



**Report submitted by Cyprus
pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1
of the Council of Europe Convention
on preventing and combating violence
against women and domestic violence
(Baseline Report)**

Received by GREVIO on 30 July 2021
GREVIO/Inf(2021)8

Published on 4 August 2021

**Answers to the Questionnaire
on legislative and other measures
giving effect to the provisions of the
Council of Europe Convention on Preventing
and Combating Violence against Women
and Domestic Violence
(Istanbul Convention)**

Table of contents

Abbreviations	3
I. Introduction	4
II. Integrated policies and data collection	6
III. Prevention	12
IV. Protection and support	27
V. Substantive law	36
VI. Investigation, prosecution and procedural law and protective measures	45
VII. Migration and asylum	50
Appendix 1	54
Table 1.1: Initial training (education or professional training)	54
Table 1.2: Initial Training for Police officers	55
Table 1.3: In-service training	56
Table 1.4: Police in service training for 2019	57
Table 1.5: Police in service training for 2020	58
Appendix 2	58
Table 2.1: Government funding of the APHVF	58
Appendix 3	59
Table 3.1: Adults sex offenders against children	59
Appendix 4	60
Table 4.1: Annual number of women who requested and those who received accommodation in women's shelters, together with their children	60
Appendix 5.1: Relevant extracts from Cyprus legislation	61

Abbreviations

ACPCVF	Advisory Committee for Preventing and Combating Violence in the Family
CAPA	Cyprus Academy of Public Administration
CFPA	Cyprus Family Planning Association
CFCR	Commissioner for Children's Rights
CFGE	Commissioner for Gender Equality
CRTA	Cyprus Radio Television Authority
GECEVT	Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training
CYSTAT	Statistical Service of Cyprus
MOECSY	Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth
MJPO	Ministry of Justice and Public Order
NAP	National Action Plan
NMWR	National Machinery for Women's Rights
WH	Women's House

The Government of the Republic of Cyprus regrets that due to the continuing illegal occupation and effective control of the 37% of its territory by Turkish military forces, the Government is unable to ensure the full realization of women's rights and equality between women and men in the whole of its territory and that, therefore, is also deprived of its ability to apply gender equality law, policies, practices and programmes to those living in the occupied area. It is for this reason that no reliable information and data are available regarding the enjoyment of the relevant rights by the Cypriot population living in the occupied area which is not controlled by the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. Unfortunately, it had not been possible to reach a solution on the Cyprus problem at the simultaneous referenda before the accession of Cyprus to the European Union in 2004, despite considerable efforts deployed by the international community and the United Nations Secretary General. The Cyprus Government policy is to keep the road open towards the reunification of the island. Therefore, all information provided in this report concerns the Republic Of Cyprus controlled areas.

Introduction

Violence against women and girls is an issue of high priority for the Republic of Cyprus and commitments towards its eradication have been made at the highest level of the political leadership. In this regard, major developments have taken place during the last few years, including:

- a. Ratifying the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)¹, in November 2017².
- b. Drafting and enacting comprehensive legislation criminalising all forms of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Law 115(I)/2021³ for full and effective implementation of the Istanbul Convention.
- c. Drafting and enacting an innovative law criminalizing harassment and stalking⁴.
- d. Enacting a law on Combating Sexism and Online Sexism⁵, in line with the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on Preventing and Combating Sexism⁶.
- e. Establishing and operating a “Woman’s House” (WH) which functions as a multi-agency multi-disciplinary crisis center for women victims of violence and their children.
- f. Forming special teams within the police force, which deal exclusively with cases of gender-based and domestic violence and whose members are trained.
- g. Encouraging victims to report cases of violence.
- h. Launching awareness-raising campaigns addressed to the public and particularly women.
- i. Financing NGOs that provide protection and assistance to women victims, and
- j. Systematic training of professionals of different disciplines, working in the field.

Recently, the well-known *Me-too* movement has given thousands of women victims of violence around the world the courage to break their silence and to report unacceptable and shameful incidents of violence and abuse that they have suffered. The Government of Cyprus is today more ready and more determined than ever before to stamp out such incidents and provide support, protection and empowerment to all victims of gender-based violence without exception.

As a result of the above measures, there were 445 more cases of violence reported in 2020 than in 2019, with 75% of the reports made in 2020 related to violence against women. These numbers illustrate that there was a significant increase in reported cases which may also be due to the fact that many cases refer to offences that were

¹ Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence Istanbul, 11.V.2011

² Law Relating to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Fight Against Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. (L.14 (III) of 2017)

³ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues’ 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

⁴ Ο περί της Προστασίας από Παρενόχληση και Παρενοχλητική Παρακολούθηση Νόμος του 2021 (N. 114(I)/2021)

⁵ Ο περί της Καταπολέμησης του Σεξισμού και του Διαδικτυακά Διαδιδόμενου Σεξισμού και περί Συναφών Θεμάτων Νόμος του 2020 (The Law On Combating Sexism and Internet Sexism and Related Issues 2020 (Law N. 209 (I) of 2020)

⁶ Recommendation CM/Rec (2019)1 adopted by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe 27 March 2019

committed in the past, and the victims now feel more empowered and able to report to the authorities.

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence⁷ was signed by Cyprus on June 16th, 2015. At the time, the Republic of Cyprus submitted reservations to Article 30 (2) concerning state compensation to victims, Article 44 (1e), (3), (4) concerning jurisdiction and Article 59 concerning the residence status of the victims, as provided for in Article 78 (2) of the Convention. The decision to submit reservations was the result of the work of the Ministerial Committee for Equality and the respective Technical Committee that assisted it in its work, after a thorough study of the obligations arising from the Istanbul Convention.

The Ratification took place on November 10th, 2017 (Cyprus Law 14(III), 2017)⁸, following the implementation of basic provisions of the Treaty, which came into force on March 1st, 2018.

However, it should be noted that, full implementation of the Treaty in Cyprus commenced when the 'The Cyprus Law for the Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues Law (Law115(I)/2021)⁹ came into effect in May 2021.

The present document provides responses to the issues and questions submitted to the Government of Cyprus with regard to the Questionnaire on legislative and other measures giving effect to the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)", adopted by GREVIO on 11 March 2016 GREVIO/Inf (2016)1.

Like all countries, Cyprus fights against the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020. Due to the spread of the coronavirus the implementation of several actions and measures aimed at combating gender-based violence has been postponed. Information and data provided by the relevant bodies refers to the years 2018 onwards and reflects the progress made in recent years in this area, given that this is the first Report submitted by Cyprus to the Council of Europe.

This report focuses on measures taken in relation to all forms of violence against women and girls under the age of 18, including domestic violence and refers to measures taken to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, punish, and provide reparation for any acts of violence covered by the Convention perpetrated by non-state actors. Information and data provided in this report are for the years 2018 - 2021.

Bodies, agencies, institutions, and organisations involved in the preparation of the report submitted

⁷ Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence Istanbul, 11.V.2011

⁸ Law Relating to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Fight Against Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. (L. 14 (III) of 2017)

⁹ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

The official body responsible for co-ordinating the collection of information in response to this questionnaire and the preparation of the present document is the Ministry of Justice and Public Order of the Republic (MJPO) which, according to Article 38 of Law 115(I)/2021¹⁰, is entrusted with the responsibility for the National Strategy for Violence against Women and, in general, the policy in relation to this law and the achievement of its objectives, ensuring compliance of Cyprus' obligations under the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. The Ministry of Justice and Public Order is the competent Ministry for the purposes of the Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and, was very much involved in the preparation of the present document.

- a. The information and data, on the basis of which the present report was compiled, was provided by the Ministries having competence for the specific matter (i.e.: the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (MLWSI), the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (MOECYS), the Statistical Service of Cyprus (SSC), the Ministry of Finance, the Cyprus Academy for Public Administration (CAPA), the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Interior, the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court, the Police, the Commissioner of Administration (Ombudswoman), the Commissioner for Gender Equality, the National Machinery for Women's Rights (NMWR), the Commissioner for Children's Rights and the Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training (GECEVT).
- b. Information was also obtained from the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating Violence in the Family (ACPCVF) and several NGOs (such as the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (APHVF), the Cyprus Family Planning Association (CFPA) and the Hope for Children CRC Policy Center), which could provide information in relation to the issues and questions submitted to the Government.

Integrated policies and data collection

(Chapter II of the Convention, Articles 7 to 11)

- A.** Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies on violence against women, the financial resources dedicated to the implementation of these policies and support of the work of NGOs and other civil society actors, in particular women's organisations, the establishment of effective co-operation with these organisations, as well as data collection adopted by the Republic of Cyprus in order to support and empower women victims of violence and their minor children, are related to:
 - a. The actions of the Advisory Committee for Preventing and Combating Violence in the Family (ACPCVF), that was established by the Council of Ministers Decree in 1996, in accordance with Article 16 of the Family Violence Law 47(I)/1994, that was replaced by Law 119(I)/2000¹¹. The Committee is fully funded by the government and its aims are to
The aim of the Committee is to:
 - monitor the implementation of the relevant law on Family Violence,

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Law for Preventing and Combating Violence in the Family, 47(I)/1994, that was replaced by Law 119(I)/2000

- raise awareness among professionals and the public,
- carry out research,
- encourage the strengthening of interdepartmental cooperation,
- evaluate existing services,
- provide training to relevant professionals, and
- develop the National Action Plan (NAP) on Preventing and Combating Violence in the Family.

The Advisory Committee was, recently, appointed by the Council of Ministers to coordinate the establishment of the Woman's House, that will cover victims of all forms of violence against women (VAW), including domestic violence, and their children <http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/cgibin/web?-A=1&-V=profile> and <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/structures/cyprus/advisory-committee-prevention-and-combating-violence-family>.

- b. The implementation of the second National Action Plan¹² (NAP) for the prevention and combating of violence in the family, and gender-based violence. For the years 2017-2019, the following important actions were foreseen and promoted by the NAP:
- Adoption of Law 51(I)/2016¹³ (which transposes the Victims' Rights Directive)¹⁴;
 - Adoption of the police risk assessment protocol for cases of intimate partner violence. The protocol refers to Articles 20 and 21 of Law 51(I)/2016¹⁵ on individual assessment of victims, as well as the Law 14(III)/2017¹⁶ ratifying the Istanbul Convention;
 - The recent adoption of the Law 115(I)/2021¹⁷ which mainly transposes the Istanbul Convention, and also includes many provisions of the Victims Rights Directive and Law 51(I)/2016¹⁸ transposing the Directive;
 - The establishment of the Woman's House.

The Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family, in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, continues to monitor the implementation of some of the objectives of NAP, which did not materialise and remain a priority. These, include:

- Finalizing the new revision of the Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures.
- Promoting systematic, specialized and inter-departmental training for "front-line" professionals dealing with of domestic violence;

¹² Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. National Action Plan on the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence (2017-2019). Available at: http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/downloads/actionplan_2017-2019_gr.pdf

¹³ 'Establishing Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime'. Law 2016 [51(I)/2016].

¹⁴ Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA

¹⁵ Establishing Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime'. Law 2016 [51(I)/2016].

¹⁶ Ο περί της Σύμβασης του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης για την Πρόληψη και την Καταπολέμηση της Βίας κατά των Γυναϊκών και της Ενδοοικογενειακής Βίας (Κυρωτικός) Νόμος του 2017 (Ν. 14(III)/2017)

¹⁷ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹⁸ Establishing Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime'. Law 2016 [51(I)/2016].

- iii. Reinstating Family Counsellors within the Social Welfare Services;
- iv. Developing and adopting a multi-agency Risk Assessment Mechanism for effective management of cases of domestic violence, promoting the effective implementation of the Law 2016 [L.51(I)/2016]¹⁹.

The policies mentioned above cover physical, sexual, psychological, economical violence against women, including domestic violence, rape and stalking and apply mainly to the years 2018-2021. These acts of violence predominantly affect women, all relevant policies therefore, focus on their needs, placing the human rights of victims at the centre of every policy.

- c. The establishment of the Women's House (WH), on 27.11.2019, as part of the implementation of the obligations of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence²⁰. The Council of Ministers of Cyprus approved the operation of the "Woman's House"²¹ which functions since December 2020. The WH is a multi-agency and multi-professional crisis centre for victims of violence against women and their children, it employs a holistic approach and places the human rights of victims at the centre of the relevant policies adopted by the State. It employs staff that is trained on issues related to VAW. It is fully funded by the government and coordinated by an NGO for domestic violence. It is a "one stop shop" and a "crisis centre" based on Family Justice Centres Model. (More information about the WH is available on the website of the ACPCVF, the Coordinator of the project. <http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/20200506/1588765852-03622.pdf>.)
- d. The development of a National Strategy on Sexual and Reproductive Health of Young People 2018-2025, <http://www.moh.gov.cy>, focusing on adolescent and girls and aiming, among others, on the prevention and handling of sexual violence.
- d. The provision of Article 36(1) of Law (115(I)/2021),²² promotes the adoption of comprehensive and co-ordinated policies on violence against women, stating that the involved governmental services may cooperate with NGO stakeholders in a coordinative, multi-disciplinary framework, so as to provide protection and support services to the victims and/or training for their employees, through cooperation protocols. The purpose of this cooperation, according to the above Law, is the provision of services that are victim friendly and easily accessible for the victim and the members of her family.
All relevant services (i.e.: the Police, the Social Welfare Services and the staff of the Woman's House -social workers, clinical psychologists, legal counsellor, child's advocate, etc.) are located in the building of the Woman's House, thus, enabling better co-operation and co-ordination between professionals among all relevant government agencies, institutions and civil society organisations and, at the same time, ensuring minimum repetition of procedures. It is expected that in the next phase of operation of the WH forensic examinations will be performed too.

¹⁹ As above

²⁰ The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) was adopted by the Committee of Ministers and opened for signature in Istanbul on 11 May 2011.

²¹ Council of Ministers' Decisions no. 86,671 and 87,452 (with date 23.1.2019 and 15.5.2019, respectively).

²² Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

- e. The provisions of Article 38 of the Law (115(I)/2021)²³ assigning the Ministry of Justice and Public Order as the Body responsible for the National Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Article 39, providing for the establishment of a National Coordinating Body that is accountable to the Minister, are expected to contribute to the implementation of the strategies/ action plan(s) to address violence against women at regional/ local levels, as referred to in Article 7 of the Convention, and more specifically, to:
 - ii. the drafting of a new NAP for the Prevention and handling of violence against women and their children, including domestic violence;
 - iii. the establishment of special teams for domestic violence in all regional police stations in every town.
 - f. Areas where progress was made, apart from passing new legislation as mentioned above, include the establishment and operation of the Woman's House in Nicosia (pilot programme) that functions through a multidisciplinary approach and is open to all women victims of VAW and their children, the establishment of the third shelter for women victims of domestic violence and their children and the preparation of a fourth shelter (that is expected to start its operation by the end of 2021).
- B.** The government covers more than 50% of financial and human resources needed for the adequate implementation of the above-mentioned integrated policies, programmes and actions, as follows:
- a. The Advisory Committee for Preventing and Combating Violence in the Family is fully financed by the Government.
 - b. The WH, is fully financed by the Government.
 - c. Each Ministry/Service is responsible for the allocation of the financial and human resources that are needed for carrying out the actions of the NAP for the prevention and combating all forms of violence against women, from its own budget.
 - d. NGO's and Civil society organisations that provide protection and assistance to women victims and their children receive state funding of about 50% of their expenses (see more details in Appendix 2, Table 2.1).
 - e. The MJPO through the budget of the NMWR subsidizes Women Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations and other agencies for the implementation of actions promoting equality between women and men and combating all forms of violence against women.
- C.** The work of NGOs and other civil society actors, in particular women's organisations, is recognised, encouraged and supported, as required by Articles 8 and 9 of the Convention. An effective cooperation between state agencies and these organisations has been established.
- 1. The main NGO that deals with violence in the family (Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family), provides services that are both recognized and supported by the State. Thus, the services provided by the Association (i.e.: 24-hour helpline 1440, individual appointments for counseling, both for victims and perpetrators, social services, shelters etc.), are partly funded by the government (i.e.: 53% of their budget is covered by the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance).

²³ Ibid

The operation and coordination of the WH, (a one-stop-shop multiagency, multidisciplinary center aiming to support and provide services to women victims, as these are defined in the Istanbul Convention), was assigned through tendering by the Ministry of Labour²⁴ to the APHVF. The programme is fully funded by the government.

2. For effective co-operation at national and regional/local levels, there is close cooperation between the APHVF, which is the organization responsible for the operation of the WH, with the Special Units for Violence in the Family of Cyprus Police, the Social Welfare Services, the Health Services and Mental Health Services. This, ensures an effective multi-disciplinary co-operation for case management at a national level.

Moreover, the WH has already signed cooperation protocols with the following government agencies:

- a. Ministry of Interior
- b. Ministry of Transport, Communications and Works
- c. Ministry of Education and Culture
- d. Ministry of Justice and Public Order
- e. Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance
- f. Cyprus Police
- g. Ministry of Health, and is in the process of signing cooperation protocols with the involved agencies (both governmental and NGO's)

- D.** The Ministry of Justice and Public Order has been designated (Article 38 of Law No.115(I)/2021)²⁵ as the Body responsible for the National Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. Article 39 of the said Law provides for the establishment of a National Coordinating Body for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, that is accountable to the Minister of Justice and Public Order. The National Coordinating Body is responsible for coordinating, planning, implementation, follow up and evaluation of policies and measures for the Prevention and Combating of all forms of Violence against Women, covered by the Convention.

Article 39(2) of Law N.115(I)/2021²⁶, states that the Coordinating Body is composed of a chairperson, appointed by the Council of Ministers and 11 members.

The members appointed from the public sector are selected from the following Ministries and services:

- a. The Chairperson of the National Machinery for Women's Rights or a representative;
- b. The Chairperson of the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating Violence in the Family;
- c. One representative of the Law Office of the Republic;
- d. One representative of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order;
- e. One representative of the Ministry of Health;
- f. One educational psychologist from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth
- g. One representative of the Ministry of Interior
- h. One representative of the Police

²⁴ Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, File number 11.04.014 dated 27/01/20

²⁵ The Prevention and Combating Violence against women and domestic violence and related issues Law of 2021

²⁶ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

- i. One representative of the Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance;
- j. Two members of NGOs or/and professional bodies from the areas of mental health or social work.

All the above members are selected in view of their background/involvement in the area of violence against women.

The Coordinating Body is in the process of being established. An estimation of its annual budget, including human resources has already been submitted to the government for approval.

For the time being, the ACPHVF <http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy> is the body responsible for the coordination and implementation, follow up and evaluation of policies and measures for the Prevention and Combating of domestic violence.

E. Data relevant to violence against women and domestic violence is collected by several agencies both state and NGOs and is often disaggregated by sex, age, type of violence as well as the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim. These include:

- a. The Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT), which collects data on the number of cases of violence against women and domestic violence that are reported to the Police and for which the relevant legal proceedings are followed. Data on the number of cases of sexual offences and offences against the person, the number of victims as well as data pertaining to the perpetrators, can be found on the website at the following url: https://www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat/statistics.nsf/populationcondition_27main_en/populationcondition27main_en?OpenForm&sub=7&sel=2.

The above data is extracted from the database of the central crime analysis system of the Cyprus Police (i.e.: all the criminal cases investigated) and is disaggregated by sex, age of the victim, type of violence, the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim and the place where the offence was committed, country of origin of the victim and whether the woman is pregnant.

- b. The Crime Combating Department at the Police Headquarters and, more specifically, the Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office, which keeps a record of all complaints: (domviol.childabuse@police.gov.cy), collects data for the total number of incidents and complaints of domestic violence reported to the Police, segregated by type, age and sex (whether these follow the legal route or whether they remain as “complaints” and a legal procedure is not followed, in case of charges being withdrawn by the victim).
- c. Law enforcement agencies/criminal and civil justice services also collect data.
- d. The Social Welfare Services collect data on domestic violence which is disaggregated by geographical location.
- e. The Children’s House, which handles cases of sexual abuse and/or sexual exploitation of children collects relevant data.
- f. Prisons, collect data from all newcomers who are interviewed by highly trained staff and get information on sex, age, geographical location, disability, type of violence and the relationship of the offender with the victim, etc. During the imprisonment of an offender, additional information is collected by all services

operating in prisons (i.e.: Mental Health Services, Welfare Services, Medical Services) and exchanged in order to safeguard the best interest of the victim and the best interest for the treatment of the perpetrator. All information is kept in the offender's personal record.

- g. APHVF collects anonymous data from the calls answered via its national Helpline 1440, from abused women and their children hosted in APHVF shelters, from victims who receive counselling services by APHVF and from perpetrators who attend the APHVF's perpetrators' programme 'Proteas'. The data is disaggregated by sex, age, type of violence, relationship of the perpetrator to the victim, geographical location, number of children, short risk assessment, data on the perpetrators etc.
- h. The WH also collects data on gender-based violence against women, for all cases who receive its services.

It appears from the above that, at present, there is no comprehensive data collection on all forms of violence against women. The statistical data that is collected and kept by different bodies has information with different variables which cannot be compared. The data gap is problematic, as it impedes an in-depth analysis and policy-making that would create much needed services and mechanisms to support and protect victims. The Coordinating Body, as foreseen by the Istanbul Convention, established according to Article 44 of Law 2021 (N.115(I)/2021)²⁷, is entrusted with the establishment and operation of a Unified Archive (common database on the basis of a cooperation protocol or a special agreement between all competent authorities, NGOs and civil society organisations) in order to collect, analyse and process statistical data on all forms of violence against women which are included in the Istanbul Convention. This, will assist in planning and developing more targeted and more effective measures, actions and policies in order to confront the problem of gender-based and domestic violence in Cyprus.

Data collected is made public on an annual basis through the official websites of each body mentioned above (e.g.: Department of Statistics, Police, APHVF etc.) and through articles in the media.

Prison information is not publicly disseminated but it is used by the relevant services in prisons for the best interest of the victim and for the treatment of the perpetrator. Statistically, this information is disseminated by the state statistical services (but relevant information to the perpetrator's identity is disclosed).

- F. Up to now, there is no research in Cyprus in the fields of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the Convention in order to study its root causes and effects, incidences and conviction rates as well as the efficacy of measures taken to implement the Convention.
- G. Population-based surveys on violence against women have not been conducted on a national basis.

Prevention

²⁷ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

(Chapter III of the Convention, Articles 12 to 17)

In light of the overarching general obligations of the Government of Cyprus within the area of prevention, several actions were taken, both by state and non-state bodies, as provided for in Article 12, paragraphs 1 to 6 of the Convention, including to promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of women and men (through education, legislation, awareness raising campaigns etc.), with a view to eradicating prejudices, customs, traditions and other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women and men. Such preventive actions address specific needs of persons made vulnerable by particular circumstances and place the human rights of all victims at their center. Furthermore, these actions include the promotion of programmes and activities for the empowerment of women and ensure that culture, custom, religion, tradition, or so-called honour are not considered as justification for any acts of violence.

The main contribution towards this direction comes from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (MOECSY) that, among others, targets young members of society, by incorporating human rights and gender equality issues, stereotypes and prejudices, empowerment etc. in curricula of all levels of education and, at the same time, providing in service training for teachers on the above issues. Furthermore, several actions, are undertaken by different authorities, focused on training professionals of different disciplines, including civil servants, social workers, volunteers, etc. Many of these actions have been funded by the National Machinery for Women's Rights. Examples of actions contributing to prevention were taken by governmental and non-governmental bodies, and include:

- a. The passing of the Law against sexual harassment and stalking (114(I) 2021)²⁸
- b. The passing of the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Related Matters Law of 2021²⁹
- c. The passing of the Law on Preventing and Combating Sexism³⁰
- d. The adoption by the Council of Ministers³¹ of the "Code of Practice for the Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Harassment and Harassment"³², in July 2018, a necessary measure based on national legislation. The Code is useful for both public service employees and any competent authority in their collective efforts to eliminate harassment and sexual harassment at work and to successfully implement the principle of equal treatment. In this respect, CAPA provided inservice training to 1000 civil servants.
- e. The preparation by the Republic of Cyprus of the first NAP³³ for the full implementation of the UN Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security³⁴. The

²⁸ Ο περί της Προστασίας από Παρενόχληση και Παρενοχλητική Παρακολούθηση Νόμος του 2021 (Ν. 114(I) του 2021)

²⁹ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

³⁰ Ο περί της Καταπολέμησης του Σεξισμού και του Διαδικτυακά Διαδιδόμενου Σεξισμού και περί Συναφών Θεμάτων Νόμος του 2020 (Ν. 209(I)/2020)

³¹ Council of Ministers' Decision No. 85.394 of 12.7.2018

³² Issues relating to sexual harassment in the workplace are regulated by Article 2 of the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Laws of 2002 as amended up to 2014.

³³ Cyprus National Action Plan 2021-25 for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 "Women, Peace and Security"

³⁴ The Security Council resolution (S/RES/1325) on women and peace and security (31 October 2000).

NAP was approved by the Council of Ministers on 22 December 2020. The Office of the Gender Equality Commissioner has the overall coordination of the implementation of the NAP. It is expected that this NAP will, among other things, contribute towards gender equality, and decrease of both discrimination and violence against women.

- f. The undertaking of the initiative by a group of women Members of Parliament to compile special legislation to combat sexism and online sexism. This initiative followed the adoption, by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, of the Recommendation on Preventing and Combating Sexism³⁵ and the recognition that sexism, which mostly affects women, is widespread and prevalent in all institutions and layers of Cypriot society, reiterating stereotypes and gender-based discrimination, on a national level. This Recommendation, among other things, urges member states to take appropriate measures to prevent and combat sexism in both public and private spheres and to encourage all involved parties to implement legislation, policy and programmes in order to combat sexism.
 - i. Following a wide consultation with all government services, equality, and human rights bodies, and with the full support of the executive authority, the extremely important Bill on combating sexism was voted into Law in December 2020³⁶. This Law, which was hitherto absent from national legislation, fully coincides with the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on “Preventing and Combating Sexism”. It is worth noting that this extremely important Recommendation has been translated into Greek under sponsorship from the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, and was widely disseminated among all Ministries, equality bodies, Women’s Organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations, and within the community at large.
 - ii. The Law on Combating Sexism constitutes a fully rounded tool to effectively prosecute anyone behaving in a sexist manner, in both public and private spheres, and to protect the victims who are subject to sexism and to behaviors which have a detrimental effect on them, and which humiliate them or denigrate them in any way.
 - iii. This legislative reform was hailed positively across the political spectrum, by all women’s organisations and by society at large. Nevertheless, in order for the law to be effectively implemented, what remains is for the right conditions to be created to establish and cultivate a culture of equality and respect for human rights.
 - iv. The aim of the Cyprus legislation on sexism is to criminalize sexism in all its forms in both public and private spheres, including online sexism. Although the new law covers men and women equally, as the preliminary remarks of the law state, women and girls are those most strongly affected by such types of violence, and, therefore, they need particular protection and support.
 - v. Article 3 of this law provides for both financial penalties up to 5000 euros, and custodial sentences of a maximum of one year for the perpetrators. In case of legal entities, further sanctions may be imposed, such as a temporary exclusion from public funding, and a ban on commercial activities.

³⁵ On 27 March 2019, the Committee of Ministers adopted Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)1 on preventing and combating sexism.

³⁶ Ο περί της Καταπολέμησης του Σεξισμού και του Διαδικτυακά Διαδιδόμενου Σεξισμού και περί Συναφών Θεμάτων Νόμος του 2020 (Ν. 209(I)/2020)

- g. The contribution of the ACPCVF, in collaboration with relevant NGOs, to promoting the implementation of the provisions of European directives and national laws regarding violence against women, through media interventions, trainings, proposals for support services to victims, as well as advocacy through formal and informal consultations (e.g., participation in parliamentary committee meetings). The ACPCVF -the Body appointed by the Council of Ministers³⁷ as the coordinator for the set-up of the WH- in collaboration with the APHVF, which is the Administrator/ Operator of the WH, organized, participated in and funded the induction training of the personnel of the WH, which took place from 9th-27th November 2020.

A. Several awareness campaigns and programmes have been promoted or conducted in accordance with Article 13, paragraph 1 of the Convention, including in cooperation with the National Machinery for Women's Rights and the Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality, NGO's and civil society, covering different forms of violence against women. These, among others, include:

- a. An awareness raising campaign that was organised by the Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality. The campaign included the design of a poster aiming to urge women who suffer violence to report their abusers. The poster was distributed within the civil society. The campaign, that was also on social media, included the production of a video with the message "*Break the chain of domestic violence. Take your life in your own hands. All provided services remain open 24/7*". The video was showing in all TV Channels.
- b. An awareness raising campaign aiming at students aged 12 to 18, on "*Preventing and combating gender-based violence*", that was organised through the European Commission's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Program project, using audio-visual media and music (*Play It for Change*, 2018-2019).
- c. Campaigns for awareness raising on violence against women, that were organised by Social Welfare Services.
- d. Publication of 2 booklets by the National Machinery for Women's Rights:
- i. The guide for Gender Mainstreaming in Public Policies, and
 - ii. The guide to eliminate linguistic sexism from public documents.
- e. Awareness raising campaigns and distribution of informational material on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights that were conducted by the Cyprus Family Planning Association (CFPA). The CFPA has a stable presence in the media and social media.
- f. Publication by the CFPA of the informational booklet "*Parents, let us talk about sex*" that aimed to provide parents with information and support in initiating the dialogue with their children and to develop their capacity to manage questions regarding sex and sexual health issues. The booklet was published in 2020, both in Greek and English and is available in print and online version. The booklet was distributed and promoted widely.

³⁷ Council of Ministers' Decisions no. 86,671 and 87,452 (with date 23.1.2019 and 15.5.2019, respectively).

- g. Participation of the APHVF (during 2019-2020), in a number of European programmes on gender issues, targeting and combating gender-based violence, such as: *“The Young for Gender Equality in the Family: The Importance of the State and the Social Institutions”*, *“GENDER-ED: Combating Gender Stereotypes in Education and Career Guidance”*, *«HOMBAT: Combating Homophobic and Transphobic bullying in schools»*, *“Building Healthy Relationships and Enhancing Gender Equality”*.
- h. The organization of a conference (in 2018) in order to raise awareness about FGM in Cyprus by the Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality in collaboration with the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). At the conference the results of a study conducted by EIGE on the degree of danger of young girls regarding female genital mutilation in Cyprus were presented. In a press conference, the Commissioner for Gender Equality stated that, although this practice is not related to the Cypriot culture and religion, there are women and girls who are victims of FGM in Cyprus. The Republic of Cyprus, however, implements policies and measures regarding FGM.
- B.** The authorities in Cyprus have taken several steps to include teaching material in formal education curricula at all levels of formal and non-formal education, as required by Article 14, paragraph 1 of the Convention, as follows:
- a. According to Article 48 (1) of the Law (115(I)/2021),³⁸ the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (MOECSY), ensures that all children of primary and secondary education, both state and private, should be informed, through updated curricula and other actions on sex education, prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence, rape, prejudices, stereotypes and conflict resolution in relationships (based on gender without the use of violence), their rights for personal integrity as well as all types of verbal sexism. Moreover, the above-named law ensures that the MOECSY promotes the development of skills among children, parents and teachers in relation to dealing with information and communications with humiliating content of sexual or violent type that may be harmful. The MOECSY also ensures that all personnel of the Ministry, including educational programmes of all levels, receive training as mentioned above.
- b. Throughout the pandemic, the MOECSY continued to support schools for the implementation of its antiracist policy* *“Code of Conduct against Racism and Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents”*.³⁹ The policy conceptualizes racism in a broad manner, including sexism and violence against women and girls. The “Code” includes definitions of basic concepts, outlines the responsibilities and commitments expected by each member of the school community, and provides the steps to be followed by schools in order to deal with racist incidents in a practical manner. The antiracist policy views diversity as a multidimensional phenomenon, thereby, contributing towards the decrease of bullying and discrimination based on any form of diversity in schools, including and intersecting with gender (e.g., ethnicity, appearance, language, religion, disability).

³⁸ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues’ 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

³⁹ “Code of Conduct against Racism and Guide for Managing and Recording Racist Incidents” Ministry of Education and Culture, Pedagogical Institute Curriculum Development Unit, 2016.

- c. The Pedagogical Institute, in order to support teachers and schools implement the antiracist policy, has conducted several actions during the school year 2020 – 2021, such as the operation of the School Support Network with several online meetings. The antiracist policy website is continually being updated with information on the implementation, supporting material and answers to frequently asked questions. A support line (e-mail and telephone) operates throughout the year. Around 40 educators from 32 schools have participated in this year's network.
- d. The MOECSY has prepared the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Violence at School for the years 2018-2022. The Strategy includes in service training on gender issues and their relation to violence, as well as empowerment of parents, guardians, teachers and management teams. For these trainings, the Interdepartmental Committee of the MOECSY collaborates with various NGOs.
- e. The MOECSY, in its effort to ensure equal opportunities in education, for all genders on a non-discriminatory basis, at all levels of education, has formed an Interdepartmental Committee with representatives from all its departments and services. This Committee oversees and coordinates all actions taken that are related to gender equality issues. The work of the Committee has resulted in the development of an Action Plan for schools which promotes gender equality (2018-2020)⁴⁰, aiming to support the inclusion of gender equality in matters related to the structures of the educational system and to teacher in-service training.

C. In Cyprus, both state and private universities that offer education or professional training to professionals who may deal with victims or perpetrators of all acts of violence, as required by Article 15 of the Convention (i.e.: lawyers, social workers, nurses, psychologists etc.), cover some areas of prevention of such violence, including human rights, equality between men and women, violence against women, etc. However, as shown in Appendix 1, Table 1.1 and Table 1.2, some relevant categories of professionals receive initial training on issues related to violence against women, within their services as new recruits. These include:

- a. Social Services Officers who receive basic training in the area of violence in the family by Social Welfare Services. It should be noted, however, that since March 2020, and until today, the number of initial training programmes decreased in comparison to programmes delivered during the previous years, due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- b. Police Academy provides initial training on violence against women and domestic violence, to all police officers upon entry into service, (as well as in-service training for police officers of various ranks). Police Officers receive, among others, specialized training on human rights, domestic violence issues, handling of juvenile victims of domestic violence, non-suggestive interviewing

⁴⁰ Στρατηγικός Σχεδιασμός για την Ισότητα Ανδρών και Γυναικών 2018-2020. Υπουργείο Παιδείας και Πολιτισμού, 26.01.2018. https://www.pi.ac.cy/pi/files/epimorfosi/isotita_fylou/schedio_drasis_isotitas_2018_2020.pdf

techniques for child victim of sexual violence, risk assessment, etc. (For more details see Tables 1.2 in Appendix I).

- D. As shown in Table 1.3 in Appendix I, several disciplines of professionals have benefitted from in-service training on violence against women. These include teachers of primary and secondary education, social workers, health professionals, police officers, government employees etc. In-service training was delivered mainly through Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA), which is responsible for providing training to all government employees, the Pedagogical Institute, which is responsible for in-service training of teachers of all levels of education, Social Welfare Services, the Police Academy and the Association for the Prevention and Combating Violence in the Family, in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental bodies. Such trainings were funded by the service that provided them (i.e. CAPA, Police Academy, Social Services or Pedagogical Institute), they were often part of European projects, or they were funded by the National Machinery for Women's Rights.

Even though, in-service training programmes, seminars and workshops were suspended during the years 2020-2021, due to Covid-19 restrictions, several online lectures and webinars were organised. Some information on the type, content and agencies delivering the in-service training, is provided below:

1. Cyprus Academy of Public Administration, (which is funded by the Ministry of Finance), has organized and implemented training programmes on:
 - a. the "*Integration of Gender Dimension in Public Policies*". These programmes were held in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, the Office of the Commissioner for Gender Equality, the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Protection and Human Rights and the Committee for Gender Equality in Employment and Vocational Training. They were addressed to the Equality Officers, the coordinator and the members of the Learning Cores, the Members of the strategic planning and budgeting teams and other policy-making officers in each Public Service Department. These programmes were carried out during 2019.
 - b. the "*Code of Practice for the Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Harassment and Harassment*"⁴¹, aiming to prevent and combat sexual harassment in the public sector. This in-service training for civil servants was carried out during the years 2019 and 2020 in collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights and the Committee on Gender Equality in Employment and Occupation. Further training, focusing on the role of Equality Officers and the members of the Committee for Gender Equality in Employment and Vocational Training, aiming to enable them to deal with these issues within their organisations, was carried out during 2019.
 - c. *workplace bullying* training was also carried out in 2019, for civil servants from different ministries, departments and services.

⁴¹ Issues relating to sexual harassment in the workplace are regulated by Article 2 of the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Laws of 2002 as amended up to 2014.

- d. *sexual harassment in the workplace* was provided in 2019 by CAPA financed with funding obtained from the European Programme Management Foundation for Lifelong Learning, for a project that is part of the European ERASMUS programme + Key Action 2 "*Strategic Partnerships in the fields of education, training and youth*". The project aimed to develop educational material and an e-learning platform, to implement an effective training programme for the prevention and combating of sexual harassment in the workplace, and to develop tools and skills required to deal with allegations of sexual harassment. The duration of the project is 30 months and its budget amounts to 280,601.00 euros. CAPA is the lead partner of the project, with partners from Greece, Denmark, Bulgaria, Portugal.
2. The Pedagogical Institute, in cooperation with the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS):
- a. organized and implemented workshops for primary and secondary education teachers through "Circle of CHANGE: *Preventing and combating violence against women and girls*" gender equality awareness project⁴².
 - b. offered in-service training to teachers of Primary, Secondary and General Education as well as to teachers of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education and addressed issues related to preventing and combating delinquency.
 - c. offered in-service training to teachers on "*Combating homophobic and transphobic bullying in education*" through HOMBAT Program⁴³. The aim of the HOMBAT project was to create a solid and sustainable framework for the prevention and combatting of homophobic and transphobic bullying in schools, in Greece, Cyprus and Lithuania. The result of the project was the establishment of an online learning platform for school professionals with the goal of building their capacities on preventing and addressing homophobic and transphobic bullying.
3. The Cyprus Police, through the Police Academy, offered relevant training programmes to Police Officers and Police Recruits and Advanced Training Programmes, such as the Sergeant Courses and the Advanced Criminal Investigation courses. Specialized programmes are often organized in collaboration with the Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Combating office, focusing on addressing specific needs and including:
- a. Specialized programmes on Domestic Violence issues;
 - b. Handling Juvenile Victims of Domestic Violence;
 - c. Non-Suggestive Interviewing techniques for child victims of sexual violence;
 - d. Training for members of the Community Policing on the Sexual Abuse of Juveniles;
 - e. Refresher Course on Interviewing Children and Vulnerable Witnesses;

⁴² The "Circle of CHANGE: Preventing and combating violence against women and girls through gender equality awareness" project aims at changing attitudes and behaviours towards violence against women, by prevention through education, combating victim-blaming and encouraging victims and witnesses to report violence to the relevant authorities and institutions. It has been Co-funded by the European Union's Justice Programme (2014-2020).

⁴³ European Program "Combating HOMBAT" Combating Homophobic and Transphobic bullying in schools», "Building Healthy Relationships and Enhancing Gender Equality" in women from Cyprus, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan. (2019-2020).

- f. Fundamental Rights and Liberties;
 - g. Equality between men and women at work and education;
 - h. Various relevant Laws;
 - i. Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims.
4. The Cyprus Police has participated in two EU funded projects which included in service training as follows:
- a. *“Circle of Change / Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Girls through Gender Equality Awareness”*⁴⁴, that aimed to contribute on influencing and /or changing the existing gender-based violence and negative stereotypes around women and girls, and more specifically around victims, so as to eliminate victim blaming in Cyprus. Thus, a training curriculum has been composed and targeted 217 police officers, through six training sessions which were organized within the year 2018. The project produced training material that was being used to educate Police Officers who attended relevant courses at the Cyprus Police Academy.
 - b. STEP4GBV⁴⁵ aimed at training and informing front-line professionals on issues contributing to the protection and support of victims of gender-based violence. In this framework, Cyprus Police has organized six seminars in the years 2018 and 2019 which were addressed to Police Officers and other relevant authorities.
 - c. The Police Academy also offered seminars on gender equality / equal rights / equal responsibilities, raising awareness of violence against women and risk assessment protocols used in case of violence between partners etc.
5. Social Welfare Services organised trainings in the area of violence in the family. These included refresher and specialised in-service training programmes for Social Services Officers. A number of Social Services Officers also attended seminars and trainings offered by other governmental services and organisations, either in Cyprus (i.e.: CAPA) or abroad.
6. The Cyprus Family Planning Association implements sexuality education at all levels of education and organises seminars, lectures and experiential workshops for children, young people, parents, and professionals. The CFPA strengthens and supports the implementation of sexuality education in schools using educational material, specially developed for each age group. In 2019 CFPA implemented many educational experiential workshops and seminars in primary and secondary schools, both public and private, in universities and in summer camps. Workshops were also organized for parents and educators and were implemented by experienced, trained CFPA volunteers. Specially designed and

⁴⁴ The “Circle of CHANGE: Preventing and combating violence against women and girls through gender equality awareness” project aims at changing attitudes and behaviours towards violence against women, by prevention through education, combating victim-blaming and encouraging victims and witnesses to report violence to the relevant authorities and institutions. It has been co-funded by the European Union’s Justice Programme (2014-2020).

⁴⁵ The project “STEP4GBV – Support, Training, Exchange Practices for Gender-Based Violence” is a collaborative project funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Program of the DG Justice of the European Commission. STEP4GBV has a duration of 2 years, January 2018-December 2019 and it focused on the support of victims of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and the treatment of perpetrators.

youth friendly information material was distributed during the workshops. During 2020, only a limited number of workshops for volunteers and professionals were held online due to restrictions of the covid-19 pandemic.

- a. The CFPA participated in several European programmes on gender issues and on targeting and combating gender-based violence (2019-2020). Such programmes include: HOMBAT (2019-2020)⁴⁶ . “GENDER-ED: Combating Gender Stereotypes in Education and Career Guidance”⁴⁷, “The Young for Gender Equality in the Family: The Importance of the State and the Social Institutions”⁴⁸, The aim of the programme “The Young for Gender Equality in the Family” was to address gender stereotypes of educational and career choices and to promote gender equality in education, training, and career guidance. The programme also aimed to empower young women and men on issues of gender equality, and to promote suggestions to policy makers in order to develop and apply gender equality practices and policies in the family. One of the most important output of the project was the development of the app Dream Fighters which was designed with the active contribution of teenagers. The app is available for free.
 - b. During 2020 the CFPA , in collaboration with the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies and the NGO Support Centre, organised and implemented two online workshops under the topic of “Building Healthy Relationships and Enhancing Gender Equality”⁴⁹ targeted to young women aged 18 -25. The workshops used non-formal education methodologies and aimed at encouraging women participants to reflect on their experiences and share their thoughts and concerns; to critically discuss how gender norms and stereotypes affect the expression and enjoyment of gender and reproductive rights, to explore implications of gender inequalities and gender discrimination in women’s lives and relationships, to challenge gender norms and explore ways for bringing more freedom, happiness, fulfilment and equality in women’s’ lives and relationships.
7. The APHVF, offered training to professionals from all relevant services and other NGOs and/or bodies on prevention, detection and handling of domestic violence, violence against women, gender-based violence, including information on victims’ rights, prevention of secondary victimisation, child abuse and neglect, healthy relationships, etc. Specialised training was offered by APHVF to the officers of the WH, including the above-mentioned issues, as well as multi-agency co-operation. (See Table 1.3 in Appendix 1) The APHVF also

⁴⁶ European Program “HOMBAT” Combating Homophobic and Transphobic bullying in schools», “Building Healthy Relationships and Enhancing Gender Equality” in women from Cyprus, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan. (2019-2020).

⁴⁷ “Project funded by the European Union (2018-2020) entitled: "GENDER-ED: Combating gender stereotypes in education and career guidance". The main aim of the project is to address the stereotyping of educational and career choices and to promote gender equality in education, training and career guidance

⁴⁸ The project ‘‘The Young for Gender Equality in the Family: The Importance of the State and the Social Institutions’ ’is funded by the Cyprus Youth Organization within the framework of the European Program ERASMUS + (Key Action 3 – Structured Dialogue) and lasted for two years, from January 2019 to December 2020

⁴⁹ Part of the European Program “Combating HOMBAT” Combating Homophobic and Transphobic bullying in schools», “Building Healthy Relationships and Enhancing Gender Equality” in women from Cyprus, Egypt, Lebanon and Jordan. (2019-2020).

coordinated an EU-funded project from Sep.2017 to Sept.2019 named '*SAFER – Systematic Approaches for Equality of Gender*⁵⁰, aiming to educate children from a young age to build healthy relationships in order to prevent gender-based violence and raise of awareness of girls and boys about gender-based violence as a way to prevent it at an early stage.

E. Article 25 of the Violence in the Family Law (Law 212(I)/2004), provides that on the special condition that the perpetrator is submitted to self-control treatment by specialists or on such other conditions as the Court may consider necessary for preventing the repetition of acts of violence, the Court may, if it considers expedient, impose on the accused a suspended sentence of imprisonment and accept his request to place him on probation.

1. Currently, there is only one programme in Cyprus for perpetrators of Domestic Violence, established in July 2020 by an NGO (the APHVF) and covers the whole island. The programme offers individual and group counselling sessions and operates on voluntary basis, either by self-referrals or referrals by competent authorities (i.e.: Police, Social Welfare Office, Mental Health Services, and Rehabilitation Programmes). The programme provides for up to 25 people. Fifteen men attended the programme from July to December 2020, and for the first six months of 2021 twenty men were enrolled. The APHVF intends to establish a perpetrators' programme in prison settings, in order to reach perpetrators who have been sentenced, as well as those who have been released.
2. The programme was set up and is implemented by the APHVF, an organisation that, primarily, offers services to women victims. Victims' safety and support, as well as their human rights are, therefore, of primary concern to the Organisation which ensures that the perpetrators' programme is implemented in close co-ordination with specialist support services for women victims. Close cooperation between all professionals involved with multi-agency, multi-disciplinary meetings that take place regularly ensures co-ordinated and safe services to women victims.
3. The programme operates in close cooperation with the organisation's specialist services for women and is informed by a gendered understanding of violence against women. The fact that the perpetrators programme was set up and is implemented by APHVF, an organisation focusing mainly on women victims, their rights and their needs, also ensures that the programme takes into account a gendered understanding of violence against women.
4. The perpetrators of domestic violence programme receives EU and governmental funding from Social Welfare Services, through the Grants-in Aid-Scheme. For 2019 the state funding amounted to €10.000 and for the year 2020 €25,000 (covering up to 53% of its expenses). Furthermore, for the year 2020, the APHVF received funding (that was used for all its programmes) from the National Mechanism of Women's Rights, the Ministry of Justice and Public

⁵⁰ the Programme also aims to raise awareness and sensitise primary school teachers, students, parents and relevant stakeholders regarding gender-based violence (GBV); and supply teachers with relevant classroom material and with a systematic approach in cultivating life skills, building healthy relationships, adopting and maintaining values, and increasing resilience and personal strength that would enable them to discuss about GBV in their classroom, challenge existing gender stereotypes and ultimately prevent GBV.

Order and the Municipality of Nicosia (details can be seen in Table 2.1 in Appendix 2).

5. The impact of the perpetrator's programme has not been evaluated yet, since it has not completed its first year of operation. However, it appears that there is an increasing rate of requests for participation since its establishment and as the competent services/authorities are informed about the programme, more referrals are made.
- F. At present, there are no specific support programmes for sex offenders in Cyprus as referred to in Article 16, paragraph 2 of the Convention.

1. The State, however, provides general mental health services (including Individual psychiatric or psychological therapeutic sessions, focusing on aspects of sexual crimes, behavioral aspects of violence, anger management techniques etc.), to incarcerated persons (pre-trial detainees or convicted prisoners), upon their demand, within the prison setting, by the Prison Department of the Mental Health Services (MHS). It is also ensured that any relevant psychopathology is under treatment. Thirty requests were made to MHS by the Supervisory Authority for psychological assessments of convicted sex offenders against children during the year 2020. Four requests were transferred to be completed in 2021.

The number of adults sex offenders against children who were convicted and, following the decision of the Supervisory Authority of convicted sex offenders against children, were subject to compulsory follow up care from clinical psychologists of the Mental Health Services within 2020, are shown in Appendix 3, Table 3.1.

The MHS, through their specialised Mental Health Evaluations' Centre, also conduct psychodiagnostics assessments and prepare relevant reports for sex offenders on request from:

- a. The Release Council, before the sex offender's release from prison under terms and/or
- b. The Supervisory Authority for the convicted sex offenders against children before the expiry of the Supervision Order or before the sex offender's release from prison.

The Surveillance Authority for Convicted Sex Offenders against children was established, in accordance with Article 47 of the Law (91(I)/2014)⁵¹. The Surveillance Authority consists of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order (president) and representatives from Cyprus Police, the Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, Mental Health Services, Social Welfare Services, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Youth, Prisons Department, Licensed Prisoners' Council and Cyprus Youth Organization.

The convicted sex offenders against children are referred to the Surveillance Authority with a surveillance order issued by the Court at the request of the Attorney General of the Republic. The Surveillance Authority is considered as the coordinating mechanism of the competent authorities of the Republic-namely the Attorney General of the Republic, the Police, the Mental Health Services and Social Welfare Services, for the surveillance of convicted sex offenders against children, who have been

⁵¹ Law for the prevention of Combat of Sexual Abuse, Child sexual Exploitation and Child pornography (91(I)/2014).

recently released from prison, through taking effective measures, as these are defined in articles 51 and 52 of Law (91(I)/2014)⁵². More specifically, according to article 51, the Surveillance Authority determines, on a case-by-case basis, programmes in order to provide social and psychological support to the convicted sex offenders. The programmes are aiming to prevent and minimise the risks for the recurrence of future sexual offences against children.

2. Article 31.(1) of Law 91(I)/2014⁵³, states that “The Services involved, as well as the non-governmental organizations involved shall treat victims with all due respect of their dignity, recognize their rights and legal interests, particularly within the framework of the criminal proceedings as well as ensure that they receive special treatment, corresponding best to their interest, condition, age and degree of maturity, (2) The Social Welfare Services shall ensure the provision of assistance, support, and protection ... and (3) The Social Welfare Services shall ensure that, when the age of a person who has suffered from any of the offences provided for in sections 6 to 10 and 15 is uncertain, and there are reasons to believe that the person is a child, that person is presumed to be a child, in order to receive immediate access to assistance, support and protection. Furthermore, Article 32.-(1) provides that “The Court may, during or after the trial of a case in relation to the offences provided for in this Law, order the removal of the victim and his/her placing in a safe place or his/her placing under the care of the Director of Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, for such a period as it may considers appropriate, provided that it considers that this is necessary for the child's interest, and provided that any other measures against the offender shall not ensure the interest and protection of the child. (2) The Court may issue an interim order for the removal of a victim, by applying the provisions of section 33 of this Law”

3. Moreover, in order to ensure that the safety of, support for and the human rights of women victims are of primary concern it is demanded that, persons convicted for Sexual Crimes go through psychological evaluation by Mental Health Services both prior and during their sentence.

G. Article 30 of the Radio and Television Organizations Law 7(I)/1998 (as it has been amended in 2012)⁵⁴ states that “the Authority⁵⁵ shall ensure that the broadcasts don't contain any incitement to hatred on grounds of race, sex, religion or nationality”.

Additionally, the following regulations of the Radio and Television stations Regulations 2000 (10/2000)⁵⁶ provide that:

⁵² Law for the prevention of Combat of Sexual Abuse, Child sexual Exploitation and Child pornography (91(I)/2014).

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ Οι περί Ραδιοφωνικών και Τηλεοπτικών Οργανισμών Νόμοι του 1998 μέχρι 2012.

⁵⁵ The Cyprus Radio Television Authority was established in 1998 when the Radio and Television Stations Law 7(I)/1998 was enacted. It is the competent regulatory body for the establishment, installation and operation of private radio and television stations in the Republic of Cyprus. The Authority is given all necessary powers to enable it to exercise effective regulation and control of the broadcasting sector. The Authority consists of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and five members who are appointed by the Council of Ministers.

⁵⁶ Κανονιστικές Διοικητικές Πράξεις Αριθμός 10, Οι Περί Ραδιοφωνικών και Τηλεοπτικών Σταθμών Νόμοι Κανονισμοί Δυνάμει του Αρθρου 51

- a. Regulation 26(l)⁵⁷, which states, among other things, in regard to entertainment programs, that “broadcasting of programs that insult the dignity of the two sexes is prohibited ...”.
- b. Regulation 24(1)(e)⁵⁸ concerning mainly News Broadcasts, states that special provisions need to be made regarding reportages, about violence against children, women or elders”.

Also, in the Advertising Code⁵⁹ (Appendix IX of the aforementioned Regulations) and more specifically in provision B8 it is stated that “advertisements are prepared with a sentiment of responsibility towards society and take into consideration the ethical values that are the foundations of any democratic state and are common to all country-members of the Council of Europe, such as personal freedom, tolerance and respect to the dignity and the equality of all people”.

- H.** Cyprus Radio Television Authority (CRTA) has developed Guidelines on gender equality and portrayal in order to promote a balanced, non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the broadcasting media and encourage accurate, responsible, sensitive and ethical reporting of violence against women and girls. CRTA developed the Guidelines in collaboration with academics (UNESCO Chair in Gender Equality and Empowerment of the University of Cyprus) and NGOs (Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies). The Guidelines have recently been updated to include specific recommendations generated from monitoring findings (sensationalism and victim blaming). The media organizations will send their input and are expected to adopt the Guidelines by September 2021.

The media guidelines are not always well understood when they are translated or applied to media practice. As from December 2021, CRTA will provide on-going gender training for journalists to address such concerns and to enable journalist’s ability to translate guidelines into reporting practices. CRTA already collaborates with experienced reporters, academics and NGOs to organize and develop the trainings. (*“Calling it by its correct name”* - appropriate language, terminology and sources, *“Tell the whole story”* - how to place incidents within a wider social context, building skills to interview survivors and protect their identities, etc.). Furthermore, CRTA will develop annual monitoring activities (2022) in the field of gender equality and violence against women and girls to provide feedback, encourage ongoing reflection and increase self-regulation.

CRTA prioritises the improvement of critical thinking and through media literacy workshops (September to May 2021) seeks to educate pupils to use their skills analysis in order to identify and accordingly challenge and deconstruct gender stereotyping in advertising and in audio-visual media content.

- I.** Several measures have been taken to encourage the establishment of protocols, codes and guidelines on how to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace; and raise awareness of human resources staff on issues of violence against women, including domestic violence.

A Code of Conduct for the Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Harassment and Harassment within the civil service was drafted by the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights (Ombudswoman). The Code was

⁵⁷ Radio and Television Act, National Communications Commission Amended Date : 2018-06-13

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Ibid

adopted by the Council of Ministers in July 2018⁶⁰ and has become obligatory throughout the public sector through national legislation⁶¹. The Code provides practical guidance, aiming to secure appropriate procedures to deal with sexual harassment through prevention and repression. This is a useful manual for the creation of a working environment that embraces the gender equality principles and respect of human dignity, while uplifting any discrimination on the basis of gender. State as well as private universities, Unions and professional bodies have also drafted Codes of Conduct for the Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Harassment and Harassment. Cyprus Academy for Public Administration (CAPA) in cooperation with the office of the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights has organised and delivered training to about 1000 civil servants in 2019, aiming to raise awareness on sexual harassment and provide information on how to deal with it. Furthermore, training was provided to the members of Equality Committees, that have been designated in each Ministry and Public Department with the aim to raise awareness on the issue and inform them about their responsibilities in the enforcement of the Code.

- J.** The Code of Conduct for the Prevention and Treatment of Sexual Harassment and Harassment provides for the ability to reverse the burden of proof in the context of administrative and/or other procedures. This is an important tool when establishing a case of sexual harassment in the workplace. Failure to make use of this tool, when the Department of Labour examines an allegation of sexual harassment, means that the investigation cannot take advantage of the beneficial and protective provisions of the Equal Treatment for Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Laws of 2002–2014⁶².

⁶⁰ Council of Ministers Decision No. 85.394 of 12.7.2018

⁶¹ Ο περί της Προστασίας από Παρενόχληση και Παρενοχλητική Παρακολούθηση Νόμος του 2021 (Ν. 114(I)/2021)

⁶² Issues relating to sexual harassment in the workplace are regulated by Article 2 of the Equal Treatment of Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Laws of 2002 as amended in 2014.

Protection and support

(Chapter IV of the Convention, Articles 18 to 28)

- A. Cyprus has taken both legislative and other measures to ensure that appropriate protection and support is offered to women victims and child witnesses of any form of violence covered by the Convention, as required by Article 18, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Convention. These, also include measures to ensure human rights and safety of victims are protected and multi-agency co-operation and effective referrals to general and specialist support services are offered.

Protective and supportive measures aim at avoiding secondary victimisation and at addressing the specific needs of vulnerable persons, including child victims. These measures also aim at the empowerment and economic independence of women victims.

- a. The main action, taken recently in this respect, is the passing of the Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2021 (115(I)/2021). This Law promotes the adoption of comprehensive and co-ordinated policies on violence against women, stating that the involved governmental services may cooperate with NGO stakeholders in a coordinative, multi-disciplinary framework, so as to provide protection and support services to the victims and/or training for their employees, through cooperation protocols. This cooperation enables the provision of services that are easily accessible to the victim and the members of her family and are victim friendly.
- b. Women victims of all forms of violence can receive information on their rights, on support services and legal measures available to them, as required by Article 19A of the Convention, by calling the national 24hour crisis Helpline 1440⁶³. The APHVF does not have the financial capacity to offer translation services on its Helpline. For non-Greek or English-speaking victims, a referral to the Police is made, where the victim is informed that a translator/interpreter of a language she understands can be requested. The Crisis Team of the WH goes to the police station, after being called by the police, informs the victim about her rights and ensures that a place of residence is found, when needed.

A particularly important action taken to ensure that women victims of all forms of violence covered by the Convention receive information on/and support services and legal measures available to them, as required by Article 19, is the establishment of a "Woman's House" that was approved by the Council of Ministers of Cyprus on 27.11.2019⁶⁴ and started its operation at the end of 2020. The WH functions as a multi-agency, multi-disciplinary crisis centre for women victims of violence and their children. The WH is based on the Family Justice Centre model and operates as a 'one-stop-shop', focusing on a gendered understanding of violence against women, on human rights and safety of victims, and aiming to provide an integrated approach to information,

⁶³ Operates by the Association on the Prevention and Handling of Family Violence on a 24 hour basis, seven days a week, on a national level.

⁶⁴ Council of Ministers Decision No. 86.671. Minutes of the Council of Ministers Meeting (23/1/2019): Establishment of the "Woman's House" within the framework of implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

support services, protection and crisis management to women victims of violence and their children through quality, specialized, accessible and coordinated services, all under one roof.

The establishment of the Woman's House fulfils the government's obligations under Article 22: to provide Specialist Support Services to all women victims of violence and their children, focusing on the human rights and safety of the victim. Article 22 also recommends that a range of protection and support services be located on the same premises. Services from various disciplines, including social workers, psychologists, medical and legal professionals and police, as well as non-governmental organisations, work under the same roof in the WH, thus enabling the provision of appropriate support and protection from all forms of violence covered by the scope of the Convention to women and their children including by referring to general and specialist support services (Articles 22(2) of the Convention).

The Woman's House aims to:

- Improve multi-agency cooperation and coordination of relevant services providing services to victims.
 - Provide accessible, effective and quality services to women (and their minor children) and girls (under 18 years) victims of violence.
 - Provide a safe, supportive environment for victims asking for help.
 - Reduce the time required to access services and prevent revictimisation.
 - Promote reporting of violence against women and increase criminal prosecutions of violence against women and girls.
 - Improve system responses to violence against women in order to reduce recidivism and prevent femicide.
- c. The Woman's House operates by an NGO (APHVF), under the supervision and in cooperation with the Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance and it is fully subsidised by government funds.

On arrival at the WH women victims, among others, are informed by the case manager (social worker), about their rights and about available services and they are given a general information booklet: "*Victims' Rights, Support and Protection*" according to the Law 51(1)2016⁶⁵, which has been translated in seven languages. In addition, they are given an informational leaflet on the rights of victims of gender-based violence, that has been created within the framework of an EU funded program (STEP4GBV)⁶⁶ and translated in ten languages. Advice and help at the initial stage of any investigation procedure is also offered and if the victim wishes, she meets the legal counsellor of the WH, who provides legal advice and help to apply for legal aid, if needed. It should be noted that some improvements are necessary for the procedure of legal aid to be more victim friendly.

- d. The Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance has appointed Social Welfare Officers as Consultants on Family Matters who are responsible to

⁶⁵ Cyprus Police booklet: Crime Victims: Victims' Rights, Support and Protection (Law 51(1)2016

⁶⁶ The project "STEP4GBV – Support, Training, Exchange Practices for Gender-Based Violence" is a collaborative project funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Program of the DG Justice of the European Commission. STEP4GBV has a duration of 2 years, January 2018-December 2019 and it focused on the support of victims of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and the treatment of perpetrators.

handle cases of reported violence. An act of violence against children and adults can be reported to a Consultant on Family matters or any Social Welfare Officer in a District Social Welfare Office. People who report an act of violence may maintain their anonymity. Information on support services and legal measures available to the victims are also provided by Social Welfare Services according to articles 4, 5, 7, 8 and 9 of Law 51 (I)/2016⁶⁷.

- e. There is close cooperation between Cyprus Police and agencies that are involved in the protection of women and children. For this purpose, the Domestic Violence Unit of the Police Divisions and members of the Safeguarding Sub-Directorate of the Police Headquarters attend weekly meetings at the WH to address the needs of women victims in a holistic manner. Cyprus Police is in the process of developing a web application aiming to help victims of domestic violence that are in immediate danger to communicate silently with the Police, in cases where they cannot leave their residence, or make a phone call. This application will work as an SOS button and will be free to all users of smart phones or tablets.
- f. The government provides financial assistance, through the Grants in Aid Scheme, to the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the family for the operation of several programmes concerning protection and support for victims of domestic violence, including the help line and 3 shelters for women victims of domestic violence and their children.
- g. The Republic of Cyprus contributes to setting up and operating a unified Europe-wide telephone helpline 116016 for the victims of gender-based violence. This initiative has been undertaken at a European level, in order to facilitate access to suitable services providing support, protection and guidance for the victims all over Europe. The APHVF, with financial support provided by the government ⁶⁸, is in the process of creating the necessary infrastructure, acquiring equipment and organising the operation of the helpline at a national level and connect it with the unified European number.
- h. Cyprus Family Planning Association (CFPA) operates a helpline since 1996. The helpline 1455 is free and offers information and support to all citizens of the Republic on sexual and reproductive health issues. It is targeted to people of all ages, but mainly to young people who want to share their personal worries and concerns, on issues such as relationships, sex, adolescence, contraception, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unwanted pregnancy, sexual orientation, sexual violence etc. The helpline makes references to other specialized services, organizations and programmes that operate throughout Cyprus, and it is staffed by trained volunteers, professionals and non-professionals (Psychologists, Sociologists, Counsellors, Educators, Social Workers etc). The volunteers undergo continuous training in sexual and reproductive human rights and sexual violence and are under supervision. The service is offered with complete confidentiality by allowing the anonymity of the callers. The Association is a member of the Counselling Telephone Lines Network of the Cyprus Youth Organization (ONEK). The helpline runs daily 09.00- 20:00. It is envisaged that with the opening of the Support and Therapy Centre, by the end

⁶⁷ The Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law 51 (I)/2016.

⁶⁸ The Ministry of Justice and Public Order has funded the setting and first year of operation of the Europe-wide telephone helpline with the sum of €45,000.

of 2021, the helpline will offer information and guidance on matters of childhood sexual abuse and exploitation and their long-term consequences as well as ways of referral to the centre.

- i. CFPA has been approved by the Ministry of Health (in December 2019), for the development of a Support and Therapy Centre for Adult survivors of sexual childhood abuse and exploitation. This is the very first structure in Cyprus, offering specialized interventions to adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse (both women and men), and their family or support system. The services will be offered to all people living in Cyprus including migrants, asylum seekers and human trafficking victims. The centre will provide psychological support and therapy for victims of childhood sexual abuse and complex trauma, psychological evaluation, social support (in connection with other services for a holistic cover of the clients needs), sexual and reproductive counselling, as well as legal counselling (information regarding their rights in general). At the same time, the centre will offer prevention services which will include awareness raising campaigns to the general public, and training programmes targeted to professionals, children, teens, parents and educators on issues related to sexual abuse and exploitation, including stigma, as well as healthy relationships, sexual health and gender equality. The centre will contribute to the systematic collection of national data on the extent of child sexual abuse and, at the same time, it will signify the beginning of data collection concerning adults who had been sexually abused at a young age. The Centre is expected to run by the end of 2021 and will be staffed by an interdisciplinary team of professionals (clinical psychologists, social worker, nurse, prevention officer, lawyer). The team will work under supervision and will be continually trained to provide quality services. The Centre will adopt a multi-agency approach through the development of synergies with public and private sector. It is expected that these synergies will provide effective referrals to general and specialist support services for the clients (such as employment services, health services and financial support) and ease the referral procedures. The centre will be easily accessible and will accept referrals from both the public and private sector. The services will be offered with no charge. The centre will work daily (afternoons as well) in the capital of the island, Nicosia.

B.

1. Women victims of violence are entitled to general support services, such as social services, health services and employment services, which provide long-term help and are not exclusively designed for the benefit of victims but serve the public at large, as referred to in Article 20, paragraph 1. These services include:
 - a. *financial support services*: Victims can apply for allowance from the state. The main allowance for which they can apply is the "minimum guaranteed income", an allowance that is intended for people with an income lower than the guaranteed income. The examination of this application can be time consuming, and it may usually take several months. This procedure is, however, prioritized for victims, while, at the same time the Social Welfare Office can provide a one-off extra allowance to the victim.
 - b. *housing services*: There are three shelters for women victims of domestic violence and their children operated by the APHVF (an NGO that receives state funding). When shelters are full, the APHVF also provides alternative accommodation in one-bedroom flats, to victims in need. Victims whose safety may be in danger or when there are issues of parental custody or child neglect

are not offered this type of accommodation, as they are in need of closer supervision. In addition, when the shelters are full, the Social Welfare Office books a hotel or a hostel for a short stay.

- c. *legal counselling services*: are provided for victims and are free of charge. Victims, however, need to pay for legal representation in Courts. Victims can apply for free Legal Aid.
 - d. *psychological support services*: The MHS provide, upon request, psychological or/and psychiatric support to women victims of violence against women or domestic violence. For the provision of psychological support to children and adolescents victims or witnesses of such violence approval of both parents is required. This has been an obstacle on occasions when children are in the shelter with their mother and the father refuses to give his consent. Psychological support services are also offered to victims by Woman's House and the APHVF counselling service.
 - e. *education and training services*: The APHVF employs teachers in order to provide education to children hosted in shelters. A summer school operates for children in shelters during the summer months. The APHVF offers education and training services to WH personnel in order to equip them to meet the specific needs of the victims and to refer them to the appropriate specialist services, when necessary.
 - f. *employment services*: Assistance is provided to victims in finding employment, through referral to employment agencies or the Employment Department.
2. Several measures were taken to ensure that women victims benefit from appropriate health care and social services.

Article 34(6) Law No.115(I)/2021,⁶⁹ states that the Ministry of Health ensures that admission, examination and treatment protocols, appropriate to dealing with incidents of violence against women and domestic violence, will be established in all health care facilities that are under its supervision. Some relevant protocols already exist, and others are in the process of being finalised (e.g. the protocol of cooperation between the WH and the MHS). The General Health System in Cyprus does not provide victims who are not registered with the system or for those who do not pay social insurance contributions.

Psychological assessment regarding women victims and their children, victims or witnesses of domestic violence, are performed at the specialised Mental Health Evaluations' Centre of the MHS, upon request from the Police (when investigating a complaint) or the Social Welfare Services (when handling parental care cases on reports of violence).

During the years 2018-2020, MHS appointed a representative at the Technical Committee for the preparation of the WH. Since the establishment of the WH, MHS participate in the Multidisciplinary Committee with their representative. The Committee discusses each case individually and decisions are made for its handling.

Law N.51(1)2016⁷⁰, states that Social Welfare Services of the Republic (SWS) are responsible for providing free and confidential support services to victims according to their needs. Article 11 of the above Law states that the SWS ensure

⁶⁹ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

⁷⁰ Law on the Establishment of Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime of 2016 (N.51(1)2016) ,

that the victim receives information, advice and support relevant to the exercise of her rights, including information on:

- a. the right to compensation against the offender, for criminal offences committed against her;
- b. her role in the criminal proceedings, including preparation for participation attendance at the trial as a witness, in cooperation with the MHS and the prosecution authorities;
- b. existing relevant specialist support services in place,
- c. emotional support and, when psychological support is needed, referral to the MHS of the Ministry of Health or/and Educational Psychology Service of the Ministry of Education and Culture, when the victim is a student,
- d. networking with other services, such as psychological support services, housing, financial support and medical services.

Article 41 Law No.115(I)/2021⁷¹ states that the Coordinating Body has the responsibility to promote the use of protocols between state services and NGOs. However, these protocols have not yet been prepared, as the Coordinating Body is in the process of being established.

3. The only data available at present concerns the number of women victims of violence who have been assisted by Mental Health Services. According to this data, for the years 2019-20, 11 women and 183 children victims of family violence have been assessed or have received therapy by clinical psychologists.

C. The National Coordinating Body for the Prevention and Combating Violence against Women, that will come into effect according to Article 39 of Law 115(I)/2021⁷² and that is in the process of being established, has the responsibility to ensure that Information and assistance in relation to individual or collective complaints mechanisms is easily accessible to the victims. At present, such information and assistance to the victims is provided by Social Welfare Services, (as mentioned in IV B2) or through the Helpline 1440 and the WH.

D. The newly established WH, which at the moment operates on a pilot basis, is situated in Nicosia and offers support services to all women victims of violence against women and domestic violence covering the whole island. The WH also offers services to victims of sexual violence (acting as a women's rape crisis and sexual assault centre). Furthermore, it offers psychological counselling services and support to victims and child witnesses (as provided by Article 25 and 26 of the Convention).

- a. There are three shelters for victims of violence and their children and can offer short term accommodation of up to three months:
 - i. The shelter in Nicosia, the first purpose-built Women's Shelter and Crisis Centre in the capital of the Republic of Cyprus, can accommodate victims and their children in 7 rooms;
 - ii. The shelter in Limassol, can accommodate victims and their children in 5 rooms; and

⁷¹ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

⁷² Ibid.

- iii. The shelter in Paphos, that can accommodate victims and their children in 2 rooms. It should be noted that in some occasions more than one family can be accommodated in one room, depending on availability.

Furthermore, the Association can provide alternative accommodation for up to 20-25 people.

- b. The APHVF employs 60 professionals, as follows:
 - i. four employees for the general administration of the NGO (an executive director, an administrator, a chief research officer and an accounts officer).
 - ii. Twelve employees for the Crisis Intervention Centre (one chief officer, four officers for the perpetrator's programme, six counselling officers and one research officer);
 - iii. Thirteen employees for the Nicosia shelter (one chief officer, nine officers, two educators /childcare officers and one care taker);
 - iv. Eleven employees for the Limassol shelter (one chief officer, eight officers and one educator/care taker and
 - v. Four employees the Paphos shelter (one officer, two counselling officers and one educator /child care officer;
 - vi. Thirteen employees for the WH (one chief officer, one coordinator, four clinical psychologists, two social workers, one legal advisor, one child advocate, two officers and one care taker.
- c. The WH, the shelters and the crisis line 1440 are accessible 24/7. The APHVF currently also operates the text message service at 99984042, a live chat and the missing children line at 116000.
- d. All services provide protocols and guidelines that place women at the epicentre of their activities and ensure the protection and safety of the victims. According to the Law No.115(I)/2021⁷³ (Article 35), the services involved, within the framework of their responsibilities, take all appropriate measures to assist women victims and their children in the short and long term. Help is provided in the context of their physical and psychosocial rehabilitation, following an individual assessment of the victim's personal condition, considering her point of view, her age, circumstances and her degree of maturity, as well as her needs and concerns, in order to find permanent ways of support or protection, which are appropriate for the case of each victim. For example, mothers and their dependent children receive the initial services at the Woman's House to avoid their separation and thus, avoid further re-victimisation. Protocols and guidelines that apply for shelters are gendered specific and focus on victims' safety.
- e. The above services are available for women victims of violence against women and domestic violence, including migrant women and women with disabilities and their children.
- f. The annual number of women who requested and those who received accommodation in women's shelters, together with their children are shown in Appendix 4, Table 4.1.

⁷³ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

- g. Funding resources and annual amount for these programmes can be seen in Appendix 2, Table 2.1.
 - h. The Woman's House as well as the shelters mentioned above are run by an NGO, the APHVF, that receives government funding.
 - i. The services of the WH as well as those of the shelters are free of charge for all women irrespective of their income.
 - j. Weekly multidisciplinary and multiagency meetings are held to ensure co-ordination between general and specialist support services and to create a mutual plan for each case.
- E.** The APHVF operates a 24/7 telephone helpline 1440, that is a state-wide line covering the Republic of Cyprus and is free of charge. It provides advice to callers in relation to all forms of violence covered by the Convention, as referred to in Article 24. The calls to the hotline are anonymous and confidentiality is ensured. Confidentiality is lifted only if the person reports child abuse and/or neglect (as stated by Law), and/or if the person reports the intention to harm themselves, and/or other people. To this end, a prerecorded message is heard at the beginning of the call to 1440 informing the caller.
- Officers responding to calls on Helpline 1440 have been trained on the basics of all forms of violence against women. Continuous training takes place on a regular basis. The annual number of calls made to seek help for women victims is increasing every year.
- For 2019, 1384 calls were made to the Helpline concerning domestic violence, out of which 82% (1134) were made by a women victim.
- The number of calls has increased to 2147 calls during 2020, with 76% of them, (1631) made to the Helpline by a woman victim in relation to domestic violence.
- F.** All general and specialist support services provided to women victims of domestic violence, including services for their children, take into consideration the rights and needs of child witnesses, based on the best interest of the child. Children who accompany their mother to the WH or the shelter are referred to the State Mental Health Services for Children and Adolescents where age-appropriate counselling is offered to them. MHS staff is trained to follow all the relevant protocols. When a child in counselling or therapeutic support, reports or implies being a victim or a witness of violence, then a mandatory report is sent to the police for investigation.
- In case of violence against women, with child witnesses, the police follow a number of pre-set procedures, including taking video-recorded statements from the children by specially trained officers and cooperating with the Welfare Services on a structured basis. Since the establishment of the WH, in December 2020, 14 minors have received counselling services by the MHS.
- G.** According to the Law No.115(I)/2021⁷⁴ (Article 17), if a person, in the course of his/her profession, in the public or private sector, has sufficient reason to believe that a crime of violence against women has been committed, or that violence is expected to be repeated, reports a breach of law to the prosecuting authorities, the rules of confidentiality provided in any applicable Law do not apply in connection with the

⁷⁴ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

complaint unless the information is obtained by a lawyer in the context of providing legal advice and / or defence and / or representation in relation to criminal or civil proceedings. Furthermore, Prosecution authorities ensure the protection of persons who report violence against women (Article 20). When minors are involved, no confidentiality is observed.

Substantive law

(Chapter V of the Convention, Articles 29 to 48)

- A.** The legal framework pertaining to violence against women in Cyprus, pays particular emphasis on the criminalisation of such acts and includes sanctions and measures taken to provide women victims with adequate civil remedies and to ensure their right to claim compensation as well as to prohibit mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes.
1. The legal framework in place in the Republic gives effect to the provisions of the Convention.
 - a. The Republic of Cyprus has signed the Istanbul Convention on 16 June 2015 and has ratified it with Law 14(III)/17⁷⁵.
 - b. Law of 2021(115(I)/2021)⁷⁶ has been passed on May 2021. Relevant extracts of the Law, with particular emphasis on the criminalisation of acts of violence against women are provided in Appendix 5.1. As stated in the said Law, the Court, in the exercise of its powers to impose a penalty for an offense of violence against a woman, among others, takes as aggravating circumstances those in which the crime was committed by a partner, former partner, a member of the family, or by a person who has abused a position of power, trust or influence, when there was repeated violence, violence against vulnerable persons, violence committed against or in the presence of a child or when there has been the use or threat of use of a weapon (Article 11).
 - c. Law of Violence in the Family (Law 119/00)⁷⁷, provides for the prevention of domestic violence and for the protection of victims, stating that domestic violence is “any act, omission or behaviour which causes physical, sexual or mental injury to any member of the family/ relationship by another member of the family/ relationship, including limitation of an individual’s freedom and the use of violence for the purpose of having sexual intercourse without the consent of the victim” (Article 3). Article 3(4) states that any person using violence commits an offence under this Law, punishable, except for the case of common assault which is punishable with imprisonment for two years and in the case where a more severe punishment is provided under any other or this Law, with imprisonment up to five years or with a fine up to three thousand pounds (about five thousand euro) or with both such penalties. The Law also states that if an offence is committed under the Criminal Code by one member of the family against another member of the family, it shall be considered as particularly serious and that the court may impose the penalties set out in the Law in lieu of the penalties provided in the sections of the Criminal Code.

⁷⁵ Law Relating to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Fight Against Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. (L. 14 (III) of 2017)

⁷⁶ The Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Related issues’ 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

⁷⁷ The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L. 119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments (Law 212(I)/2004).

Article 25 of Law 119/00⁷⁸, provides that the Court, at the request of the accused, may place him on probation under the Probation and other Means of Treatments of offender Law (Law 46(i)/96)⁷⁹.

- d. Offences of violence against women are also dealt within the framework of the Criminal Code, Cap 154⁸⁰.

There are specific sections of the code that address violence against women.

For example, Article 151 states that: "Any person who unlawfully and indecently assaults any female is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for 5 years."

- 2. The main Internal laws, which contain specific legislation addressing violence against women are:
 - a. The Law for the prevention and combating of violence against women and the prevention of domestic violence and Law 115(1)2021⁸¹, that criminalises all forms of violence against women and domestic violence.
 - b. The Law 51/16⁸², with which the Cyprus Republic has transposed Directive 2012/29/EU⁸³ on establishing minimum standards on the rights, support, and protection of victims of crime, which ensures that women victims of gender-based violence, among others, receive specialized support service and compensation.
 - c. The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L. 119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments made by law enacted up to 1st March, 2005, (Law 212(I)/2004).
 - d. The Law on combating sexism (L.209(I)2020)⁸⁴
 - e. The Law against sexual harassment and stalking (114(I) 2021)⁸⁵

B. Actions taken to provide relevant professionals with guidance on how to implement the above legal framework include:

- a. The establishment of Specialised Domestic Violence Units in all police divisions of Cyprus Police (since 2020). Specially trained investigators are appointed at these units and their role is to investigate offences related to violence against women, domestic violence and child abuse. For the investigation of these offences they follow specific protocols and procedures.

⁷⁸ The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L. 119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments (Law 212(I)/2004).

⁷⁹ Ο περί Κηδεμονίας και Άλλων Τρόπων Μεταχείρισης Αδικοπραγούντων Νόμος του 1996 (46(I)/1996)

⁸⁰ Criminal Code, Chapter 154 of the Laws (1959 Edition).

⁸¹ The Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

⁸² 'Establishing Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime'. Law 2016 [51(I)/2016].

⁸³ Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA

⁸⁴ Νόμος που προβλέπει για την καταπολέμηση του σεξισμού και των σεξιστικών συμπεριφορών και περί συναφών θεμάτων Αριθμός 209(I) του 2020

⁸⁵ Ο περί της Προστασίας από Παρενόχληση και Παρενοχλητική Παρακολούθηση Νόμος του 2021 (N 114(I) του 2021)

- b. The development of a Protocol of Risk Assessment of Intimate Partners Violence by the Office for the Management of Domestic Violence and Child Abuse, Crime Prevention Department, Police Headquarters, with the assistance of the Cyprus Police Academy. This protocol has been introduced and is being used by the police since 2018. The protocol satisfies the provisions of the Cyprus Law 51(1)2016⁸⁶ (Rights, Support and Protection of victims of crime) and the Laws for violence against women and domestic violence L.14 (III)/2017⁸⁷ and L.115/2021⁸⁸. The protocol is used during investigations of crimes against women in order to assess the risk factors in a more suitable way. Moreover, the Police of Cyprus proceeded with the preparation of relevant trainings for the police members on the abovementioned subject and the promotion of a special edition of the protocol. However, there is no evidence in our knowledge showing the effectiveness of application of this protocol in practice, and to which extent this is applied by all police officers.
- c. The Police has, also, issued a number of circulars on gender-based violence so that all reports regarding violence against women made to the Police are handled in a proper and consistent manner and in accordance with the relevant legislation and procedures. At the same time, a police manual focusing on domestic violence was edited and is being used as an educational aid.
- d. Furthermore, considering the increased risk factors existing for women and children during Covid-19 pandemic, an internal circular has been issued by the Chief of the Police, directed at the first line police members to alert them on these issues.

C. Procedures available to women victims to provide them with civil remedies against the perpetrators include:

1. Article 23 of Law 115(I)/2021⁸⁹, provides that every victim, regardless of her willingness to cooperate with the prosecuting authorities during the criminal procedure, is entitled to immediate access to legal representation and, if needed, to free legal aid. Article 25, ensures that the victim has an enforceable right to claim compensation from the perpetrator for any criminal act referred to in this Law and the perpetrator is liable respectively for the payment of special and general compensation to the victim for the damages suffered as a direct result of the offense.
2. A person who is convicted of a crime of violence against a woman shall be liable for the payment of specific, fair and reasonable general compensation to the victim. According to Article 15 of Law, 2016 (51/16)⁹⁰ "any person who is a victim pursuant to this law, shall have an actionable right to compensation in the

⁸⁶ Establishment of Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law, 2016 (51/16)

⁸⁷ Ο περί της Σύμβασης του Συμβουλίου της Ευρώπης για την Πρόληψη και την Καταπολέμηση της Βίας κατά των Γυναικών και της Ενδοοικογενειακής Βίας (Κυρωτικός) Νόμος του 2017 (Ν. 14(III)/2017)

⁸⁸ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Establishment of Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law, 2016 (51/16)

course of the civil proceedings against an offender, for any criminal offence committed against him/her, and the offender shall have a respective civil law responsibility to pay special or general compensation to the victim. In case of the death of the victim, actionable right to compensation shall have the family members of the victim".

At present there is no available data on the number of civil law remedies applied for against perpetrators, against state authorities and on the number of civil law remedies granted under categories.

D. A court exercising civil jurisdiction may award damages to the victim.

1. A person convicted of a crime of violence against a woman is subject to civil liability for payment specific, fair and reasonable general reparations to the victim. For purposes of calculating the compensation from a perpetrator, the Courts in Cyprus take into consideration, inter alia, the following:
 - a. the extent of the violence and its consequences to the victim;
 - b. the degree of guilt of the perpetrator;
 - c. the relationship of the perpetrator to the victim and
 - d. the power or the influence of the perpetrator to the victim

Although there is a provision in Article 20(2) of the Courts of Justice Law (14/60)⁹¹ that the Assize court can order any convicted person to compensate any aggrieved person up to 10,000 Euros, this is rarely used and mostly for theft cases.

2. Cyprus has a crime victim compensation program (funded by the General revenue of the Republic of Cyprus), aiming to provide financial compensation for victims of violent crime. Nationals of the states party to the European Convention on the Compensation of Victims of Violent Crimes are eligible. Nationals of all member states of the Council of Europe who are permanent residents in Cyprus are eligible. These are:
 - a. Victims of violent crime (i.e. any offense that is committed intentionally and contains the element of violence, and which is the direct cause of death, serious bodily injury, or impairment of health)
 - b. Dependents of homicide victims, including a husband or wife, or a child under the age of 15 (child includes a stepchild, child born out of wedlock, and legally adopted child)
 - c. A child, regardless of age, who is permanently incapable of supporting him- or herself

The claimant (victim) must apply to the Director of Social Insurance and will receive notification of the decision as soon as the eligibility is established in accordance with the provisions of the law and upon the review of police and medical reports. Compensation and benefits covered by the Social Insurance may include:

- a. Medical expenses in public institutions (up to the amount of £1,000 or 1700 euro)
- b. Hospitalization expenses in public institutions
- c. Sickness benefits
- d. Invalidity and dependent's pension (widow's pension and orphan's benefit)
- e. Funeral grant (£303.00)
- f. Disability pension

⁹¹ The Courts of Justice Law (14/60) provide that the Assize court have jurisdiction to try all offences against the Criminal Code.

g. Pension to dependents

Any immediate expenses are covered under the Social Insurance Law.

There is no available data at present on the number of women victims who claimed compensation from perpetrators or the state or the number of women victims who were awarded compensation from either perpetrators or the state.

E. In relation to custody and visitation rights of children:

1. Incidents of violence against women are taken into account in the determination of custody and visitation rights of children as a superseding concern, even if violence was not directed to children, they are considered as victims of violence. Where there has been violence against children Law 119(I)/2000⁹² provides for the issuance of a Court Order which prohibits the visitation of the perpetrator.

2. The Court may, during or after the trial of a case of violence where the victim is a minor, order the removal of such victim and his/her placing in a safe place or his/her placing under the care of the Director of Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, for such a period as it may consider appropriate. (Article 21(1) of the Law 119(I)/2000⁹³, and Articles 31,32 and 33 of Law of 2021(115(I)/2021)⁹⁴.

The Court may, also issue “a restraining order”, prohibiting a perpetrator to enter or remain in the marital home if the accused has a history of repeated acts of violence against members of his family or that he has two convictions in the last two years for similar offences; or (b) the violence used has caused such actual bodily, sexual or mental harm, as to endanger the life, integrity or sexual or mental health of the victims; or (c) the accused refuses to be submitted to self-control treatment imposed as a condition for the purposes of applying section 33 of Criminal Code⁹⁵ or otherwise Article 26 (a).

In practice, however, the issuance of court order depends on the discretion of judges, who due to the lack of training and sensitization on these matters may often reject such requests.

F. An indication of how internal law criminalises the following forms of violence:

1. **psychological violence:** Article 6 of Law 115(I)/2021⁹⁶, states that the perpetrator of psychological violence is guilty of an offense and may be sentenced to 2 years imprisonment or/and penalty fee up to 4.000 euros.
2. **stalking:** is criminalised and the sentence for stalking, is up to 2 years imprisonment or/and up to 4.000 euros penalty fee. (L114(I) του 2021)⁹⁷
3. **physical violence:** is a criminal offence and is punishable with up to five years imprisonment or a fine of up to C€3,000⁹⁸ or both. (Law 119/00)⁹⁹. Also, Article 151 of

⁹² The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L. 119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments (Law 212(I)/2004).

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

⁹⁵ Criminal Code, Chapter 154 of the Laws (1959 Edition).

⁹⁶ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

⁹⁷ Ο περί της Προστασίας από Παρενόχληση και Παρενοχλητική Παρακολούθηση Νόμος του 2021 (114(I) του 2021)

⁹⁸ About €5,000

the Criminal code¹⁰⁰ states that any person who unlawfully and indecently assaults any female is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for five years.

In Article 242 of the Criminal Code¹⁰¹ it is specified that any person who unlawfully assaults another is guilty of a misdemeanor and, if the assault is not committed in circumstances for which a greater punishment is provided in this code, is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or to a fine not exceeding 1000 pound or both. However if the assault causes actual bodily harm the assailant is liable to imprisonment for three years (Article 243 of the above mentioned Code).

sexual violence, including rape: the perpetrator of sexual violence, including rape is guilty of an offense and may be sentenced to up to 5 years imprisonment or/and penalty fee up to 10.000 euros. (Article 7 of Law 115(I)/2021)¹⁰²

Sexual violence committed against former or current spouses or partners is considered as an aggravating factor lifting the sentence to life imprisonment.

Under internal law (91(I) of 2014)¹⁰³, the age of 17 years is considered as the legal age for consensual sexual acts. Sexual acts between minors or between a minor and an adult who have an age distance not more than three years are not considered a crime. However, Cyprus Law allows a minor who has reached the age of 16 years to get married following a parental consent. This provision is in conflict with the general legal age of sexual consent.

The offences of rape or attempted rape are specifically stressed in Article 5 of Law 119/00¹⁰⁴ and are stipulated in article 144 and 146 of the Criminal code. A person who commits such offences is liable to imprisonment for life or for ten years, respectively.

5. **forced marriage:** is prohibited by Cyprus Penal Code¹⁰⁵. Compulsion to marriage is considered an offence. The penalty is up to two years imprisonment.
6. **Female genital mutilation:** is a specified crime under the Cyprus Penal Code 1962¹⁰⁶ (Article 233A) (the amendment that included FGM passed in 2011), including preparatory acts to the commitment of the crime, punishable with imprisonment of up to five years.
7. **Forced abortion:** Any person who with intent to procure miscarriage of a woman by unlawfully administering to her any poison or the noxious thing is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for fourteen years. (article 167 of the Criminal Code)¹⁰⁷
8. **Forced sterilization:** Forced sterilization is prohibited in Cyprus and, under section 147 of the Criminal Code, is punishable with imprisonment of up to ten years or fine provided is imposed or both of the said penalties.

G. Sexual Harassment is criminalised by Law 114(I)/2021¹⁰⁸ and is punished with up to two years imprisonment or a fine of up to €5,000. Sexual Harassment in the

⁹⁹ The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L. 119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments (Law 212(I)/2004).

¹⁰⁰ Criminal Code, Chapter 154 of the Laws (1959 Edition).

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹⁰³ The Prevention and Combating the Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2014 (L.91(I) of 2014)

¹⁰⁴ The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L.119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments (Law 212(I)/2004).

¹⁰⁵ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹⁰⁶ Cypriot Criminal Code, CAP 154 (last amendment (4) 2011), Provision 233A)
https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_isn=54167&p_lang=en

¹⁰⁷ Act No. 15(I) of 26 February 1999 to amend the Criminal Code.

https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_isn=54167&p_lang=en

workplace, is regulated by Article 2 of Law 205(I)/2002¹⁰⁹, that prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace and provides for punishment of a maximum penalty of six months in prison, a 12,000 euro fine, or both.

The Law is explicit that employers are obliged to take effective measures for the protection of their employees from any act or omission which constitutes sexual harassment. An employer is liable for the offence of sexual harassment if he fails to take all necessary precautions to protect their employees. Furthermore, an employer is liable irrespective of whether he was aware that an offence occurred. During civil court proceedings the burden of proof is transferred to the Respondent to disprove to the Court the allegations of the Applicant and prove that there was no violation of the Law. In criminal court proceedings the burden of proof rests on the prosecution on the legal standard of beyond reasonable doubt. Currently, the litigation on sexual harassment at the workplace is arguably passive. Nonetheless, it is important that cases are coming to the surface, which could trigger more victims of sexual harassment to file a complaint in civil and/or criminal courts.

Furthermore, Law 115(1)/2021¹¹⁰, Article 7, addresses and criminalizes sexual harassment. It states that a person who engages in sexually explicit conduct by a woman which is expressed in words or deeds and which has as its object or effect an insult to the dignity of the woman, in particular where, through that conduct, the person in question is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive climate towards this woman, is guilty of an offense and, in case of conviction, is subject to imprisonment not exceeding five (5) years or to a fine not exceeding ten thousand euros (€ 10,000) or in both cases. A person found guilty and convicted of such an offence may be imprisoned (maximum 5 years) or pay a penalty not higher than €10.000 or both.

A code of conduct outlines the prevention and handling of sexual harassment in the public service.

- H. Law 115(I)/2021¹¹¹ as well as the Cyprus Penal Code 1962¹¹², address both acts or attempts of psychological violence, stalking, physical violence, sexual violence (including rape), forced marriage, the performance of female genital mutilation, forced abortion and forced sterilisation as punishable offenses.
- I. As above.
- J. Law 115 (I)/2021 states that the principles on which the application of the provisions of the law is based are applied by all the services involved and NGOs without any discrimination on the grounds of sex, race, language, religion, culture, sexual orientation, disability, refugee, immigration or other status and therefore, none of the above can be regarded as justification for any act of violence covered by the Convention.

¹⁰⁸ Ο περί της Προστασίας από Παρενόχληση και Παρενοχλητική Παρακολούθηση Νόμος του 2021 Ν. (114(I)/2021)

¹⁰⁹ Equal Treatment between Men and Women in Employment and Vocational Training Law of 2002 (205(I)/2002).

¹¹⁰ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹¹¹ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹¹² Cyprus Criminal and Penal Code, https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_isn=72604&p_lang=en

- K.** Offences established in accordance with the Convention apply as criminal offences regulated by the Cypriot Penal Code. The family link between the perpetrator and the victim is considered as an incriminating factor rising the sentence of the offence.
- L.** Apart from sanctions referred to in section E (1-8) above,
1. Law 115 (I)/2021¹¹³ states that for each form of violence covered by the Convention there are sanctions, as follows:
 - a. the perpetrator of economic violence is guilty of an offense and may be sentenced to 5 years imprisonment or/and penalty fee up to 10.000 euros.
 - b. the person who incites a child to commit an offense is guilty of an offense and in case of conviction is subject to the same sentence of imprisonment or a fine imposed by the said offenses on the perpetrator.
 - c. the person who sends, distributes, publishes, circulates or reproduces material with pornographic or sexual content by any electronic, digital, printed or other means of any nature, in relation to a woman, without her consent in order to humiliate and / or harass her, is guilty of a felony and is subject to a sentence of imprisonment not exceeding fourteen years.
 - d. the person threatening or blackmailing a woman that without her consent will send, distribute, publish, release, or reproduce material with pornographic or sexual content depicting herself, by any electronic, digital, printed or other means of any nature is guilty of a felony and is subject to imprisonment of not more than fourteen years.
 2. in relation to perpetrators, further relevant measures may be taken, such as:
 - a. the monitoring or supervision of convicted persons. Article 25(1) of Law 115 (I)/2021¹¹⁴ provides that the Court may, if it considers expedient, in lieu of imposing any other sentence on the accused, accept his request to place him on probation under the Probation and Other Means of Treatment of Offenders Law on the special condition that he will be submitted to self-control treatment by specialists or on such other conditions as the Court may consider necessary for preventing the repetition of acts of violence.
 - b. the withdrawal of parental rights, if the best interests of the child, which may include the safety of the woman victim, cannot be guaranteed in any other way. (Parents and Children Relations Laws 1990 to 2008)
- M.** In exercising its powers to punish a crime against a woman, the court takes into account the aggravating circumstances, as long as they are not already part of the constituents of the crime (Article 11 of Law 115 (I)/2021).¹¹⁵

¹¹³ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹¹⁴ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹¹⁵ Ibid

- N.** Mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes are prohibited. According to the Law 62(I)/2019¹¹⁶ for the mediation in family affairs, the mediation should be terminated in the case where allegations of violence arise.
- O.** There is no electronic filing system in district courts and, therefore, there is no official administrative and judicial data available.
According to Police statistics¹¹⁷, during the year 2019, there were 10 cases resulting in the death of a woman and 4 cases in 2020. Furthermore, 678 women victims reported violence against them in 2018, 929 in 2019 and 1354 in 2020.

¹¹⁶ Ο περί Διαμεσολάβησης σε Οικογενειακές Διαφορές Νόμος του 2019 (Ν. 62(I)/2019)

¹¹⁷ https://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/dmlstatistical_en/dmlstatistical_en?OpenDocument

Investigation, prosecution and procedural law and protective measures

(Chapter VI of the Convention, Articles 49 to 58)

A. Measures adopted by Authorities to ensure a prompt and appropriate response from law enforcement agencies to all forms of violence covered by the Convention by offering adequate and immediate protection to women victims, include:

- a. National legislation: In the national legal frame, protection orders can be applied by civil and criminal law. Civil law protection orders are regulated by family law, specifically by the Parents' and Children's Relations Law¹¹⁸. Criminal law protection orders are mainly regulated by:
 1. the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Laws 2000 and 2004 (as amended)¹¹⁹
 2. the Law on Preventing and Combating the Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography of 2014¹²⁰, and
 3. the Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence of 2021¹²¹.
 4. the Minimum Standards Law on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime¹²², 2016 (51/16)

- b. Protocols: i.e.: Police adopted a **protocol for risk assessment**, in 2018, for use in cases of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), including in cases of ex-spouses/ex-partners.¹²³ The Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office of the Police is responsible for providing training on the protocol, as well as for the monitoring of cases of domestic violence. The risk assessment protocol complies with:
 - Law 14(III)/2017¹²⁴ ratifying the Istanbul Convention, with specific reference to Article 51 of the Istanbul Convention,
 - Article 21 of the Victims Rights Directive¹²⁵,
 - Article 21 of Law 51(I)/2016¹²⁶

¹¹⁸ The Parents and Children Relations Laws 1990 to 2008

¹¹⁹ The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L.119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments (Law 212(I)/2004).

¹²⁰ The Prevention and Combating the Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2014 (L.91(I) of 2014)

¹²¹ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹²² Establishment of Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law, 2016 (51/16)

¹²³ <http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/20180227/1519724395-27633.pdf>

¹²⁴ Law 14(III)/2017 ratifying the Istanbul Convention, with specific reference to Article 51 of the Istanbul Convention,

¹²⁵ Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA

¹²⁶ Establishment of Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law, 2016 (51/16)

- c. Specialised Units: The operation, as from the year 2020, of specialized units in all Police Divisions investigating exclusively domestic violence cases. These units are subjected to the Divisional Crime Investigation Departments.
- d. The provision of information to all women victims, at the initial stage of any investigation procedure, about their rights and about support and protection measures that are entitled to, through a special informational booklet that is provided to them. The booklet is translated in six (6) languages (Greek, English, Turkish, Russian, Arabic and French) and is also uploaded at the internal information portal of the Police. Additionally, a translation in the Braille language is provided.
- e. Cooperation of the Police with the Welfare Service, the Mental Health Service, as well as relevant NGOs during the handling and investigation of these cases, on a structured basis, by maintaining a line of two-way communication, organizing and/or participating in multi-disciplinary meetings for difficult and complex cases and the coordination of their actions when necessary.
- f. Web application being developed by the Police of (now in its final stage), aiming to help victims of gender-based violence / domestic violence that are in immediate danger.

There is no available administrative data on the number of interventions carried out annually by law enforcement agencies in relation to violence against women.

B. To ensure assessment of the lethality risk, the seriousness of the situation and the risk for repeated violence is carried out two risk assessment tools have been put in place and are being used by police members during the investigation and the overall handling of domestic violence and gender-based violence cases. There is a risk assessment procedure, focusing on intimate partners' violence, introduced in 2018 (see 1b above), as well as a recently adopted one (2020), aiming at assessing and defining the special protection and support needs of victims of crime in general.

C. 1. According to Article 22 of Law 212(I)/2004,¹²⁷ when a woman victim (or at risk) of domestic violence is in a situation of immediate danger the Police and the Court are granted with the power to issue an emergency barring order.

More specifically:

- a. Article 22 of Law 212(I)/2004.¹²⁸ provides that the Court may, upon application by a member of the family or by the police or by the prosecutor or by the Attorney-General of the Republic or by a Family Counsellor or by another person acting on behalf of any of the above, issue an interim order restraining the suspect or for the removal of the minor victim until a criminal case against the accused for the criminal offence of violence is filed and tried. The Police can only apply for a temporary order during the investigation of a case of domestic violence/violence against women. Also, in many cases regarding these type of offence, the court, upon filing of the case and on the basis of a police request, may renew/extend the order or issue an order until the next hearing of the case. Section 15 of this Law provides for a speedy trial of cases of violence.

¹²⁷ The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L. 119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments (Law 212(I)/2004).

¹²⁸Ibid

- b. The duration of a protection order depends upon the decision of the court issuing the order.
- c. The interim order is valid for a period up to eight days from the day of its service to the suspect. The Court may further extend the order up to eight days, in each case, provided that the total validity of the order shall not exceed twenty four days before the filing of the criminal charge against the suspect. At the day and time specified by the Registrar the Court shall hear the suspect or / and any affected or interested person who shall appear and shall decide whether to terminate the validity of the order or to extend it up to eight additional days.
- d. Emergency barring orders can apply to all women victims of domestic violence.
- e. In the national legal frame, protection orders can be applied by civil and criminal law. Civil law protection orders are regulated by family law, specifically by the Parents' and Children's Relations Law 1990¹²⁹. Criminal law protection orders are regulated by:
- the Violence in the Family Laws 2000 and 2004 (as amended)¹³⁰
 - the Sexual Abuse of Children Law 2014¹³¹, and
 - the Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence 2021¹³². When a woman victim (or at risk) of domestic violence is in a situation of immediate danger, the court can issue a protection order (that is, ordering the perpetrator to immediately vacate the residence of the woman victim and/or prohibiting the perpetrator from entering the residence of or contacting the woman concerned), according to all relevant legislation i.e. The Violence in the Family Law (L. 119(I)2000)¹³³, the Law on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (L.115(I)2021)¹³⁴, the Law on Protection from Harassment and Stalking (Law114(I)2021).¹³⁵
- f. Article 23(7) of Law 212(I)/2004¹³⁶, states that any person against whom a restraining order has been issued, who, while the said order is in force, contravenes any of the conditions thereof shall commit an offence punishable with imprisonment of up to two years.

D.

¹²⁹ The Parents and Children Relations Laws, 1990 to 2008.

¹³⁰ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹³¹ The Prevention and Combating the Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2014 (L.91(I) of 2014)

¹³² Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹³³ The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L. 119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments (Law 212(I)/2004).

¹³⁴ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹³⁵ Ο περί της Προστασίας από Παρενόχληση και Παρενοχλητική Παρακολούθηση Νόμος του 2021 .N. 114(I) του 2021

¹³⁶ The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L. 119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments (Law 212(I)/2004).

- a. Restraining or protection orders are made available to women victims of all forms of violence covered by the Convention through an application to the Court by a member of the family or by the police or by the prosecutor or by the Attorney-General of the Republic or by a Family Counsellor or by another person acting on behalf of any of the above.
The court can issue a protection order, according to all relevant legislation i.e. The Violence in the Family Law (L. 119(I)2000), the Law on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (L.115(I)2021), the Law on Protection from Harassment and Stalking (L114(I)2021). The Police can only apply for a temporary order during the investigation of a case of domestic violence/violence against women.
- b. Restraining or protection orders can apply to all victims of violence covered by the Convention.
- c. No fees are levied against the woman victim.
- d. The order takes effect immediately, that is as soon as it is served to the accused.
- e. Temporary orders for which the police apply during the investigation of these type of cases are valid for 8 days per order and they may be renewed for a total of 24 days.
- f. These orders are available irrespective of, or in addition to, other legal proceedings.
- g. Restraining or protection orders can be introduced in subsequent legal proceedings.
- h. In case of breach of restraining or protection orders the penalty is up to two-year imprisonment Article 23 (7) of Law 119(I)/2000¹³⁷, states that any person against whom a restraining order has been issued, who, while the said order is in force, contravenes any of the conditions thereof shall commit an offence punishable with imprisonment up to two years. The provisions of section 15 of this Law for a speedy trial of cases of violence shall also apply in the cases of commission of offences in contravention of the provisions of this subsection.
- i. Women seeking protection receive free legal advice from state agencies and NGOs in relation to their rights as well as services available to them.

E. Administrative and judicial data on the number of restraining or protection orders is not available at present.

G. In all forms of violence against women and domestic violence legal proceedings can be initiated by the victim, the Social Welfare Services and the police. Law.115(I)2021¹³⁸ provides that, even if the woman victim withdraws her statement or complaint, the state is obliged to continue legal proceedings. Until today there is no known case that this has been applied.

H. Assistance and support in legal proceedings can be provided to victims by NGOs or other civil society actors and domestic violence counsellors:

1. Law 115(I)/2021,¹³⁹ that is in line with the convention, allows a counsellor from an NGO to be present in the testimony with the consent of the victim. The social services can refer an individual to appropriate services provided by NGO. The same legal framework states that police and NGO's can cooperate in taking

¹³⁷ The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L. 119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments (Law 212(I)/2004).

¹³⁸ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹³⁹ Ibid

appropriate measures for safeguarding the victim's safety. Individualized assessment in respect to violence, in line with the convention can be performed by an NGO after the referral of Social Welfare Services.

2. During investigations and judicial proceedings.
 - a. the Court can issue an exclusion order against a person accused of using violence against a woman by prohibiting the accused from entering or approaching the place of residence or work of the victim. (Article 33 of the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victim) Laws 2000 and 2004¹⁴⁰ shall apply with the aim of preventing intimidation of the victim.
 - b. The services involved, within their remit, take all measures to assist and support victims in the short and long term and to ensure that they have access to services with properly trained staff and include legal, medical, psychological, counselling and financial support for meeting their needs. Article 34 (a) and (b) of the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victim) Laws 2000 and 2004 apply with the aim of preventing intimidation of the victim. Law 115(I)/2021¹⁴¹ provides that women victims are:
 - informed, where they and their family might be in danger, when the perpetrator escapes or is released temporarily or definitively;
 - enabled to be heard, to supply evidence and have their views, needs and concerns presented (directly or through an intermediary);
 - provided with appropriate support services so that their rights and interests are duly presented and taken into account (i.e. a victim can be interviewed by a policewoman or examined by a woman doctor if she wishes);
 - protected from contact with perpetrators in law enforcement agency and court premises, whenever possible.
3. When the victim is a child, the court may appoint the Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of the Child to represent the victim in criminal or civil proceedings, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Commissioner for the Protection of the Rights of the Child 74 (1) 2007 44 (1) 2014.¹⁴²
- I. 1. As regards to measures of protection that are available during investigation and judicial proceedings, Article 28 of Law 115(I)/2021¹⁴³ provides that: in the case of violence against women, the victim enjoys the protection provided by the Law on the Enactment of Minimum Standards related on the Rights and Support and Protection of Victims of Crime (L.51(I)/2016),¹⁴⁴ and ensures that women victims of gender-based violence receive specialised support services. Furthermore, several other laws, including the Violence in the Family Law¹⁴⁵, and the Law on

¹⁴⁰ The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L. 119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments (Law 212(I)/2004).

¹⁴¹ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹⁴² The Protection of Children's Rights Laws 2007 and 2014 [i.e. Laws 74(I)/2007, 44(I)/2014].

¹⁴³ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹⁴⁴ Law on Enactment of Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law, 2016 (51/16)

¹⁴⁵ The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L. 119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments (Law 212(I)/2004).

Child Sexual Abuse¹⁴⁶, provide for measures of increased protection for such victims. Such measures include protection orders, video recording of statements, court witness intimidation measures (including giving evidence through CCTV) and structured /official information of their legal rights.

J. Any victim, irrespective of her will to cooperate with Prosecuting authorities during the criminal proceedings, has the right to direct access to legal aid for legal representation for civil procedure, according to provisions of Advocates Law¹⁴⁷, for claiming damages from the perpetrator, and in case she has not enough resources she has the right to legal aid according to the provisions of the “Legal aid Law”¹⁴⁸ Since the establishment of WH one woman, out of 7 cases, has been provided with free legal aid from the state.

K. Investigation, prosecution, procedural law and protective measures in relation to violence against women exist in:

- The Violence in the Family Laws 2000 and 2004;
- The Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law 51 (I)/2016;
- The Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues’ 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021);
- The Law on Protection from Harassment and Stalking (L.114(I)2021);
- The Prevention and Combating the Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2014 (L. 91 (I)/2014).

For example, Article 32(1) of Law 91(I) of 2014, provides that the Court may, during or after the trial of a case in relation to the offences provided for in this Law, order the removal of the victim and her placing in a safe place or her placing under the care of the Director of SWS of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, for such a period as it may consider appropriate to ensure the interest and protection of the child.

Migration and asylum

(Chapter VII of the Convention, Articles 59 to 61)

A.

1. Migrant women victims of violence are particularly vulnerable due to the fact that their status often depends on that of their spouse’s. In relation to preventing gender-based violence in reception centres, the Refugee Law 2000 (6(I)/2000)¹⁴⁹ provides that the competent authorities shall take into consideration gender and age-specific concerns and the situation of vulnerable persons and that appropriate measures shall be taken in order to prevent assault and gender-

¹⁴⁶ The Prevention and Combating the Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2014 (L. 91 (I)/2014)

¹⁴⁷ CAP. 2 The Advocates Law of 1956

¹⁴⁸ Ο περί Νομικής Αρωγής Νόμος του 2002 (Ν. 165(I) του 2002)

¹⁴⁹ Law N.105(I) of 2016 amending the Law on Refugees (Laws of 2000 to 2016-Amendment 2)

based violence, including sexual assault and harassment.¹⁵⁰ However, up until today, there are no specific guidelines or procedures in effect to guarantee the efficient implementation of these provisions.

The Woman's House provides services to migrant women on the principle of no discrimination, regardless of their migrant/ legal status.

- a. In the event of the dissolution of the marriage or relationship due to particularly difficult circumstances such as violence, irrespective of the duration of the marriage or relationship, the Republic of Cyprus guarantees the family members of a European citizen, the right to autonomous residence, as per Article 26 of the Law governing the right of citizens of the Union and members of their families to move and reside freely in the Republic (L.7(I)/2007¹⁵¹). Article 26 stipulates: "the right of residence of the family members of a citizen of the Union, who are not nationals of a Member State, if this is dictated by particularly difficult situations, including the case that the family member became a victim of domestic violence as defined in the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law¹⁵², as long as the marriage existed". The same applies to the family members of a Cypriot citizen.
- b. in the event of the expulsion of the (abusive) spouse or partner on whom her residence status depends, if the incident of violence has been reported and the victim was recognized as such, then the same as above applies.
- c. where her stay in the country is necessary owing to her personal situation, the Aliens and Immigration Law (CAP. 40 and Laws 19 of 1950 and Law of 1951¹⁵³) provides the Minister of Interior with the discretion to grant a special residence permit or a permit on humanitarian grounds to any foreigner, when this is deemed necessary.
- d. where her stay in the country is necessary for the purpose of her co-operation in investigation or criminal proceedings, Article 37 of Law 115(I)/2021¹⁵⁴ on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and on Related Matters, stipulates that "In case the victim is a foreigner and his / her stay in the Republic is deemed necessary by the prosecuting authorities for the purposes of his/her cooperation in the criminal procedure, the Migration Department of the Ministry of Interior ensures that the victim is granted a temporary residence permit for the period required to complete the process, in consultation with the prosecuting authorities".
- e. where she lost her residence status as a result of a forced marriage for which purpose she was removed from her country of residence, The Aliens and

¹⁵⁰ Ο περί της Προστασίας από Παρενόχληση και Παρενοχλητική Παρακολούθηση Νόμος του 2021 (Ν. 114(I) του 2021_

¹⁵¹ Law on the Right of European Union Citizens and their Family Members to Move and Reside Freely within the Territory of the Republic of Cyprus, 2007 (Law No. 7(I) of 2007).

¹⁵² The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law, 2000 (L.119(I)/2000), incorporating the amendments (Law 212(I)/2004).
The Aliens and Immigration Law. (CAP. 40 and Laws 19 of 1950 and n of 1951.) Aliens and Immigration Regulations.

¹⁵⁴ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues' 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

Immigration Law¹⁵⁵ provides the Minister of Interior with the discretion to grant a special residence permit or residence permit on humanitarian grounds to any foreigner, when this is deemed necessary.

2. No data can be provided for the categories 1a, 1b, 1c and 1e, because the residence permits that are issued are differentiated in the categories that are issued to foreigners (e.g. employment visa, visitor visa, general humanitarian grounds, etc.) and do not include information such as “violence victim”. No residence permits were issued as yet for category 1d, as the Law 115(I)/2021¹⁵⁶ entered into force in May 2021,

B.

1. Internal law recognises gender as a basis to grant protection. Vulnerable groups that can apply for asylum include victims of gender-based violence, trafficking and survivors of female genital mutilation.
2. There is no data available on the number of women victims or those at risk who have been granted refugee status on one or more of the Convention grounds, or those who received complementary/subsidiary protection on such grounds

C. Currently, the legal framework introduces the aspect of a short-term permit until the legal proceedings are concluded. FGM can be a ground for refugee status. A woman or girl who has been subjected to or fears being subjected to FGM on return to her country of origin may apply for refugee status in Cyprus, according to Provision 3(c) of the Refugee Law (L. 6(I)/2000¹⁵⁷). The law does not specifically refer to FGM, however a woman or girl can claim asylum on the grounds that she belongs to a particular social group that practises FGM. Provision 4(a) on “non-refoulement” states that a “refugee or applicant shall not be deported or sent to the borders of a country where, on the grounds of sex, race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political perceptions, his life or freedom will be endangered or subjected to torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or persecution”

D. Asylum-seekers are entitled to financial assistance including a rental allowance. The rental allowance is set at €100 per month for single persons and couples and increases with the number of dependents, but cannot exceed a maximum of €200 per month (without further adjustment for large families).

¹⁵⁵ The Aliens and Immigration Law. (CAP. 40 and Laws 19 of 1950 and n of 1951.) Aliens and Immigration Regulations.

¹⁵⁶ Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and related issues’ 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021)

¹⁵⁷ Law N.105(I) of 2016 amending the Law on Refugees (Laws of 2000 to 2016-Amendment 2)

Appendix 1
Table 1.1: Initial training (education or professional training)

	prevention and detection of violence	standards of intervention	equality between women and men	needs and rights of victims	prevention of secondary victimisation	multi-agency cooperation	knowledge required for qualification to Practice the profession	length of curriculum
Police and other law-enforcement officials	Yes By APHVF By Police	Yes	Yes	Yes By APHVF By Police	Yes	Yes	Yes	Approx. 4 hours 1 day
Prosecutors								
Judges								
Social workers	Yes By APHVF		Yes By APHVF	Yes By APHVF	Yes By APHVF	Yes	Yes	Approx.. 4 hours
Medical doctors								
Nurses and midwives								
Psychologists, in particular counsellors/psychotherapists	Yes By APHVF		Yes By APHVF	Yes By APHVF	Yes By APHVF			Approx.. 4 hours
Immigration/asylum officials								
Educational staff and school administrators	Yes By APHVF		Yes By APHVF	Yes By APHVF	Yes By APHVF			Approx.. 4 hours
Journalists and other media professionals								
Servicemen and women								
Civil Servants		Yes CAPA	Yes CAPA					

Table 1.2: Initial Training for Police officers

	Programme	Date	Number of Participants
1.	Training Programme for Recruit Police Officers Cohort No. 150	03/09/2018-29/03/2019	63
2.	Training Programme for Recruit Police Officers Cohort No. 151	27/12/2018-12/07/2019	57
3.	Training Programme for Recruit Police Officers Cohort No. 152 & 153	03-21/08/2020	85
4.	Training Programme for Recruit Police Officers Cohort No. 149	(07/09/2020-09/11/2020)	96

Table 1.3: In-service training

	Number of professionals trained in 2019	Number of professionals trained in 2020	mandatory nature	average length of curriculum	periodicity	funding source	body mandated to carry out/certify in-service training	training efforts supported by guidelines and protocols
Police and other law-enforcement officials	370 ¹⁵⁸	226 ¹⁵⁹	Yes			Police Academy	Police Academy	Yes
Prosecutors								
Judges								
Social workers		20	Yes	20 hours		SWS APHDV	SWS APHDV	
Medical doctors								
Nurses and midwives								
Psychologists, in particular counsellors/ psychotherapists		10		20 hours		Min of Health	Min of Health	Yes
Immigration/asylum officials								
Educational staff and school administrators		40	NO	Online training 14 hours	Nov.20- May 21	Pedagogical Institute	Pedagogical Institute	Yes
		20		20hours		APHDV	APHDV	
Journalists and other media professionals								
Servicemen and women		20	No	2x1 day		CAPA	CAPA	Yes
Civil Servants		1 000	Yes	5 days		CAPA	CAPA	Yes
Equality Officers		10		1 day		CAPA	CAPA	Yes

¹⁵⁸ For details see Table 1.4 below.

¹⁵⁹ For details see Table 1.5 below.

Table 1.4: Police in service training for 2019

	Programme	Date	Number of Participants
1.	Training Programme for Recruit Police Officers Cohort No. 150	03/09/2018-29/03/2019	63
2.	Training Programme for Recruit Police Officers Cohort No. 151	27/12/2018-12/07/2019	57
3.	Funded Seminars on: Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Gender-Based Violence	21/01/2019	18
4.	Funded Seminars on: Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Gender-Based Violence	13/02/2019	20
5.	Sergeants Training Programme	18/02-12/04/2019	17
6.	Advanced Crime Investigation (CID) Training Programme	12/03-05/04/2019	15
7.	Funded Seminars on: Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Gender-Based Violence	06/03/2019	19
8.	Basic Criminal Investigation Training Course (CID)	06/05/2019 - 07/06/2019	13
9.	Funded Seminars on: Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Gender-Based Violence	03/05/2019	14
10.	Funded Seminars on: Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Gender-Based Violence)	29/05/2019	21
11.	Training Programme on Community Policing	03-24/06/2019	14
12.	Sergeants' Training Programme	23/09/2019-15/11/2019	17
13.	Dealing with violence against women	07/10/2019 08/10/2019	18 22
14.	Dealing with violence against women	16/12/2019 17/12/2019	15 17
15.	One day seminar on Gender Equality	07&08/10/2019	40
16.	One day seminar on Gender Equality	16&17/12/2019	32

Table 1.5: Police in service training for 2020

	Programme	Date	Number of Participants
1.	Dealing with violence against women	17&18/02/2020	18 15
2.	Training Programme for Recruit Police Officers Cohort No. 152 & 153	03-21/08/2020	85
3.	Training Programme for Recruit Police Officers Cohort No. 149	(07/09/2020-09/11/2020)	96
4.	Training Programme for Special Constables Cohort No. 19	09/11/2020-08/01/2021	12
5.	One day seminar on Gender Equality	17&18/02/2020	33

Appendix 2

Table 2.1: Government funding of the APHVF

Year	Programme A Crisis Intervention Center	Programme B Nicosia Shelter	Programme C Paphos Shelter	Programme D Limassol Shelter	Programme E Perpetrators Programme	Programme F Woman's House
2017	100,000	110,000	18,000	-	-	-
2018	135,000	112,600	22,400	-	-	-
2019	150,000	135,000	20,000	60,000	10,000	50,000
2020	190,000	175,000	45,000	130,000	25,000	197,069

Programme F (Woman's House) is fully funded by the government which also covers 53% of the expenses of the Crisis Intervention Centre and the three shelters.

For the year 2020 the Association also received funding for all its programmes as follows:

Ministry of Justice and Public Order: €10,000

National Machinery for Women's Rights: €15,000

Appendix 3

Table 3.1: Adults sex offenders against children

Adults sex offenders against children who were convicted and following a decision of the Supervisory Authority of convicted sex offenders against children, were subject to compulsory follow up care from clinical psychologists of the Mental Health Services within 2020,	Number
Received follow up care from a clinical psychologist in an outpatient setting of Mental Health Services (MHS)	40
Started receiving follow up care from a clinical psychologist in an outpatient setting of MHS	29
Completed or have stopped receiving follow up care from a clinical psychologist in an outpatient setting of MHS	11
Receiving follow up care from a clinical psychologist in an outpatient setting of MHS on a weekly basis	27
Receiving follow up care from a clinical psychologist in an outpatient setting of MHS on a biweekly basis	6
Receiving follow up care from a clinical psychologist in an outpatient setting of MHS on a monthly basis	5
Receiving follow up care from a clinical psychologist in an outpatient setting of MHS on a quarterly basis	1
Never showed up in follow up care, despite Court order	1

Appendix 4

Table 4.1: Annual number of women who requested and those who received accommodation in women's shelters, together with their children.

Year	Annual number of women who requested accommodation in women's shelters	Annual number of women who received accommodation in women's shelters	With their children
2019	Nicosia: 106 Limassol ¹⁶⁰ : 6 Paphos: 41 Total: 192	All	156 9 63 228
2020	Nicosia: 65 Limassol: 31 Paphos: 25 Total: 121	All	77 40 25 142
2021: There are no statistics available			

During the year 2020 the Association started operating the “Alternative accommodation Program” which offered accommodation to 18 women and 22 children in Nicosia and to 29 women and 33 children in Paphos.

¹⁶⁰ The Limassol shelter started its operation in December 2019

Appendix 5.1: Relevant extracts from Cyprus legislation

Examples of relevant extracts from Cyprus legislation that specifically address violence against women are provided below:

- a. Article 7 of Law 115 (j) / 2021 which provides for sexual harassment
"A person who engages in sexually explicit conduct by a woman which is expressed in words or deeds and which has as its object or effect an insult to the dignity of the woman, in particular where, through such conduct, the person in question creates an intimidating , hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive climate towards this woman, is guilty of an offense and, in case of conviction, is subject to imprisonment not exceeding five (5) years or a fine not exceeding ten thousand euros (€ 10,000) or both. "
- b. In Cyprus, FGM is criminalised through a specific provision in the Penal Code. Article 233A (1) of the Cypriot Penal Code 1962 (amended in 2011) outlaws "The amputation, or in any way, amputation of all or part of the labia majora or labia minora of a woman's vulva or clitoris; or (b) assisting, instigating, advising or provoking the execution by a third party of any of these acts on a woman's body.
- c. The Violence in the Family (prevention and protection) Law of 2000 (Law 119/00) provides in article 3(4) that "any person using violence shall commit an offence under this Law, punishable, except for the case of common assault which is punishable with imprisonment for two years and in the case where a more severe punishment is provided under any other or this Law, with imprisonment up to five years or with a fine up to three thousand pounds or with both such penalties". It is also stated in the Law that "in the event that an offence is committed under the Criminal Code by one member of the family against another member of the family, it shall be considered as particularly serious and that the court may impose the penalties set out in the Law in lieu of the penalties provided in the sections of the Criminal Code".
- d. The Law, in exercising its powers to impose a penalty for a crime of violence against women, introduced increased penalties for specific forms of violence including psychological violence, sexual harassment, economic violence, and dissemination of pornographic material or material with sexual content (Law 115(I)/2021) Articles 5-9).
- e. Article 151 of the Criminal code states that any person who unlawfully and indecently assaults any female is guilty of a felony and is liable to imprisonment for five years.
- f. In Article 242 of the Criminal Code it is specified that any person who unlawfully assaults another is guilty of a misdemeanor and, if the assault is not committed in circumstances for which a greater punishment is provided in this code, is liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or to a fine not exceeding 1000 pound or both. However if the assault causes actual bodily harm the assailant is liable to imprisonment for three years (Article 243)
- g. The Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection) Law of 2000 (Law 119/00) covers and protects women. Article 3 of the Law defines the term violence as:" any act, omission or behaviour which causes physical, sexual or mental injury to any member of

the family by another member of the family and includes violence used for the purpose of having sexual intercourse without the consent of the victim as well as of restricting its freedom." According to Article 3 of the specific legislation that provides for the prevention of domestic violence and for the protection of victims, domestic violence can be an offence or behaviour of a member of a family that causes physical, sexual or psychological damages to another member of the family, including sexual assault and limitation of an individual's freedom.

- h. The Violence in the Family (prevention and protection) Law of 2000 (Law 119/00) provides in article 3(4) that any person using violence shall commit an offence under this Law, punishable, except for the case of common assault which is punishable with imprisonment for two years and in the case where a more severe punishment is provided under any other or this Law, with imprisonment up to five years or with a fine up to three thousand pounds or with both such penalties.
- i. The Law on combating sexism and online sexism (209(I) 2020) states that:
According to Recommendation CM/REC (2019) 1 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, adopted on 27 March 2019, on the prevention and control of sexism, gender discrimination is a violation of human rights but also an obstacle to enjoyment human rights and fundamental freedoms, with sexism being a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men, which ultimately leads to discrimination and impedes the full social development of women. Because, according to the same recommendation, sexism is associated with violence against women and girls, and "everyday" sexism is a "continuum of violence", inevitably creating a climate of intimidation, fear, discrimination, exclusion and insecurity, which limits opportunities for personal development and freedom of the person,
And, because, the same recommendation emphasizes the need to take action to combat Internet sexism as a specific manifestation of sexist hate rhetoric through criminal law, aiming to combat sexist patterns and to be effective in protecting girls and women from growing sexism online and social media,...For all these reasons, the House of Representatives votes as follows: the Law on the Fight against Sexism and the Internet Widespread Sexism and Related Issues 2020.