



## WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE EUROPE

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CYPRUS

### Basic Information

Population: 858,000

Female Population: 440,462

Member of Council of Europe: 1961

Member of European Union: 2004

CEDAW ratified: 1985

CEDAW Optional protocol ratified: 2002

Istanbul Convention – signed: yes (2015); ratified: no

Violence prevalence data: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-violence-against-women-survey>

Gender Equality Index: 44.9, for further information see: <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/gender-equality-index/2012>

UN Women Global Database on Violence against Women: <http://www.evaw-global-database.unwomen.org/en/countries/asia/cyprus>

### CEDAW Concluding Comments 2013:

Violence against women

**17.** The Committee welcomes the State party's efforts to combat domestic violence, in particular the adoption of a comprehensive legislative framework, the conduct of national research on the prevalence of domestic violence, and professional training provided to the police by the Police Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office. However, the Committee remains concerned about the low number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions in cases of domestic violence, despite the high number of cases reported. The Committee is further concerned about the lack of information on the implementation of the National Action Plan on Prevention and Handling of Family Violence (2010–2013), the insufficient gender perspective and lack of inclusion of migrant women and ethnic minorities in the State party's programs and policies regarding domestic violence, as well as the limited assistance provided by the only shelter run by a non-governmental organization in the State party. The Committee further expresses concern about the limited data and information available on the incidence of other forms of violence.

**18.** The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Take effective measures to investigate reported acts of all forms of violence as well as prosecute and adequately punish perpetrators, including by providing mandatory training to judges, prosecutors and lawyers and providing legal aid to victims;

(b) Effectively implement its National Action Plan on Prevention and Handling of Family Violence within a specified time frame and with sufficient budget allocation as well as systematically monitor its impact;

(c) Enhance the data collection system to include all forms of violence against women, protection measures, prosecutions and sentences imposed on perpetrators, and conduct appropriate surveys to assess the prevalence of violence experienced by women, including migrant women and women belonging to ethnic minorities;

(d) Provide adequate assistance and protection to women victims of violence, in particular social rehabilitation and an adequate number of shelters, including by strengthening its cooperation with and support to non-governmental organizations offering shelter and other forms of support to victims of domestic violence; and

(e) Set a time frame for the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

## Introduction

The following information has been compiled from the research carried out in 2015 for the WAVE Report ([http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVE\\_Report\\_2015.pdf](http://files.wave-network.org/researchreports/WAVE_Report_2015.pdf) ) with national experts working in the field of violence against women. The research methodology involved an extensive questionnaire and a follow-up skype interview. The profile includes information on women's helplines, shelters, centres, networks and policy and funding. However, it was not possible to gather information about prevention, awareness-raising, campaigning and training.

## Women's Helplines

### National women's helplines

There is one national women's helpline in Cyprus, called the Centre for Emergency Assistance Helpline (1440). The helpline was opened in 1990 and is run by the NGO Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO). It does not operate 24/7, due to lack of adequate financial resources, however it is free of charge and provides multi-lingual support in English and Greek.

In 2014, the national women's helpline received 1,636 calls, including 1,374 (84%) from women.

### Other helplines for victims

There are four national helplines for victims of crime in Cyprus. The general victim's helpline called Citizens' Line (1460) operates 24/7 and is free of charge; it is run by the Police of the Republic of Cyprus. The children helplines Missing Children Helpline (116 000) and Support for Children and Adolescents (116 111) operate 24/7 and are free of charge; both are run jointly by SPAVO and the NGO Hope for Children.

## Women's Shelters

There are two women's shelters for victims of domestic violence in Cyprus; both are accessible 24/7 and free of charge. In addition, there is one women's shelter specifically for women survivors of trafficking that is run by the State.

The domestic violence shelters are run by SPAVO, and are located in the capital city Nicosia and in Paphos, where the second shelter was opened in September 2014. The NGO SPAVO is currently working on the construction of an additional women's shelter in Nicosia, with funding provided through Norway Grants, among others. Expected to be completed by May 2016, the shelter will be able to accommodate 24 women and children.

The two existing women's shelters have a total of 17 shelter beds, with nine beds available at the shelter in Nicosia, and eight beds available at the shelter in Paphos. In 2014, the women's shelters in Nicosia and Paphos accommodated 32 women and 40 children.

### Women's Centres

There is one women's centre providing non-residential support to women survivors of violence in Cyprus. The centre is run by the NGO SPAVO and is partly funded by the state.

### Women's Networks

There is currently no national women's network addressing violence against women in Cyprus.

The network of women's NGOs called the [Cyprus Women's Lobby \(CWL\)](#) was formed in 2008. While the network is still informal, work is underway to change the current legislation on registration of NGOs, which should result in the formalisation of CWL. At present, the network includes nine member organisations, including the [Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family \(SPAVO\)](#), the [Mediterranean Institute of Gender Equality \(MIGS\)](#), the [Cyprus Family Planning Association \(CFPA\)](#), and the [International Association for the Promotion of Women in Europe \(AIPFE\)](#). Activities carried out by the network include lobbying and advocacy, campaigning, support to members' activities and networking, as well as the organisation of seminars and conferences.

### Policy & Funding

Currently waiting for approval by the Council of Ministers, the *National Action Plan for Preventing and Combating Violence in the Family 2016-2018* will follow from the previous National Action Plan for the period 2010-2013. In addition, the *National Action Plan for Equality between Men and Women 2014-2017* includes violence against women (VAW) as one of its priorities.

There is currently no coordinating body for the implementation of policies and measures to prevent VAW; the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family is entrusted with the evaluation and monitoring of policies and measures, including the NAP 2016-2018. The Advisory Committee has published several reports and publications on VAW<sup>1</sup> as well as evaluation

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<sup>1</sup> Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family. (2012). *Extent, Frequency, Nature and Consequences of Domestic Violence against Women in Cyprus*. Available at [http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/research/erevna\\_2012oct\\_viol-ag-women\\_summary\\_en.pdf](http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/research/erevna_2012oct_viol-ag-women_summary_en.pdf)

reports on policies and measures to address VAW which are available on their website [www.familyviolence.gov.uk](http://www.familyviolence.gov.uk). Commissioned by the Equality Unit of the Ministry of Justice, MIGS conducted a mid-term evaluation of the *National Action Plan for Equality between Men and Women 2007-2013* in 2011.

Government funding is mostly allocated to the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family for activities to combat domestic violence on the national level; information provided in the 2014 Council of Europe *'Analytical study of the results of the 4th round of monitoring the implementation of Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence in Council of Europe member states'* indicates an annual budget of EUR 50,000<sup>2</sup>. The report also mentions the provision of government funds (EUR 140,000) to the organisation SPAVO, for the building of a women's shelter in 2012.<sup>3</sup> There is, however, no information available on regular and sustainable government funding for NGO activities in the field of combating VAW.

While provisions in national legislation do allow for state funding to go to women's NGOs for service provision in Cyprus, government funding is not legally mandated and the most common forms of funding for women's support services run by NGOs are project-based and annual core funding.

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<sup>2</sup> Council of Europe. (2014). *Analytical study of the results of the 4th round of monitoring the implementation of Recommendation Rec(2002)5 on the protection of women against violence in Council of Europe members states*. P.60

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.