



**Εθνικό
Συμβούλιο Νεολαίας**
Hellenic National
Youth Council

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**Submission to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights by
the Hellenic National Youth Council (ESYN)**

Key words: youth, young people, youth rights, gender equality, gender-based violence

About the submitting organization:

[The Hellenic National Youth Council \(ESYN\) The H.N.Y.C. \(Hellenic National Youth Council\)](#)

was founded in July 1998, after strenuous efforts by Greek political and social youth organizations and obtained an elected administration in November of that year; it is an independent, non-government, non-profit federation of youth organizations. Today up to fifty-nine youth organizations (six political youth parties and numerous non-government youth organizations) are members of H.N.Y.C. Thus, most of youths belonging to an organization are part of this federation. Its aim is to strengthen the role and coordinate the actions of its member organizations. The H.N.Y.C., according to the number of members in its organizations, represents over three hundred and fifty thousand young Greek men and women. The H.N.Y.C. associates with the Greek government concerning domestic matters and is the official representative of young Greeks in Greece and abroad. It represents young Greeks in domestic matters by participating in the Intermenstrual Committee for Youth, the Organizing Committee of the Youth Parliament, the National Committee on Volunteering, etc. Also, it participates in several networks and clusters of Greek civil society. Abroad it participates in the European Youth Forum, the Mediterranean Youth Forum, the International French-Speaking Youth Council, the General Assembly of the UN and the Youth Council of UNESCO.

The data and the research was achieved by the ESYN team and Stelio Maridaki General Secretary of ESYN mail: stmaridakis@gmail.com phone:+306932400895

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Greece is a country based the respect of the rule of law, and whose institutions should work towards ensuring fundamental human rights of all its new citizens. However, this goal yet to be achieved and this is because Greece has not yet implemented measures to improve living conditions that will allow young people to enjoy equal opportunities and equal rights in areas such as health, work, and equal treatment regardless of racial or ethnic origin. The problems are many, but this report will focus on one of the key issues that has been occupying Greek society lately and has been largely neglected, allowing it to reach frightening proportions: the abuse of young people.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 This information included in this report was gathered through desk-based research, and includes data and statistics made available by official sources and collected through the work of the Hellenic National Youth Council. Links to relevant reports, publication and other resources are included in the end notes.

3. YOUTH ABUSE TODAY

3.1 According to the definition by ESYN: "Abuse or ill-treatment of young people includes all forms of physical or emotional abuse, sexual misconduct, or neglected treatment or exploitation for commercial purposes, resulting in specific or potential harm to the life and development of young people, within a relationship of responsibility, trust and power" Research ¹shows that young people in Greece suffer from different forms of abuse and neglect. These include (but are not limited to): physical and psychological/emotional abuse; bullying; sexual exploitation (particularly of minors, including online child abuse); trafficking; etc.

3.2 Not all forms of violence leave visible marks, and while some forms of violence have more serious physical or emotional consequences than others, the effects of gender-based violence can include loss of self-esteem, depression, self-destructive tendencies, poor school performance, and rejection, bodily injury, suicide or even death. It is clear that abuse and violence against young people in Greece not only have an impact on youth at an individual level, but they also negatively affect young people's access to and enjoyment of their human rights, included but not limited to their rights to: equality and nondiscrimination; live in dignity; and to the maximum of opportunities for survival and development; protection against any form of abuse and/or exploitation; freedom of expression. These are rights that are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. Greece is a State Party to all of these

¹ <https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/el/> and [Institute of Child Health Directorate of Mental Health & Social Welfare](#)

international treaties, and therefore it has legal obligations to uphold these rights, including in relation to youth.

3.3 In Greece's 2016 Universal Periodic Review, recommendations were made to the Greek government to take steps to tackle some of these forms of abuse. However, over the past five years Greece: The development was not very great, due to the economic crisis it monopolized the political interest and time of the governments, but lately the steps are big and fast. Has started making law for all forms of violence and create a telephone line to report any form of violence [15900](#)² sos line.

3.4 These forms of abuse of young people in Greece are becoming an increasingly worrying phenome. In the midst of a pandemic, demands for support for young people in health and poverty have risen. Also, the reports (anonymous and anonymous) of abuse increased by 40.9%, but without accurate data recording. Moreover, according to data collected by ESYN, 23,045 children were supported in matters of violence in Greece 2020³. These latest developments make addressing these issues even more urgent.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 After studies and research carried out by the members of ESYN, we came up with a series of proposals for tackling the phenomenon of violence against young people. These are:

- Increase investment in research on gender-based violence and its contributing factors (stereotypes, inequality, bias, structural barriers to gender equality).
- Establish a reference center (national organization) for incidents of sexual abuse and violence against children and youth.
- Implement actions to raise awareness on sexual abuse against children and youth, and include sex education in school curricula.
- Take action to promote gender equality among youth, and implement strategies to tackle cultural and traditional stereotypes, including through education.

5. VIOLENCE AND ABUSE AGAINST OF YOUNG GIRLS AND WOMEN

² The SOS line 15900 is addressed to women victims of violence <https://www.isotita.gr/thlefoniki-grammi-sos/>.

³ Additionally, data shows that the counseling line 11611 received 7,411 calls, while the SOS line 1056, 198,653 calls. Also, 1,123 complaints for 2,009 children were prosecuted and 144 on-site interventions were carried out for 223 children. 126 requests for hospitality were submitted for 187 children, 305 children grew up in the homes of the non-profit organization "Child Smile" (seven of whom have been sexually abused) and four children were hosted with their mothers, who were victims of domestic violence.

- 5.1 While Greece followed up on its 2016 UPR recommendations to sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, violence against young women and girls remains an issue in the country. Violence against young women and girls takes various forms and includes - among others - domestic violence, rape, trafficking in girls and women and forced prostitution. Violence against women is multifaceted and linked to inequalities in roles of both sexes and in socio-economic power structures. In Greece, there are many factors that contribute to making gender-based violence against young women and girls a key issue to tackle. These factors include gender inequality, based on beliefs about the fields that suit women and men and their social value, with an impact on the fair distribution of power between women and men; traditional and rigid perceptions that associate masculinity with control, dominance and competition and femininity with care and a vulnerable image; the depiction and perpetuation of gender stereotypes in the media (including the presentation of violent acts in terms of reward and success, along with the sexual charge of violence and the depiction of women as available and vulnerable sexual objects). As these elements are so rooted in culture and traditions, the lack of appropriate measures by public authorities has made it difficult to prevent gender-based violence in Greece.
- 5.2 ESYN found that according to the 1st Annual Report on Violence against Women by the General Secretariat for Family Policy & Gender Equality in Greece in collaboration with UNICEF on the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, during the period November 1, 2019 to October 31, 2020, a total of 4,872 women found the strength and asked for support ⁴. From the complaints it is observed that the 1,875, is 38.50%, concern Attica. During the period of the covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown, the number of cases has increased. The first months of 2021 in Greece brought to light an image of widespread abuse from the past to the present, which has affected the lives of many women, but, systematically, there were no complaints to public authorities. For example, one in 10 women has experienced some form of violence since the age of 15, and one in 20 has been raped. One in five women has been physically or sexually abused by a current or former partner, and one in 10 women say they have experienced some form of adult sexual violence before reaching the age of 15. (Source GSDFPGE)⁵.
- 5.3 However, the problem is not limited to forms of domestic violence but also extends to the workplace. Research shows that a growing number of work-related health problems are due to psychological rather than physical causes. Psychological violence can include different forms of violence such as sexual harassment, bullying or moral harassment (mobbing). Violence and harassment are "hidden phenomena" that are difficult to understand. As a result, many serious incidents of violence and harassment may go unreported or unrecognized. (Source GSDFPGE)⁶.
- 5.4 On an individual level, the pain and humiliation that results from violence and harassment usually lead to lack of motivation, in the loss of self-confidence and low

⁴ [The General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality \(GSDFPGE\)](#).

⁵ [GSDFPGE https://www.isotita.gr/](https://www.isotita.gr/).

⁶ [GSDFPGE The General Secretariat for Demography and Family Policy and Gender Equality](#).

self-esteem, anger and depression, anxiety and irritability of the women involved. In Greece, ESYN reported that exposure to work-related bullying and/or sexual harassment was associated with anxiety, depression, aggression, insomnia, melancholy and apathy, cognitive issues and behavioral problems, decreased job satisfaction, increased harmful habits (e.g., smoking), decreased self-confidence, self-isolation, negative effects on private and family life.

5.5 On the basis of the research and advocacy work carried out by ESYN, Greece should implement the following recommendations to prevent and tackle gender-based violence against young women and girls:

- Undertake public campaigns targeting young women and girls to raise awareness around gender-based violence and harassment, and mechanisms available to address them.
- Adopt legislation on sexual harassment in the workplace, including a clear definition, explicit sanctions, provisions for financial and legal support to victims and mandatory training for employers and employees.

6. OTHER ISSUES RELATED TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN GREECE

6.1 New European research reveals that in Greece during the crisis, the cases of domestic violence have increased. What has changed, as it is emphasized, in relation to the previous years, is that now men also fall victim to abuse and in fact hold the first place in Europe. Through a European study, of the organization Domestic Violence in Europe, which was done in Greece, we see that Greek men are victims of psychological violence at a rate of 72%, while they have suffered physical violence at a rate of 31.7%. In Greece, in fact, the most frequent cases of psychological violence against men were identified, while in terms of physical violence, Greece comes first with 31.7%, followed by England with 15.1% and Belgium with 14.2%. The data of the study practically stop in 2010, however, the estimates of the experts are that these percentages have increased, but we do not have newer records. 72% psychological violence, mainly issues related to unemployment and the salary that men receive, while an increase. They present the cases of persecution from the family home, for reasons of unemployment. It is noteworthy that only 25% of men responded to violence. Psychologists say that men and women who engage in violence can only change if they realize their problem on their own, or in some painful way, such as abandonment.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Real wealth is to know that the needs of our fellow human beings are as important as our own. The culture of a state is judged by how it structures gender relations. 8.2 It is therefore necessary that Greece carries out a total restoration, oriented towards universal values, maintaining the delicate balances between individual and collective, narcissistic attitude and community culture, the evolution of technology and the preservation of traditional institutions.

7.2 Policies on sexual harassment

According to ESYN, the basic policies regarding the reduction of sexual harassment should include the following elements:

- An explicit commitment to eliminate and prevent sexual harassment and an explicit prohibition of sexual harassment.
- A definition of sexual harassment.
- An explanation of the sanctions (including dismissal) that will be imposed by the employer for confirmed incidents of harassment.
- A detailed description of the grievance process on their part employees.
- A statement that anyone found guilty of harassment will be subject to immediate and appropriate disciplinary sanctions.
- A declaration regarding harassment by third parties, such as customers, etc.
- Additional resources or people available for support and advice.
- An express commitment to keep all complaints and harassment proceedings confidential.
- Facilities for training of employees at all levels.
- Policies against retaliation against those who complain of harassment and them witnesses.
- Policies and procedures should be negotiated and consultation with employee representatives.
- The persistent pressure from women's organizations and human rights organizations rights, has placed Violence against Women on the human rights agenda.