

PRIO & SYMBIOSIS conference:

## *Gender, Migration and Trafficking in Europe*

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### Migrant Women in Cyprus

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**kisa**

Ισότητα, Στήριξη, Αντιρατσισμός  
Equality, Support, Antiracism



# KISA – Action for Equality, Support, Antiracism

- Grassroots, membership and activist-oriented NGO
- Fields of Migration/Asylum/Racism/Discrimination/Hate Speech and Hate Crime/Trafficking, esp. labour trafficking

## Current strategy

- Campaigning – Advocacy
- Empowering migrants & refugees
  - Information, support and mediation services
  - Capacity building , self organisation, integration
- Research and documentation
- Networking – National / EU / international level
- Strategic Litigation

# Migration model of Cyprus

## Underlying philosophy and basic tenets

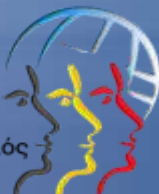
- Instituted early 1990s – agreement of social partners
- Temporary and time-limited residence and employment permit (max. 6 years) - “Cyprus is not a migration country”
- Absolute link of permit to a specific employer, job and economic sector
- “ ‘Aliens’ are here to serve us” – Unless ...€£\$ citizenship or visa for sale
- Recruitment and management of migration by private agencies – Important state functions (deportation) in the hands of agents and employers

## Aims to:

- Meet acute labour shortages and provide employers with low skilled, low paid labour force (“import of foreign labour”)
- Fill gaps in reproduction process & social services provision
- Facilitate mass entry of Cypriot women in labour market
- Prevent permanent stay of migrants

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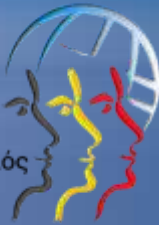
# Migration Model of Cyprus – II

## Impact and consequences

- Exclusion from and violation of fundamental human and labour rights
- Tight control of migrants and absolute dependence on employers
- Migrants subject to extreme exploitation, trafficking, physical and psychological violence, intimidation, confiscation of documents
- Loss of legal migration status
- Exclusion from all national policies/ plans/ measures / services
- Instigation, promotion and legitimation of systemic/ structural discrimination, xenophobia, racism, islamophobia, nationalism
- Limited and distorted approach to integration

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# Migrant Women in Cyprus

## Categories



- EU citizens
  - From: Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Pontians, other Eastern European countries, Britain, Germany
  - Employment: Hotel & catering, retail trade, light manufacturing, health, education
  - Status and rights: In theory, full equality with Cypriots; in practice: low salaries, long hours, often no Social Insurance

# Migrant Women in Cyprus - II

- Third-country nationals
  - Migrants, Refugees, Asylum seekers, Students, Undocumented migrants
  - From: Philippines, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal and other Asian countries, Russia and other Eastern European non-EU countries, Syria, Iran, Iraq and other Middle Eastern and African countries
  - Employment: Domestic work, caring of children, old, sick and disabled, agricultural and animal farming, entertainment and sex industries
- Third-country nationals married to Cypriot/ other EU nationals, esp. with children
  - Visitor status, dependent on husband/ partner (many cases of deportation on husband's/partner's demand)

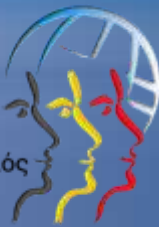
# Migrant Domestic Workers

## Position and status

- Largest single group of all third-country nationals (over 66%)
- Overwhelming majority of all DWs (97%)
- Unrecognised and unprotected occupation vs ILO DW Convention 189/2011
- Excluded from:
  - Legal and trade union protection and labour inspection
  - Gender equality mechanisms/ institutions
  - Basic human and labour rights - unemployment, sickness and maternity benefits, and pensions; health care

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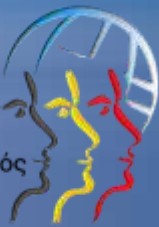
# Migrant Domestic Workers - II

## Conditions and violation of rights

- Control by and dependence on employer compounded by living and working in the same space
- Very long hours, no overtime, often no day off and no salary
- Intimidation and/or threats for deportation if report abuse, employment contract and other violations
- Confinement to work space, abuse, physical and psychological violence, including sexual harassment and rape
- Withholding and/or confiscation of travel and other personal documents
- Gross violations of employment contract

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# Migrant Domestic Workers - III

## Employment Contract

- Issued and administered by Ministry of Interior vs Ministry of Labour for all other migrants
- Inherently and systemically discriminatory
- Lowest pay in Cyprus - €309 (first group to have wage cuts in 2013)
- 9 public holidays vs 12-16 for other workers
- Expressed prohibition of pay increase
- Loss of employment and deportation if:
  - Pregnant or sick for over a month and if sickness not due to industrial accident;
  - Drunk; or
  - Gambling!

[Employers' letter to migrant domestic worker  
before she came to Cyprus]

**Migrant Women:  
Thou shalt ...or shalt not ....  
... The 11calogue  
of migrant domestic workers**



- 1. START WORKING 7 MORNING UNTIL 10 EVENING, OR WE CHANGE THIS IF WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING.**
- 2. YOU HAVE HALF DAY OFF (MORNING OR AFTERNOON, WE SAY YOU WEEN), SAME TIME SUNDAY AND SAME TIME ATER DAY.**
- 3. NO MOBILE AT HOME, NO BAG!**
- 4. NOBODY COME AT HOME EXCEPT YOU!**
- 5. DON'T GIVE INFORMATIONS TO THE OTHER PERSONS!**
- 6. DON'T SPEAK FOR THE FAMILY, OR YOUR SELF AT THE OTHER HOUSE NEAR TO US. SAY ONLY TO THEM ONLY HELLO AND BAY!!!**

7. **IF YOU BROKE FAMILIE'S THINGS, YOU WILL PAY FOR THEM.**
8. **NOBODY CALL AT THE FAMILIE TELEPHONE.**
9. **SOME TIMES YOU MUST STAY AT HOME NIGHT WITH THE CHILDREN, IF WE HAVE PROBLEM, SEMINAR OR TRIP.**
10. **DON'T SAY AND GIVE YOUR PERSONAL PROBLEMS TO THE PERSONS OF THE FAMILIE!!!**
11. **IF YOU ARE WORKING, YOU MUST BE ALWAYS HAPPY AND KIND, LEAVE YOUR PROBLEMS AT YOUR HOME COUNTRY!!!**

**GOOD LUCK AND NICE TRIP**

**MADAM ..... AND DOCTOR .....**

**[spelling as in original]**

Thank you!



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