



KISA position paper

Suggestions for legislative and policy changes aiming at the improvement of the work and life conditions of migrant women in Cyprus.

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P.O.Box 22113, 1517 Nicosia, Cyprus. Tel: + 357-22878181, Fax: + 357-22773039,
email: info@kisa.org.cy, Website: www.kisa.org.cy
Τ.Θ. 22113, 1517 Λευκωσία, Κύπρος. Τηλ: +357-22878181, Φαξ: +357-22773039,
Ηλ. Ταχ.: info@kisa.org.cy, Ιστ/δα: www.kisa.org.cy

1. Introduction

The brutal murders of 5 migrant women and the young children of 2 of these women appear to have shaken the Cypriot society to its foundations. With gatherings, marches and other solidarity events, Cyprus has mourned and commemorated the abject loss of these seven lives but it has also protested and condemned the criminal indifference, negligence and institutional racism in the police force and other authorities. At the same time, this tragic incident has revealed to the world the harsh reality of migrant women in Cyprus, in the framework of a highly exploitative, unfair and discriminatory migration system, structural racism and gender-based violence. The government responded with the long overdue and unwilling resignation of the Minister of Justice and the dismissal of the Chief of Police after mounting public pressure, and the hasty announcement of measures for “added protection of foreigners” but which were really meant to dispel the negative publicity about the conditions of migrants in Cyprus and to appease the public and more particularly its voters in the upcoming European Parliament elections. The appointment of criminal investigators into the deficiencies of the police in taking up the investigation of the reported disappearance of the victims seems to conclude the ‘package’.

Civil Society organisations active in the field for years have raised on every occasion the need for structural reforms and change in the migration policies of Cyprus in order to improve the conditions in all spheres of the work and life of migrant women in Cyprus. We believe that it is time that we put on the agenda and push for radical and effective changes.

We, KISA demand at a minimum the following changes:

2. Regarding Civic participation:

- Create a **platform for structured dialogue** with migrant communities, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders and individuals.
- allocate sufficient Funds and capacity building for the empowerment self-organisation of migrant communities,
- Promote the unionisation of migrants women in trade unions of their choice
- Develop a language and orientation introductory course able to meet the needs and working/living circumstances of DW. Employers must agree for

approval of entry of new Migrant DW that they will facilitate the enrolment and participation in the course



3. Regarding Legislation: Ratification and implementation

- proceed immediately to the ratification of ILO C189 Convention on Domestic Work as well as the Convention(190/2019) and Recommendation (206/2019) to combat violence and harassment in the workplace
- adopt and implement a comprehensive strategy and action plan to effectively deal with violence especially against migrant women and their children;
- Put in place all necessary legislative, administrative and practical infrastructure and measures for the effective implementation of the Istanbul Convention.
- Review all legislation and policies that directly or indirectly discriminate migrant women and render them vulnerable to abuse, harassment and exploitation .



4. Regarding the management of migration

- Set up in cooperation with the governments of countries of origin an efficient and not corrupt, or exploitative mechanism for official information about available jobs in Cyprus, the conditions and terms of their employment and entry visas for migrants in Cyprus.
- lift/abolish the time and other limitations for residence permits of third-country migrants so as to ensure the better integration of migrants in the host society under conditions of dignity
- guarantee free and equal access to labour market to all migrant women residing longer than five years in Cyprus
- create a registry of all employers abusing and/or violating the terms of contract of employment of migrant workers so as not to be allowed to employ migrant workers
- facilitate access to citizenship after seven years of residence for the proper integration of migrant workers

5. Regarding employment of domestic workers

- Implement the Council of Ministers' decision to transfer the regulation of migrant domestic workers' employment from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Labour, Social Welfare and Social Insurance.
- Open up the Public Employment Service to migrants, including domestic workers, for the identification of initial jobs but also for any change of employment, employer and abandon private employment agencies
- Separation between domestic and care work and ensure salaries that correspond to the actual duties undertaken.
- Apply the minimum wage scheme for domestic workers and carers
- In this context, the contract of domestic workers and carers should be stamped by the Labour Department, so as to ensure the implementation of the minimum wage; when employed on part-time basis, the minimum wage should apply pro rata.
- Domestic workers should have the right to stay out without any impact on their income
- Domestic workers will "stay in" only with their free consent and any reductions of their income for living expenses should be agreed and documented in the employment contract between the two parties (employer / employee)
- Restriction in domestic work sector only for the first 5 years.
- Guarantee for domestic workers the right to change without conditions their employer as many times as they wish
- Allow to enrol themselves as self-employed and work in more than one employers.
- After the 5th year guarantee full and equal access to labour market like cy and eu workers in compliance with eu and international law obligations



Steering Committee

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