



## **Committee on Family Law and Consensual Joint Custody**

*Athens, February 10<sup>th</sup> 2023*

**TO  
The Delegation of the GREVIO Commission**

**SUBJECT: Report of the Commission on Family Law &  
Consensual Joint Custody, on the occasion of the 1st evaluation of  
the implementation of the Istanbul Convention in Greece,  
conducted by a delegation of the GREVIO Committee**

*For the drafting of this report all the organisations of the Committee on Family Law and  
Consensual Joint Custody participated.*

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the Committee, in the Annex, Chapter F)*

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence better known as the “Istanbul Convention”, is the first international, binding and comprehensive legal framework for preventing and combating gender-based violence, including provisions for the protection of victims and the punishment of perpetrators. It links gender-based violence with the violation of human rights and lack of respect for human dignity.

Greece was one of the first countries to sign the International Convention in May 2011, recognizing the need to adopt legal rules to prevent and combat gender-based violence. However, its ratification and incorporation into Greek law took place after about 8 years had passed since its initial signature (on 5.4.2018 the law was published with which it was ratified and on 1.8.2018 it came into force). Today, 4.5 years after it became a state law (Law 4531/2018), the Istanbul Convention is still not implemented.

It is a matter of concern that Greece, despite the ongoing struggles of the feminist movement against the oppression of women and girls, and despite having a complete legal framework for gender equality, which started with the radical changes made to family law in 1983 and continued for many years:

- it ranks last in the Gender Equality Index of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE); and
- is, according to the UN, one of the main trafficking countries for victims of sexual exploitation, mainly from Eastern European, Balkan and African countries.

This Report is prepared on the occasion of the meeting of the Committee on Family Law and Consent (a partnership of women's organizations operating from the end of 2020 to date and consisting of 24 women's organizations/collectives) with the delegation of GREVIO in the context of its 1st evaluation of the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. The Family Law Committee submits this document with the following points, which we consider particularly important, some because they promote the fight against gender stereotypes and inequalities, and others because they constitute significant deviations from the provisions of the Convention, with omissions in the application of the letter and spirit, leaving women and girls, as well as children who are abused or exposed to violence against women and/or domestic violence in Greece, defenseless:

#### 1. IMPLEMENTATION OF A NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR EQUALITY

The National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021 - 2025

<https://bit.ly/40JFK9F> was drafted in May 2021 in implementation of the requirements of the Istanbul Convention, but it does not provide for a stable program of prevention, awareness raising and empowerment of women throughout the country.

The National Action Plan for Equality foresees, among other things, actions to combat stereotypes, but in practice they were limited to the creation of 3 - 4 TV advertisements, which did not become widely known, since they were not publicized in the wide media and for a long period of time. Essentially:

- (a) that was not sufficient (the priority axes are the minimum and self-evident)
- b) the costing and financing of actions is not always evident; and
- (c) for the time being, it remains at a theoretical level and in most respects is not applied in practice. In particular, there has been no progress on actions concerning the new criminal offences included in the Istanbul Convention, such as female genital mutilation (FGM), stalking or forced marriage. Finally, there is a lack of support and involvement of women's and feminist organizations as civil society actors.

#### 2. NON-CONTRACTUAL TRANSPORT OBLIGATION (Article 4, paragraph 3 of the Istanbul Convention)

The judicial use of the concept of "parental alienation" institutionally creates a new culture of degradation of women, misogyny and discrimination against women in the sensitive area of justice. In addition, it undermines the views of child victims of domestic violence who fear contact with perpetrators of domestic abuse, despite the obvious risks to both adult and child victims.

Studies are already finding that allegations of so-called parental alienation are being used to deny allegations of domestic and sexual abuse, and that in many cases involving evidence or findings of domestic abuse, this evidence "disappeared" when judges focused on this concept.

Along with the concept of parental alienation, other concepts and ideologies have become entrenched, such as allegedly false reports in cases of adult and juvenile rape, the perception that victims report for their own benefit or for compensation, perceptions that damage the credibility of the woman victim or complainant and constitute, in addition to institutional violence and prejudice, an affront to women's honor and dignity.

The procedures and programs currently in place to prevent and combat violence against women do not take sufficient account of the special skills of women with disabilities. The lack of training and awareness among professionals of the specific conditions faced by women with disabilities that make them more vulnerable, as well as the absence of standardized protocols for the management of gender-based violence incidents, result in inappropriate support services being provided to women victims with disabilities.

In addition, information on victims' rights, where it exists, is not available in sign language, lacks subtitles and voiceovers, and there is a lack of specific expertise in interventions to support victims of domestic violence with disabilities.

Consequently, comprehensive protection for victims of gender-based violence, including the right to legal assistance and regardless of socio-economic benefits, remained only at announcement level, but was never actually put into practice.

### 3. STATE DUTIES AND GOVERNING AUTHORITY (Article 5 of the Istanbul Convention)

In Greece there is no legislative framework similar to that of other countries which provides for the liability of State officials in cases of failure to exercise due diligence in cases of violence against women.

There is no service where the negligence of the state in these cases can be reported. The Ombudsman, although institutionally supposed to intervene in cases of domestic violence, has a biased attitude in favor of groups of men who are "fighting" to have parental alienation recognized as a form of domestic violence. It was recently announced that the Ombudsman will be an active participant in the 6th International Conference on Co-parenting and Shared Parenting to be held in Athens from 5-7 May 2023 with keynote speaker Jennifer Harman, who is known for her support of Richard Gardner's unscientific and dangerous theories of parental alienation. The aforementioned psychologist has been criticized for her bias and for promoting dangerous reunification programs for parents of abusers and children, ignoring the safety risks to both children and their mothers. As partners of the Conference, they even show (<https://athens-2023.org/>) the Municipality of Athens (under the auspices), the Ombudsman and the Hellenic Psychological Society (EL.Ps.E.).

There is no data or other information on the number of administrative decisions or court cases against state officials for failure to take preventive or protective measures in accordance with this law. Thus, it appears that public officials are rarely held accountable for failing to fulfill their duty of due diligence. This becomes more acute in the context of custody and visitation rights from abusive fathers and the failure to grant protection orders, which, in many cases, lead to fatal outcomes.

There is a strong level of institutional gender bias with discrimination and stereotyping against women who report violence, particularly in cases of sexual violence, where institutional bias is most pronounced at all stages, from reporting to adjudication of the case.

The Greek authorities do not ensure the effective implementation of the due diligence obligation to diligently prevent, investigate, punish and prepare victims of any form of violence covered by the Istanbul Convention.

As a result, always according to the statistics of the General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality itself, and the statistics of the Police, domestic violence complaints in the year 2021 were 8,776 with 9,942 victims, of which 74.2% were women and girls (7,375 persons). However, according to justice data, criminal charges were brought against 3,902 men and 706 women (52.5% of cases). In 17.6% of the cases (1,541 cases, 1,274 with a male defendant and 267 with a female defendant), the criminal prosecution was suspended because criminal mediation (= penal mediation) was initiated. Therefore, for the 2,627 complaints (29.9%) that remain, there is no data or information available. This is a high percentage which makes it evident that for almost one in two complaints no prosecution is brought, either because it is subject to a penal mediation process, or because it does not proceed to the prosecution stage, or there is a delay in the judicial proceedings (see the 3rd Annual Report on Violence against Women<sup>1</sup> p. 109, 110, 121 and 122).

#### 4. PROVISION IN THE STATE BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

There is no provision in the State budget for expenditure on preventing and combating gender-based violence and, of course, on the implementation of the Istanbul Convention. The operation of social structures to combat gender violence is precarious, since the costs are not covered by the state budget, but by European funds (ROPs - Regional Operational Programs).

The Greek government treats the network of structures to combat gender violence as a project with an expiry date and doubtful continuity after the end of the program. It is working to obtain the extension of European funding, but it is not proceeding with their integration, refusing to accept their permanent nature in order to respond to the ongoing needs of society to address gender and domestic violence.

We note that there are municipalities that have expressed a desire to establish a Counseling Center, but this has not been done due to lack of resources.

We point out that it is crucial to earmark funds from the European Recovery Fund to mitigate the gender inequalities triggered in particular by the pandemic, causing economic and employment insecurity for women, an upsurge in domestic violence and a huge amount of work every day to care for children and the elderly.

#### 5. EXPLOSIVE INCREASE IN FEMICIDE AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

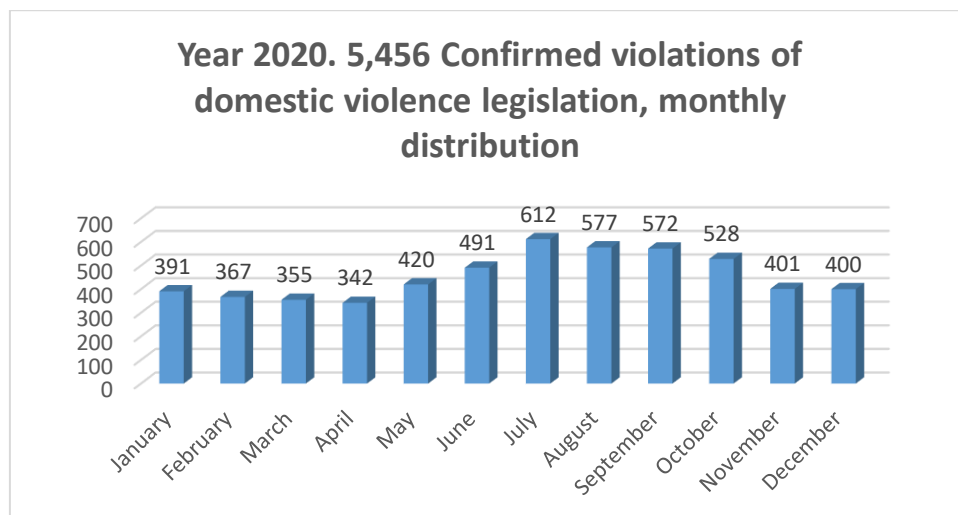
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<sup>1</sup> <https://isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/3h-ethsia-ekthesi-Via-kata-twn-Gynaikwn-GGDOPIF.pdf>  
[into Greek language]

In our country there is an alarming increase in the number of femicides and domestic violence experienced by women and girls. These incidents increased and became more acute during the period of the pandemic and we are concerned whether they will cause a greater increase after the implementation of the Tsiaras Law.

In particular, the Greek Police data on crime in the country in 2020 - 2022, based on the cases of domestic violence that reached the reporting stage by the female victims, shows that in 2021 we had a 61% increase, while in 2022 the increase was 99.79% compared to 2020. These rates would be significantly higher if we could take into account the cases of gender-based violence that are not reported.

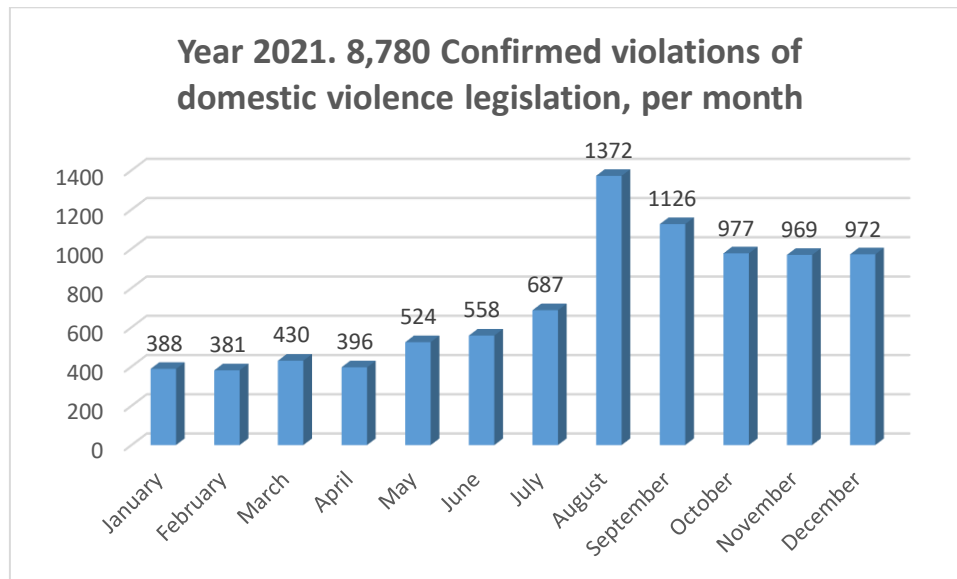
In detail, we see that while in 2020 we had a total of 5,456 confirmed violations of domestic violence legislation (felonies; misdemeanors), which ranged from 342 to 612 per month, i.e., we had a relative equal distribution throughout the year, with the summer months showing the highest rates.



In 2021 the confirmed violations of domestic violence legislation soared to 8,780.

It is interesting to see how the 8,780 confirmed offences are distributed through the year by month. From January to April, we have around 381 - 396, which is about the same percentages as in 2020. Then there is a significant upward trend, reaching 524 cases in May, 550 in June, 628 in July. While, in August 2021, the number of confirmed

offences shoots up to 1,372 and in September to 1,126, to then stabilize with an average of 975 offences per month.



According to a press release from the Hellenic Police published on 3/2/2023, 11,476 incidents of domestic violence were reported in 2022, an average of 31 incidents per day. Of these, 3,279 were handled by the 18 domestic violence offices of the Hellenic Police.

The "scourge of the modern era", as stated in the ministry's press release, is a cause for concern, since the cases are constantly increasing.

At the same time, femicides are increasing significantly, while according to the press release of the Hellenic Police, homicides have decreased.

The multiple discrimination suffered by specific groups of women, exacerbating their vulnerability, e.g., women with disabilities (as mentioned above)/women belonging to minorities/refugees/migrants, leads to further social, economic and gender inequalities.

Instead of changing stereotypes as we would expect, we see the spirit of patriarchy taking on new dimensions and reaching its extreme form which is femicide, with justifications such as "she wanted to abandon me", "she refused to obey" etc.

This spirit seems to have intensified after the implementation of the law of mandatory joint custody, which enabled some men to get back at their ex-wives by winning court battles. Since then, there has often been a preaching of misogyny and patriarchy, a denigration of motherhood and the institution of the family.

A constant demand of women's organizations is the legal recognition of the term 'femicide' and the inclusion of the crime of femicide as a separate offence in the Greek Criminal Code, in order to make visible the causes of the commission of the crime against women, which stem from gender inequalities and gender stereotypes. However, the government systematically refuses to implement this.

## 6. DOWNGRADING OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR GENDER EQUALITY BY THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT

The General Secretariat for Gender Equality has played an important role, since its establishment in 1985, in the implementation of policies to combat gender inequalities. It was initially established as an autonomous Public Service under the Ministry of the Presidency of the Government (1985), then under the Ministry of Interior, from where it was briefly transferred to the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights (2009) and later returned to the Ministry of Interior (2010), which was the first Ministry of the Greek Government.

The reference in the introduction of the country's official report on the upgrading of equality policies is surprising, given that the current government, upon taking office in 2019, has proceeded with the continuous downgrading of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality, despite the strong opposition of both the General Secretariat's employees' association and women's organizations and civil society as a whole, undermining its autonomy and its horizontal character, as follows:

- 1) by transferring it from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Labor and
- 2) by abolishing it and creating in its place the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality (2019) and the General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality (2021).

The above, combined with the statements of the Deputy Minister of State for Demography, Family Policy and Gender Equality (DGPF) on the inextricable link between demography and gender equality, lead to the slippery slope of eroding the horizontal and distinct character of equality policies and reducing them to 'instrumental' policies of dubious usefulness in the service of demography. It is clear that the coupling of demographic and family policies with equality policies is a step backwards in women's struggle to disassociate themselves from their reproductive role and all the stereotypes associated with that role.

It is a decision by which the government appears to be adopting the most anachronistic and deeply rooted gender stereotypes, perpetuating sexism in Greek society and refusing to move forward to change these attitudes and achieve substantive equality.

From the outset, this combination seemed problematic and foreshadowed tensions between equality and demographic policies. And indeed, tensions did not take long to emerge, such as the need to remove women who suffer domestic violence from the family home, the need to disassociate women's value from their family situation, the need to overturn stereotypes about the role of women solely as mothers, wives and objects of desire, and the safeguarding of women's reproductive rights.

We cannot but associate this degradation with the various attempts by the Government, the Ministry of Education and the Church, even with the consent of the President of the Hellenic Republic, to smuggle through conferences and educational programs anachronistic views on fertility and against women's right to abortion, which in any case constitutes a violation of women's human rights. It should be noted that these efforts have been unsuccessful, due to the massive reaction from women's organizations and society, but there is a general trend to repeat them. It should be



noted that the right to abortion has been established in Greece since 1986, subject to certain conditions.

Let us not forget that the establishment of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality was the fruit of the struggles of the feminist movement, whose common ground was the criticism of the gender division of labor in the family and the stereotypes associated with the reproductive role of women. In conclusion, we would say that the loss of the autonomy of equality as a politics implies the loss of the autonomy of women themselves.

Further to the degradation:

- The budget of the new General Secretariat has reached zero (0) euros in 2020 and is only 22.000 euros this year (The 2019 budget before the current government took over and abolished the Gender Equality Secretariat, was 400.000 euros).
- The Gender Equality G.S. is understaffed and needs to be reinforced with staff in order to be able to adequately fulfil its role as the responsible body for the coordination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the measures and policies adopted in the field covered by the Istanbul Convention (especially with regard to the respective cutting-edge departments for the monitoring of the Istanbul Convention, such as the anti-violence department and the observatory).

The mere maintenance of the network of structures - through the renewal of co-funded programs (whenever a program is about to expire, there is a race to renew it), when it should have been expanded, after 12 years of operation, to cover the needs of women throughout the country, cannot be considered a success. There are many islands, large municipalities and even counties that are not even served by a specialized counseling center e.g., Laconia (See also below).

We consider it particularly important to inform that following the downgrading of the General Secretariat, came the devaluation of the struggle for women's rights. In particular, there have been two mass arrests of feminists, one in 2020 with 11 arrested and 3 solidarity companions, who were demonstrating on 25 November 2020 against violence against women. A case file was formed for their trial, but the case was filed 1.5 years later. None of the police officers who broke the law and the prosecutor who ordered the arrests were punished. The excuse was the anti-coronavirus measures and the protest was held by a few dozen people in a huge square, Syntagma Square.

The second mass arrest took place on 26 March 2021 in front of the Turkish Embassy in Athens, where 7 women held a symbolic protest with a banner in broad daylight for Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention.

Instead, they were confronted by about 50 police officers who surrounded them, prevented them from approaching the Embassy, initially prevented them from opening their banner and finally forced them to go, accompanied by police officers, to the nearest police station of Syntagma for identification.

When asked by the 7 women if they had been charged, the police officers replied that they were in custody.

In a subsequent investigation by the Ombudsman into the legality of the charges, no punishment was attributed to those who abused their power and attempted to intimidate the feminists.



## 7. SUPPORT STRUCTURES FOR BATTERED WOMEN

### 7.1. Network of Structures of the General Secretariat of Demographic and Family Policy and Gender Equality (Counselling Centers, Shelters, 24-hour SOS Helpline 15900)

The integrated framework for the prevention and treatment of all forms of violence against women continues to operate since its launch in 2011, within the framework of the "National Program for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women 2009-2013". Today, 44 counselling and support structures, 19 shelters for abused women, as well as the 24-hour SOS Helpline 15900 are in operation, constituting an important network of support services for women who need help, but are not enough. Since the ratification by law of the Istanbul Convention, very few structures have been created and no new programmatic agreement with a municipality for the creation of a new structure has been signed in the last 4 years.

In the island regions the problem is more acute - there is a partial replacement by community centers, but they can in no way perform the work of the network of structures of the GSDFPGE, with the holistic multidisciplinary approach that is always done from a gender perspective. But even where there are counselling centers there are problems present, due to a shortage at times of staff of various specialties.

The main issue is to ensure the sustainability of the entire network of structures by including them in the state budget, as well as the permanent employment of existing specialized staff. It is important to further strengthen the network with additional structures, both counselling centers and hostels, as the needs are not being met. In particular, as regards housing, it is imperative to create additional hostels in Attica, where only 3 (including the National Center for Social Solidarity - EKKA) are operational.

As a consequence of the above problem, which relates to the non-permanence of staff, the discrimination suffered by the staff is further burdened with work-related stress due to the employment contracts signed by the staff entering the network (PLTC- Private Limited Term Contract), while in reality the employees cover fixed and regular needs. The problems that arise are often related to the leave to which they are not entitled in relation to other workers, despite the assimilation by the European Court of Justice of Indefinite Term contracts to Private Limited Term contracts and the State's obligations in this respect. The nature of the contracts creates an additional serious problem of staffing structures as staff departures, maternity, childcare leave, etc. are not replaced (especially in the case of resignation, there are huge delays, often unjustified, in filling the position), resulting in structures operating for months understaffed with all that this entails for the support of women.

Abused women who turn to these structures for help often have young children and are on low or no income. A prerequisite for admission to the shelters is the results of the special medical examinations to which they and their children are subjected. A period of about 15 days elapses before the results of these examinations are issued, provided they manage to find an available appointment, during which time there is no state provision for their safe accommodation, such as staying in a hotel at state expense.

Moreover, given that the shelters provide protection for a short period of time, (3 months with the possibility of extending another 3), the problems of battered women persist and the women victims continue to be exposed to serious risks.

The opening hours of the counselling centers do not meet the needs of working battered women, there is no provision for childcare/creative activities and they have to find a solution for themselves to come to the counselling sessions without children. Abused women also face major problems when they are forced to go to the police stations to lodge a complaint during evening hours, holidays or the summer vacation period, as there is no provision for them to stay in emergency rooms and it is suspected that they spend the night in police station detention cells, with no other solution to protect them from their abusive partners.

Although a number of important issues were mentioned at the beginning of the text regarding the network's accommodation of women and their children, it is important and quite serious for the women themselves who seek help from it to put their needs in more detail as these women, with or without children, who eventually arrive to seek accommodation, are usually at great risk to their own lives at that time. The following issues have arisen in relation to shelter:

- Provision for hostels accessible to women with disabilities
- Provision and care to cover the temporary accommodation of women and their children until the completion of the procedures to be accommodated in a hostel of the GSDFPGE network
- Increase in the number of shelters in Attica as they are not sufficient to meet the needs that arise and an increase in the number of places for emergency accommodation
- Reconsideration of the age limit for underage children of women, especially boys, to be accommodated with their mother in a network shelter. 12 years of age is a serious obstacle for women who are ultimately forced to withdraw their request for accommodation because they do not want to be separated from their children
- Ensuring that women who do not have the financial resources to travel, are provided with a financial allowance.
- Provision for the accommodation of women-ex users of substances in substitution therapy. A large number of requests from women victims of violence who attend substitution programs with full accompaniment by the relevant body are not accepted by the network's hostels, with the result that they either remain with the abuser or have to resort to a hostel for substance users
- Need to increase the budget in the hostel, as due to a reduced budget there are difficulties in fully covering the needs of security, supplies and other individual needs
- Frequent shortcomings in the security of the hostels, with all that this implies for the safety of the guests.

Further important issues arise with regard to the legal advice offered by the lawyers of the Women's Counselling Centers which are listed below:

- There are no tools to carry out legal support such as books, databases of legal information, seminars, access of lawyers to e-nomos (Bar Association), legal information bank.

- Urgent to increase the amount for legal assistance from the Center for Research on Issues of Equality (KETHI) and immediate provision to cover also the issuance of legal documents to women victims of violence, as at the moment women victims of gender-based violence without a residence permit cannot be supported unless they first find another lawyer to issue a residence permit (!) as the KETHI budget does not cover it
- The need for legal counselling both at the SOS helpline and in the shelters, which is currently not provided
- Immediate provision for the signing of a new protocol of cooperation for the provision of legal services and legal assistance to women victims of gender violence and multiple discrimination between the GSDFPGE and the bar associations of the Greek territory
- Specialized regular trainings of lawyers to keep their knowledge up-to-date on constantly changing legislation, case law, etc. in the fields of family law, criminal law, procedure, etc. Need for targeted training seminars for lawyers in the network of structures. It should be noted that so far and despite continuous requests, no training for legal practitioners has taken place.

#### 7.2. Referral centres for victims of sexual violence - rape

A Single Referral Centre has yet to be designated by the state, so that victims of rape or other forms of violence can be referred to, in order to get holistic and safe help and support (the case of the 12-year-old rape and trafficking victim in Kolonos serves as an example- See Appendix - Chapter B) and at the same time statistical data is available.

Not only are there no specialized referral centers for victims of sexual violence and rape (as described in Article 25) as well as specialized forensic, counselling and psychological support services for women victims in both big cities and in the countryside, but any scarce services are not provided in a timely manner and victims' access to them usually depends on their willingness to file a complaint.

Forensic examination is provided either by forensic services, which exist in only 14 cities <sup>2</sup>in Greece, or by hospitals. However, the number of forensic doctors is not sufficient to ensure that victims are provided with a direct forensic examination, and forensic services operate on public service hours.

Rape victims are required to maneuver in a system that does not rely on the cooperation of state or non-state actors and standardized procedures, with the result that they are often unable to establish evidence of rape, since when victims initially go to hospitals, they are unlikely to be able to collect and preserve forensic evidence, but even when they are able to do so, they may be rejected by the court because their storage was not ordered by the police or the prosecution.

As a result of the above, we are particularly concerned about the high risks of secondary victimization of female victims.

In summary, it is absolutely necessary to immediately establish adequately equipped Rape Crisis Centers as well as Sexual Violence Referral Centers, both in major cities and in the countryside, in order to cover all the protection needs of victims of rape and/or sexual violence.

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<sup>2</sup> [https://ministryofjustice.gr/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/latrodikastikes-Ypiresies\\_27092022.pdf](https://ministryofjustice.gr/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/latrodikastikes-Ypiresies_27092022.pdf)

## 8. COLLECTION OF STATISTICAL DATA

The results of qualitative research are still scarce, there are not enough data that can be used and, above all, they are not easily accessible to women's organizations, civil society and society in general.

There are no surveys collected by the GSDFPGE (Based on Article 11(1b) of the "Convention") since, there are multiple awareness raising activities and surveys on violence against women and domestic violence by women's and feminist organizations in the country and other bodies, which are not collected by the central body or made public.

Especially in the justice system, there is no systematic collection of data on all forms of violence against women and at all stages of criminal proceedings (from reporting, investigating the opening of criminal proceedings and the results), nor is combined data collected on divorce and child custody decisions in order to assess whether and how the Greek courts ensure the safety of women and children affected by domestic violence.

For many years, the judicial system has not provided data on complaints, convictions and sentences, nor on protection orders (restraining orders and injunctions).

There are no investigations into all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, including special investigations into forms of violence such as economic violence which is not included in Law 3500/2006 on domestic violence either. There are no surveys, especially those showing differences between different groups of women in terms of their exposure to violence, which are used to ensure evidence-based policy. There are no regular research programs and epidemiological commission studies on women's victimization, help-seeking and vulnerability to gender-based violence.

There is no research exploring the reasons for the low reporting rates for sexual violence and non-partner rape or for the secondary victimization of women by all 'relevant agencies', including the police and the judiciary.

There is also no research into the level of conviction rates for various forms of violence against women, which would be necessary to explore possible inadequacies in the criminal justice sector.

Furthermore, there is no systematic and thorough analysis of all femicides and child murders in the context of domestic violence in order to identify risk factors and the failures of services that have failed to provide protection to victims.

## 9. PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORK

For sexual harassment in the workplace, Convention 190 of the International Labor Organization on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the Workplace has been ratified (Law 4808/2021 "Government Gazette A no. 101/19.06.2021) but we have no data so far on its implementation.

## 10. HOSPITALS AND FORENSIC SERVICES

Very often women victims of gender-based violence, especially physical and sexual abuse, resort to hospitals and private health professionals for medical and/or nursing care.

On the occasion of the 2015 refugee crisis, a health protocol for dealing with sexual abuse has been developed with the aim of both managing victims of gender-based violence, as well as documenting the phenomenon and preventing the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases.

However, no sexual abuse response team has been established in public hospitals, with the consequence that the female survivor of sexual abuse is treated as an emergency department case, which at best means that a doctor of infectious diseases or a gynecologist deal with this case.

As psychologists are not included in the general on-call team, there is no psychological assessment and support for victims, and no follow-up of any kind is ensured.

The training of medical staff on this issue is incomplete and occasional, as - although the relevant material exists - it is limited to the prevention of STD transmission and not to the overall support of the surviving victim of violence. Also, apart from the refugee phase, there has never been systematic ongoing training on this issue.

Many hospitals in the country have never integrated the issue of prophylaxis against STIs and HIV into the Emergency Department, and as a result, this service is not available throughout the country either.

Forensic assessment, which is necessary for the certification of sexual abuse, is not available in all nursing facilities in the country. Even if the survivor resorts to the police (not a very common occurrence), she cannot be forensically assessed immediately, resulting in data not being collected and not being referred for prophylactic treatment in a timely manner. Unfortunately, there are a number of forensic scientists who are not aware of the precautionary treatment.

Coordination between the forensic service and nursing homes is suffering, with many problems arising in an issue where immediate intervention is required.

## 11. JUDICIAL POWER

Although the judiciary is an important pillar for the protection of victims and the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, in practice it does not exist. In particular, the provisions of the Convention (Articles 31, 45, 48, 48, 52, etc.) are not followed by the judiciary, there are no protocols for the management of cases of gender, sexual or domestic violence and no inter-sectoral cooperation with other relevant sectors.

On the contrary, in courtrooms there is no difference in the tactics followed by judges in cases of domestic or other forms of gender-based violence.

Often, some judges behave in a sexist or misogynistic manner towards women victims of violence and their children, thereby threatening their mental and physical integrity. They thus perpetuate a culture of gender violence and gender stereotypes within the courtrooms, and their judgments in civil and criminal cases, instead of protecting victims of domestic violence, often expose them to greater danger than the one they were in before the complaint was made.

A major problem in Greece is the delay in the administration of justice, which in cases of violence against women results in long-term torture for the victims and terrible financial costs, especially if they are divorced women with children.

It is characteristic that in cases of injunctions, which means an immediate risk to the physical integrity of women, while in previous years the court date for a temporary injunction was set at 2 days, in the last year, following the passing of the law on compulsory co-determination, the waiting time has increased to 15 days, according to a complaint by the Athens Bar Association.

We have many cases of women who are victims of long-term litigation with ex-husbands (see more in the Appendix - Chapter A).

Of great concern is the increasing use of the term "parental alienation" in pleadings, in courtrooms and in court decisions in cases where there is domestic violence. This concept is systematically used by the perpetrator and his/her lawyers to 'prove' that the complaint against him/her is false, but also as a tool to remove parental custody from the mother and/or to gain access to his/her victims (women and children almost exclusively).

Also of great concern is the recent (July 2022) court decision to suspend the sentence of a well-known actor convicted of rape (Dimitris Lignadis) until the Court of Appeal has heard the case. It should be noted that D. Lignadis has been sentenced to 12 years in prison for 2 rapes of minor boys and is currently at large.

Another indicative case that reveals negligence and many omissions of the police and state authorities in the face of the felony of rape, is the complaint of 25-year-old Georgia Bika for her rape by a son of a rich and well-known family after her involuntary sedation ("rape pill"), in January 2022 in Thessaloniki. The complainant had to appeal to the European Court of Justice for the Greek judicial authorities to be mobilized!!! (See more in the Annex - Chapter B).

Another matter of concern is the practice followed by many abusers' defense lawyers, who, not following any Code of Ethics and Conduct, abandon in many cases the complainant, claiming that her complaint is false, resulting in the humiliation of the victim in the courtroom. In the same way in the trials for the femicide of the Eleni Topaloudi, which had shocked the nation, the lawyers of the perpetrators attempted to defame the dead young woman in front of her parents.

## 12. LEGAL ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS

For many women, access to justice is not possible due to financial problems. Legal aid for low-income citizens is neither easily nor quickly accessible and often provides poor quality services due to fragmentation in provision. Income criteria exclude a large proportion of women whose income, although extremely low, exceeds the threshold set (around €400 per month).

The legal aid provided through memoranda of understanding between the bar associations and the structures of the GSDFPGE is advertised as being decoupled from income criteria, but its funding and duration (annual memoranda of understanding) are so short that it can in fact cover only a small number of women. Legal aid lawyers are appointed for this particular case, but it may be linked to dozens of others of the same battered woman, so a lawyer appointed a few days before the trial cannot have the full factual and judicial picture.

Here we should add that appointed lawyers are paid after two or three years, with the consequence that they avoid free legal aid whenever they can. Since November 2022, bar associations in many cities have been on strike on this issue, precisely because of the delay in payment of their fees, resulting in the postponement of all cases<sup>3</sup> to be tried with legal aid.

### 13. PREVENTIVE INTERVENTION AND TREATMENT

#### 13.1. Criminal mediation (Article 48 of the Istanbul Convention)

Law 3500/2006 on domestic violence introduced the institution of criminal mediation (Article 11 of Law 3500/2006), which is a conciliatory route to avoid referral to trial, which is a direct violation of Article 48 of the Convention, as the way in which information and obtaining the consent of the victim for the initiation of criminal mediation is conducted makes it mandatory in most cases.

The investigation by the competent Public Prosecutor of the possibility of criminal mediation in relation to the offence of domestic violence does not constitute a mere encouragement, nor is it discretionary, but rather has been elevated to a specific procedural requirement for the valid initiation of criminal proceedings, with any failure to do so rendering inadmissible the criminal proceedings already brought.

A prerequisite for the initiation of the criminal mediation procedure is the submission of an unconditional declaration by the person to whom the commission of the crime is attributed that he or she is willing to cumulatively:

- (a) Promise not to commit any act of domestic violence in the future (reason of honor) and, in the case of cohabitation, to agree to stay away from the family home for a reasonable period of time if the victim so proposes. This promise shall be the subject of a report in accordance with Articles 148 et seq. of the Code of Criminal Procedure
- (b) as far as possible, to immediately remove or remedy the consequences of the act and to pay reasonable compensation to the victim
- (c) Attend a special counselling and treatment program for dealing with domestic violence in a public institution, at any place and for as long as deemed necessary by the competent therapists. The person in charge of the program shall certify the completion of its attendance. The certificate shall be attached to the case file. It shall state in detail the subject matter of the counselling/therapy program and the number of sessions attended by the person concerned.

Although the number of domestic violence cases that, instead of being prosecuted, are subject to criminal mediation seems to have doubled in recent years (13%-17% of prosecutions in 2016-2019, 21.7% in 2020 and 33.4% in 2021)<sup>4</sup>, there is no mechanism to monitor compliance with the conditions under which criminal mediation was initiated, nor the safety of victims. Finally, it is worth mentioning that there was a period when the state agency (EKKA) obliged victims to come, together with the offender, for couples' therapy, while it is not known whether this is still the case in any of the agencies that undertake offender treatment programs on the order of the public prosecutor. These programs are limited and apply to specific cities: Athens,

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<sup>3</sup> In Greek court practice, each postponement means a delay of about a year.

<sup>4</sup> See. 3rd Annual Report of the General Secretariat, p. 124



Thessaloniki, Piraeus (National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA), Kavala (Non-Profit Institute of Violence STOP).

### 13.2. Programs for sex offenders

In Greece there are no specific programs for sex offenders. The research on sex offenders is limited. There is a research gap in our country in investigating the psychopathology and psychosocial factors related to the offending behavior and sexuality of this particular category of offenders.

There are no programs based on a social-cognitive approach, encouraging sex offenders to take responsibility for their actions, including a risk assessment process and varying in duration according to the assessed risk of offending, and in line with recognized best practices, which are embedded in the understanding of violence against women.

### 14. OBLIGATION TO REPORT INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE (Article 27 of the Istanbul Convention)

Under Article 27 of the Istanbul Convention, the State must take all necessary measures to encourage any person who witnesses an act of gender-based violence, or has reasonable grounds to believe that such an act is likely to be committed, or that further acts of violence may be expected, to communicate and report it to the competent organizations or authorities.

While at a theoretical and campaign level these acts are encouraged, victims and complaining witnesses too often find themselves involved in lengthy and complex legal disputes, initiated by perpetrators as part of a strategy of threats and intimidation against women victims, their children and witnesses.

Often, due to the biased disposition and lack of expertise of judges on gender-based violence issues, incriminating evidence and indications, although present, are overlooked or downplayed by judges, even when the complaint concerns parental violence against a minor child.

The relatively recent Code of Conduct for Lawyers does not include any recommendation or exhortation to handle cases falling within the scope of the Istanbul Convention in accordance with best practice principles in order to address the phenomenon of secondary victimization of victims.

### 15. AUTOMATIC PROCEDURE FOR CASES OF GBV (under Article 417 of the CPC)

In cases where acts of domestic violence are committed in the boundaries of the auto-custodial period in the degree of a misdemeanor, such as bodily harm, threats or illegal violence, in order to have unalterable evidence, there is the provision of direct criminal protection for the victims and discouragement of the perpetrator to exceed the barriers of legality.

No data are published on how many cases were tried in the autopsy procedure, how many were adjourned and for how long, and whether and what restraining orders were imposed.

### 16. PROTECTION OF CHILDREN - WITNESSES (Article 26 of the Istanbul Convention)

The concept of child protection means the obligation of the State to create conditions which ensure the normal, mental and physical development of minors. Thus, any State

action that endangers or hinders the development of children is deemed unconstitutional. In the Greek legal system, the protection of children is based on many constitutional provisions, but in practice things are very different.

In order to tackle child abuse, a comprehensive National Response Plan is required, as well as interdisciplinary cooperation between the services and professionals involved, which unfortunately does not happen in practice in Greece. For the protection of child witnesses of domestic violence, the cooperation of all professionals involved is necessary.

Domestic violence committed in front of a child is almost never prosecuted, despite the fact that it exists as an offence in Law 3500/2006 for all forms of domestic violence (Art. 1, par. 3) and as an aggravating circumstance for physical violence (Art. 6, par. 3 of Law 3500/2006 and Art. 312, par. 3 of the PC).

#### 17. PUBLIC PROCEEDINGS AND CASE APPEALS (Article 29 of the Istanbul Convention)

Victims of gender-based violence have the right to bring an action against the perpetrators for moral damages as well as for violation of their personality. Similarly, at the international level, they have the possibility of recourse to the European Court of Human Rights and the UN CEDAW Committee.

However, no law provides for the possibility of bringing an independent action based on the rights and obligations of the Istanbul Convention. The victim may bring such actions through the remedies of appeal and reversal.

However, there is no specialized court that monitors all victim cases, both civil and criminal, in order to gather reliable data on the rate of use of the lawsuits by victims, their effectiveness, the decisions of the courts on the lawsuits and the amounts awarded.

Crucially, no stand-alone civil action for compensation for domestic violence and its effects on victims is provided, based on the provisions of the Istanbul Convention as such.

#### 18. INDEMNIFICATION (Article 30 of the Istanbul Convention)

There are no recorded statistics from the judiciary either on the type of lawsuit, or on the success or failure of lawsuits and the amount of compensation awarded to victims of acts of violence against women and girls.

According to Law 3811/2009, the Hellenic Authority for Compensation of Victims of Crime is the competent body for the payment of compensation to women victims of violence who submit a claim.

According to the data collected by the General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality for the period 2006-2020, seven (7) applications for compensation were submitted to the Hellenic Compensation Authority, but no compensation was paid for any of these applications (3rd Annual Report of the General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality p. 132).

Based on the amendments introduced in Law 3811/2009 by the Istanbul Convention (Law 4531/2018, Article 4), two categories of expenses for which survivors can claim state compensation were added:

(a) mental and psychological support for the victim; and

(b) costs of change of environment and residence, in particular the costs of moving and purchase of necessary consumer goods for relocation to a safe environment.

As of 2018 to date, neither an application form has been created nor have the Joint Ministerial Decision referred to in Article 4 of Law 4531/2018 been issued that they would stipulate:

α) "the amount of compensation for the mental and psychological support of the victim"; and

(b) "the type of change of environment costs covered and the amount thereof".

It is evident from the available statistics that a number of difficulties prevent women victims of violence from receiving compensation in practice. These barriers appear to be particularly pronounced in cases of sexual violence. Too often there is a distorted and biased perception that women victims of sexual abuse take false claims to justice in order to obtain compensation.

There is no relevant study, nor is there any data from the judiciary on the percentage of victims of sexual violence who have received compensation from the convicted perpetrator, nor on whether or not the compensation they may have received is full. There is also no official data on the number of perpetrators ordered to pay compensation by type of offence.

#### 19. THE GREEK POLICE IN FRONT OF THE VICTIMS OF CIVIL VIOLENCE

The clear criminal classification of domestic violence as a crime has also meant that it is now perceived as an unjust and criminal behavior, attributable to the perpetrator and punishable. It also delineated the role and responsibilities of the police in dealing with it, highlighting the police as the most critical institution that can be activated for this.

The establishment of the 18 Domestic Violence Offices of the Greek Police, which operate throughout Greece, is very important and is part of our country's international contractual obligations aimed at preventing and combating the phenomenon.

However, the practices applied by the Greek police in cases of gender-based violence are not always in line with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention, they expose women-victims to secondary victimization and generally, instead of protecting victims of gender-based violence, they expose them to high risks even for their lives.

Interviews and public statements by police officers show that prejudices and patriarchal attitudes are widespread in the security forces, causing police inaction and often leading victims to remain silent out of a lack of trust.

The police authorities are also not trained in the need to administer prophylactic treatment, resulting in non-referrals to hospitals and forensic services.

Just a few months ago a "police response manual to combat gender-based violence" was distributed to all police stations, the contents of which we do not have access to in order to assess whether its guidelines attempt to provide protection and support to survivors and their children in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

Indicative of the outrageous situation in the police is the public statement by syndicalist-representative of police officers, immediately after the femicide of young

Caroline, in front of her minor child, by her husband. This syndicalist was instructing the would-be perpetrators how to behave after the crime, in order to have extenuating circumstances and achieve a reduction of their sentence, so that "in 4 years they would be out".

Equally outrageous was the interview of the Minister of Civil Protection to MEGA Channel (a major TV station) after the femicide by a husband on a Greek island (Zakynthos) during which he blamed the murdered woman (see more in the Appendix - Chapter D).

The Equality and Rights Committee for Police Personnel of the Panhellenic Federation of Police Officers (POASY) has put forward the following demands for implementation, with which the Family Law Committee agrees:

- Provision of permanent training and continuous training at regular intervals for the staff of these offices, taking into account that:

- the training of the police officers serving in the operational offices includes only one 5-day training which is not sufficient for the proper handling of cases

- there is a percentage of police officers who are trained and then for various reasons, official or private, they leave this service and new ones come in, who have not had time to be called for training.

What definitely needs to be done is recurrent training of police officers at least once a year. At the same time, expertise and exchange of knowledge and experience of police officers with police officers from other countries, where domestic violence bureaus are successfully operating.

- The presence of a psychologist, where necessary, prior to the victim's testimony.

- Full staffing of the offices, so that all shifts are covered, with staff who wish to serve and not those who do not wish to serve.

- Have more female police officers serving to facilitate preliminary investigations when victims are female.

- Establish more Domestic Violence Offices either to absorb the workload where it occurs, or to serve citizens who due to geography are forced to travel many miles.

- Carrying out awareness-raising activities at regular intervals in schools, municipalities and in all regions.

- Establishment of a civilian dress code to facilitate communication with victims and their work in general.

- Provision of contractual service vehicles for exclusive use.

- Establishment of a Sub-Directorate to which these offices will be attached for their proper functioning and efficiency.

We point out that crime cannot be dealt with by the police alone, if there are no social services, if the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity and possibly other Ministries, all of which, working together, can carry out new scientific research and special studies.

A unified and coordinated policy is needed, which will be disseminated in various ways, not only for information but also for action in all directions. Gender-based violence, and domestic violence in particular, has very specific characteristics and requires all of us to think, plan and act differently.

For this reason, the police must invest a lot in the field of prevention and implement various methods and programs aimed at reducing the commission of such crimes as much as possible.

#### 20. LAW 4800/2021 ON "REFORM OF FAMILY LAW"

It is characteristic that 10 years after the adoption of the Istanbul Convention, the Greek government deliberately introduces a law that is in the opposite direction, ignoring the scientific opinions, the recommendations of GREVIO and its international obligations.

Law 4800/2021, also known as the Tsiaras Law, has provoked strong reactions from the women's movement, as it is a flagrant violation of the Istanbul Convention and the International Conventions on the Rights of the Child, as it has changed the child-centered nature of family law and created a serious social problem, exacerbating intra-family confrontations and conflicts.

It should be noted that neither women's organizations and collectives of the feminist movement were invited to a dialogue, nor was the government body responsible for the design, implementation and monitoring of gender equality policies, namely the General Directorate for Gender Equality, invited to the consultations. In contrast, various collectives of fathers who promoted the change of legislation through lobbying methods were (and are) given a privileged position as interlocutors and also privileged treatment by a number of media outlets.

This law is in direct conflict with Article 31 of the Istanbul Convention, which requires States to take "such legislative or other measures as may be necessary to ensure that, in determining the rights of guardianship and contact with children, the incidents of violence covered by the scope of this Convention are taken into account" and that "the exercise of any rights of contact or guardianship shall not endanger the rights and safety of the victim or children".

It refers to several cases that constitute "abuse of parental responsibility" and justify the removal of parental responsibility from one parent, but which do not appear to prioritize the best interests of the children, but rather reflect vindictive spouses who want to remove parental responsibility from their former partner for reasons relating to their relationship with each other or with their extended family. The law 4800/2021 has unforeseeable consequences for the families and social cohesion, and it reaches the point to penalise terminal depression (depression after birth).

In the same provision, child abuse, surprisingly enough, is mentioned last and requires a conviction with a final court order for domestic violence, which if not caught in the act, can take from 2 to 7 years, depending on the geographical area. In fact, in its original version, the article spoke of an irrevocable court decision convicting the abusive parent, i.e., a range of up to 13 years until the final court decision was issued, during which time the minor child would be obliged to live under the same roof as the abusive parent. The irrevocable order was removed following concerted action by women's organizations.

The recent change in Greek family law began with a provision restricting the movement of a parent who has custody of minor children. Specifically, the new regulation provides that in order for the parent with custody of minors to be able to change residence, regardless of the reason, a court decision must have been issued beforehand that the other parent's right of contact is not affected.

The provision has created many problems for mothers who have been trapped in the area that was their family home. They cannot leave without the former partner's permission and cannot seek employment because no employer will wait for the court case to be completed. And importantly, this move is often done so that the woman can receive assistance in caring for young children from her family.

Most important of all, they cannot escape an abusive partner until after the court order is issued. Thus, even if a woman wants to escape from an abusive environment, she is obliged not only to announce her intention to leave to her partner, but also to obtain a positive court order for her removal, otherwise she will have to abandon her children in order to leave. This regulation has trapped many women who, under the threat of losing their children, do not dare to escape from a bad marriage or an abusive relationship, and certainly do not dare to seek work or new perspectives in their lives away from the place and the location where their family home was located.

Now, with the co-determination regulation, which is automatically in force (no longer requiring a court order), all perpetrators of domestic violence retain unfettered access and unrestricted control over their victims' lives, subject only to their parental status, even after a complaint of domestic violence has been filed, which is usually adjudicated after many years.

The problem is evident in shelters, where there is great difficulty for female guests to enroll their children in schools, due to the law of co-parenting that requires the written consent of the father. The character of the hostels as safe havens is therefore compromised, as the abusive partner/spouse will be informed of the location. The court route to resolve the issue takes several years as a final judgment is required.

The terms "disruption of child-parent relations" and "disruption of the child's emotional relationship with the other parent and his/her family" are also used, terms that are considered to be a misuse of parental authority. If the judge believes they exist, he or she may even remove all parental custody from a parent who is found to be almost exclusively at fault by the abused mother, who is concerned about her child's contact with the abusive parent or has decided to support her child's free choice to refuse contact with the abusive parent and his or her family.

There is no provision by national and regional authorities to ensure the good and safe operation of family meeting points based on specific standards of principles and values, including the duty to report to the judicial authorities any information about children at risk of abuse.

Recently, the Ministry of Justice has proceeded with the establishment and formation of a special legislative committee by Ministerial Decision No. 43370/f.360/20-9-2022 on the reform of the institutional framework for dealing with domestic violence. The

purpose of the special legislative drafting committee is to further satisfy the demands of the lobby of "dads' associations", which seek legislative recognition of "parental alienation" or other similar term as a form of domestic violence, as well as the provision of corresponding legal sanctions. At the same time, the World Health Organization and the UN are opposed to the use of 'parental alienation' in legal proceedings, as it puts children at risk. In this context, we ask for GREVIO's substantial assistance in order to prevent victims of domestic violence from being artificially turned into perpetrators and condemned instead of being the recipients of due protection. (See Annex - Chap. C, the relevant press release of the Family Law Committee).

Recently, there has been a spate of countersuits and other appeals of defamation, false reporting, child abduction and child endangerment against women who dare to report domestic and/or sexual violence.

These allegations, usually based on false evidence, are made by the perpetrator against the survivor and against members of her supportive environment (family members and other witnesses), with the aim of provoking fear and silence among victims and society in general.

For the above reasons, we stress the necessity to introduce legislation to criminalize false accusations, as well as the introduction of safeguards in Greek legislation so that no government can violate International or European law.

#### 21. "ACTIVE DADS" MOVEMENT

Of concern is the emergence of the "active dads" movement, which speaks of "parental alienation" and seeks compulsory co-parenting, claiming to care about children's rights, while instead causing disastrous consequences for children's psycho-emotional development and health.

We find that their lobby has the support of the government and most of the media, and the views they promote not only do not eliminate stereotypes, but create new ones. Mothers are labelled as alienating (even when there is an asserted need for protection, which the courts do not provide), labelled as deceitful and that they will do anything for child support money (even if the child support is not given by the obligor and they are not protected by the state). In this way, mothers become financially weak, even in terms of their own and their children's survival and consequently gender inequalities increase.

#### 22. NON-IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 52 OF THE CONVENTION OF INSTANBUL

The non-implementation of Article 52 of the Istanbul Convention (Law 4531/2018) on the immediate removal of the perpetrator from the family shelter/home of the victim(s), as well as the prohibition of communication between the perpetrator and the victims, leaves women and child victims of domestic violence without protection from abusers, even after a report of domestic violence against the mother and/or children.

#### 23. FAMILY COURTS



There is a need to establish family courts with the power to decide, with the best interests of each child as the primary consideration, on parental responsibility, custody and communication between the child and the parent. Particularly in cases where there is domestic violence against the child and/or against mother and child, any decision to allow the child to communicate with the violent parent should be accompanied by measures to monitor the communication and safety of the child and mother. Family courts need to be assisted by their own, specialized services, to which social research, child and parenting expert reports and supervision of the safety of the victims and the perpetrator's compliance with restraining orders, injunctions and court orders will be entrusted.

#### 24. AWARENESS-RAISING - SYSTEMATIC AND TARGETED TRAINING

Although there is an increase in violence against women and an increase in femicides (during and after the coronavirus lockdowns), there are no prevention, awareness-raising and empowerment programs for women by the official authorities on a consistent and coordinated basis to change norms and stereotypes in education, the media and society in general.

With a view to changing distorted norms and changing attitudes, the need for compulsory, appropriate, targeted and recurrent training, at least for prosecutors, judges and police officers, in the fight against gender-based violence, with an emphasis on domestic and sexual violence, is highlighted.

##### 24.1. Educational system

The government refuses, despite repeated appeals by women's organizations, to include a "human relations" course in the education system, as well as the dissemination of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. Children are not taught how to protect themselves, and instead we have many cases of abuse and sexual exploitation of minors, as well as pornography. Sometimes we hear about the implementation of projects in schools on gender relations, but these are occasional, only in certain schools and not compulsory for all schools.

Women's and feminist organizations have repeatedly emphasized the need to include sex education in all levels of education as a compulsory subject, within which issues of gender/domestic/sexist violence, abuse, sexual exploitation of minors, as well as child pornography should be included, but so far, they have not been taken into account. Children are not aware of their rights as those rights are set out in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child and are unaware of where to turn in cases of violation. Even if some private bodies promote SOS helplines through the media, this is neither systematic nor official.

Of course, there are teachers who take the initiative to make - within the teaching time - references to gender stereotypes, gender equality lessons, etc. in some cases in cooperation with parents' associations. However, these actions are neither official, nor fixed, nor compulsory; they are left to the will of the teaching staff of each school and its management.

As far as public universities are concerned, on the initiative of each university community, Equality Committees have been set up with specific action plans, including the prevention of gender-based violence in the university environment.

#### 24.2. Training of professionals

The Government does not provide in legislation that public institutions will recurrently conduct courses on equal treatment between women and men.

The National School of Judiciary provides some courses and initial training seminars with content on violence against women to trainee judges, but these are not sufficient. Regarding professional training for judges, although On-line courses on intimate partner violence are offered, there is a strong gender bias and misuse of gender stereotypes in case adjudications, as well as bad practices that increased with the enactment of Law 4800/21 on mandatory joint custody.

Training of prosecutors and other public officials and employees is insufficient, especially training on post-traumatic stress disorder and its effect on testimony in court, etc.

The same applies to lawyers, many of whom have no training or information, although there are European Union programs for training them. The majority of the legal profession has no knowledge of the Istanbul Convention, its obligations and its implementation, and there is a strong bias and distortion of equality, as was evident through the enactment of Law 4800/2021 on mandatory joint custody.

In addition, the same applies to the level of training offered to forensic doctors, who play a vital role in documenting evidence of rape and sexual assault in a non-invasive and sensitive manner.

There are no multidisciplinary workshops on gender-based violence, bringing together various professionals involved in the administration of justice, such as prosecutors, lawyers, judges, police officers, forensic doctors, medical doctors. These workshops would aim to increase professionals' knowledge of the legal framework and the various support services available, as well as to raise awareness through direct testimonies of victims of gender-based violence.

Training on violence against women in the legal world remains optional, and the authorities do not ensure that available training addresses all forms of violence against women covered by the Istanbul Convention, in particular sexual violence, as well as the psychological dimension of domestic violence, post-separation violence, the impact of violence on child victims and witnesses, and the prevention of secondary victimization.

As far as the different medical professions are concerned, there is no common protocol for dealing with gender-based violence that recognizes domestic violence as a public health issue and sets out standardized interventions. Not all health professionals receive training on intimate partner violence, and are therefore reluctant to address this issue in a culturally sensitive way.

It is difficult to assess in a comprehensive way the level and quality of training of the vast number of professionals involved in implementing the Istanbul Convention as a whole.

It raises deep concerns about the very recent event where a seminar of the National School of Judiciary on "Domestic Violence - Civil and Criminal Dimension" on December 8, 2022 included a presentation by a senior judge of the country entitled "Parental alienation as a form of domestic violence"

#### 25. SEXISM AND PATRIARCHY IN THE MEDIA

Sexist and misogynistic views are often shown uncontrollably, even on large, nationwide television stations. The absence of control of the media by the National Broadcasting Council has resulted in the introduction of distorted standards and patriarchal to racist views into society. (See more in the Annex - Chapter E)

We strongly denounce the TV trials, which have reached uncontrolled proportions, especially in recent cases such as the mother accused of the death of her 3 children, the 12-year-old girl - victim of rape and exploitation in Sepolia and the Ark of the World Foundation. Wherever there is an issue of violence against women and women victims, the televisual gluttony is indescribable. Sensitive personal data is violated on a daily basis, case files are published in sections as they develop and even forensic reports are made public. The Family Law Committee has repeatedly addressed the National Broadcasting Council (ESR) asking for the laws to be respected, but its (ESR) intervention is minimal to non-existent. Only a few media outlets highlight the issues of equality & gender discrimination. Although there are many female journalists and TV presenters, they don't seem to be gender conscious or they lack the power to make decisions on the content of the issues they present.

#### 26. MeToo MOVEMENT

The rising of the #MeToo movement in our country is an optimistic message that gives women victims the power to break the silence and denounce sexual and all forms of violence against them. However, the way they are then treated by the police and the judicial system (including the lawyers who take on the defense of the accused) is a systematic and very painful secondary victimization.

It is worth pointing out the absolute violation of Article 54 of the Convention, as not only is information about the sexual history and behavior of the victim, which has nothing to do with the case on trial, heard in the courtrooms, but many lies are also heard, through which they attack the complainants with the sole aim of convincing mainly the jury (in the Greek judicial system there are four, as opposed to three regular judges) of the immorality or ulterior motives of each complainant or their parents, in order to obtain the acquittal of the accused due to doubts.

As an example, in the trial of the sailing athlete Amalia (the first Greek MeToo trial) who, upon reaching adulthood, complained of lechery and rape by her coach when she was between 12 and 14 years old, the coach was sentenced to 13 years for lechery, but was acquitted for the rapes, which were considered consensual sexual intercourse. Olympic sailing champion Sofia Bekatorou, who supported the accused from start to finish, said after the ruling that "unfortunately society was not yet ready to accept the truth". Fortunately some prosecutor reversed the decision as to the part of the acquittal for the rapes and we are waiting for the trial.

#### 27. PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING CENTRES

The percentage of women in decision-making centers is very low in Greece compared to the European average. This is extremely ominous, since with low participation of women in politics, it is not possible to ensure the adoption of rules to prevent and combat gender-based violence and their implementation.

There are few women ministers in the Cabinet. When the Prime Minister was asked why he did not include more women in the Cabinet, he replied that he could not find any!

In 2010, with the passing of the Law on Local Governance ("Kallikrates Program"), Regional Committees for Gender Equality (PEPIS) were established in all regions and service units for gender equality policies in each municipality.

Also, in March 2019, a law was passed on the mandatory operation of a Municipal Equality Committee in each municipality. However, the members appointed to these municipal commissions are most often inappropriate, as they are selected on the basis of political affiliation to the respective municipal authority. It has been repeatedly requested that seminars be organized for the members of these committees, but this has not been implemented.

#### 28. NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS AND CIVIC SOCIETY (under Articles 8 and 9 of the 'Convention')

Although there is an obligation of the country, based on the Istanbul Convention (Law 4531/2018), on the need for intersectoral connection and cooperation between state agencies and women's/feminist organizations for the prevention and response to gender-based violence, we would say that this cooperation is almost non-existent both at the central and local level.

By way of example, women's organizations were not invited to participate in the preparation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality (in which there is only one reference to future meetings with civil society organizations working with populations pushed into survival sex).

Also, they have not been invited for consultation in any legislative drafting committee, neither for the reform of the family law (Law 4800/2022, see para. 13), nor at the current time for the preparation of the new law on domestic violence (on which there is no information so far).

#### 29. WOMEN REFUGEES

A major issue that has emerged concerns the women refugees, who are served by the network of structures of the GSDFPGE and the problems that arise with the various institutions, as well as with interpretation. It is important to mention that the staff of the GSDFPGE network have shown seriousness, professionalism and concern from the beginning of the refugee crisis until today. And it is important because, especially at the beginning of the refugee crisis, there was neither the knowledge, nor the training, nor the tools for the staff. So, there is an immediate need to address the issues that have been raised in relation to the gender-based violence that refugee women are exposed to, which are:

- Exclusion of recognized refugee women and persons with residence permit who do not belong to the category of "residence permit for work purposes", in the inclusion of the category of beneficiary women victims of domestic and

gender-based violence under the Ministerial Decision No. 90097/29-09-2022 (Government Gazette 5106/B/29-09-2022), Public Service of Employment Program entitled: "Program of grants to enterprises for the employment of: A. 3,000 unemployed persons belonging to hard-to-serve population groups and B. 7,000 unemployed persons facing barriers to their integration or reintegration into the labor market"

- Difficulty of Greek banks to open a simple bank account for recognized refugees/asylum seekers. Despite the actions taken to address this difficulty, each bank may follow its own policy, according to information received from both banks and UNHCR

## ANNEX

### A. CASES OF WOMEN VICTIMS OF LONG-TERM LITIGATION WITH EX-HUSBANDS

#### Case 1

A. got married in 2013, and her child was born in 2014. The violence had started at the time of the pregnancy. Whenever she said she would leave, he threatened to kill her. She divorced in 2016, at which point she filed a restraining order against him because of his constant violence. In 2017 the ex-husband lost parental custody. In 2018 he is granted communication only in the presence of the mother and a third party.

The woman has filed several lawsuits against him for violence. The most significant one when the child was 2.5 years old and was in communication at the father's house, he hit the child with a punch in the eye. The mother obtained a forensic report that proved the abuse inflicted to the child. This case was heard when the child was 8 years old, in November 2022, and the father was sentenced to 2 years, suspended sentence. He has been unable to see the child ever since.

In previous years, when he had the right to contact, the child objected every time it was time to see the father. As a result, the mother would bring the child for contact, along with representatives of women's organizations who went together to protect the mother and the child, but the child strongly objected, often a representative of the local police station would come, and the father sued both the mother and the solidarity groups for refusing to enforce a judgment for obstructing contact.

In December 2022 he was sentenced to 8 months in prison for violence, reduced to 6 months due to a clean criminal record (mitigating factor). There have been 10-15 lawsuits filed by mother for the child

Four lawsuits have been pursued by the father against the mother, which have not been adjudicated. It is believed that there are others that are expected to be disclosed. Huge legal fees for the mother who has to pay a lawyer every time, even at the minimum, while she is a private company employee on minimum wage, and living on rent. The effort to raise solidarity funds for legal costs has had little return due to the difficult financial situation of the general public to whom the appeal is addressed.

#### Case 2

Kallithea case: long-standing domestic violence and a claim for joint custody.

On 26 November 2021, a 42-year-old mother managed to get out of her privately owned apartment in Kallithea, where her then partner had locked her and their 3-year-old daughter. She came out into the hallway screaming for help with the child, and the neighbors made a human shield to protect them from him, until the police came and they were all taken to the police station under the caught in the act procedure. The man was detained until the next day, while the woman and child were released late after midnight. On 3 January 2022, the Department of Security Measures of the First Instance Court of Athens granted the woman's request for a temporary injunction, and in particular: a) awarded the mother custody of her minor daughter; b) obliged the father to pay the mother alimony of 150 euros per month; and c)

prohibited the father from approaching the mother and her home at a distance of less than 300 meters.

On 18 February 2022, the main application for injunctive relief filed by the woman against her former partner was heard. Custody was temporarily granted to the woman, and the man was allowed to see the child for some hours on weekends with the woman present.

On 16 June 2022, the man was convicted by the Athens Trial Court for battering against the woman (22/11/2021, 23/11/2021, 26/11/2021) and sentenced to 6 months imprisonment with a three-year suspension and appealed.

On 30 January 2023, the trial for the child custody claims took place in Athens. The lawsuit filed by the husband requesting co-custody and the lawsuit filed by the wife requesting sole custody of their daughter were tried together.

A decision is pending.

The feminist collective “MOV” has supported the woman and the daughter from the beginning and continues to this day, despite being targeted by the man because of his practical solidarity (the man has filed several lawsuits against members of “MOV”).

### **Case 3**

A. suffers physical violence during the marriage. After an episode of severe physical abuse in front of the child in 2014, the perpetrator left the residence leaving her bloodied, after having tried to stab her. From 2014 when the separation begins until 2016 the perpetrator, on the grounds of his right to visit and communicate with the child, commits ongoing episodes of domestic violence, physical violence and threats. The incidents are either in front of the child or against the child. Because of the ongoing incidents, she reports some of them, while at the same time the abuser is also suing her for violating court orders to communicate. In total she files 7 lawsuits, two of them for bodily harm, one of them for dangerous bodily harm, loss of hearing, simple bodily harm against both her and the child and 3 lawsuits for threats. In total, the perpetrator is irrevocably sentenced to 56 months imprisonment, except for one act that of simple bodily harm to both the complainant and the child, which is acquitted due to doubts. In the context of revenge, intimidation, threats and economic violence against the victim, the perpetrator filed 28 lawsuits against her for violation of a communication decision and a personal injury lawsuit in the parental role as a father, claiming damages of EUR 50,000 against the woman survivor.

A judgment was finally delivered awarding damages against the victim.

In the judgment, the convictions against the perpetrator, the final decision of the guardianship acknowledging the episode of violence against the child, the assessment of the child psychologist who had sessions with the child for a year because there was no consent of the father, were proposed and presented, but not taken into account at all.

In September 2021, Law 4800/21 aka the law of mandatory joint custody came into force, which in article 1532 AK, paragraph F, states that there is an abusive exercise of parental authority in cases where there is a final judgment of domestic violence.

However, and contrary to the law itself which was a requirement of the “Dads’ ” lobby, this article was not implemented because of the unscientific theory of parental alienation.



In addition, in this decision the judge biased against the survivor and disregarded the episodes of domestic violence against the mother and child and proceeded to diagnose and rule on the existence of alienation in this child's case. It even overlooks the fact that the child, in addition to being a direct victim, has also been an indirect victim - a witness to the violence against the mother and its effects on his psyche. In its reasoning, it also proposes indirectly to the perpetrator to reform the existing parental care situation of the child by removing it from the mother due to parental alienation, referring to Articles 1532 AK and 1533 AK. Article 1533 AK applies in cases where the child is at risk, both physically, mentally and psychologically, in cases where the parent has immoral and criminal behavior, an immoral or dissolute life, etc. This recent decision is particularly worrying, in view of the organized effort by the Dads lobby to recognize parental alienation as a form of domestic, psychological violence in the new bill, which the government is preparing for domestic violence.

#### **Case 4**

Even cases already settled are being overturned, as the new law allows, with dramatic consequences for children and mothers. The photographic law has unforeseen consequences for families and for social cohesion and peace. One such example is the criminalisation of post-partum depression. The case below, with decision no. 11061/18-10-2022, is typical. Mother lost her 3 babies, 2 twins and another child because she had postpartum depression. Postpartum depression, is a transient condition and when you do not have the support of the environment, especially the spouse, it worsens. He has taken the children away from her and she pays child support while he works from home, but he stated that he is unemployed because of her because he had to take care of the children when she was sick. He forced her to go to public psychiatric hospitals to get a judgment against her which of course no public hospital has opined that postpartum depression is a permanent psychiatric condition, but a mild transient case. Yet they took her children away from her because the father also claimed postpartum depression:

#### **Her story**

I am the mother of three lovely babies.

A boy (3.5 years old) and the twins a boy and a girl (2 years old).

I am living separately from my children for one and a half (1,5) years. The reason for this is an arduous and unfair legal dispute that my ex-husband started in February 2021.

It all started when I spoke about divorce after a year of many problems he had caused. I have also asked him to get a lawyer so that we can talk as adults about how to be good parents to our three children.

Instead of sitting down and talking, he made fun of me for 1.5 months, pretending that he had no lawyer and could not find one (it was the Christmas season). He never came for a civil conversation with me, but he did show up in January 2021 with a restraining order against me. It is a case file based on lies, malicious slander, distortions, my personal documents which he had intercepted and a plethora of false witnesses, who did not hesitate to sign their names and knowingly deprive my children of their mother.

A mother who adores them, and they adore her, a healthy mother who only suffered from postnatal depression. A temporary condition that I fought alone, and during which my ex-husband did not stand by me for a single moment. The judicial authorities accepted this assumption.

The calumny I have suffered is unprecedented. It is unfounded (as evidenced by many medical reports and documents). **Nevertheless, it was enough to lead to an extremely strange order** that, to this day, deprives me of custody of my children. Contrary to what my ex-husband claims, I love my children, care for them tirelessly and strive daily to ensure that they are well - despite the trauma and inadequacies they experience because of my absence. I struggle daily to provide them with everything, but I also have to fight a tough battle to restore justice and to ensure that they are not deprived of their mother for a moment longer.

I do not ask for much - I want to have my children and to have the possibility to look after them every day; I demand justice and reparation for the psychological damage that both, my children and I, have suffered. The psychological damage caused by a person, who does not care about the children, but only has his own interest in mind. Financially and otherwise. What he seeks is strife and revenge - nothing else. If he cared about his children, he would not have taken such extreme measures to deprive them of their mother so young.

One might ask - how could her children be taken from their mother, and so young? Anything can happen. Anything can happen if there are financial resources and "high connections." All this happens when "ego," securing alimony and deceit are the priorities - in the name of the children's welfare.

For my part, I cannot stop wondering:

What kind of person is this, who, at a time of extreme vulnerability due to childbirth and postnatal depression, sends the mother to a public psychiatric hospital just to get a piece of paper in his hands? A paper that said nothing more than what we knew: "Mild disorder due to postnatal depression."

What kind of person is this, who takes his children away from their mother with lies and calumny and feels happy about it?

What kind of person is this, who tells outrageous lies in the courtrooms and at the same time admits to those around him that the mother is healthy?

What kind of person is this, who deceives common friends and produces snippets of conversation without their consent, in order to create impressions? Friends who have recanted afterward and continue to recant in writing?

What kind of person is this, who involves public hospitals to obtain fake certificates to support his false narrative?

What kind of person is this, who bullies his children by claiming that the police have taken their mother away from them, and that they are no longer allowed by the police to see her often?

Is he really able to exercise custody?

You can draw your own conclusions.

## **B. CASES REVEALING NEGLIGENCE AND OMISSIONS OF STATE AUTHORITIES IN THE FACE OF THE CRIME OF RAPE**

### **Case 1**

Indicatively, we mention the case of the complaint made by 25-year-old Georgia Bika, that she was raped after sedation on New Year's Eve 2022 by the son of a rich and famous family in a luxury hotel in Thessaloniki, where she had gone for entertainment the day before.

When she regained consciousness, she appealed to the police authorities for the provision of practical support to help document her rape, but she did not get a response as required by law. She then requested that she be referred to a forensic doctor for the taking of genetic materials and the examination of the drug she was sure she was given, which was done after a long delay.

In her subsequent memorandum to the judicial authorities, she cites 30 pieces of evidence of errors and omissions which, according to her, were made by certain State bodies involved in her case.

Her lawyer says in his appeal "we filed a memorandum which is 126 pages long, in which we analyze the omissions of certain state officials, not just police officers. Through it, we argue with evidence, supported by reason, that impermissible omissions took place, which in Ms. Bika's view were made for the sole purpose of harming her and exonerating the defendant."

After a case file was formed, an irrevocable acquittal was soon (February 22) formed by the Supreme Court Prosecutor's Office for the accused, with the prosecutor who drafted it stating that Ms Bika has been lying a lot.

After major mobilizations of the feminist movement in many cities in Greece, but especially after the complainant's appeal to the European Court of Justice, in November 2022, the head of the Prosecutor's Office ordered a review of the case based on the evidence provided.

The complainant had to appeal to the European Court of Justice in order for the Greek judicial authorities to be mobilized!!!!

### **Case 2**

In September 2022, the case of the "12-year-old girl of Sepolia", a victim of consecutive rapes and a large prostitution ring, was revealed. Member of a large family with 8 children who had always lived in poverty and social abandonment.

One of the most scandalous aspects of the treatment of the 12-year-old girl by the state authorities (police, etc.) is the interrogation process in which she has been involved, which is being carried out under unacceptable and extremely traumatic conditions in the General Police Directorate of Attica, forcing her to relive all that she has suffered. In order for the 12-year-old girl to have access to a mental health service (which she desperately needs), her aunt, who has been given custody of her, must accompany her some 60 kilometers away from her place of residence and, of course, pay the costs, while being unemployed. To date, the Ministry of Education has not provided her with home education, as she is unable to attend school for obvious

reasons. Almost six months have passed and the State has still not been able to provide even basic support for the minor and the people who are responsible for her care. To date, the minor has not received adequate psychological support or financial assistance. This case is a dramatic illustration of the absence of the welfare state, revealing the substantive non-existence, for lack of will, of institutions that can support minor victims of abuse who, as in this case, face an acute problem of survival.

### **C. COMMITTEE ON FAMILY LAW AND CONSENSUAL JOINT CUSTODY PRESS RELEASE ON UPCOMING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE BILL**

- *One year after the implementation of the law that changed the family law (law 4800/2021), the adverse effects on the aggravation of family conflicts and increase in domestic violence are evident.*
- *Special Legislative Commission at the Ministry of Justice for the reform of the institutional framework for dealing with domestic violence.*
- *Again, no information, participation of women's organizations*

At the initiative of the Committee on Family Law and Consensual Joint Custody, an online meeting with members of the Greek Parliament and women's associations was held on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> of December, in order to examine the progress of the implementation of Law 4800/2021 on mandatory co-parenting and the establishment of a new legislative drafting committee at the Ministry of Justice on domestic violence.

One year after the implementation of the law that changed the family law and the adverse effects on the aggravation of family conflicts and contradictions in the increase of domestic violence and the increase in the number of court cases between spouses in civil and criminal courts are evident.

One year later, instead of evaluating the results of Law 4800/2021 and remedying the adverse effects, the Ministry of Justice is setting up a new legislative commission to reform the institutional framework for dealing with domestic violence, without any participation of women's organizations and, as we are informed by numerous publications, the lobbying of "dads' associations" is pushing and finding favorable ears for the legislative recognition of "parental alienation" or another similar term, while the World Health Organization and the UN are against the use of "parental alienation" in legal proceedings as it puts children at risk.

Experience has shown, it is stressed, that once the term "parental alienation" enters a custody case, neither the reasons for the child's refusal to communicate nor the allegations of domestic violence, which are immediately labelled as false and the product of suggestion, are given due consideration.

We are particularly concerned by the attack on the rights of women and children and have asked members of the National Parliament for their full support to ensure that such legislation is not enacted.

**We demand:**

1. Immediate implementation of Article 52 of the Istanbul Convention: **issuance of restraining orders immediately after the report** of domestic violence (Article 18 of Law 3500/2006, as amended by Law 4531/2018) **to remove the perpetrator from the family home and prohibit approaching the victims**, in order to prioritize the safety of victims or persons at risk.
2. Immediate implementation **of the GREVIO recommendations requiring a ban on the use in a judicial context of concepts and terms referring to parental alienation** of the violent parent, which is attributed to the non-violent parent who reports domestic violence and seeks protection. **Educate judges, prosecutors, expert witnesses and social workers** on how perpetrators of domestic violence use the conceptual construct of "parental alienation", which has been rejected by the scientific community for decades, in order to deconstruct reports of domestic violence as false and blame the mother as an 'uncooperative and unfit parent' who is responsible for the child's poor relationship or refusal to communicate with the abusive father.
3. **Strict application of Article 31** of the Istanbul Convention (Law 4531/2018) **in all Family Law cases** in which there are indications or reports of domestic violence (regardless of the existence of a criminal complaint against the perpetrator or the stage at which the criminal proceedings are at) in combination with the adoption of measures to protect children (victims and witnesses) and their mother (**Articles 26 & 45** of the Convention - Law 4531/2018).
4. Representation of Women's Organizations and specialized NGOs that provide support to women and children who suffer domestic violence in the Legislative Drafting Committee established to reform the institutional framework for dealing with domestic violence.
5. Open and meaningful consultation with ALL relevant stakeholders, including specialized NGOs and Women's Organizations, on the Draft Law **BEFORE** it is put to Public Consultation.

*Athens, December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2022*

#### D. INDICATIVE CASES OF THE SITUATION IN THE GREEK POLICE FORCE

Indicative of the outrageous situation in the police force is the interview of the Minister of Civil Protection to MEGA Channel (a major TV station), after the femicide by the husband on a Greek island (Zakynthos).

During the interview, the Minister blamed the murdered woman, accusing her that: while a restraining order had been issued for the husband not to approach her, she allowed him to return home; on the day of the murder she gave information that did not facilitate his arrest by the police; she chose to return to her home and her children; and finally, she did not make the right choice as she should not have gone to the police but "to protect herself, to be in a structure, to seek other kinds of advice...".

It is worth quoting his words verbatim in the video, available at: <https://bit.ly/3likOWF>

The Minister, after urging women (4th minute of the video) to report domestic violence because that is how they will find help, then (4:50 - 7:30 minute of the video), describes the itinerary of this particular femicide according to what is known to the Zakynthos Police as follows: *"the murderer... had been arrested on the complaint of the woman who unfortunately was the victim of the murder on 18.6.2022, the Greek Police had arrested him, led him to justice, led him to the Prosecutor, the Prosecutor dealt with the case, detained him, drew his conclusions and when he was temporarily released, with an explicit trial date in February 2023, it was with the restrictive condition that this man would not approach his wife, at a distance of less than 100 meters.*

*He is an unemployed builder, his wife seems to have taken pity on him in the process and took him back home, they met again in the same house, they had 3 children, 2 minors and another boy of 20 years... it seems that the phenomena have been repeated and repeated and repeated...*

*The woman had unfortunately enabled this man to be next door to her again and to re-express his vile, aggressive and violent behaviors and on the evening of July 31<sup>st</sup> she went to the Police Station herself with the encouragement of a friend and her children, reported the incidents again, reported that her husband had left the house because the Police asked where he was so that they could go and arrest him directly. Unfortunately, the picture given is that he is not in the house, she asked to be let go to return to her children, because we are talking about minor children, she returned to the house..."*

Asked by the reporter whether someone (of the Police force) went along to check, he replied that *"this is the only point where one can say whether the Police could have done more but now... let's not hide... let's assume that someone was accompanying her to the house - in principle he was not at home, he went to the house afterwards - this person had decided to murder her.*

*The only solution in this particular case would be that these two people would never be in the same house again, under no circumstances. To be protected, to be placed in a structure, to seek other kinds of counselling... This is why I said something at the beginning: dealing with the problem is a complex issue. First of all, all the courage and decision from the individuals themselves, who are the victims of domestic violence - a strong decision to approach with*

*courage, with strength of soul, to ask for help, to talk about their problem, to get advice..."*



## E. CASES OF SEXISM AND MISOGYNY IN THE MEDIA

### Case 1

Typical of the sexist and misogynistic discourse projected in the media is the extract in a broadcast of a major TV channel (ANT1) for which no fine was ever imposed on 5.6.2020. A well-known journalist states (minute 11:30 of the video) the sexist and misogynistic view: *"There are many dads who pay a very high price for this rent of a 9-month pregnancy and this hurts me as a father, because the father is the hero of the children, no matter how much some mothers or some judges want to overlook this... they don't give the father what they should."* ... and following (15.57 minutes into the video), again clearly articulating his perspective on the role and place of women: *"Dad is the child's hero - the hard things are the dad's - dad goes through the hard things... mum is the love, the hug, you know in the first pain the hug that will calm you down. But dad is to teach you the hard stuff, to teach you the way, to lead you where you need to go."* In a comment the presenter tried to interrupt the sexist rant by saying: *"many mothers raised their children on their own, heroines, and they had all these characteristics that you say are of men - I mean, I try not to put labels on who is a hero and who is not in the story"*, the journalist insists... *"no, no, I separated the roles, they are roles!"*

Furthermore (from 13:45 minute of the video), he heralds the passage of the mandatory joint custody law, which was actually passed a year later... he talks about mothers instrumentalizing children... and he doesn't hesitate to say publicly (from 17:40 minute of the video) that he cares *"about dads, active dads, who want to be active in their children's lives and can't. I have another way, another system, I get it I'll figure it out. But there are also dads who don't have my phone number, have the phone number of the secretary of a ministry or the police or something... they don't have power. And that power has to be, you know, strength in numbers."*

Video available here: <https://bit.ly/3Yd2U6m>

### Case 2

In the debate on the compulsory co-parenting bill, a government MP said that *"a woman whose husband cheated on her, beat her, abused her and results in her having hatred against her ex-husband, yet the child still has the right to be raised with both parents"*

Video available at: <https://bit.ly/3I1gzb9>

**F. Women's Organisations members of the Committee for Family Law and Consensual Shared Custody.**

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