**Reply to the questionnaire from the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health**

***Answers are provided by the General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy and Gender Equality of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (in the text also as GSDFPGE)***

1. **Please describe, share data and information on the characteristics, number of cases, and the profile of victims and perpetrators in your country/ies or region(s) regarding:**
   1. **Gender based violence against women**

Worldwide gender-based violence against women is a problem that affects all women regardless of their economical, educational level or place of residence; Greece is no exception to this. However, for a better understanding of the data presented below, we consider it appropriate to provide some clarifications on how the data was collected.

According to article 11 of the Istanbul Convention, the State is obliged to “collect disaggregated relevant statistical data at regular intervals on cases of all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention”. In practice, this means that different types of data have been collected by diverse entities.

In particular, these entities include:

- The Ministry of Justice, as to the state compensations.

- The Ministry of Citizen Protection - General Secretariat of Anti-crime Policy, as to the number of male perpetrators being incarcerated.

- The Ministry of Citizen Protection - Hellenic Police and Police Department of Domestic Violence, as to the number of relevant crimes and women victims.

- The Public Prosecutors’ District Courts, through the Supreme Court’s Public Prosecution Office, as to the number of prosecutions, sentences and measures that have been taken.

-The Ministry of Migration and Asylum, as to the number of victims who have been granted residence permits or asylum.

- The National Center for Social Solidarity (“EKKA”), as to the number of perpetrators that participate in specialized support programmes and the number of calls made to seek help for women victims of violence in EKKA’s Helpline.

- The General Secretariat for Demography, Family Policy and Gender Equality, as to the number of women who received support from the network of structures for preventing and tackling all forms of violence against women.

Equally, the Observatory for Gender Equality, a mechanism that collects and process gender segregated data on equality issues, is in constant collaboration with the relevant bodies for the development and presentation of indicators on violence against women. Nevertheless, this is a complicated and time-consuming procedure as certain bodies have incomplete information systems for recording data.



Regarding the cases of gender-based violence, data by the Hellenic Police and the Ministry of Justice are provided below (see Tables 2-6). Any discrepancies should be attributed to the methodological difficulties mentioned above.



[[1]](#footnote-1)



[[2]](#footnote-2)

Table 1 and Table 3 present certain data regarding perpetrators. According to data from a study carried out for the GSDFPGE on the quantitative and qualitative assessment of violence against women in the period 2008 – 2016, the majority of perpetrators belong to the 35 - 44 age group, are separated, and are employed full-time. Τhey have completed higher secondary or tertiary education, whereas an interesting finding is that the majority of perpetrators for whom there is relevant data have been victims of violence themselves (see Table 7). Nevertheless, the limited sample size does not allow for generalizations.

A tender is currently under way for the preparation of a "study on the profile of domestic violence perpetrators, evaluation of perpetrator programmes, proposals to improve perpetrator programmes for the prevention of domestic violence", which will be carried out in the context of the implementation of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality and the National Action Plan for the Rights of Children.



**1.7. Please share analysis and available evidence on the impact of Covid-19 on the above**

By characterizing violence against women as a “shadow pandemic”, International Organizations underline the size of the problem as well as the impact the Covid-19 have had regarding this problem. Risk factors[[3]](#footnote-3) related with the pandemic and its consequences, such as economic and well-being, insecurity, exposure to infection and counter-pandemic measures, emerged in various countries around the world as well as in Greece, increasing the level of stress in daily life, contributing to social isolation and making access to support networks difficult.

As recorded in other countries as well, during the pandemic incidents of violence increased exponentially. In Greece, according to data by the GSDFPGE helpline SOS 15900, in April 2020 (the first lockdown was imposed in March 2020 in Greece) there was a significant increase to the level of 227,4% of calls related to "incidents of violence" and an increase to the level of 142% of calls related to “seeking useful information”. Part of this increase, though, could be attributed to the successful campaign launched by the Greek Government for raising public awareness and providing information on available specialised response services for survivors of GBV with the message *"we stay at home but we do not stay silent", as well as "staying home does not mean enduring violence"*.



The profile of female victims of violence does not seem to have been differentiated during the pandemic. Statistical data on women served by the GSDFPGE Network in the reference periods [March-April 2020](https://isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Bimonthly-Report-Newsletter-GSFPGE-March-April-2020.pdf), [November 2020-January 2021](https://isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Newsletter-Report-GSFPGE-11.2020-01.2021.pdf) and [February-April 2021](https://isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Quarterly-Newsletter-Report-GSFPGE-Feb-Apr-2021-1.pdf), periods when the most severe restrictions to curb the spread of Covid-19 virus were inflicted, are available in GSDFPGE’s newsletters.

**2.Please describe whether the legal framework prohibits and sanctions these forms of violence and the definitions and forms of violence included in the legal system. Please explain redress options for survivors of violence, (the pathway they go through if they decide to file a complaint), levels of impunity and if access to comprehensive physical and mental care for GBV-survivors is recognized as a form of reparation.**

Law 4531/2018[[4]](#footnote-4) ratified the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence in general (the Istanbul Convention).

The Istanbul Convention provides for the criminalization of the following forms of violence against women: psychological violence, stalking, physical violence, sexual violence, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced abortion and sterilisation, sexual harassment. The Convention highlights State’s obligation to ensure that victims will be provided with adequate civil remedies and compensation, and describes the principles governing investigation and prosecution.

The GSDFPGE, designated as the competent Authority for monitoring the Convention, implements information-and-awareness-raising campaigns on the content of the Istanbul Convention through social media and targeted large-scale events. It also formulates relevant educational material and organizes training seminars for Authorities and entities competent to implement and incorporate the instructions of the aforementioned Convention.

As to the specific forms of violence:

- Currently femicide is not recognised as a separate offence under the Criminal Code (CC). It is covered by the provisions of homicide (Article 299 - Manslaughter with malice aforethought). However, the use of the term “femicide” is becoming increasingly frequent in public and NGOs discourse, in the media and at the political level.

- Article 304 of the CC refers to forced abortion (termination of pregnancy). There is no separate provision on forced sterilisation which is covered by Article 310 on “Serious Bodily Harm”. Regarding FGM, a new Article 315B was added to the CC by Law 4531/20185. In parallel, the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025 further provides for the elaboration of the relevant regulatory framework.

- Regarding forced marriages, Law 4531/2018 provides for the addition of this case to the Article 323A of the CC regarding the crime of trafficking. Moreover, as to the legal age for marriages, the Civil Code (Article 1350) defines that the minimum legal age for marriage is 18 years old, for both sexes. Nevertheless, minors are allowed to proceed with marriage if the union is “dictated by an important reason”, but only with the consent of their guardians and under a Court order.

- Articles 333-353[[5]](#footnote-5) of the CC (revised according to Law 4855/2021) prohibit and sanction different types of sexual violence (e.g. rape, violation of sexual dignity, abuse of person incapable of resisting a sexual act).

- Law 4808/2021 ratified the ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work, providing definitions and describing both the State’s and employers’ obligations. It, also, amended Law 3850/2010 on employee’s health and safety, provided for the rights of the individuals affected, and designated an Independent Department of the Labour Inspectorate to monitor violence and harassment at work. In addition, the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025 includes the preparation of proposals for legislative interventions regarding possible amendments to the Criminal Code.

- Law 3500/2006 provided definitions of domestic violence and its types and described the sanctions for each one as well the procedures to be followed. Law 4531/2018 amended Law 3500/2006 by complementing the protection provided to victims. Indicatively, the first paragraph of the article 3 expands the meaning of the term “family” to also include persons that live together under a civil partnership, whereas the permanent companion of a woman or a man and their common children or the children of each one of them also fall under the field of protection of the above-mentioned law, independent of the element of cohabitation. Further, the third paragraph of article 3 of Law 4531/2018 complements article 11 par. 2 (b) of Law 3500/2006 on domestic violence, so that the necessary legal consequences occur when the person responsible for the commission of domestic violence does not comply with the obligations laid down by the specific legislative provision[[6]](#footnote-6).

**5. Please share information on the health and other type of responses provided by the State and/or other actors in your country or regions in focus to survivors of each/some of the aforementioned forms of violence. Please assess what works well and not so well, and whether COVID-19 impacted the response and how.**

- The GSDFPGE’s National Program on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women has been implemented since 2010. It refers to all forms of gender based violence and is part of the National Action Plans on Gender Equality. Under this, an integrated network of structures operates across the country to tackle primarily gender-based violence (and all forms of violence), protect and support women victims. Nowadays, the Network, which is being funded by the European Union, consists of:

* 43 Counseling Centers which provide: a) awareness and specialised information services on gender issues, b) psychosocial support services, c) counseling and information services on the rights of women victims of violence and women who suffer multiple discrimination, d) referral services to shelters, judicial and public Authorities, e) legal services, in cooperation with bar associations, and f) employment counseling.
* 19 Women’s Shelters which provide: a) safe residence to women-victims of gender-based violence or multiple discrimination, and their children (girls up to the age of 18 and boys up to age of 12), b) psychological and social support, c) facilitation of access to legal advice and d) career counseling.
* The bilingual (in Greek and English) SOS 15900 helpline, a nationwide telephone line, free of cost, that provides immediate assistance in emergency cases on a 24-hour basis, all year long. The helpline also employs two interpreters to support the needs of Farsi and Arab speaking women and includes an email address.

Articles 25-30 of Law 4604/2019 on Substantive Gender Equality institutionalize the Network and describe its composition and operation.

Covid-19 outbreak and the counter-pandemic measures created significant difficulties and challenges for the provision of support to gender-based violence victims. The GSDFPGE responded immediately, sending instructions to all structures on their operational procedures, so that the health of both the employees and the women assisted there would be protected. All structures continue to offer their services implementing new procedures, such as telephone or Skype support sessions. Moreover, an intensive TV and social media-spot campaign succeeded to raise awareness on the gender-based violence issue, and provided information about the specialized response services available. In the meanwhile, the GSDFPGE was in constant cooperation with the Hellenic Police so that specific difficulties (e.g. travel bans due to quarantine restrictions) would be overcome, while Temporary Accommodation Facilities across the country were issued in cooperation with the Hellenic Chamber of Hotels, where women survivors and their children could stay until all the necessary medical exams were completed, before being placed at the safe shelters of the Network. The GSDFPGE also cooperated with the Hellenic Society of Forensic Medicine and the NGO “The Smile of the Child” to speed up the medical examinations provided to women and their children.

From 2011to 2020, approximately 36,000 women have been assisted by the Counseling Centers and the Shelters, while more than 55,000 women have consulted the SOS Helpline. According to an evaluation study published in 2019[[7]](#footnote-7), the vast majority of the women supported by the Counseling Centres were “Very Satisfied” or “Completely Satisfied” with the services provided and their quality characteristics. High levels of satisfaction were also recorded for women accommodated in shelters, with the comfort of the common areas being the main element of lower levels of satisfaction.

- In November 2020, the Hellenic Manpower Organisation (“OAED”), in the framework of its cooperation with the GSDFPGE, proceeded to the modification of the employment and entrepreneurship programs, in order to support unemployed women victims of gender-based and domestic violence. This is done by supporting them with a 40% increase in allocated points with regard to the point-system on the second business opportunity program and including them in the employment program for vulnerable social groups. The program subsidizes for 12-24 months around 90% of the total cost of up to 800 euro per month for a fulltime job and 400 euro for a part-time job. Women victims of domestic and gender-based violence who complete employment support sessions in the Network’s Structures are able to participate in the above-mentioned program, whereas victims of trafficking and transsexual people are also included as beneficiaries. Since the launch of the program, 69 applications have been submitted at Counseling Centers and 7 at Shelters.

- A “Risk Assessment Tool” for women victims of gender-based and domestic violence is been developed on behalf of the GSDFPGE, in order to assess the level of risk of recurrence of violence in their close environment. The tool will be applied and utilized horizontally by all reception services for women victims, such as the Police, Health Care Services and the Justice System.

**7.Please describe the needs of survivors of the above-mentioned forms of violence as identified by your State/institution. Please share survivor-self identified needs and those of their families, with a focus on health emergency and long-term needs.**

- Women belonging to disadvantaged and marginalized groups experience intersectional discrimination; thus comprehensive measures are required by the State to address the problems they face. Recognizing the compounded difficulties that migrant women victims of violence (especially refugees and asylum seekers) face, the GSDFPGE has developed cooperation with international and national stakeholders (e.g. UNHCR, UNICEF, Médecines du Monde, etc) to contribute to the needs of refugee women and their children. This partnership aims at the coordination of all competent entities for the identification, referral, accommodation, and provision of counseling services to refugee women victims or potential victims of violence and their children, with regard to their special needs (disability issues included). The provision of those services is made through the national Network.

- The Survivor Project: "Enhancing services for refugee and migrant GBV survivors" (European Union's "Rights, Equality and Citizenship" Program 2014-2020) was implemented from September 2018 to September 2020 by the Centre for Research on Women’s Issues (CRWI), the GSDFPGE, the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), aiming to enhance the quality and access to services by refugee and migrant GBV survivors in Greece and to strengthen GBV programming through transnational dialogue and sharing GBV best practices, resources and tools in Greece and the wider Europe. The recruitment of 4 women mediators-interpreters for the SOS 15900 helpline and the network of Structures, the training of KETHI intercultural mediators, the training of professionals deriving from different services of the public sector and NGOs active in the field, training seminars at the Police Academy and at the Department of Social Work of the University of Western Attica, were included in these activities.

- The ["EMPOWER](https://empowerref.gr/en/home/)" project, implemented by the GSDFPGE with partners from the Center for European Constitutional Law-Tsatsos Foundation and the Doctors of the World, focused on the "empowerment of professional and refugee communities for the detection, recording and prevention of sexual and sexist violence in Greece". The project had a two-year duration span and was completed in October 2020. Within the framework of the above-mentioned project there were 139 beneficiaries/front-line practitioners who developed their competencies. Furthermore, a total of 51 representatives of refugee communities and frontline professionals were supported to provide practical information on gender-based violence and to take preventive measures to transmit this knowledge during the provision of services in the field, in order to reduce cases of gender-based violence in both short and long term. In the end, around 450 people were benefited by dissemination and publicity activities.

**9. Please describe State and other actors initiatives and measures to prevent these forms of violence, specific budget allocated to prevention, and good practices in this regard.**

-“Preventing and combating gender based violence and domestic violence” forms Priority Axis 1 of the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025. Under this Axis, a comprehensive set of initiatives and actions for the prevention of GBV against women are included. Indicatively, we mention the following activities:

* Programmes addressed to perpetrators of GBV and domestic violence to prevent these forms of violence.
* Continue the publication and dissemination of the annual report on violence against women as a means to provide information and raise awareness about the issue.
* Develop training material and implement training programmes on the Istanbul Convention.
* Information and awareness-raising activities addressed to the public, as well as to targeted groups (e.g. students).
* Awareness-raising campaign for different forms of gender based violence (e.g. domestic violence, sexual harassment in the workplace in the public and private sectors, cyber-violence, stalking, FGM).
* Awareness campaign for women with disabilities, women and girls with their families and caregivers about prevention, recognition and reporting of incidents of gender-based violence and the existing support services.
* Establishment of protocols and codes of conduct for professionals who support women with disabilities to prevent gender-based violence and abuse.
* Field work with target populations (e.g. Roma, refugee women) so that they get informed of women’s and children’s rights and specific forms of gender-based violence such as early and forced marriages, FGM, trafficking,
* Legislative proposals.

- Educational actions of knowledge and critical thinking, as well as life skills activities on issues of gender, rights, mental and physical health, safety, security, protection, respect for sexual dignity and equality have been integrated into all levels of compulsory education. Relevant themes are included in the “Flexible Zone of Experiential Activities” in primary school, on the “Platform: 21st century Skills Labs” and in “Health Education Programmes”. Furthermore, awareness-raising activities on gender issues, including gender-based violence, are conducted in the framework of “Thematic Week”, as well as in separate programmes implemented in cooperation with NGOs active in the field.

- The GSDFPGE and the structures of its network have been organizing or co-organizing a variety of awareness-raising activities (e.g. conferences, campaigns, workshops, etc.) on the issues of gender-based violence.

- Each year, in view of November 25th, the GSDFPGE launches information and awareness-raising campaigns regarding GBV. The most recent one was addressed to women victims of violence, but also to the perpetrators and their relatives and the wider environment, wanting to remind that some words can become [“sharp as knives](mailto:https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJsaLqAaNeo)". The video of the campaign urges women to "listen to his actions and not his words", while advising them to speak now, to call the SOS helpline 15900 for victims of violence or contact the 43 Counseling Centres to receive support services.

- In December 2020, the National Action Plan for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was prepared; the GSDFPGE participated in its formulation. The ninth objective of this Action Plan refers to women with disabilities and includes actions related to the horizontal integration of the disability dimension in all policies and programmes for gender equality and to the prevention and combating gender-based violence against women and girls with disabilities, including forced abortion and sterilization. Of particular importance is also the 'visibility' of women with disabilities who suffer additional grounds for discrimination. The majority of these actions are included in the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2021-2025. In this framework, a Cooperation Protocol was signed in September 2021 between the GSDFPGE and the National Coordinator for People with Disability, while a dedicated study on the situation of women with disabilities and the needs of parents and guardians of children with disabilities has been launched, in cooperation with the KETHI. Finally, a study will be conducted by the Research Center for Gender Equality and the National Center for Social Studies regarding women with disabilities in Greece, which will map their needs and help to adequately address them.

***Additional Information***

- On January 25, 2021 the emergence of the "Me too" movement in Greece led to the creation of a governmental specialized e-platform (<https://metoogreece.gr/>); this was done with the initiative of the GSDFPGE and it focuses on the collection of information on issues of sexual harassment, abuse and authoritarian violence, as well as the coordination of actions to combat such phenomena.

- Under the project entitled "[Enhancing protection for refugee and migrant GBV survivors through increased access to GBV services and awareness raising activities](https://www.kethi.gr/en/node/1661)", implemented by KETHI and funded by UNICEF:

* Two books, the one entitled “[Everything from Scratch](https://www.kethi.gr/sites/default/files/attached_file/file/2021-11/2021%20OLA%20apo%20tin%20arxi%20GREEK-ENGLISH-ARABIC-FARSI_diort.pdf)” and the other [“The world Anew”](https://www.kethi.gr/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/O-Kosmos-apo-tin-arxi-gia-site.pdf), were published in 2021 and 2019 respectively, as a result of the collaboration between UNICEF and KETHI. Both books are available in four languages: Greek, English, Arabic and Farsi.
* A [manual addressed to secondary school teachers](https://www.kethi.gr/sites/default/files/attached_file/file/2021-09/%CE%9F%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%B3%CF%8C%CF%82%20%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1%20%CF%84%CE%B7%CE%BD%20%CE%B5%CE%BA%CF%80%CE%B1%CE%B9%CE%B4%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%20%CE%B1%CE%BE%CE%B9%CE%BF%CF%80%25C) was published on the educational use of the book “The World Anew” in order to raise awareness on GBV issues.
* An e-book version of the book "The World Anew", which is available free of charge on various relevant platforms as well as a dedicated podcast with the stories of the book "The World Anew" in four languages were created
* Four videos to be shown on social networks, aimed at educating teenaged children, were created. Each video covers one or more aspects of intimate partner gender violence among adolescents and is available in four languages: Greek, English, Arabic and Farsi.
* A 40'' video was broadcasted by TV stations (national and regional) for the period from 25/10/2020 to 25/11/2020.

1. Please note that the table refers to the number of incidents concerning women victims, regardless of the sex of the perpetrator(s). Also, each incident may refer to multiple forms of violence. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2020: Data available from 50/63 First Instances Prosecutor’s Offices (79.3%) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. EIGE, (2021). *The Covid-19 pandemic and intimate partner violence against women in the EU.* [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Please see Annex A. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Please see Annex Β. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Please see Annex C. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. CMT Prooptiki, (2019). Third Deliverable: Evaluation Study. ESF Actions Coordination and Monitoring Authority (EYSEKT) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)