



CHILD PARTICIPATION AS VICTIMS OR WITNESSES IN CRIMINAL CASES IN CYPRUS

National Report for AIMJF's Comparative and Collaborative Research.

La participación de niños como víctimas o testigos en causas penales en Chipre

Informe nacional para la investigación comparativa y colaborativa de la AIMJF

La participation des enfants en tant que victimes ou témoins dans des affaires pénales à Chypre

Rapport national pour la recherche comparative et collaborative de l'AIMJF

Judicial Court of Cyprus

Abstract: The paper is part of a collaborative research organized by the International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates (AIMJF/IAYFJM) on child participation as victims or witnesses in criminal cases. The article explains the legal, institutional and procedural aspects of child participation in the Justice System in Cyprus.

Resumen: El documento es parte de una investigación colaborativa organizada por la Asociación Internacional de Juventud y Familia (AIMJF) sobre la participación de niños, niñas y adolescentes como víctimas o testigos en causas penales. El artículo explica los aspectos legales, institucionales y procesales de la participación infantil en el sistema de justicia en Chipre

Résumé : Le document fait partie d'une recherche collaborative organisée par l'Association Internationale des Magistrats de la Jeunesse et de la Famille (AIMJF) sur la participation des enfants en tant que victimes ou témoins dans des affaires pénales. L'article explique des aspects légaux, institutionnels et procéduraux de la participation des enfants dans le système de justice à Chypre

Introduction

The International Association of Youth and Family Judges and Magistrates (IAYFJM or AIMJF, in the French and Spanish acronym) represents worldwide efforts to establish links between judges from different countries, promoting transnational judicial dialogue, in order to provide better conditions for a qualified attention to children based in a human rights approach.



To do so, AIMJF organizes research on international problems facing the operation of the courts and various laws relating to youth and family and training programs.

The aims of this research are to identify similarities and discrepancies among countries and to develop a cartography of how child participation as victims and witnesses in criminal cases is organized worldwide.

This national report is based on a questionnaire prepared by AIMJF.

Questionnaire

1. Right to be heard

Children are not presumed to be untrustworthy witnesses solely based on their age; instead, their competency is assessed individually, considering their understanding of the proceedings and their ability to communicate effectively. According to section 13 of the Evidence Law, all persons are deemed competent witnesses unless the Court determines that they do not understand the obligation to tell the truth or cannot comprehend questions due to their young age or mental incapacity. In criminal proceedings, children under 14 give unsworn evidence as per section 55(3) of the Criminal Procedure Law. This competency determination applies to both criminal and civil cases. Additionally, Law 51(I)/2016, which pertains to the rights, support, and protection of crime victims, defines a child as anyone under 18 and includes provisions for the protection of child victims, mandating that all relevant services and organizations support and protect them throughout the legal process.



1.1. Are there any restrictions to the right to be heard (minimum age, or other criteria)?

Access to court for every person is guaranteed by the Constitution in Cyprus, ensuring that every child has the right to express their opinion and be heard in judicial proceedings. While there are no age restrictions, the exercise of children's right to access justice in civil judicial proceedings requires parental consent. Generally, children lack legal capacity to sue and can only bring an action through their parents or guardians, though children without a guardian can bring proceedings through a court-appointed guardian ad litem. Legal and policy measures aim to avoid undue delay in cases involving children, with courts prioritizing such cases as much as possible. Interim orders in cases involving children are handled without undue delay. In administrative justice, the Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare, and Social Insurance offer protection and support for children throughout the judicial process, prioritizing the child's best interests. There are no regulations to adapt court sessions to a child's pace and attention span, but judges may order the removal of children from the courtroom if harmful material is presented. Protective measures in civil proceedings include conducting trials in camera.

In criminal proceedings, children are informed of their rights without delay and given appropriate support, with no statutory age limit for expressing views. Instead, maturity is assessed independently of age and subject to judicial consideration, with a right of appeal if a court deems a child mature but refuses to hear them.

Laws such as Law 91(I)/2014 and Law 51(I)/2016 protect children from discrimination in judicial proceedings. Social Welfare Services play a pivotal role in providing court reports that include children's opinions, especially in custody cases. In cases of family violence or child sexual abuse, Social Welfare Services collaborate with relevant agencies under approved interdepartmental proceedings. Cooperation protocols with NGOs, such as Hope for Children, ensure comprehensive care for unaccompanied minors, respecting confidentiality and involving professionals who assess children's evolving capacity and



maturity, ensuring their voices are considered in legal proceedings based on their understanding and best interests.

1.2. Are children allowed to refuse to make a statement? If so, in which cases?

Children do have specific rights in judicial proceedings, influenced by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. They are allowed to express their views in court, with special measures to protect them in criminal cases, such as testifying via video link or in a child-friendly environment. The court can also decide if a child's testimony is necessary based on potential psychological impacts.

In family law, children's preferences are considered, but they are not compelled to testify if it might harm their well-being. The court often uses reports from social services to understand the child's best interests without requiring a formal statement from the child.

2. Broad perspective of the legal framework and procedure

2.1. Is there a specific legal framework that defines how to treat child victims/witnesses of crime (e.g. special norms in the criminal procedural code, special child code, special victims code, etc)?

Yes, there is a specific legal framework that outlines how to treat child victims and witnesses of crime, ensuring their protection and support during judicial processes. While criminal cases involving child victims are currently dealt with by ordinary criminal courts, several specialized laws include child-sensitive provisions.



*Law 119(I)/2000*¹, concerning Domestic Violence and the Protection of Domestic Violence Victims, provides also the legal framework for addressing cases of violence against minors. It specifies that upon receiving a complaint or information about such violence, the Family Counselor can consult with a multidisciplinary group established under section 8 of the law to better handle the case and must inform the Director of Social Welfare Services about the incident. The Family Counselor is required to obtain consent from the minor's guardian before exercising certain powers, unless the guardian or another family member is suspected of mistreating the minor. In such cases, the Family Counselor must report the case to the police and inform the Attorney-General in writing before or soon after a medical examination of the minor, within three days at the latest.

Additionally, the Director of Social Welfare Services is empowered to act under section 4 of the Children Law. If the Family Counselor is unable or unwilling to act, or if the case is particularly serious, the Director can take action directly or delegate the responsibility to another experienced officer. This legal framework ensures comprehensive and timely intervention in cases of child violence, incorporating advice from multidisciplinary professionals, conditional consent waivers, and immediate reporting to authorities.

Part IV (sections 9-14) of this law mandates that a child's deposition must be taken by an officer of the same sex unless otherwise requested. It also allows for the videotaped testimony of the victim to be admitted as evidence to avoid the need for repeated testimony in court. The law also provides for expedited investigation and court proceedings, and the option for proceedings to be held in camera to avoid intimidation.

Regardless of the stipulations *in section 10 of the Evidence Law*, a complaint made by a victim of violence to various professionals—including police officers, family counselors, welfare officers, psychologists, doctors (including psychiatrists), educators, Advisory Committee members, members of the Association for the Prevention of Violence in the

¹ *THE VIOLENCE IN THE FAMILY (PREVENTION AND PROTECTION OF VICTIMS) LAWS 2000 AND 2004, 119(I) of 2000, 212(I) of 2004.*



Family, or close family members—within a reasonable period after the offense, will be considered valid evidence.

In cases of domestic violence, the court may issue protective orders for family members, including children. *The Criminal Procedure Law (section 55(3)) allows children under 14 to give unsworn evidence, and the Evidence Law (section 13)* ensures all individuals, including children, are considered competent witnesses unless they cannot understand the obligation to tell the truth or cannot comprehend the questions due to age or mental incapacity.

Law 51(I)/2016 further enhances the rights, support, and protection of victims of crime, defining a child as anyone under 18 and outlining the obligations of services and organizations to provide necessary support. The law includes specific provisions for child victims, ensuring they receive appropriate protection throughout the judicial process.

Legal amendments in 2021 have criminalized harassment and stalking and established a child-friendly criminal justice system. These amendments ensure that child offenders are tried by the Children's Court, which can impose alternatives to detention. The laws also allow child witnesses to testify from separate rooms or the Children's House to avoid direct confrontation with the accused.

The national anti-trafficking legislation, *Law 60(I)/2014*, includes specific measures to protect child victims within criminal proceedings. *Sections 30 and 34* of this law require that children receive special treatment and protection from further victimization, including the provision of effective protection from revenge or intimidation and ensuring interviews are conducted in child-friendly environments by trained professionals.

The "Hope For Children" CRC Policy Center and the Cyprus Judicial School have also introduced innovative tools like the "Kids in Court Game" to prepare children for judicial proceedings, emphasizing a child-sensitive approach supported by various public authorities

2.2. Is there any coordination between different role players (such as the police, education, social services, health system) to initiate legal proceedings and coordinate response (evidence collection and intervention), including avoiding multiple interviews of the child? Is there any flowchart in your country to coordinate these interventions? If so, could you please share it?

Yes, there is coordination among different role players, such as the police, education, social services, and the health system, to initiate legal proceedings and coordinate responses for child victims of crime. These teams include representatives from police, social services, health professionals, and education sectors who work together to handle cases involving child victims. They ensure that the child's needs are met comprehensively and that evidence is collected efficiently.

In cases of violence in the family the Social Welfare Services cooperate with all the other relevant services based on a manual of interdepartmental proceeds, approved by the Council of Ministers in 2002. In cases of sexual abuse against children the Social Welfare Services cooperate with the other relevant services establishing a multidisciplinary approach.

It should be also stated that according to *sections 30(1) and 30(2) of the Prevention and Combating of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography Law of 2014*, anyone who fails to report a case that comes to his knowledge, where a child is involved, commits an offense and, if convicted, is subject to prison sentence of up to fifteen years or a fine of up to twenty thousand euros, or to both of these penalties. Also, *section 35(a) of the violence in the Family Law 2000*, ensures the obligation to report cases of abuse. The Children's House, which has been operating since 2017, handles cases of sexual abuse and/or exploitation of children.

The *Children's House* provides a multi-disciplinary, child-friendly approach to the management of cases of child sexual abuse. It operates under the supervision of the SWS



and in cooperation with the SWS and all competent Services/Organizations. It is fully subsidized by national resources.

This coordination aims to streamline evidence collection and intervention, thereby minimizing the need for multiple interviews of the child, which can be re-traumatizing.

2.3. Can you briefly explain what are the major steps of the legal procedure in criminal cases (felonies) with child victims or witnesses involved?

2.3. Major Steps of the Legal Procedure in Criminal Cases (Felonies) with Child Victims or Witnesses

The legal procedure for criminal cases involving child victims or witnesses follows several key steps to ensure protection and support throughout the process. Initially, the incident is reported to the police, who take the child's initial statement, often by an officer of the same sex to ensure comfort and sensitivity. Evidence collection begins, including potentially videotaped testimony to minimize the need for the child to testify repeatedly. Medical and psychological assessments are conducted to document any physical or emotional harm, with reports from health professionals and psychologists forming part of the evidence. During pre-trial proceedings, the child may provide a videotaped deposition, and multidisciplinary team meetings ensure coordinated support and evidence gathering. At trial, the child's videotaped testimony is presented, with measures in place to protect them from direct confrontation with the accused, such as testifying via live link or in camera proceedings to safeguard privacy. Post-trial, social services provide ongoing support to help the child recover from the trauma, ensuring comprehensive care and assistance throughout the legal process.

2.4. In which moment(s) can a child be heard in this procedure?

A child can be heard at various stages of the legal procedure in Cyprus:

- **Initial Reporting:** The child provides their initial statement to the police, usually in the presence of a same-sex officer.



- **Pre-Trial Evidence Collection:** The child may give a videotaped deposition during interviews conducted by trained professionals, including social workers and psychologists.
- **During the Trial:** The child's videotaped testimony is presented, and they may testify via live link from a separate room to avoid direct confrontation with the accused. This measure ensures the child's comfort and reduces potential trauma

2.5. Does the child have the power to initiate, suspend or terminate the criminal procedure (such as giving consent for the complaint or the possibility to refuse consent or revoke consent)? If so in which cases?

Children do not have the power to initiate, suspend, or terminate criminal proceedings independently. While a child can report a crime, the formal initiation of criminal proceedings is handled by legal guardians, police, or public prosecutors based on the available evidence and legal requirements.

The decision to suspend or terminate proceedings lies with the prosecution or the court. This decision considers the best interests of the child, the severity of the crime, and the evidence. The child's willingness to cooperate and their psychological state are important factors but do not grant them the authority to make these decisions unilaterally.

3. Preparation for the child participation

3.1. Is there in your country specific child-friendly information material for children as victims or witnesses (e.g. brochure, video etc)? If so can you please share them?



There are several child-friendly information materials available for children who are victims or witnesses of crimes, developed by organizations such as UNICEF and through the Barnahus model. These resources aim to create a supportive and understandable environment for children in judicial processes. The Barnahus model promotes a multi-disciplinary and interagency approach, providing resources like brochures and videos that explain the judicial process in a manner suitable for children. Additionally, the European ***Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)*** has published comprehensive reports and resources that include the perspectives and experiences of children in judicial proceedings, ensuring the content is accessible to young audiences. These resources are crucial in helping children navigate the judicial system with the necessary support and information, minimizing their stress and confusion.

Cyprus also has a ***Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights, who plays a significant role in protecting and advocating for children's rights.*** The Commissioner has established the Commissioner's Young Advisors Team, consisting of children aged 13 to 17 years, to discuss and exchange views on matters concerning children's rights. The Commissioner consults with other organized groups of children, such as the Children's Parliament and the Pancyprian Coordinating Students' Committee, and receives complaints from these groups. When complaints are received, the Commissioner provides information about the investigation process and its results directly to the children involved.

Furthermore, the Commissioner for Children's Rights of the Republic of Cyprus can submit an application for the appointment of a special representative in judicial proceedings affecting a child, especially in cases where there might be a conflict of interest with the parents. However, awareness among children regarding their avenues to seek justice remains low. A study by Child Rights Connect and the Committee for the Rights of the Child (CDENF) of the Council of Europe in December 2023 indicated that while member states, including Cyprus, have some sporadic good practices ensuring access to justice for children, there is still much room for improvement in raising awareness and ensuring systematic support for child victims and witnesses.



3.2. How do children have access to these materials in Cyprus ? (e.g. brochure available at police station/court; brochure sent to the child together with summon; witness preparation conducted in court with support of a video, or with support of a special professional; investigator/judge orally explaining in child-friendly language before interview/hearing, or any other?) How long before the interview/hearing does this happen?

Children access child-friendly information materials through various well-structured channels to support them during judicial proceedings. Following the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse in 2015, Cyprus enacted comprehensive national legislation in 2014 and implemented a National Strategy and Action Plan to combat sexual abuse and exploitation.² The Children's House, operational since September 2017, based on the Nordic Barnahus model, provides comprehensive support, including brochures and videos, to child victims and their families during the investigation and healing process. This center collaborates with a central police unit established in 2017 to investigate child sexual abuse allegations. Police stations and courts also offer child-friendly materials during initial interactions, and specially trained investigators and judges explain judicial processes in child-friendly language well before interviews or hearings. The Ministry of Education and Culture (MOEC) supports this initiative by coordinating a committee dedicated to preventing child sexual exploitation, providing compulsory training for teachers, and organizing seminars on recognizing and reporting sexual abuse. These efforts ensure that children are informed and supported well in advance of any judicial proceedings

² Amendments had been made to the law on violence in the family (prevention and protection of victims) and the witness protection law to ensure that witness children could testify from a room other than the court or in the Children's House.

The Implementation Council "FONI" was created in 2018 to implement the national strategy for the prevention and combatting of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, while in October 2021, a new three-year national action plan was approved. Clear and targeted compulsory sex education was included in curricula from kindergarten onwards.



3.3. Is there any assessment of the child conducted before a child is interviewed/heard? If so, what is assessed / for what purpose (e.g. background and circumstances of child; whether the child would be able to speak freely; capacity of child to express him/herself; capacity to participate, if uncertain; capacity to handle interview and possible effects; potential vulnerabilities and special needs, etc)? If so, what is the legal background of their professional conducting this assessment? To which institution does this professional belong? Is there any kind of report produced? t

An assessment of the child is conducted before they are interviewed or heard in judicial proceedings. This assessment aims to evaluate various aspects such as the child's background and circumstances, ability to speak freely, capacity to express themselves, ability to participate, and potential vulnerabilities or special needs. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that the child can handle the interview and to understand the possible effects it may have on them.

The assessment is typically carried out by professionals from the Children's House, which includes specially trained psychologists and social workers. These professionals are equipped with the necessary legal and psychological training to evaluate the child's condition comprehensively. The legal framework supporting these assessments stems from the national laws enacted following the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse and the National Strategy on the Combating of Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children.

The professionals conducting these assessments belong to the multidisciplinary teams at the Children's House, which collaborates closely with the central police unit specialized in child sexual abuse cases. The assessment results in a detailed report that outlines the child's capacity to handle the interview, their special needs, and any recommended support measures to ensure a child-friendly judicial process. This report is used to tailor



the interview process to the child's needs, ensuring their protection and comfort during the proceedings

3.4. Is there any kind of contact or evaluation with the parents or legal guardians ?

Yes, there is contact and evaluation with the parents or legal guardians before a child is interviewed or heard in judicial proceedings. This process involves gathering detailed information about the child's background and family circumstances to better understand the context and support needed. The evaluation helps professionals tailor their approach to the child's needs, ensuring that the child feels supported and that the family is informed about the proceedings. This contact is typically conducted by professionals at the Children's House, including psychologists and social workers, who collaborate closely with the child's family to provide comprehensive support.

3.5. Is the child allowed/invited to visit the facilities where he or she will be heard prior to the interview/hearing?

Yes, children in Cyprus are allowed and often invited to visit the facilities where they will be heard prior to the interview or hearing. This pre-visit is designed to familiarize the child with the environment, reduce anxiety, and make them more comfortable with the judicial process. During this visit, children can see the interview rooms, meet the professionals who will be present, and get a sense of the setting where they will give their testimony. Such visits are arranged to ensure that the child is as comfortable as possible on the day of the interview or hearing

3.6. Does the child receive any kind of support prior to the interview/hearing (psychological, social, medical, legal)?



Children do receive various kinds of support prior to the interview or hearing, including psychological, social, medical, and legal support. Psychological support is provided by trained psychologists to help the child cope with any stress or trauma they may be experiencing. Social support includes assistance from social workers who help the child and their family navigate the judicial process and access necessary services. Medical support is available if there are any health concerns that need to be addressed. Legal support ensures that the child understands their rights and the judicial process, often facilitated by legal professionals or child advocates. This comprehensive support is designed to prepare the child emotionally, physically, and legally for the interview or hearing, ensuring their well-being throughout the process

4. Protection and Support

4.1. Is there any risk assessment conducted for the child victim/witness after a crime has been reported? If so, who conducts it? Is there any specific tool? If so, can you share it please?

A risk assessment for child victims or witnesses is conducted after a crime has been reported. This assessment is typically carried out by professionals at the Children's House, including specially trained psychologists and social workers. The assessment aims to evaluate various factors such as the child's background, ability to speak freely, capacity to express themselves, capacity to participate, potential vulnerabilities, and special needs. The purpose of this assessment is to ensure that the child can handle the interview and to identify any specific support they might require. Specific tools and structured frameworks are used during this process, though detailed public documentation of these tools is limited.



4.2. In case of identification of risks, what kind of protective measures are available in your country?

If risks are identified, various protective measures are available in Cyprus. These measures include temporary protective orders issued by courts to prevent the perpetrator from contacting or approaching the child, placement in safe housing such as foster care or protective facilities like the Children's House, supervised visitation to ensure that any interaction between the child and the alleged perpetrator is monitored, and police protection in high-risk cases to provide additional security for the child

4.3. What kind of support measures are available for child victims / witnesses of crime (psychosocial, medical, legal) before, during, after the judicial process)

Child victims or witnesses of crime in Cyprus receive extensive support before, during, and after the judicial process. This support includes psychological assistance from trained psychologists to help the child cope with stress and trauma, social support from social workers to help the child and their family navigate the judicial process and access necessary services, medical support to address any health concerns, and legal support to ensure that the child understands their rights and the judicial process, often facilitated by legal professionals or child advocates

4.4. In case of intrafamilial violence, which measures can be / are usually adopted to grant the child's security? Is there any/which kind of support offered to the remaining members of the family? Are there any specific measures in case of child abduction or child kidnapping?



In cases of intrafamilial violence, several measures are usually adopted to ensure the child's security. These include removal from the home and placement in a safe environment such as foster care or the Children's House, counseling and support for both the child and remaining family members to address trauma and facilitate recovery, restraining orders issued by courts to prevent contact with the abusive family member, and supervised visitation to ensure any necessary interactions are monitored. Specific measures for child abduction or kidnapping include immediate police involvement to locate and recover the child, coordination with international agencies if the abduction involves crossing borders, and swift legal actions to resolve custody and ensure the child's safe return.

5. Environment

5.1. In which institution/what kind of environment is the child interviewed/heard in pre-trial/trial phase?

Child victims or witnesses are typically interviewed and heard at the Children's House during the pre-trial and trial phases. The Children's House provides a specialized environment designed to support and protect child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. It offers a safe, child-friendly setting where children can feel comfortable and secure while being interviewed by trained professionals.

5.2 Is there any specificity in this environment to adapt it for children? (e.g. separate 'building' specifically for children; non child-specific building, but separate entrance for children; separate interview/hearing room for children)

The environment at the Children's House is specifically adapted to meet the needs of children. It is a separate building dedicated entirely to children, ensuring a safe and non-threatening atmosphere. The facility includes separate interview rooms specifically



designed for children, which are equipped with child-friendly furnishings and decorations to create a welcoming and comforting space. These rooms are distinct from regular judicial or police interview rooms, which helps reduce the stress and anxiety that children may feel during the interview process.

The adaptations at the Children's House aim to provide a supportive environment that caters to the psychological and emotional needs of child victims or witnesses, ensuring they can participate in the judicial process without experiencing further trauma. This specialized approach reflects Cyprus's commitment to implementing child-friendly justice practices as outlined in the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse

5.3. Are there guidelines for the environment where the child is interviewed/heard? (architecture, setting)? If so can you please share it? Can you share a photo of this space?

Yes, specific guidelines are established for the environment where children are interviewed or heard, particularly in facilities like the Children's House. These guidelines ensure a child-friendly and supportive setting designed to reduce stress and anxiety for the child. The Children's House is a separate building dedicated to children, creating a non-threatening atmosphere away from typical judicial or police environments. Interview rooms within the facility are furnished and decorated to be welcoming and comforting, using colors and furniture specifically chosen to appeal to children. To further protect the child, separate entrances and dedicated spaces are used to avoid contact with other judicial processes and minimize re-traumatization risks. Technological tools, such as audiovisual recording equipment, are available to facilitate child-friendly interviews, allowing the child's testimony to be recorded and reducing the need for repeated questioning.



The facility follows a multidisciplinary and interagency approach, ensuring that various professionals, including psychologists, social workers, and police officers, collaborate to provide comprehensive support to the child during the judicial process.

These guidelines are based on the Barnahus model, which emphasizes a child-friendly setting that incorporates multidisciplinary and interagency interventions. For a visual representation, UNICEF provides examples of such child-friendly interview rooms, illustrating the type of environment used in Cyprus to ensure the child's comfort and safety during judicial proceedings

5.4. Is there a specific waiting area for the child?

Yes, there is a specific waiting area for children at facilities like the Children's House. This dedicated waiting area is designed to be child-friendly, providing a safe and comforting environment for children before they are interviewed or heard. The space is furnished and decorated with the needs of children in mind, featuring appropriate seating, toys, books, and other engaging activities to help reduce anxiety and make the wait more pleasant. This setup ensures that children are not exposed to potentially intimidating or stressful environments and can feel at ease before their judicial proceedings. These child-friendly waiting areas are part of the broader effort to create a supportive and non-threatening environment for child victims and witnesses, in line with the guidelines and best practices of the Barnahus model, which emphasizes the importance of a holistic, multidisciplinary approach to child protection.

5.5. Are there protection measures to avoid direct contact (including visual) between the child and the alleged offender? if so what kind? (e.g. separate entrance, separate waiting area, separate interview/hearing rooms, use of video link, voice or image distortion etc)



Yes, comprehensive protection measures are in place to avoid direct contact, including visual contact, between the child and the alleged offender, ensuring the child's safety and comfort throughout the judicial process. These measures as mentioned above include separate entrances and waiting areas at facilities like the Children's House, ensuring children do not encounter the alleged offender before or during proceedings. Children are interviewed and heard in specially designed rooms separate from the alleged offender, reducing anxiety and avoiding direct confrontation. The judicial system often employs video links, allowing the child to give testimony from a safe environment while the proceedings are monitored by the court. In some cases, voice or image distortion methods are used to protect the child's identity, enabling them to communicate without fear of recognition by the alleged offender. Additionally, courts can order in camera proceedings, ensuring the child's testimony is given without the accused or public present, creating a more secure environment.

5.6. In case identification of the offender is needed, how is this conducted, and where?

When the identification of an offender by a child victim or witness is necessary, specific measures are taken to ensure the process is conducted in a child-friendly and safe manner. The identification process typically occurs at the Children's House or similar child-friendly facilities to provide a supportive environment for the child.

The process may involve the use of video links or one-way mirrors, allowing the child to identify the alleged offender without being seen or having direct contact. This setup helps to minimize the potential stress and trauma associated with the identification process. Additionally, the child may be accompanied by a trained professional, such as a psychologist or a social worker, who provides emotional support throughout the procedure.

These methods are designed to protect the child's well-being while ensuring the accuracy and reliability of the identification. The use of such protective measures aligns with the



broader framework of child-friendly justice practices implemented in Cyprus, aiming to create a supportive judicial environment for children.

5.7. If the child lives in a different city in relation to the city where the proceeding is tried, what are the specificities at stake?

If a child lives in a different city from where the judicial proceeding is being tried, specific measures are taken to accommodate and support the child. The primary aim is to minimize the child's travel and ensure their comfort and safety during the process.

The child can provide testimony via video link from a location close to their residence, such as a local Children's House or another child-friendly facility. This use of technology allows the child to participate in the proceedings without the need for extensive travel, reducing stress and potential trauma associated with appearing in a formal courtroom setting far from home.

Additionally, logistical arrangements are made to ensure the child's travel, if necessary, is as comfortable and secure as possible. This may involve providing transportation, accommodation, and accompanied by a trained professional, such as a social worker or psychologist, to offer continuous support throughout the journey and during the proceedings.

5.8. Is it possible in your country that the interview is conducted virtually (the child and the interviewer are in different places)? In which circumstances? Are any / which special security measures (are) adopted?

It is possible for interviews with child victims or witnesses to be conducted virtually, with the child and the interviewer in different locations. This approach is used particularly



when geographical distance or specific circumstances make it difficult for the child to be physically present at the interview location. Virtual interviews are facilitated through secure video conferencing technologies, which ensure the child's safety and comfort while participating in the judicial process from a familiar and supportive environment.

Special security measures are adopted to maintain the integrity and confidentiality of the virtual interview. These measures include using encrypted communication channels to prevent unauthorized access, ensuring that only authorized personnel are present during the interview, and having a trained professional, such as a psychologist or social worker, present with the child to provide emotional support. The child may be interviewed from a child-friendly facility like the local Children's House, which is equipped with the necessary technology and environment to support virtual interviews.

5.9. Must a child appear in court to be interviewed or are recorded investigative interviews admitted as evidence in court? If the child has to appear in court, which circumstances are determinant?

It is not always necessary for a child to appear in court to be interviewed, as recorded investigative interviews are admissible as evidence. According to the legal framework, especially under Law *119(I)/2000 concerning Domestic Violence and the Protection of Domestic Violence Victims*, the videotaped testimony of the child can be used as evidence. This approach is designed to prevent the need for the child to repeat their testimony in court, which can be a re-traumatizing experience. The videotaped testimony must be accompanied by a transcript and the accused retains the right to cross-examine the child based on this recorded testimony.

However, there may be certain circumstances where a child's appearance in court is deemed necessary. This could occur if the court determines that the presence of the child is crucial for the case, for example, if the defense raises specific challenges that necessitate direct questioning of the child. In such cases, special measures are taken to ensure the child's safety and comfort, such as allowing the child to testify from a separate



room via video link to avoid direct contact with the alleged offender, and providing the presence of a trained professional for support.

These measures are part of Cyprus's commitment to child-friendly justice, ensuring the child's welfare while maintaining the integrity of the judicial process.

6. Specific legal guarantees for the child

6.1. Does the child have the right to legal assistance? for free? Is this assistance specialized? At what moment does this assistance come in (e.g. already advising whether or not to report a case / during the first interview / only in court / other)

Children have the right to free and specialized legal assistance, particularly in cases where they are victims or witnesses of crime. This legal support is designed to address the unique needs of children and ensure their rights are protected throughout the legal process. Legal assistance is available from the very beginning, advising on whether or not to report a case, during the first interview with authorities, and continuing through all stages of the judicial process, including court appearances if necessary. This provision is supported by several legislative measures, ***including Law 51(I)/2016***, which outlines the obligations of services and organizations to provide necessary support to child victims, as well as Council of Europe guidelines and European Union directives on child-friendly justice.

6.1.1 What is the role of the legal assistant (representing views of child or best interests of child; advising the child; talking on behalf of the child; ...)?



The role of a legal assistant for child victims or witnesses of crime encompasses several key responsibilities. Primarily, the legal assistant represents the best interests of the child, ensuring that the child's rights and well-being are prioritized throughout the judicial process. This involves advising the child on legal matters, helping them understand their rights, and guiding them through the legal procedures. The legal assistant also acts as an advocate for the child, speaking on their behalf when necessary to ensure their views and concerns are adequately represented in court. Furthermore, the legal assistant may communicate directly with other professionals involved in the case, such as psychologists and social workers, to coordinate a comprehensive support strategy for the child. This holistic approach ensures that the child's emotional, psychological, and legal needs are met, providing a protective and supportive environment during their involvement in judicial proceedings

6.2 Does the child have the right to be accompanied by a support person? If so, what is the role of this person? What is this person entitled to do in support of the child?

Yes, a child has the right to be accompanied by a support person during judicial proceedings. This support person plays a crucial role in ensuring the child's emotional and psychological well-being throughout the process. The support person's responsibilities include providing emotional support, helping the child feel safe and comfortable, and facilitating communication between the child and other professionals involved in the case.

The support person is entitled to accompany the child during interviews, court appearances, and other related proceedings. They help the child understand the proceedings by explaining legal terms and processes in a child-friendly manner. Additionally, the support person can help the child express their views and concerns, ensuring that the child's voice is heard and considered in decision-making processes.



This comprehensive support aims to minimize the stress and anxiety associated with judicial proceedings and ensure that the child's rights and best interests are upheld. The role of the support person is recognized and integrated into the child-friendly justice framework in Cyprus, aligning with international standards and best practices for protecting and supporting child victims and witnesses of crime

6.3. What is the role of parents/legal representative?

Parents or legal representatives play a crucial role in supporting child victims or witnesses of crime throughout the judicial process. They provide essential emotional and psychological support, helping to alleviate the child's anxiety and stress. Their responsibilities include ensuring the child's best interests are prioritized, aiding the child in understanding legal terms and procedures, and explaining what to expect during interviews and court sessions. Parents or legal representatives also advocate for the child's well-being, ensuring that their needs and preferences are communicated to legal authorities. They work closely with legal assistants, psychologists, social workers, and other professionals to coordinate a comprehensive support plan for the child. Additionally, they attend legal appointments, interviews, and court hearings with the child, offering a familiar and comforting presence. Their involvement ensures the child's rights are protected, including the right to a fair hearing and the right to be heard and participate in the proceedings, aligning with the child-friendly justice framework in Cyprus

6.3.1 When are parents/legal representative excluded (e.g. perpetrator, exploitative, intimidating/influencing, non-supportive, conflict of interests...)?

Parents or legal representatives are excluded from participating in the judicial process when their involvement could negatively impact the child or the integrity of the proceedings. This exclusion occurs under several circumstances: if the parent or legal representative is the alleged perpetrator of the crime, if they have been exploitative towards the child, or if there is evidence of intimidation, influence, or coercion over the child. Additionally, parents or legal representatives who display a non-supportive or hostile attitude towards the child may be excluded to prevent any negative impact on the child's emotional state and willingness to participate. A conflict of interest, where the parent or legal representative's interests do not align with the best interests of the child, also warrants exclusion. According to national laws and protective measures in Cyprus, such as those outlined in the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons and the Protection of Victims Law (L 60/14), the Social Welfare Services Director or another appointed representative steps in to represent the child in these situations. These provisions are part of the broader child protection framework in Cyprus, designed to ensure that the child's best interests are prioritized throughout the judicial process

6.3.2. If excluded, is there another legal representative appointed/ if so by whom?

If parents or legal representatives are excluded from participating in the judicial process involving a child, another legal representative is appointed to ensure the child's interests are represented. This appointment is typically made by the Director of the Social Welfare Services or another designated authority. The appointed representative, often in coordination with the Commissioner for the Protection of Children's Rights, steps in to provide the necessary legal and emotional support to the child, ensuring that their rights and best interests are upheld throughout the judicial proceedings. This process ensures that the child receives continuous and appropriate representation, even when their parents



or usual legal representatives are precluded due to conflicts of interest or other disqualifying factors

6.4. What kind of measures are adopted to grant the right to privacy / confidentiality (public excluded / in all cases / in which cases? press statements so that child can not be identified?)

Several measures are adopted to ensure the right to privacy and confidentiality for child victims and witnesses throughout judicial proceedings. The court can order that proceedings be held in camera, meaning the public is excluded from the courtroom, a measure applied in all cases involving child victims or witnesses to protect their privacy and ensure they feel safe during the proceedings. Press statements are carefully managed to prevent the identification of the child, with the media prohibited from publishing any information that could reveal the child's identity, including names, addresses, schools, or descriptions of the child and their family. In legal documents and during proceedings, pseudonyms are often used instead of real names, and identifying information is redacted from public records to maintain the child's anonymity. Additionally, technological measures such as video links are used to allow the child to participate in the proceedings without being physically present in the courtroom, reducing the risk of exposure and helping maintain confidentiality. These measures are part of the broader child protection framework, designed to safeguard the privacy and well-being of child victims and witnesses, ensuring their participation in the judicial process does not lead to further trauma or exposure

6.5. Is the child allowed to plea for cautionary measures?

Children do have the right to request cautionary measures through their legal representatives or support persons. This includes seeking protective orders or other safety measures to ensure their well-being and security during the judicial process. The child's ability to plea for such measures is facilitated by the legal framework that prioritizes the protection and best interests of child victims and witnesses.



Cautionary measures that can be requested include restraining orders against the alleged offender, removal from harmful environments, and other protective actions deemed necessary by the court. The court considers these requests carefully, taking into account the child's safety, emotional well-being, and the specifics of the case. Legal representatives or appointed guardians can advocate on behalf of the child, presenting the plea for cautionary measures to the court to ensure the child's protection throughout the legal proceedings.

This right is embedded in the broader framework of child-friendly justice in Cyprus, which aligns with international standards and practices to safeguard the rights and well-being of children involved in judicial processes

6.6. Does the child have the right to appeal any decision?

Yes, children have the right to appeal any judicial decision that affects them, either directly or through their legal representatives. This right ensures that children can seek a review of decisions made during judicial proceedings if they believe the decisions do not serve their best interests or if there are grounds for appeal based on legal or procedural errors.

The appeal process is facilitated through the child's legal representative or appointed guardian, who can file an appeal on the child's behalf. The legal framework in Cyprus, which includes laws such as *Law 51(I)/2016* on the rights, support, and protection of victims of crime, provides the necessary provisions for children to appeal decisions and ensures that their rights are protected throughout the judicial process.



Concerning claims for damages/compensation during or after criminal proceedings in which the child was a victim, if an ordinary civil claim is made for damages/compensation it will have to be made on behalf of the child by their parent or legal guardian. As for orders for compensation of victims within the actual criminal proceedings, the ordinary criminal courts have limited powers.

In case where there is a conflict of interests between the child and his/her parents/guardians, the Social Welfare Service may take the child under the care of the Director of Social Welfare Services, who is the guardian of the child and is deemed necessary will assign a legal representative for the child.

7. Interviewing structure and procedure

7.1 Who hears the child victim/witness in the pre-trial phase / who in the trial phase? How often is a child usually heard in total (pre-trial and trial)? Does the law limit the total number of interviews/hearings conducted?

Child victims or witnesses are heard by different professionals during the pre-trial and trial phases to ensure their protection and comfort. During the pre-trial phase, children are typically interviewed by specially trained forensic interviewers, which can include psychologists, social workers, and police officers as part of a multidisciplinary team at facilities like the Children's House. These professionals are trained in child-friendly interviewing techniques to create a supportive environment for the child (UN Sustainable Development Goals) (Barnahus).

In the trial phase, the child's testimony is usually presented through previously recorded interviews. These recorded interviews are admissible as evidence, reducing the need for the child to appear in court multiple times. If additional testimony is necessary, it can be provided via video link from a secure, child-friendly location, preventing direct confrontation with the alleged offender and maintaining the child's comfort and safety.



The law in Cyprus limits the number of interviews and hearings to which a child can be subjected to minimize stress and potential trauma. Specific legislation, such as *Law 119(I)/2000 on Domestic Violence and the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking and Exploitation of Persons and the Protection of Victims Law (L 60/14)*, includes guidelines on limiting the number of times a child is interviewed or heard. This legal framework ensures that the process is swift and non-repetitive, protecting the child's well-being throughout the judicial process

7.2. Is it mandatory that this professional has specific training for child interviews?

Yes, it is mandatory for professionals conducting child interviews to have specific training. This ensures interviews are sensitive to the needs and vulnerabilities of children, minimizing trauma and ensuring accurate information gathering. The training covers child-friendly interviewing techniques and is required for psychologists, social workers, and police officers involved in such cases.

7.3. Is any kind of interview protocol adopted in your country (pre-trial and/or trial stage)? If so, which one? If so, could you please share it?

Yes, specific interview protocols for child victims are used and witnesses during pre-trial and trial stages to ensure a child-sensitive and effective process. As previously mentioned, in the pre-trial stage, the Children's House follows the Barnahus model, involving multidisciplinary and child-friendly interviewing techniques to minimize trauma. These interviews are conducted by specially trained professionals, including psychologists, social workers, and police officers. During the trial stage, the child's testimony is usually presented through recorded interviews admissible as evidence, reducing the need for court appearances. Video links and other technologies are used to allow the child to testify from a safe location. These protocols are supported by laws such as *Law 119(I)/2000 on*



Domestic Violence and Law 60/14 on Trafficking and Exploitation, ensuring the child's safety and the integrity of their testimony. [For more details, refer to resources from the Hope For Children CRC Policy Center, the Council of Europe - Child-Friendly Justice]

7.4. Who is allowed to participate in the interview/hearing? Who is sitting in the same room as the child / who is sitting in another room, if any?

As mentioned above, child interviews in Cyprus are conducted by specially trained professionals, including psychologists, social workers, and police officers, often in a child-friendly setting like the Children's House. During the interview, these professionals are present in the same room as the child. The alleged offender is not present but may observe from another room via video link, along with their legal representatives and sometimes the judge. This setup prevents direct contact between the child and the alleged offender, minimizing trauma. The same protocols apply during the trial phase, with testimony often presented via recorded interviews or video link to ensure the child's safety and comfort. These procedures are supported by laws such as *Law 119(I)/2000 and Law 60/14 to protect the child's well-being*.

7.5. Who is addressing the child victim/witness: only the interviewer? cross examination allowed? if only the interviewer, how can other participants ask questions? How is the communication between those who follow the interview and the interviewer? What kind of communication tool is used?

During the interview of a child victim or witness, only the specially trained interviewer directly addresses the child. Cross-examination by other participants, such as the defense, is not conducted in the same manner as in regular court proceedings to protect the child from potential trauma.



To facilitate communication between those who follow the interview (e.g., legal representatives, judges, or the defense) and the interviewer, a communication tool is used. Typically, this involves a one-way mirror or video link setup, where other participants can observe the interview from a different room. If they have questions or need specific information, they can communicate with the interviewer through an earpiece or other discreet communication devices. This ensures that the interviewer can relay the necessary questions to the child in a sensitive manner without causing additional stress.

This method allows the child to be interviewed in a supportive and non-intimidating environment while ensuring that all relevant parties can participate in the judicial process. These procedures are in line with the guidelines and best practices for child-friendly justice, ensuring the child's well-being throughout the judicial proceedings.

7.6. Is the interviewer allowed not to ask the questions raised by others? Is the interviewer allowed to rephrase the questions raised by others?

Yes, the interviewer is allowed to exercise discretion regarding the questions raised by others. This includes not asking certain questions if they are deemed inappropriate or harmful to the child. The interviewer is also permitted to rephrase questions to ensure they are suitable for the child's age and understanding and to avoid causing any undue stress or trauma.

This approach ensures that the child's welfare is prioritized while still allowing for necessary information to be gathered during the interview. By rephrasing questions, the interviewer can maintain the flow of communication in a child-friendly manner, which aligns with international standards and best practices for conducting interviews with child victims or witnesses.



7.7. Is the interviews audio and video recorded, if so for what purpose (accuracy of statement, use as evidence in court, use in other courts, other)?

Yes, interviews with child victims or witnesses are audio and video recorded. This is done to ensure the accuracy of the child's statement, to provide reliable evidence in court, and to reduce the need for the child to repeat their testimony, minimizing their stress. The recordings can also be used in other judicial proceedings involving the same case.

7.7.1. In case the recording is admitted as evidence in court: what protection measures can be applied (e.g. image and voice distortion, child heard in a separate room etc)?

When the recording of a child's interview is admitted as evidence in court, several protection measures can be applied to safeguard the child's well-being. These measures include image and voice distortion to protect the child's identity, allowing the child to be heard from a separate room via video link to avoid direct confrontation with the alleged offender, and conducting in-camera proceedings to exclude the public from the courtroom. These practices ensure that the child can participate in the judicial process safely and comfortably while minimizing potential trauma. These measures are supported by Cyprus's legal framework and align with international guidelines for child-friendly justice systems.

7.8. How is the quality of the recording? In case of failure in the recording, what are the measures adopted?

The quality of recordings for child interviews is maintained to a high standard to ensure clarity and accuracy. Advanced audio and video equipment is used to capture clear recordings, which are essential for accurately presenting the child's testimony in court. In the event of a failure in the recording, contingency measures are in place. These measures may include conducting a new interview if it is in the best interest of the child and can be done without causing additional trauma. Additionally, the presence of detailed interview notes taken by the professionals conducting the interview can serve as supplementary



documentation to support the child's testimony. These protocols ensure that even in the event of technical difficulties, the child's voice is accurately represented and their rights are upheld throughout the judicial process.

7.9. If no audio/video recording: is the child allowed to review his or her statements and to correct them? Is the child/legal representative allowed to get a copy of written statement / recording?

If no audio or video recording is available, the child in Cyprus is allowed to review and correct their statements to ensure accuracy. The child, or their legal representative, has the right to obtain a copy of the written statement. This allows for verification and any necessary amendments to be made to ensure the child's testimony is accurately represented. These measures are part of the legal framework that aims to protect the rights and well-being of child victims and witnesses, ensuring their statements are reliable and reflective of their true account. This process aligns with the guidelines and best practices for child-friendly justice systems advocated by international organizations such as the Council of Europe and UNICEF.

7.10. If there is a special procedure for hearing child victims and witnesses, is it mandatory for the child to participate in such a way or has he/she the right to choose to be heard as any other victim or witness? Are there still adaptations in this case?

Yes, there is a special procedure for hearing child victims and witnesses to ensure their safety and comfort during the judicial process. It is generally mandatory for children to participate in this child-friendly procedure, which includes measures such as conducting interviews in a supportive environment like the Children's House, using trained professionals, and employing video links to avoid direct confrontation with the alleged offender. However, children and their legal representatives do have some degree of choice in how they are heard.



If a child or their legal representative prefers for the child to be heard in the same manner as any other victim or witness, they can make this request. Even in such cases, adaptations are still typically made to ensure the child's well-being. These adaptations may include having a support person present, using simplified language, and allowing breaks during testimony to reduce stress. The overall aim is to maintain the child's comfort and safety while respecting their rights and preferences.

These procedures and adaptations are supported by Cyprus's legal framework and align with international standards for child-friendly justice, as advocated by organizations like the Council of Europe and UNICEF.

8. Offender's right during or after the interview

8.1. Is the alleged offender allowed to participate in the interview of the child witness? Is his/her defence attorney allowed to participate? Is participation of either of the two mandatory?

The participation of alleged offenders and their defense attorneys in interviews with child witnesses is carefully regulated to ensure the protection of the child's welfare and the fairness of legal proceedings. Typically, alleged offenders are not permitted to directly participate in interviews of child witnesses to prevent potential intimidation and to maintain the integrity of the interview process. Instead, trained professionals such as law enforcement officers or child advocacy professionals conduct these interviews in a manner that prioritizes the child's safety and comfort. Defense Legal representative (Lawyer) may be allowed to observe these interviews in some jurisdictions, but they are generally restricted from directly questioning the child during the interview itself. Their role primarily involves ensuring that the interview adheres to legal standards and safeguards the accused's rights to a fair trial. Participation of either the alleged offender or their defense Lawyer in these interviews is not mandatory, as the procedures are designed to balance the rights of all parties involved while gathering evidence in a legally sound and respectful manner. Specific laws and guidelines vary across states, but they



aim to uphold the principles of justice and protection for child witnesses throughout the interview process.

8.2. If the offender is not present during the interview, how can he or she make additional questions to the child? How can he or she contradict the child's statements?

In legal contexts where the offender is not present during the interview of a child, several mechanisms allow them to interact with the process and address the child's statements. Through their legal representatives (Lawyers), offenders can submit written questions to be posed to the child, ensuring pertinent inquiries are addressed and providing an opportunity to challenge or clarify the child's statements. The offender's legal team receives transcripts or recordings of the interview to review for discrepancies or inconsistencies, crucial for formulating a response strategy. They can prepare a defense based on interview information, gathering evidence and interviewing witnesses to challenge the child's statements if necessary. In adversarial legal systems, like those in common law jurisdictions like ours, the offender's counsel may cross-examine the child during a trial or hearing, allowing direct questioning of their statements under legal supervision. Legal teams can also pursue remedies if the interview process raises concerns about fairness or accuracy, such as through legal motions or appeals, ensuring the offender's rights to confront and challenge evidence are protected. It's vital to note that procedures and rights vary by jurisdiction and legal context, underscoring the importance of legal representation in safeguarding the offender's rights throughout the legal process.

9. Parallel proceedings – coordination

9.1. In case of parallel proceedings (such as in family or child protection procedures) based on the same facts, is it clear who has the priority to conduct the interview?



In cases involving parallel proceedings, such as those in family or child protection contexts based on the same facts, determining priority for conducting interviews can be intricate and dependent on various factors. Jurisdictional rules play a crucial role, outlining guidelines on which proceedings take precedence and how conflicts between them are resolved to ensure efficiency and fairness. The nature and purpose of each proceeding also influence priority; for instance, criminal investigations into abuse allegations might outweigh civil custody proceedings. Court orders or directives may explicitly designate the sequence or priority of interviews, aiming to manage the process effectively while safeguarding the rights and interests of all parties, particularly focusing on the best interests of the child. Effective coordination and communication among authorities involved are essential to minimize duplication and ensure decisions align across proceedings. Legal representation and advocacy further contribute to shaping priorities, advocating for timely and appropriate conduct of interviews while balancing the welfare and rights of those involved.

9.2. Is there any coordination procedure between different courts/authorities? How is the coordination procedure?

Coordination procedures between different courts or authorities, particularly in cases involving overlapping jurisdictions or parallel proceedings, are critical for ensuring efficient and fair administration of justice. Central to these procedures is establishing clear communication channels, often through regular meetings and formal protocols for information sharing. Case management conferences play a pivotal role, allowing representatives from various courts or authorities to discuss overlapping cases, resolve conflicts, and streamline proceedings. Some jurisdictions utilize centralized databases or systems to facilitate access to case information across entities, promoting coordination and reducing duplication of efforts. Courts may also schedule joint hearings or collaborative sessions to address multiple aspects of a case concurrently, enhancing efficiency and minimizing delays. Orders for coordination may be issued to set timelines, align procedural steps, or resolve jurisdictional disputes, further supporting consistent



decision-making and ensuring the protection of parties' rights. Legal and administrative support personnel play a crucial role in implementing these procedures, ensuring compliance with deadlines, proper documentation, and effective communication among involved parties. These coordination efforts are essential across various legal domains, including family law, child protection, criminal justice, and civil disputes, reflecting each jurisdiction's unique legal framework and administrative practices.

9.3. If another court/authority has not participated in the interview and needs additional information , is this court/authority allowed to interview the child again? And/or can interviews be shared (who can share with whom)?

In cases where another court or authority has not participated in an initial interview but requires additional information, whether they can conduct a new interview or access existing interview records depends on jurisdictional rules and legal considerations. Typically, the permissibility revolves around factors such as the relevance of the information needed, consent requirements, and considerations of the child's welfare and privacy. Coordination between courts or authorities is crucial to determine if interviews can be shared and under what legal safeguards to ensure confidentiality and procedural fairness while prioritizing the best interests of the child throughout the process.

10. Training

10.1. Are judges and magistrates trained to deal with child victims?

Yes, judges in Cyprus receive training to deal with child victims. Such trainings are being organised by the Cyprus School of Judges and include understanding the psychological impact of crimes on child victims and ensuring that the legal procedures do not further traumatize the child. The goal is to create a child-sensitive judicial process that upholds the rights and well-being of child victims throughout the legal proceedings.



In March 2020, a training seminar on “Human Trafficking”, was organised by the Cyprus School of Judges, upon the initiative and in collaboration with the Ministry of Interior and with the support of the Embassy of the United States of America in Cyprus. The seminar was attended by District and Family Court Judges as well as Legal Officers of the Supreme Court. In an interactive and practical manner, the expert trainers presented and analysed the topic in light of European and International Conventions and legal instruments, as well as case law case of the European Court of Human Rights. Moreover, they analysed the issue of trauma, they discussed judicial challenges and presented good practices, focusing on the protection of victims of human trafficking.

10.2. Is the content of the training interdisciplinary? Do other professionals also participate in the same training?

The training content for judges dealing with child victims is indeed interdisciplinary, integrating knowledge and practices from various fields to provide a comprehensive approach to handling cases involving children. This holistic approach ensures that all aspects of a child victim's experience are considered and addressed effectively within the judicial process.

On 13 September 2018, a workshop was organized focusing on judicial procedures for child-friendly justice. Judges, prosecutors, police, and social welfare representatives participated in the workshop, discussing and agreeing that children should be heard in a child-friendly space outside of the court.

Participants discussed the various needs and rights of child victims, emphasizing the importance of avoiding undue delays and ensuring that the child is heard. The role of judges and prosecutors was also a key topic, highlighting the need for specialized education in this area. The "Child-friendly justice – checklist for professionals" was used as a discussion tool to guide the workshop.



This workshop was organized by the “Hope For Children” CRC Policy Center as part of the PROMISE 2 project, demonstrating the interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of the training, involving various professionals to ensure a comprehensive approach to child-friendly justice.

11. Reforms in progress

11.1. Are there reforms in progress in your country regarding child’s victim rights, the procedure among others? What is the aim and the main subject of it?

In Cyprus, reforms are underway to enhance child victim rights and procedural safeguards. Efforts aim to clarify legal procedures, such as requiring parental consent for children to access justice and establishing roles for guardians in civil proceedings. Additionally, inter-agency cooperation, particularly involving Social Welfare Services and relevant agencies, is being strengthened to handle cases of child abuse and family violence more effectively through multidisciplinary approaches. The primary aim of these reforms is to uphold the rights of child victims and ensure a supportive legal environment.