

**Advisory Committee
for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family**



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

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Introduction

Since Nicos Anastasiades assumed the Presidency of the Republic of Cyprus, the Government has made the prevention and combating of domestic violence one of its priorities, across all the state and society sectors involved. Within the framework of the above objective, the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family) proceeded to prepare the new National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence (2017-2019), which succeeded the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence (2010-2013). The new National Action Plan was approved by the Council of Ministers (date 25.05.2017 and Decision No. 82.656) for 2017-2019.

2. The new National Action Plan is well-focused and concentrates on key priority objectives and it can be implemented within the financial and administrative capacities of the state.

3. The new National Action Plan recognises the gender-based dimension of domestic violence and is intended to incorporate the notion of gender equality, as well as a victim-centred approach to deal with the social phenomenon.

4. For the preparation of the new National Action Plan, the following were taken into account:

- The Evaluation Report of the first National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence (2010-2013), which was held in 2014 and covered the period 2010-2013. The implementation of the first National Plan, despite any difficulties that may have come up, has contributed substantially to the prevention and combating of the problem of domestic violence in Cyprus. The Evaluation Report revealed that Cyprus has done significant work in this field in recent years, having mapped for the first time a noteworthy number of actions that have been implemented both in the governmental / public sector, as well as the society at large.

Nonetheless, the Evaluation Report of the first National Action Plan highlighted, among other things, the following needs: a) to strengthen the interdepartmental cooperation /



coordination between all parties involved, as well as the continuous training of professionals for the effective handling of incidents of domestic violence, b) to incorporate gender mainstreaming in policies aimed at the prevention and combating of domestic violence, c) to create a Central Data Bank to hold records of incidents of domestic violence, d) a 24-hour helpline for victims of violence, e) to expand the shelters for victims of violence, f) to enlarge and reinforce the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family and g) to give emphasis on the prevention through the sectors that influence attitudes and ideas, such as education and the media.

- The findings of the first Pancyprian survey on the "Extent, Frequency, Forms and Consequences of Domestic Violence against Women in Cyprus" (2012), conducted by the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family, with a grant from the National Mechanism for Women's Rights. According to the findings of the survey¹:

- At least 28% of the women surveyed reported some form of violence: economic violence: 19.4%, emotional/psychological violence: 19.3%, sexual violence: 15.5%, and physical violence: 13.4%, while 3% of women stated they had a miscarriage due to domestic violence.

- 57% of the women who admitted being victims of violence had not mentioned the incident to anyone else and only 30% asked for help.

- 1/3 of the sample stated they had little or no information about the services provided to victims of domestic violence. Only 57% of the women surveyed stated that they are aware of the existence of the 1440 helpline and the operation of SPAVO.

- Only 2% reported the incident to the Police.

- The Concluding Remarks of the community funding programme "PROGRESS" on the topic of "Pancyprian campaign to combat/eliminate violence against women and girls in Cypriot society", which was completed on November 15, 2015. The "PROGRESS" Programme was

¹ This research was conducted pro bono by Dr. Martha Apostolidou, Dr. Petroula Mavrikiou and Dr. Stavros Parlali for the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family.



carried out by the Office of the Commissioner for Administration and Protection of Human Rights (Ombudsman), within the framework of its responsibilities as an Authority on Equality, in cooperation with the Advisory Committee on Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence, the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies, and the Cyprus Academy of Public Administration. The two-year campaign (2014-2015) was co-funded by the European Commission, through the Community funding programme "PROGRESS" and included the organisation of a Pancyprian information/awareness campaign in the media, as well as the organisation of a series of training seminars for various bodies that, within the context of their work, can have preventive or eradicated impact in combating violence against women and girls in Cyprus. The training seminars aimed at raising awareness among the professionals, whose work involves responding to incidents of violence against women and girls, at improving their knowledge of the current institutional framework and at promoting cooperation between them. In this framework, 12 training seminars were held, aimed, in particular, at the following key groups: Police Officers, Health Professionals (Doctors, nurses, psychologists), teachers, Social Services officers, Lawyers, Immigration and Labour officers (in cases where violence is committed against migrant women), as well as the media.

- The Report of the Research Project 'One in Five' on "Strengthening national policies to stop sexual violence against children: A Council of Europe project involving pilot initiatives in Cyprus" (2015).
- Other National Action Plans, including the National Action Plan for Equality between Men and Women (2014-2017), the National Action Plan against Human Trafficking (2013-2015), as well as European Legislation and Policies, such as the European Strategy for Equality between Men and Women (2010-2015), the European Union development strategy 'Europe 2020' and the European Pact for Gender Equality 2011-2020.
- The Concluding Remarks of the 6th and 7th Periodic Reports of the Republic of Cyprus on the Implementation of the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) by the competent Committee of the United Nations (Geneva, February 2013). In its Concluding Remarks, the CEDAW Committee welcomed the adoption of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence and the first Pancyprian research on the "Extent, Frequency, Forms and Effects of Domestic Violence



against Women in Cyprus” (2012) conducted on behalf of the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family with a grant from the National Mechanism for Women's Rights. However, the Commission remains concerned about the low number of prosecutions and convictions in cases of domestic violence, despite the high number of reports. They also expressed concern regarding the absence of gender dimension in state programmes and policies dealing with issues of domestic violence. In addition, the Commission underlined the lack of adequate support and protection of victims of violence, as there is just one shelter for victims of domestic violence operating in Cyprus.

Among other things, the Commission calls on the Republic of Cyprus to:

(a) take effective measures to investigate reports of all forms of violence and to also prosecute and punish perpetrators, such as providing mandatory training for judges, prosecutors and lawyers and providing legal assistance to victims.

(b) ensure the effective implementation of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence with specific timeframes and an adequate budget for the monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness and accomplishment of the objectives of specific actions.

(c) strengthen the system for collecting data on all forms of violence against women.

(d) ensure that adequate assistance and protection are provided to women victims of violence, and

(e) to set a timeframe for the ratification of the Convention of Council of Europe for the prevention and elimination of violence against women.

- The findings of the pan-European survey on ‘Violence against women’ (2014) conducted by the FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights). According to the findings of the survey, 22% of women in Cyprus have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15. In particular, 14% of women have experienced physical violence by a partner, 4% of women have experienced sexual violence by a partner, and 39% of women have experienced some form of psychological violence by a partner.

- The Council of Europe Convention for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). We welcome the decision of the Government of Cyprus to sign this Convention on 16 June 2015, having been open for



signature in Istanbul on 11 May 2011. This Convention is an important, binding, international instrument that can make a substantial contribution to the formulation of effective policies for the prevention of all forms of violence against women, to the protection, support and empowerment of victims, to the promotion of international cooperation and to the exemplary punishment of perpetrators. Cyprus is the 38th country to have signed the Convention, while 19 countries have already ratified it. The signing of the Convention will contribute greatly to the prevention and treatment of all forms of violence against women and domestic violence. The aim is to promote the ratification by law of this Convention by the Parliament.

- The Law on the Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography of 2014 (Law 91(I)/2014).
- The Law on the Establishment of Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime of 2016 (Law 51(I)/2016).
- The views of The Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights, the Commissioner for Children's Rights, Equality agencies, academic/research bodies, as well as non-governmental organisations.

5. On the basis of the above, the following six main priority objectives have been defined:

- 1) Monitoring the problem of domestic violence
- 2) Prevention of the social phenomenon of domestic violence
- 3) Training and specialisation of professionals
- 4) Effective implementation of the legislation
- 5) Reinforcing services for the protection and support of victims of domestic violence
- 6) Coordination and evaluation of the implementation of the National Action Plan.



6. Each priority objective shall be broken down into intermediate objectives, actions, implementation partners, timeframes and indicators for monitoring the actions. Specifically, the new National Plan focuses, inter alia, on the promotion/implementation of the following objectives:

- Completion of the upgrading of the Manuals of interdepartmental procedures for adults and children on the handling of incidents of domestic violence and their enactment in the form of Regulations by the Parliament.
- Promote the implementation of a standard practice for the support and protection of women victims of violence (Women's Support Unit).
- Promotion of Risk Assessment / Risk Management procedures in all services involved.
- Promotion of the creation of a single database for the recording of incidents of domestic violence.
- Promotion of systematic interdepartmental training of professionals through Cyprus Academy of Public Administration.
- Subsidise the Advisory Committee for the recruitment of family counsellors from the private sector.
- Promotion of the effective implementation of the Establishment of Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law of 2016 (Law 51(I)/2016).
- Promotion of the ratification by law of the Istanbul Convention by the Parliament.

7. In conclusion, the new National Action Plan is an important tool for promoting Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence, given that, in addition to focusing and planning the actions, it will also contribute to the intradepartmental and interdepartmental coordination of the actions / programmes, as well as to the monitoring and evaluation of their implementation.



IMPLEMENTATION BOARD
OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE PREVENTION AND COMBATING OF
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE (2017-2019)



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Strategic Objective 1:

Monitoring the Problem of Domestic Violence

N/A	Target	Actions	Implementation	Implementing Body	Timeframe	Monitoring Indicators
1.1	Promotion of the Creation of a Single Statistic Database for Recording Incidents of Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of actions for the visit of an expert from abroad. • Study and submission of a proposal to the competent Ministry. • Pilot implementation of a program for recording cases of child abuse 		Advisory Committee on Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence in cooperation with: Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance Ministry of Justice and Public Order Statistical Service Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights (Ombudsman) Ministry of Education and Culture Ministry of Health Police		Number of Meetings Submit a proposal Implementation of a pilot program Pilot project evaluation
1.2	Promotion of "Child at Risk Register" Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study and submission of a proposal to the Competent Ministry. 		Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family		Submit proposal
1.3	Promotion of the Creation of a Documentation and Study Centre for Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a relevant database on the Advisory Committee website. 		Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family		Advisory Committee website
1.4	Research on all forms of Domestic Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission of research proposals to local and European programmes • Conducting research on all forms of Domestic Violence 		Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family Non-Governmental Organisations Academic Institutions		Submission of research proposals Number of surveys



Strategic Objective 2:

Prevention of the Phenomenon of Violence in the Family

N/A	Objective	Actions	Implementation	Responsible Body	Timeframe	Monitoring Indicators
2.1	Prevention and early detection of abused children and people with special needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of the establishment of 'home visit' to children under 5 years old, vulnerable families and people with special needs by health visitors. Creation of a "high-risk" reference form 		Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family Ministry of Health Social Welfare Services		Submit proposal Reference form
2.2	Promote gender equality and the elimination of gender stereotypes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of gender equality programmes and actions in all areas 		Ministry of Justice and Public Order National Mechanism for Women's Rights Commissioner for Gender Equality Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance Committee on Gender Equality in Employment and Professional Education Women's organisations and NGOs Ministry of Education and Culture UNESCO Chair in Gender Equality and Empowerment Pedagogical Institute Cyprus Academy of Public Administration		Number of programmes/actions
2.3	Information / enlightenment and public awareness on the issue of Violence in the Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information campaigns Dissemination of messages through the media Publication and dissemination of information material 		Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family Union of Cyprus Communities Union of Cyprus Municipalities Women's organisations and NGOs		Actions/ events Press releases Publications/ reissues of information material

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N/A	Objective	Actions	Implementation	Responsible Body	Timeframe	Monitoring Indicators
				Police Ministry of Education and Culture Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights Commissioner for Children's Rights National Mechanism for Women's Rights Ministry of Health		
2.4	Reinforcing education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of the Health Education Curriculum for all school levels. Integration of sexual and reproductive health topics into the curriculum of all school levels. Compulsory training of all teachers, of all levels, involved in sexual education. 		Ministry of Education and Culture in cooperation with Pedagogical Institute and other bodies		Curriculum Curriculum of Primary, Lower and Upper Secondary Schools Number of trainings



Strategic Objective 3:

Training and Specialisation of Professionals

N/A	Objective	Actions	Implementation	Responsible Body	Timeframe	Monitoring Indicators
3.1	Informing, raising awareness and training of teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of the topic of Domestic Violence in education. Organisation of intradepartmental and interdepartmental training programmes. Specialised training on child abuse for Teachers, Psychologists and professors of Counselling & Education courses. 		Ministry of Education and Culture in cooperation with other bodies Pedagogical Institute Cyprus Academy of Public Administration		Number of seminars/trainings/programmes Number of Professionals Evaluation of seminars/trainings/programmes
3.2	Information, awareness and training of Social Services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of the topic of Domestic Violence in education. Organisation of intradepartmental and interdepartmental training programmes. Specialised training for the identification of abused children, women, elderly and people with special needs. 		Social Welfare Services in cooperation with other bodies Cyprus Academy of Public Administration		Number of seminars/trainings/programmes Number of Professionals Evaluation of seminars/trainings/programs
3.3	Information, awareness and training of the Police Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinforcing the teaching of the topic of domestic violence throughout all school levels. Organisation of intradepartmental and interdepartmental training programmes. Specialised training for taking a testimony / video recorded testimony from underage persons. Specialised training of neighbourhood police officers regarding the detection and 		Police in cooperation with other bodies		Number of seminars/trainings/programmes Number of Professionals Evaluation of seminars/trainings/programs



N/A	Objective	Actions	Implementation	Responsible Body	Timeframe	Monitoring Indicators
		referral of incidents of domestic violence.				
3.4	Information, awareness and training of Healthcare Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integration of the topic of domestic violence in the in-service training of all health service professionals. Organisation of interdepartmental, multidisciplinary and intradepartmental training programmes. Specialised training for the identification of abused women, children, elderly and disabled persons by the staff of the Emergency Department. 		Ministry of Health in cooperation with Cyprus Academy of Public Administration and other bodies		Number of seminars/trainings/programmes Number Professionals Evaluation of seminars/trainings/programs
3.5	Information, awareness and training of professionals in the private sector and volunteers of non-governmental organisations (NGOs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation of seminars / workshops / information sessions / experiential workshops 		Non-Governmental Organisations in cooperation with other bodies		Number of seminars Number of professionals Evaluation of seminars
3.6	Information, awareness and training of the Neighbourhood Watch (local government)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation with the Advisory Committee with the aim of providing specialised training for local government Neighbourhood Watch in the detection and referral of incidents of domestic violence. 		Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family Union of Cyprus Communities Union of Cyprus Municipalities in cooperation with other bodies		Number of trainings Number of Professionals Evaluation of trainings
3.7	Information, awareness and training of Judges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of a proposal to the Supreme Court Organisation of seminars/experiential workshops 		Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family		Proposal submission Number of Judges



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N/A	Objective	Actions	Implementation	Responsible Body	Timeframe	Monitoring Indicators
				Supreme Court in cooperation with other bodies		Evaluation of seminars
3.8	Interdepartmental training of Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interdepartmental training of state officials of all the services involved. 		Commissioner for Administration and Human Rights/Equality Authority Cyprus Academy of Public Administration Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO)		Number of seminars Number Professionals Evaluation of seminars



Strategic Objective 4:

Effective Implementation of legislation

N/A	Objective	Actions	Implementation	Responsible Body	Timeframe	Monitoring Indicators
4.1	Interdepartmental Procedures (IP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with the ministries/ state agencies involved, the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family and other Non-Governmental Organisations. • Completion of the upgrade/ improvement of the IP for children and adults. • Establishment of IP in the form of Regulations and their approval by the House of Representatives in order to have binding force and to provide in detail: a) the duties of each body / service. b) penalties (through legislation) in cases where the specified duties are not respected; 		Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance Cabinet Law Office of the Republic House of Representatives Police Ministry of Education and Culture Ministry of Health		Submission of IP for Adults Handbook Submission of IP for Children Handbook Establishment of the IP in the form of Regulations
4.2	Recruitment of Family Advisors / Counsellors from the private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study and submission of a proposal to the competent Ministry. 		Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family in cooperation with other bodies		Proposal submission



N/A	Objective	Actions	Implementation	Responsible Body	Timeframe	Monitoring Indicators
4.3	Promotion of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct research on the present legislative framework regarding the requirements arising from the provisions of the Convention. • Submission of a law proposal for the implementation of the Convention • Submission and adoption of a law proposal for the criminalisation of stalking 		Ministry of Justice and Public Order Law Office of the Republic House of Representatives Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies		Preparation and submission of a study Proposal for a law on preventing and combating violence against women Criminalisation of the offence of stalking (stalking)
4.4	The Establishment of Minimum Standards on the Rights, Support and Protection of Victims of Crime Law of 2016 (Law 51(I)/2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the effective implementation of legislation on victims of domestic violence. • Creation of information and awareness-raising material for the rights of victims of domestic violence in the framework of the relevant legislation. • Organisation of specialised training programmes for professionals. 		Law Office of the Republic Ministry of Interior Police Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance Ministry of Health		Number of meetings Publications Letters



N/A	Objective	Actions	Implementation	Responsible Body	Timeframe	Monitoring Indicators
				Ministry of Education and Culture Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family		
4.5	The Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2014 Law 91(I)/2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of the implementation of the National Strategy for the protection of children from sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and child pornography. Harmonisation of the relevant Legislation with the IP for children. 		Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance Law Office of the Republic Police Ministry of Health Ministry of Education and Culture Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family Hope for Children		Number of meetings Number of programmes/actions Submission of IP for Children Handbook



Strategic Objective 5:

Reinforcing the Services for the Protection and Support of Victims of Domestic Violence

N/A	Objective	Actions	Implementation	Responsible Body	Timeframe	Monitoring Indicators
5.1	Creation of structures for the protection of victims of violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enactment of Regulations for the operation of the Shelters for victims of violence. Operation of the helpline for victims of violence on a 24-hour basis Implementation of a standard practice for the support and protection of women victims of violence (Women's Support Unit) 		Social Welfare Services Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family		Enactment of Regulations Helpline Application of a standard practice
5.2	Reduce recurrent victimisation among high-risk survivors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a study to investigate the applicability of various risk assessment models for all services involved in handling/combating domestic violence Preparation of a new manual for the detection and handling of high-risk incidents 		Ministry of Justice and Public Order in cooperation with: Police Social Welfare Services Ministry of Health Law Office of the Republic Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the		Submission of a proposal / study



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N/A	Objective	Actions	Implementation	Responsible Body	Timeframe	Monitoring Indicators
				Family Other Non-Governmental Organizations		
5.3	Providing treatment to abusers and victims	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of existing Rehabilitation Programmes Implementation of Rehabilitation Programmes for Abusers in prisons. 		Ministry of Health in cooperation with: Ministry of Justice and Public Order Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family		Submission of Proposals
5.4	Use the Fund for Victims of Violence to address the immediate needs of victims of domestic violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enquiry to access a European programme for Legal Aid to Victims of Violence 		Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family		Result of the enquiry



Strategic Objective 6:

Coordination and Evaluation of the Implementation of the National Action Plan

N/A	Objective	Actions	Implementation	Responsible Body	Monitoring Indicators	Remarks by the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance
6.1	Monitoring the implementation of the National Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination and monitoring of the National Action Plan • Appointment of a coordinator in each Ministry/ government agency/ Non-Governmental Organisation • Conduct interdepartmental meetings • Preparation of a Progress Report of the Action Plan 		Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family	Letters Number of meetings Progress reports	
		Annual report of the actions to the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family		Ministries State Agencies Non-Governmental Organisations	Number of reports	

