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Prevent and combat violence against children, young people and women and to protect victims and groups at risk

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# COUNTRY REPORT GREECE

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against children, young people and women and to  
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**WS 1 – Country Report Greece**

**To prevent and combat violence against children, young people & women & to protect  
victims and groups at risk**



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**Introduction**

According to Eurobarometer there is a high level of public awareness regarding domestic violence in Greece -95% of the general population are aware of domestic violence- (Eurobarometer, 2010). Moreover, regarding Greece there is an increase in the awareness of the particular subject from the circle of friends. However, victims do not address directly to the social care services for Domestic Violence (K.E.T.H.I., 2003). That indicates the fact that in Greek society Domestic Violence constitutes a strong social taboo with deep roots in the Greek traditional structure of patriarchy (K.E.T.H.I., 2003).

Placing the topic of domestic violence under a socio-political and historical perspective, one can argue that this issue was raised in Greece after the political changeover in 1975, right after the fall of Greek dictatorship. At that time independent women’s groups with feminist demands were formed (DIMITRA Institute of Training and Development S.A., n.d.).

The Constitution of 1975 established equal rights for Greek men and women. In 1983, the Greek family law was consequently amended (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002). The revised family law abolished the patriarchal family and the traditional dowry system (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002). In addition equal rights and obligations were offered to both spouses in terms of all facets of family life (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

Since then, many of the demands of women’s movement have been achieved. Moreover, cultural approaches to the position of women in the Greek society have been changed following the western standards. However, domestic violence, the so-called “unseen violence”, was and still is a silent aspect of many women’s daily life (DIMITRA Institute of Training and Development S.A., n.d.).

The evaluation of domestic violence phenomenon in Greece turned out to be a rather complex task. The main difficulty was the collection of data as regards to the matter at hand. What has been revealed by this process is that there is inconsistency of data collection by the specific Organizations / Structures that handle the issue.

Apart from that, domestic violence against women in Greece still constitutes a social taboo, regardless of the evolution of the social role of Greek women. Therefore, domestic violence is not impeached frequently, since in the Greek society the social values and stances support the role of men as the “leader” of the family, whose power cannot be questioned (Chatzifotiou & Dobash, 2001, p. 1024-1051). Although Greek men are considered authoritarian they are not viewed as being violent to their wives. Greek women by playing their role as wives they are quite tolerant and submissive and they do not denounce incidents of violence against them (Spinellis, 1997). Meanwhile the social and legal services have avoided throughout the years their embroilment in the issue of domestic violence, since they perceive it as belonging in the

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private place. It has been argued that, on the contrary, they have been engaged in the maintenance of the family structures described above (Chatzifotiou & Dobash, 2001, p. 1024-1051).

In addition to all these the tremendous increase of immigrants in Greece during the last years has affected the phenomenon of domestic violence, since the care services are faced up with increasing number of immigrant women victims.

Welfare institutions and care services are called to cope with a widened social phenomenon and notably vulnerable populations. The domestic violence field in Greece turned to be rather demanding.

### **1. DV –Legal level**

#### **Domestic Violence’s legal frame in Greece**

In 1986 the General Secretariat for Equality placed the issue of domestic violence under debate for the first time at a governmental level, by asking from a group of female scientists to revise modes and techniques of approaching the issue from a woman’s point of view as well as to propose new “paths” of official intervention (DIMITRA Institute of Training and Development S.A., n.d.).

As a consequence of this action of the General Secretariat of Equality, in 1993 a Shelter for battered women and their children was created in alliance with the municipality of Athens (DIMITRA Institute of Training and Development S.A., n.d.). A few years later, in 1998, the Battered Women’s Centre was established by the General Secretariat for Equality in the city of Athens (DIMITRA Institute of Training and Development S.A., n.d.).

This kind of activation of the Greek state on the issue of domestic violence with initiatives deriving from the General Secretariat of Equality has been continued. An Inter-Ministerial working group was formed in 1999 by the General Secretariat of Equality, with the permission to plan and put into practice regulation and strategy inhibiting violence against women. It was commanded by one political and one personnel officer, under the joint responsibility of the Ministry of Citizen Protection and the Ministry of Health and Welfare. Representatives from the Research Center on Equality Matters as well as professionals from the academic society and the women’s movement had been employed in the particular constitution (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

There were long delays in terms of producing draft legislation for domestic violence. This fact was attributed to a lack of political dedication by the various ministries involved, and to the fact that there were difficulties in terms of administrative coordination due to the division of competencies between the participating Ministries (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

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In Greece until 2006 there were no precise domestic violence stipulations in the penal code. Domestic violence was incorporated in the crimes of violence against the person (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

While domestic violence was fairly accepted in Greece as a social problem, it was noted that there was no legislation that particularly looked after women as victims of domestic violence, which would account for the particular connection and the inter-dependence and the linkage between the victim and the perpetrator of domestic violence (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

Discrimination against women was recognized as a violation of the principle of equality under article 4 paragraph 2 of the Greek Constitution. Apart from Law 1342/1983, which puts into practice the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the definition of discrimination as it is offered by Article 1 of the Convention was not clearly repeated in any Greek legal text (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

Domestic Violence was usually dealt with the broad stipulations of Civil and Criminal Law. One could have taken legal action against domestic violence if the woman victim decided to press charges for physical harm, regulated by articles 308, 308A, 309, 310 of the Greek Penal Code (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002). However, the crime of physical injury due to domestic violence was not prosecuted *ex officio* (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

In the summer of 2006 a law on domestic violence was adopted (DIMITRA Institute of Training and Development S.A., n.d.). The law stipulates the definition of domestic violence. It distinguishes domestic violence as a particular criminal act and accounts for specific penalties. Furthermore, the law accounts for the taking away of a violent spouse from the marital household, as well as, the needed ethical and material support towards the victims by organizations that have been created for that particular reason (DIMITRA Institute of Training and Development S.A., n.d.).

Domestic violence is defined as a criminal act against a family member, in accordance with Articles 6, 7, 8 and 9 of this Act and with Articles 299 and 311 of the Criminal Code (Act 3500, Article 1, 2006). Family is defined as the community consisting of spouses, parents and relatives' first and second degree by blood or marriage, and their adopted children (Act 3500, Article 1, 2006). Moreover in the definition of family the Greek law includes members with a fourth degree of kinship as well as minor members who are living with the rest of the family (Act 3500, Article 1, 2006).

### **Types/Forms of Violence**

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The term “violence” is defined as any physical, verbal and psychological or emotional violence, coercion, and neglect regardless of whether the use of violence is repeated or occurs only once (Research Center for Equality Issues-KETHI, 2003 translated from Greek).

- I. *Physical violence* is determined by fluctuations between slapping, a serious physical injury which even might result in intentional homicide. (Research Center for Equality Issues-KETHI, 2003 translated from Greek). In other words, physical violence refers to any potential action that might jeopardize the physical integrity, life and health of an individual and might refer also to the use of certain items, such as knives, stones and more (Bakogiorgou, 2006 translated from Greek).
- II. *Psychological violence* ranges from humiliation, to severe psychological damage that might impair the victim's social functionality (Research Center for Equality Issues-KETHI, 2003 translated from Greek).
- III. *Verbal violence*, which is directly related to psychological violence contains a wide range of behaviors driven by shouting and insulting verbal threats, verbal humiliation as well as terrorizing the victim (Bakogiorgou, 2006 translated from Greek).
- IV. *Social Violence* aims at a substantial isolation of the victim, i.e., the perpetrator prohibits the victim from having any relationship with relatives, friends, acquaintances, neighbors or the option of having a professional life and work (Bakogiorgou, 2006 translated from Greek).
- V. *Economic Violence* requires the complete economic dependence of the victim from the abuser, i.e., the victim has not her/his own money and financial resources (Bakogiorgou, 2006 translated from Greek).
- VI. *Sexual violence* is the most unknown form of violence which appears to be widespread in society; the victims very rarely speak about it for many different reasons (Bakogiorgou, 2006 translated from Greek). Rape within or outside of marriage, incest are forms of sexual violence which usually coexist (Bakogiorgou, 2006 translated from Greek).

Marital rape is not regarded as a crime under the Greek Penal Code. Article 336 of the Greek Penal Code forbids rape as follows:

*“1. Whoever with physical violence or with threat of grave and direct danger forces another to extra-matrimonial intercourse or to tolerance or action of an indecent act, is punished with incarceration.”*

(DIMITRA Institute of Training and Development S.A., n.d.)

Marital rape is accepted as a punishable unlawful crime against the person and personal freedom (DIMITRA Institute of Training and Development S.A., n.d.). In Greece sexual fulfillment of the other spouse is regarded as a broad commitment of marriage. Denial to satisfy the other spouse’s sexual desires may be thought as a cause for divorce and bears serious social

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costs, i.e., it is the wife’s mistake if her husband looks for other sexual company, since she rejects him. As a result, marital rape remains a concealed type of violence against women in Greece. (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

In addition legal improvements have been approved in the local level. To be more specific, according to the New Code for Municipalities and Communities, the municipalities and communities in Greece are able to offer support and counselling to victims of domestic violence (DIMITRA Institute of Training and Development S.A., n.d.). Parallel requirements are going to be incorporated to the new Code for Prefectural Self – Government (DIMITRA Institute of Training and Development S.A., n.d.).

### **Legal Rights of the victims**

The Constitution of Greece encloses the subsequent safeguard provisions relating to the equality of women and men. Article 4 paragraph 2 of the Greek Constitution accounts for equality between Greek men and women, announcing:

*“Greek men and women have equal rights and equal obligations.”*

(Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

According the Law on Domestic Violence adapted in 2006 the victims of domestic violence have the following legal rights:

- The victim can file a complaint against the offender (orally or in writing) to any police department and request the recording of the incident of abuse in the police department’s log book as well as to receive a copy
- If the victim does not wish to file an official complaint against the offender, she/he has the right to ask from the prosecutor to issue a written mandate to the nearest police station requesting from the police officers to make the necessary “recommendations” to the offender
- The Victim has the right to undergo forensic examination, i.e., she/he can ask from the prosecutor to instruct the relevant coroner. After the completion of the examination the victim has the right to request an official copy of the examination
- The victim has the right to go to a hospital and request to record the incident of abuse to the hospital’s medical books and also receive a copy. The victim may also ask from the hospital’s social service to offer an immediate support as well as to consult her/him regarding the appropriate institutional bodies and services that may be available
- The victim has the right to move, together with her/his children, away from the family residence as well as to send an extrajudicial statement to her/his spouse in order to inform him/her about it
- The victim has the right to require a restraint order (Act 3500, Article 18, 2006)
- The victim has the right to maintain and secure his/her anonymity during the process of preliminary inquiry (Act 3500, Article 20, 2006)
- The victim has the right to be informed regarding all legal procedures in progress in relation to his/her case, to participate in these procedures and to be heard inside a court of law (Act 3500, Article 19, 2006)

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- The victim is entitled to a financial compensation, through the Program for Victims Compensation (Act 3500, article 22, 2006)
- The victim has the right to be informed regarding any possible change regarding the legal status of the perpetrator, such as his/her release from jail
- The victim has a right to receive free legal advice and representation in a court of law
- The victim can file for a divorce, ask for her/his children custody, and request alimony from the perpetrator
- As soon as the victim denounces the act of abuse, a prosecution ex officio is held by state legal authorities (Act 3500. Article 11, 2006)
- As soon as the victim denounces the perpetrator a restrain order is issued and the perpetrator is obliged to leave from the family residence (Act 3500, article 11, 2006)

**Types/Forms of punishment for the perpetrators**

According the Law on Domestic Violence adapted in 2006 the forms of perpetrators' punishment are as follows:

- If the action is likely to cause a physical injury, imprisonment of at least 2 years is applied (Act 3500, Article 6, 2006)
- If the action actually causes severe physical injury or with the potential to actually threaten the life of the victim, then a sentence of maximum 10 years of imprisonment is applied (Act 3500, Article 6, 2006)
- If the action causes intentional physical or emotional harm, imprisonment is forced by the Greek Law. If the victim is under 18 or if the action took place under a minor's presence, then a 10 years sentence is applied (Act 3500, Article 6, 2006)
- Terrorizing, threatening, as well as forcing a member of the family to do or not to do something consists an act of violence against that person and is punished with a 6 month imprisonment (Act 3500, Article 7, 2006)
- Violation of sexual dignity within the family is prosecuted and punished with a 2 year imprisonment (Act 3500, Article 9, 2006)
- In cases of domestic violence misdemeanors the responsible district attorney for the criminal prosecution is obliged to examine the possibility of “mediation” (Act 3500, Article 11, 2006). During the process of “mediation” the perpetrator has the obligation to attend a special counseling and therapeutic program, organized and offered by formal state services, for as long as needed (Act 3500, Article 11, 2006)
- During the period of “mediation” the perpetrator is obliged to stay away from the family household as well as to avoid contact with any family members (Act 3500, Article 11, 2006)
- The mediation procedure founded for resolving economic issues which extends more than three years, does not impede divorce procedures but gives the prospect of potential ground for agreement and choices, in a risky period (women have high vulnerability during the first two years after separation) (European Network for Women, 2007).

**Gaps, Deficits and Legal Deficiencies**

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The adaptation of the Law on Domestic Violence in 2006 was of great importance, since the issue of domestic violence could be dealt in an integrated legal way taking into account the broad stipulations of Civil and Criminal Law that are employed in the cases of domestic violence incidents as well. However, there are further legal deficiencies that convert the legal protection of the victims into a rather controversial issue.

If the victim decides to press charges against her spouse or to file for a divorce in accordance to the general stipulations of Civil Law, then she/he may request protection orders against her/his violent spouse from the Court (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002). At the same time, the judge is not obligated to issue protection orders and this is the reason why in practice, attorneys of abused women attempt to get hold of a medical document as evidence of the requirement for protection orders (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

Moreover, there is great immensity of the legal structure concerning family violence. Usually, a criminal case takes 3-5 years for full settlement.

Besides the legal deficits there are further malfunctions as regards to the infrastructure for empowering and supporting victims of family violence (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002). Consequently, even if a woman decides to take legal action against her violent spouse and press criminal charges, there is no welfare way out or an option offered to her by the State, as in sufficient support services that may supply aid shelter and safety not only for her but also for her children during the years she will be caught up in judicial battles (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

There are only two Reception Centers for Abused Women managed by the General Secretariat of Equality, in Athens and Piraeas, which recommend legal advice and psychological support, but unfortunately they do not offer hospitality (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002). There is only one available Guest House, managed by the General Secretariat of Equality and the Municipality of Athens, but this is unfortunately of inadequate capacity (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

### **Legal provisions and Family Law for Minority Women**

At present there are no special legal provisions for marginalized groups or immigrants in the Greek Law. Minorities and immigrants are subject to the same legal acts and provisions as the rest of the people who live in the country.

Cases of domestic violence within minority groups are more complicated, due to the presence of legal overlaps. This is particularly true for immigrants due to the fact that they are “aliens” in the country and often do not have all the legal documents and prerequisites. As a result there

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are legal problems associated to their illegal status inside the country which make a denunciation of a possible case of domestic violence a “luxury”.

In the Act 3386 on the Immigration Law of Greece and in Article 53 there is reference to the presuppositions for family reunion, i.e., bringing the family members of an immigrant who lives in Greece for at least two subsequent years, from the country of origin (Act 3386, Article 53, 2005). The residence of the immigrants’ family members is legally dependent from him, i.e., if the couple gets a divorce then the residence ceases to be valid and the person must return to their country of origin (Act 3386, Article 58, 2005). There are special legal provisions that account for an independent permit and cases of domestic violence are among them (Act 3386, Article 60, 2005). Nevertheless one major problem that relates to an independent permit status has to do with the fact that there is significant lack of information regarding gender-based violence (Greek Helsinki Monitor & the World Organization against Crime, 2002).

While Greece had approved the Convention without any hesitation, Muslim minorities of Thrace and of the eastern area of the country persist to be subject to Sharia law, directing towards the conclusion that there is a differentiation in the treatment of national and minority law (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002). Women are most discriminated regarding personal and family affairs, Sharia ideology and main beliefs are in conflict with Greek law and international human rights (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

The Committee against Torture, the Human Rights Committee and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights have jointly uttered worry for the lack of precise legislation in this regard, in particular the lack of stipulations on domestic violence and marital rape (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

Moreover, they cited the traditional patriarchal positions and gender role stereotyping as the root reasons of violence against women for minority women (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002). Some other alarming aspects had been included as follows (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002):

- women's right of entry to justice and legal aid services
- access of Roma and ethnic women to health, education and employment
- the process of arbitration in cases of domestic violence
- the inadequate enforcement of legislation on trafficking
- the under-representation of women at all levels of political and public life and decision-making

Two optional reports from NGOs were presented for Greece. The first, a shared effort by Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM) and Minority Rights Group – Greece (MRG-G),<sup>5</sup> offered an overall disappointing image regarding the status of women in Greece (Greek Helsinki Monitor &

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Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002). It emphasized for the most part on the condition of minority women, with a particular focal point on the issue of trafficking, exploitation and domestic violence (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

As it is argued in this particular report despite the fact that men and women are equally represented before the law, the primary social arrangement is still male-dominated, i.e., widespread patriarchal principles and chauvinist mind-sets continue to enable prejudice in both the private and public fields (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002). Particularly, it was emphasized that Muslim women undergo a deep suffering under Sharia law, where some traditional practices and cultural habits are tolerated due to a sense of cultural respect for protecting minority law (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002). The NGO report proposed that the State party’s report’s center on the legal reality in Greece directs to an embroidered image of the situation of women (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

The second NGO report, proposed by The European Network of Women – Greece (ENOW), 6 uttered a lot of the same worries (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002). Although the report acknowledged that innovative projects on gender policy have made better the lives of many Greek women and claimed that the most enthusiastic followers are those in the superior social echelons (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002), it pointed out an upsetting tendency in the socioeconomic state of poor women, particularly of marginalized groups and the Roma, such as increasing unemployment, poverty and exploitation (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002). ENOW asked for progress regarding victim re-integration initiatives, victim representation in the courtrooms, issue-sensitization and awareness for appropriate professionals (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

Both NGOs vigorously supported a re-definition and re-evaluation of cultural standards (Greek Helsinki Monitor & Organization Mondiale Contre la Torture, 2002).

## **2. DV - Political level**

### **Welfare State**

The General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE) is the authorized State organization in Greece for Gender Issues, within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Decentralization and e-Government. The GSGE has presented the National Program for Substantive Gender Equality, which includes an extensive framework of national public policies in all regions of Greece, taking into account both the government’s approach in relation to the provision of services to all the country’s citizens –men and women alike– and the suggestions made by feminist analyses of public policies (GSGE, 2011).

There are four main tactical objectives:

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1. Promotion of gender equality and orientation of intercession towards groups of women facing unfairness and various forms of discrimination so as to offer protection of all women's rights (GSGE, 2011)
2. Deterrence and opposition towards all types of violence against women (GSGE, 2011)
3. Support of women's employment and their financial autonomy
4. Utilization of cultural idea so as to emphasize the objective of gender equality (GSGE, 2011)

The Program contains actions, such as: upgrading, augmentation and implementation of legislation; enlargement of affirmative action for specific groups of women; policies for gender mainstreaming, counting economic ones; development of administration techniques; empowerment of civil society and women's organizations as well as the organization of campaigns for the sensitization of public opinion with the aim of preventing and reshaping gender-based stereotypic positions (GSGE, 2011).

There are two Counseling operating in the region of Attica, one in the city of Athens which is active since 1988 and another in the city of Piraeus (GSGE, 2011). These Centers offer psychological and counseling services as well as social and legal support (GSGE, 2011). Among the immediate priorities of GSGE is to expand these Centers in all over the country, i.e., Counseling Centers in all regions of the country (in 13 capitals of the Regions) (GSGE, 2011).

The General Secretariat for Gender Equality established the SOS - 15900- hotline (the line opened on March 11th, 2011) (GSGE, 2011). The SOS hotline is of great use to all victims of violence; it is countrywide and it is active on a 24 hours basis, all year long, with local charge (GSGE, 2011). There are psychologists and social workers available to offer direct and prompt support during crisis, emergencies as well as episodes of violence (GSGE, 2011). Moreover, the SOS hotline provides information and phone counseling services to victims of all types of gender-based violence (GSGE, 2011). The new service is organizing a social advertisement titled "*The last time*" which will be on air by all major TV stations during the current year -2011 (GSGE, 2011).

Together with the hotline, an optional e-mail address [sos15900@isotita.gr](mailto:sos15900@isotita.gr) for assistance and counseling has being prepared. There will be an Internet portal with continuous, straightforward and official information as well as communication (GSGE, 2011). The specific services will be as follows:

- Interactive informative services
- Supportive and counseling services
- Education tools for the most important digital skills and proficiency as well as e-services
- Registry for available specialists

Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI) is an effective and flexible body that works in collaboration with the GSGE. KETHI was founded in 1994. It operates centrally in Athens and

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regionally in the cities of Patra, and Iraklion-Crete. It is under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Decentralization and E-Government (KETHI, n.d.).

Currently, GSGE is making use of the extensive knowledge and significant expertise obtained using KETHI sources (documentation, women’s consultation, awareness campaigns, studies / research and publications) so as to complete the National Program (GSGE, 2011). Within this coordinated joined effort KETHI has the following responsibilities:

- To reinforce and support interaction between state authorities and NGO’s by taking over the role of technical counselor (GSGE, 2011)
- To enhance women’s’ understandings within the labor market by assuming the role of the scientific coordination as well as consultation on employment issues (GSGE, 2011)
- A special department which will get involved with rape and domestic violence Department will be created (GSGE, 2011). This department will include expert staff with the aim to offer emotional support and a variety of other services, such as accompany and support the victim through the medical examination (GSGE, 2011). An additional objective of this department has to do with the accomplishment of police officers’ training and education regarding the treatment of victims of rape/ domestic violence (GSGE, 2011)

There are five (5) Counseling Centers for Employment and Entrepreneurship operating in the Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI) and GSGE plans to expand them (GSGE, 2011). The idea of counseling embraces techniques of holistic perspective towards women’s problems, since they are directly interconnected and cannot be treated separately (GSGE, 2011). The range of service in these centers include legal counseling and assistance, in collaboration with bar associations, psychological-social support, employment financial as well as entrepreneurship coaching and information regarding health issues (GSGE, 2011).

The National Center for Social Solidarity has an SOS-hotline (SOS hot line 197) which offers social support services and Guest Houses managed by the Ministry of Health and Social Solidarity.

There is a network of Social Welfare Services in various areas of the country, such as Thessaloniki, Serres, Komotini, Xanthi, Crete, Larisa etc that provide free welfare services and help. These services are managed and offered at a local government level, by the Municipalities of the country.

### **NGO’s**

W.I.N. HELLAS (W.I.N. Hellas, n.d.) is an NGO, that offers a variety of counseling and empowerment services to any woman who is a victim of abuse, i.e., within her family, society, or working environment. The organization employs a wide range of experts, such as psychologists, psychotherapists, and offers both emotional and ethical support to the victims. In addition, through a special education program called “*you can change your life*”, provides all the

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necessary information regarding education on issues of abuse. At the same time W.I.N. HELLAS provides legal guidance and acts as a mediator and a point of reference between the victim and the relevant supportive services and institutions.

EUROPEAN NETWORK OF WOMEN (ENOW) (European Network of Women, n.d.) is a European organization, founded in 1983 that provides 2 telephone line services. One for women, men and children victims of abuse which is called “*SOS besides you*” and the another for trafficking victims, called “*SOS against human trafficking*”. ENOW also offers financial support and aid in finding a new job.

FRONTIDA (CARE) (Frontida, n.d.) is an NGO founded in 2004, with the aim to combat domestic violence, trafficking and bureaucratic procedures regarding children adoption. The organization offers counseling services, legal services, helps women to get a job and to find a new house.

Archdiocese’s Centre (Archdiocese’s Centre, n.d.)for Family Support founded in 1998 after the decision of the Greek Church’s Holy Synod. The Center is in Athens and offers counseling services, educational seminars for parents, medical services as well as legal services.

Women’s’ Self-Defense Team (Women’s’ Self-Defense Team,n.d.)was founded in 1988 and it offers self-defense training. The aim of this training is to offer both emotional and physical empowerment to women victims of abuse or to women who feel that they need to learn how to protect their selves from potential threats.

KLIMAKA (Klimaka, n.d.) is an NGO founded in 2000. The aim of the organization is to offer social integration services to socially marginalized and vulnerable groups of people. The range of the services includes boarding houses, day care centers, and guest houses. In addition there are counseling services, medical services as well as welfare services in general.

There are two organizations offering free medical services in Greece, Doctors of the World and Doctors Without frontiers (Medecins sans Frontieres, n.d.). Doctors of the World (Giatroi tou Kosmou, n.d.) is an International NGO organization which was founded in France in 1980 and has branches all over the world. The organization has four polyclinics in Athens, Thessaloniki, Chania-Crete and Perama, operating since 1997, in which free healthcare is offered. Medecins Sans Frontiers is an international, independent, medical humanitarian organization, which offers medical help. The Greek branch operates since 1990. During 2009 there was a project targeting immigrants and refugees that offered medical and psychological support.

The Hellenic Red Cross (Geek Red Cross, n.d.) was founded in 1964 with the aim to provide social and humanitarian support to members of marginalized and vulnerable groups. The Experts from various fields such as social workers, lawyers, psychologists, doctors etc as well as a wide network of volunteers offer their services to the Hellenic Red Cross. The range of services includes psychological support, social integration, community welfare services and others.

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Vavel Day Center (Vavel Day Center, n.d.) is a mental health unit for immigrants operating in Athens. It aims to serve the mental health needs of immigrants residing in Athens. It provides diagnosis, treatment and psychosocial rehabilitation for mental disorders. Although domestic violence is not the core area of activity of the particular NGO, it is a common issue of the treated incidents. Immigrant women often address to Vavel Day Center due to personal incidents of domestic violence. Consequently, the particular NGO refers directly to marginalized groups of people; that is immigrants living in Athens.

The Research and Support Center for Victims of Maltreatment and Social Exclusion (CVME) (CVME, n.d.) is a civil nonprofit organization founded in 1999 in the city of Ioannina. CVME, offers free social, medical, psychological and legal support to victims of maltreatment. In addition there is an SOS helpline and CVME addresses specific professional groups such as doctors, psychologists, social workers, policemen, lawyers etc. in order to provide educational, training activities.

### **Level of Interaction and Cooperation**

According to the national Program for Gender Equality, improvements are being made in terms of the organization, structure as well as the quality of domestic violence services. Furthermore there are actions targeted to educate and enhance the knowledge and understanding of professionals working in the field of domestic violence.

Specifically, the General Secretariat for Gender Equality in collaboration to the Greek Police Force issued an educational guide for all police officers so as to offer them instructions and tools of dealing with domestic violence. In addition, about 200 police officials received training on how to handle victims and incidents of domestic violence with the obligation to disseminate their education to the rest of the police force throughout the country.

Between the years 2005-2007, the Ministry of Health and Solidarity formed women’s shelters for battered women and victims of trafficking. This can be considered as an imperative step towards the correct direction, even though these shelters are not enough and they only offer hospitality to women for a limited and short period of time (European Network for Women-Greece, 2007). The shelters are also significant since NGOs can exchange know-how and experience with public workers and staff, which may have a vital result on shaping potential future plans (European Network for Women-Greece, 2007).

In the following section specific actions towards the development of a cooperative scheme among state and NGOs’ services, are presented:

#### **➤ Institutional Cooperation**

- Initiation of mutual ministerial collaboration with the co-competent Ministries of Citizen Protection and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, planning to harmonize the actions and the integration of the aspect of gender in their policies.

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The so-called “*gender mainstreaming*” (Ministry of Justice, Transparency & Human Rights and General Secretariat for Gender Equality, 2009-2013)

- Training has become a priority regarding issues of domestic violence. There are educational and professional actions aimed to provide further knowledge to a wide range of professional in the field. These educational projects aim to gender experts, court members, diplomats as well as labor inspectors and penitentiary employees. Moreover, there will be implementation of training projects for employees in municipal and regional services for immigration, training of police officers as well as social services employees in local government organizations (Ministry of Interior, Decentralization and E-Government and General Secretariat for Gender Equality, 2010-2013).

#### ➤ **Cooperation among State and NGOs**

- Support to women’s organizations and NGO’s with measures and policies (Ministry of Interior, Decentralization and E-Government and General Secretariat for Gender Equality, 2010-2013) that aim to :
  - prevent and combat any kind of gender violence
  - offer support to victims of violence
  - support vulnerable social groups of women (immigrants, refugees, detainees, former detainees, Roma, women with disabilities, etc)
  - fight against gender stereotypes and gender social roles as they expressed in the mass media
- Creation of internet portal for GSGE services. There will be a mechanism for the management of citizens’ requests so as to combat bureaucracy, digital interactive counseling services and internet on line on a daily and 24 hour basis, as well as SOS hotline counselors for domestic violence (Ministry of Interior, Decentralization and E-Government and General Secretariat for Gender Equality, 2010-2013).

#### **Gaps, Deficits and Social Welfare Deficiencies**

Bureaucracy is among the top problems according to a survey made by KETHI on women immigrants in Greece, regardless of their country of origin (K.E.T.H.I., 2007). The survey highlighted the major problems those women faced in their daily life and other issues, besides bureaucracy, such as difficulties to obtain a permanent status, lack of knowledge regarding their rights and obligations within the Greek state as well as hostile behavior in their dealings with public services were raised (K.E.T.H.I., 2007).

Conclusively, there is no special treatment and services that anticipate the special needs of the social marginalized victims of domestic violence such as immigrants.

#### **Ways of Documenting Domestic Violence and Screening Techniques**

In reference to the documentation and screening techniques of Domestic Violence in Greece there were limitations in terms of existing manuals and guidelines. Given these limitations and in

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order to be able to find sources of information regarding the particular issue various organizations which focus on domestic violence were contacted and asked to provide information regarding the issues in question.

Screening takes place inside the organizations, from specialized and trained staff, either volunteers or employees, through their interaction and contacts with the victims. In general there are no manuals in terms of screening techniques but those people are in a position to identify cases of domestic violence either through discussion or by observing signs of physical injury and abuse. However we were able to find a manual for Greek police force which offers some general guiding principles as well as a series of screening questions.

The Police Manual was published in 2005 and includes definitions, types of domestic violence, deontological guidelines, as well as a screening method for domestic violence. The main idea of this method is to be able to identify abuse and violence through a series of particular questions. If the victim answers “yes” to more than a few questions then this means that he/she needs the immediate help and support of the police officer (Greek Police Force Manual for Domestic Violence, 2005).

The role of the police is to secure privacy and confidentiality of the victim, to ensure his/her safety as well as to refer the victim to the relevant services and organizations. This presupposes an excellent knowledge of the services and the mechanisms of intervention, as well as of the legal rights of the victim. In cases of serious physical abuse the police officer should facilitate the victim’s transport to a hospital as well as to take all necessary steps for the legal coverage of the victim (Greek Police Force Manual for Domestic Violence, 2005).

Moreover he/she should advise the victim on how to proceed after the incident, i.e., to change the locks in the house, to inform the neighbors so that they can contact the police in case of future assaults and threats, to change the phone number, to relocate if necessary for a specific period of time and stay with friends or relatives etc (Greek Police Force Manual for Domestic Violence, 2005). In addition the police officer should offer practical tips to the victim so as to help him/her change the daily routine activities (for example change his/her working hours, change his/her daily trips-routes, etc) so as to remain undetected from the perpetrator (Greek Police Force Manual for Domestic Violence, 2005).

In terms of documenting domestic violence the majority of the relevant data was derived from the Greek Police Force Statistical Database. In this statistical base we were able to find evidence of recorded incidents of Domestic Violence (Greek Police, n.d.). The data referred from 2007 until 2009 and there was an increase in the total number of reported incidents. The data are presented in the table below:

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<b>Type of incident</b>	<b>Number of reported cases in the year 2007</b>	<b>Number of reported cases in the year 2009</b>
Intentional homicide	11	13
Physical injury	78	98
Dangerous physical injury	9	17
Severe physical injury	-	1
Threat	7	23
Rape	8	22
Attempted rape	1	6
Sexual Dignity Insult	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>182</b>

### **Cost of Domestic Violence**

Unfortunately, there were no particular data of economic figures of domestic violence.

### ***3. DV -Socio-cultural level***

In an effort to conduct a comprehensive review of the existing data that refers to the socio-cultural level of domestic violence in Greece we tried to find available databases in a variety of electronic resources. However, we came up with the fact that there were no that much available data as regards either the factors of domestic violence or its health effects.

Some organizations were displayed in their websites the number and the type of domestic violence incidents that they were coming up annually. Some others provided these data to us upon request.

In every case this kind of spread and heterogeneity indicate that a holistic picture of the socio-cultural point of domestic violence in Greece was not possible to be obtained. The available data regarding the socio-cultural level of domestic violence in Greece were as follows:

### **Categories and Factors of Domestic Violence**

#### **- Child Abuse in Greece**

The data regarding the child abuse in Greece has been taken from the NGO “Χαμόγελο του Παιδιού” /”The Child’s Smile”. It is an NGO for the protection of the rights of the children. It offers several services for children, such as SOS-line, guest-houses for children and services for vanished children.

According to the NGO’s annual report for 2010 (The Child’s Smile-Annual Report 2010, n.d.) the socio-cultural characteristic of the children victims of domestic violence are presented in the tables below:

- Table 1 demonstrates the age group percentages (%) from the total number of 770 children victims during the period from 1/1/10-31/10/10.

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- Table 2 demonstrates specific types of child abuse and the percentage of victims in each one of these types.
- Table 3 shows the profile of perpetrators.
- Table 4 shows the types of violence.

**Table 1: Age group of children victims from 1/1/10 to 31/10/10**

Age groups	% from the 770 children victims
0-6	41
7-12	31
13-18	16
Unknown	12

**Table 2: Types of child abuse**

Types of Child abuse	% of children victims
Physical abuse	44
Sexual abuse	3
Neglect/abandonment	48
Forced beggary	3
Forced prostitution	0
Psychological/emotional abuse	2

**Table 3: perpetrators profile**

Relationship among the perpetrator and the victim	% from the total number of the perpetrators
Parents (both mother and father)	39
Mother	38
Father	17
Other person	6

**Table 4: Types of violence**

Specific types of violence	% of parents
Hitting in the but	58
Pulling of ear	35
Shaking	32
Pulling of hair	26
Slapping	20
Screaming/shouting	82
Public humiliation	10
Threatening of calling someone to harm them/punish them	9
Threatening of abandoning them	13

**- Male victims**

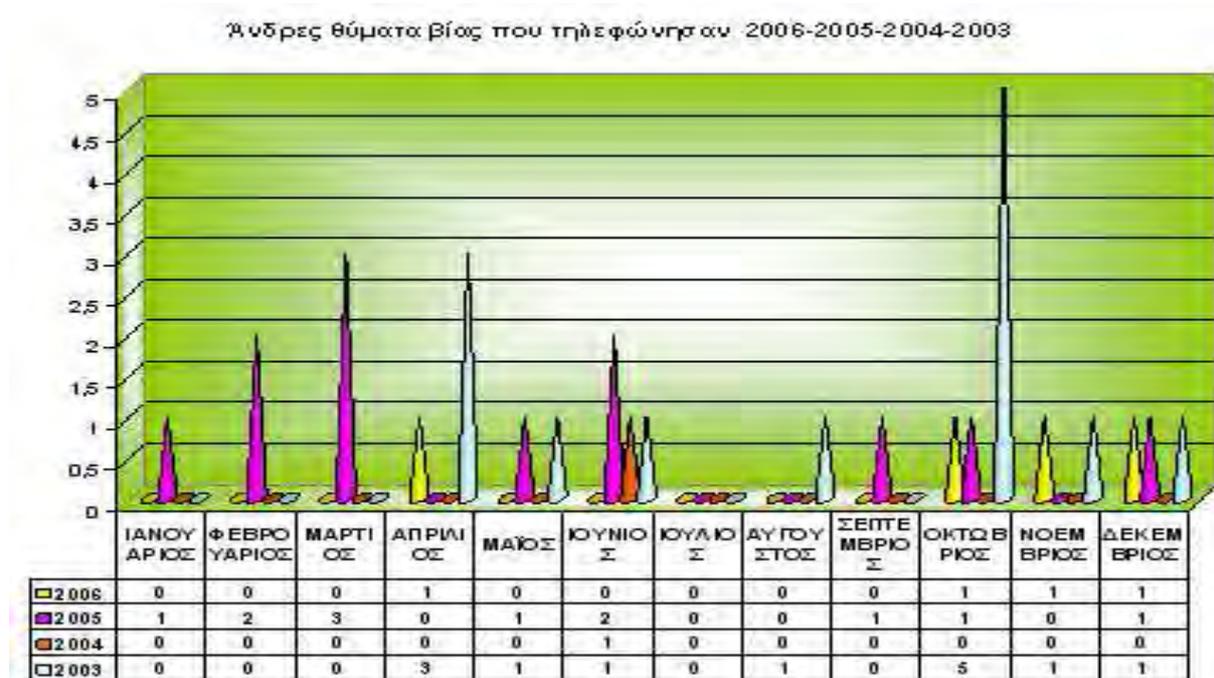
The data regarding the male victims of domestic violence in Greece has been taken from the NGO Greek Network of European Women (Dimitra Institute of Training and Development,

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n.d.). From the operation of its SOS line for victims of domestic violence there were male victims called during the years 2003-2006 and were recorded as follows:



The particular graph reveals a rather low number of male victims, since the largest number of recorded incidents was 5. However, there is a slight increase although discontinuous, throughout the years from 2003 to 2006.

#### **- Intimate partner abuse in Greece**

The main source for statistical data in relation to intimate partner abuse in Greece is the General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE). As it was mentioned in the section of the Political Level of Domestic Violence, GSGE has two major consulting centers in Athens and Piraeus. The following data were retrieved from those centers during the period from 1/1/10 until 31/10/10.

According to the available data from the total number of 1.870 women who reported complaints and asked for help from the GSGE centers during the period 1/1/10 - 31/10/10:

- ✓ 16% of them were foreigners
- ✓ 4 out of 10 women foreigners came from the Balkan region
- ✓ 67% from the total number (Greek and foreigners) were married
- ✓ 1 out of five were separated (21%)
- ✓ 1 out of 3 has married the perpetrator, despite the fact that she had indications and proofs of violent behavior before the marriage took place
- ✓ 82% of the perpetrators are married to the victims, whereas 12% are not
- ✓ 2 out of three women remain in an abusive relationship for out least ten years
- ✓ 3 out of five women who asked for help stated that they were victims of both physical and psychological abuse, as well as that before coming to the centers they had already asked for help from various institutions such as the police, hospitals, welfare services, etc

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From the same GSGE analysis there were certain conflicting data in relation to certain traditional viewpoints and theories regarding domestic violence that has to do mainly with the profile of the victims and the perpetrator and reference to their educational level and the use of certain substances. More specifically:

**Victims:**

- ✓ 7 out of ten women victims are University or high school graduates
- ✓ 6 out of 10 stated that they are in a good or in an average financial status, against the traditional view that domestic violence victims are of a low educational and financial class.

**Perpetrators:**

- ✓ 6 out of 10 perpetrators do not use substances; alcohol and substance abuse are significant factors that have an important effect regarding the manifestation of domestic violence but they were not the primary causes of violence.
- ✓ 6 out of 10 perpetrators have a university degree or they are high school graduates, a fact that stands against the view that domestic violence is increased among people of low educational background.
- ✓ Only 1 out of ten perpetrators is unemployed, a fact that contradicts the argument that the perpetrators of domestic violence are people without a job.

**Dissemination of Information**

In relation to the aspect of dissemination of information on domestic violence there are two main categories identified after investigating the field of domestic violence in Greece. This kind of categorization has to do with the point of reference of the provided information:

- Firstly, there is dissemination of information on domestic violence that refer to the wider public that includes either victims or not.
- Secondly, there is dissemination of information on domestic violence with reference mainly to the experts working in the field. Yet, the inclusion of the wider public is possible as well.

- Dissemination with reference to the wider public -either victims or not-

In the direction of the rise of awareness among public in 1999-2000 the Research Center for Gender Equality and the General Secretariat for Gender Equality organized an awareness campaign that included a conference, booklets and other awareness material such as stickers and “break the silence” leaflets sent by mail together with electricity bills. Moreover, there were giant posters in 150 locations in five major Greek cities (Athens, Thessaloniki, Patras, Volos and Heracleion in Crete) (Dimitra Institute of Training and Development, n.d.). There is no other widespread education of society with regard to domestic violence (Greek Helsinki Monitor and the World Organization against Torture, 2002).

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Furthermore, in 2002, the Research Center for Gender Equality published “a Self-Help manual for battered women” in order to help women victims of Domestic Violence by offering them practical advice on how to handle the violent incidents during its happening and afterwards as well as how to prevent the violent crisis.

Also a Guide for Migrant Women was also found, issued in 2008 and supported by the Research Center for Equality Issues (KETHI). The guide had the form of a book and it was published in Greek. Information on Domestic Violence was provided within the more general context of education as regards to the rights and the obligations of migrants.

Another leaflet was also at our disposal carrying the message “*Violence- Desperate Women*”. There were analytical information provided regarding the ways through which a woman victim of domestic violence could handle the issue. The particular leaflet was a joined project between different NGOs.

- Dissemination with reference to the experts working in the field

In the particular kind of dissemination of information on domestic violence we came up with the organization of two conferences on the investigated subject. These congresses took place in Athens during spring of the current year.

The first one a daily conference was organized by a feminist organization (NGO) named “Feminist Initiative” (Feminist Initiative, n.d) and it was about the general theme “Violence against Women: Supportive Structure and Local Government”. It was addressed mainly to experts in the field (sociologists, psychologists, social workers, employees in the particular sector). However, the congress was open to the wider public.

The other was again a daily conference held by another feminist organization (NGO) named “Center of Women Studies and Research – DIOTIMA” (DIOTIMA, n.d.). The conference was focused on the immigrant women. The theme of violence against immigrant women was covered by experts on the field. The participants were mainly experts working in the social welfare institutions (Universities, General Secretariat for Gender Equality (GSGE), Ministry of Health and Social Security).

Both daily conferences indicate the fact that the issue of violence against women is considered as quite important in the Greek society. Undoubtedly, domestic violence is part of the general subject of violence against women. Another very important issue is that marginalized groups of victims of violence and in particular the immigrant women are deemed special cases that need different ways of management. The special interest and dialogue on violence against immigrant women is inseparable from the huge increase of immigrants in Greece during the last years.

#### **4. DV -Individual level**

##### **Social workers and service providers-Help the Helpers**

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As it has already been mentioned in the section of socio-cultural characteristics of domestic violence in Greece the collection of available data was rather difficult. For the collection of the information about the social workers and the provided services the situation was very much alike. There were not that much available data in electronic resources. Consequently, direct contact with the organisations working on the field was necessary.

In order to shed light in the particular field area of domestic violence -social workers and service providers- we conducted personal interviews with professionals. There were three people contacted who were willing to discuss the matter at hand and provide us with further information regarding the social workers and the service providers.

The contact persons and their occupations were as follows:

- Theodora Katsivardakou: Director of the part of Social Politics in General Secretariat for Gender Equalities
- Spiros Pilarinos: Director of Occupational relations in General Secretariat for Gender Equalities
- Apostolis Sabartziotis, Psychologists: currently working on a Day Center for Adults with Mental Disorders. Ex-employee in the telephone line 800-11-3-7777 for psychological support of victims of domestic violence. This line was covering incidents from all over Greece. It was working on an 8 hours basis for 5 days per week -except the weekends. Nowadays is closed.

### **Types of professionals**

The types of professionals who get involved in the field of domestic Violence reported as follows T. Katsivardakou & S. Pilarinos (personal communication, April, 21, 2011) :

- Psychologists: they work on Structures of Domestic Violence treatment as well as the telephone line that supports the victims. Therefore, they are the first receivers of domestic violence incidents. They get involved in the psychological support of the victims providing counselling services both psychological and practical. The practical advices that they offer to the victims refer to the process that they need to follow, which involves further reports to the police, justice etc.

Furthermore, psychologists are engaged with the psychotherapeutic field of the victims. In many cases, also, there is need for further psychotherapeutic counselling of the couple that is, both partners and not only the victims.

- Social workers: they work on Structures of Domestic Violence treatment as mediators between the victims and the social body. They are engaged in the legal process that is, helping the victim to submit complaints. Moreover, they help the victims regarding themes of medical providence. Furthermore, they are responsible for finding guest rooms -“*shelters*”- for the victims in the cases where the housing with their partners is dangerous.

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While psychologists work more on personal level with the victims, social workers are engaged in the process of helping the victims to handle their situation in social level. Due to the sensitive issue of domestic violence and the vulnerable position of the victims their engagement in the further socialization of the object -the fact- and the subject -victim- is very crucial.

- Lawyers: they work on counseling the victims regarding law and justice referring on domestic violence issues. They submit the complaint for the victims and they represent them to the court.

Lawyers do their work in the legal field supporting and counselling the victims. However, social workers and psychologists stand by the victims during the legal process.

- Doctors: they are in the reception of the victims during their visit or staying in the hospital. They do the diagnosis and the further hospitalization whenever is needed. Moreover, they provide the medical testimony which is used in the legal process. In particular, their medical confirmation is very important in the cases of further submission of complaint.
- Psychiatrists: they provide further diagnosis of possible psychopathological illnesses. In these cases the victims need to take medication during the healing process. Psychologists address the victims to psychiatrists or in the cases where the victims are visiting the hospital they get psychiatric diagnosis. All the providers of Domestic Violence services either public or nongovernmental used to have a psychiatrist as a supervisor of the working staff of the psychological field.
- Police: the role of the police is quite crucial. Due to the very nature of the subject at hand many of the victims are visiting first the police in order to address their domestic violence's incidents. Therefore, police in general and the policemen in particular are in many cases the first recipients of the incidents. This fact extends their role in the sense of psychological and social working support. They need to treat the victims in a very peculiar way as well as to refer them in further legal, health and social bodies (Greek Helsinki Monitor and the World Organization against Torture, 2002).

#### **Particular places where field work is done**

The particular places where the field work is done are either public organizations or NGOs T. Katsivardakou & S. Pilarinos (personal communication, April, 21, 2011):

- Police Stations
- Courts
- Hospitals

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- Emergency Rooms
- Health Centers
- Public Centers for Psychological Support
  - Telephone lines for psychological support of the victims
  - Guest houses for the victims
- Social offices/services of Local Government Organizations
  - Telephone lines for psychological support of the victims
  - Guest houses for the victims
- NGOs
  - Telephone lines for psychological support of the victims
  - Guest houses for the victims

### **Quality of the provided services**

There have been different kinds of issues raised regarding the quality of the provided services in the field of domestic violence during conversations with the experts. An interesting fact was that all of them coincided in the same aspect of the quality. That is the fact of sustainability of the provided services. What it was underlined by the use of the term “sustainability” was the financing the organizations.

Both the official/social welfare organizations and the NGOs receive their revenues mainly from the State. In different cases they get funds from European work packages. The main problem regarding the sustainability of these organizations is that financing is not stable. Therefore, some of the provided services could be cut off unexpectedly. This fact generates problems regarding the quality of the provided services. For instance, there is a case where a guest room for domestic violence victims had to close due to deficient financing. Therefore, the treatment of the victims was not continuous and therefore quite ineffective. A. Sabartziotis (personal communication, May 6, 2011).

And this was not the only case. During our research for the purposes of the particular report we came up with the fact of four guest houses for women victims of domestic violence whose operation has stopped due to lack of financing.

The General Secretariat for Gender Equalities reported another important issue in reference to the quality of the provided services. It stated that the hospitals and the health centres are not adequately staffed to handle cases of battered women (Dimitra Institute of Training and Development, n.d.).

### **Forms of professional training**

Each employee in the field of care services providers in domestic violence takes the directions/ education about the particular field work from the care service provider where he/she is working on. T. Katsivardakou & S. Pilarinos (personal communication, April, 21, 2011).

The continuous education of the professionals working in the field of domestic violence is very much dependent upon financing provided to them by the employing body. Financing as regards

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to professional education has been described again as deficient by the interviewees. T. Katsivardakou & S. Pilarinos (personal communication, April, 21, 2011).

### **Types of professional training**

In Greece further education of the professionals is provided by the NGO “Greek Network of European Women”. The education provided by the particular body takes the form of seminars held by specialists of the field -psychologists, social workers either from abroad or from Greece-. They are referring to professionals working in the field of Domestic Violence -mainly psychologists and social workers-. The seminars were held in different paces either in Athens or in rural areas of Greece. The following areas of training have been covered in these seminars:

- Interventions during crisis
- Psychological support
- Victims advisory
- Working in a telephone line regarding Domestic Violence
- Mediation to the couple
- As regards to the continuous education of the professionals working in Domestic Violence field there is only one NGO -the “Greek Network of European Women”- providing further educational programs that is dependent upon financial limitations. Therefore, they are not provided with stability and continuity.

### **Possible gaps, barriers and deficits**

A very crucial deficit in the field of domestic violence in Greece is the lack of institutionalized training for law enforcement officials and members of the judiciary in relation to the investigation (Greek Helsinki Monitor and the World Organization against Torture, 2002). There is still little special education of the officials regarding the vulnerability of the victims of Domestic Violence.

However, a very important action as far as the education of the Police is concerned took place in 2005. As it has already been mentioned in the chapter of the political level of domestic violence in Greece a Manual of Domestic Violence was designed by the Ministry of Citizen Protection for the policemen (Treatment of Domestic Violence, 2005). During 2005, 200 chief officers of the Greek Police has been educated on how to handle Domestic Violence incidents by experts of the field working in the General Secretariat of Gender Equality. These 200 chief officers were responsible for communicating the Manual of Domestic Violence to the wider Police staff. T. Katsivardakou (personal communication, April, 21, 2011).

That was a big step as far the treatment of Domestic Violence is concerned since the role of the Police is quite crucial and therefore policemen awareness in regards to victims of domestic violence was quite valuable.

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As far as the identification of possible gaps is concerned there was quite an interesting observation during the conduction of the interviews. All the interviewees were starting their narrations presenting the gaps and the deficits as regards to the treatment of the victims of domestic violence.

The main problems of social workers and service providers of Domestic Violence that were mentioned by the professionals who were interviewed were the following:

- Lack of State Structures and Bodies for supporting the victims of Domestic Violence that is, lack of guest houses for the victims.
- Moreover, there is lack of translators working in the State Structures as well as in the NGO for foreign victims of Domestic Violence.
- Lack of financing not only in reference to State Structures but also in reference to the NGO that are engaged in the particular field. The financing should not only cover the treatment of the victims but also the continuous education of the professionals in the particular field.
- Lack of information and further spread to the public regarding Domestic Violence and the ways of its treatment. Neither the victims nor the wider public are aware of the existence of particular bodies that work on domestic violence.
- Existence of further religious and cultural prejudgments referring not only to the Greek society (e.g. “*what will the neighbors say?*”, “*try not to take divorce!*”) but also to the cultural and the legal background of the marginalized groups such as immigrants.

## **Victims**

### **Marginalized groups in Greece**

There were not that many available sources regarding the demographic profile of the immigrant victims of domestic violence in Greece. According to available data from the GSGE (General Secretariat for Gender Equality, n.d.) centers for the women victims of domestic violence for the period 1/1/10 - 31/10/10:

- from total number of 1.870 women who reported complaints and asked for help
  - ✓ 16% of them were foreigners
  - ✓ 4 out of 10 women foreigners came from the Balkan region

As regards to the specific marginalized groups that experience domestic violence in Greece due to lack of available statistic data, essential information has been gained from the interviews taken with experts on the field. According to their experience and knowledge the largest group of immigrant women victims of domestic violence in Greece is the Albanians. The group that comes second is immigrant women victims for other Balkan countries - Bulgaria and Rumania -. The third group is immigrant women coming from the Arab world. They are mainly asylum seekers. Language barrier constitutes the largest obstacle for this population. Moreover, due to their legal problems in Greece they prioritize the processes of legalization of their staying in

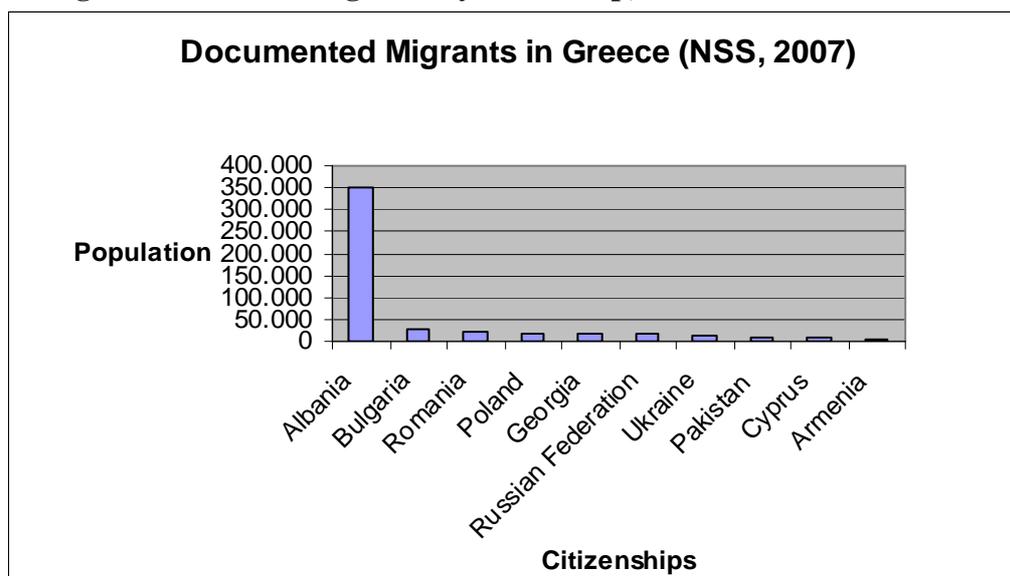
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Greece. Therefore, their actions such as address to care services due to their experience of domestic violence are kept aside.

As regards to the largest marginalized group, that is Albanian women victims of domestic violence, they are having different cultural background which is very much depended upon and oriented by their religion. The fact that they are muslims generates different stances towards the role of the women and the equal rights and obligations of men and women. Therefore, immigrant Albanian women suffer domestic violence.

According to the National Statistical Service of Greece (NSS, 2007) Albanians are the most numerable migrant ethnicity in Greece, with a total number of 352,780, followed by Bulgarians (26,593), Romanians (22,982), Pollands (19,181), Georgians (18,728), Russians (17,239), Ukraines (15,142), Pakistanis (9,154), Cypriots (9,137) and Armenians (6,669). The numbers above include asylum seekers and refugees. This distribution is presented in Figure 1:

**Figure 1: Resident migrants by citizenship, 2007**



The Albanians represent the overwhelming majority in all age groups (80–87%). Bulgarians are the second largest group of third country nationals in ages between 15–19, 20–24 and 30-64 years, representing 6%, 4% and 8% respectively of the total number of third country nationals belonging to these age groups. Romanians predominate as the second largest immigrant group in ages between 25 and 29 years, representing 5% of the total number of third country nationals belonging to this age group.

There is no official estimation on the number and demographic information of undocumented migrants. The only available information is provided by the Greek Police Department (Greek Police Department-Statistics, 2011.). According to it, on 2007, 112.364 illegally entering the country migrant were arrested by the police authorities.

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The gender balance of immigrant groups varies widely. Overall, the sexes are well-balanced, but certain nationalities have highly skewed profiles. Albania shows some 61% male presence along with Romania. The Asian and African countries in particular have almost exclusively male immigrants in Greece, such as India (87%), Pakistan (98%) and Egypt (87%). Other nationalities have a predominantly female presence, such as Ukraine with 82%, Moldova with 71%, Russia with 83%, Georgia with 64% and Bulgaria (66%).

### **Ways through which victims experience domestic violence in Greece**

As far as the reaction of victims of domestic violence is concerned there are some very interesting findings available on an epidemiological research for domestic violence in Greece which was conducted in 2010 by the Research Center of Gender Equality (Research Center of Gender Equality, 2010). It has been found that the reaction of the victims is very much dependent upon the type of the experienced violence:

- Women who suffer verbal or psychological violence try to relax their partner -79%
- Women who suffer physical and sexual violence provide threats of divorce/separation from their partners -76,5%-.
- Women who suffer physical and sexual violence react with separation threats more frequent -44,2%- than women who suffer verbal or psychological violence -34,5%-.

Another interesting finding is that most of the women victims of domestic violence -60,9%- would firstly open up to members of their family. The 46,9% would report the incident to close friends and only 35,9% would report it in other relatives (Research Center of Gender Equality, 2010, p. 125) .

33,3% of women victims in Greece are feeling responsible for the incident of violence of their partners/husbands. The majority of Greek women who characterize themselves as victims - 8,75%- mentioned that they would first try to relax the perpetrator. There was none of them declared that they would address to social care service providers (Research Center of Gender Equality, 2010, p. 126).

The above mentioned indicators are quite revealing regarding the culture and the mentality of Greek women that tend to excuse the authoritarian behavior of their partners/husbands (Chatzifotiou & Dobash, 2001, p. 1024-1051).

### **Level of awareness and education among the victims of domestic violence**

According to Eurobarometer there is high level of awareness of the public regarding domestic violence in Greece -95% of the general population- (Eurobarometer, 2010). However, it has been observed that the victims do not address directly to the social care services (K.E.T.H.I., 2003). This fact reflects a strong social taboo as regards to domestic violence in Greece (K.E.T.H.I., 2003).

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Moreover, there is great rise of immigrants in Greece during the last years. Their cultural differentiation as regards to family structures and the rights of women render the awareness of the available services for victims of domestic violence to a crucial issue.

There are certain informative campaigns that aimed in the rise of awareness as regards to care services for victims of domestic violence (General Secretariat for Gender Equality, 2011). However, there is much more to be done considering the social taboo of the Greek population as well as the cultural barriers and the difficulties faced up by immigrant populations. Regarding the later language constitutes a great obstacle. Therefore there is need for the informative campaigns and actions that aim to increase awareness as well as to cultivate certain social stances regarding domestic violence to be more frequent and multilingual.

**Needs, gaps and deficits in terms of victims’ interaction with the social care service providers**

Based on the epidemiological research of the Research Center for Sex Equality (Research Center for Sex Equality, 2010) and the personal interviews conducted with social workers for the purposes of the particular report the main needs are addressed as follows:

- The guest houses that are available for the treatment of the victims are not enough and they do not operate constantly. Due to unstable financing some of them have even stopped their function. Their closure generates great problems to the victims and the process of their treatment.
- Need for well-structured and continuous education of the personnel who works with domestic violence incidents -social workers, psychologist-. The educational funding provided to service providers need to be constant.
- Due to the great increase of undocumented immigrants in Greece coming from the Arab world there is need for translators for the Arab immigrant women victims of domestic violence.
- There is need for further cultivation of awareness of the public and the victims regarding the social care services of domestic violence.
- Further awareness of the legal and state representatives who handle domestic violence cases on the specificities of domestic violence. Doctors and hospital personnel, police personnel as well as justice officers need to be informed and educated on how to cope with victims of domestic violence.

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