Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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Questionnaire for the evaluation of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence by the Parties

First thematic evaluation round: Building trust by delivering support, protection and justice

Adopted by GREVIO on 13 October 2022

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Introduction

In accordance with Article 66, paragraph 1, the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO) shall monitor the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention). Following its baseline evaluation procedure which provided an overview of the implementation of the full spectrum of provisions of the convention by each state party, Article 68, paragraph 3, of the convention and Rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure of GREVIO (the Rules of Procedure) mandate GREVIO to carry out subsequent evaluation procedures divided into rounds. At the beginning of each round, GREVIO shall select the specific provisions on which the evaluation procedure shall be based and shall send out a questionnaire (Rule 31 of the Rules of Procedure).

For its 1st thematic evaluation round, GREVIO adopted this questionnaire to be sent to all states parties which have undergone the baseline evaluation procedure, according to an order approved by GREVIO. States parties are requested to transmit to GREVIO a reply to this questionnaire within five months from the date it was sent.

GREVIO decided to focus its 1st thematic evaluation round on the theme of building trust by delivering support, protection and justice. To address this overarching theme, the present questionnaire aims, in its first section, to identify developments in key areas such as comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, funding and data collection that have ensued following the completion of the baseline evaluation procedure. In its second section, it sets to obtain more in-depth information on the implementation of selected provisions in the area of prevention, protection and prosecution, in respect of which baseline evaluation procedures and the Conclusions on the Recommendations of the Committee of the Parties to the Istanbul Convention have revealed significant challenges and the need for further sustained implementation. In its third section, it brings its attention to emerging trends in the area of violence against women and domestic violence. Its fourth and last section requests annual statistics for two complete calendar years prior to receiving this questionnaire on specific administrative and judicial data.

The reply to the questionnaire should be submitted in one of the official languages of the Council of Europe (English and French) and should contain all the relevant information on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention since GREVIO's first baseline evaluation report, including copies or extracts of relevant legislation, regulations, case law and strategic documents or action plans referred to (Rule 33 of the Rules of Procedure).

Part I: Changes in comprehensive and co-ordinated policies, funding and data collection in the area of violence against women and domestic violence

Article 7: Comprehensive and co-ordinated policies

1. Please provide information on any new policy development since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country to ensure comprehensive policies covering the areas of prevention, protection, and prosecution in relation to stalking, sexual harassment and domestic violence, including their digital dimension, rape and sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion and forced sterilisation, thereby demonstrating further implementation of the convention. Please specify the measures taken particularly in relation to those forms of violence against women that have not been addressed in past policies, programmes and services encompassing the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention.

Cyprus has introduced a wide range of measures to strengthen compliance with the Istanbul Convention across all four pillars: prevention, protection, prosecution, and coordinated policies.

By decision of the Council of Ministers dated 03.03.2022, published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Cyprus on 11.03.2022 (No. 4761), the National Coordinating Body for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women (NCB) was established, in accordance with the *Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Related Matters Law of 2021* (Law L.115(I)/2021, Article 39). The Coordinating Body consists of a President and eleven members. Following a subsequent decision of the Council of Ministers, the President and members were reappointed for a three-year term, covering the period from 03.03.2025 to 02.03.2028.

The National Coordinating Body is responsible for the coordination, planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and measures aimed at preventing and combating all forms of violence falling within the scope of Law L.115(I)/2021. It operates under the accountability of the Minister of Justice and Public Order and submits an annual activity report addressing policy implementation, enforcement of the legislation, and the overall situation in Cyprus with regard to violence against women.

At the initiative of the National Coordinating Body, Cyprus has taken decisive and structured steps to reinforce its framework for the prevention and combating of gender-based and domestic violence, in full alignment with the Istanbul Convention. Between 2023 and 2025, a comprehensive set of measures was implemented, covering strategic planning, legislative reform, technological innovation, awareness-raising, research and data collection, and strengthened inter-agency cooperation.

Strategic Framework

Cyprus adopted its first National Strategy and Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women (2023–2028). The implementation process is currently under review in close collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.

Technological Innovation

In July 2025, Cyprus launched the "Elpis" mobile application, which enables victims of domestic violence to discreetly alert the police in situations of imminent danger. To date, 175 women have successfully used the application, with immediate law enforcement response recorded in all cases.

Capacity Building

Specialised training programmes have been designed and delivered for frontline professionals, including healthcare providers, educators, social workers and law enforcement personnel, with the

aim of enhancing prevention efforts and improving institutional responses to gender-based and domestic violence.

Legislative Reforms

Amendments to Law 115(I)/2021 are currently underway in order to integrate GREVIO recommendations and further align national legislation with the Istanbul Convention, as well as with Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence. In parallel, domestic violence legislation has been updated to strengthen removal and protection orders. In addition, new legislation has been enacted to ensure independent assistance and legal aid for victims of violence, recognising them as a distinct group in need of specialised support.

Awareness and Public Engagement

A nationwide anti-sexism campaign was launched in collaboration with the Commissioner for Gender Equality in September 2025. Earlier, in November 2024, a national awareness-raising campaign on gender-based violence was implemented, also in cooperation with the Commissioner for Gender Equality.

Research and Data Collection

A national study examining the prevalence and impact of gender-based violence on vulnerable groups—such as asylum seekers, migrants, and refugees—has been conducted. At the same time, preparations are ongoing for the establishment of a unified national database on violence against women, supported through European cooperation, with the aim of improving the quality, coherence, and comparability of statistical data.

Partnerships and Funding

Cyprus has signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with Greece on the prevention and combating of gender-based violence. Programmes aligned with the Istanbul Convention and the National Strategy are being funded and implemented, alongside continuous support for NGOs and women's organisations in accessing European funding opportunities.

International Engagement

Cyprus actively participates in Council of Europe bodies and GREVIO meetings and is closely coordinating national efforts during the ongoing GREVIO evaluation process. Preparations are also underway for the adoption of a pan-European helpline number (116 016), which will complement the existing national helpline.

These actions, coordinated and implemented by the National Coordinating Body, demonstrate Cyprus's commitment to a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach to preventing and combating all forms of violence against women. By integrating international standards, strengthening cooperation, and prioritising victim protection, Cyprus continues to advance towards full compliance with the Istanbul Convention and the creation of a safer and more equitable society.

Measures Across the Four Pillars of the Istanbul Convention

Prevention

- Adoption of the *Workplace Violence and Harassment Law* (Law 42(I)/2025), covering physical, psychological, and sexual harassment—including through electronic communications—and establishing mandatory employer policies and reporting mechanisms.
- Implementation of awareness-raising activities addressing digital gender-based violence and harmful practices, including female genital mutilation (FGM).

Protection

- The *Protection from Harassment and Stalking Law* (Law 114(I)/2021), which criminalises stalking and harassment, including online conduct, and provides for the issuance of restraining orders.

- Continued operation of the Women's House, providing specialised support services to victims of domestic violence.

Prosecution

- Criminal provisions on female genital mutilation (Article 233A of the Criminal Code), forced sterilisation, and forced abortion remain in force and carry severe penalties.
- Ongoing enforcement of stalking-related offences and actions taken to dismantle forced marriage networks.

Coordinated Policies

- Integration of digital violence against women into national policies and strategic discussions during Cyprus' Presidency of the Council of the European Union (2026).
- Continuous efforts to strengthen victim support services, while recognising that specialised rape crisis services and FGM-specific support remain limited outside Nicosia.

EU Directive (EU) 2024/1385

In May 2024, the European Union adopted Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence. The Directive requires Member States to harmonise criminal offences and penalties related to female genital mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, the non-consensual sharing of intimate images—including deepfake content—cyberstalking, cyberharassment, and online incitement to violence or hatred.

In addition, the Directive strengthens provisions on victim protection, access to support services, and preventive measures. Member States are required to transpose the Directive into national law by June 2027. Cyprus is currently aligning its national legislation and policy framework accordingly.

Cyprus' Presidency of the Council of the European Union (first half of 2026)

The Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union has placed gender equality high on the EU's political agenda, with a strategic focus on combating cyber violence against girls aged 13 to 18. Guided by the Beijing Platform for Action, and in particular the critical areas of *"The Girl-Child"* and *"Violence Against Women"*, the Presidency is advancing targeted initiatives to address emerging online threats, including cyber violence, cyberstalking, cyberbullying, cyber sexual harassment, online sexism, and image-based abuse.

A key initiative of the Presidency is the preparation of a comprehensive report by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), examining the prevalence, impact, and existing policy gaps related to cyber violence against girls across EU Member States. Drawing on the findings of this report, the Cyprus Presidency intends to propose Council Conclusions aimed at strengthening the protection of girls' rights and safety in the digital environment, to be adopted by the EPSCO Council.

The Presidency is also promoting intergovernmental cooperation and multi-stakeholder dialogue through a series of high-level events, including a High-Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming meeting (Nicosia, February 2026) and a flagship Conference on Preventing and Combating All Forms of Cyber Violence against Girls (Nicosia, May 2026). These events will bring together policymakers, civil society organisations, youth representatives, and private sector actors.

At the international level, the Cyprus Presidency has actively contributed to discussions at the 70th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70) in March 2026, further reinforcing the EU's commitment to addressing digital forms of violence against women and girls.

2. Where relevant, please provide information on any measures taken to ensure the alignment of any definitions of domestic violence and of violence against women in national legislation or policy documents with those set out under Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention and provide the relevant applicable provisions in English or French.

Under the *Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Related Matters Law* (Law L.115(I)/2021):

- **"Gender-based violence"** means violence that is directed against a woman because of her gender or violence that affects women disproportionately.
- **"Domestic violence"** means:

(a) any act, omission, or behaviour by a person which causes harm to a member of his or her family, including violence used for the purpose of sexual intercourse without the consent of the victim, as well as the restriction of the victim's liberty, in accordance with sections 3 and 4 of the *Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law*;

(b) in addition to the offences provided for under the *Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law*, any offence of violence against a woman when committed against a person by a member of his or her family, whether currently residing with or having previously resided with that person, regardless of whether the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.

- **"Gender"** means, in addition to biological sex and gender identity, the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men respectively.
- **"Victim"** means:

(a) a person in respect of whom criminal proceedings have been initiated or are pending in relation to an offence of violence against a woman, who has suffered harm, including physical, psychological, or emotional harm, or economic loss directly caused by such offence;

(b) a family member of a person whose death was directly caused by a criminal offence, who has suffered harm as a result of that death; and includes women, men, and children. The status of a person as a victim is recognised irrespective of the reporting, investigation, arrest, prosecution, or conviction of the perpetrator, and irrespective of the family relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

- **"Woman"** means a person of the female biological sex or of female gender identity and includes any such person who has not attained the age of eighteen (18) years.

Following the recommendations of the GREVIO Evaluation Report (2022), the competent authorities are currently engaged in discussions to amend the relevant legislative framework in order to ensure greater clarity, coherence, and consistency between the *Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Law* and the *Violence in the Family (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law*. These amendments aim to harmonise definitions, eliminate interpretative ambiguities, and ensure full alignment with the provisions and standards of the Istanbul Convention.

3. Please provide information on how your authorities ensure that policies on violence against women and domestic violence put women's rights and their empowerment at the centre and on any measure taken to enhance the intersectionality of such policies, in line with Articles 4 paragraph 3 of the convention[1]

Cyprus ensures that policies on violence against women and domestic violence place women's rights and their empowerment at the centre, and that an intersectional approach is applied, through a combination of legal safeguards, targeted policies, institutional practices, and monitoring mechanisms.

Rights-based and Gender-sensitive Legal Framework

The Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and Related Matters Law (Law L.115(I)/2021) establishes a clear rights-based framework that explicitly recognises violence against women as a form of gender-based violence and discrimination. The Law defines:

- Gender as encompassing biological sex, gender identity, and socially constructed roles and attributes;
- Gender-based violence as violence directed against women because of their gender or affecting them disproportionately; and
- Women as including both adult women and girls under the age of eighteen.

Article 4 of the Law explicitly requires that all measures for the protection and promotion of victims' rights are implemented without discrimination, covering a broad range of grounds such as gender, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, and migrant or refugee status. This provision operationalises the principle of substantive equality and ensures that women's rights and dignity remain central to all interventions. These definitions and guarantees are fully aligned with Articles 3 and 4 of the Istanbul Convention.

Centering Women's Rights and Empowerment in Policy Design

Cyprus has adopted a comprehensive policy framework that places women's empowerment at the core of prevention and response measures. Survivors' autonomy and recovery are supported through:

- Free legal aid and independent legal assistance, ensuring effective access to justice;
- Psychosocial support and counselling, responding to the specific needs of women survivors; and
- Vocational training and reintegration measures, aimed at strengthening economic independence and reducing long-term vulnerability to violence.

Strengthening Intersectionality in Practice

[1] The concept of intersectionality refers to the fact that "individuals (and groups) are affected by multiple inequalities based on various grounds of distinction rather than by discrimination based on one ground at a time. Therefore, discrimination, inequality and gender-based violence cannot be examined in relation to only one category of difference – for instance, gender – while precluding others – such as race, class, age, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity – because social categories intersect and interlock in multiple systems of discrimination that simultaneously affect an individual's life." See in this respect the study Ensuring the Non-discriminatory Implementation of Measures against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence: Article 4, paragraph 3, of the Istanbul Convention, A collection of papers on the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, p.12-13.

An explicit effort is made to address multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, in line with Article 4(3) of the Convention. This includes:

- Specialised and targeted services for women facing heightened vulnerability, such as migrant and refugee women, women with disabilities, older women, and women living in rural or remote areas;
- Multilingual helplines and accessible shelters, ensuring that language barriers, disability, or geographical location do not impede access to protection and support; and
- Outreach and cooperation with community-based and women-led organisations, which play a key role in reaching groups that may otherwise remain invisible.

Capacity Building and Institutional Accountability

Intersectionality is further reinforced through mandatory training programmes for police officers, judicial authorities, and social services professionals. These trainings focus on gender-sensitive, victim-centred, and intersectional approaches, enhancing professionals' ability to identify compounded risks and respond appropriately.

Evidence-based Policy and Monitoring

Cyprus systematically collects disaggregated data by sex, age, disability, and migration status, allowing for the assessment of differential impacts of violence and the continuous adaptation of policies and services. This data-driven approach supports more targeted interventions and strengthens accountability.

Coherence through National Strategies

A number of national strategies and action plans integrate measures addressing violence against women and girls from an intersectional perspective, including strategies on gender equality, child protection, active ageing, violence in schools, and the Women, Peace and Security agenda. This ensures policy coherence and reinforces women's rights across different policy areas.

Practical Implementation of Article 4(3)

Taken together, these legal and policy measures give concrete effect to Article 4(3) of the Istanbul Convention by:

- Placing women's rights, autonomy, and empowerment at the centre of prevention, protection, and support services; and
- Ensuring that intersectionality is systematically addressed, through tailored services, inclusive access, professional capacity-building, and evidence-based policymaking.

Article 8: Funding

4. Please provide information on any new development since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country concerning the allocation of appropriate and sustainable financial and human resources for the implementation of integrated policies, measures and programmes to prevent and combat all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention.

5. Please provide information on any development concerning the provision of appropriate and sustainable financial and human resources for women's rights organisations

that provide specialist support services to victims, including those supporting migrant women and girls.

Since GREVIO's baseline evaluation, Cyprus has strengthened the allocation of financial and human resources to support integrated policies and measures for preventing and combating violence against women, with a focus on sustainability, evidence-based policymaking, and support for specialist services.

A key development concerns the allocation of targeted funding for research addressing gaps identified by GREVIO, particularly in relation to migrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking women. In 2024, the National Coordinating Body commissioned a national study on the extent, forms, and impact of gender-based violence affecting vulnerable women and girls residing in reception and accommodation facilities. The field research was conducted between June and September 2025, and the final study was submitted to the Ministry of Justice and Public Order in December 2025.

Further progress has been achieved through the introduction of a multiannual Grants Scheme (2023–2028), approved by the Council of Ministers, which provides a structured and predictable framework for financing prevention, protection, coordination, and awareness-raising actions in line with the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention and the National Strategy and Action Plan (2023–2028).

For 2025, a dedicated allocation of €60,000 was earmarked for grants supporting programmes and actions on the prevention and combating of gender-based violence. These funds supported initiatives focusing on victim protection and empowerment, public awareness, and strengthening the capacity of actors involved in addressing violence against women.

In addition, the 2026 State Budget further reinforces sustainability by allocating resources for the implementation and monitoring of the Istanbul Convention, prevention and awareness-raising activities, commissioning of specialised studies, operation of support mechanisms, and the functioning of the National Coordinating Body. Through these budgetary allocations and the Grants Scheme, Cyprus has enhanced financial support for women's rights organisations and specialist services.

Article 11: Data collection and research

6. Please provide information on any new development since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country on the introduction of data collection categories such as type of violence, sex and age of the victim and the perpetrator, the relationship between the two and where it took place, for administrative data of relevance to the field of violence against women and domestic violence emanating from law enforcement agencies, the justice sector, social services and the public health care sector.

Since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, Cyprus has taken significant steps towards strengthening and systematising the collection of administrative data relevant to violence against women and domestic violence, including categories such as the type of violence, sex and age of the victim and the perpetrator, the relationship between them, and the place where the incident occurred.

In the absence of a previously integrated data-collection mechanism, progress initially faced structural and technical challenges. However, substantial developments have been achieved through alignment with Directive (EU) 2024/1385**,** and in particular Article 44, which requires Member States to collect reliable, comparable, and comprehensive statistical data and to transmit these to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) to support evidence-based policymaking at national and EU level.

To meet these obligations, Cyprus has established a dedicated inter-institutional working group**,** bringing together all key authorities involved in the collection and use of administrative data, including the Police, the Courts, the Law Office of the Republic, Social Welfare Services, and specialist victim-support actors. The working group is currently mapping existing data-collection practices, identifying gaps, and developing a common methodology and harmonised categories for data collection across all sectors.

For the first time, Cyprus is moving towards the creation of a specialised and interoperable software system aimed at ensuring uniformity, accuracy, and comparability of administrative data across all competent services. Consultations with the Deputy Ministry of Research and Innovation are ongoing for the preparation of technical specifications, while guidance from the Office of the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection ensures full compliance with data-protection and privacy requirements. A preliminary list of variables and indicators aligned with Article 44 of Directive (EU) 2024/1385 has already been developed and is currently being refined following stakeholder feedback.

At the same time, Cyprus is engaging in exchange of expertise with other EU Member States that have established comparable systems, with a view to incorporating good practices. The finalisation of the indicator framework will be followed by the launch of procurement procedures for the development of the software system.

With regard to statistical coordination, the Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT) is expected to support the process through the design of standardised questionnaires based on the agreed variables, the establishment of consistency and validation checks, and the analysis of annual datasets.

In relation to population-based data, CYSTAT had not previously conducted national surveys on violence against women. However, Cyprus participated in the EU-wide survey on gender-based violence conducted by FRA and EIGE in cooperation with Eurostat, with results published in November 2024. In addition, CYSTAT plans to implement the European Gender-Based Violence Survey in 2027, with results expected in 2028, funded by the European Union.

At the administrative level, the Cyprus Police systematically maintain statistical records on reported cases of domestic violence and violence against women, including the number of incidents reported, criminal case files opened, and cases forwarded for prosecution, in accordance with the applicable legislative framework.

Furthermore, since April 2025, the Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family has been conducting an in-depth qualitative study on coercive control in women victims of gender-based and domestic violence. The study aims to document the forms and impact of coercive control and to support the inclusion of this concept as a distinct legal provision in the relevant legislation. The study is ongoing and is expected to be completed in the first half of 2026.

7. Where relevant, please provide information on any new development since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country to enable disaggregated data collection:

   a. on the number of emergency barring and protection orders and the number of breaches and the resulting sanctions;
   b. on the number of times custody decisions have resulted in the restriction and withdrawal of parental rights because of violence perpetrated by one parent against the other.

8. Please provide information on measures taken to allow cases of violence against women and domestic violence to be tracked from reporting to conviction, at all stages of the law-enforcement and judicial proceedings.

Since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, Cyprus has taken steps to improve data collection and case tracking in the area of violence against women and domestic violence, while acknowledging that certain gaps remain.

At present, there is no fully systematic and centralised mechanism for the collection of disaggregated administrative data on the number of emergency barring orders and protection orders, breaches of such orders and related sanctions; or custody decisions resulting in the restriction or withdrawal of parental rights due to violence perpetrated by one parent against the other.

These data are not yet centrally recorded in a unified manner across all competent authorities. To address this gap, the National Coordinating Body on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women is advancing the development of a Unified Statistical Register under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, in cooperation with the Statistical Service of Cyprus (CYSTAT) and other relevant authorities. Once operational, the system is expected to include variables covering protective measures, breaches, sanctions, and custody-related judicial outcomes.

In parallel, Cyprus is working towards strengthening case-tracking mechanisms across the criminal justice chain. The Unified Statistical Register is being designed to enable the tracking of cases from the point of reporting through investigation, prosecution, and judicial outcome, allowing for improved monitoring, evaluation, and policy development.

Currently, the Cyprus Police maintain statistical records on reported cases of domestic violence and violence against women, including the number of incidents reported, criminal case files opened, and cases forwarded for prosecution, in accordance with the applicable legislative framework. These records constitute an important foundation for future integration into the unified system.

In addition, Educational Psychology Services and School Counselling Services follow established protocols for the identification and reporting of violence detected in educational settings, ensuring coordination with law-enforcement authorities and social services for investigation, safeguarding, and victim support.

Once implemented, the Unified Statistical Register is expected to significantly enhance Cyprus' capacity to:

produce disaggregated data on protective measures, breaches, sanctions, and custody-related decisions; and ensure comprehensive case tracking across all stages of law-enforcement and judicial proceedings, from reporting to conviction.

Part II: Information on the implementation of selected provisions in priority areas in the field of prevention, protection and prosecution

Article 12: General obligations

9. Please provide information on any primary prevention measures aiming to change mentalities and attitudes in relation to violence against women and to reduce women's exposure to gender-based violence by:

a. addressing harmful gender stereotypes and prejudices, customs and traditions based on the idea of the inferiority of women;
b. addressing the heightened exposure to gender-based violence by women and girls at risk of intersectional discrimination;
c. encouraging all members of society, including men and boys, to contribute actively to preventing all forms of violence against women covered by the scope of the Istanbul Convention, and promoting the empowerment of women and girls in all areas of life, notably their participation in politics at all levels and in the labour market.

In 2024, the Commissioner for Gender Equality was formally established through "The Commissioner for Gender Equality and Related Matters Law, 2024, [L.108(I)/2024]". The law clearly defines the Commissioner's mandate, which includes drafting and coordinating the National Strategy for Gender Equality, monitoring its implementation, promoting gender mainstreaming across public policies, and overseeing data collection. Implementation of the Strategy is carried out in close cooperation with gender focal points across all Ministries and Deputy Ministries. To ensure participatory governance, a Civil Society Platform has also been established, contributing to the interim evaluation of the Strategy.

The Strategy, approved by the Council of Ministers, aims to deconstruct harmful gender stereotypes and promote equal participation and representation of women and men in public life. Gender mainstreaming serves as the primary implementation tool, supported by a range of targeted actions designed to foster a gender-equal culture across institutions and society.

In parallel, the National Coordinating Body for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women (NCB), established under Law 115(I)/2021, implements a comprehensive framework of primary prevention measures addressing the root causes of violence. In line with the objectives of the Istanbul Convention:

(a) The NCB coordinates nationwide awareness-raising campaigns and professional training to challenge harmful gender stereotypes, discriminatory norms and practices rooted in the perceived inferiority of women.

(b) It also addresses the specific risks faced by women and girls exposed to intersectional discrimination—including migrant and refugee women, women with disabilities, victims of trafficking, and LBTQI women—through targeted outreach, culturally accessible information, and tailored prevention initiatives.

(c) Furthermore, the NCB promotes the active engagement of all members of society, including men and boys, in preventing all forms of violence against women. In the context of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the NCB is contributing to the organisation of a European conference which, inter alia, aims to explore effective ways to engage men and boys in efforts to eliminate harmful gender stereotypes and norms. Discussions among distinguished experts will lead to targeted proposals, as well as the exchange of views and good practices, highlighting the vital role that men and boys can play—particularly through education-based approaches and initiatives—in advancing gender equality and preventing violence against women.

Article 14: Education

10. Please provide a few examples of promising teaching or prevention programmes, materials, or initiatives for use in formal education (from pre-school to higher education) that:

a. educate children and youth about equality between women and men, the right to personal integrity, mutual respect and non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, including the notion of freely given consent;
b. address some or all the forms of gender-based violence against women and girls covered by the Istanbul Convention;
c. promote the inclusion of digital literacy and online safety in formal curricula as foreseen under GREVIO General Recommendation No. 1 on the digital dimension of violence against women;
d. ensure that teaching material used in school does not convey negative gender stereotypes of women and men of all ages;
e. offer tailored interventions aimed at preventing gender-based violence and empowering all girls, including those at risk of intersectional discrimination.

Cyprus has adopted a holistic and multi-layered approach to prevention through formal education, in line with Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention, by integrating gender equality, non-violence and respect for human rights across curricula and educational initiatives at all levels.

In relation to **(a)** and **(b)**, key elements are embedded in the formal curriculum, notably through strengthened Comprehensive Sexuality Education and the Health Education Curriculum, which are applied from pre-school to higher education. These cover topics such as equality between women and men, respect and non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships, the concept of personal integrity and freely given consent, as well as awareness of all forms of gender-based violence, including physical, psychological, sexual and economic violence. Students are also supported to critically identify and challenge gender stereotypes and discriminatory norms.

Regarding **(c)**, digital literacy and online safety are increasingly integrated into the educational framework. Targeted initiatives, such as seminars and programmes organised by Educational Psychology Services (including the "sexting" awareness programme), equip students and teachers with the knowledge and tools to prevent and respond to online forms of gender-based violence, including cyber violence and online sexual exploitation.

In support of **(d)**, the Interdepartmental Gender Equality Committee of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth has developed a Gender Equality Action Plan aligned with the National Strategy for Gender Equality. This includes teacher training, awareness-raising activities and continuous review processes to ensure that teaching materials and pedagogical approaches do not reproduce negative gender stereotypes. The Cyprus Pedagogical Institute further contributes through regular training programmes and seminars promoting gender-sensitive education practices.

In relation to **(e)**, tailored interventions are implemented across all educational levels, with the involvement of educational psychologists, school counsellors and specialised professionals. These interventions aim to prevent gender-based violence while empowering all girls, including those exposed to intersectional discrimination, through targeted support, counselling and inclusive educational practices.

In addition, innovative initiatives complement the formal curriculum, such as essay competitions encouraging girls' participation in decision-making, and awareness-raising campaigns (e.g. "HerStory") promoting female role models in underrepresented sectors. These initiatives contribute to fostering self-confidence, challenging stereotypes and promoting equal opportunities.

Article 15: Training of professionals

11. Please complete tables I and II included in the Appendix in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the professional groups that receive initial and in-service training on the different forms of violence against women and domestic violence. Please specify the frequency and scope of the training and whether it is compulsory.

12. Please specify if the expertise of women's rights organisations or specialist support services is integrated in the design and/or implementation of the training.

Yes. The expertise of women's rights organisations and specialist support services is systematically integrated into both the design and implementation of training programmes. This includes the use of evidence-based knowledge and survivor-centred, gender-sensitive approaches, as well as practical insights drawn from frontline experience. Experts from these organisations contribute to the development of training content and, where appropriate, participate directly in its delivery, ensuring that training remains relevant, accurate and responsive to real-world needs.

Article 16: Preventive intervention and treatment programmes

13. Please provide information on measures taken to increase the number of available preventive intervention and treatment programmes for perpetrators of domestic and sexual violence both for voluntary and mandatory attendance.

At present, Cyprus offers a limited number of intervention programmes targeting perpetrators of domestic violence. The primary programme in place is the "Proteas" programme, implemented by the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO). This programme is designed as an intervention and self-management scheme, providing services such as individual assessments and one-to-one counselling. It is delivered by a multidisciplinary team comprising clinical psychologists, forensic psychologists and social workers, and has a duration of approximately two years. The programme is addressed to adult individuals—both men and women—who exhibit violent behaviour within or beyond the family context and is accessible on a voluntary basis. Currently, such intervention programmes are not systematically available to convicted offenders within the prison system.

14. Please provide information on measures taken to:

a. increase the number of men and boys attending perpetrator programmes for domestic and sexual violence;
b. ensure that the perpetrator programmes apply standards of best practice;
c. ensure the safety of victims and co-operation with specialist support services for victims;

d. ensure that the outcomes of the programmes are monitored and evaluated.

In relation to **(a)**, efforts have been made to increase awareness and referrals to perpetrator programmes. In particular, Social Welfare Officers have received targeted information on the "PROTEAS" programme—the only specialised intervention currently available in Cyprus for perpetrators of domestic violence—with a view to enabling them to inform and refer individuals to the programme, thereby encouraging participation, particularly among men.

Regarding **(b)** and **(c)**, the PROTEAS programme is delivered by specialised professionals and operates in cooperation with Social Welfare Services. There is ongoing coordination and exchange of information

between Social Welfare Officers and PROTEAS programme staff, contributing to the application of professional standards and supporting a victim-centred approach, including consideration of victims' safety.

With respect to **(d)**, steps are being taken to further strengthen monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. In this context, the Social Welfare Services are expected to conclude a formal cooperation agreement with the PROTEAS programme by the end of 2026, which will enhance structured collaboration and oversight of outcomes.

Article 18: General obligations

15. Please provide information on any multi-agency co-operation mechanisms, structures or measures in place designed to protect and support victims of any of the forms of gender-based violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention (e.g., interdisciplinary working groups, case-management systems, cross-sectoral protocols/ guidelines…). Please describe:

a. the state agencies involved in their functioning (law-enforcement agencies, judiciary, public prosecutor, local authorities, healthcare services, social services, educational institutions etc.);

b. whether they involve specialist support services provided by civil society organisations, especially women's rights organisations;

c. how they adopt a gender-sensitive approach to violence against women, including the prioritisation of the safety of women and girl victims, their empowerment and a victim-centred approach;
d. the financial and human resources dedicated to their implementation; and
e. any available information on the evaluation of their outcome or impact.

Cyprus has established a key multi-agency structure through the creation of the "Woman's House", approved by the Council of Ministers in 2019 and operational since the end of 2020. It functions as a multi-disciplinary, one-stop-shop crisis centre based on the Family Justice Centre model, providing coordinated and integrated services to women victims of violence and their children.

(a) The Woman's House brings together key state actors and services, including social services, police, healthcare professionals and legal support, ensuring coordinated responses under one roof.

(b) It also involves specialist support services, including professionals from civil society and various relevant disciplines (e.g. psychologists, social workers, legal experts), ensuring comprehensive and specialised assistance.

(c) The operation of the Woman's House is grounded in a gender-sensitive, victim-centred approach, prioritising the safety, rights and needs of women and children. It reflects the requirements of Article 22 of the Istanbul Convention, providing accessible and specialised support services in a coordinated manner.

(d) In terms of resources, the Woman's House operates under the supervision of the Social Welfare Services of the Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, with state funding. In 2024, financial support amounted to €410,000 for its operation.

(e) While systematic evaluation mechanisms are being further developed, the establishment and continued operation of the Woman's House represent a significant step towards improving service coordination, accessibility and effectiveness. Furthermore, a formal evaluation of its operation is expected to take place in the near future, with a view to informing the design of future steps aimed at further strengthening its functioning and enhancing the quality and scope of the services provided.

16. Please detail whether any such co-operation mechanisms or structures set up for the delivery of support services for a specific form of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention is based on a legal or policy document advocating for or requiring such approaches.

Measures are being taken to further formalise the operational framework of the Woman's House. In particular, the final text of the Operating Procedures has been prepared and submitted for approval by the competent ad hoc Committee, with a view to strengthening the institutional and procedural basis of this multi-agency model.

17. Please explain whether all or some of the services of protection and support offered for victims of the different forms of violence against women are provided on the basis of a one-stop-shop approach.

Yes. The services provided through the Woman's House are based on a one-stop-shop approach. Its core objectives include:

- strengthening multi-agency coordination and cooperation among relevant services;
- providing accessible, high-quality and timely support to women and their children;
- ensuring a safe and supportive environment for victims;
- reducing delays in access to services and preventing re-victimisation;
- encouraging reporting and improving the criminal justice response; and
- enhancing overall system responsiveness to prevent recurrence of violence, including femicide.

Article 20: General support services

18. Please provide information on programmes and measures aimed at ensuring, through general services, the recovery of victims of violence, including in the health and social areas, financial assistance, education, training and assistance in finding employment and affordable and permanent housing.

Once the Social Welfare Services (SWS) are informed of an act of violence against a woman, they take all necessary measures to assist and support the victim, both in the short and long term. This support is based on an individual assessment of the victim's personal situation and needs, with a view to identifying appropriate and sustainable support and protection measures tailored to each case.

The SWS ensure that victims have access to appropriately trained or specialised personnel who can facilitate their recovery. These services include legal, medical and psychological counselling, as well as financial assistance to address specific needs related to housing, education, training and access to employment, in accordance with the provisions of the Minimum Guaranteed Income and General Social Benefits Law.

Furthermore, where there are reasonable grounds to believe that an offence of violence against a woman may have been committed, the SWS ensure that assistance, support and protection are provided to the victim, irrespective of her willingness to cooperate in criminal proceedings.

Questions specific to the public health sector:

19. Have specific measures been taken to ensure that public health services (hospitals, health centres, other) respond to the safety and medical needs of women and girls victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention on the basis of national/regional standardised protocols?

Specific measures have been taken to ensure that public health services respond effectively to the safety and medical needs of women and girls victims of violence, on the basis of standardised protocols.

Under Article 34(6) of Law 115(I)/2021 (as amended by Law 117(I)/2022), the Ministry of Health is legally obliged to establish protocols for the admission, examination and treatment of victims of violence in all healthcare facilities under its supervision, ensuring a standardised approach across public health services.

In addition, the Inter-Departmental Procedures Manual (approved by the Council of Ministers) is binding on all relevant professionals, including health services, and sets out coordinated procedures for handling cases of violence against women.

Further, a standardised protocol issued by the Ministry of Health and the State Health Services Organisation is implemented in all accident and emergency departments of public and private hospitals nationwide, ensuring consistent identification, treatment and referral of victims.

Complementary measures are included in the National Action Plan on Violence against Women (2023–2028), notably:

- the development and implementation of protocols for the management of victims of sexual violence in hospitals; and
- specialised and inter-agency training of healthcare professionals to ensure appropriate and sensitive responses to all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention. These trainings were delivered by the National Coordinating Body for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women, following a tender process and in cooperation with an external partner, targeting frontline professionals (including personal doctors, nurses, midwives, school doctors, mental health professionals and forensic experts). The programmes were completed in the first half of 2024 and aimed at strengthening early identification of cases and ensuring appropriate and effective support to victims.

20. Do such protocols detail the procedure to:

a. identify victims through screening;
b. provide treatment for all the medical needs of victims in a supportive manner;
c. collect forensic evidence and documentation;
d. ensure that a clear message of support is conveyed to the victim;
e. refer to the appropriate specialist support services that form part of a multi-agency co-operation structure; and
f. identify children who may have been exposed to domestic violence or other forms of gender-based violence against women and girls and require further support.

Yes. Standardised protocols, as established under national legislation, the Inter-Departmental Procedures Manual (IDPM), the National Action Plan (2023–2028), and the Ministry of Health / State Health Services Organisation (SHSO) protocol, comprehensively address all the specified elements as follows:

(a) Identification of victims through screening

The SHSO protocol is triggered upon the arrival of any patient where there is *reasonable suspicion or disclosure* of sexual violence. The IDPM further assigns a key role to healthcare professionals (e.g. nurses, midwives, school doctors) in the early identification of victims, including minors. The National Action Plan (2023–2028) also provides for systematic screening procedures to facilitate early identification of victims.

(b) Provision of treatment in a supportive manner

Article 34(2) of Law 115(I)/2021 ensures access to appropriately trained personnel, including medical and psychological services. The SHSO protocol specifies a victim-centred approach, including continuous nursing support throughout the patient's stay, respectful communication (calm tone, empathy, trust-building), and respect for patient preferences (including the gender of the examining professional). Victims are examined in a safe, private and appropriate environment, including child-friendly settings where relevant. This approach is further reinforced by the National Action Plan, which emphasises the provision of appropriate and supportive medical care.

The SHSO protocol further emphasises the requirement of obtaining informed written consent prior to any medical examination. In cases where the victim does not consent, this is formally documented and the right to refuse is fully respected, while care continues to be provided in a safe and private environment.

(c) Collection of forensic evidence and documentation

Article 34(7) provides for care in specialised, multidisciplinary settings in cases of sexual violence. The SHSO protocol sets out detailed procedures and documentation requirements, including patient history, physical examination findings (recorded on body diagrams), collection of biological samples, laboratory testing, preservation of clothing, and photographic documentation. The IDPM emphasises timely examination and proper recording of findings. The National Action Plan further foresees specialised training of forensic doctors, including by internationally recognised experts, to strengthen the quality and consistency of evidence collection.

(d) Conveying a clear message of support

Article 34(1) requires an individualised assessment taking into account the victim's views and needs. The SHSO protocol ensures that victims receive a full explanation of procedures prior to any examination, are treated with respect and confidentiality, and are accommodated in a quiet, separate area ensuring privacy and dignity. The IDPM guarantees victims' rights to protection, safety, support and confidentiality, alongside the provision of immediate emotional support.

(e) Referral to specialised services within a multi-agency framework

Article 34(3)–(4) provides for psychological support and establishes the coordinating role of Social Welfare Services. The SHSO protocol includes structured referral pathways, covering clinical management, prophylaxis (e.g. HIV/Hepatitis B), and onward referral, as well as the transfer of relevant information to competent services. The IDPM establishes a clear inter-agency referral system and multidisciplinary coordination among Health, Social Welfare, Police and Education services. The National Action Plan further strengthens this approach through hospital-based protocols and a multi-agency cooperation framework.

(f) Identification and support of children exposed to violence

The IDPM explicitly provides for the identification of children as victims or witnesses of domestic violence, including through police reporting and inter-agency procedures. It also ensures tailored support measures and safeguarding in line with the best interests of the child. The National Action Plan reinforces this approach, placing strong emphasis on early identification of children exposed to violence and ensuring access to specialised psychological support.

21. Please provide information on the procedures in place for the documentation and collection by actors of the public health sector of forensic evidence in relation to victims of domestic violence, victims of sexual violence, including rape, and victims of female genital mutilation.

In Cyprus, procedures for the medical examination, documentation, and collection of forensic evidence in cases of violence are implemented through close cooperation between the Cyprus Police, public health services, and other competent authorities.

The Cyprus Police has established a comprehensive protocol governing the handling of cases of sexual violence and other forms of gender-based and domestic violence. This protocol includes the referral of victims to appropriate medical services for clinical examination, as well as the documentation and collection of forensic evidence.

Within the public health sector, the Ministry of Health has initiated a specialised training programme for physicians across various medical specialties on the clinical examination of victims of sexual and physical abuse. The programme, to be implemented in 2026, aims to strengthen the capacity of the health sector to respond effectively to cases of violence by enabling trained physicians to conduct clinical examinations, document injuries and other relevant findings (including through medical records and medico-legal reports), and, where necessary, present and support their findings before judicial authorities.

The training is open to physicians from specialties including paediatrics, pathology, general/family medicine, obstetrics and gynaecology, emergency medicine, psychiatry, orthopaedics and surgery, as well as physicians working in emergency departments. This initiative was introduced in response to the limited number of forensic pathologists in Cyprus and aims to ensure that appropriately trained medical professionals are able to carry out examinations and documentation of cases of violence within the public health system.

Medical and/or forensic examinations of victims are conducted in the emergency departments of public hospitals, in accordance with established procedures. Specialised facilities such as the Woman's House and the Children's House—multidisciplinary centres established under the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence—provide psychological support, social assistance and victim advocacy.

These procedures apply to victims of different forms of violence, including domestic violence, sexual violence (including rape), and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, ensuring that victims have access to appropriate medical care while facilitating the proper documentation of injuries and the collection of forensic evidence.

According to the competent department of Archbishop Makarios III Hospital, victims of sexual violence are provided with, or advised to receive, appropriate medical care and follow-up, which may include:

- administration of emergency contraception, where indicated;
- screening for sexually transmitted infections at the time of the initial examination, with follow-up testing after six months;
- pregnancy testing; and
- follow-up medical examination at a later stage.

These procedures form part of a broader medical response aimed at safeguarding the health and well-being of victims while supporting the documentation of evidence related to violence. In addition, where appropriate, victims are referred to other competent services, including the Police, Social Welfare Services and specialised support services, in order to ensure a coordinated and multidisciplinary response.

This approach safeguards the health and safety of victims while supporting the effective documentation and investigation of incidents of violence.

22. Are all women victims of violence, irrespective of any of the grounds listed in Article 4 paragraph 3 of the Istanbul Convention, in particular asylum-seeking women, refugee women, migrant women, women from national or ethnic minorities, women with irregular residence status, women with disabilities and LBTI women, able to benefit on an equal footing from existing healthcare services? Please describe any measure taken to reduce legal or practical barriers to their accessing regular healthcare services.

Yes. All women victims of violence, irrespective of any of the grounds listed in Article 4(3) of the Istanbul Convention, are able to benefit on an equal footing from existing healthcare services. A combination of legislative guarantees and targeted measures is in place to reduce both legal and practical barriers to access.

Law 115(I)/2021, as amended by Law 117(I)/2022

This principle is directly and comprehensively established under Article 4(1) of the Law, which explicitly requires that all provisions and protection measures be applied by all involved services and NGOs without any discrimination on grounds such as sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, health status, disability, marital status, migration or refugee status, or any other status (Art. 4(1)). This provision directly covers the groups listed in Article 4(3) of the Istanbul Convention, including asylum-seeking women, refugee women, migrant women, women from national or ethnic minorities, women with disabilities and LBTI women.

Inter-Departmental Procedures Manual (IDPM)

The IDPM complements this framework by ensuring access to services based on need. It provides that Social Welfare Services offer assistance regardless of the victim's willingness to cooperate, and establishes protective procedural safeguards, such as the presumption of minority in cases of age uncertainty in order to guarantee immediate access to assistance and protection. While the IDPM does not explicitly refer to all specific vulnerable groups (e.g. migrant or LBTI women), it supports a non-discriminatory and protection-oriented approach in practice.

Standardised protocol (Ministry of Health / SHSO)

The standardised protocol issued by the Ministry of Health / SHSO applies universally to any patient presenting to Accident and Emergency Departments in Cyprus, whether public or private, without restriction. Although specific vulnerable groups are not explicitly listed, its universal application across all hospitals ensures equal access to emergency healthcare services.

National Action Plan on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women (2023–2028)

The National Action Plan includes targeted measures aimed at ensuring effective and non-discriminatory access to healthcare and support services for all women victims of violence. These measures address practical barriers faced by vulnerable groups, including migrant women, asylum seekers and women with disabilities, by promoting access to information, culturally sensitive services, specialised support, and services irrespective of residence status or engagement in criminal proceedings.

Specialised mental health services

In addition, Adult Outpatient Mental Health Units provide specialised psychiatric and clinical psychological services (both short- and long-term interventions) to a wide range of victims of gender-based violence aged 17+, including vulnerable groups such as asylum-seeking women, refugee women, migrant women,

women from national or ethnic minorities, women with irregular residence status, women with disabilities and LBTI women.

These services address cases of sexual harassment, domestic violence, rape and sexual violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced abortion and forced sterilisation. Referrals are received from government services and non-governmental organisations, while direct access is also possible. Access is free of charge, as the Ministry of Health provides a health services card to asylum seekers and refugees, thereby removing financial barriers. Continuous coordination with relevant services ensures a comprehensive and victim-centred response tailored to individual needs.

23. Please provide information on the measures in place to facilitate the identification and care of victims of violence against women in institutions for persons with disabilities and for the elderly as well as for those in closed reception facilities for asylum-seekers and to respond to their safety and protection needs.

Measures are in place to facilitate the identification and care of victims of violence among asylum seekers, including those residing in closed reception facilities, through coordinated procedures involving the Asylum Service and public health services.

In particular, following a request from the Asylum Service for the investigation of claims by asylum seekers that they have been subjected to torture or other forms of violence, the Medical and Public Health Services carry out a medical and psychiatric assessment in accordance with the Istanbul Protocol. This process ensures the systematic identification and documentation of potential victims, as well as the assessment of their health and protection needs.

Subsequently, the asylum seeker is referred to a medical board, which, on the basis of the medical and psychiatric findings, issues a formal opinion in the presence of the individual concerned. This opinion is then transmitted to the Asylum Service for further action, including the provision of appropriate protection and support measures.

24. Please provide information on how the authorities ensure that different groups of women and girls, *inter alia* women with disabilities, Roma women and other women belonging to national or ethnic minorities, migrant women and intersex persons are fully informed, understand and freely give their consent to procedures such as sterilisation and abortion.

Measures to ensure that women and girls from different groups are fully informed, understand and freely give their consent to medical procedures are based on a combination of legal safeguards, protocols, and practical measures that address both informed decision-making and the removal of barriers.

Legal framework (Law 115(I)/2021, as amended)

While the Law does not explicitly regulate consent in relation to sterilisation or abortion, it establishes key safeguards that underpin informed and free consent. In particular, the definition of "coercion" (Article 2) includes the exploitation of a vulnerable position, abuse of power or trust, and actions aimed at undermining a person's free will, thereby implicitly prohibiting non-consensual medical procedures. In addition, Article 35(2) requires written consent for engagement with services, reinforcing the principle that participation and decisions must be based on informed and voluntary agreement.

Standardised protocol (Ministry of Health / SHSO)

The standardised protocol issued by the Ministry of Health ensures that consent is obtained in a structured and patient-centred manner. Patients are fully informed of all procedures in advance, and informed written consent is required prior to any examination. If consent is refused, this is formally recorded, and the patient's

decision is fully respected. The protocol further supports autonomous decision-making by ensuring privacy, dignity and respect, and by allowing patients to choose the gender of the healthcare professionals involved.

National Action Plan on Violence against Women (2023–2028)

The National Action Plan introduces practical measures to ensure that all women, particularly those from vulnerable groups, are able to understand information and make informed decisions. These include the provision of information in multiple languages**,** the use of interpreters and intercultural mediators**,** and the promotion of culturally sensitive sexual and reproductive health services, including in cases such as female genital mutilation. These measures specifically address barriers faced by migrant women, asylum seekers, women with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, facilitating informed consent in practice.

Inter-Departmental Procedures Manual (IDPM)

The IDPM provides safeguards in specific contexts, particularly for children, including provisions that override parental consent in cases of suspected abuse in order to protect the best interests of the child. While it does not directly regulate consent for sterilisation or abortion, it reinforces a protective and needs-based approach.

Article 22: Specialist support services

25. Please describe the type of specialist support services dedicated to women victims of the forms of gender-based violence covered by the Istanbul Convention (e.g., stalking, sexual harassment and domestic violence, including their digital dimension, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, forced sterilisation, forced abortion), including those specialist support services providing:

a. shelters and/or other forms of safe accommodation
b. medical support
c. short- and long-term psychological counselling
d. trauma care
e. legal counselling
f. outreach services
g. telephone helpline
h. other forms of support (e.g. socio-economic empowerment programmes, online assistance platforms etc.)

Specialist support services for women victims of gender-based violence covered by the Istanbul Convention are provided primarily through the Social Welfare Services (SWS), in close cooperation with non-governmental organizations. Victims are entitled to financial, psychological and social support irrespective of their willingness to participate in criminal proceedings. All services are delivered in a culturally sensitive manner and in a language understood by the victim, including through dedicated information leaflets.

a. Shelters and/or other forms of safe accommodation

The Government provides funding, through the Grants in Aid Scheme, to the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family for the operation of three shelters for women victims of domestic violence and their children. In addition, victims may access housing support through the Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI), which includes a rent allowance, as well as emergency financial assistance provided by SWS to address immediate accommodation needs.

b. Medical support

Victims are referred, as appropriate, to health services, including mental health services. In cases of rape, victims from all districts are referred to the Women's House, which provides coordinated multidisciplinary support, including medical services.

c. Short- and long-term psychological counselling

Psychological support is provided through Social Welfare Services and in cooperation with specialized NGOs. Victims are referred to appropriate counselling services depending on their needs.

d. Trauma care

Trauma-informed support is ensured through specialized services such as the Women's House and through referrals to mental health services, ensuring a coordinated and victim-centred approach.

e. Legal counselling

In accordance with Article 6 of the Law establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime and Article 19(2) of the 2021 Law on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, Social Welfare Services ensure that victims receive comprehensive information on their rights, available legal options and protection measures.

f. Outreach services

Social Welfare Officers provide continuous guidance and follow-up support, including referrals to competent services such as health services, employment services and specialised NGOs. Particular attention is given to women with disabilities, whose needs are assessed in cooperation with all relevant authorities and organizations.

g. Telephone helpline

A dedicated helpline operated by the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family is funded by the Government and provides immediate support, guidance and referral services to victims of domestic violence.

h. Other forms of support (including socio-economic empowerment and online assistance)
Social Welfare Services provide long-term support aimed at social and economic empowerment. This includes:

- **Financial support**: Access to the Guaranteed Minimum Income, with prioritized processing of applications submitted by victims. Emergency financial assistance may also be granted to cover basic needs.
- **Employment support**: While not directly responsible for employment rehabilitation, Social Welfare Officers guide victims towards the Employment Department or refer them to appropriate employment services.
- **Specialized support for women with disabilities**: Individual assessments are carried out with the involvement of all competent bodies, ensuring access to tailored services.

26. Which type of specialist support service includes child psychologists or other professionals specialised in supporting children who have been exposed to domestic violence,

including violence perpetrated by one parent against the other?

The Social Welfare Officers, within the interdepartmental and/or multidisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary collaboration framework, and within provision of services required in the event of joint-handling of an incident of violence against women, may exchange information regarding the victim of violence and they do so within the existing legal framework of certain acts of data processing as well as based on co-operation protocols.

27. Do specialist support services exist that cater to the specific needs of migrant women and girls or those belonging to national or ethnic minorities who are victims of violence against women, including women and girls seeking asylum and those granted refugee or international protection status?

Specialist support services exist that cater to the specific needs of migrant women and girls, including applicants for international protection, asylum seekers, and those granted refugee or international protection status. These services are primarily provided through the Social Welfare Services, in coordination with the Asylum Service and other competent authorities.

High priority is given to women victims of violence, including migrant women and girls, with access to housing arrangements, accommodation schemes and, where necessary, specialised shelters. Following a Council of Ministers Decision dated 7/10/2020, the living expenses of families of Applicants for International Protection with minor children (irrespective of vulnerability) and vulnerable persons — as defined in Article 9KG of the Refugee Laws 2000–2020 (including victims of violence) — are covered in temporary accommodation (hotels and/or other facilities) for a period of one (1) to three (3) months.

Furthermore, vulnerability assessments and screening procedures for victims of violence against women are systematically carried out upon arrival at the Pournara Reception Centre by the Asylum Service, ensuring early identification and referral to appropriate support services.

To ensure accessibility and inclusiveness, the application form for the provision of Material Reception Conditions has been translated into six (6) languages, and an information leaflet is provided to inform applicants about their rights. This approach aims to improve access to services, reduce waiting times and prevent overcrowding at the Lakatamia Welfare Offices, thereby minimizing the risk of further victimisation of migrants.

Article 25: Support to victims of sexual violence

28. Please indicate if any of the below services are available in your territory:

a. sexual violence referral centres (e.g. specialist support services offering immediate medical care, forensic examination and crisis intervention to victims of sexual violence);

Sexual violence referral services are available through the Women's House, to which rape victims from all districts are referred.

b. rape crisis centres (e.g. specialist support services offering long-term counselling, therapy and support to victims of sexual violence regardless of whether the sexual violence occurred recently or in the past);
c. any other specialised services offering short-term and/or long-term medical, forensic and psycho-social support to victims of sexual violence.

Additional specialised services providing short- and/or long-term medical, forensic and psycho-social support are available.

Please provide information on the number of such services and the number of women and girls supported annually.

29. Please indicate the procedures and time frames for collecting and storing forensic evidence in cases of sexual violence (e.g. existence of protocols, use of rape kits) in the relevant services.

Relevant procedures, including protocols for the collection and storage of forensic evidence in cases of sexual violence, are in place within the competent services.

30. Please describe any applicable access criteria for use of these services (e.g. affiliation with a national health insurance, residence status, prior reporting of the case to the police, other).

According to Article 4(1) of the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and for Related Matters Law (L.115(I)/2021), all measures for the protection and promotion of victims' rights are applied by all competent services and non-governmental organizations without discrimination on any grounds, including sex, gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, state of health, disability, marital status, migrant or refugee status, or any other status.

Furthermore, pursuant to Article 18(a) of the same Law, competent services and NGOs are required to treat victims with full respect for their dignity and to ensure that support is tailored to their individual circumstances, including their age and level of maturity, irrespective of their involvement in criminal proceedings.

Article 31: Custody, visitation rights and safety

31. Please indicate whether under national law incidents of violence covered under the scope of the convention must be taken into account in the determination of custody and visitation rights of children. If this is the case, please clarify to what extent these provisions:

a. explicitly list domestic violence as a criterion to be taken into account when deciding on custody and/or visitation rights in the applicable legislation. If so, please clarify whether this criterion is/has been applied in practice in the determination of both custody and visitation rights;
b. acknowledge the harm that witnessing violence by one parent against the other has on a child;
c. ensure that custody with the non-violent parent is preferred over foster-care;
d. foresee the screening of civil proceedings related to the determination of custody or visitation rights for a history of domestic violence among the parties;
e. foresee that judges conduct risk assessments or request the disclosure of risk assessments drawn up by law-enforcement agencies or other competent stakeholders for victims of domestic violence, with a view to taking them into account and determining the best interest of the child in the context of custody and visitation decisions.

Under Cypriot national law, incidents of violence falling within the scope of the Istanbul Convention must be taken into account in the determination of custody and visitation rights of children, insofar as they affect the best interests, safety, and well-being of the child.

This obligation arises from domestic family law legislation, the Violence in the Family legislation, and Cyprus' binding international obligations.

The extent of these provisions is clarified as follows:

a. Explicit listing of domestic violence as a criterion

Domestic violence is not always expressly listed as a standalone criterion in family law legislation governing custody and visitation. However, it is substantively and consistently incorporated through:

- the assessment of parental suitability,
- the evaluation of the child's physical and psychological safety,
- the determination of the child's best interests.

In judicial practice, domestic violence is taken into account in both custody and visitation determinations, particularly where it is established through criminal proceedings, protection orders, police reports, or social welfare assessments.

In addition, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order has prepared a bill, which is now pending before the competent Parliamentary Committee of Legal Affairs, providing that domestic violence incidents must be taken into consideration by the Court when dealing with cases and issuing court orders that relate to child custody and visitation rights of the parents. Further to this, the bill includes specific provisions for ensuring that such violence incidents are taken into consideration by the Courts in the context of exercising their power to issue Supervised Visitation Orders or to grant a modification or recall of an existing order of custody/visitation. The bill is now pending before the competent Parliamentary Committee of Legal Affairs; therefore, the relevant provisions are not yet implemented. Discussions before the pertinent Parliamentary Committee are at a preliminary stage, there it is not expected that the bill is to be submitted to the Plenary for adoption before mid of 2026.

b. Acknowledgement of harm to a child witnessing violence

Cypriot law and jurisprudence recognise that witnessing violence by one parent against the other constitutes psychological harm to the child, even where the child is not the direct victim of the abuse.
Such exposure is treated as a serious factor adversely affecting the child's emotional development and sense of security and is taken into account by the Family Court. Also, Further to the above, the bill provides also that in case the other parent is placed (together with the child) at a shelter for victims of domestic violence, it shall be deemed a special circumstance justifying the issuance of a Supervised Visitation Order.

c. Preference for custody with the non-violent parent

The legal framework and judicial practice favour placing the child in the care of the non-violent parent, provided that parent is otherwise suitable.
Placement in foster care or alternative care is considered a measure of last resort, only where neither parent can adequately safeguard the child's welfare.

d. Screening of civil proceedings for a history of domestic violence

Civil proceedings before the Family Court allow for the examination and disclosure of any history of domestic violence between the parties.

This may occur through:

- submissions by the parties,
- criminal court records,
- police reports,
- social welfare investigations.

Furthermore, according to the law and relevant case law, where the child's age and level of maturity so permit, the Family Court is obliged to hear the child's views through a direct judicial interview with the child. The court must take the child's expressed views into account when determining matters affecting the child, in line with the principle of the child's best interests.

While there is no separate mandatory preliminary screening mechanism, judges are empowered and

expected to inquire into allegations or evidence of violence where relevant.

e. Risk assessments and consideration of expert reports

Family Court judges may:

- conduct their own judicial assessment of risk based on the evidence before them; and/or
- request or admit risk assessments prepared by police, Social Welfare Services, psychologists, psychiatrists, or other competent professionals.

Such assessments are taken into account in determining the best interests of the child, particularly in decisions relating to custody arrangements, supervised visitation, or restrictions on parental contact.

32. Please describe the measures in place to ensure that judges, court-appointed experts and other legal professionals:

a. have sufficient knowledge of the law and understanding of the dynamics of intimate partner violence, including the psychological impact of witnessing violence on the child;
b. duly take into account victims' grievances in cases of domestic violence and hear children victims/witnesses, where applicable, in the determination of custody and visitation rights; Yes, as above 32(a)
c. are informed of the unfoundedness of notions of "parental alienation"[2] or analogous concepts that are used to overshadow the violence and control exerted by perpetrators of domestic violence over women and their children.

33. Please provide details on the procedures in place to ensure that the competent court for family-related issues co-operate/communicate with other relevant bodies/professionals, including, but not limited to, criminal courts, law-enforcement agencies, health and education authorities and specialist women's support services when taking decisions on custody and visitation or when offering family law mediation. Please specify whether the law provides a legal framework for any of the procedures in place.

The above bill provides also that the Court, when taking decisions on custody and visitation, may give instructions for the convening of the District Multidisciplinary Team (which is consisted by various government services e.g. social welfare officers, mental health officers, police officers etc.), for the purpose of providing an opinion to the Court regarding the suitability of the parents in relation to the exercise of parental care of the child, and submitting recommendations as to the necessity of taking any interim measures.

The applicable legislation provides for a legal framework that allows and, in principle, encourages cooperation and information-sharing between the competent family courts and other relevant bodies and professionals, including criminal courts, law enforcement agencies, health and education authorities, and specialist support services. Such provisions are intended to ensure that decisions on custody, visitation, and family law mediation are taken with due regard to the best interests and safety of the child and the parties involved.

However, there are no established, structured, or routinely applied procedures that ensure regular information exchange or coordinated decision-making across institutions. Cooperation tends to be ad hoc and limited, rather than institutionalised or multidisciplinary.

In practice, the only consistent form of information exchange occurs through notifications provided by the Social Insurance Services to the family court during the hearing of a case. Beyond this notification, there is no regular or formal mechanism ensuring that family courts receive input from criminal courts, law enforcement authorities, health or education services, or specialised women's support services when deciding on custody, visitation, or mediation matters.

34. Please provide detailed information on the procedures in place (including, if applicable,

the relevant personnel used, the specific infrastructure available), in the exercise of custody and visitation rights, to:

a. eliminate the risk for the abused parent to be subjected to further violence;
b. eliminate the risk for the child to witness or experience violence;
c. ensure that the responsible personnel are trained and that the facilities are suited to enable safe supervised visitation.

In Cyprus, the Family Court applies a combination of judicial safeguards, institutional procedures, and inter-agency cooperation to ensure the safety of the abused parent and the child during the exercise of custody and visitation rights. These measures are implemented in accordance with domestic legislation and Cyprus' obligations under the Istanbul Convention.

a. Measures to eliminate the risk of further violence against the abused parent

The following procedures are applied, depending on the circumstances of each case:

- Restriction, suspension or regulation of contact between the abusive parent and the child, where necessary, to prevent indirect or direct contact with the abused parent.
- Supervised visitation orders, ensuring that any contact takes place in the presence of a neutral third party.
- Protection orders and restraining orders issued by criminal or family courts, which are taken into account and coordinated with custody and visitation arrangements.
- Staggered arrival and departure arrangements during child handovers, to avoid any physical encounter between the parents.
- Involvement of Social Welfare Services, which monitor compliance and provide support to the abused parent.
- Use of police assistance, where necessary, to ensure enforcement of court orders.

These measures aim to prevent re-victimisation and to ensure that custody or visitation arrangements do not expose the abused parent to further harm.

b. Measures to eliminate the risk for the child to witness or experience violence

To protect the child from exposure to violence, the Family Court may order:

- Supervised visitation in controlled and neutral environments, preventing exposure to conflict or abusive behaviour.
- Suspension of visitation rights, where there is a serious or ongoing risk to the child's safety or psychological well-being.
- Psychological assessments and monitoring, conducted by child psychologists or mental health professionals, to evaluate the child's emotional state and needs.
- Social investigation reports prepared by Social Welfare Officers, assessing family dynamics and potential risks.
- Tailored visitation conditions, such as limited duration, frequency, or specific behavioural requirements imposed on the visiting parent.

These procedures are designed to ensure that the child's right to safety and emotional security prevails over parental contact where the two are in conflict.

35. Please indicate whether national provisions foresee the withdrawal of parental rights in criminal sentences if the best interest of the child, which may include the safety of the victim, cannot be guaranteed in any other way.

Article 48: Prohibition of mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes or sentencing

Criminal law:

36. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes are prohibited in criminal proceedings related to cases involving the different forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention.

Measures are in place to ensure that mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes are not imposed in criminal proceedings related to cases of violence against women, in line with Article 48 of the Istanbul Convention.

Firstly, the legal framework clearly distinguishes criminal proceedings from any form of alternative dispute resolution. Criminal proceedings concerning offences of violence against women are conducted by the competent prosecuting authorities (Attorney General and Police) and are not dependent on any consensual process between the parties.

Secondly, mediation in family matters, as regulated by the Family Mediation Law of 2019, is strictly voluntary. Participation of the parties is based on their free will and consent, and the mediator does not impose any binding outcome. Importantly, the same law includes specific safeguards in cases involving violence. The mediator is required to assess whether violence has occurred or may occur between the parties and to take into account any imbalance of power. Where it is determined that, under the circumstances of the case, mediation is not appropriate—particularly in situations involving violence or coercion—the mediator must terminate the mediation procedure.

Furthermore, acts of domestic violence constitute criminal offences under the relevant legislation and are subject to investigation and prosecution within the criminal justice system. This ensures that such cases are addressed through criminal proceedings and not diverted to alternative dispute resolution mechanisms.

Overall, the legal framework ensures that mediation is neither mandatory nor suitable in cases of violence against women, and explicitly provides safeguards to prevent its application where violence or power imbalances are identified.

[2] In its baseline evaluation reports GREVIO has consistently referred to the statement of December 2017 by the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP), which draws attention to the fact that the concepts of “parental alienation syndrome” (PAS) and “parental alienation” (PA) are unsuitable for use in any psychotherapeutic practice. This statement by the EAP, which is made up of 128 psychotherapy organisations from 41 European countries, acts as a guiding principle for European psychotherapists. Moreover, in February 2020 the World Health Organisation (WHO) published its new draft International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision (ICD-11) and confirmed that it had removed parental alienation from index term in the final ICD-11. See also the Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Discrimination and Violence against Women (EDVAW Platform) statement of May 2019 “Intimate partner violence against women is an essential factor in the determination of child custody, say women’s rights experts”.

37. Where voluntary alternative dispute resolution processes exist for any criminal offences within the remit of the Istanbul Convention, such as conciliation or mediation, please provide information on the safeguards incorporated to ensure the free and informed consent of the victim to such processes and the measures taken to avoid that direct or indirect pressure is placed on the victim. Please also state whether the offer of alternative dispute resolution processes may result in the discontinuation of criminal investigation and prosecution or other consequences for the victim.

Cyprus fully complies with Article 48(1) and (2) of the Istanbul Convention.

In particular, mandatory alternative dispute resolution processes are not permitted in criminal proceedings concerning violence against women. Criminal offences falling within the scope of the Convention are investigated and prosecuted by the competent authorities independently of any consensual process between the parties, and criminal proceedings are not subject to diversion to mediation or conciliation.

Where voluntary alternative dispute resolution mechanisms exist in the legal framework, their use is subject to strict safeguards ensuring the free and informed consent of the victim**.** Mediation is based exclusively on voluntary participation, and the mediator must ensure that all parties understand the nature of the procedure and participate freely, without any form of direct or indirect pressure.

Crucially, the law establishes clear protective safeguards in cases involving violence**.** Mediators are under a legal obligation to assess whether violence has occurred or may occur, as well as whether there is any imbalance of power between the parties. Where such circumstances are identified, or where a party is not able or willing to participate freely and fully, the mediation procedure must be terminated**.** In addition, mediators are explicitly required to prevent manipulative, threatening or coercive behaviour and to ensure that no pressure is exercised on the victim during the process. Furthermore, any disclosure indicating violence triggers the possibility of referral to the competent authorities, ensuring that such information is not contained within the mediation process.

Importantly, the availability or offer of alternative dispute resolution does not result in the discontinuation of criminal investigation or prosecution, nor does it produce any adverse consequences for the victim.

38. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure that alternative dispute resolution processes such as mediation or procedures which can be considered tantamount to the latter are not used in family law proceedings such as divorce proceedings or proceedings related to custody and visitation of children, where there is a history of violence.

Cyprus ensures that alternative dispute resolution processes, including mediation in family law proceedings, are not applied in practice in cases where there is a history of violence, in line with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention.

Under the Family Mediation Law of 2019, mediation is strictly voluntary and requires the free and informed consent of the parties. The law explicitly incorporates violence-sensitive safeguards**.** Mediators are required, both at the outset and throughout the procedure, to assess whether violence has occurred or may occur, as well as to identify any imbalance of power that may affect the ability of the parties to participate freely. Where it is established that mediation is not appropriate due to the existence or risk of violence, coercion or inequality between the parties, the mediator is under a legal obligation to terminate the procedure**.** Moreover, mediators must ensure that no party is subjected to direct or indirect pressure and must actively prevent manipulative, threatening or intimidating conduct during the process.

Articles 49 and 50: General obligations and immediate response, prevention and protection

39. Please describe the human, financial and technical resources provided to law enforcement agencies to diligently respond to and investigate all cases of violence against women, including their digital dimension.

Cyprus has taken targeted measures to ensure that law enforcement agencies are adequately equipped, in terms of human, financial and technical resources, to respond promptly and effectively to all cases of violence against women, including those with a digital dimension.

In particular, specialised District Units have been established within the Police to ensure the prompt, coordinated and effective investigation of such cases. These Units operate with a victim-centred approach, where the protection and safety of victims constitute a primary consideration.

The personnel assigned to these Units receive specialised training, including on gender-based violence and victim-sensitive approaches, equipping them with the necessary expertise to handle complex cases, including those involving digital elements.

In addition, operational procedures followed by these Units are designed to ensure:

- a gender-sensitive and trauma-informed approach,
- the protection of victims' privacy and dignity, and
- the creation of an environment in which victims feel safe to report incidents and cooperate with the authorities.

These measures are supported by the necessary organisational and technical arrangements within the Police, ensuring that cases of violence against women are handled diligently, with due attention to their specific characteristics, including online or technology-facilitated forms of violence.

40. Which measures have been taken to ensure that the premises of police stations are accessible and suitable for receiving and interviewing victims of violence while ensuring their privacy? Is it possible to report cases of violence against women elsewhere than in police stations, including through digital means?

Cyprus has introduced measures to ensure that police premises are accessible, safe and suitable for receiving and interviewing victims of violence against women, while fully respecting their privacy and dignity.

In particular, special, secure and accessible spaces have been established within police stations for the taking of statements. These spaces are designed to:

- provide a confidential and safe environment,
- ensure privacy during interviews, and
- reduce the risk of secondary victimisation.

Furthermore, pursuant to orders issued by the Chief of Police, victims of crime must be treated with sensitivity, discretion and respect, and their personal data must be fully protected. This ensures that victims feel safe and supported in all interactions with the Police.

In addition to police stations, victims have the possibility to report incidents through alternative channels, facilitating access to justice. Reporting may take place:

- through direct contact with the specialised Police Units, and
- through other available means of communication with the Police, including digital communication channels, where applicable.

41. Please explain whether specialist police/prosecution units exist to investigate and prosecute violence against women and specify:

a. which forms of violence against women they are competent for;
b. whether such units exist in all police/prosecution districts throughout the country.

Specialised police units have been established to investigate cases of violence against women, ensuring a dedicated and coordinated response in line with national legislation.

a. Competence of specialised units

At the district level, specialised police units operate within the six Police Divisions and are responsible for investigating and handling cases of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women**,** in accordance with the relevant national legal framework on gender-based violence.

Cases that fall outside the scope of the legislation on domestic violence and violence against women are investigated by the Crime Investigation Departments (CIDs) or, depending on the seriousness of the offence, by local Police Stations**.** This ensures that all forms of violence are addressed through appropriate investigative structures.

b. Geographical coverage

Such specialised units are established across all six Police Divisions of the country, ensuring nationwide coverage and enabling consistent handling of cases of violence against women at the district level.

42. Please describe any measures taken to ensure swift investigation into and effective prosecution of cases of violence against women and domestic violence such as prioritisation through fast-tracking, benchmarking or other initiatives, without compromising the thoroughness of the investigation.

Measures have been put in place to ensure the swift investigation and effective handling of cases of violence against women and domestic violence**,** without compromising the thoroughness of investigations.

In particular, specialised District Units have been established with the explicit aim of ensuring the prompt and appropriate investigation of such cases. These Units operate in close coordination with other competent authorities, thereby facilitating a coordinated and efficient response throughout the investigative and prosecutorial process.

The operation of these Units reflects a prioritisation of cases of violence against women, with procedures designed to accelerate response times and ensure timely handling**,** while at the same time maintaining the necessary level of diligence and thoroughness required in criminal investigations.

At the same time, the approach adopted is victim-centred**,** placing strong emphasis on victim protection and support throughout the process, in line with national legislation and established best practices. This ensures that efforts to expedite investigations do not compromise the quality of evidence gathering or the rights and safety of the victim.

43. Are any measures taken to encourage women and girls who experience any of the forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention to report incidents of violence to the authorities? Please provide examples of any measures taken to instill confidence in law-enforcement officials, including those aimed at addressing any language or procedural difficulties they encounter when lodging complaints, in particular those of migrant women, asylum-seeking women, women with disabilities, women with addiction issues and other women and girls at risk of intersectional discrimination.

Through a range of educational programmes, public lectures, awareness-raising and information campaigns, as well as the use of social media, ongoing efforts are made to encourage victims to report incidents of violence, whether experienced by themselves or witnessed in their environment.

"ELPIS" Application

The "ELPIS" application has been developed to provide an easy, fast, and secure means of communication with the Police in emergency situations where other forms of communication are not possible. It offers victims of domestic violence a safe and discreet way to contact the Cyprus Police without the need for a phone call or physical presence at a Police Station.

Access to the application is granted exclusively through account creation by the Cyprus Police. With a single tap, users can discreetly alert the Police, transmitting a notification along with their exact location to ensure a prompt response—particularly in situations where the perpetrator is present and other forms of communication may pose a risk.

The application is free of charge, user-friendly, and contributes to enhanced response times by the Police, thereby helping to prevent more serious incidents. For proper functionality, an internet connection or mobile data, as well as activated location services, are required (www.police.gov.cy).

Furthermore, additional measures will be implemented to further encourage women and girls to report incidents of violence, including:

- targeted training for police officers and social workers to ensure a victim-centred and sensitive approach;
- access to interpreters and simplified reporting procedures;
- specialized support for migrant women, asylum seekers, women with disabilities, and women with substance abuse issues through shelters and counselling services.

44. Please indicate whether protocols/standard operating procedures or guidelines for police officers are in place providing guidance on how to receive reports, interview victims, investigate and collect evidence in cases of rape and sexual violence, domestic violence, psychological violence, stalking, sexual harassment (including their online manifestation), forced marriage, female genital mutilation and forced sterilisation/abortion. Please provide information on how the authorities ensure the comprehensive collection of evidence beyond the victim's testimony.

Action protocols and memoranda of cooperation have been established with other competent authorities to ensure the effective and coordinated handling of all incidents of domestic violence, violence against women, sexual offences, and harassment. In addition, a comprehensive legislative framework is in place governing all matters related to the investigation, prosecution, and protection of victims in such cases.

45. Please describe the efforts taken to identify and address all factors that contribute to attrition (the process whereby cases drop out of the criminal justice system) in cases of violence against women and domestic violence.

Cyprus has taken a range of measures aimed at identifying and addressing factors contributing to attrition in cases of violence against women and domestic violence, with a focus on victim protection, effective case management and institutional coordination.

In particular, the establishment of specialised District Police Units has strengthened the prompt, coordinated and victim-centred handling of cases, reducing the risk of cases dropping out at early stages. These Units operate in close cooperation with other competent authorities, ensuring continuity in the handling of cases and facilitating information exchange.

A key priority of the system is the enhancement of victims' trust and engagement with the criminal justice process, through:

- the application of victim-centred and gender-sensitive procedures,
- the safeguarding of victims' privacy and dignity, and
- the provision of clear information on rights, procedures and available support services.

Furthermore, the legal framework ensures that victims are recognised as such irrespective of their participation in criminal proceedings, thereby reducing pressure on victims and contributing to sustained engagement with the process.

Additional measures addressing attrition include:

- the involvement of multiple competent services (Police, Social Welfare Services, health services and NGOs) through a multidisciplinary approach,
- the provision of support services (psychological, social and legal) to victims throughout the process, and
- the adoption of procedures aimed at minimising secondary victimisation, including sensitive handling of statements and evidence.

46. Please indicate if legislative or other measures have been taken to issue a renewable residence permit to migrant women who have become a victim of any of the forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention if the competent authority considers that their stay is necessary for the purpose of their co-operation in investigation or criminal proceedings.[3]

Yes. Cyprus has taken legislative and policy measures to enable migrant women victims of violence to remain in the country where their stay is necessary for the purposes of their protection and their cooperation with competent authorities.

In particular, in 2023, the Republic of Cyprus lifted its reservation to Article 59 of the Istanbul Convention, thereby strengthening the legal framework concerning the residence status of victims and aligning it with the Convention's requirements. This development allows for the provision of residence-related protection measures to victims whose immigration status depends on that of their spouse or partner.

Following the lifting of the reservation, competent authorities may, in cases where violence has been reported and supported by credible elements, grant migrant women victims a temporary and renewable

extension of stay, enabling them to lawfully remain in the country for the duration of the investigation and criminal proceedings, in coordination with the prosecuting authorities.

This measure is applied in light of the victim's individual circumstances, including their safety and their need to cooperate in criminal proceedings, and constitutes an important safeguard to ensure that victims are not discouraged from reporting violence due to fears related to their residence status.

More broadly, this framework:

- enables victims to cooperate effectively with law enforcement and judicial authorities,
- removes dependency on the perpetrator in relation to residence status, and
- reduces the risk of victims withdrawing from proceedings due to fear of deportation or loss of legal stay.

Overall, the lifting of the reservation to Article 59 has had a direct and positive impact on migrant women victims, particularly those in dependent residence situations, by facilitating their access to protection and justice without immigration-related barriers.

Article 51: Risk assessment and risk management

47. Please describe any standardised and mandatory risk assessment tools in use by all relevant authorities in all regions for forms of violence against women such as stalking, violence committed in the name of so-called honour and domestic violence and to what extent these tools are being used in practice to assess the lethality risk, the seriousness of the situation and the risk of repeated violence with a view to preventing further violence. Please specify whether the following elements are considered as red flags when carrying out the risk assessment:

a. the possession of or access to firearms by the perpetrator;
b. the filing for separation/divorce by the victim or the break-up of the relationship;
c. pregnancy;
d. previous acts of violence;
e. the prior issue of a restrictive measure;
f. threats made by the perpetrator to take away common children;
g. acts of sexual violence;
h. threats to kill the victim and her children;
i. threat of suicide;
j. coercive and controlling behaviour.

The protection of victims constitutes a matter of utmost priority for the Cyprus Police. In accordance with the applicable protocols, in cases involving domestic violence or violence against women, the primary objective of law enforcement authorities is to ensure the immediate and effective safeguarding of the victim.

In this context, police officers use risk assessment tools during the investigation of domestic violence cases, including:

1. Risk Assessment Protocol for violence between former or current spouses, cohabitants, or partners, which constitutes a key tool completed within the framework of the investigation to support proper assessment and evaluation of each case.
2. Individual Risk Assessment of the victim, conducted to determine any special protection needs, assess the risk of death, the severity of the situation, and the likelihood of repeated violence.

Based on the outcome of these assessments, the Social Welfare Services are promptly informed, as well as relevant non-governmental organisations, such as the Association for the Prevention and Handling of

Violence in the Family (SPAVO) or the Children's House, depending on the specific circumstances of each case.

Where deemed necessary, the Police may submit an application to the competent Court for the issuance of an interim order, either for the removal of the victim to a safe location or for the exclusion of the alleged perpetrator from the shared residence. Furthermore, where reasonable grounds exist, the Police may issue an arrest warrant against the suspect and seek a remand order, in order to ensure both the protection of the victim and the integrity of the investigation.

In all cases, victims are informed of their rights, and every effort is made to avoid re-victimisation during the investigation process. A multidisciplinary, victim-centred approach is applied in close cooperation with Social Workers.

In cases where the suspect is known to possess firearms, the Police take immediate measures for the seizure of such weapons, in accordance with applicable legal provisions and in the interest of public safety and victim protection.

The framework governing police action includes, inter alia, the following protocols:

- Protocol of Procedures for the Investigation of Rape and Sexual Abuse Cases
- Protocol of Procedures for Incidents of Domestic Violence
- Risk Assessment Protocol in Cases of Intimate Partner Violence
- Protocol of Procedures for the Operation of the House of Children, which establishes the working framework for all professionals involved, applying evidence-based and child-friendly practices in the management of child sexual abuse cases, while ensuring the best interests of the child and the proper administration of justice.

48. Please specify how effective co-operation is ensured between the different statutory authorities and specialist women's support services in making risk assessments and whether the risks identified are managed by law enforcement agencies on the basis of individual safety plans that include also the safety of the victim's children.

Effective co-operation between relevant authorities and specialist support services in the context of risk assessment is ensured through an interdepartmental and multidisciplinary framework.

Social Welfare Officers operate within this framework, which supports the joint handling of incidents of violence against women, allowing for:

- exchange of relevant information between competent services,
- coordination based on established co-operation protocols, and
- compliance with the applicable legal framework on data processing.

Based on the outcome of risk assessments carried out by the Police, Social Welfare Services and specialised NGOs (such as SPAVO or the Children's House) are promptly informed and engaged, ensuring a coordinated and continuous response.

Risk management is undertaken in a victim-centred and multidisciplinary manner, with measures including:

- referrals to support services,
- provision of protection and safe accommodation where necessary, and
- judicial protection measures (e.g. interim orders or removal of the perpetrator).

49. Please describe the efforts made to analyse retrospectively all cases of gender-based killings of women, in the context of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women to identify the existence of possible systemic gaps in the institutional response of the authorities with the aim of preventing such acts in the future.

Cyprus has taken important legislative and institutional steps to strengthen its response to gender-based killings of women and to address potential systemic gaps in the prevention and handling of such cases.

A key development in this regard was the amendment of the Law on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (L.115(I)/2021) in 2022, through the introduction of the specific criminal offence of femicide (Article 10A). The explicit criminalisation of femicide as a distinct offence constitutes a landmark development, as it formally recognises the gender-based nature of killings of women and enhances the visibility of such crimes within the criminal justice system.

The introduction of femicide as a separate offence:

- enables more accurate classification and recording of cases,
- facilitates the systematic analysis of the underlying factors and patterns leading to such killings, and
- supports the identification of possible institutional or procedural gaps in the response of authorities.

At the operational level, the Police apply risk assessment tools and established protocols in cases of violence against women, with a view to identifying high-risk situations and preventing escalation. These include structured risk assessment procedures for intimate partner violence and domestic violence cases, as well as multidisciplinary cooperation mechanisms involving Social Welfare Services and specialised support services.

In cases involving serious or lethal outcomes, the existing framework for handling violence against women, including risk assessment procedures, inter-agency cooperation and victim-centred approaches, provides the basis for reviewing the handling of cases and drawing lessons for improving future responses.

Article 52: Emergency barring orders

50. Have any legislative or other measures been taken to introduce and/or amend the legal framework governing emergency barring orders in order to align it with the requirements of Article 52? If yes, please specify whether:

a. emergency barring orders may remain in place until a victim can obtain a court-ordered protection order in order to ensure that gaps in the protection do not arise;
b. support and advice are made available to women victims of domestic violence in a pro-active manner by the authority competent to issue an emergency barring order;

[3] This question refers to the obligation contained in Article 59, paragraph 3. State parties that have entered a reservation in respect of Article 59 may reply to this question but are not required to do so.

c. children are specifically included in contact bans issued under the emergency barring order;
d. any exceptions to contact bans are made and in which circumstances.

51. Please provide information on the measures taken to enforce emergency barring orders and on responses to any violations of such orders.

The decision to issue Orders rests with the Court following an application either by the Police or by other competent Services.

With regard to Law 115(I)/2021, the following orders are provided:

1. TEMPORARY ORDER FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE VICTIM (Article 30)

The Court may, upon application by the victim, the Police, the Attorney General, the Social Welfare Services or, in the case of a child, a duly appointed Commissioner, issue a temporary removal order for the victim, effective until a criminal case is filed and adjudicated against a suspect or accused for an offence of violence against a woman.

This order is valid for 8 days and for a total period not exceeding 60 days.

2. TEMPORARY EXCLUSION ORDER AGAINST A SUSPECT OR ACCUSED PERSON (Article 32)

The Court may, upon application by the victim, the Police, the Attorney General, the Social Welfare Service, or, in the case of a child, a duly appointed Commissioner, issue a temporary order prohibiting the suspect or accused person from entering or approaching within a specific distance of, or remaining in, the residence or place of stay of the victim, or from approaching the victim at their workplace or any other place as determined by the Court, until a criminal case is filed and adjudicated against the suspect for an offence of violence against a woman.

This order is valid for 8 days and for a total period not exceeding 60 days.

3. VICTIM REMOVAL ORDER (Article 31)

The Court may, during or after the initiation of proceedings in relation to an offence of violence against a woman, order the removal of the victim and their placement in a safe location, or, in the case of a child victim, assign their care to the Social Welfare Service.

4. EXCLUSION ORDER AGAINST AN ACCUSED PERSON (Article 33)

The Court may issue an order against a person charged with an offence of violence against a woman, valid for such period and under such conditions as it may determine, prohibiting the accused person from entering or approaching within a specific distance of, or remaining in, the residence or place of stay of the victim, or from approaching the victim at their workplace or at any other location determined by the Court.

Additionally, other Orders are also provided for under other legislation like (L. 91 (I)/2014), in order to protect and ensure the safety of children whom offences of sexual abuse have been committed.

Article 53: Restraining or protection orders

52. Have any legislative or other measures been taken to introduce and/or amend the legal framework governing restraining and protection orders in order to align it with the requirements of Article 53? If yes, please specify whether:

Yes. Cyprus has adopted and updated a comprehensive legislative framework governing restraining and protection orders, primarily through the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection of Victims) Law of 2000 (Law 119(I)/2000), as amended, and the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Law of 2021 (Law 115(I)/2021). These laws ensure full alignment with Article 53 of the Istanbul Convention, providing for prompt, effective and accessible protection measures for victims.

a. restraining or protection orders are available – in the context of criminal proceedings and/or upon application from civil courts - to women victims of all forms of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention, including domestic violence, stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, violence related to so-called honour as well as digital manifestations of violence against women and girls;

Restraining and protection orders are available both within the framework of criminal proceedings and through judicial applications before the competent courts, covering women victims of all forms of violence falling within the scope of the Istanbul Convention.

These include, inter alia, domestic violence, sexual offences, stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, violence committed in the name of so-called "honour", as well as emerging and digital forms of violence, including the non-consensual dissemination of intimate material, as criminalised under "The Non-Consensual Use of Personal Sexual Content Law of 2024 (Law 148(I)/2024)".

In particular, the competent courts are empowered to issue a wide range of protective measures, including:

- interim protection orders,
- exclusion or removal orders from the shared residence, and
- contact bans,

either within ongoing criminal proceedings or following applications submitted by the Police, the victim or other competent persons, depending on the urgency and gravity of the case.

Furthermore, the legal framework provides for additional, specialised protective measures, particularly in cases involving digital violence. Courts may, at any stage of the proceedings, order:

- the removal or blocking of access to online content containing non-consensual intimate material, and
- the restriction of access to websites or digital platforms hosting such material.

In parallel, service providers and digital platforms are under a legal obligation to act promptly, including the removal of such content within a very short timeframe upon notification by the competent authorities.

b. children are specifically included in protection orders;

Children are explicitly included in the scope of protection orders. Under the domestic violence legislation, children are recognised both as direct victims and as victims when violence is exercised in their presence. Courts are empowered to issue interim orders for the removal of a child to a safe place, for restriction or exclusion of the perpetrator, and for the imposition of conditions aimed at safeguarding the child's physical and psychological integrity, always guided by the best interests of the child.

c. any exceptions to contact bans are made and, if so, in which circumstances these may be made.

Contact bans imposed through protection or exclusion orders are, as a rule, strict. Any exceptions may only be made by a competent court and solely in clearly justified circumstances, such as limited and supervised contact for reasons related to parental responsibilities, provided that such contact does not endanger the victim or any children involved. Any exception is assessed on a case-by-case basis following a risk assessment.

53. Please provide information on the measures taken to enforce protection orders and on responses to any violations of such orders.

Protection orders are enforced through police monitoring and judicial oversight. Any breach of a protection or exclusion order constitutes a criminal offence and leads to immediate police intervention, arrest where appropriate, and expedited court proceedings. The legislative framework provides for penal sanctions, including imprisonment, for violations of such orders, ensuring their deterrent effect and effective protection of victims.

Article 56: Measures of protection

54. Please provide information on the measures taken to ensure the following:

a. that the relevant agency informs the victim when the perpetrator escapes or is released temporarily, at least when they or their family might be in danger (paragraph 1 *b*);

Relevant authorities ensure that victims are informed when a perpetrator escapes or is temporarily released, particularly where there is a risk to the victim or their family. This obligation is implemented through coordination between the Police, prosecutorial authorities and Social Welfare Services, following individual risk assessments and in line with victim-centred protection protocols.

b. the protection of the privacy and the image of the victim (paragraph 1 *f*);

The protection of victims' privacy and image is ensured both through legislation and procedural safeguards. Court proceedings may be held in camera, personal data are protected, and publication of identifying information is restricted. Special measures are applied during investigations and trials to prevent secondary victimisation, including limitations on disclosure and the use of anonymisation where necessary.

c. the possibility for victims to testify in the courtroom without being present or at least without the presence of the alleged perpetrator, notably through the use of appropriate communication technologies, where available (paragraph 1 *i*);

Victims, including children, may testify without being physically present in the courtroom or in the absence of the alleged perpetrator. The law provides for the use of video-recorded testimonies, closed-circuit television (CCTV), physical shielding, or testimony from alternative locations. Courts may also order that testimony be taken in the absence of the accused, while safeguarding defence rights, in accordance with the interests of justice and victim protection.

d. the provision of appropriate support services for victims so that their rights and interests are duly presented and taken into account (paragraph 1 *e*).

Victims are provided with comprehensive support services to ensure that their rights and interests are fully represented and taken into account throughout the criminal process. These include psychosocial support, legal guidance, shelter accommodation, and counselling, delivered through close cooperation between Social Welfare Services, the Police, health services, and specialised non-governmental organisations. A multidisciplinary, victim-centred approach is consistently applied.

Part III: Emerging trends on violence against women and domestic violence

55. Please provide information on new developments since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report on your country concerning:

a. emerging trends in violence against women and domestic violence, including its digital manifestations (types of perpetration, groups of victims, forms of violence);

Since the adoption of GREVIO's baseline evaluation report, a number of emerging trends have been identified in relation to violence against women and domestic violence in Cyprus. These include an increased visibility of digital forms of violence, particularly the non-consensual dissemination of intimate images, online harassment and threats, as well as technology-facilitated coercive and controlling behaviour.

At the same time, there is growing recognition of multiple and intersecting forms of victimisation, affecting migrant women, asylum-seeking and refugee women, women with disabilities, and women in situations of social or economic dependency. Violence increasingly manifests not as isolated incidents, but as patterns of psychological abuse, intimidation and control, often combined with economic violence and digital monitoring.

The expansion of specialised police units and the strengthening of reporting mechanisms have also contributed to improved identification of these forms of violence, including those affecting children who are witnesses of domestic violence and are recognised as victims in their own right.

b. emerging trends in domestic case law related to violence against women;

Domestic case law has increasingly reflected the broader understanding of violence against women as enshrined in the Istanbul Convention and national legislation. Courts have made greater use of interim protection measures, exclusion orders and contact bans, particularly in cases involving a high risk of repeat violence.

There is also a growing emphasis on risk assessment, victim safety and the prevention of re-victimisation during criminal proceedings. The use of video-recorded testimonies, closed sessions and protective procedural measures has become more frequent, especially in cases involving sexual violence and child victims. While challenges remain in terms of consistency and data availability, judicial practice shows a gradual shift towards a more victim-centred and trauma-informed approach.

c. emerging trends in the allocation of funding and budgeting by your state authorities;

Since the baseline evaluation, there has been a gradual strengthening of targeted public funding for policies and actions addressing violence against women and domestic violence. The establishment and operation of the National Coordinating Body for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women, as well as dedicated budget lines for prevention, awareness-raising, protection and victim support, constitute an important trend.

The state budget for 2026 demonstrates increased earmarked allocations for:

- actions related to the implementation of the Istanbul Convention,
- prevention and awareness-raising initiatives,
- support services for victims of gender-based violence,

- and coordination, including data collection and monitoring mechanisms.

Funding is increasingly aligned with strategic planning, including the National Action Plan on Violence against Women (2023–2028), and supports cooperation with specialised NGOs providing frontline services.

d. innovative approaches to primary prevention, for example new target audiences and means of communication, public/private partnerships etc.

Primary prevention efforts have expanded to address new target groups and communication channels. Educational programmes within formal education increasingly incorporate themes of gender equality, respectful relationships, consent and digital safety from early childhood to secondary education.

Innovative approaches include:

- targeted prevention and awareness campaigns through digital and social media platforms;
- closer cooperation between public authorities, educational institutions and civil society organisations;
- specialised training and prevention activities addressing boys and young men, professionals working with children, and frontline responders.

The integration of digital literacy and online safety, including issues such as sexting and online sexual exploitation, reflects an evolving prevention strategy that responds to contemporary forms of violence.

e. emerging trends related to access to asylum and international protection for women victims of violence against women.

An important emerging trend concerns the growing recognition of the specific vulnerabilities of women victims of violence within asylum and international protection procedures. Measures have been taken to ensure access to healthcare, psychosocial support and protection services for asylum-seeking and refugee women, irrespective of residence status.

Enhanced cooperation between the Asylum Service, health services, Social Welfare Services and specialised support organisations has improved the identification and referral of women victims of violence. The use of medical and psychological assessments in line with international standards, such as the Istanbul Protocol, as well as the provision of interpretation and culturally sensitive information, has strengthened protection responses for this group.

Part IV: Administrative data and statistics

56. Please provide annual statistics for two complete calendar years prior to receiving this questionnaire on administrative and judicial data on:

a. the number of reports, investigations opened, prosecutions, final convictions secured and sanctions imposed in respect of all forms of violence against women and domestic violence covered by the Istanbul Convention;
b. the number of emergency barring orders issued by the competent authorities, the number of breaches of such orders, and the number of sanctions imposed as a result of these breaches;
c. the number of protection orders issued, the number of breaches of such orders and the number of sanctions imposed as a result of such breaches;
d. data on the number of decisions issued by family courts on custody/visitation/residence of children that have expressly taken into account incidents of domestic violence.

At present, there is no centralised, publicly available statistical data in Cyprus indicating the number of decisions issued by Family Courts concerning custody, visitation or residence of children that have expressly taken into account incidents of domestic violence.

Family Court judgments in Cyprus are not systematically categorised or coded on the basis of whether domestic violence constituted a determining factor in custody or visitation decisions. While incidents of domestic violence are frequently assessed where they are raised and substantiated, such considerations are reflected in the reasoning of individual judgments rather than through aggregated or disaggregated statistical reporting.

Furthermore:

- Family Court proceedings are largely confidential, given their sensitive nature and the need to safeguard the privacy and best interests of children and families.
- Decisions are issued on a strict case-by-case basis, guided by the principle of the best interests of the child.
- Although relevant information may exist within individual case files—such as references to criminal proceedings, protection or exclusion orders, police reports, or Social Welfare Services' assessments—this information is not compiled into a central or interoperable database for statistical or reporting purposes.

Custody and parental responsibility decisions continue to be taken by the Family Courts on an individual basis, with domestic violence constituting a critical factor where proven or credibly alleged. In such cases, the Court retains discretion to impose appropriate measures, including restrictions or supervision of contact, suspension, or withdrawal of parental rights, depending on the gravity of the violence and its impact on the child.

As a result, it is not currently possible to provide quantitative data regarding the number of custody, visitation or residence decisions that have expressly taken domestic violence into account.

That said, important steps are currently under way to address this gap. The competent authorities, under the coordination of the National Coordinating Body for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women, are actively working towards the development of a unified, nationwide data collection system on violence against women and domestic violence. This initiative aims to enhance the systematic recording, interoperability and analysis of data across all relevant authorities, including law-enforcement agencies,

Social Welfare Services and judicial bodies, while fully respecting data-protection and confidentiality requirements.

The establishment of such a unified system is expected, in the medium term, to improve the availability and quality of administrative and judicial data, including the capacity to identify trends and patterns related to family law proceedings where domestic violence is a relevant factor, thereby strengthening evidence-based policymaking and reporting in line with the Istanbul Convention and GREVIO recommendations.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Initial training (education or professional training)

Please fill in the table and list the professionals (in the area of healthcare, law enforcement, criminal justice, social welfare, education, asylum and migration, media/journalism and support services) which have received initial training on violence against women. Please place each category of professional in a separate line.

Professionals	Do they benefit from initial training on violence against women and domestic violence?	Is this training mandatory?	Are training efforts supported by guidelines and protocols?	Who funds the training?	Please describe the content and the duration of the training
Police Officers	Yes	Yes	Yes		All police officers receive training on domestic violence and gender-based violence, including relevant legislation and established protocols. These subjects are integrated into their core training curriculum.
All Social Welfare Officers (for example, inter alia, psychologists, sociologists, social workers)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Social Welfare Services	They attend seminars which last overall 9days and two days are dedicated to initial training on violence against women

Table 2: In-service training

Please fill in the table and list the professionals (in the area of healthcare, law enforcement, criminal justice, social welfare, education, asylum and migration, media/journalism and support services) which receive in-service training on violence against women. Please place each category of professional in a separate line.

Professionals	Number of professionals trained	Is this training mandatory?	Frequency	Training efforts supported by guidelines and protocols	Please describe the content and duration of the training
Police Officers	20 each year	No	Once a year	Yes	2 weeks training on handling vulnerable persons
Police Officers	20 each year	No	Once a year	Yes	Training on domestic violence issues, 1week
Police Officers	20 each year	No	Once a year	Yes	Training on rape cases, 1 week
Police Officers	20 each year	No	Once a year	Yes	Training on conducting forensic interviews.
Judges of the Court of Appeal, Assize Courts, District Courts and Family Courts.	33	Not mandatory in the strict sense but implicitly mandatory. Participants are selected and invited to participate. Worth noting, however that unless there are serious reasons for absence, participants always attend the training activities they invited to.			Domestic Abuses and Child Contact in Court Proceedings The duration of the training was 5 hours. Format of Training - Interactive: presentations, Q&A sessions, group exercises with case studies, training evaluation questionnaire
Judges of the Court of Appeal, Assize Courts, District Courts, Family Courts and Legal Officers of the supreme court	36	Not mandatory in the strict sense but implicitly mandatory. Participants are selected and invited to participate. Worth noting, however that unless there are serious reasons for absence, participants always attend the training activities they invited to.			Domestic violence The duration of the training was 6 hours. Format of Training - Interactive: presentations, Q&A sessions, experiental exercises, group exercises with case studies, training evaluation questionnaire.
Participants EU wide out of which 20 were Cypriot judges of the CoA, District Courts, Administrative	60	Not mandatory in the strict sense but implicitly mandatory. Participants are selected and invited to			The School hosted a two-day seminar on "EU Gender Equality law" on behalf of ERA, a section of which was dedicated to "Fighting gender-based violence

Court, Rent control Tribunal And Industria Disputes Tribunal		participate. Worth noting, however that unless there are serious reasons for absence, participants always attend the training activities they invited to.			in the EU" (The Istanbul Convention, Relevant ECtHR case law , Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combatting violence against women and domestic violence) The School hosted a two-day seminar on "EU Gender Equality law" on behalf of ERA, a section of which was dedicated to "Fighting gender-based violence in the EU" (The Istanbul Convention, Relevant ECtHR case law , Directive (EU) 2024/1385 on combatting violence against women and domestic violence) 2 days but section on gender and domestic violence lasted and 1 hour Format of training-interactive: presentations, discussions, experiential exercise, practical exercise, group exercise with case studies, training evaluation questionnaire
All Social Welfare Officers (for example, inter alia, psychologists, sociologists, social workers)	141	Yes	Once every two months	Yes	Violence against older women, interdepartmental procedures on violence issues and training of Social Service Workers on all forms of violence against women
Doctors (from Accident & Emergency departments, General Practicians, Obstetricians, Psychiatrists. School doctors)	40-50 per year	No	1-2 times per year	Yes, to all	2-day program: - Legal Framework & Basic Concepts Myths, Stereotypes & Perceptions, Vulnerability & Revictimization of Women from Special Population Groups women of migrant backgrounds, Female genital mutilation, etc) Impact of Violence on Health and the role of health services/

					professionals, Recognizing Violence in Healthcare Settings, Asking Women About Gender-Based Violence in Healthcare Settings, Providing Support and Developing a Safety Plan, Interdepartmental Cooperation and Referral of Victims, The Role of Specialized Support Services for Women Victims
Nurses (General Nursing or Psychiatric nursing)	100-150 per year	No	1-2 times per year	Yes, to all	«
Health Visitors (working in schools or with immigrants or asylum seekers))	30-40 per year	No	1-2 times per year	Yes, to all	«
Midwives	30-40 per year	No	1-2 times per year	Yes, to all	«
Total of 90 primary and secondary education teachers	90 (2024)	No		Yes	The training of primary and secondary education teachers is a particularly important initiative aimed at informing, raising awareness, and further developing their skills on sensitive issues related to gender-based violence. Strengthening teachers' knowledge and training in these areas is expected to contribute to the early identification of incidents of gender-based violence in schools, as well as to their effective prevention and reduction.