

10:02:50 AM | Monday, November 28, 2011

FinancialMirror.com

News

- Home
- News
- Web TV
- Blog
- Research Center
- Subscribe
- Contact

Username: _____ Password: _____ LOGIN [Forgot your password?](#) [Subscription Info](#) [Read our Newspaper Online](#)

Join us on facebook Follow us on Twitter

[Home](#) [News](#) [Cyprus & World News](#) [Story Detail](#)

News

visit [WebTV](#) for more videos

Cyprus & World News

...

Human trafficking increasing in Cyprus, says MIGS

25 November, 2011



Human trafficking is on the increase, according to the Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies, which is making every possible effort to contain it.

On its part, the government is in the process of amending the existing legislation and integrate in it the relevant European directive, in an attempt to combat human trafficking and protect victims.

Human trafficking has taken different forms since 1980, when the first reports on such matters emerged in Cyprus, and today it appears not only in cabarets and

pubs, but also in the streets, universities, massage parlors, even coffee shops, according to the Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies (MIGS) Policy Coordinator, Jozie Christodoulou.

In an interview with CNA, she said she believes the increase in human trafficking in Cyprus is the result of prevailing social attitudes and structures.

Christodoulou notes that human trafficking in Cyprus has always been widespread although the exact number of the victims is not known, and this is, as she explains, a general problem worldwide, because human trafficking is a form of organized crime.

In Cyprus, according to Christodoulou, "there has always been an increase in human trafficking, especially in human trafficking for sexual exploitation, besides labour exploitation and other purposes".

As she says, since 1980, when human trafficking first appeared in Cyprus, it has taken different forms. Human trafficking takes place in cabarets and pubs, "while today it appears in the streets, in massage parlours, and according to a survey conducted by the MIGS, it also exists in universities and coffee shops, located outside cities, mostly in villages".

The victims, she notes, are mostly women, who are trafficked for the purposes of sexual exploitation or labour exploitation. "Trafficking in women is more obvious, because men usually work outdoors, while women work in closed premises, where there is no monitoring of the situation, and thus we don't know the number of the victims" she adds. The victims are usually third country nationals, immigrants and EU nationals.

Christina Kaili, Project Coordinator at the MIGS, says a new trend has appeared in human trafficking since 2010, called "marriages of convenience". In these cases, women, mainly from European countries, come to Cyprus under false promises of a better life, but the traffickers force them, through violence and threats, or sometimes offers of money, to get married to third country nationals, so that they become European citizens.

"It's a new trend observed in other European countries as well, called 'wife importing' " Kaili notes, adding that it raises concerns and it's difficult to handle because the 'groom' creates a kind of personal relationship with the victim, and because migration and human trafficking laws do not include

[Business](#) [Financial](#) [Cyprus](#) [International](#) [Technology](#)



IKOS chief: Greek Euro exit catastrophic



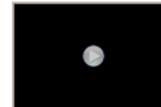
Barclays Wealth Market Update - 7 Nov - 2011



Barclays Wealth Market Update - 18 Oct 2011



TASE aims to become a global player



TASE and Peace Economics - Dr Ester Levanon



Hungry Greeks still feeding French military

» Latest videos in your



Greece is Eurozone's sacrificial lamb



Barclays Wealth Market Update - 27 June 2011

inbox [SUBSCRIBE NOW](#)
No Video found under this category



Getting out of poverty - Greece



Getting out of poverty - Romania



Greek cops add severity to austerity



Putin Blues by Western media



VISA's new digital wallet reinvents payment system



Why do Hi-Techs like the TASE?



Download the latest Financial Mirror in PDF

[Click here for subscription, plans and info](#)

yet this trend.

Kaili explains that "forced marriages" are not regarded by the Cyprus Law on human trafficking as a form of exploitation. "According to the Immigration Law, 'marriages of convenience' take place between a permanent resident of Cyprus and a third country national, in order for the latter to acquire Cyprus citizenship and enjoy benefits offered by the Republic. This definition is problematic because it contains a purely economic aspect. If one examines human trafficking cases in Cyprus, they will observe that it is mostly about forced marriages" Kaili, says, explaining that such cases of human trafficking cannot stand before the court because they are not considered to be a form of exploitation.

The Criminal Code and the Immigration Law apply in such cases, at this stage, according to Kaili, who adds that trials can last up to two years. Eventually the victims return to their country of origin and due to lack of evidence the trafficker cannot be convicted. "In essence traffickers have discovered a new way to carry out human trafficking" she says.

Christodoulou adds that support services provided to the victims by the Republic are not enough to convince them to stay, since they are the only witnesses in the case, and this is a general problem when handling human trafficking cases, she notes.

In relation to the Cyprus Law on human trafficking - which requires that one has suffered sustained damage or financial loss, caused by the offence of trafficking human beings, in order to be identified as a victim of human trafficking - Christodoulou points out that this definition constitutes a great problem. As she explains, while the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings grants the ability to identify one as a potential victim of human trafficking, local legislation does not allow this. Christodoulou says that MIGS has addressed the Parliament and the Interior Ministry in the past in relation to these references in the Law, but has not as yet received any response.

She also stresses that people involved in efforts to eradicate human trafficking should receive systematic education and training to be able to identify potential human trafficking victims. "We often hear excuses from the government and the EU that traffickers are always a step ahead. For us this is purely an excuse so that human trafficking continues to exist, because human trafficking brings a lot of money" she says, simultaneously expressing the view that there is lack of political will to eradicate human trafficking.

Christodoulou says lack of political will to eradicate human trafficking is evident in that "measures taken are not sufficient".

As she mentions, the Interior Ministry has made a lot of efforts, including changing the term used in the legislation from artists to creative artists. "The reason the term changed is because 'artist' was equated to prostitute. The definition of 'artist' is not however negative. I don't think that changing the term used in the legislation will stop human trafficking", she points out.

Furthermore, she adds that there is a reduction in the number of police investigations carried out in areas where human trafficking is likely to occur, and notes that since anyone can find these women and buy their services, so can the police.

MIGS Policy Coordinator adds that private employment agencies play a large part as many of them get involved in organized crime. These agencies, she says, are beyond control. As she explains, they cooperate with other agencies abroad and in this way they manage to bring potential human trafficking victims to Cyprus, for either labour or sexual exploitation.

Asked to comment on the latest report of GRETA (Council of Europe Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings), which notes that "Cypriot authorities have so far not taken adequate measures to discourage the demand of services from trafficked persons, which is critical to combating human trafficking", Christodoulou refers to the results of a survey, carried out by MIGS, and according to which increased demand for sexual services in Cyprus results from existing social attitudes and structures.

She notes that in a society where women's participation in decision-making procedures is limited, because of social structures, and the state accepts that there are women who can be bought or sold by men, then a message is communicated that women are for sale and purchase.

Besides stereotypes, we need to change social structures, Christodoulou points out, adding that we must start from elementary and secondary schools to teach children about gender equality, equal opportunities and women's rights.



Driverless Future – Are we Ready?



The common charger - Good news for consumer - Good

Get all the latest news and videos in your inbox.

Register FREE

Register now

Find us on Facebook



Financial Mirror

Like

10,035 people like **Financial Mirror**.



Maggie Zahiruddin Demetris Valentine Kingsley



Yorgos Paul Stefanos Dajana Neophytos

Facebook social plugin

Advertisement

FinancialMirror.com

About Us

Who we are

Contact us

[Back to](#)

Advertise with us

[How to advertise](#)

[Payment methods](#)

News

[News Headlines](#)

[Cyprus & World News](#)

[Business & Economy](#)

[Technology](#)

[News in Greek](#)

Research Center

[Cyprus Economy](#)

[Cyprus Stock Exchange](#)

[Investment Tips](#)

Web TV

[Business](#)

[Financial](#)

[Cyprus](#)

[International](#)

[Technology](#)

Misc

[Sitemap](#)

[Privacy policy](#)

[Terms of use](#)

In relation to the protection provided by the state to the victims of human trafficking, MIGS Policy Coordinator refers to the state shelter, and notes that other experts have expressed the view that is a guesthouse, rather than a shelter. She believes that a shelter should support the victims psychologically, financially and socially, and not just offer them a place to sleep and eat until their case concludes. Protection provided to the victims by the state is not sufficient, she indicates.

Copyright ©2011 Financial Mirror. All Rights Reserved

Web design & development by SAE-Business

Furthermore she underlines the role of the media in publishing stories of trafficked persons, in a way that they are not victimized once again. "In an effort to inform people about human trafficking, media can cause damage to the victim", she maintains.

A Multidisciplinary Co-ordinating Group has been established, tasked to take all the necessary measures to combat human trafficking and protect the victims. It is chaired by the Interior Minister who is the National Co-ordinator.

Also the process to revise existing legislation is underway and the new relevant European directive will be integrated in it. Cyprus has also revised some aspects of its immigration policy, as well as its policy regarding the employment of foreign house maids, improving their salaries and their employment contracts. Cyprus has adopted a National Action Plan against Human Trafficking for the years 2010-2012.





Pambos A Stavrou · Top Commenter · Consultant at Rainmaker Capital

I am really wondering if the people running MIGS and the government authorities realise what they are doing AT ALL. Before prostitution in Cyprus was controlled and contained within cabarets, with immigration control on the numbers and police control on health issues. Pushing to stop this we now filled the streets and bars and cafes and flats with uncontrolled and uncontained prostitution. Guys do you realise that SINCE you will NEVER stop prostitution you should fight to control and contain it rather than trying to hide it.

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 22 hours ago



Kathrin Herzog

Of course, police don't bother to check!

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · Saturday at 6:27am



Pambos A Stavrou · Top Commenter · Consultant at Rainmaker Capital

Police cannot check anymore cause the geniuses of policy making in Cyprus took the prostitutes out of the cabarets and spread them in the flats and streets - and now apart from that we also have a health issue

[Reply](#) · [Like](#) · 22 hours ago

Facebook social plugin