so-called ‘honour’ crimes), cyber violence and harassment using new technologies.

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1 The Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law of 2016 (51 (I) / 2016), Article 2
The Legal Framework

The United Nations
Council of Europe
European Union
National Law
The United Nations

The Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against women, to which Cyprus is a signatory, was created within the framework of the United Nations, along with several general recommendations on the topics of violence towards women, female genital mutilation and women’s health.

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The main aim of this convention is the promotion of women’s rights through the elimination of discrimination against women and girls in all areas. It was ratified by Cyprus in 1985, and was entered into Cypriot law via Law 78/1985.

The convention presents the definition of discrimination against women as “...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.”

The countries who ratified the Convention commit themselves to undertaking a series of measures to end discrimination against women which include:

   a) the incorporation of the principle of equality of men and women in their legal system, abolishing all discriminatory laws and adopting appropriate ones prohibiting discrimination against women;

   b) the establishment of tribunals and other public institutions to ensure the effective protection of women against discrimination; and

   c) ensuring the elimination of all acts of discrimination against women by persons, organizations or enterprises.

The CEDAW did not originally refer directly to the topic of gender violence, but contributed to the wider area of gender discrimination towards women. However, in 1989 the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women released General recommendation No. 12 on Violence against Women which presented that the CEDAW requires States who are signatories to the convention to act in order to protect women against violence of any kind occurring within the family, workplace or any other social area of life.

Additionally, the General Assembly adopted an Optional Protocol in 1999, which enables the Convention’s monitoring mechanism to receive complaints from individuals or groups regarding violations associated with the Convention provisions and instigate inquiry procedures into grave and systematic violations of women’s rights.
**General Recommendation No. 14 on Female Circumcision**

This recommendation focuses on recommending measures to State parties for the eradication of female circumcision and other traditional practices harmful to the health of women. Such measures include:

(a) the collection and dissemination by universities, medical or nursing associations, national women's organizations or other bodies of basic data about such traditional practices;

(b) the support of women's organizations, at both national and local levels, working for the elimination of female circumcision and other practices harmful to women;

(c) the encouragement of politicians, professionals, religious and community leaders, at all levels, including the media and the arts, to co-operate in influencing attitudes towards the eradication of female circumcision; and

(d) the introduction of appropriate educational and training programmes and seminars based on research findings about the problems arising from female circumcision.

**General Recommendation No. 19 on Violence against Women**

This recommendation incorporates violence against women into a framework of discrimination and human rights violations and presents measures to combat them. It clearly states that the definition of discrimination includes gender-based violence as “violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty.”

It is also presented that gender-based violence impairs or nullifies women's enjoyment of human rights and recommends states to take positive action in combating gender violence, including preventive and protective measures, as well as criminal penalties, incorporation of new legislation and services that offer safety and security.

**General Recommendation No. 24 on Women and health**

This recommendation focuses on the elimination of discrimination against women in their access to health care services. Regarding gender-based violence, it provides that health workers are to receive gender sensitive training to enable them to detect and manage the health consequences of gender-based violence.
The Council of Europe

The Council of Europe, as an organization that focuses on upholding human rights in Europe, has produced several conventions and recommendations on the topics of preventing and combating violence against women and domestic abuse and human trafficking, to which Cyprus is also a signatory.

**Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)**

- Entered into force in Cyprus on 01/03/2018.

The purposes of this convention are to:

(a) protect women against all forms of violence, and prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence;
(b) contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and promote substantive equality between women and men, including the empowerment of women;
(c) design a comprehensive framework, policies and measures for the protection of and assistance to all victims of violence against women and domestic violence;
(d) promote international co-operation with a view to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence; and
(e) provide support and assistance to organizations and law enforcement agencies to co-operate effectively in order to adopt an integrated approach to eliminating violence against women and domestic violence.

- Additionally, for the purposes of this convention “violence against women” is defined as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.
  - The definition of “gender-based violence against women” is also presented as violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately.
  - The convention also recognizes the fact that domestic violence affects women disproportionately and gives emphasis to the need for particular attention to female victims of gender-based violence.
**Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings**

Entered into force in Cyprus on 01/02/2008. 
This convention focuses on the protection of victims of trafficking and the safeguarding of their rights, and additionally aims at preventing trafficking as well as prosecuting traffickers.

**Recommendation Rec(2002)5 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the protection of women against violence**

This recommendation aims at tackling the issue of violence towards women.

It reaffirms that violence towards women is the result of an imbalance of power between men and women, which is leading to serious discrimination against the female sex within both the family and society.
The European Union

The European Union, through regulations, directives and recommendations, has led to the transposition of new laws in the Republic of Cyprus regarding the areas of protection measures in civil matters, minimum standards on rights, support and protection of victims, human trafficking and elimination of violence against women.


This regulation focuses on establishing rules for a simple and rapid mechanism for the recognition of protection measures ordered in a Member State in civil matters. It applies to protection measures ordered with a view to protecting a person where there exist serious grounds for considering that that person's life, physical or psychological integrity, personal liberty, security or sexual integrity is at risk in order to prevent, for example, any form of gender-based violence or violence in close relationships, such as physical violence, harassment, sexual aggression, stalking, intimidation or other forms of indirect coercion. It is important to underline that this Regulation applies to all victims, regardless of whether they are victims of gender-based violence.


The purpose of this Directive is to ensure that victims of crime receive appropriate information, support and protection and are able to participate in criminal proceedings.

It was transposed into national Cypriot legislation in 2016 within the minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime law of 2016 (51(I)/2016).


The purpose of this directive is to allow the judicial or equivalent authority of a Member State to enforce a protection measure of a person who is protected against a criminal act, by issuing a European protection order to allow another Member State to continue the protection within its territory. This directive also
states that it applies to cases of gender violence. This directive was transposed into Cypriot law in 2015 with The European protection order law of 2015.


This Directive expressly recognizes the gender-specific phenomenon of trafficking and that women and men are often trafficked for different purposes. For this reason, the directive offers gender-specific assistance and support where appropriate.

The main purpose of this directive is to establish minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and sanctions in the area of trafficking in human beings. It also introduces common provisions, taking into account the gender perspective, to strengthen the prevention of this crime and the protection of its victims. It was incorporated into Cypriot law in 2013 and is currently within the prevention of trafficking, exploitation of persons and victims protection law of 2014.


The adoption of this resolution has the aim of improving the national laws and policies of Member States in order to combat all forms of violence against women, in particular trafficking in women for sexual and other purposes. This is presented via the provision of assistance, under appropriate national programmes and financing schemes, to voluntary bodies and organizations which offer shelter and psychological support to female victims of violence, including trafficking in human beings, regardless of the victim's nationality, and protection of female victims of domestic violence.

**European Parliament Resolution of 5 April 2011 on Priorities and Outline of a New EU policy Framework to Fight Violence against Women (2010/2209(INI))**

The adoption of this resolution focuses on the increase of human trafficking into and within the European Union, a trade which targets women in particular, and urges Member States to take firm action to combat this illegal practice. The resolution additionally states that there is an inequality in the protection of women against male violence between Member States.

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National Law

The national law of the Republic of Cyprus tackles some areas of gender-based violence, as shown below, which include the promotion of hostility, incitement of violence or hatred, female genital mutilation, protection of victims and domestic violence.

Penal Code - CH.154 84 (I)/2003

Article 47 (1) (a) of the Penal Code states that anyone who promotes hostility between communities and groups, by reason of race, religion, colour or gender, acts against the sovereignty of the Republic and is guilty of an offence and, if convicted, is subject to imprisonment of up to five years.

Penal Code - 87 (I)/2015

Article 99 (1) of the Penal Code states that, if someone incites violence or hatred to groups of persons or members of groups of persons identified on the basis of their sexual orientation or sex identity with a threatening, abusive or offensive character, he is guilty of an offence and, in the event of conviction, he can be punished with imprisonment not exceeding three years or with a fine not exceeding five thousand Euros with both of these penalties.

Penal Code - 48 (I)/2003

Article 233A, introduced in 2003, refers to female genital mutilation. It indicates that a person who applies or helps to cut or amputate all or part of the labia majora or the labia minora of the vulva or the female clitoris (unless the execution is necessary by a doctor) is punishable by imprisonment of up to 5 years. It is also reported that the woman's consent does not constitute a defence or a mitigation of penalty.

The Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law of 2016 (51(I)/2016)

This law was amended in 2012 to incorporate Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Union, laying down minimum standards for the rights, assistance to victims of crime and the protection of victims of crime.

Article 2 of this law sets out the definition of 'gender-based violence' as violence against a person on the grounds of sex, identity or expression of that sex or violence disproportionately affecting persons of a particular sex and includes:
(a) violence within a close relationship;
(b) sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment;
(c) trafficking in human beings;
(d) slavery; and
(e) various forms of harmful practices, including forced marriage, female genital mutilation and so-called "honour crimes".

It also presents the definition of "Intimate Partner Violence " as violence by a person who is or was a spouse or partner of the victim or another member of his or her family, regardless of whether the offender shares or shared the same roof with the victim, and includes physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence and anything that may cause physical, mental or emotional harm or financial loss.

Article 4 states that the services involved, or non-governmental organizations involved in the law, should treat victims with respect, sensitivity, and an individual, professional and non-discriminatory approach in every contact with victim support services or prosecution services and judicial authorities acting in the criminal proceedings. Continuing, the article shows that these services should ensure that measures to protect and promote the rights of victims are enjoyed without discrimination for any reason, including gender.

For cases of gender-based violence, the law states that special support and protection should be provided due to the high risk and repeated victimization, intimidation and retaliation associated with such violence.

In cases of intimate partner violence, the law states that special protection measures should be provided to the victim, especially in the case of a woman who is dependent on the offender financially, socially or in terms of her right of residence. Subsequently, Article 10 of the Act provides that the services or non-governmental organizations concerned may, upon complaint by a victim whom they judge and/or have a reasonable suspicion of believing that any person may be a victim, inform the Social Welfare Services, which provide for the provision of free and confidential victim support services, as appropriate, before, during and for a reasonable period after the criminal proceedings, including services provided by non-governmental organizations that can provide specific support.

Article 11 states that it is the duty of the Social Welfare Services to ensure that the victim receives information, advice and support regarding the exercise of his rights, including the right to an action against the offender and the role of the victim in the criminal proceedings procedure. The article also shows that the victim should receive:
(a) information on or reference to existing dedicated support services;
(b) emotional support and, if there is a need for psychological support, referral to the Mental Health Services and/or to the Educational Psychology Service of the Ministry of Education and Culture if the victim is a student; and
(c) networking with other services such as psychological support, housing, financial support and medical services.

Article 22 mentions the rights of protection of victims with special protection needs during the criminal proceedings which are as follows:
(a) each victim’s interview shall be conducted in an area specially designed or adapted for that purpose;
(b) any interview of the victim is conducted by a trained practitioner for this purpose or with his help;
(c) any interview of the victim is conducted by the same person, unless this is contrary to the proper administration of justice; and
(d) any interview of a victim of sexual violence, gender-based violence or violence in close relationships shall be conducted by a person of the same sex as the victim if the victim so desires, provided that the course of the criminal proceedings is not prejudiced.

It is also presented that the victim has at his disposal during the proceedings before the Court:
(a) measures to prevent any visual contact between a victim and an offender, including during filing, using appropriate means such as communications technology;
(b) measures to allow the victim to participate in the courtroom hearing without being present, in particular by the use of appropriate communications technology;
(c) measures to avoid unnecessary questions about the victim’s private life not related to the offence; and
(d) measures to enable the hearings to be held behind closed doors.

This law defines domestic violence as any act, omission or conduct that causes physical, sexual or mental harm to any family member by another family member and includes violence for the purpose of sexual intercourse without the consent of the victim, as well as the restriction of his/her freedom. It then mentions all offences related to domestic violence, including the penalties they provide.
Case Studies

Female Genital Mutilation
Domestic Violence
Sexual Harassment
Female Genital Mutilation in Cyprus

Female Genital Mutilation, in accordance with the European Commission, is a specific form of violence. "Female genital mutilation involves the partial or total removal of the external genital organs for cultural or other non-therapeutic reasons. The practice has severe physical and psychological consequences for the victims. It is an unacceptable violation of the rights of women and girls."\(^5\)

Female Genital Mutilation is a practice which can cause short to long term negative effects, and even death, to whoever undergoes it. In accordance with UNICEF, it is practised in more than 20 African countries, spreading between Senegal in the west and Somalia in the east, and is mainly practised for cultural and social reasons, with religion being the main excuse to justify it.\(^6\)

The Republic of Cyprus is party to various conventions regarding FGM which include the Universal Declaration of Human rights, the Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.\(^7\)

Regarding domestic law, the Republic of Cyprus has a specific provision in its Penal Code, Article 233A, which defines FGM as cutting or clitoridectomy of part of whole of the labia majora or labia minora of the vagina. It also adds that the consent of the woman is not to be taken into consideration by the courts and the crime is punishable with up to 5 years of imprisonment. Additionally, the article states that, at the discretion of the court, the principle of extraterritoriality can apply, making female genital mutilation punishable even if committed in another country.

In 2010, the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies estimated that approximately 1,500 women, from countries where FGM is practised, were currently living in the Republic of Cyprus. A report in 2018 by the European Institute of Gender Equality stated that, of the current 758 girls aged 0-18 who originate from countries where FGM is practised who are living in the Republic of Cyprus, 12% to 17% are at risk of FGM.\(^8\) These girls primarily originate from the countries of Egypt, Sudan, Iraq and Ethiopia in descending order. There is, however, difficulty in reaching out to these communities to facilitate focus group discussions, as all participants up to this point had gone through the asylum system.

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\(^8\) [https://eurogender.eige.europa.eu/system/files/events-files/eige_fgm_cyprus_country_profile.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0Cw2iLyr5qUb0maHbEkTiYUr2TXmm8vqmBdnIzzTyFfpDXuTQCsc3cbRz0](https://eurogender.eige.europa.eu/system/files/events-files/eige_fgm_cyprus_country_profile.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0Cw2iLyr5qUb0maHbEkTiYUr2TXmm8vqmBdnIzzTyFfpDXuTQCsc3cbRz0)
The focus group discussions which were done yielded information that the practice is considered to be a widespread and standard tradition, especially in the countryside, but still it is seen as an undesirable practice that must be stopped.

The Republic of Cyprus has not had a sharp rise in the inflow of migrants, in contrast to other EU Member States over recent years, but it has seen an increase in the number of unaccompanied children coming from Somalia who arrived in Cyprus with the intention of travelling elsewhere. Due to the incorporation of the Dublin III Regulation, these children remain in the Republic of Cyprus and, in order to prevent the risk of FGM, it is essential for the State to take steps to educate them regarding their rights.

Until 2017, there was a policy in place which granted international protection to women who could prove that they had undergone female genital mutilation, but this policy had been terminated, resulting in women and girls, who had arrived in Cyprus with the intention of receiving international protection, being in a state of uncertainty.

Furthermore, Professional Development Training programmes have taken place in Cyprus to combat this issue. One of them is the professional development training for health professionals entitled “Female Genital Mutilation: Challenges to Health Care Services in Europe and in Cyprus” which took place at the University of Nicosia in 2012, supported by Amnesty International, Ireland. The aim of this training was to provide health professionals in Cyprus (i.e. nurses, midwives, health visitors, gynecologists) with specialized training sessions that would enhance their knowledge and skills in providing quality, gender-sensitive and culture-sensitive health services to women and girls affected by the life-long consequences of FGM. In addition, this programme focused on improving inter-departmental co-operation between health professionals involved in obstetric, gynecological health treatment, first aid and other areas of the health system where women or girls affected by FGM may be referred to.

In continuation, the European Commission granted the Cyprus University of Technology a project to develop an E-Learning tool, entitled “United to END FGM: European Knowledge Platform for Professionals dealing with Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)” to serve as an EU-wide multilingual resource and education centre, which provides easily accessible and culturally appropriate information and support to professionals from diverse backgrounds across the EU with the aim to deliver effective victim support, raise awareness on FGM and protect women and girls living with or at risk of FGM. This e-learning tool was initiated and co-ordinated by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) in Cyprus in partnership with AIDOS, AKIDWA and APF.

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Domestic Violence

Intimate Partner Violence, also commonly referred to as Domestic Violence, within the Republic of Cyprus is recognized within the context of “violence in the family” which is defined as “any act, omission or conduct that causes physical, sexual or mental harm to any family member from another family member and includes violence used for the purpose of having sexual intercourse without the consent of the victim, as well as restricting his or her liberty”\(^\text{11}\).

The Violence in the Family (prevention and protection of victims) Law 119(I) of 2000 and 212(I) of 2004, provides the detailed crimes, as well as their sentences, and also provides information about the criminal procedure and protection of victims.

In accordance with a National Research carried out, entitled “Extent, Frequency, Nature and Consequences of Domestic Violence Against Women in Cyprus” in 2012, it is stated that international research has shown that almost all domestic violence is based on gender power relations and is directed by men against women.

This study aimed to investigate the extent and frequency, types and consequences of domestic violence against women in Cyprus. It was carried out with samples from 3,973 households which were randomly selected from each district on the basis of the 2011 population census.

The research found that some forms of violence, such as psychological and social violence, appeared to be more acceptable to the women of the sample than physical violence. Moreover, it was noted that 7% of the sample perceived forced sexual encounter within marriage or within a relationship as acceptable behaviour.

Additionally, it was found that at least 28% of the women of the sample reported some kind of violence. The percentages of the various kinds of violence inflicted upon women (from rarely to every day) are as follows: Economic violence: 19.4%, Emotional /psychological violence:19.3%, Sexual violence: 15.5%, Social violence: 14.8% and Physical violence: 13.4%.

It is also presented that different types of violence usually co-exist and that all types of physical and sexual violence include psychological and emotional abuse.

Furthermore, it is shown that women of the sample that belong to the age group of 45-64 reported more violence (35.9%) followed by the age group 25-38 (25.9%) and 35-44 (28%). It also noted that violence tends to decrease when family financial status improves and that there is less violence when couples make decisions on financial issues together.

Regarding Districts, the research found that Limassol was the district where most cases of domestic violence were reported with (40%) while the Larnaca district had the lowest with (27%). In continuation, it presented that implications to health reported by the women of the sample after violent incidents against them included injuries (12%), health problems (11%), hemorrhages (6%), fractures (5%) and even termination of pregnancy (3%). The implications also include conditions such as stress, depression, insomnia and nightmares (with percentages ranging from 11%-39%). The majority of the women of the sample also stated that one of the main reasons for their husband’s, ex-husband’s or spouse’s violent behaviour was anger.

\(^\text{11}\) Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law 119(I) of 2000 and 212(I) of 2004
It was found that only 1/3 of the women of the sample who had been abused had asked for help and only 9% of those injured had received medical care, with the most important reasons for not disclosing the incidents including the thought that they were to be blamed for their abuse, thinking about their children, the fear of the perpetrator’s reaction and the social stigma.

About 5% of the women of the sample reported that they experience some violent behaviour, such as being sworn at, neglect of their psychological needs, the use of bad language, avoidance of communication, bullying and arbitrary deprivation of liberty on a daily basis. Also, one third of the women of the sample said that they had little or no knowledge regarding the services available for victims of family violence. Only 57% of the women of the sample are aware of the existence of the hotline for victims of domestic abuse, while only 50% know about the shelter and the support provided by the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence.\(^{12}\)

One of the organizations that focuses on combating domestic violence is the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO), which serves as a national centre providing preventive services of domestic abuse, supports and protects receivers of violence and supports and guides users of violence.

The main goals of this organization are to:

- prevent domestic violence;
- provide direct help to people experiencing or exercising domestic violence;
- provide shelter and protection to victims of domestic violence;
- provide information and support to battered women through counselling;
- provide information and support to users of violence;
- provide theoretical and practical training to people who are interested in offering their voluntary help;
- provide information to and raise awareness of competent authorities and citizens about the social phenomenon of domestic violence;\(^{13}\) and
- locate shortcomings and weaknesses in legislation and formal procedures and submit suggestions to the related national services in order to undertake correctional measures and develop a wider policy on domestic violence.

In addition, the Cyprus Police has taken affirmative action in producing leaflets on the topic of Domestic Violence with the purpose of informing victims about statistics, the law, their rights related to it and hotline numbers.\(^{14}\)

\(^{13}\) https://www.domviolence.org.cy/en/vision-mission/
Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment in the Republic of Cyprus is governed under The Equal Treatment for Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law of 2002 to 2007 (L. 205(I)/2002) which defines it as any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, in employment or vocational training or in access to employment or vocational education or training. However, this national law only covers sexual harassment within the workplace and there is no equivalent national law for instances outside of it.

This law also sets out that, in addition to the perpetrator, the employer can also be responsible for the acts of sexual harassment carried out by employees.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental rights conducted an EU-wide survey on violence against women, based on interviews with 42,000 women across the EU, and yielded information on sexual harassment. It was found in the Republic of Cyprus that 36% of women had experienced a form of sexual harassment from the age of 15\(^{15}\) and that 14% of women interviewed had faced sexual harassment in the past 12 months involving:

- unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing;
- sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made them feel offended;
- inappropriate invitations to go out on dates;
- intrusive questions about their private life that made them feel offended;

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• intrusive comments about their physical appearance that made them feel offended;
• inappropriate staring or leering that made them feel intimidated;
• somebody sending or showing them sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that made them feel offended;
• somebody indecently exposing themselves to them;
• somebody making them watch or look at pornographic material against their wishes;
• unwanted sexually explicit emails or SMS messages that offended them; and
• inappropriate advances that offended them on social networking websites such as Facebook, or in internet chat rooms.\(^\text{16}\)

In addition, a 1997 report conducted by the Intercollege Research and Development Centre, presented, through a sample questionnaire of 1500 (involving men and women), that 85% believed that sexual harassment is a serious social problem within Cyprus and that 40% personally knew people who were victims of it and who worked as housekeepers (73%), in hotels (64%), in factories (38%), in shops and offices (28%) and in schools and colleges (17%).\(^\text{17}\)

Some action has been taken within the Republic of Cyprus to fight sexual harassment, but, unfortunately, the action is mainly towards the area covered by the law, which is sexual harassment within the working environment, and does not provide any adequate action for external sexual harassment.

In 2007, informative leaflets were produced, containing the practice code for prevention and treatment of sexual harassment in the workplace, by the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsman), which focused on offering directions and advice about the subject to possible victims.\(^\text{18}\)

In 2012, another similar document was produced containing the practice code for the prevention and treatment of sexual harassment in the workplace issued by the Committee of Gender Equality in Employment and Vocational Training.\(^\text{19}\)

\(^\text{17}\) Intercollege, Research and Development Centre. 1997. Sexual harassment in the workplace in Cyprus. Nicosia, Cyprus: Intercollege
\(^\text{18}\) http://www.ombudsman.gov.cy/Ombudsman/Ombudsman.nsf/All/2348CE8BA625D720C2257E8100412689/$file/%CE%9A%CF%8E%CE%B4%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%B1%CF%82%20%CF%80%CF%81%CE%B1%CE%BA%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82%20%CF%82%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1%20%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD%20%CE%B1%CE%BD%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BC%CE%B5%CF%84%CF%8E%CF%82%20%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%AE%CF%82%20%CF%80%CE%B1%CF%81%CE%B5%CE%BD%CF%8C%CF%87%CE%BB%CE%B7%CF%83%CE%B7%CF%82.pdf
Relevant Bodies

**SUPPORT**

- **Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO)**
  Helpline: 1440  |  22-339001  |  info@domviolence.org.cy  |  www.domviolence.org.cy

- **CARITAS Cyprus**
  8 Saint Marona Street, Flat 4, 1010 Nicosia  |  22-662606  |  Administration@caritascyprus.org

- **Cyprus Family Planning Association (CFPA)**
  27 Ezekia Papaioannou str., 1311, Nicosia  |  Helpline: 1455  |  22-751093  |  Info@cfpa.org.cy
  www.cyfamplan.org

- **Cyprus Stop Trafficking (CST)**
  Nicosia  |  22-771063 / 99-428952  |  Cyprus.stop.trafficking@gmail.com / achristophidou@hotmail.com
  www.cyprusstoptrafficking.webs.com

- **Cyprus Refugee Council (previously ‘Strengthening Asylum’ of the Humanitarian Affairs Unit of Future Worlds Center)**
  9 Stasandrou Str., Nicosia  |  22-205959  |  info@cyrefugeecouncil.org  |  https://cyrefugeecouncil.org

- **STIGMA (Organisation for Protection for Protection of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Victims)**
  Limassol  |  25-109139  |  www.stigma-organisation.org

**RESEARCH NGOs**

- **Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS)**
  22-795151  |  info@medinstgenderstudies.org  |  www.medinstgenderstudies.org

**COMMITTEES**

- **Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family**
  Nicosia  |  22-775888  |  Familyviolence.a.c@cytanet.com.cy  |  www.familyviolence.gov.cy
**HOSPITALS**

- **Archbishop Makarios Hospital III**  
  Nicosia  |  22-405000 (call center) / 22-405160/38 (Gynecology / Obstetrics service)**
- **Mental Health Services (Ministry of Health)**  
  22-402100  |  director.mhs@cytanet.com.cy  |  www.moh.gov.cy/mhs

**GOVERNMENTAL BODIES**

- **Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman)**  
  Era House, 2 Diagorou, 1097, Nicosia  |  22-405500/501  |  Ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.cy  |  www.ombudsman.gov.cy
- **Social Welfare Services (Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance)**  
  63 Prodromou str., 1468 Nicosia (Central offices)  |  22-406709  |  central.sws@sws.mlsi.gov.cy  |  www.mlsi.gov.cy/sws
- **Department of Labour Inspection (Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance)**  
  12 Apellis str., 1080 Nicosia (Central offices)  |  22-405630 / 631  |  director@dli.mlsi.gov.cy  |  www.mlsi.gov.cy/dli
- **Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office (Police)**  
  22-808442  |  Domviol.childabuse@police.gov.cy

**REFUGEES / MIGRANTS / ASYLUM SEEKERS**

- **Association of Recognized Refugees in Cyprus**  
  «New Genesis Centre», 17 Perikleous Str.  |  22730679  |  arrccyprus@gmail.com
- **Asylum Service (Ministry of Interior)**  
  22-445245 ή 22-445265  |  info@asylum.moi.gov.cy  |  www.moi.gov.cy/moi/asylum/asylumservice.nsf
- **UNHCR Representative in Cyprus (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees)**  
  2 Demetracopoulou str. 3rd floor, 1090, Nicosia, P.  |  80002777  |  iomnicosia@iom.int  |  www.iom.int
- **International Organization for Migration**  
  Nehru Avenue, 1102 Nicosia (Nicosia Old Hospital area)  |  80002777  |  iomnicosia@iom.int  |  www.iom.int
• Civil Registry and Migration Department (Ministry of Interior)
Chilonos, 1457 Nicosia (Central offices) │ 22-804518 / 22-804523 / 22-804402 │
migration@crmd.moi.gov.cy │ www.moi.gov.cy/moi/crmd/crmd.nsf

CHILDREN AND YOUTH
• Commissioner for Children’s Rights
Corner Apelli and Pavlou Nirvana Str., 5th floor, 1496 Nicosia │ 22-873200 │
childcom@ccr.gov.cy │ www.childcom.org.cy

• Youth Board of Cyprus
Athalassas Avenue 104, 2024 Nicosia, Strovolos, Sofocles Tower (3rd, 4th and 5th floor Central offices) │ Helpline: 1410 │ 22-402600/2 │ info@onek.org.cy │ www.onek.org.cy

• Hope for Children (CRC Policy Centre)
75 Limassol Avenue, Office 201, 2nd Floor, 2121 Nicosia │ 22-103234 │ info@uncrcpc.org │
www.uncrcpc.org

• European Helpline for Children and Teenager Support
116111 │ www.call116111.com

• European Helpline for Missing Children
116000 │ www.call116000.org