

## **Advancing Gender Equality in Cyprus: A Seven-Pillar Advocacy Paper from Women's Civil Society**

### **In light of the Cyprus Presidency of the European Union (Jan-June 2026) and the upcoming Parliamentary Elections 2026**

In light of the assumption of the [Presidency of the Council of the European Union by the Republic of Cyprus](#) in the first half of 2026, the organisations that participated in the consultation [meeting with the European Institute for Gender Equality \(EIGE\)](#) on 9 April 2025, decided to join forces and put forward a collective paper of demands covering seven pillars for advancing gender equality and women's rights in Cyprus.

The Cyprus Women's Lobby took the initiative to consult with our member organisations and other civil society organisations that participated in the meeting with EIGE, with the aim of co-signing a joint position paper and set of recommendations addressed to the Presidency of the Republic of Cyprus and the political parties in light of the upcoming Parliamentary Elections in 2026.

This document focuses on key gender equality policy areas that emerged from the consultation process, EIGE's evidence base, and our collective experience as civil society organisations working women's rights in Cyprus.

This advocacy paper was prepared following extensive consultation with members of the Cyprus Women's Lobby (CWL) and the organisations that participated in the April 2025 meeting with EIGE.

In preparing the document, we analysed eight thematic pillars as follows:

- Thematic Pillar 1 – Political Participation and Representation
- Thematic Pillar 2 – Gender-Based and Domestic Violence
- Thematic Pillar 3 – Employment and Economic Equality
- Thematic Pillar 4 – Health and Care
- Thematic Pillar 5 – Data, Research and Documentation
- Thematic Pillar 6 – Institutional Mechanisms
- Thematic Pillar 7 – Media

Our aim is also to highlight the specific challenges, and structural inequalities present in the Cypriot context, and how these are experienced by women from all walks of life, adopting a multicommunal and intersectional approach. The use of the terms “multicommunal” and “intersectional” reflects the diversity of society in Cyprus and the need to incorporate the experiences of all women's communities – Greek Cypriots, Turkish Cypriots, Maronites, Armenians, Latins, as well as migrant women, rural women and other groups – into public policy.

We also emphasise that issues affecting women facing multiple vulnerabilities – such as migrant women, refugees, women with disabilities, homemakers, and victims of human trafficking for the purposes of sexual, labour, or reproductive exploitation – must be heard in all public consultations within the framework of the EU Presidency (January–June 2026) and in the context of the Parliamentary Elections taking place in May 2026.

## THEMATIC PILLARS

### Thematic Pillar 1 – Political Participation and Representation

According to the 2025 Gender Equality Index of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), Cyprus ranks among the lowest-performing countries in the domain of political representation, where women remain underrepresented in decision-making positions. This underrepresentation is evident in both political and economic spheres, indicating the urgent need for targeted policies and actions to strengthen women's participation in leadership roles. Equality in power – and consequently in policymaking and shaping – is essential for achieving gender equality in all other areas in Cyprus.

Providing targeted training on gender awareness and the concept of gender equality in politics is essential across all relevant fields. Emphasis should be placed on the different perceptions and uses of power by men and women, as well as on what politics means for women from a feminist perspective.

Available data show that running for public office requires significant financial, logistical, and social support. It is necessary to design and implement funding programmes – both public and within political parties<sup>1</sup> – that prioritise women candidates, especially those from economically vulnerable groups, rural areas, migrant backgrounds, or other underrepresented communities, including Turkish Cypriot women.

#### We demand:

1. **Address the underrepresentation of women in public and political life** through the adoption of positive action measures and binding commitments for balanced representation – starting from each government formation.
  - A first step is the institutionalisation of mandatory legislative quotas in electoral lists and party bodies.
  - Awareness-raising campaigns to combat sexism<sup>2</sup>, hate speech, and electoral violence against women in politics.
2. **Equal media and party coverage of all candidates.**

<sup>1</sup> Political party funding should be linked to meaningful actions that support and empower women candidates.

<sup>2</sup> The Combating of Sexism and Online Sexism and Related Matters Law of 2020 (Law 209(I)/2020), [https://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/indexes/2020\\_1\\_209.html](https://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/indexes/2020_1_209.html).

3. **Gender-disaggregated data collection** by the Central Electoral Service on the number of men and women who vote.
4. **Publication of gender-disaggregated data** on the number of candidates and elected representatives in each position by the Central Electoral Service.
5. **Promotion of women's economic empowerment** from all communities as a key step toward equal political participation.
  - Institutionalisation of specialised support structures for women candidates, offering personalised guidance, mentoring, legal and communication support.
  - Empowerment and capacity-building programmes to support navigation through political processes and address gender-specific challenges during campaigns and public life.
6. **Participation of women with a gender-conscious and equality-driven agenda** in peace negotiations for Cyprus: According to UN Security Council Resolution 1325, there must be meaningful and equal participation of women with a feminist perspective and equality agenda in the negotiations for resolving the Cyprus issue, as a means of strengthening democracy, sustainability, and integrating a gender dimension into peace processes.
7. **Mainstreaming the gender dimension in migrant and refugee integration policies**, which remain superficial and face delays in implementation.

**Responsible institutions:** House of Representatives, political parties, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, Central Electoral Service, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Ministry of Labour, European Union.

## Thematic Pillar 2 – Gender-Based and Domestic Violence

Despite the legal enshrinement of equality and protection from gender-based violence and violence against women, the implementation of the relevant legal framework remains fragmented. Support structures must be strengthened with financial and human resources, prevention actions and education must be enhanced, and data collection must be carried out systematically, taking into account all social groups—especially migrant women, refugee women, elderly women, housewives, and women with disabilities—so that they are not excluded from support services. Regarding data and documentation, services are obliged to maintain and provide such information in accessible electronic formats. In terms of adjudicating cases of violence against women, all procedures must be expedited, as there are currently unacceptable delays.

## We demand:

1. Full implementation of the "Law on the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence and Related Matters of 2021" (Law 115(I)/2021)<sup>3</sup> and the "Law on the Non-Consensual Use of Intimate Sexual Content of 2024" (Law 148(I)/2024)<sup>4</sup>.

## DEMANDS FOR PREVENTION AND EDUCATION<sup>5</sup>

1. **Design and implementation of monitoring mechanisms** and tools to ensure the delivery of comprehensive sexuality education<sup>6</sup> at all levels of education.
2. **Development of an evaluation programme** to identify vulnerability factors for children from migrant backgrounds or single-parent families (and explore alternative methods of education and awareness-raising on topics related to sexuality education).
3. **Evaluation of the implementation of comprehensive sexuality education at all levels** of education (with the participation and involvement of children and adolescents), either by the Ministry of Education or external partners.
4. **Conduct regular and systematic surveys to collect data** on children's and young people's knowledge and perceptions regarding issues included in comprehensive sexuality education, such as gender stereotypes, forms of violence, sexual abuse, etc.
5. **Every reform of family law and any new bill that affects the rights of women and children** must be subject to a **mandatory gender impact assessment**<sup>7</sup>, in accordance with the obligations of the Republic of Cyprus under the Istanbul Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).
6. **Design and implementation of systematic mandatory training for all educators** on all forms of violence covered by the Convention and their role in preventing and addressing violence against women.
7. **Systematic mandatory initial and in-service training of frontline officers** — including health professionals, social workers, police officers, and officials in migration and asylum services.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/indexes/2021\\_1\\_115.html](https://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/indexes/2021_1_115.html).

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/2024\\_1\\_148/full.html](https://www.cylaw.org/nomoi/enop/non-ind/2024_1_148/full.html).

<sup>5</sup> The analysis follows the relevant chapters of the Istanbul Convention.

<sup>6</sup> In accordance with international standards: <https://www.unfpa.org/universal-sexual-reproductive-health-rights-calculator/comprehensive-sexuality-education> και [https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/blog/2020/-/asset\\_publisher/aa3hyf8wKBn/content/comprehensive-sexuality-education-protects-children-and-helps-build-a-safer-inclusive-society](https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/blog/2020/-/asset_publisher/aa3hyf8wKBn/content/comprehensive-sexuality-education-protects-children-and-helps-build-a-safer-inclusive-society).

<sup>7</sup> [https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-impact-assessment/what-gender-impact-assessment?language\\_content\\_entity=en](https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gender-impact-assessment/what-gender-impact-assessment?language_content_entity=en).

8. **Systematic mandatory training for lawyers, prosecutors, and judges** on all forms of violence covered by the Convention.
9. **Systematic and annual recording of statistical data:** Design/adoption of a mechanism for the systematic collection of data by all state services, disaggregated by sex, age, and migration status, to be available and accessible in digital format to all relevant stakeholders, including:
  - Health and mental health services, medical associations: on all forms of violence covered by the Convention (as well as abortions), and trends and service usage among women.
  - Social Welfare Services.
  - Asylum and Migration Services: regarding asylum claims related to gender-based violence and residence permits.
  - The Police.
  - NGOs providing services to victims of violence.
10. **Design and implementation of an island-wide awareness campaign** on the Istanbul Convention. The aim of the campaign should be to inform and raise awareness about all forms of violence against women, women's rights, and available support services — including helplines. Special targeting should be directed at vulnerable groups of women, adolescents, and youth. The participation of these groups in the design of the campaign is essential. The inclusion of migrant and refugee women in the campaigns and the use of languages they understand is critical — in consultation with migrant women's organisations and frontline organisations (where they exist).
11. **Provision by the Government of adequate financial support to the National Coordinating Body for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women**, for the monitoring, implementation, and evaluation of the Istanbul Convention<sup>8</sup>, along with sufficient human and financial resources. As a matter of principle, representatives of victims from all social groups should participate in the strategic planning of the body's actions.

## DEMANDS FOR SUPPORT AND PROTECTION

1. **Provision of timely and adequate information on the rights of victims of violence** in accessible and comprehensible languages, with targeted outreach to all social groups covered by the Convention.
2. **Strengthening and expansion of support services**, specifically:
  - Support for victims must be available and accessible to all women, regardless of their willingness to file a complaint or provide official testimony against the perpetrator.

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<sup>8</sup> It falls within the scope of application of Law 115(I)/2021.

- Interdepartmental structure “Women’s House”: Ensure full staffing and make it accessible in all cities and for all forms of violence covered by the Convention.
- Development of specialized protocols for managing cases of all forms of violence, adoption of these protocols by all relevant actors, and training in their proper use. For example, protocols for handling cases of sexual violence and rape, and female genital mutilation (FGM).
- Expansion of shelters for victims of violence, counselling services, and emergency assistance centres in all districts, covering all forms of violence against women and girls.
- Establishment of transitional accommodation structures for long-term intervention, housing, and employment support for victims of violence.
- Guarantee of women’s entitlement to social benefits both during their stay in shelters and after.
- Creation of a support unit to ensure continued empowerment of survivors for 3–4 years, if needed, after exiting the abusive environment and the shelter.

## DEMANDS FOR CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION, ENFORCEMENT AND PROTECTIVE MEASURES

1. **Expedited criminal proceedings:** Prompt investigation, forensic examination, and evidence collection for all forms of violence against women covered by the Convention, with a victim-/survivor-centred, gender-sensitive, culturally appropriate, and trauma-informed approach. Support must be provided to migrant and refugee women and their children as especially vulnerable groups at risk of facing sexual and domestic violence.
2. **Development of risk assessment protocols** by social welfare services and their immediate implementation within a reasonable timeframe.
3. **Rapid response by the Police and cooperating agencies** for the issuance of protection measures for victims, with a monitoring mechanism, ensuring that children are explicitly included in protection orders.
4. **Domestic violence must be considered in decisions** regarding parental responsibility, custody, and visitation rights, and appropriate protective measures must be taken.
  - Any legislative or policy initiative promoting parental alienation as a “neutral” practice should be rejected, as it ignores gender inequalities and poses a risk of secondary victimization for survivors of gender-based violence.
5. **Immediate implementation of the law and fast-track procedures** without deterrent requirements are necessary for all forms of gender-based violence and for all women. Despite legislative amendments, courts continue to reject legal aid applications as the process remains unfriendly to victims.
6. **Withdrawal of the reservation to Article 30(2) of the Istanbul Convention** regarding the right of victims to receive compensation from the state.



7. **Preparation and approval of regulations/procedures** for the implementation and monitoring of the Protection from Harassment and Stalking Law of 2021 (Law 114(I)/2021) by the competent Council of Ministers.

## DEMANDS FOR ASYLUM AND MIGRATION

1. Full implementation of the **withdrawal of the reservation to Article 59** of the Istanbul Convention, including legislative amendments and the establishment of clear procedures to ensure that migrant and refugee women have real access to protection and rights.
2. Ensuring **equal access for all women, regardless of residence status**, to services for protection, support, investigation, and prosecution of gender-based violence.
3. **Asylum applications from victims of violence must be assessed based on international protection standards and guidelines.**<sup>9</sup>
4. **Decoupling the Minimum Guaranteed Income (MGI) scheme from other state welfare policies** for vulnerable groups of women victims of violence covered by the Convention.
5. **Ensuring women's access to psychosocial, legal, and economic integration and empowerment services**, and expanding employment policies for victims of violence – including the rights of (presumed) victims of trafficking in human beings.<sup>10</sup>
6. **Transfer of the Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group on Trafficking in Human Beings to the Ministry of Justice**, as this is a human rights issue and not a migration issue, contrary to its recent transfer to the Deputy Ministry of Migration. The lead authority of the group must be clearly defined, and its sustainability ensured through proper staffing and funding.
7. **The Multidisciplinary Coordinating Group on Trafficking in Human Beings must resume its role** including the resumption of regular meetings.
8. **Immediate appointment of an independent National Rapporteur** to monitor institutions and actions to combat trafficking in human beings.
9. **Cooperation between the Bicommunal Technical Committees** on cases of trafficking in human beings – particularly in cases of sexual and labour exploitation.

## DEMANDS REGARDING ONLINE VIOLENCE

<sup>9</sup> There is a tendency to grant victims subsidiary protection, which offers lower coverage and does not allow them to reunite with their families (e.g. in cases of female genital mutilation, forced marriage, sexual violence, domestic violence).

<sup>10</sup> As provided for in the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (Ratifying) [Law 38\(III\)/2007](#), as well as the relevant [Strategy and National Action Plan 2023–2026](#).

1. **Strengthening monitoring mechanisms and prioritised removal of illegal and harmful content** from digital platforms and websites that facilitate online violence, exploitation, and the non-consensual dissemination of personal content (e.g., classified ad sites, adult content platforms), in line with European legislation (Digital Services Act). Such monitoring should be carried out in cooperation with the Commissioner for Digital Security, the Commissioner for Personal Data Protection, and the Cybercrime Unit, with a clear obligation for websites to respond to reports of gender-based violence, even within “private” spaces such as WhatsApp groups or closed forums.
2. **Training personnel** working in tech platforms, police forces, and the justice system to be able to appropriately identify and respond to cases of online gender-based violence. Development of shared European tools for data collection and guidelines on online violence.

**Responsible Institutions:** Ministry of Education, Deputy Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Asylum and Migration Service, Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, Council of Ministers, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, political parties, Ministry of Justice, Cyprus Police, Coordinating Body for the Prevention and Combating of Violence Against Women, Advisory Committee for the Prevention and Combating of Violence in the Family, Commissioner for Digital Security, Commissioner for Personal Data Protection, Cybercrime Unit.

### Thematic Pillar 3 – Employment, Economic Equality and Care

The gender pay gap must be addressed, along with the precarious working conditions for women, especially migrant women, asylum seekers, and refugee women. In addition, there is no recognition of unpaid care work for children, the elderly, the ill, or family members with special needs.

According to the Cyprus Statistical Service (2024 Survey on Income and Living Conditions of Households), **14.6%** of the population was at risk of poverty, meaning they lived in households with disposable income below the monetary **at-risk-of-poverty threshold** (€12,400 annually). Additionally, **2.5%** of individuals were living in **conditions of severe material and social deprivation**, and **5.5%** of households had **very low work intensity**. Overall, the **composite indicator of risk of poverty or social exclusion (AROPE)** stood at **16.9%** of the population.

Gender-disaggregated analysis shows that **women continue to face a higher risk of poverty and social exclusion** compared to men (17.8% vs 16.0%, respectively). This risk increases significantly for **women over the age of 65** and for **single-parent families**, where the rates reach or exceed **25%**. Furthermore, **migrant women** and **part-time workers** face greater insecurity due to lower incomes and limited access to social insurance and benefits.

The data indicate<sup>11</sup> that gendered economic inequalities in Cyprus remain structural. The **gender pay gap stood at 9.4% in 2023**, while the **gender pension gap remains at 28.7%**,

<sup>11</sup> Cyprus Statistical Service, 2025 Income and Living Conditions Survey.



reflecting the long-term consequences of the unequal distribution of unpaid care, women's underemployment, and career interruptions.

This situation highlights the need for **targeted policies to reduce the gender gap in poverty and social exclusion**, including:

- measures for the recognition and redistribution of unpaid care work,
- strengthening women's income and pension rights,
- increasing investment in care-related social infrastructure, and
- integrating a gender perspective into all social protection and employment policies.

The root causes of this issue are multilayered and stem from factors such as the absence of women from employment or full-time employment, their underrepresentation in highly paid jobs (particularly in STEM fields), and prolonged absences from the labour market to provide care for children, the ill, or elderly parents.

**We demand:**

1. **Reconciliation of family and professional life:**
  - Increase parental leave (from first child)
  - Support for families with children aged 0–3 (nurseries/infant care centres)
  - Support for families with children or individuals requiring long-term care
2. **Support — including childcare — for single-parent and vulnerable families**, including those with children with disabilities or children with special needs.
3. **Revision of employment contracts and working conditions for domestic workers.**
4. **Creation of bilateral agreements** with the countries of origin of migrant domestic workers from third countries, so that they can receive their pension on the basis of their contributions to the Social Insurance Fund.
5. **Establish quotas within trade unions; specifically in leadership and all decision-making bodies.**
6. **Monitoring in the private and public sectors to introduce and implement the Code of Conduct** for the prevention and handling of sexual harassment [and to ensure that it is practically enforceable].

**Responsible institutions:** Parliament, Ministry of Labour, Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Interior, Labour Inspectors, employers' and trade union organisations.

#### **Thematic Pillar 4 – Health**

Women's access to specialised health services is inadequate, as existing infrastructures and protocols do not take into account the sex of the patient (see cardiovascular diseases and their connection to menopause, female cancers, reproductive rights, respectful maternity care, etc.).

## We demand:

1. **That the National Health Insurance Organisation (OAY) provide the necessary health services for women** – Pap test, mammography, osteoporosis screening, etc. – without age criteria or immigration status.
2. **Access to abortion services for all women**, and information on reproductive rights based on the existing legislation<sup>12</sup>.
3. **Systematic training of healthcare professionals** on women's health in all its dimensions, and particularly on the specific needs of older women and survivors of violence.
4. **That the State Health Services Organisation (OKYπY) provide legal and safe abortion in all public hospitals** in every district, whenever needed and without delay. It must ensure that each public hospital has a sufficient number of healthcare professionals who do not refuse to perform pregnancy termination, so that the service is available to women on demand.
5. **That the National Health Insurance Organisation (OAY) include reimbursement for pregnancy termination within the GHS system** in every lawful case, as provided by law, and specifically up to the 12th week, so that every woman has access to pregnancy termination.
6. **That OKYπY immediately provide scientifically substantiated counselling and information services on abortion** or the management of unwanted pregnancies to any woman or couple who wishes or needs such services. These must be offered confidentially, respectfully, and in a non-directive manner, before and after abortion, and when useful, include counselling on contraceptive options.
7. **That OKYπY develops protocols and procedures to be applied across all public hospitals**, including the management of pregnancy termination when any complications arise, and to provide counselling on contraceptive methods.
8. **That OKYπY develops protocols and procedures to be applied across all public hospitals** including the management of rape and sexual violence, and female genital mutilation.
9. **That OAY include reimbursement for modern contraceptive methods within the GHS framework**, including the insertion of the coil (IUD) as a contraceptive method, and make available more options for modern contraceptive methods.
10. **That the Ministry of Health design and implement awareness and information campaigns** aimed at young women and men, with the aim of preventing unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections.
11. **That refugee women be eligible for the General Health System (GHS).**
12. That OAY and the Ministry of Health **collect sex-disaggregated data** for all of the above.

<sup>12</sup> The Criminal Code Law, Cap. 154, Article 169A, as amended by the Criminal Code (Amendment) Law of 2018 (Law 186(I)/2018) on abortions.

**Responsible Institutions:** Ministry of Health, National Health Insurance Organisation (OAY), State Health Services Organisation (OKYIY), hospitals, health centres, Social Welfare Services, Ministry of Labour, Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, Mental Health Services, Pancyprian Doctor's Association.

### Thematic Pillar 5 – Data, Research and Documentation

The existence of gender-disaggregated data contributes to the development of comprehensive policies, informed decision-making, and addressing issues that arise from the monitoring of such data. There is a lack of qualitative and quantitative gender data on gender equality in all its dimensions. These data must be collected systematically by state services and made publicly available.

#### We demand:

1. **The creation of archives and repositories that document and record the feminist history of Cyprus.**
2. **The adoption of gender-sensitive indicators and mechanisms for collecting qualitative and quantitative data across all areas of equality,** making use of tools developed by EIGE (including sexual health).
3. **The creation of a national database** for monitoring violence against women and gender-based violence.
4. **Encouraging civil society organisations to collect detailed data regarding their activities,** as these are very useful when presenting their needs to the government.
5. **Systematic monitoring and selection of research on women's experiences:** We propose the establishment of mechanisms for collecting, monitoring, and promoting research that documents the experiences of women in Cyprus (including all communities), with the aim of strengthening feminist literature, evidence-based documentation, and policymaking from a gender perspective.

**Responsible Institutions:** Commissioner for Gender Equality, Commissioner of Public Administration and Human Rights, Cyprus Statistical Service, Elections Service, State Health Services Organisation (OKYPY), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Deputy Ministry of Social Welfare, Asylum Service, Deputy Ministry of Migration and Asylum, research and academic institutions.

### Thematic Pillar 6 – Institutional Mechanisms

There is limited funding and participation of civil society organisations in public decision-making processes. According to research by Civil Society Advocates (2023) <sup>13</sup>, the key

<sup>13</sup> Civil Society Organisations (CSOs): Challenges in relation to the legal operational framework and recommendations for creating an enabling environment for CSOs in Cyprus, <https://civilsocietyadvocates.org/images/Publications/for-stronger->

problems affecting the daily operation of civil society organisations (CSOs) include: lack of funding, bureaucracy (in general), lack of cooperation and consultation with government departments, bureaucracy related to the new law on Associations, Foundations, Federations and Unions, as well as the overall devaluation of CSOs by society.

The absence of a public consultation framework, together with the lack of institutional recognition of civil society organisations, means that the expertise and knowledge of each organisation are not sufficiently utilised by the state. The meaningful contribution of organised civil society at every stage of decision-making processes could lead to the adoption of more effective laws, policies, and regulations.

The failure to recognise the pluralistic and significant contribution of CSOs at an institutional level also means that the state fails to create a supportive and enabling environment for civil society — an environment that strengthens and empowers CSOs to achieve their goals and objectives. Instead, there is a noticeable devaluation of organised civil society, and its social and economic contribution is undermined. This framework not only discourages volunteerism at an individual level but also obstructs the work of organisations, jeopardises their sustainability, undermines the voluntary sector in Cyprus as a whole, and further reinforces public distrust toward CSOs.

There is a lack of a structured and formal mechanism for cooperation/consultation/dialogue between organised civil society and the state apparatus. Such a mechanism would facilitate a democratic and open process of dialogue, allowing discussion of issues affecting NGOs and leading to agreed solutions and a shared understanding. The essential role of CSOs/NGOs must be recognised, and organisations should become partners of the government and all state bodies, to the mutual benefit of both sides and for the benefit of society as a whole.

#### **We demand:**

1. **Strengthen and improving consultation methods** and the participation of civil society in policy development, legislation, and decision-making.
2. **Adopt an inclusive intercommunal/multicommunal approach** to consultations that considers the voices of all groups of women in Cyprus.
3. **Support and increase the funding available to NGOs** and other organised civil society organisations and simplifying the procedures so as not to place an additional financial burden on organisations.
4. **Implementation of the recommendations stemming from the Gender Budgeting Initiative<sup>14</sup>:**

[csos\\_wp2\\_report\\_challengesrecommendations\\_final\\_june2023.pdf](https://civilsocietyadvocates.org/images/Publications/for-stronger-csos_wp2_report_challengesrecommendations_final_june2023.pdf). See also related policy recommendations: [https://civilsocietyadvocates.org/images/Publications/for-stronger-csos\\_wp2\\_report\\_challengesrecommendations\\_final\\_june2023.pdf](https://civilsocietyadvocates.org/images/Publications/for-stronger-csos_wp2_report_challengesrecommendations_final_june2023.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Research by the UN, EU, OECD, and other organisations has shown that, traditionally, state budgets are designed primarily around the needs of men and do not take into account the needs of women, children, and

- **Promote the integration of the gender dimension into the design, budgeting, laws, and programmes of government institutions**, through specific procedures and analytical tools for more effective budget analysis, with the aim, among others, of promoting the empowerment of women.
  - **Accelerate the adoption of gender budgeting** so that state resources are allocated more fairly, effectively and transparently.
  - **Set clear, increased and simplified targets related to gender equality funding.**
  - **Require gender budgeting in all European programmes.**
  - **Require enhanced monitoring, evaluation and transparency of the outcomes of all government programmes and actions**, with the support of detailed and gender-disaggregated statistical data.
  - **Carefully examine the issue of unpaid labour and take necessary measures through the reform of the state budget and taxation.**
  - **Develop closer cooperation with NGOs working on the issue for better and faster results.**
5. **Ensure that every new law or legislative proposal undergoes a Gender Impact Assessment** and incorporates the gender dimension.
  6. **Evaluate regulations and laws that revitalise the functioning of institutional bodies** and integrate them so as to allow equal treatment of women and men.
  7. **Strengthen synergies with organised civil society organisations** and provide funding for their work.

**Responsible institutions:** House of Representatives, Commissioners of the Presidency, Ministries.

### Thematic Pillar 7 – Media

The systematic underrepresentation of women and the reproduction of gender stereotypes in the Cypriot media undermine pluralism, press freedom, and gender equality. According to data from the Global Media Monitoring Project<sup>15</sup>, 79% of news coverage concerns men, while women appear in only 11% of political news and 13% of economic news. Furthermore, out of the 515 news items analysed, only six focused on issues of gender equality. The rate of improvement—just 0.6% annually—is alarmingly slow, highlighting the need for targeted and sustained interventions.

**We demand:**

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other population groups. This significantly hinders women's effective participation in development and prevents states from achieving the 2030 goals.

<sup>15</sup> <https://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp-2025-key-findings/>.

1. Media professionals and institutions to **comply with journalistic codes of ethics and the Advertising Standards Authority** to ensure that they do not reproduce sexist content.
2. **Systematic training of journalists and media professionals** on gender-balanced reporting and investigative journalism aimed at driving social change.
3. Media professionals and institutions to **improve fact-checking mechanisms** to avoid gender disinformation.
4. Media professionals and institutions to **provide systematic coverage of gender-based violence** – not only when there are specific cases – and contribute to raising awareness about prevention and support services.
5. **Media institutions to ensure gender balanced representation in leadership roles** (chief editors and managers).
6. Media institutions to **establish monitoring tools to gender-audit their content** in order to act responsively and facilitate social change.
7. Media professionals and institutions must **enhance their collaboration with civil society organisations, universities and women's organisations** who can provide valuable expertise and support.

**Responsible institutions:** Journalists Code of Conduct Committee, Union of Cypriot Journalists, Advertisements Control Authority, Commissioner of Gender Equality.

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This advocacy-paper serves as a tool for mobilisation, advocacy, and hope. We join our voices to demand an equal and democratic Europe, shaped through our perspective in Cyprus.

### **For the Cyprus Women's Lobby**

Members of the Board of the Cyprus Women's Lobby:

1. Birth Forward
2. Hands Across the Divide
3. Women's Association Protoporia
4. Family Planning Association
5. Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies
6. Equality Observatory of Cyprus
7. Socialist Women's Movement
8. Hypatia Foundation Promoting Equality



**Co-signatories:**

9. Research Foundation FIMONOI
10. Gender Advisory Team Cyprus
11. G.F.C. Generation for Change CY
12. Mediterranean Women Mediators Network (Cyprus antenna)
13. UNESCO Chair on Gender Equality, University of Cyprus
14. STEP UP STOP SLAVERY
15. Mission Solidarity Cy
16. Cyprus Stop Trafficking
17. Centre for Gender Equality (ENAF), Frederick University
18. Zoe Vs War Violence
19. KISA – Equality, Support, Antiracism
20. Pancyprian Association of Single Parents Families and Friends

*\* This document has been translated into English and Turkish for the purposes of public consultation and will be shared with European and international human rights organisations.*