

In line with the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 2013 Concluding Observations, a study on the economic consequences of divorce on both spouses – Gender-based economic disparities of divorced spouses, has been conducted. The survey has, inter alia, manifested that the economic crisis has had devastating effects on the standard of living of divorced spouses, especially women, who are the primary caregivers of their children. Major issues include the reduction of their income, the increase of unemployment, the elimination of social service programmes for children and the defaulted loans. Taking stock of these findings, the new National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2019-2023 has set out the aim of Protecting Vulnerable Groups of Women, such as single mothers. Numerous actions are planned in this regard. Moreover, the results of this study have been taken seriously into consideration when reforming the family law.

The reform of the Family Law has been among the priorities of the Government of Cyprus during the last years. To this end, the Ministry of Justice and Public Order, calling upon the expertise of judges, lawyers, the Commissioner for Children's Rights and academics in the field, proceeded with the preparation of seven bills, which are now under discussion in Parliament. These bills aim to modify the Family Law in an effort to safeguard the rights of women and men, as well as the best interest of the child, thus achieving full harmonization with relevant international and European Human Rights instruments, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This modernisation of family law will particularly benefit women, in many ways, such as: (a) the protection of family home is strengthened, with the provision that neither of the spouses will be able to dispose of it without the consent of the other, (b) efficient procedures for obtaining information on spousal property for the purpose of calculating alimony are established, and (c) the presumption of one spouse's contribution to the increase in assets will be revised and reassessed.