

Teen Dating Violence and Gender-Based Violence in Greece: Context, Challenges, and Prevention

Teen dating violence (TDV) and gender-based violence (GBV) represent important public health concerns across Europe, and Greece is no exception. Dating violence includes physical, psychological, sexual, and verbal abuse occurring within adolescent romantic relationships, while gender-based violence refers to harmful acts directed at individuals based on their gender. It is important to understand the Greek context, in order to develop effective prevention strategies and support young people to build healthy, respectful relationships.

Recent research highlights alarming rates of dating violence among Greek youth. A 2025 study validating the Conflict in Adolescent Dating Relationship Inventory (CADRI) among Greek university students found that 88.7% reported perpetrating some form of dating violence against their partners in the past year. Additionally, 90.7% reported experiencing dating violence, with verbal and emotional abuse being the most common types (Hellenic Mediterranean University, 2025). According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), in 2022, 74% of domestic violence victims recorded by Greek police were women, with psychological violence being the most frequently reported form. That year, police documented 7,430 incidents of physical domestic violence and recorded 24 femicides.

Furthermore, Greece has made substantial legislative progress in addressing gender-based violence. The country was among the first signatories of the Istanbul Convention in 2011, ratifying it through Law 4531/2018, which entered into force in October 2018. Law 3500/2006 established the legal foundation for combating domestic violence, while Law 4604/2019 introduced a comprehensive framework for gender equality and the prevention of gender-based violence. Recent reforms in 2024-2025, including Law 5172/2025, have strengthened penalties for domestic violence offenders and introduced protection measures for victims. The 2021-2025 National Action Plan for Gender Equality prioritises preventing and combating gender-based and domestic violence as one of its four key pillars.

Regarding the GBV prevention initiatives, the GEAR against IPV (Gender Equality Awareness Raising against Intimate Partner Violence) project has taken a prevention initiative implemented in Greece. Coordinated by the European Anti-Violence Network, this school-based intervention has trained over 450 teachers and reached more than 2,000 adolescents across seven EU Member States. In Greece specifically, the programme was implemented in 21 schools and 11 Houses of "The Smile of the Child," engaging both the general adolescent population and high-risk youth who have experienced

abuse or neglect. The approach uses experiential activities to help young people examine gender stereotypes, recognise characteristics of healthy versus unhealthy relationships, and develop zero tolerance towards violence.

Despite legislative advances, significant challenges remain. The GREVIO baseline evaluation report noted concerns about prevailing patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes among the judiciary, insufficient shelter capacity for victims (only 20 shelters with approximately 450 beds nationwide), and limited counselling programmes for perpetrators. Fear of social stigma continues to deter reporting, and court proceedings often experience significant delays. Additionally, specialised Domestic Violence Units are limited or absent in many rural areas. UNICEF Greece has highlighted that corporal punishment remains socially acceptable in some contexts, and psychological violence is often not perceived as violence.

To conclude, Greece has demonstrated commitment to addressing teen dating violence and gender-based violence through adoption of international conventions, progressive legislation, and prevention programmes. However, the high prevalence rates among young people highlight the urgent need for continued investment in school-based prevention, teacher training, and awareness-raising activities that challenge gender stereotypes and promote healthy relationships. Closing the gap between legislative frameworks and practical implementation remains essential, particularly in expanding support services, training professionals across sectors, and ensuring that young victims have access to confidential, child-friendly reporting mechanisms. A multi-sectoral approach engaging schools, families, healthcare providers, and communities offers the most promising path toward building a generation equipped with the skills and awareness to maintain relationships free from violence.

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