INTRODUCTION

In 2010, a European project addressing Youth Sexual Aggression and Victimization (Y-SAV) was launched. Y-SAV is a three-year project co-financed by the European Union in the framework of the Health Programme to address the issue of sexual aggression and victimization among young people. The project aims to build a multidisciplinary network of European experts in various member states, bring together the knowledge on youth sexual aggression and victimization in a state-of-the-art database, develop a more harmonised way of measuring these issues and provide recommendations for strategic action to address the problem of youth sexual aggression under different circumstances in different EU member states.

This report is part of the Y-SAV knowledge base. The knowledge base presents information regarding youth sexual aggression and victimization for each EU member state. This report presents the current situation in Cyprus regarding policies, legislation, organisations, prevalence, risk factors and evidence-based interventions in the area of youth sexual aggression and victimization.

This report was compiled by the Y-SAY principal investigators at the University of Stockholm (Sweden), Rutgers WPF (The Netherlands) and the University of Potsdam (Germany). We would like to acknowledge Dr. Christiana Kouta (Cyprus University of Technology) for her important contribution to the Y-SAV report on Cyprus.

This report arises from the project Y-SAV which has received funding from the European Union in the framework of the Health Programme.
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GOVERNMENT AND POLICIES

Ministries
The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for youth issues and has a Youth Board (See under C.i), a semi-governmental advisory body, at its service. An Immediate Response Team\(^1\) was established in 2008 and it refers mainly to an initiative dealing with school violence (does not refer to sexual violence; however it has to do with youth aggression).

Since 2007 there is a Commissioner for Children’s Rights to protect and promote the rights of the child.

The Ministry of Health has a committee on violence, but it is mainly related to family/domestic violence. The committee is relatively new and aims at training health professionals in dealing with violence. The Ministry of Health offers services to children and youth at its special Mental Health Department for children. This includes sexual violence and victimization.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, under the social welfare services-family and children, has the following aims:
- provision of counselling and support to the families in order to cope with the problems that threaten the unity of the family;
- protection of children from possible dangers;
- promotion of the rights of children;
- prevention of delinquent behaviour;
- introduction of measures to tackle delinquent behaviour.

Policies
The present government has set its priorities in its election program starting in 2008. With regard to young people, the government wants to strengthen the cooperation between the agencies of the mass youth movement. Furthermore the government intends to upgrade the Information Centres by involving specialists as advisors and expand the all-purpose youth centres to all municipalities. The national plans on youth focus on anti-drugs, lifelong learning, equality and employment -and not on sexual life- but there is a suggestion to establish a scientific committee to monitor juvenile delinquency.

In September 2011, new/revised school curricula were introduced on the basis of educational reform (pre-primary, primary, secondary education). Within the new curriculum issues related to sexual and reproductive health and gender issues are explored.\(^2\)

After a recent accusation (2011) to the Ombudsman by two raped women that they did not receive proper care in the health care service, a protocol was prepared to be applied in such cases.

The National Machinery for Women’s Rights, set up in February 1994 by the Council of Ministers, is a system of four bodies in the Ministry of Justice and Public Order. It consists of representatives of the major women’s organisations, trade unions, and government departments and is under the auspices and chairmanship of the Minister of Justice and Public Order. The National Machinery deals with all matters concerning women, focusing on the elimination of legal discrimination against women and the promotion of real equality between women and men.\(^3\)

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\(^1\) [www.moec.gov.cy/agogi_ygeias/omada_amesis_paremvasis_paravatikotita.html](http://www.moec.gov.cy/agogi_ygeias/omada_amesis_paremvasis_paravatikotita.html)


Current discussion

The total lack of measures beyond the family nucleus is perhaps indicative of the legislator’s intention to protect the institution of the family as the ‘backbone of society’ rather than protect the victim or treat the perpetrator. Research conducted by a national NGO into date rape in Cyprus (see below) concluded that there is no gender perspective on violence prevention and that support services are to be found only in respect of ‘family violence’ and not ‘gender-based violence’ or ‘violence against women’. This approach reinforces the perception of society that sexual violence is a private issue and not a public one, as women are viewed primarily through the lens of the family and not as individuals.


LEGAL SITUATION

i. Law and legal definitions
Rape: unlawful carnal knowledge of a female without her consent, or with her consent if the consent is obtained by force or fear of bodily harm or, in the case of a married woman, by impersonating her husband (Section 144). The penalty is life imprisonment (Article 145). The penalty for attempt to commit rape is 10 years’ imprisonment (Article 146).

Intercourse by force (Section 172): carrying a sentence of 14 years. This provision is gender-neutral and also covers same-sex assaults.

Sexual abuse from a member of the family is dealt with by the domestic violence law, whilst sexual abuse from a person who does not fit the definition of a family member is covered by the anti-trafficking law and to some extent by the Criminal Code. The definition contained in the domestic violence law (any act, omission or conduct causing physical, sexual or psychological harm) is general enough to comply with the Council of Europe’s definition of sexual abuse. The anti-trafficking law refers to ‘sexual exploitation’ rather than ‘sexual abuse’ which is defined as forcing, causing, encouraging, recruiting, etc. a minor to prostitution or to participation in pornographic representations, or sexual activity through the use of coercion, force of threat or through the abuse of a recognised position of power or of influence or guardianship. The term ‘sexual act’ is defined as intercourse between children or a child or an adult of the same of the opposite sex, oral sex, masturbation, sex with animals, sadistic or masochistic acts in a sexual context. This definition arguably covers penetrative and non-penetrative sex, as well as contact and non-contact sexual activity but in a more restrictive way since the acts prohibited are specific and explicitly provided in the law, leaving a margin of discretion outside the scope of the law. The Criminal Code does not provide any definitions for the offences relating to the sexual abuse of a child.

There are no special protective measures for victims of rape either during the investigation or the prosecution. A number of protective measures are in place regarding the giving of testimony in court, which are to be found in both, the domestic violence law and the Witness Protection Law 95(I)/2001, but these are not special to crime victims.

A few measures are in place for sex offenders who commit sexual offences within the family. Article 25(1) of the domestic violence law vests the Court with discretion to accept a request from the perpetrator to place him under custody instead of imposing a sentence, on the condition that he shall undergo treatment for self-control or upon other conditions which the Court may impose. Article 25(2) empowers the Court to impose a suspended sentence on the accused and to place him under guardianship upon terms which the Court will decide.

Further, a law exist regarding sexual harassment at workplace (N.205(I)/2002, 191(I)2004, 40(I)2006).

The legal age of consent is 17 years.

Official statistics
Cyprus has one of the lowest reporting rates in Europe, with only 29 cases of sexual assault reported in 2009, but it is generally accepted that underreporting conceals the true extent of the problem.6

In 2010-2011, 74 rape cases were reported to the police. This is an increase of 5.6% of reported cases to the police from the previous year.7 In 2011 (until October 2011) 16 cases of child sexual abuse were reported.

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7 www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/All/32883789A02049D5C2257995003BEEA0/$file/sovaroeglima.pdf
According to a research report 10% of the children in 2004 reported that they had been sexually abused/assaulted.\(^8\) 1 out of 10 women were sexually harassed in the workplace, typically in the age group of 21-30 years, during their first 3 years in employment.\(^9\)

**Legal studies**

There are no support measures in place with regard to non-spousal rape or sexual abuse, a fact regularly criticised by women’s organisations. This is perhaps to be explained by the fact that the vast majority of rape victims are foreign female visitors who do not have a voice in the Cypriot policy making circles. The findings of a recently conducted study\(^10\) on date rape quote the police as saying that ‘rape cases are difficult to prosecute due to victim credibility in the absence of evidence’. This obstacle is mostly generated by the approach followed by the Courts to demand supporting evidence. The refusal of the victims to testify in Court has also been quoted by the police as a major obstacle; this is however to be expected, given the total lack of institutional and NGO infrastructure to protect and support rape victims through the judicial process and the stigmatisation that victims of sexual offences often carry in small and conservative societies like the Cypriot one. Lack of faith in the system has also been quoted as one of the reasons for the victims’ reluctance to file complaints.\(^11\)


INSTITUTIONS, ORGANISATIONS AND SERVICES

i. National level
The Youth Board of Cyprus under the Ministry of Education and Culture is the national agent on youth issues. The youth board handles issues in fields of participation, volunteerism, evaluation of youth policy, positive lifestyle, prevention, campaigns, employment and international cooperation.

Regional/local level
On the local level – no regional level can be defined – there are 20 municipal Youth Councils established to increase the involvement of young people in public affairs (2010).

Since the 1970s, Youth Centres have been established (105 at this point), organised and managed by the municipalities to operate and organise activities, events and seminars for counselling purposes. By 2008 the Youth Centres became administrative independent and now are assembled in a private non-profitable national organisation.

1. Victim-oriented Institutions, organisations and services

1.1 National level

The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family

Website: www.domviolence.org.cy/ (+357 1440 Hotline).

Type of organisation: NGO.

Short description: The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family runs a free crisis helpline (0800-2200) and shelter for women victims of family violence and their underage children. The association cooperates closely with the Social Welfare Services, the police and other institutions. The helpline is staffed by trained psychologists, social workers and volunteers that provide psychological support, guidance, and information with regard to victim’s rights. For other needs such as health services or legal advice, victims are referred to the responsible government department or agency.

Services:
• shelter;
• counselling;
• crisis support;
• information;
• National Helpline;
• online-forum;
• prevention;
• public awareness/lobbying;
• training (e.g. for victims and perpetrators);
• helpline for children and youth support in association with the organisation ‘Hope for Children’.

Fields of work:
• male/domestic violence;
• rape;
• sexual abuse;
• violence against women in conflict situations;
• women’s human rights.
### The Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Domestic Violence

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of organisation</td>
<td>A committee appointed by the Council of Ministers in Cyprus acting according to the Family Violence Law (2000 and 2004).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Short description | The Advisory Committee has the following duties:  
• monitor the problem of violence in the family in Cyprus;  
• inform and enlighten the public and professionals using various means, including special conferences, educational programs and seminars;  
• promote scientific research in relation to the violence in the family;  
• promote the services for dealing with all aspects of violence in the family;  
• monitor the effectiveness of the related services in operation and the application of and compliance with the relevant legislation. |

The Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family collaborates closely with governmental agencies and non-governmental organisations (Police, Social Welfare Services, Health Services, Education Services, National Machinery for Women's Rights, Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family, local community, etc.) and joins forces along with the Cyprus Parliament, media and other stakeholders to promote campaigns, seminars, conferences and other activities in order to address violence against women.

### The HFC ‘Hope for Children’ - Office for Children’s Rights

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<th>Website</th>
<th><a href="http://www.uncrcpc.org">www.uncrcpc.org</a></th>
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<tr>
<td>Type of organisation</td>
<td>NGO based in Nicosia.</td>
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| Short description | The institution works to the defence and promotion of children’s rights. It does so through research, grassroots program design and implementation and advisory services offered to governments and international organisations.  
 It is founded on the principle of promoting and protecting children’s rights in Cyprus through implementation of a variety of projects covering communal initiatives, environmental initiatives, integration of legally residing non-Cypriot children nationals into their host society, working with separated and unaccompanied children present in Cyprus. |

### 2. Perpetrator-oriented Institutions, organisations and services

#### 2.1 National level

### The Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family

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<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th><a href="http://www.domviolence.org.cy/">www.domviolence.org.cy/</a></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of organisation</td>
<td>Non-profit, NGO.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short description</td>
<td>This association runs programs for perpetrators of domestic violence (detailed description see above under 1.1).</td>
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3. Professional Training, Health Education and Research

3.1 National level

The Family Planning Association of Cyprus (FPAC)

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<th>Website</th>
<th><a href="http://www.cyfamplan.org">www.cyfamplan.org</a></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of organisation</td>
<td>NGO.</td>
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**Short description**

The Family Planning Association of Cyprus (FPAC) runs a family planning clinic in Nicosia, providing a range of services, including AIDS/HIV testing. It advocates liberalisation of the abortion law. It runs workshops on sex education and sexuality awareness for young people, mainly college and high school students.

The advocacy project has initiated networking with other related bodies in order to join forces for the support of the decriminalisation of homosexuality. As a result, a joint public announcement was sent to electronic and print media, as well as to all Members of Parliament.

The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS)

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<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th><a href="http://www.medinstgenderstudies.org">www.medinstgenderstudies.org</a></th>
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<tr>
<td>Type of organisation</td>
<td>NGO.</td>
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**Short description**

The Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) promotes and contributes to projects of social, political, and economic themes relating to gender with an emphasis on the Mediterranean region.

MIGS calls on the State to proceed immediately with concrete measures for the protection and support of victims of sexual violence through the development of effective interdepartmental cooperation between the police, the social welfare services, the health services and other competent bodies. Furthermore, actions aimed at raising awareness and changing stereotypical attitudes and perceptions on sexual violence should be implemented without delay. MIGS also calls on the state to revise its response to rape and sexual assault against women, and improve its criminal investigation and prosecution procedures, in order to address the low conviction rate and send out a clear message to society that violence against women is not tolerated or accepted.12

Most recent project dealing with youth gender-based violence: Youth4Youth: Empowering Young People in Preventing Gender-based Violence through Peer Education. The project’s main aim is to contribute to the prevention and combating of gender-based violence among adolescents by providing them with a safe space to reveal their attitudes towards violence, to reassess their tolerance towards it, and empower them to become actively involved in developing an environment free from violence for themselves as well as for their peers. The project will be implemented using a gender equality and rights based approach.

### 4. Other Institutions

#### 4.1 National level

**The Youth Board of Cyprus**

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<tr>
<th>Website</th>
<th><a href="http://www.youthboard.org.cy/">www.youthboard.org.cy/</a></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of organisation</td>
<td>Semi-GO, funded by state.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short description</td>
<td>The Youth Board of Cyprus under the Ministry of Education and Culture is the national agent on youth issues. The youth board is a semi-governmental organisation, financed by the state, with officers employed on a contract basis. The youth board handles issues in fields of participation, volunteerism, evaluation of youth policy, positive lifestyle, prevention, campaigns, employment and international cooperation.</td>
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**The Cyprus Women’s Lobby**

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<th>Website</th>
<th><a href="http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?article230&amp;lang=en">www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?article230&amp;lang=en</a></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type of organisation</td>
<td>NGO.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short description</td>
<td>The Cyprus Women’s Lobby, an umbrella network of 16 women’s organisations and non-governmental organisations, was formed in September 2008 and brings together a wide range of women’s organisations and NGOs throughout Cyprus. Its mission is the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment, to combat all forms of discrimination and violence against women, and to ensure the full participation and active involvement of women in decision making processes.</td>
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**Cyprus Gender Equality Observatory**

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<th>Website</th>
<th><a href="http://www.pik.org.cy/en/">www.pik.org.cy/en/</a></th>
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<tr>
<td>Type of organisation</td>
<td>NGO/GO. CGEO has been under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, which funds part of the operative expenses. In addition, there are EU-funds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short description</td>
<td>The Cyprus Gender Equality Observatory (CGEO) was created in 2003 and it is a NGO with social, scientific and research activities, in the area of gender equality, equal opportunities and all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment.</td>
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# RESEARCH ON PREVALENCE, RISK FACTORS AND EVIDENCE BASED INTERVENTION

Inclusion criteria: Studies from 2000 onwards; only quantitative studies; only studies reporting youth sexual aggression (excluding cases of childhood sexual abuse, as defined by legal age of consent).

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Year of public.</th>
<th>Study characteristics</th>
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<td>Prevalence data</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies</td>
<td>2008</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Type of sample: Random selection among female college students.

Sample composition:
- Total $N = 1.857$ females and 10 focus groups.
- (476 females in cy + 2 focus groups cy).
- Age range: 18-24 years.

Design: Cross-sectional

Measurement of sexual aggression: Questionnaire included attempted and completed rape; based on Rickert et al. (2004)\(^{13}\) und Zeitler et al. (2006).\(^{14}\)

Examples for items:
- ‘Please review each behaviour below that may have happened on a date during the last 12 months.’ A list of several sexual behaviour was presented to the participants e.g.:
  - performed oral sex on person;
  - had sexual intercourse;
  - responses: my date TRIED to against my wishes/my date DID this anyway against my wishes.

Type of data collected:
- One-year prevalence in heterosexual encounters.
- Victimization reports from women.

Relationship(s) between victim and perpetrator: Specified: reported unwanted sexual experience were often perpetrated by a person that the respondents considered to be their boyfriend, friend or sexual partner, in most cases the respondent knew the perpetrator for a period of a few months or several years.

Incidence: N/a

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### Prevalence

#### Summary of prevalence findings regarding victimization

**Total rate of unwanted sex. experience: 12.2%**

- Attempted oral sex by a date: 2.9%
- Attempted intercourse by a date: 1.3%
- Completed oral sex by a date: 1.9%
- Completed sexual intercourse by a date: 1.9%

- Much higher incidents of other forms of unwanted sexual experience: (10%);
- Reported unwanted sexual experience were often perpetrated by a person that the respondents considered to be their boyfriend, friend or sexual partner, in most cases the respondent knew the perpetrator for a period of a few months or several years.

### Findings regarding risk factors

#### Summary of findings regarding risk factors for victimization

Considered risk factors (alcohol drinking, drug use):
- More than half of the respondents (58%) reported that the person forced them to have an unwanted sexual experience was drinking and/or having drugs (19.1%).

### Findings regarding outcomes or consequences

N/a