



**Evaluation Report on
National Action Plan for the Prevention and
Combating of Domestic Violence
(2017-2019)**

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Monitoring the problem of domestic violence.....	10
Prevention of domestic violence.....	21
Training and specialization of professionals.....	23
Effective implementation of legislation.....	28
Strengthening services for protection and support of victims of domestic violence.....	33
Coordination and evaluation of the implementation of the NAP.....	39
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	42

INTRODUCTION

Since the taking over of the Presidency by Nikos Anastasiadis, the Government has placed among its priorities, the prevention and combating of violence in the family in all sectors of the state and society involved. In the context of this goal, the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family) proceeded to the set up of the new National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family (NAP) 2017-2019¹, which succeeds the previous NAP 2010-2013². The new NAP was approved by the Ministry Council (dated 25.05.2017 and Decision No. 82.656) for the years 2017-2019.

2. The new NAP was targeted and focused on key objective priorities that were implemented, financially and administratively wise by the state.

3. The new NAP recognized the gender mainstreaming needed for violence in the family policies and attempted to integrate gender-based and victim-centered approach for combating the problem.

4. For the preparation of the new NAP were taken into account the following:

- The Evaluation Report on the first NAP 2010-2013, which took place in 2014. The implementation of the first NAP 2010-2013, despite of all the difficulties encountered, has inevitably contributed to the prevention and combating the problem of violence in the family in Cyprus. The Evaluation Report showed that Cyprus has done an important work in this area in the recent years, since it was the first time that was mapped a significant number of policies/ actions implemented in both government / public sector, as well as in society at large.

However, the Evaluation Report of the first NAP identified the following needs:

¹ <http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/cgi-bin/hweb?-A=3471&-V=actionplan>

² http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/downloads/actionplan_2010-2013_en.pdf

- Strengthening of interdepartmental cooperation/ coordination between the involved stakeholders, as well as the need for ongoing training of professionals for the effective handling of violence in family cases,
 - Gender mainstreaming for prevention and combating violence in the family policies,
 - Creation of a Central Database for collection and analysis of violence in family cases,
 - 24-hour helpline offering support to victims of violence in the family,
 - Increase of Shelters for victims of violence in the family,
 - Expansion of the role and mandate of the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family, and
 - Emphasis given on prevention through areas influencing perceptions and stereotypes, such as education and media.
- The findings of the first pan-cyprian research on *"Extent, Frequency, Forms and Impacts of Domestic Violence against Women in Cyprus"* (2012)³ that was conducted for the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family, funded by the National Mechanism for Women's Rights of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order. According to the research findings:
 - At least 28% of the women participated in the research, reported some kind of violence:
 - 19.4% financial violence,
 - 19.3% emotional/ psychological violence,
 - 15.5% sexual violence,
 - 13.4% physical violence,
 - 3% of women reported abortion of pregnancy due to domestic violence.
 - 57% of women who said they had been victims of violence did not report it to anyone and only 30% asked for help.

³ http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/research/erevna_2012oct_viol-ag-women_summary_en.pdf

- 1/3 of the sample reported that little or no information for relevant services was provided to victims of domestic violence. Only 57% of women of the sample reported that they were aware of the existence of the helpline 1440 and the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO).
- Only 2% reported the incident to the Police.
- The concluding remarks of the EU funded programme "PROGRESS" with title *"Pancyprian campaign for the combating/ elimination of violence against of women and girls in the Cypriot society"* which was completed, 15 November, 2015. The "PROGRESS" Program was carried out by the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsman) within the framework of her responsibilities. The research was conducted on a non-profit basis by Dr. Martha Apostolidou, Dr. Petroula Maurikiou and Dr. Stavros Parlalis, in collaboration with the Advisory Committee of the Prevention and Combating Violence in the Family, the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, and the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA). The 2 year campaign (2014-2015) was co-financed by the European Commission through the EU funded programme "PROGRESS" and included the organization of a pancyprian awareness campaign of the media, as well as the organization of a series of training seminars to relevant ministries, governmental services and NGOs that are involved in the area of prevention and combating violence against women and girls in Cyprus. The training seminars aimed to raise awareness of professionals dealing with cases of violence against women and girls, by improving their knowledge for the legal/ policy framework and promoting cooperation between them. In this context, 12 training seminars were took place, targeted in the following groups: Police Officers, Health Officers (Doctors, nurses, psychologists), Teachers, Social Workers Services, Lawyers, Immigration and Labor Officers (in cases of violence against immigrants), as well as Media Officials.

- The Report of the Research Program "One in Five" with title *"Strengthening national political authorities for the elimination of sexual violence against children: under the auspices of the Council of Europe that includes pilot initiatives in Cyprus "* (2015).
- The other NAPs, including the NAP for the Equality of Men and Women (2014-2017), of the NAP Against Trafficking in Human Beings (2013-2015), as well as European Legislation and Policies such as the EU Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-2015), the EU Strategy "Europe 2020" and the European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020).
- The concluding remarks of the 6th and 7th Periodical Report of the Republic of Cyprus for the Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by the assigned UN Committee (Geneva, February 2013). In its concluding remarks, the CEDAW Committee welcomed adoption of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family and the first pan-cyprian research on "Extent, Frequency, Forms and Impact of Domestic Violence Against Women in Cyprus" (2012) conducted for the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family, funded by the National Mechanism for Women's Rights of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order. However, the CEDAW Committee concerned about the small number of prosecutions and convictions in cases of domestic violence, despite the high number of complaints. The CEDAW Committee also expressed concern about the absence of gender mainstreaming in governmental programmes and policies regarding violence in the family. In addition, the CEDAW Committee highlighted the lack of effective support and protection of victims, as there is only one Shelter in Cyprus for victims of domestic violence. Among other things, the CEDAW Committee called on the Republic of Cyprus:
 - Take effective measures regarding the investigation of complaints of all kinds of violence, as well as the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators, including provision for

- compulsory training of judges, prosecutors and lawyers for providing legal assistance to victims.
- Ensure the effective implementation of the National Action Plan for Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence with specific timetables and adequate funding for monitoring and evaluation for the effective implementation of the NAP objectives.
 - Strengthen the data collection system for all forms of violence against women.
 - Ensure that adequate/ effective support and protection is provided to women victims of violence, and
 - Set a timetable for the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention).
- The main results of the EU-wide survey on "*Violence against women*" (2014) carried out by the FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights). According to the main results:
 - 22% of women in Cyprus have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15.
 - 14% of women have been physically abused by a partner, 4% of Women have been sexually abused by a partner, and
 - 39% of women have experienced some form of psychological violence from a partner.
 - The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). The Cyprus government has signed the Convention on 16 June 2015, opened for signature in Istanbul on 11 May 2011. The Istanbul Convention is an important, binding, international tool that can contribute essentially in implementing effective policies for prevention of all forms of violence against women, the protection, support and empowerment of victims, the promotion of international cooperation and prosecution of perpetrators. Cyprus is the 38th country that has signed the Istanbul Convention, while 19 countries have already ratified

it. The aim is to promote the ratification of this Convention by national law.

- The Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2014 (L. 91(I)/2014).
- The Establishment of Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law, 2016 (L. 51(I)/2016).
- The views of the Commissioner for Administration and the Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsman), Commissioner for Children's Rights, Equality Bodies, Academic/ Research Bodies, as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

5. Based on the above, the following six key priority objectives have been identified:

- 1) Monitoring the problem of domestic violence,
- 2) Prevention of domestic violence,
- 3) Training and specialization of professionals,
- 4) Effective implementation of legislation,
- 5) Strengthening services for the protection and support of victims of domestic violence,
- 6) Coordination and evaluation of the implementation of the NAP.

6. The new NAP focuses, among other things, on the promotion/implementation of the following areas:

- Update the Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures for Adults and Children on the handling of domestic violence cases.
- Promote the implementation of a new governmental model for the support and protection of women victims of violence (Women's House).
- Promote Risk Assessment procedures in all involved services.
- Promote the creation of a unified archive of minimum statistical data standards for collection and analysis of domestic violence cases.
- Promote systematic interdepartmental specialized training of professionals through Cyprus Academy of Public Administration.
- Promote the employment of family counselors from the private sector.

- Promote the effective implementation of the Establishment of Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law, 2016 (L. 51(I)/2016).
- Promote of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention by national law.

7. Finally, the new NAP was an important tool for promoting the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence, given that, beyond the implementation of its targets and actions, contributed significantly to the intra-departmental and interdepartmental coordination of the involved governmental and NGO stakeholders.

1. MONITORING THE PROBLEM OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

1.1 Creation of a unified archive of statistical data minimum standards on collection and analysis domestic violence cases

At present, there is no comprehensive data collection on domestic violence cases. Data 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: Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT), Cyprus Police (the Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office, Prisons), Social Welfare Services, the Children's House, the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (APHVF). The statistical data that is collected and kept by different services/ agencies has information with different variables which cannot be compared. Also, there is no electronic filing system in district courts and, therefore, there is no official administrative and judicial data available. The data gap is problematic, as it impedes an in-depth analysis and policy-making that would create targeted services and mechanisms to support and protect victims of domestic violence. Since 2016, the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family has formally submitted to the Ministry of Justice and Public Order a proposal of a unified/ centralised statistical data mechanism for collecting and processing administrative data on domestic violence (No.SE:1196-16/ 30 November 2016). The proposal was prepared in collaboration with the Statistical Service. Noted, that this objective was also in the National Action Plan for Equality between Men and Women (NAP), 2014-2017, and NAP (2019-2022). Additionally, this objective was linked to the Women's House (WH), since the WH provides for the collection of statistical data. The proposal aimed for developing targeted and more effective measures, actions and policies to tackle the problem of domestic violence in Cyprus. However, up until today, no action has been taken on the matter.

1.2 Creation of a documentation center for domestic violence

The Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family promotes this objective through its website (<http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy>), structured in such a way that academics,

researchers, professionals, victims and public, can find the information they need.

1.3 Research on all forms of domestic violence/ Projects/ EU Programmes

No research has been done in the field of all forms of violence. However, several projects have been conducted related to domestic violence, as below:

- The Youth of Gender Equality in the Family: The Importance of the State and Social Institutions - Erasmus + Erasmus + KA3 - Support for Policy Reform Dialogue between young people and policy makers (2019-2020)

The program was implemented by the [Center for Gender Equality and History \(K.I.I.F.\)](#) in collaboration with the [Cyprus Family Planning Association \(CDPA\)](#). The purpose of the project was to consult with young people and to formulate policy suggestions around the specific problems of vulnerable groups to achieve the objective of equality in the family. The project included conducting research through questionnaires and focus groups to outline young people's knowledge and views on gender equality in the family as well as the social, legal, European and national context regarding the role of the state and social institutions. It also included the organization of 4 workshops, a pan-cyprian conference, the implementation of a campaign and the organization of meetings with policy makers and state or government officials in order to inform them about the results of the dialogue. The program was funded by the European Erasmus + Program.

- Play It for Change (Pi4C) (January 2018 - December 2019)
Pi4C was a project under the European Commission's [Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme](#). Six European countries (Cyprus, Spain, Croatia, Greece, Poland and Slovenia) are taking in this 2-year project. Pi4C aimed to prevent and combat gender-based violence (GBV) in students aged 12 to 18, using audiovisual media and music. Educators had a key role in implementing the project's activities effectively. The media literacy programmes and training helped sensitize school

children around GBV, as well as enhance their critical thinking capacity.

Coordinator: [SURT Women's Foundation](#) in Spain

Partners: [CESI](#) in Croatia, [KMOP](#) in Greece, [Feminoteka](#) in Poland, [Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies](#) (MIGS) in Cyprus, [The Peace Institute](#) in Slovenia

Co-funded by the European Union

Project code: REC-VAW- AG-2016-02-776965

- “STEP4GBV – Support, Training, Exchange Practices for Gender-Based Violence” (January 2018 - December 2019)

The project funded by the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Program of the DG Justice of the European Commission. STEP4GBV and focused on the support of victims of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and the treatment of perpetrators. The project aimed to upgrade the knowledge and skills of specialized staff that provides support to victims and treat perpetrators of GBV, through capacity building activities so as to better meet the needs of these groups. This activity allowed specialized professionals to continuously cooperate and exchange knowledge and best practices and to learn from each other through a dedicated online platform. Moreover, the project aimed to develop a training material and carry out trainings specific for front line professionals which will focus on better implementing the Directive/2012/29/EU on establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime and the Directive 2011/99/EU on the European Protection Order and on the Regulation 606/2013 on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters.

Coordinator: Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family

Partners: Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family) – Coordinator, Enoros Consulting Limited, Cyprus police, Centro Italiano per la Promozione della Mediazione (CIPM), Diaconia of the ECCB The Centre of Christian help in Prague, Salvamamme (Ass. I Diritti Civili nel 2000-Salvabebè/Salvamamme), Demetra Association.

- Victims of Crime Implementation Assessment of Rights in Europe (2017-2019)

The project was coordinated by the Victim Support Europe and co-funded by the European Commission JUST/2015/ACTION GRANTS,

Partners: [Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family – \(SPAVO\) \(Cyprus\)](#), Associação Portuguesa de Apoio à Vítima (Portugal), Slachtofferhulp Nederland (The Netherlands), Weisser Ring (Germany), Weisser Ring Austria (Austria), Bily Kruh Bezpeci (Czech Republic), Rikosuhripaivystys/Victim Support Finland (Finland), INAVEM (France), Victim Support Malta (Malta), Brottsofferjouren Sverige/Victim Support Sweden (Sweden), Bijeli krug Hrvatske /White Circle Croatia (Croatia), Stowarzyszenie SOS dla Rodziny/SOS for the Family Association (Poland), Crime Victims Helpline (Ireland), Associazione LIBRA Onlus (Italy), Equality and Human Rights Action Centre – ACTEDO (Romania), European Public Law Organization (EPLO) (Greece), University of Lleida/UdL (Spain), Human Rights Monitoring Institute (Lithuania), Društvo za nenasilno komunikacijo/ Association for non-violent Communication (Slovenia), Tilburg University, International Victimology Institute Tilburg – INTERVICT (The Netherlands), Brottsoffermyndigheten – Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority (Sweden).

The project has been designed to overcome the following problems: lack of existing, current research on the practical implementation of the Victims' Directive, lack of an EU wide analysis of practical implementation, lack of a comprehensive analysis covering all articles of the Directive, lack of evidence base to carry out a practical analysis in all countries and relating to all articles of the Directive, and insufficient understanding for certain articles as to what constitutes sufficient implementation. The overall aim of this project was to help ensure that the rights established in the Victims Directive are operating in practice. This will be achieved by assisting the EU Commission in its own assessment of implementation as well as providing national stakeholders with evidence of the state of implementation in their own countries. The project also assisted with capacity building of staff at

victim support organizations and restorative justice services on victims' needs when seeking their services. The project aimed to help organizations understand where the needs of victims are not being met as well as where there are good practices, and this helped with the prioritization of their work and advocacy efforts. In addition, the work to develop indicators helped victim support organizations to understand how to improve their own services ensuring there is a national provision of victim support compliant with minimum quality standards. The [Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family – \(SPAVO\)](#) actively participated in activities such as desk research to identify material assessing the practical and legal implementation of the victims' directive at national level, set up and conduct a series of interviews with justice and non-justice practitioners and police makers, draft a national report, analyzed how the victims' directive was being implemented in practice, and provided recommendations to ensure the national system complies with the EU directive.

- SAFER (2017- 2019)

The aim of the programme was education and raise of awareness of girls and boys about gender-based violence as a way to prevent it at an early stage. To educate children from young age to build healthy relationships in order to prevent gender-based violence. The project aimed at sensitizing and raising awareness of primary school teachers, students, parents and relevant stakeholders regarding GBV; and supplying teachers with relevant classroom material enabling them to discuss about GBV in their classroom, challenge existing gender stereotypes and ultimately prevent GBV.

Coordinator: [Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family – \(SPAVO\)](#) (Cyprus)

Partners: [Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family – \(SPAVO\)](#) (Cyprus), VILNIAUS UNIVERSITETAS (Lithuania), Profexcel.Net Ltd (Ireland), Neophytos CH. Charalambous (Institute of Development) Ltd (Cyprus), CESIE (Italy), GRANTXPRT

CONSULTING LIMITED (Cyprus), Hellenic Association of Positive Psychology (Greece), YouAct (United Kingdom).

Funded by the European Union

<https://gendersafer.eu/>

- Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence in Third Level Education (ESHTE) (April 2017 - April 2019)

ESHTE aimed to prevent and combat sexual violence and harassment (SVH) and build a culture of zero tolerance in universities and 3rd level institutions (UTLIs) throughout Europe through a feminist understanding and analysis of the causes and effects of SVH. More importantly, it aimed to support UTLIs to articulate a clear message, commitment, set of core values, ethos, procedures and protocols to build a 'Zero Tolerance Zone,' and provide opportunities for sharing models of good practice. The project aimed to raise knowledge amongst UTLI staff of the higher risk of SVH amongst young women and its negative impact on student's academic performance and overall well-being. It also raised awareness and provided information to students on: consent, the myths surrounding rape, the support available to victims, the importance of reporting to the police, as well as naming and acknowledging experiences of SVH, but also raising awareness of the particular experiences of SVH of students with disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups. ESHTE implemented by a partnership of four NGOs organizations and several universities across five EU member states.

Coordinator: [National Women's Council of Ireland \(NWCI\)](#)

Partners: [The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, Cyprus \(MIGS\)](#) (Cyprus), [The Women's Issues Information Centre \(WIIC\)](#), Lithuania and [Rape Crisis Scotland \(RCS\)](#), UK.

Associate Partners (in Cyprus): [The University of Nicosia](#)

Co-funded by the European Union

Project code: JUST/2015/RDAP/AG/SEXV/ 8494

- Circle of Change: Preventing and combating violence against women and girls through gender equality awareness (April 2017 - April 2019)

Circle of Change aimed to support the development and implementation of practical and targeted information, awareness-raising and education activities to eliminate intimate partner violence/sexual violence, including rape and sexual assault (IPV/SV). The project aimed to train 200 front-line professionals (i.e. police officers and other civil servants), 125 teachers and related professionals from all major cities in Cyprus and to empower 625 adolescents through 25 student implementation workshops. It also included an awareness-raising media campaign on violence against women.

Coordinator: Cyprus Police (Criminal Investigation Department)

Partners: [The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies](#), [Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family \(SPAVO\)](#), and [Enoros Consulting Ltd](#)

Multipliers: Ministry of Education and Culture, National Machinery for Women's Rights (NMWR) under the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, Ombudsman/Anti-Discrimination Body and Equal Treatment Authority, Gender Equality Committee in Employment and Vocational Training, [Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family](#), other Women's' Associations in Cyprus.

Co-funded by the European Union

Project code: JUST/2016/RGEN/AG/VAWA /9945

- "GENDER-ED: Combating gender stereotypes in education and career guidance". (2016 - 2019)

The main aim of the project was to address the stereotyping of educational and career choices and to promote gender equality in education, training and career guidance. This was achieved by attracting women into male-dominated sectors or occupations, and conversely attracting men into female-dominated sectors or occupations by challenging stereotypical assumptions about the roles of women and men in the labour market, including in leadership positions, and to change behaviours and practices that hamper equality. Particularly, the project aimed to deconstruct traditional and stereotypical attitudes and behaviours related to gender within the education system in the partner countries and 'build' new meanings to

replace them, based on gender equality, in order to ensure that both girls and boys, women and men can benefit equally in relation to their access, integration, participation and advancement in the labour market.

Objectives: Explore the role that schools, teachers and curricula play in terms of perpetuating gender stereotypical behaviours and expectations among girls and boys; Identify the attitudes and beliefs of girls and boys on gender stereotypes in relation to their career choices; Develop innovative pedagogical tools and materials for teachers and career guidance counselors to combat gender stereotypes in the classroom; Raise awareness on how gender stereotypes inform daily practices in the education setting among all those key actors who are involved: a) secondary school teachers B) in career guidance and mentoring; Raise awareness and understanding among boys and girls on the ways in which gender stereotypes shape and influence the perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and personal choices; Challenge gendered attitudes and behaviour patterns among girls and boys through a reflection process to renegotiate the way they see themselves and others beyond the 'prohibitions' and 'restrictions' associated with their gender; Widely spread policy recommendations and messages in relation to the eradication of gender stereotypes in education.

Coordinator: [Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies](#) in Cyprus.

Partners: [Cyprus Family Planning Association \(CDPA\)](#) in Cyprus, the [Women's Issues Information Centre \(WIIC\)](#) in Lithuania, the [Association for Gender Equality and Liberty \(ALEG\)](#) in Romania, and the [Centro documentazione donna \(CDD\)](#) in Italy.

Associate Partners: Cyprus: Pedagogical Institute (under the Ministry of Education) and the Department of Labour Relations (under the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance), Romania: National Agency for Equal Opportunities (under Ministry of Labour), National Institute for Education Science (under Ministry of Education), School Inspectorate of Sibiu, Lithuania: Siauliai University, Lithuania, Italy: The

City of Modena, City of Savignano, Istituto Comprensivo di Savignano sul Panaro.

The project was funded by the European Union.

- Erasmus + "Empowering Young People: Sexual Rights Are for Everyone" (2017 -2018)

The program "Empower Youth: Sexual Rights Are for All" was co-financed by Erasmus + and is part of Key Action 3: Supporting Policy Reform: A Structured Dialogue between young people and youth policy makers. The implementation of the discussion groups was co-financed by the Alert Youth Fund. The programme aimed to create Policy Recommendations for the Sexual Rights of Young People. In order to formulate the policy recommendations, the [Cyprus Family Planning Association \(CFPA\)](#) carried out consultations with young people aged 16-30. The aim was to explore the views and needs of young people about the information they had about sexuality and sexual health, access to sexual health services and the extent to which their rights are ensured. The consultations took place electronically through a questionnaire and in focus group discussions with four groups of young people, including young people aged 20-30, young people with disabilities, LGBTQI + young women and young immigrants. After the completion of the consultations, the CDPA also organized a conference.

[Focus Groups Report](#)

- WE GO! Women Economic-Independence & Growth Opportunity (January 2016 - January 2018)

WE GO! aimed to strengthen support services for women undergoing intimate partner violence (IPV) and in particular the activities run by anti-violence centres (AVCs). This was done through the capacity building of trainers and officers and focuses on support services to foster victims' economic empowerment. WE GO! was a transnational cooperation project implemented by a partnership of 15 organizations from 7 European countries – Italy, Spain, UK, Greece, Cyprus, Sweden, Bulgaria, plus 7 associated partners (including Norway &

France). The project incorporated a network of civil society leaders connecting over 300 members from 31 countries across Europe. MIGS' particular role in the project was to carry out a comparative analysis on existing services for women victims across 8 countries. This allowed for the development of a common methodology for data collection and a comprehensive analysis framework. MIGS also identified good practices for the economic empowerment of women victims of intimate partner violence.

Coordinator: [ActionAid International Italia ONLUS](#)

Partners: [ActionAid International Italia ONLUS](#), [IRS, Italy](#), [The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, Cyprus](#), [The Euclid Network, SURT, Spain](#), [Fundación Mujeres, Spain](#), [Gender Project for Bulgaria Foundation](#), [The Bulgarian Centre of Women in Technology \(BCWT\)](#), [The Animus Association Foundation](#), [SEGE, Greece](#), [The Women's Centre of Karditsa, Greece](#), Folkuniversitetet, [Centro Veneto Progetti Donna- Auser, Italy](#), ASSOCIATION "DONATELLA TELLINI" – L'AQUILA, ITALY, and [C.I.F. \(Italian Women's Centre\)](#)

Co-funded by the European Union

Project No: JUST/2014/RDAP/AG/VICT/7365

- Breaking the Mould: Promoting Gender Equality in Cyprus (January 2016 - December 2017)

Breaking the Mould aimed to examine the imbalance in the share of housework and care responsibilities between men and women that contribute to the unequal economic independence between the genders in Cyprus. Tackling deep and pervasive gender stereotypes by raising awareness about them, the project helped Cypriot society to take positive steps towards equality. Specifically, the project focused on bringing about culture change in SMEs (which statistically employ more men than women in Cyprus), by encouraging the introduction of simple family-friendly measures. The project awareness campaign was targeted specifically to men in an effort to help diminish the stereotype that domestic work does not fit in with the traditional image of masculinity.

Coordinator: [National Machinery for Women's Rights](#) and [Ministry of Justice and Public Order](#).

Partners: [Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies](#) (MIGS), [the Ministry of Education and Culture](#), [IMH](#).

Co-funded by the European Union

Project No: JUST/2014/RGEN/AG/GEN D/7797

- WAKE - Working Along Key Experts program is a two-year European program (November 2015 - April 2017)

The aim of the programme was the exchange of good practices between specialists, the improvement of the quality of services for victims of crime and violence, the enrichment of knowledge and skills of professionals who have direct contact with victims, the provision of information to the public to ensure better access justice and the strengthening of inter-agency cooperation between all stakeholders. The WAKE programme included research and training for professionals, as well as the creation of a tool for special control procedures for the identification of victims, which is available in the Play store (for android) and the App Store (for iOS).

Coordinator: Association for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence

Partners: Cyprus Red Cross, Portuguese Association for Victim Support (APAV - Portugal), Association for battered and Sexually Abused Women (ADAVAS -Spain) and Enoros Consulting Ltd (Cyprus).

Supported by: Ministry of Justice & Public Order, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour & Social Insurance, and Ministry of Education & Culture.

Link: <http://wake.org.cy/>

2. PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

2.1 Prevention and early identification of abused children and people with disabilities

Public authorities did not provide any information.

2.2 Promoting gender equality and eliminating gender stereotypes

This objective was achieved through several EU programmes that were obtained by involved NGOs in collaboration with public authorities, as below:

- "GENDER-ED: Combating gender stereotypes in education and career guidance". (2016 – 2019) – see objective 1.3;
- Erasmus + "Empowering Young People: Sexual Rights Are for Everyone" (2017 -2018)
– see objective 1.3;
- The Youth of Gender Equality in the Family: The Importance of the State and Social Institutions - Erasmus + Erasmus + KA3 - Support for Policy Reform Dialogue between young people and policy makers (2019-2020) – see objective 1.3;
- SAFER (2017- 2019) - see objective 1.3.

2.3 Public awareness raising on the issue of domestic violence

The [Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family](#), collaborated with involved NGOs to promote 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, stable presence in the media/ social media).

The awareness raising *campaign "Preventing and combating gender-based violence" targeted at students aged 12 to 18, using audio-visual media and music*, organised by the European Commission's Rights, Equality and Citizenship programme "*Play It for Change Campaign (2018-2019)*". (see also objective 1.3)

Awareness raising campaigns and distribution of informational material on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights were conducted by the [Cyprus](#)

[Family Planning Association \(CFPA\)](#). The CFPA has a stable presence in the media and social media.

Also, the awareness raising campaign in the framework of the EU Programme “*Breaking the Mould: Promoting Gender Equality in Cyprus (2016 - 2017)*” was targeted at men in an effort to help diminish the stereotype that domestic violence does not fit in with the image of masculinity. (see also objective 1.3)

2.4 Enhancing Education

The [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth \(MOECSY\)](#), promoted updated curricula and other actions, to inform all children of primary and secondary education, both state and private, on topics such as sex education, prevention and combating of violence against women and domestic violence, rape, prejudices, stereotypes and conflict resolution in relationships, their rights for personal integrity as well as all types of verbal sexism. Also, MOECSY, in an effort to ensure equal opportunities in education, for all genders on a non-discriminatory basis, at all levels of education, prepared the Action Plan for Gender Equality at Schools (2018-2020)⁴⁰, aimed to support the inclusion of gender equality in matters related to the structures of the educational system and to teacher in-service training.

3. TRAINING AND SPECIALIZATION OF PROFESSIONALS

3.1 Educators

The [Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth \(MOECSY\)](#), has prepared the National Strategy for the Prevention and Management of Violence at School (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. As mentioned earlier, [MOECSY](#), also prepared the Action Plan for Gender Equality at Schools (2018-2020), aimed to support the inclusion of gender equality in matters related to the structures of the educational system and to teacher in-service training.

Additionally, the [Cyprus Pedagogical Institute](#), in cooperation with the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) organized:

- Workshops for primary and secondary education teachers through “*Circle of CHANGE: “Preventing and combating violence against women and girls”*” gender equality awareness project. (see also objective 1.3)
- In-service training to teachers of Primary, Secondary and General Education as well as to teachers of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, addressing issues related to preventing and combating violence.

Moreover, the [Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family – \(SPAVO\)](#) through the EU Programme *SAFER (2017- 2019)*, aimed at sensitizing and raising awareness of primary school teachers, students, parents and relevant stakeholders regarding GBV; and supplying teachers with relevant classroom material enabling them to discuss about GBV in their classroom, challenge existing gender stereotypes and ultimately prevent GBV. (see also the objective 1.3)

3.2 Welfare Officers

[Social Welfare Services](#) organised trainings in the area of domestic violence. This included specialised in-service training for Welfare Officers. A number of Welfare Officers also attended seminars and trainings offered by other governmental services and organisations, as below:

- *Victims of Crime Implementation Assessment of Rights in Europe (2017-2019)* – see objective 1.3
- *WAKE - Working Along Key Experts (November 2015 - April 2017)* – see objective 1.3

3.3 Police

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 techniques for child victim of sexual violence, risk assessment, etc.

Cyprus Police has participated in two EU funded projects which included in service training as follows:

- *“Circle of Change / Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Girls through Gender Equality Awareness”* (see also objective 1.3). 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.
- *STEP4GBV*” (see also objective 1.3). 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.
- *“Victims of Crime Implementation Assessment of Rights in Europe”* (see objective 1.3)

3.4 Health Professionals

The Nursing Officers, Midwives, Health Visitors, receive training at least once a year on domestic violence issues. Specifically, the [Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family](#), gave a lecture at the *“Workshop on Domestic Violence: Identification of cases and Intervention in the Community”*, 17 February, 2017)

3.5 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

NGOs are the key providers of training not only to their personnel and volunteers but also to governmental professionals through EU Programmes, as mentioned in the objective 1.3.

3.6 Neighborhood Observers (local government administration)

Public authorities did not provide any information.

3.7 Judges

A training seminar for Judges and Lawyers on “*Reaching out to victims of domestic violence: Approaches and good practices in the legal process*” (23-24 March, 2017), organized by the [Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family \(SPAVO\)](#), in collaboration with the [Ministry of Justice and Public Order](#). The training was organized in collaboration with SPAVO’s Norway Partners, in the framework of the general cooperation developed for the construction of victims’ Shelter sponsored by Norway Grants

3.8 Interdepartmental training of Professionals

The Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA) has organized training programmes on:

- 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.
- 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.

Also, in 2018, a conference was organised 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. At the 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.

Moreover, the Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs, University of Nicosia in collaboration with the [Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family](#), organized training seminar on *"Recognition, Evaluation and Referral victims on the basis of Directive 2012/29/EU"*, October 10-11, 2017 at the University of Nicosia. The seminar is part of the project *"Developing Directive - compatible practices for the identification, evaluation and referral of victims"* implemented by the Center for European Constitutional Law - Themistocles Foundation and Dimitris Tsatsos in collaboration with European Training and Research Center for Human Rights and Democracy (Austria), Center for the Study of Democracy (Bulgaria), Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs, University of Nicosia (Cyprus), Institute of Baltic Studies (Estonia), Center of Crime Justice & Victim Studies of the University of Limerick (Ireland), Province of Livorno Development (Italy). The seminar was addressed to professionals of all involved services dealing with cases of domestic violence.

The EU Programmes/ Projects, as stated in the objective 1.3, undertaken by NGOs in collaboration with public authorities/ ministries, offered mainly interdepartmental training to professionals from private and public sector.

Also, both state and private universities that offered educational or professional training to professionals who dealing with victims or perpetrators of all forms of violence, as required by Article 15 of the Convention (i.e.: lawyers, social workers, nurses, psychologists etc.).

4. EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF LEGISLATION

4.1 Interdepartmental Procedures

Manual of Interdepartmental Procedures for Children (2017)

The Interdepartmental Procedures for Dealing with Family Violence Cases are derived from the Family Violence (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law 2000 (N.119(I)/2000) and concern children (juvenile victims up to 18 years). The purpose of the Interdepartmental Procedures is to protect and support the juvenile victim of domestic violence throughout the process from reporting to trial. To achieve this goal, the key prerequisite is interdepartmental cooperation between stakeholders, the public and private sector and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). As a result, the [Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family](#), under the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance, in the exercise of their responsibilities, and with the cooperation of all stakeholders have prepared this Interdepartmental Procedures for Children 2017 (IPC)⁴, to provide improved and coordinated services to children affected by violence in the family. The IPC (2017) describes the procedures to be followed by state, private agencies and NGOs and clarifies the tasks and role of professionals (public/ private sector officials and NGO volunteers) in managing cases of domestic violence with regard to juvenile victims. The IPC (2017) have been approved by the Council of Ministers on November 08, 2017 (Decision No.83.680) and is therefore binding for all professionals involved.

4.2 Appointment of Family Counselors by the private sector

According to the Article 6 of the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victim) Law 2000, the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance can appoint appropriate persons to carry out the duties of Family Counselors for the better implementation of the Law.

The Family Counselor exercises the following functions: (a) receive complaints relating to a likelihood of exercise of violence and carry out the necessary investigations; (b) counsel, advise and mediate for the easing of any problems in the family that are likely to, or may lead to the use of

⁴ <http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/cgi-bin/hweb?-A=3612&-V=manual>

violence; (c) make arrangements for immediate medical examination of the complainant and if he deems it necessary to accompany him/her; (d) make a complaint to the Police for the investigation of the possibility of the commission of a criminal offence; (e) carry out, upon directions by the Court, investigations in relation to the financial state of the family in general and of the perpetrator in particular, in cases where a restraining order is contemplated; (f) carry out investigations and make arrangements for the accommodation of the accused or of his family in case a restraining order is made; (g) proceed promptly to all necessary arrangements for the medical or other examination of a child for whom there is a reasonable suspicion of ill-treatment by a member of the family; (h) any other function which the Minister assigns to him/ her.

In cases where a minor (i) is housed in a protection shelter whether the minor is a victim of violence or a witness of violence in the family; or (ii) following a complaint from his parent, he resides in a residence other than his family residence, immediately makes all necessary arrangements so that all the minor family members in relation to which a complaint has been filed with the police for committing the offence of violence causing mental Injury or in relation to which there is a reasonable suspicion of committing the offence of violence causing mental injury, are examined by a psychologist or psychiatrist.

The Family Counselor, in the exercise of his duties can request the assistance of any State officer, of the Police or of any other appropriate person. In the case of information or a complaint for the commission of the offence of violence against a minor, the Family Counselor may, if he deems it appropriate depending on the seriousness of the information or complaint, request the views, advice and opinion of the multidisciplinary group established under section 8 of this Law for the better handling of the case and inform the Director of the Social Welfare Services about the incident.

The Family Counselor can exercise the powers conferred upon him/ her without requiring the consent of the person or persons having the parental care of the said minor and shall thereafter report the case to the police, provided that the Attorney - General of the Republic is informed immediately and in writing about the incident..

The Director of the Social Welfare Services may, if the Family Counselor is unable or refuses to exercise the functions mentioned above or if he considers appropriate weighting the seriousness of the case, act himself instead of the Family Counselor, or delegate the same to another experienced officer of his Department.

At present, all the governmental Welfare Officers are appointed by the Council of Ministers as Family Counselors, as well as the private-sector personnel working at the Children's House.

4.3 Promoting the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence was signed by Cyprus, 16 June, 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. Cyprus ratified the Convention with national Law, 10 November, 2017 (Cyprus Law 14(III), 2017), following the implementation of basic provisions of the Treaty, which came into force, 1 March, 2018.

It 's important to note that in order to facilitate ratification of the Convention in Cyprus, MIGS carried out a study⁵ to examine compliance of national standards, legislation and policy with the standards of the Convention, making specific recommendations for the adoption of specific legislative and other measures. The study was commissioned by the Ministry of Justice and Public Order and provided a valuable tool that will facilitate the process of ratification, by providing a blue-print for comprehensive legislation on violence against

⁵ <https://medinstgenderstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Legislative-Study-on-Istanbul-Convention.pdf>

women in Cyprus. The aim was to promote an integrated approach to preventing and combating violence against women in Cyprus, with the active involvement of all relevant stakeholders including women's organisations and NGOs.

The Ministry of Justice & Public Order is about to draft a specific law to transpose the provisions of the Convention into national law. The draft of the national law is expected to be put for public discussion, so that the relevant ministries, NGOs, and other stakeholders will be able submit their comments.

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

The Law 51(I)/2016, with which the Cyprus Republic has transposed Directive 2012/29/EU on establishing minimum standards on the rights, support, and protection of victims of crime, ensures that women victims of gender-based violence, among others, receive specialized support service and compensation. The adoption of this law prior to the Istanbul Convention is very important because it constitutes the basis for the effective implementation of the Convention.

In an effort to promote the Law 51(I)/2016 to the professionals, the Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs, University of Nicosia in collaboration with the [Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family](#), organized training seminar on "*Recognition, Evaluation and Referral victims on the basis of Directive 2012/29/EU* ", October 10-11, 2017 at the University of Nicosia. The seminar is part of the project "*Developing Directive - compatible practices for the identification, evaluation and referral of victims*" implemented by the Center for European Constitutional Law - Themistocles Foundation and Dimitris Tsatsos in collaboration with European Training and Research Center for Human Rights and Democracy (Austria), Center for the Study of Democracy (Bulgaria), Cyprus Center for European and International Affairs, University of Nicosia (Cyprus), Institute of Baltic Studies (Estonia), Center of Crime Justice & Victim Studies of the University of Limerick (Ireland), Province of Livorno Development (Italy). The seminar was addressed to professionals of all involved services dealing with cases of domestic violence.

Also, the Police, in order to raise public awareness of the Law 51(I)/2016 to the victims, issued a booklet providing 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. The informational booklet was provided to the victims and it was translated in six (6) languages (Greek, English, Turkish, Russian, Arabic and French), and it was also uploaded on the internal information portal of the Police.

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

The Council “FONI” was established according to the Implementation of the National Strategy for the Combating of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2017 (L.112(I)/2017). “FONI” is responsible for the National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography (2016-2019). Thus, in the framework of this National Strategy was created the Children’s House according to the Barnahus model in Iceland and on the basis of European good practice. The management and operation of the Children’s House has been assigned to the “Hope For Children” CRC Policy Center by the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Insurance, and the overall supervision of the Social Welfare Services, in collaboration with co-responsible Services.

It’s important to note that under the Law (91(I)/2014), 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. It appears that this provision is in conflict with the general legal age of sexual consent.

5. STRENGTHENING SERVICES FOR PROTECTION AND SUPPORT OF VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

5.1 Establishment of structures for the protection of domestic violence victims

Woman's House (WH)

As part of the implementation of its obligations under the Istanbul Convention, Cyprus set up the Woman's House. The political decision to adopt more comprehensive and co-ordinated policies on violence against women, took place on 27.11.2019, when the Council of Ministers approved the proposal of the Minister of Labour, Welfare & Social Insurance (Ministerial Decision Number: 88.585) for the creation of the Woman's House (WH)⁶, a crisis centre for women victims of violence and their children. The [Advisory Committee for the Prevention & Combating of Violence in the Family \(ACPCVF\)](#) was appointed by the Council of Ministers, as the Coordinator for the issue. This ministerial decision is based on the proposal that ACPCVF had submitted, in 2016, to the Ministry of Labor, Welfare & Social Insurance, regarding the urgent need of bringing together all the involved services in supporting and protecting women victims of violence under in one roof/ structure.

According to a Ministerial Decision, the Ministries of Labor, Welfare & Social Security, Justice & Public Order, and Health constitute the Ad hoc Ministerial Committee that supervises/ approves the work of the Technical Committee chaired by ACPCDV, which was also the Coordinator of all actions for the implementation of this project.

The WH is a multi-agency and multi-professional crisis centre for victims of VAW and their children, providing integrated specialised services to women and girls that are victims of violence against women. The WH, also provides services to migrant women on the principle of none discrimination, regardless of their migrant/ legal status.

The WH is based on the European model Family Justice Center (FJC), and will operate as a 'one-stop-shop' providing integrated services for victims of violence against women. WH's vision is to protect and support all women (and their minor children) as well as girls (under the age of 18) who are victims of

⁶ <http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/20200506/1588765852-03622.pdf>.

violence. The mission of the WH is to provide security, protection, support and empowerment for victims of violence against women and girls through quality, specialized, accessible and coordinated multidisciplinary approach services, under one roof. It's important to note that the services are provided regardless of the victim having to press charges against the perpetrator. The mother and her dependent children receive the initial services at the Woman's House in order to avoid their separation and thus avoid further re-victimization.

The administration/ operation of the WH, was assigned by the government to the NGO, Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO), 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. The services of the WH will be free of charge for all women irrespective of their income. Weekly multidisciplinary and multiagency meetings will be held to ensure co-ordination between general and specialist support services and to create a mutual plan for each case.

The WH will provide the following services:

- Protective measures (regarding the victim and the offender) for the immediate protection and safety of the victim.
- Immediate/ short-term psychological support and referral to the Mental Health Services / NGO for long-term treatment and follow-up.
- Socio-economic support (access to benefits, housing, care services, referral to labour market reintegration services – e.g. Employment Office).
- Medical examination for physical and sexual abuse and referral to specialists of the GHS for long-term treatment and medical care. In case of sexual abuse of a minor, a referral will be made to the Child's House.
- Provision of the victim's testimony, as well as a video-recorded testimony by the Police in cooperation with the competent local Police Stations or the CSI.

- Referral and/or escort services - if required – at the Shelter/ housing services, the Police, the Court, Hospitals, Mental Health Services, the Welfare Services, child support and protection Agencies, etc.
- Legal services (free legal aid, etc)

Shelters & Helplines

The Government provides financial assistance, through the Grants in Aid Scheme, to the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the family (APHVF) for the operation of several programmes concerning protection and support for victims of domestic violence, including the helpline and 3 shelters for women victims of domestic violence and their children.

APHVF operates a 24/7 telephone helpline 1440, that is a state-wide line covering the Republic of Cyprus and is free of charge. 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 pre-recorded 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. However, 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 three shelters for victims of violence and their children and can offer short term accommodation of up to three months:

- 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;
- The shelter in Limassol, can accommodate victims and their children in 5 rooms; and

- The shelter in Paphos, 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.

Support and Therapy Centre for Adult survivors of sexual childhood abuse and exploitation

The [Cyprus Family Planning Association \(CFPA\)](#) 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, and 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 Nicosia.

5.2 Reducing the re-victimization of high-risk victims

Risk Assessment Protocol

In 2018, the Police adopted a Risk Assessment Protocol for use in cases of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), including cases of ex-spouses/ ex-partners. 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)/2017 ratifying the Istanbul Convention, with specific reference to Article 51 of the Istanbul Convention,
- Article 21 of the Victims Rights Directive,
- Article 21 of Law 51(I)/2016

The Risk Assessment Protocol is used during investigations of crimes against women in order to assess the risk factors in a more suitable way. Moreover, Police proceeded with the preparation of relevant trainings for the police officers on the subject and the promotion of a special edition of the protocol. However, there is no evidence that shows the effectiveness of application of this protocol in practice, and to which extent this is applied by all police officers.

Restraining/ Protection orders

In the national legal frame, restraining/ protection orders can be applied by civil and criminal law. Regarding the number of restraining orders there is no administrative or judicial data available at present.

5.3 Providing treatment to victims and perpetrators

According to the Article 25 of the Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law of 2000 (L. 119(I)/ 2000), as amended, 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.

However, there are no accredited specialised programmes for the treatment of offenders or sex offenders.

Regarding sex offenders, Mental Health Services, through their specialised Mental Health Evaluations' Centre, also conduct psychodiagnostics assessments and prepare relevant reports upon 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). 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 aim to prevent and minimise the risks for the recurrence of future sexual offences against children. 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.

6. COORDINATION AND EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN

6.1 Monitoring the implementation of the National Action Plan

The role of ACPCVF in relation to the NAP

The [Advisory Committee for the Prevention & Combating of Violence in the Family \(ACPCVF\)](#) was responsible for the monitoring and promotion of the NAP. ACPCVF was also responsible for the preparation of the Evaluation Report of the NAP. It is clarified that ACPCVF does not implement the NAP. The NAP, like all Action Plans, is guiding policies of the ministries of each government in the various sectors. At the same time, the involved ministries set their own priorities depending on the needs and events that arise, whose actions either comply with or depart from the NAP (e.g. National Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of Violence at School 2018-2022). Also, the implementation of many actions of the NAP can not be done individually by one Ministry, but, due to the interdepartmental nature of the problem, the contribution and cooperation of various ministries is required, which makes the implementation of the NAP extremely difficult. Despite the various obstacles, significant actions have been made.

Submission of the NAP

The 2nd NAP was officially submitted to the Ministry of Labor, Welfare & Social Insurance, in November 2016 (No.SE.:1193-16/ dated 11.11.2016), and was approved for implementation by the Council of Ministers (dated 25.05.2017 and Decision No. 82.656) for the years 2017- 2019.

Press conference of the announcement of NAP

On November 8, 2017, the Ministry of Labor, Welfare & Social Insurance, held a Press Conference which took place at the Ministry, where, among other issues, announced the start of the 2nd NAP (2017-2019). The Press Conference was attended by the president and the administrative officer on behalf of ACPCVF. Noted that since the NAP included the year 2017, and it was announced at the end of that year, essentially the year 2017 was lost in terms of promoting relevant actions.

Informing all stakeholders & appointment of NAP Coordinators

ACPCVF informed all the Ministries/ Services/ Bodies/ NGOs involved (No.SE:1251-18 and dated 09.02.2018) requesting from them to appoint Coordinators for the issue.

Meeting with Coordinators for the promotion of NAP

ACPCVF, with its letter (No.SE:1258-18/ dated 23.03.2018,) invited the government Coordinators to a meeting. The meeting took place, 9 April, 2018, at 10.00, at the office of ACPCVF.

ACPCVF, with its letter (No.SE:1264-18/ dated 26.04.2018) invited the NGO Coordinators to a meeting. The meeting took place, 17 May, 2018, at 10.00, at the office of ACPCVF. At the meetings, the following issues were discussed:

- The cooperation of the ministries / NGOs according to NAP was emphasized
- The implementation of priority actions set by ACPCVF were discussed

Training of the Coordinators of NAP

- ACPCVF in collaboration with the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA), organized a 2-day *Workshop for the training of Coordinators on "National Action Plan for Prevention and Combating Domestic Violence (2017-2019), based on a structured democratic dialogue"* 7-8 November, 2018, at the CAPA building. The General Director of the Ministry of Labor, Welfare and Social Insurance, Mr. Christos Malikkidis, gave a short speech at the workshop, emphasizing the importance and role of the Coordinators in the whole process of the NAP.
- The Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies (MIGS) and ACPCVF organized an Interdepartmental Cooperation Workshop on *"Improving parenting and communication procedures and decisions in cases of domestic violence."* The workshop took place, 28 May, 2019, at the Altius Hotel (1 Achaion Street, 1101 Nicosia) from 09:00 to 13:00. The workshop was part of the European Programme *"Improving the Justice System for the Rights of the Child in Parental Care and Communication Procedures and Decisions in Cases of Domestic Violence"* coordinated

by the University of Edinburgh and Scottish Women's Aid in partnership with Portugal, Bulgaria, Romania and Cyprus. The aim of the EU Program was to safeguard the rights of children in participating in parental custody and communication procedures and decisions in cases of domestic violence (Article 12, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child). At the Workshop, among other participants, also the NAP Coordinators participated.

CONCLUSIONS & RECCOMENDATIONS

Undoubtedly, the 2nd NAP (2017-2019) had many challenges to face, as below:

- Complete the actions that were not implemented from the 1st NAP (2010-2013);
- The lack of dedicated funding for implementation of actions;
- The ratification and implementation of the Istanbul Convention on a legislative and policy level;
- Systemic issues in multi-agency coordination and cooperation;
- Ongoing structural reforms of key public services and ministries.

As it can be observed above, NGOs are mostly the key providers for training the professionals in public and private sector, through the various funded EU programmes/ projects they obtain. NGOs have been key actors in ensuring specialised training, and the transfer of good practices in awareness raising, training, data collection and provision of support and assistance to victims. The key factor of inter-departmental cooperation is well reflected and implemented on training synergies among governmental and NGOs stakeholders. However, not all this training and expertise caters to the specific needs of the various relevant professionals, since governmental services often lack specialisation on violence against women and domestic violence. There is, therefore, a great need for professional specialization with public services and authorities in order to facilitate effective responses to violence and the provision of specialised support.

Some governmental services have been through structural transitions, such as in the case of Health Services and Social Welfare Services. Due to the creation of the National General Health System, the Ministry of Health has been reformed. In addition, the Social Welfare Services have entered into a procedure of total reform restructuring, through the recent establishment of a Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare. The internal re-formatational changes of key governmental services, inevitably affected the degree of implementation of the NAP.

In order to be able to respond to their mandate, many ministries have resorted to “out-sourcing” of their basic services. Two good examples are the operation of the Children’s House and the Women’s House that have been assigned to NGOs (Hope for Children, and SPAVO).

The new hybrid structure, Woman’s House, designed by the ACPCVF 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 re-victimisation;
- 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.

In order for the Women’s House to be able to operate effectively for both victims and professionals, the involved stakeholders need to invest in the WH and “connect” with it efficiently. The WH is a result of a political decision by the government that aims to add value to the work of the involved ministries.

Another issue is the inadequate funding/ budgeting of the sector of domestic violence. It is important to note that this NAP was implemented without a specific budget allocated.

Concluding, the NAP (2017-2019) has successfully worked as a preparatory mediator for opening the way to effective implementation of the Istanbul Convention, by providing victim-centred services. It is recommended that, following the establishment of the Coordinating Body for the implementation of the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, a comprehensive strategy for the prevention and combating of violence and domestic violence is developed, in cooperation with the ACPCVF, in order to reduce fragmentation in the design and implementation of policies and measures, and ensure a holistic approach.