

# CYPRUS

**NON.**  
**NO.**  
**NEIN.**

Say No!  
Stop  
**violence**  
against  
women

**Violence against women** is rooted in women's unequal status in society, and that status reflects the unbalanced distribution of social, political, and economic power among women and men in society. It is one of the most pervasive human rights violations of our time and a form of discrimination that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women<sup>(1)</sup>. Violence against women undermines women's dignity and integrity and imposes serious harms on families, communities and societies. In the EU, estimates suggest that 1 in 3 women (or 61 million out of 185 million) have experienced physical or sexual violence, or both, since the age of 15<sup>(2)</sup>.

The full extent of violence against women is difficult to estimate, as it continues to be underreported and stigmatised, meaning that what actually gets reported is only a fraction of the reality. In Cyprus 47 % of the population tend not to trust the police<sup>(3)</sup>.

In EIGE's Gender Equality Index 2015 it was found that where people tend to have more trust in justice institutions, levels of disclosed violence are higher. It is estimated that in Cyprus 22 % of women have experienced violence<sup>(4)</sup>, which is 11 % lower than in the EU overall<sup>(5)</sup>.

The European Institute for Gender Equality has estimated that the cost of intimate partner violence against women in Cyprus could amount to €186 million per year. This figure was calculated according to the methodology used in EIGE's 2014 study<sup>(6)</sup>, which Member States can replicate, as done by Estonia in 2016<sup>(7)</sup>.



## What are the facts?

- At least 28 % of women in Cyprus have experienced some form of domestic violence including economic violence, psychological violence, sexual violence, and physical violence. In 2012, Cyprus conducted the first nationwide survey on *Extent, Frequency, Forms and Consequences of Domestic Violence against Women in Cyprus* <sup>(8)</sup>.
- The 2014 European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights survey data results showed that since the age of 15, 1 in 5 women in Cyprus have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner and/or a non-partner, and 31 % of people in Cyprus revealed that they knew a female victim of domestic violence within their circle of friends and family <sup>(9)</sup>.
- During the period 2010—2014, 4 292 incidents of domestic violence were reported to the police, 74 % of which were reported by women and girls <sup>(10)</sup>.
- There were 57 cases of reported rape during the period 2012—2014 <sup>(11)</sup>.
- During the period 2010—2012, it is estimated that there were 129 victims of human trafficking in Cyprus, of which 84 % were women and girls <sup>(12)</sup>.

When trust in police is low, victims are less likely to report violence.



## Is violence against women a crime in Cyprus?

Although there is no specific law on violence against women in Cyprus, most forms of violence against women are illegal. Domestic violence is criminalised under the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) laws from 2000 to 2015 <sup>(13)</sup>. Sexual offences including rape are punishable with a maximum sentence of life in prison. Rape within marriage is also recognised as a crime. Other forms of violence such as forced marriage <sup>(14)</sup> and female genital mutilation <sup>(15)</sup> are against the law.

## What is being done to eliminate violence against women in Cyprus?

The Ministry of Justice is coordinating the implementation of the National Action Plan on Equality between Men and Women (2014—2017); Violence against Women is one of the key priorities of the plan. Actions include awareness raising campaigns, training of professionals and improving data collection on all forms of Violence against Women <sup>(16)</sup>.

The first National Action Plan (NAP) on Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family (2010—2013) promoted integrated policies and measures to combat domestic violence including prevention programmes, improving victim support services, and promoting research and data collection <sup>(17)</sup>. The second NAP on Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family (2016—2019) is pending approval by the Council of Ministers.

## Good practices show the way

**United to END FGM** (UEFGM) is a free-of-charge e-learning tool, offering practical information and support to health and asylum professionals across Europe on female genital mutilation (FGM), with the aim to deliver more effective victim support and protection to women and girls living with, or at risk of, FGM. UEFGM, which was coordinated by the Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies (MIGS) within the framework of the END FGM European Campaign, is now being further developed by Cyprus University of Technology with the support of the European Union. The new project aims to create a European-wide knowledge platform on FGM that will serve as a resource and education centre offering easily accessible (and culturally appropriate) information and support to professionals <sup>(18)</sup>.

The Government of Cyprus signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) in June 2015, but has not yet ratified it.

The Istanbul Convention is the most far-reaching international treaty to tackle this serious violation of human rights.

## How are women and girls protected?

Women victims of domestic violence in Cyprus have legal access to protection measures including temporary protection orders restraining the suspect from contact with the victim, as well as restraining orders prohibiting perpetrators from entering or remaining in the marital home.

Cyprus has transposed Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, implementing national legislation in April 2016<sup>(19)</sup>, which ensures that women victims of gender-based violence receive specialised support services.

Public officers of the Ministries of Health, Education, Justice and Public Order (Police) and Labour and Social Insurance (Social Welfare Services) have a mandatory duty to report to the Attorney's General's Office any referrals where concerns, suspicions or evidence of family violence exist, including domestic violence. Additionally, any person who is aware of and omits to report a case of violence against a minor, or against a person with severe mental or psychological deficiencies, commits an offence<sup>(20)</sup>.

### What help is available in Cyprus?

The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO) runs the Centre for Emergency Assistance Helpline (1440). The helpline is free of charge and provides multi-dimensional support in Greek and English<sup>(21)</sup>.

During the years 2014—2015, 83.5 % of calls received by the national domestic violence helpline were from women and girls<sup>(22)</sup>.

The Police run a general victim's helpline called Citizens' Line (1460) that operates 24 hours a day and is free of charge<sup>(23)</sup>.

There are two women's shelters for victims of domestic violence in Cyprus run by the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO). Both are accessible 24 hours a day and free of charge.



**The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family runs free-of-charge, 24/7 accessible women's shelters for victims of domestic violence<sup>(24)</sup>.**

**Emergency Assistance Helpline (1440)  
Citizens' Line (1460)**



**83.5 % of calls received by the national domestic violence helpline were from women and girls.**

## Endnotes

- (<sup>1</sup>) Council of Europe (2011). *Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and its Explanatory Memorandum*. Council of Europe Treaty Series No 10.
- (<sup>2</sup>) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014). *Violence Against Women: An EU Wide Survey, Main Results*. Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
- (<sup>3</sup>) European Commission (2016). *Eurobarometer*. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/themeKy/18/groupKy/88>
- (<sup>4</sup>) European Institute for Gender Equality (2013). *Gender Equality Index Report*. Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/Gender-Equality-Index-Report.pdf>.
- (<sup>5</sup>) Ibid. The level of disclosed violence in the EU overall is 33 %.
- (<sup>6</sup>) European Institute for Gender Equality (2014). *Estimating the costs of gender-based violence in the European Union*. Publication Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.
- (<sup>7</sup>) *Cost of Domestic Violence in Estonia*. Available at: [https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Sotsiaal/Norra/vagivalla\\_hind.pdf](https://www.sm.ee/sites/default/files/content-editors/Sotsiaal/Norra/vagivalla_hind.pdf)
- (<sup>8</sup>) The survey was commissioned by the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence in the Family (2012). The executive summary of the survey "Extent, Frequency, Nature and Consequences of Domestic Violence against Women in Cyprus". Available at: <http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/cgi-bin/hweb?-A=971&-V=research>.
- (<sup>9</sup>) European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014). *Violence Against Women: An EU Wide Survey, Main Results*. Publication Office of the European Union: Luxembourg.
- (<sup>10</sup>) Office of Analysis and Statistics (Cyprus police): *Violence in the Family*. Available at: <http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/20151204/1449232878-30504.pdf>
- (<sup>11</sup>) Office of Analysis and Statistics (Cyprus police): *Serious Crime*. Available at: [http://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/32027F2900233A04C2257F8F001D341C/\\$file/Σοβαρό%20Έγκλημα.pdf](http://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/32027F2900233A04C2257F8F001D341C/$file/Σοβαρό%20Έγκλημα.pdf)
- (<sup>12</sup>) Eurostat (2015). *Trafficking in Human Beings*. Available at: [https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/eurostat\\_report\\_on\\_trafficking\\_in\\_human\\_beings\\_-\\_2015\\_edition.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/eurostat_report_on_trafficking_in_human_beings_-_2015_edition.pdf)
- (<sup>13</sup>) 119(I)/2000, 212(I)/2004 and 172(I)/2015.
- (<sup>14</sup>) Article 22 of the Constitution: "Any person reaching nubile age is free to marry and to found a family according to the law relating to marriage, applicable to such person under the provisions of this Constitution." Also, the Marriage Law, 2003 (L. 104(I)/2003).
- (<sup>15</sup>) Article 233A of the Criminal Code.
- (<sup>16</sup>) Ministry of Justice and Public Order (2014). National Action Plan on Equality between Men and Women (2014-2017), Nicosia.
- (<sup>17</sup>) Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance. *National Action Plan on the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence (2010-2013)*. Available at: [http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/downloads/actionplan\\_2010-2013\\_en.pdf](http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/downloads/actionplan_2010-2013_en.pdf)
- (<sup>18</sup>) United to END FGM (UEFGM). Available at: [www.uefgm.org](http://www.uefgm.org)
- (<sup>19</sup>) 'Establishing Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime'. Law 2016 [51(I)/2016].
- (<sup>20</sup>) According to the article 35A of the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) laws of 2000 until 2015 [119(I)/2000, 212(I)/2004 and 172(I)/2015]
- (<sup>21</sup>) WAVE (2015). *WAVE report on the role of specialist women's support services in Europe. Compilation of Country Profiles, July 2016*. (Cyprus Country Information). Available at: [http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVEReport2015\\_Compilation\\_Country\\_Profiles.pdf](http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVEReport2015_Compilation_Country_Profiles.pdf)
- (<sup>22</sup>) Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO). Available at: [www.domviolence.org.cy](http://www.domviolence.org.cy)
- (<sup>23</sup>) WAVE (2015). *WAVE report on the role of specialist women's support services in Europe. Compilation of Country Profiles, July 2016*. (Cyprus Country Information). Available at: [http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVEReport2015\\_Compilation\\_Country\\_Profiles.pdf](http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVEReport2015_Compilation_Country_Profiles.pdf)
- (<sup>24</sup>) Ibid.

## European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.



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