

**Policy Recommendations for Cyprus' Integration Policy with regards to
female migrant domestic workers
PART A**

The integration of female migrant domestic workers is a policy issue that cuts across both gender equality and migration policy. In analysing and exposing the ways in which migration policies intersect with gender and race discrimination we also engage in a critique of social policy using a gender perspective. Analyzing the legal framework, its norms as well as its omissions that contribute to the normalization of unequal treatment of migrant women in Cyprus, we can expose how gender and race discriminations are built into policy frameworks gaining a deeper understanding of the limitations, omissions and even contradictions that characterize national policy on gender equality and non-discrimination in employment.

The emphasis on a particular group of migrants, as well as a particular group of women, is based on the premise that violence and social exclusion are gendered experiences and processes. The ways in which discrimination and/or violence is experienced by women and men are different, particularly when the type of work that they engage in is in itself gendered, and when the place, time and conditions of such employment are determined by stereotypes and misconceptions with regard to gender and not on the principles of security and equality in the workplace. For this reason we believe that gendered forms of violence and discrimination in the workplace are rendered invisible when gender equality policies as well as migration policies view 'women' as a homogenous social group.

1. Introduce Gender Mainstreaming to Migration Policy

The gender specificity of migration flows to Cyprus must be acknowledged and integration policies must be developed to combat those forms of precarious employment and exploitation experiences specifically by female migrant workers. We recommend:

- Minimum salaries for female migrant domestic workers employed as “cleaners” or “carers” must be equivalent to salaries provided for similar categories of labour.
- The right to maternity leave and maternity protection must be explicitly phrased in the female migrant domestic workers contract
- Health care benefits for prenatal, delivery and postnatal health care for mother and the child covered by Social Insurance and Health Insurance must be comparable to those provided to Cypriot Female Employees.
- Labour Inspection officers examining claims of sexual harassment and excessive work load must have access to the workplace. In this case “the home” must be primarily framed as the workplace and not as the asylum of the Home’s Owner.
- Migration officers, police officers and labour relation officers dealing with female migrant domestic workers must receive special training on gender equality

2. Address the precarious legality of female migrant domestic workers

The Cyprus government must address the precarious legality of female migrant domestic workers’ employment and reform those aspects of migration and employment systems which produce “illegality” and obstruct the re-entry of undocumented (“illegal”) female migrant domestic workers into the formal economy of labour. We Recommend:

- The residence permit and the work permit to be disconnected in order to enable mobility from employer to employer and from job to job. "Tying" female migrant domestic workers to specific employers and granting (or maintaining) the work permit only if such a tie is in place is an arrangement that legalizes conditions of slavery.
- Institutionalize an open and viable process or regularization that would enable "run aways" (female migrant domestic workers who drop out of the formal labour market and work "illegally") to re- enter the formal labour market.
- The release period must be extended to at least two months and during that period intermediary part- time work permit and intermediary (labour and health) insurance must be available.

3. Address migrant admission and migrant integration as inseparable policies

The Cyprus Government must reconsider its migration policy within the Tampere mandate. We recommend:

- Develop a comprehensive policy for Migration and Integration and take into consideration the gender dimension
- Acknowledge that integration starts as early as migrants admission into the country and that its purpose is to promote the social, cultural and economic inclusion for all migrants
- Reconsider the "control/ security approach" to migration currently followed in Cyprus and recognize the contribution of female migrant domestic workers to the economic and social development of Cyprus.
- Institutionalize an open and continuous system of regularization for undocumented female migrant domestic workers. Currently there are no arrangements and regulations in place which would allow or even encourage undocumented female migrant domestic workers to re- enter the formal economy.