

COUNTRY PROFILE



MARVOW

Multi-Agency Responses to
Violence against Older Women

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GREECE

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This report is developed by Union of Women Associations of Heraklion Prefecture (UWAH), Greece

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MARVOW - Multi-Agency Responses to Violence against Older Women

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Summary of main findings

In Greece, the legislation on domestic violence and abuse applies for all victims, regardless of their age. Abuse is recognized to appear in three major forms: physical, psychological and sexual abuse. Reference is made to Laws 3500/2006 and 4531/2018 to address/ confront the abuse. In Greece, a victim who earns less than 5,500 Euros a year can be represented by a lawyer free of charge. Furthermore, a person accused of a crime can get free legal representation.

In Greece there are no counselling centers or shelters exclusively for elderly women victims of violence. Elderly victims can ask for help in organizations that deal with victim support and domestic violence.

A free SOS Helpline operates at a national level (National Helpline 15900). The Union of Women Associations of Heraklion Prefecture (UWAH) operates a 24-hour SOS Helpline (801.11.16000). In Heraklion prefecture there are two shelters for the protection of women victims of violence and counselling centers, while there is none in the Lassithi Prefecture. Abuse cases coming from the region of Lassithi prefecture are addressed to associations in Heraklion as well.

Regarding the proper management of abuse cases, the first and most important step is to report it to the police or prosecutor's office. All incidents of abuse are ex-officio prosecuted according to the law.

The police then inform those involved in support services/ domestic violence organizations in the area, so that the women themselves can contact them, asking for counseling or psychological support or even hospitality in shelters.

In Greece, there is no compulsory referral of a victim to a counselling center or psychologist. For this reason, it is important that the victim herself is informed, in order to ask for assistance and support from a counsellor or victim support service. It is of vital importance that the social services, health professionals in hospitals or even any bystander, would report the case to the authorities (police or prosecutor's office) to initiate a social services investigation for a complaint and/or to verify the suspected abuse. This is the reason UWAH is organizing study visits to a number of social services, hospitals and police in the region, to share information and establish a fruitful collaboration.

UWAH provides psychological support as well as shelter for victims, in the Shelter for a period not exceeding 8 months. All services are provided free of charge.

Finally, in Greece, there are only few organizations involved in working with perpetrators that provide treatment from a psycho-social perspective. The perpetrators attend therapeutic psychological sessions through the process of criminal mediation, to deal with their violent and aggressive behavior. The number of abuse cases handled by the authorities cannot be verified. Even in cases where an organization reports a case of abuse, this organization rarely receives answers about the course of the incident, since the prosecutors do not have an obligation to keep them informed.

MARVOW: COUNTRY PROFILE – GREECE

The information in the Profile is covering the period since 2015 onward and describes the current situation on work with tackling elderly abuse in your country

Older persons are considered people 60+.

1. Overview of Legal and Policy Framework on elderly abuse and perpetrators/offender management

1. What is the definition of domestic violence/domestic abuse in law?

According to the definition, Abuse is the inappropriate treatment of an adult person or a child for the purpose of achieving unfair or inappropriate aims. The types of abuse are: physical or verbal abuse, injury, attack, abuse, rape, unfair practices, crimes or other forms of attack. This is a precise translation of the definition as set out in the law. It is most likely to refer to general behaviours that are contrary to what are morally and legally permissible and right.

2. Does it include non-physical abuse and/or coercive control/intimate abuse?

The non-physical abuse and/or coercive control/intimate abuse is included in the legislation (Law 4531/2018) and in particular after the ratification of the Istanbul Convention in 2018.

3. Does it include neglect?

The legislation does not explicitly refer to neglect as a form of abuse.

4. What types of domestic violence/domestic abuse is criminalised?

All forms of abuse that can be proven are considered as criminal proceedings. Depending on the extent, the degree and the significance, they are also subject to the appropriate sentence, as prescribed by the court.

5. Do elder victims have access to free and adequate legal aid? If no, please specify.

In Greek law there is no specific reference to elderly victims of violence. Consequently, what applies to women victims of violence is legally binding. Regarding free legal aid, all that is provided is that they receive a public benefit, due to free legal representation for people with a low financial income (up to 5,500 euros- the count of 5,500 euros is an annual income which now is to consideration to above). In addition, free legal representation is received from a person who accused of a crime.

6. How are older victims of violence identified? (Or are they are hidden, contacted only, if they report?)

All health professionals, social scientists or social workers can identify signs of abuse during a scheduled examination or discussion and then refer them to the relevant departments to do appropriate social investigation.

7. What kind of support services are offered for older women:

On national level? On regional level? On municipal level?

Unfortunately, none of these levels are provided support services exclusively for older women.

8. Who are service providers for victims of domestic violence on national level? How do these service providers cooperate or network? (Please amend the table below accordingly and specify their role one by one)

On national level for domestic violence there is the service of the General Secretariat for Equality and Family Policy (State Agency). It has a 24-hour helpline-15900 and operates Hostels for the Protection of Women Victims of Violence in all areas of Greece. In addition, since November 4, 2019, offices have been set up in the Greek police, in each prefecture and municipality, for prevention of domestic violence and abuse. In addition, there are associations and women's organizations that support women victims of violence, but as a secondary level services/ intersection.

9. Who are service providers for victims of domestic violence on community level? How do these service providers cooperate or network? (Please amend the table below accordingly and specify their role one by one)

In Heraklion Prefecture there are two bodies dealing with violence and abuse of women. In Heraklion there is the Office of the General Secretariat for Equality and Family Policy, which operates a counselling centre and hostel, and the Association of Women Members of Heraklion, which operates a counselling centre and hostel for Abused Women and Children. In addition, there is the Police Office to combat violence against women. In Lassithi Prefecture there is no body, private or state, that deals with the abuse of women. Similarly, there is a police station in Lassithi for abuse cases. The interconnection of all services and the diffusion of information is continuous. There is constant communication between the associations in order to better deal with any incident.

If possible, please describe the activity chain / information flow starting from the first contact and ending with safety plan and violence free life, specifically for older victims?

The first and most important step is to contact the police to report the incident and to press charges against the perpetrator. The police then inform those concerned about the existence of the corresponding structures in the area so that the women themselves can contact us, asking counselling, psychological support or even hospitality. Finally, even if a woman first comes in contact with a support structure, the first tip is to contact the police. The police are the first state agency that are usually asked to respond to abuse incidents, either by the victim or by a third person who witnessed or became aware of a domestic violence/a case of abuse-related incident. The main issue is to report the case to the police. This is the first and the more important step.

10. Are risk assessment processes for domestic violence cases in place in your country? Does it cover older victims of violence?

In Greece there is no corresponding practical policy and established risk assessment. The setting up of police officers for preventing domestic violence and abuse of women is recent. Their official using began on November 4, 2019.

10. If risk assessment has been developed by a specific agency/institution or organisation in your country but is not yet implemented, please explain what are the obstacles?

NA

11. Are specific tools used in the process of practicing risk assessment on domestic abuse cases?

There are no specific tools for this purpose.

12. Is risk assessment embedded in a wider policy/legislative framework on combating intimate partner violence against women (legal framework, National Action Plan/Strategy, other policy)? Please specify.

There is no clarification in Greek law regarding this phenomenon.

13. To what extent is the existing policy framework gender specific?

No gender specificity in policy papers.

Please identify any existing empirical research, studies and evaluations, on elderly abuse in your country. Or any other relevant studies on domestic violence which might be important to MARVOW project. Please report exact reference and summary of main findings.

Investigations in Greece:

According to a WHO report, conducted in July 2011, each year in percentage terms:

- 2.7% (4 million) of all people over 60 experience physical abuse.
- 19.4% (29 million) experience psychological abuse.
- 3.8% (6 million) experience financial exploitation and end
- 0.7% (1 million) experience sexual abuse.

The Eurobarometer Special Report (2009) states that 47% of Europeans consider poor care, neglect and abuse of dependent elderly people to be a fairly common situation in their countries. As far as Greece is concerned, there is a great lack of data on the magnitude of the problem. ABUEL survey for the two years 2008-2010 in Greece, elderly - victims of abuse were 126,111 people. The incidents are analyzed as follows:

13.2% psychological abuse.

- 3.5% physical abuse (4.7% aged 80 - 84 years).
- 3.9% economic exploitation (7.9% aged 80 - 84 years).
- 1.5% sexual abuse (2.3% women).
- 3.1% dropout (8.9% aged 80 - 84 years). • 1.1% injuries.

Also, as the recent ABUEL (Abuse of Elderly in Europe, 2011) European research has shown, women and older people (80 - 84 years old) are the social groups most affected by all forms of violence especially in the countries of the south. And violence is not only physical, but it is subjected to psychological, physical abuse, financial exploitation, sexual abuse, abandonment and marginalization.

2. Mapping work with victims/survivors

Fill in a Country Profile covering the period since 2015 onward current situation on work with tackling elderly abuse in your country

Please specify the agencies, institutions or organisations involved in work with and their specific role in the victim support system.

Actors	Role in victim support (step by step activities). Access	Challenges	Source of info 1-4*
Acting coordinating body			
Social workers (municipality level)	The municipal social worker is responsible for conducting social research to examine the living conditions of a suspect. After completing the investigation, they compile a social report, which includes everything they have learned, have observed and whether or not the abuse has been reported, and submits it To the prosecuting authorities responsible for the follow-up and resolution of any incident.	<p>-It takes a long time for social investigation to take place. The time for social investigation. It depends on the incident. But a social survey can take days, weeks or even months (with reviews). However, if the incident is high risk the first report should be completed within 10 days at the latest.</p> <p>-Possibility of false accusations or incorrect information being interviewed by individuals of the familiar environment.</p> <p>-Refusing ones to speak regarding on the subject.</p> <p>-Denial to cooperate.</p> <p>-Work overload.</p> <p>-Cases of DV are usually on low priority for the judicial system unless there is a crime involved. So it is the work overload of courts which determine the delay. In the municipality of Heraklion there are 15</p>	4

		<p>social workers and in the municipality of Agios Nikolaos (Lassithi) there are 12. None of them working exclusively with incidents of abuse and domestic violence.</p> <p>Regarding to the number of cases, we can't give a certain answer.</p> <p>-Personal acquaintance of the social worker with the victim and the perpetrator. That means because of the possible social worker's relationship with the perpetrator, the social worker's opinion might be biased about the perpetrator and the facts.</p>	
Healthcare (family doctor/GP)	The family doctor may report the signs of abuse he recognizes and report his suspicions to the appropriate social services in the area, the police or the public prosecutor's office. Then the process of social investigation is followed by the social worker of the state.	<p>-Lack of knowledge to identify the signs of abuse and to denounce it.</p> <p>-insufficient knowledge regarding abuse (we don't know that what is happening is abuse)</p> <p>-Refusing ones to speak regarding on the subject.</p>	4
Medical doctor in hospital	If the woman reports that this is a case of abuse, the doctor at the hospital must examine her and refer her to a forensic examiner in order to prove that she has suffered abuse. Then inform the hospital's social service. If the woman does not report abuse, she is examined as a patient and then, according to her examination,	<p>-Lack of knowledge to identify the signs of abuse and to denounce it.</p> <p>-incorrect knowledge regarding abuse (we don't know that what is happening is abuse)</p>	4

	referred to the hospital social service or social services.	-Refusing ones to speak regarding on the subject. -Lack of time required for examination in emergency departments.	
Social worker in hospital	The hospital social worker, after being called in for an incident, acts as an advisor and proceeds with a social history. He will then refer to the social services of the Municipality to follow the procedure already mentioned above.	-Refusing for a victim to speak regarding on the subject. -Lack of knowledge to identify the signs of abuse and to denounce it. For the social works in hospitals there is a standard risk assessment but not a specific one for abuse cases. -Personal acquaintance of the social worker with the victim and the perpetrator.	4
Psychologists/ Psychotherapists	A psychologist / psychotherapist will only address a woman if she so wants and asks for it. When this is done, counselling and psychological support cycles will be planned to support and strengthen her.	-Lack of specialised knowledge and training.	4
Police	The police are responsible for the immediate intervention and protection of a victim by the perpetrator. This is where an incident is reported. Police inform the prosecutors. * Since November 4, 2019, an independent office has been set up to deal with domestic violence and abuse of women.	-Refusal of the woman to report the abuse that she has suffered. -Lack of knowledge. -Personal acquaintance of the social worker with the victim and the perpetrator.	4

Prosecutors	Prosecutors are considered to be at the top of the pyramid hierarchy. They are responsible for investigating any report that reaches the judicial authorities and they are responsible for the course, procedures and consequences that will follow in an incident of abuse. All institutional and legal procedures are initiated by prosecutors.	-	4
Shelter service providers	A woman can be accommodated in shelter after all the necessary procedures for her entry into the shelter have been followed. During her stay all her basic needs are covered (e.g. food, clothing, medical care). In addition, she receives psychological support. The time of stay varies. The ideal time of stay is best and not more than 8 months, only in extremely difficult and dangerous cases.	-Completeness in the shelter at the time request hosting.	4
Day care centres for elderly / Open care centres for elderly	They can identify signs of abuse and report any suspicions to social services, the police or the public prosecutor's office, so that appropriate procedures can be made.	-Refusal of the woman to report the abuse that she has suffered. -Refusing ones to speak regarding on the subject. -Lack of knowledge to identify the signs of abuse and to denounce it.	4
Social housing (for survivor)			
Elderly care houses, nursing homes	They can identify signs of abuse and report any suspicions to social services, the police or the public prosecutor's office, so that appropriate procedures can be made.	-Refusal of the woman to report the abuse that she has suffered. -Refusing ones to speak regarding on the subject.	4

		<p>-Lack of knowledge to identify the signs of abuse and to denounce it.</p> <p>-The reports of elderly abuse are very seldom because of the staff of elderly care houses or nursing homes are reluctant to report since they perceive that there is no support mechanism either for them or for the victim and family.</p>	
Other (please specify)			

*Source of information above comes from (please specify):

- 1 – researcher’s knowledge;
- 2 – national etc. reports;
- 3 – direct contact with an agency
- 4 – mixed resources

3. Mapping work with perpetrators/offender management

Fill in a Country Profile covering the period since 2015 onward current situation on work with perpetrators/offender management.

Please describe the work with perpetrators/offender management in your country? Please provide specificity on community level, if any.

Please specify the agencies, institutions or organisations involved in work with and their specific role in the offender management system.

In Greece a few cases of working with perpetrators take place. In overall in 2017 and 2018, 108 cases of perpetrators treatment took place. Union of women association is one of the few associations that deals with perpetrators nationwide and is a member of WWP EN.

Actors	Role in victim support (step by step activities). Access.	Challenges	Source of info 1-4*
Police			3
Social workers (municipality level)			1
Prosecutors			3
Probation service			
Agency providing social housing			
Prison			3
Municipality official			
NGO working with perpetrators			3
Other (please specify)			

*Source of information above comes from (please specify):

- 1 – researcher’s knowledge;
- 2 – national etc. reports;
- 3 – direct contact with an agency
- 4 – mixed resources