

Combating Sexism and Online Sexism Law

The Cyprus law



COMMISSIONER
FOR **GENDER**
EQUALITY

A national legislation

An initiative undertaken by a group of **women Members of Parliament** to compile special legislation to combat sexism and online sexism followed the adoption of the **Council of Europe Recommendation on Preventing and Combating Sexism**

Preamble. WHEREAS, according to Recommendation CM/REC (2019)1 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on preventing and combating sexism adopted on 27 March 2019, gender discrimination is a violation of human rights, but also an obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, with sexism being a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between women and men, which ultimately leads to discrimination and prevents women's full social advancement,

AND WHEREAS, according to the same abovementioned Recommendation, sexism is linked to violence against women and girls, whereby acts of "everyday" sexism are part of a "continuum of violence", inevitably creating a climate of intimidation, fear, discrimination, exclusion and insecurity, which limits opportunities for personal growth and freedom of person,

AND WHEREAS, as further emphasised in the above Recommendation, the phenomenon of online sexism through online attacks has clearly intensified, in ways that such a behaviour affects, individually or collectively, persons or groups of persons, even when such persons are not a target in themselves, for example in the workplace, preventing the victims even from expressing opinions, ultimately resulting in their distancing from the internet and in the undermining of the right to freedom of speech and opinion in a democratic society, as well as in limiting their professional opportunities, all the while sexist abuse of social media through posting visual content of private moments without the consent of those depicted is also a form of such violence, which needs to be addressed,

Sexism and online sexism

"online sexism", means the registration in a computer system of electronic data which contain sexism, as this term is defined in this Law, and which is directed against a specific person or against a specific group of persons

"sexism" means publicly or privately expressed sexist behaviour directed at a particular person or group of persons, consisting of an action, gesture, visual presentation, practice, written or oral expression based upon the idea or perception that a person or a group of persons is inferior because of their sex with the purpose of-

- (a) violating the rights of the victim or victims by insulting, diminishing and damaging their dignity, resulting in depriving their access to public services and in unequal access to resources; or
- (b) resulting in physical, psychological or socio-economic harm to the victim or victims; or
- (c) creating an intimidating, hostile, humiliating, abasing and offensive environment against the victim or victims; or
- (d) promoting and reinforcing gender stereotypes and gender discrimination.

Offences of sexism and online sexism

If a person acts in a manner that constitutes sexism or online sexism **is guilty of an offence.**

In **case of conviction**, the person is liable to:

- Imprisonment not exceeding 1 year, or
- A fine not exceeding €5.000, or
- Both above mentioned penalties

The legislation

This legislation constitutes a **fully rounded tool to effectively prosecute** anyone behaving in a sexist manner, in both **public and private spheres**, and to protect the victims who are subject to sexism and to behaviors which have a detrimental effect on them, and which humiliate them or denigrate them in any way.

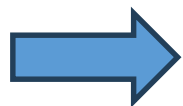
The law covers men and women equally, but it is **recognized that women and girls are those most strongly affected** by such types of violence and this is why they need particular protection and support.

The law aspires to **deconstruct social stereotypes and prejudices** around the roles of men and women, and to create an environment of respect for all people.

Next Steps

- National Political Statement signed by the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Ministers, Deputy Ministers and Commissioners to the President – January 11th, 2024
- New National Strategy for Gender Equality, 2024-2026
The Ministry of Justice and Public Order, by the end of the year, is planning to launch a campaign to raise awareness for legislation on combating sexism and online sexism
- National Action Plan on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women, 2023-2028
The National Coordinating Body for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against women will launch a research on the employment conditions in media, with emphasis on sexism and sexual harassment

The law in English is
available here



COMMISSIONER
FOR **GENDER**
EQUALITY

Thank you for your attention!

Niovi Georgiade

GEC Member

Office of the Commissioner for
Gender Equality, Cyprus



+357-22805989



www.institutiongenderequality.org



commissionerge@presidency.gov.cy



Επίτροπος Ισότητας των Φύλων



[commissionerge_cy](https://www.instagram.com/commissionerge_cy)



@CommissionerGE



@GenderEqualityCommissioner



COMMISSIONER
FOR **GENDER**
EQUALITY