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Rights, support and protection of victims of gender-based violence

<https://www.domviolence.org.cy/STEP4GBV/>

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THE "STEP4GBV" PROJECT

The newsletter was produced under the STEP4GBV Project: Support, Training, Exchange Practices for Gender Based Violence, which is co-funded by the European Commission. The project aims to, inter alia, improve the quality of services provided to victims of gender-based violence, ensure access to information by all victims and effectively meet the needs of victims.

DEFINITIONS

“violence” includes any act or omission or behaviour that may cause harm to a particular person (victim), as well as harm to the family, property and/or reputation of such person.

“harm” includes physical or sexual or mental harm or illness or disorder, whether permanent or temporary, or any other harm to a particular person, as well as harm to the family, property and/or reputation of such person.

“gender-based violence” means violence that is directed against a person because of that person's gender, gender identity or gender expression or that affects persons of a particular gender disproportionately and includes:

- (a) violence in close relationships
- (b) sexual violence (including rape, sexual assault and harassment)
- (c) trafficking in human beings
- (d) slavery, and
- (e) different forms of harmful practices, such as forced marriages, female genital mutilation and so-called “honour crimes”

“violence in a close relationship” means violence committed by a person who is a current or former spouse, or partner or other family member of the victim, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same household with the victim. Such violence could cover physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence and could result in physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss.

“Age of consent” is the age below which it is prohibited to engage in sexual acts with and it is defined as the age of seventeen (17) years.

“child” means any person below 18 years of age.

KEY RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

If you are a victim of gender-based violence, you have the right to:

- Be understood and understand the information provided to you.
- Be accompanied by a person of your choice during your visit to the Police.
- Know the details of the Police member handling your case.
- Receive information on the course of your case.
- Have an interpreter and/or translator present at your very first contact with the Police.
- Be informed in the event of the perpetrator's release or escape and in the event of possible measures being taken for your protection.
- Be provided with a translation of the documentary evidence of your complaint.
- Be provided with protection during criminal proceedings.
- Have protection of your personal privacy and discretion.
- Receive compensation for any travel expenses associated with your participation in the criminal proceedings.
- Receive compensation for the damage you have suffered as a result of the offence.

RIGHTS FOR SPECIFIC CATEGORIES OF VICTIMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

A. VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND PARTNER VIOLENCE

You are a victim of domestic or partner violence when

Your current or former spouse or partner, causes you:

- **Physical harm** (injuries of small or large extent)
- **Sexual harm** (e.g., violence for the purpose of sexual abuse)
- **Psychological harm.** For example:
 - He/she verbally abuses you, offends you, threatens you
 - You are fully dependent on him / her financially
 - He/she isolates you from your social, family and friendly environment
 - He/she restricts your freedom

You are a child victim of domestic violence when

Another family member (child or adult) causes you physical, sexual or psychological harm.

Family members are the spouses, the parents and the spouses' offspring (biological or adopted) and any person residing with any of the aforesaid persons.

In addition to the basic rights that all victims have, as a victim of domestic or partner violence, you have the following rights:

- During the investigation of the case by the Police, you can give your testimony to a police officer of the same sex, unless you wish otherwise. Your testimony may also be video-recorded.
- You may be more effectively protected from the perpetrator with a Restraining Order issued by the Court, which prohibits a person suspected of or charged for a domestic violence offence from entering the family residence.
- You are entitled to accommodation in one of the Shelters of the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO), provided that specific conditions are met.

It would also be useful to know that:

- When violence is exercised by a family member against another member, it is considered by law, as aggravated violence and the Court can impose serious sentences.
- The Court may convict the perpetrator using only the victim's testimony, if it is not possible to provide supporting evidence.
- The Court may allow the screening of recorded testimonies deposits as main evidence. Furthermore, a special partition may be placed, or cctv of other means may be used so that the witness is not visible to the perpetrator, for witness protection purposes.
- When a domestic violence offence is reported, the victim's name and address and any other information that may disclose his/her identity are prohibited from being published or divulged.

EMERGENCY CALL LINE	112	For reports: At the nearest Police Station or at the District Criminal Investigation Departments
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For more information, please contact the following support services:

Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office (Police), Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO), Social Welfare Services, Mental Health Services, Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman), Commissioner for Children's Rights, Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence, Cyprus Planned Parenthood Association (CyFamP), Archbishop Makarios III Hospital, "Cyber Ethics" Cyprus Safer Internet Center, European Helpline for Children and Adolescents, "Hope for Children" CRC Policy Center, Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS), CARITAS
[\(see service directory p.11-14\)](#)

B. VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE

CHILDREN VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

“**Sexual abuse/exploitation of a child**” includes, inter alia, the following acts:

- (a) causing a child who has not reached the age of consent, to witness sexual acts/abuse or portrayal of sexual acts/abuse
- (b) participation in a sexual act with a child who has not reached the age of consent,
- (c) coercing a child or using violence to or threatening a child, who has not reached the age of consent, in order to perform a sexual act with a third party or to take part in pornographic performances
- (d) obtaining access, possession or distribution of child pornography material.

If you are a child-victim of sexual abuse, in addition to the basic rights that all victims have, you also have the following rights:

- Your case may be investigated without delay, so as not to further exacerbate the traumatic experience you have experienced.
- Your testimony may be taken in an area specially designed or adapted for this purpose by specially trained professionals and it may be recorded.
- You may be protected with the issuance of an Interim Suspect Restraining Order or Victim Removal Order, until trial of the case.
- You and all nominated victims can protect yourself by a Court Order, prohibiting the suspect from entering or coming close or remaining in the area of residence of the victim or in places frequented by children.
- The Police can inform you in case they feel you are in danger by the perpetrator, while they will take the necessary protective measures.
- You are entitled to comprehensive support (case investigation, psychological and social support from all relevant agencies) through the “Child’s Home” institution.
- You are entitled to all the necessary facilities provided by the Witness Protection Law, inter alia, to appear before the Court without an audience, without having visual contact with the perpetrator, or through a separate room via cctv,
- You have the right to protect yourself regarding the disclosure of your personal information, during and after the proceedings end.

Moreover,

You will not be prosecuted if you have been involved in criminal activities which you were coerced to perform, as a direct consequence of your sexual abuse.

EMERGENCY CALL LINE	112	For reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the nearest Police Station or at the District Criminal Investigation Departments or • the Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office (special investigation team of Child Sexual Abuse Cases)
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For more information, please contact the following support services:

Cyprus Stop Trafficking, Hope for Children CRC Policy Center, MIGS, CARITAS, Cyber Ethics, Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office (Police), Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence, Youth Board of Cyprus, Social Welfare Services, Mental Health Services, European Helpline for Children and Adolescents, Commissioner for Children's Rights, MIGS, CARITAS, SPAVO, Cyprus Planned Parenthood Association (CyFamP), Archbishop Makarios III Hospital
(see service directory p.11-14)

ADULT VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE OR EXPLOITATION

Sexual abuse or exploitation involves attempts or sexual acts without a person's consent. Sexual abuse or exploitation may be:

- indecent assault
- rape
- incest
- trafficking of persons for the purpose of sexual exploitation
- forced prostitution
- prevention of contraceptive measures
- forced abortion
- forced marriage
- female genital mutilation
- sexual abuse of mentally and/or psychologically disabled people

It is noted that several forms of sexual abuse and exploitation can also be carried out online (sexting).

If you are a victim of sexual abuse or exploitation, you have the right to:

- **Support and protection**, if deemed necessary, in order to eliminate the risk of secondary and repeated victimization, intimidation and retaliation during and after the investigation and prosecution of the perpetrator
- **Individual assessment**, in order to identify your specific protection needs.
- **Provision of specific protection measures** if you are identified as a disabled victim, as follows:

- (a) each interview is conducted in an area specially designed or adapted for that purpose,
- (b) each interview is conducted by or with the assistance of a professional trained for that purpose,
- (c) each interview is conducted by a person of the same sex, if you so wish and if it does not affect the course of criminal proceedings,
- (d) The Court shall take measures to:
 - i. avoid any visual contact between a victim and the perpetrator,
 - ii. allow the victim to take part in the court proceedings without being present in the courtroom
 - iii. avoid unnecessary questions about the victim's private life not related to the offence, and
 - iv. enable the hearing to be held behind closed doors.

EMERGENCY CALL LINE	112	For reports: At the nearest Police Station or at the District Criminal Investigation Departments
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For more information, please contact the following support services:

STIGMA, MIGS, CARITAS, Cyber Ethics, Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office (Police), Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman), Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence, Social Welfare Services, Mental Health Services, SPAVO, Cyprus Planned Parenthood Association, Archbishop Makarios III Hospital
 (see service directory p.11-14)

C. TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS

Trafficking in persons is the recruitment and trafficking through various forms of coercion, use of violence and deception or misleading, abuse of power or vulnerability to exploit any form, such as sexual exploitation, exploitation at work, organ trafficking, begging.

If you are a victim of trafficking for the purpose of exploitation you have the right to:

- Be protected against criminalization for your involvement in criminal activities if your participation is a direct consequence of your victimization.
- Receive all the necessary information regarding the protection of your interests.
- Compensation, through legal action, against any person responsible for the offences committed against you.

- Have access to legal advice, the right to legal representation for the exercise of the right to compensation and the right to free legal aid if you do not have sufficient financial resources.
- Physical, psychological and social rehabilitation, which can be achieved through the following:
 - Provision of necessary resources, provided that you do not have sufficient resources, including appropriate and secure accommodation, psychological, material and financial assistance.
 - Access to free emergency medical treatment and free of charge medical care.
 - The provision of interpreting and translation services, where necessary.
 - Access to education, where applicable.
 - To handle the special needs arising from pregnancy, health condition, disability, mental or psychological disorder, or serious forms of psychological, physical or sexual violence.
 - Access to the labour market, in the same manner as Cypriot citizens.
 - Access to vocational training and education provided by the Human Resource Development Authority of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, in the context of existing policy and procedures.
 - Access to rehabilitation programs provided by the State or Non-Governmental Organizations), e.g. lessons to improve professional skills, preparation for repatriation.

EMERGENCY CALL LINE	112	For reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the nearest Police Station or at the District Criminal Investigation Departments or • the Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings at Police Headquarters
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For more information, please contact the following support services:

Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (Police), Cyprus Stop Trafficking (CST), CARITAS, UNHCR CYPRUS, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Social Welfare Services, Mental Health Services, European Helpline for Children and Adolescents, Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman), Commissioner for Children’s Rights, Archbishop Makarios III Hospital, Civil Registry and Migration Department, Asylum Service, Department of Labour Inspection
 (see service directory p.11-14)

SERVICE DIRECTORY (alphabetical)

UNHCR CYPRUS (Delegation of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees)

- 2 Demetracopoulou Street, 3rd floor, 1090 Nicosia (P.O. Box 25577, 1310 Nicosia)
- Tel. 22-359057 / 43, 22-660164
- cypni@unhcr.org
- www.unhcr.org/cyprus.html

Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office (Police)

- Lt.Gen Evangelos Florakis Street, 1478 Nicosia
- Tel. 22-808442
- domviol.childabuse@police.gov.cy

Office of Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (Police)

- Lt.Gen Evangelos Florakis Street, 1478 Nicosia
- Tel. 22-808063
- Deptc.oocthb@police.gov.cy

International Organization for Migration (IOM);

- Nearchos Avenue, area of the old Nicosia Hospital
- Tel. 80002777
- iomnicosia@iom.int

Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman)

- 2 Diagorou Avenue, Era House, 1097 Nicosia
- Tel. 22-405500 / 501
- Ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.cy
- www.ombudsman.gov.cy

Commissioner for Children's Rights

- Corner of Apelli and Pavlos Nirvana Streets, 1496 Nicosia
- Tel. 22-873200
- childcom@ccr.gov.cy
- <http://www.childcom.org.cy>

European Line for Missing Children

- 116000
- www.call116000.com

European Helpline for Children and Adolescents

- 116111
- www.call116111.com

“Hope for Children” CRC Policy Center

- Tel. 22-103234
- info@uncrcpc.org
- www.uncrcpc.org

“Cyber Ethics” Cyprus Safer Internet Center

- Tel. 70000116
- helpline@cyberethics.info
- www.cyberethics.info
- Chat.www.cyberethics.info

Cyprus Planned Parenthood Association

- 27 Ezekia Papaioannou Street, 1131 Nicosia (P.O. Box 25706, 1311 Nicosia)
- Helpline: 1455
- Tel. 22-751093
- info@cfpa.org.cy
- www.cyfamplan.org.cy

Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS)

- 46 Makedonitissis Avenue, 2417, P.O. Box 24005 Nicosia Cyprus
- Tel. +357 22 841 528
- info@medinstgenderstudies.org
- www.medinstgenderstudies.org

Future Worlds Center

- 5 Prometheus Street, 1065 Nicosia
- Tel. 22-873820
- info@futureworldscenter.org
- www.futureworldscenter.org

Archbishop Makarios III Hospital

- Nicosia, Cyprus
- Tel. 22-05000 (call centre), 22-405160 / 38 (Gynaecology and Obstetrics Clinic)

Organization for the Protection of Victims of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (STIGMA)

- P.O. Box 53687, 3317 Limassol
- Tel. 25-109139
- www.stigma-organisation.org

Youth Board of Cyprus (ONEK)

- 104 Athalassas Avenue, Sofocles Tower, 3rd, 4th and 5th floors, 2024 Strovolos, Nicosia (Head Offices)
- Helpline: 1410
- Tel. 22-402600 / 2
- www.onek.org.cy

Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO)

- P.O. Box 20422, 2152 Nicosia
- Helpline: 1140
- Tel. 22-339001
- info@domviolence.org.cy
- www.domviolence.org.cy

Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence

- P.O. Box 16045, 2085 Nicosia
- Tel. 22-775888
- familyviolence.ac@cytanet.com.cy
- www.familyviolence.gov.cy

Civil Registry and Migration Department (Ministry of Interior)

- Hilonos Street, 1457 Nicosia
- 22-804518, 22-804523, 22-804402
- migration@crmd.moi.gov.cy
- www.moi.gov.cy/moi/crmd/crmd.nsf

Department of Labour Inspection (Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance)

- 12 Apelli Street, 1493 Nicosia
- Tel. 22-405630 / 631
- director@dli.mlsi.gov.cy
- www.mlsi.gov.cy/dli

Asylum Service (Ministry of the Interior)

- Tel. 22-445245, 22-445265
- info@asylum.moi.gov.cy
- www.moi.gov.cy/moi/asylum/asylumservice.nsf

Social Welfare Services (Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance)

- 63 Prodromou Street, 1468 Nicosia (Offices in all Cyprus Districts)
- Tel. 22-406709
- Central.sws@sws.mlsi.gov.cy
- www.mlsi.gov.cy/sws

Mental Health Services (Ministry of Health)

- Tel. 22-402100
- director.mhs@cytanet.com.cy
- www.moh.gov.cy/mhs

CARITAS Cyprus

- 8 Ayios Maronas Street, Office 4, Pafos Gate, 1010 Nicosia
- Tel. 22-662606
- administration@caritascyprus.org
- www.caritascyprus.com

Cyprus Stop Trafficking (CST)

- P.O. Box 24228, 1702 Nicosia
 - Tel. 22-771063, 99-428952
 - Cyprus.stop.trafficking@gmail.com , aachristophidou@hotmail.com
- www.cyprusstoptrafficking.webs.com