

InSupport

Enhancing Interagency Support for Victims of Sexual Violence

symplexis

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)/Police protocol for responding to sexual violence

Support for survivors of sexual violence

Project number: 101195372



Co-funded by
the European Union

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)/ Police Protocol for Responding to Sexual Violence

The InSupport project –Enhancing interagency support for victims of sexual violence– aims to enhance the protection and provision of support to victims and survivors of sexual violence in Greece, through the creation of an inter-agency cooperation mechanism and the development of operational and referral procedures from a gender perspective, and was developed in the context of establishing and forming a Working Group, regarding the participation of the Hellenic Police in the “INSUPPORT” research project under the “CERV-2024-DAPHNE” funding programme.

17 March 2026



Co-funded by
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the European Commission can be held responsible for them. [Project Number: 101195372 — InSupport — CERV-2024-DAPHNE]

symplexis

KEOI
ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΕΡΕΥΝΑΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΡΟΒΛΕΨΗΣ



**METROPOLITAN
COLLEGE**



Contents

Introduction	5
1. Purpose and context	5
1.1 Purpose of the Protocol	5
1.2 Legal and institutional framework	5
1.3 Scope	10
1.4 Definitions	10
2. Fundamental Principles and Code of Conduct	12
2.1 Priority to the victim – Respect for Human Dignity	12
2.2 Code of Conduct	12
2.3 Data Protection	13
2.4 Non-discrimination – a victim-centred approach	13
3. First Response Procedure	14
3.1 First contact	14
3.2 First aid and safety	18
3.3 Information on (victim’s) rights	18
4. Legal proceedings	20
4.1 Taking a statement & preventing secondary victimization	20
4.2 Collection of evidence	23
4.3 Site inspection	24
4.4 Video footage & special investigative techniques	25
5. Risk Assessment	25
5.1 Assessment Tools	25
5.2 Protective measures	26
6. Inter-agency cooperation	26
6.1 Cooperation with Health Services (Hospitals, Health Centers, Forensic Services) ...	27
6.2 Psychosocial Support Structures	29
6.3 Legal Support	30
a) The right to legal representation	30
b) Free legal aid	31
c) Protective measure	31

(d) Right to compensation	31
7. Monitoring and evaluation.....	32
7.1 Incident recording system	32
7.2 Assessment of reports	33

Introduction

Sexual violence is a serious crime that requires immediate and effective response by the police authorities, with sensitivity, empathy and absolute priority to protect the victim/survivor and his/her rights.

This Protocol sets out the guiding principles/code of conduct when providing assistance to victims/survivors of sexual violence, taking statements/first contact, collecting evidence and assessing the risk to the safety of the victim/survivor, based on the applicable legal framework. It takes into account fundamental principles such as respect for human dignity, prevention of secondary victimization of the victim, non-discrimination and protection of the victim/survivor's personal data.

This document is a deliverable (deliverable 3.1) for the project "InSupport" [Programme number: 101195372 — InSupport — CERV-2024-DAPHNE]. It was funded by the European Union's Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values (CERV) programme. The NGO Symplexis was responsible for the entire project, including its design and development.

1. Purpose and context

1.1 Purpose of the Protocol

The purpose of this Protocol is to establish a clear, binding and unified framework for the immediate, effective and people-centered approach and response to incidents of sexual violence by the competent law enforcement authorities. The Protocol aims to protect the life, physical integrity and sexual freedom of every person with absolute respect for human dignity and seeks to prevent revictimization and all forms of discrimination. Furthermore, it seeks to ensure the effective and timely investigation of reported incidents, as well as the full information and support of victims with regard to their rights. Finally, it aims to ensure the accountability of perpetrators through criminal proceedings.

1.2 Legal and institutional framework

In Greece, the current Criminal Code defines offences against sexual freedom and sexual dignity in Articles 336 to 353. This legal framework provides for the **ex officio prosecution of sexual violence offences**.

The ex officio prosecution of these offences means that the submission of a complaint, report or even a simple notification to the competent prosecuting authorities is not only sufficient but also requires them to initiate legal proceedings. Any failure to undertake the prescribed preliminary investigative and administrative measures cannot be justified by a potential reluctance of the victim to proceed with a formal complaint.

The competent police services (Police Stations, Crime Investigation and Prosecution Departments, Immediate Response Units, etc., as applicable) are obliged to act promptly when they become aware, by any means, of the commission of sexual violence offences. They must, without delay, notify the competent Public Prosecutor of any information they receive, by any means, regarding a prosecutable criminal offence subject to ex officio prosecution [Article 38(1) of the Code of Criminal Procedure]. Such notification must be made in writing and include all available information concerning the offence, the perpetrators and the evidence [Article 38(3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure].

Consequently, the Greek legal system differs from those in several countries (such as England, France, etc.), where victims may approach public authorities and receive psychological, medical, safety support, etc., while evidence is preserved and they retain the right to decide whether to initiate criminal proceedings immediately or at a later stage.

In recent years, the Criminal Code has undergone significant amendments in order to align with the Istanbul Convention, placing emphasis on the absence of consent (Law 4619/2019, as amended by Law 4855/2021 and Law 5172/2025).

In particular, the above provisions of the Criminal Code are as follows:

Article 336 – Rape

- 1. Any person who, by means of physical force or by threat of serious and imminent danger to life or physical integrity, compels another to engage in or tolerate a sexual act shall be punished by imprisonment of at least ten (10) years.*
- 2. A sexual act is defined as sexual intercourse and acts of equal gravity.*
- 3. If the act referred to in paragraph 1 is committed by two or more perpetrators acting jointly, or results in the death of the victim, or if the victim is a minor, life imprisonment shall be imposed.*
- 4. Any person who, except in the case referred to in paragraph 1, engages in a sexual*

act without the consent of the victim shall be punished by imprisonment for up to ten (10) years.

➔ The most significant change is that rape is now defined on the basis of lack of consent, and solely on the physical violence.

Article 337 – Insult to sexual dignity

1. Any person who, through gestures of a sexual nature, proposals relating to sexual acts, sexual acts performed in the presence of another, or through the exposure of their genitals, grossly offends another person’s dignity, shall be punished by imprisonment of up to one (1) year or a fine. Criminal prosecution requires a complaint, unless the victim is a minor.

2. The act described in the preceding paragraph shall be punished by imprisonment of up to two (2) years or a fine if the victim is under twelve (12) years of age.

3. Any adult who, through the internet or other means or information and communication technologies, contacts a person under fifteen (15) years of age and, through gestures or proposals, offends the dignity of the minor in the sphere of sexual life, shall be punished by imprisonment of at least two (2) years. If a meeting follows, the penalty shall be imprisonment of at least three (3) years.

4. Any person who directs gestures of a sexual nature or makes proposals for the commission of sexual acts to a person who is professionally dependent on them, or who exploits the position of a person seeking employment, shall be punished by imprisonment of up to three (3) years.

5. Any person who, without consent, communicates or sends to another person, by any means or through information and communications technology, real or fabricated images or visual/ audiovisual material recorded on an electronic or other physical medium, depicting genitalia, in a manner likely to cause fear, distress or serious psychological harm shall be punished by imprisonment of up to three (3) years. If the offence referred to in the preceding paragraph is committed against a minor, a public representative, a journalist or a human rights defender, or if the perpetrator is in a hierarchical or dependency relationship with the victim, this constitutes a particularly aggravating circumstance.

➔ This article covers acts that do not amount to rape but seriously violate personal dignity. Such offences are not prosecuted ex officio unless the victim is a minor.

Article 338 – Abuse of a person incapable of resistance in a sexual act

1. Any person who engages in a sexual act with another by abusing their mental or physical disability or their inability to resist, regardless of cause, shall be punished

by imprisonment.

2. If the act referred to in the preceding paragraph is committed by two or more perpetrators acting jointly, imprisonment of at least ten (10) years shall be imposed.
 → This constitutes a criminal offence and is persecuted *ex officio*.

Article 339 – Sexual acts with or in the presence of minors

1. Any person who engages in a sexual act with a person under fifteen (15) years of age, or deceives them into performing or submitting to such an act shall be punished, unless more severe penalties apply under Articles 342 and 351A, as follows:

(a) if the victim is under twelve (12) years of age, imprisonment of at least ten (10) years;

(b) if the victim is over twelve (12) years of age or older, imprisonment.

2. Sexual acts between minors under the age of fifteen (15) shall not be punishable, unless the age difference between them exceeds three (3) years, in which case only reformatory or therapeutic measures may be imposed.

3. Any person who induces or entices a minor under the age of fifteen (15) to watch, through the use of information and communications technologies or in person, a sexual act, without participating, shall be punished by imprisonment of at least two (2) years and a fine if the minor is under fourteen (14) years of age, or imprisonment of up to three (3) years or a fine if the minor is over fourteen (14th) year of age.

- The law is particularly strict in this regard, as minors (under 15 years of age) are considered legally incapable of consent. Any sexual act with a child under 15 years of age constitutes a felony, even without the use of force.

Article 342 – Sexual abuse of minors

1. Any adult who engages in sexual acts with a minor entrusted to their care or supervision, even temporarily, shall be punished as follows:

(a) if the victim is under fourteen (14) years of age, by imprisonment of at least ten (10) years and a fine;

b) if the victim is aged fourteen (14) or over, by imprisonment and a fine.

The following constitute aggravating circumstances in the commission of the offence referred to in paragraph 1: a) by a relative, (b) by a person living with the minor or maintaining friendly relations with the minor's relatives, (c) by a teacher, educator, coach or other person providing instruction to the minor, (d) by a person receiving the minor's services, (e) by a member of the clergy with whom the minor has a spiritual relationship; (f) by a psychologist, doctor, nurse or healthcare professional who

provides services to the minor; (g) by a person who takes advantage of the minor's mental or physical disability.

2. Any adult who addresses sexual gestures or proposals or narrates or depicts or presents acts of a sexual nature on a minor entrusted to their care or custody, even temporarily, shall be punished by imprisonment of at least six (6) months.

➔ Aggravating circumstances.

Article 343 – Abuse in a sexual act

The following shall be punished by imprisonment of a least two (2) years and a fine: (a) any person who compels another to engage in or tolerate a sexual act by abusing a relationship of employment dependence of any nature; (b) anyone who compels another person to engage in or tolerate a sexual act by exploiting the victim's position as a person seeking employment, (c) persons appointed to or in any capacity employed in prisons or other detention centers, police services, schools, educational institutions, hospitals, clinics or any kind of therapeutic establishment, or in other institutions intended to care for persons in need of assistance, if, by abusing their position, they compel a person admitted to these institutions to engage in a sexual act.

➔ The above applies to cases where the perpetrator exploits their position (e.g. doctor, teacher, employer) or the victim's inability to resist (e.g. due to mental disability or temporary loss of consciousness).

Article 344 – Indictment

In cases under Article 336, criminal proceedings are initiated ex officio; however, if the victim declares that they do not wish the prosecution to proceed, the public prosecutor may refrain from the criminal proceedings or, if proceedings have already been brought, refer the case to the competent judicial council, which may definitively terminate the criminal proceedings, taking into account the victim's statement that the publicity arising from the criminal proceedings would result in serious psychological trauma.

More specific circumstances surrounding the commission of criminal offences constituting sexual violence are defined in Chapter 19 of the Criminal Code, "Offences against sexual freedom and offences of economic exploitation of sexual life, as well as in specific criminal laws such as Law 3500/2006 "On combating domestic violence and other provisions".

In the current legal framework and the Criminal Code, **cyber sexual violence** and harassment are treated with particular severity, as their psychological impact and

damage to the victim's dignity may be just as serious as physical violence.

The following are the main forms of online sexual violence addressed by the law:

1. Revenge Porn: This involves the publication or distribution of photographs or videos of a sexual nature without the consent of the person depicted. Even if the material was originally filmed with consent, its publication without authorization constitutes a criminal offence if it involves minors, and a serious misdemeanor (or a criminal offence under certain conditions) if it involves an adult. It is often committed for the purposes of blackmail, revenge following a break-up, or humiliation.

2. Sexual Blackmail (Sextortion): When someone threatens to make intimate material public if the victim does not comply with sexual demands or pay money. Criminal proceedings involve provisions on blackmail (Section 385 of the Criminal Code) in conjunction with offences against sexual freedom.

3. Cyber Harassment/Stalking: Sending unsolicited sexual messages or images (e.g. 'dick pics') or persistent comments with sexual innuendo on social media. Falls under Article 337 of the Criminal Code (Insult against sexual dignity), which explicitly states that the offence may also be committed through "gestures or proposals relating to sexual acts".

4. Grooming (online enticement of children): The approach of minors by adults for the purpose of sexual exploitation. It is a distinct offence that is severely punished, even if there is no physical contact, solely on the basis of the preparatory process via the internet.

1.3 Scope

This protocol aims to address cases not provided for by the currently applicable protocols for handling victims of domestic violence and minor victims of sexual violence. Its scope includes criminal acts of a sexual nature which, by their very nature, require immediate forensic examination and the collection of evidence.

1.4 Definitions

According to established case law¹, a more detailed definition of the acts under consideration may be described as follows:

For the constitution of the offence of rape, the following are required: (a) the coercion of a person, regardless of gender, into involuntary sexual intercourse or the

¹ Athens Court of Appeal 753/2000, Supreme Court 1028/2024

commission of an indecent act, which occurs when the person, against their will, is subjected to sexual intercourse or to the tolerance or commission of an indecent act, (b) such coercion must be effected through the threat of serious and imminent danger or through physical violence, understood as force that cannot be resisted and thus compels a person to submit to sexual intercourse or to attempt an indecent act, against their will.

Coercion may take two forms, namely threats and physical violence. An indecent act is defined as conduct that objectively offends public decency and morality and is subjectively directed towards the satisfaction or arousal of sexual desire; it is distinguished from sexual intercourse, which is defined as the union of the sexual organs. Subjectively, intent (*mens rea*) is required, consisting of the perpetrator's will to compel another person, through physical violence or threat or both, to engage in or tolerate sexual intercourse or an indecent act, including the awareness that the "other person" does not consent.

Furthermore, the commission of the act by two or more perpetrators acting jointly constitutes a distinct aggravated form of the basic offence and is punished more severely with a prison sentence of at least ten (10) years.

The term "jointly" in the commission of the act refers always and exclusively, in accordance with the General Principles of Criminal Law, to the existence of complicity. Consequently, for the establishment of gang rape, other forms of participation are excluded, namely instigation and direct or simple aiding and abetting.

Thus, the definition of the multi-act crime of rape committed in complicity (Art. 45, 336(1) of the Criminal Code) is also distinct, where the act of each accomplice constitutes only part of the objective elements, whilst the remaining part is realized by the act of the other accomplice (one applies coercion, another performs the sexual act) and of gang rape (Art. 336(2)-(1) of the Criminal Code), which occurs when each of the perpetrators (two or more) carries out, successively or simultaneously, both the coercion by physical force and the sexual act or indecent assault.

Whilst the forms of participation in gang rape are determined in each specific case by the nature of the perpetrator's intent (Supreme Court 25/98, Criminal Reports M VIII, 663, Supreme Court 1356/97, Criminal Law Review M, 478 Systematic Interpretation of the Penal Code, the aggravating circumstance of gang rape, p. 39, no. 68 et seq.,

Kontaxis, Interpretation of the Criminal Code, p. 2139). Moreover, a continuing offence is defined as one committed by the same person through multiple homogeneous acts separated in time but directed against the same legal interest, each fulfilling all elements of the same offence, and linked by a unified intent.

2. Fundamental Principles and Code of Conduct

2.1 Priority to the victim – Respect for Human Dignity

The response of the competent police officers must be guided by the principle of “priority to the victim”. Every action must aim at safeguarding human dignity, considering that the person who has experienced sexual violence is in a state of severe psychological trauma.

The approach must be free from judgement, prejudice, or doubt toward the victim’s account, and must create an environment of safety and trust.

Good practice example

Instead of immediately questioning the victim about the incident, the police officers should ask: “Is there anything you need right now to feel more comfortable? Would you like to move to a quieter place?”. Waiting in public and crowded spaces alongside other members of the public, or worse, with detainees, constitutes a violation of dignity and must be strictly avoided.

2.2 Code of Conduct

Police officers handling such cases must demonstrate a high level of professionalism, empathy and absolute discretion. The use of intimidating language or the exertion of pressure to influence decision-making is prohibited.

Respect for the victim and the avoidance of any action that could cause secondary victimization are of paramount importance.

Good practice example

Questions such as “Why did you go there?” or “Why didn’t you react?”, must be avoided, as they imply victim-blaming. Instead, validating language should be used: “It’s understandable that you may find it difficult to remember all the details right now; shock affects memory and we are here to support you at your own pace.”

2.3 Data Protection

It is self-evident that all actions carried out within the framework of the preliminary investigation are subject to strict confidentiality. Under no circumstances is it permissible to “disclose” any information to third parties or to the media. The number of the police officers involved in handling the incident must be limited to what is strictly necessary for its successful resolution. Information, videos, photographs or audio files must not be stored on personal or private devices such as mobile phones or other electronic devices, both because this serves absolutely no official or general investigative purpose and because of the risk of unintended disclosure to an unknown number of people, due to insufficient security and confidentiality measures.

All information must be handled under conditions of strict confidentiality. The victim’s personal data, the details of the assault and of their private life are protected by the confidentiality of the preliminary investigation and the provisions of the GDPR.

Access to this information is strictly limited to those formally involved in the investigation of the case.

Data held in electronic form (photographs, videos, etc.), stored on mobile phones, laptops, etc., must be transferred intact to the Directorate of Forensic Investigations for assessment, under the supervision, guidance and direction of the competent prosecuting authority. Data from social media applications and, in general, any information relating to an alleged incident of sexual violence must be stored on an appropriate digital medium (e.g. USB, DVD) and included in the case file. Such material must not be transmitted for verification, nor is it submitted to the Public Prosecutor’s Office via email.

2.4 Non-discrimination – a victim-centered approach

The Protocol is applied horizontally, without any discrimination on the grounds of origin, social status or sexual orientation. A ‘victim-centered’ approach means that the needs, wishes and safety of the victim guide the process, balancing the requirements of criminal prosecution with the victim’s psychological and emotional well-being.

In all cases where there is an immediate risk of serious harm to the victim’s health or

life, priority must be given to ensuring the prompt possible provision of medical care, followed by the preliminary investigation of the reported sexual offence, even if this entails a significant risk of loss of evidence.

3. First Response Procedure

3.1 First contact

The first contact with a victim of sexual violence is not a mere administrative procedure, but a critical clinical and investigative intervention. The officer handling the case must, above all, immediately recognize the dynamics of the trauma, which often manifests in the form of “tonic immobility”. This behavior, commonly referred to as “freezing”, is one of the most misunderstood yet crucial phenomena in the investigation of sexual violence. It is an involuntary biological state of temporary paralysis. It is not a conscious choice or decision made by the victim, but an automatic response of the brainstem when the individual perceives that neither flight nor fight is possible. Under conditions of extreme fear, the amygdala (the brain’s fear center) becomes hyperactive and overrides the prefrontal cortex (the center of rational processing). The brain may go so far as to send a signal to the body to become completely immobilized, reducing the heart rate and blood pressure. Typical symptoms include complete inability to move the limbs, inability to speak or cry out, and often a sense of dissociation, where the victim feels that “they are watching the scene from above” or that their body does not belong to them. Freezing responds to the initial temporary inhibition of movement for threat assessment (like a deer caught in the headlights) and precedes the fight-or-flight response. Tonic immobility is the final state of paralysis occurring during the assault. The body becomes rigid, the eyes may be closed or fixed on a single point, and voluntary muscle control is lost.

The above is significant for the police investigation because their understanding radically changes the way the victim is handled, the manner in which the testimony is taken and the evidence is evaluated:

- **Debunking the myth of resistance:** The absence of physical injuries (scratches, bruises) on the victim or the perpetrator is often misinterpreted as “consent”. Tonic immobility scientifically explains why a victim may not resist, fight back, scratch or call for help, despite non-consent.
- **Dealing with “incoherent” testimony:** Due to this state, memories are stored in fragments. The victim may remember the perpetrator’s scent or a sound with great clarity but be unable to determine the duration of

the attack.

- **Anticipating triggers:** Avoiding behaviors that may remind the victim of the assault, such as, for example, a harsh tone or an authoritative posture.

The recognition and expert substantiation of tonic immobility (by forensic pathologists, psychologists) is crucial for:

- **Establishing lack of consent:** According to the Istanbul Convention and modern criminal law, consent must be given freely. Biological paralysis negates any notion of consent, even if the victim remained 'silent'.
- **Eliminating victim blaming:** Understanding immobility as an involuntary biological response relieves the victim of the unbearable burden of self-blame ("Why didn't I react?"), which often leads to post-traumatic depression and refusal to cooperate with the authorities.

Example of victim handling

a) incorrect approach: "If he wasn't holding your hands, why didn't you push him away?" (A question that causes secondary victimization). b) Correct (trauma-informed) approach: "Many people in such moments feel that their body does not respond or that they can't move. Would you like to describe what you were feeling in your body at that moment?"

This approach enables the victim to describe their actual experience, providing prosecutors with the necessary information for assessment.

Reception

The reception must take place in a space that ensures complete auditory and visual privacy, away from communal waiting areas, detention facilities or busy offices.

The police officer handling the case introduces themselves by name and rank and clearly explains their role. It must be made clear to the victim that, under Greek Criminal Code, proceedings are initiated ex officio. This requires a high level of professionalism, so that the mandatory nature of prosecution is not perceived as coercion, but as a state guarantee of protection and justice.

Example of appropriate behavior

Instead of immediately requesting identification details, the officer begins with the phrase: "My name is [Rank/Name] and I am here to ensure your safety and to

initiate the procedures required by law. I understand that you are in a difficult situation, but the state is obliged to intervene promptly to protect you and investigate the incident.” If the victim is accompanied by a third party, the officer must assess whether their presence is supportive or potentially coercive and may briefly separate the victim for an initial assessment.

This protocol, while not strictly adhering to either a victim-centred or a trauma-informed approach, seeks to take into account, adopt and utilise at an operational level the best practices of both approaches, within the framework of the applicable legal framework and the existing capabilities of state institutions and their structures.

Consequently, from the very first contact between police officers and the victim, the objective is not merely ‘polite’ behavior, but the conscious recognition that they are dealing with a person who has experienced severe trauma, capable of altering brain function, memory and behavior.

For a successful outcome, the following must be taken into account regarding the victim:

- The victim must not be treated as an ordinary citizen attending for routine reasons, but as a person in urgent need of support and respect for their rights. Priority is given to their needs and empowerment toward regaining autonomy, following the extreme violation of their freedom.
- The victim must not be treated as yet another criminal caught red-handed breaking the law, as an adversary of the legal order, but as a person seeking refuge for their physical, mental and emotional safety.
- The victim must not be treated coldly as an “object” of evidence collecting and proof, but as a central agent who is properly informed and actively involved in decision-making. Each step is explained in advance to avoid surprise, thereby increasing trust and transparency.
- The victim must be supported to restore their dignity and privacy; they must not be exposed to public view, and information must be handled with the utmost confidentiality.
- Only necessary and appointed personnel must be present, on a legitimate basis. No unnecessary entry or exit from space, on the ground of curiosity, must be permitted.
- No pressure is exerted to rush the process. The police officer may ask, “Would you like to proceed with your statement now, or would you prefer some time to rest first?”
- Collaboration is encouraged; authority shifts from the “all-knowing” officer to the individual. The victim is treated as a partner in the

investigation of their own case.

- The victim is encouraged in overcoming feelings of guilt about their “weaknesses”; the police officer acknowledges the difficulty of the situation without becoming emotional, using phrases such as “It is understandable that you are finding it difficult to remember this detail now; the brain often reacts this way under intense stress” (validating statements).
- The victim is facilitated by the use of open-ended questions, clearly not accusatory ones, such as “Tell me what you remember” rather than “Why didn’t you cry out?”.
- The focus shifts from “What did you do?” to “What happened to you?”. In a traditional interrogation, the investigators look for contradictions, gaps and ambiguities; in this case, they act as facilitators of the victim’s memory.
- Efforts must be made to restore a sense of control to the victim and make them feel that they have choices. The crime of sexual violence is an act that causes complete loss of control. This approach attempts to restore control to the victim (e.g. “Would you like to take a break?”, “Would you like to sit in the chair or on the sofa?”).
- The victim must not be put on the defensive but is to be supported in remaining present and engaged, avoiding dissociating or distancing themselves from the process. The police officer must not say “Why can’t you remember the time?”, but use another phrasing to form the question differently: “It’s normal not to remember the sequence of events right now; tell me what you perceived by your senses – what did you smell or hear?” Fragmented memory is a common and by no means rare phenomenon. The victim may vividly recall smells or sounds (sensory memories), but struggle with the chronological sequence of events. A professional who focuses on trauma must not interpret memory gaps as “lies”, but as a trauma-related symptom.
- The aim is both to respect the victim’s dignity and to ensure that testimony remains reliable and admissible in court despite shock. Freezing, confusion or agitation do not necessarily indicate falsehood.

Within this framework, the preliminary investigation is not “lenient” towards the victim, but rather more effective. A victim who feels safe and free from judgement or, even worse, condemnation, will provide more accurate and detailed information, is more likely to remain engaged throughout the judicial process (fewer withdrawals of complaints or refusals to cooperate) and testifies more effectively in court, as the healing process has begun earlier, with the foundations having been laid from the very first steps of contact with the state authorities.

In the Greek context, where criminal prosecution is *ex officio*, this approach serves as

the sole shield against secondary victimization, ensuring that state intervention functions as a therapeutic and restorative mechanism rather than as a second degree of psychological harm.

3.2 First aid and safety

The priority of physical integrity over procedural formality is non-negotiable. The investigator must carry out an immediate, non-invasive visual assessment of any life-threatening injuries or internal injuries. Medical stabilization (where required) must precede the forensic examination. If the person shows signs of shock (shivering, paleness, tachycardia), calling the ambulance service (EKAV) is the first step, while at the same time ensuring that the perpetrator no longer has access to the victim.

Psychological stabilization requires the creation of a “controlled environment” for the victim. The police officer must inform the person of the steps that will follow, avoiding any element of surprise. It is crucial to prevent the victim from taking actions that destroy biological material (washing, changing clothes, consuming food/liquids in cases of oral penetration), whilst explaining the reason respectfully and without causing additional distress.

Example of good practice

If the victim insists on washing because they are feeling “dirty”, the officer should respond calmly and empathetically: “I fully understand your need to clean yourself. However, for the sake of the case file and to identify the perpetrator, you must first visit the forensic doctor. Any biological traces you have on you right now are the strongest evidence we have.”

In conclusion, provided there is no immediate and obvious danger to the victim’s life and physical integrity, and their condition has been stabilized with the minimum possible interventions that would lead to the loss of evidence, the aim is to refer the case to the forensic medical service as quickly as possible.

3.3 Information on (victim’s) rights

In the Greek system, where a report of sexual violence to the police triggers ex officio prosecution, the information provided to the victim must be extremely clear. The police officer must explain to the victim that the proceedings cannot be withdrawn

and that their testimony is fundamental.

If the victim is of foreign origin and does not speak, understand, or write Greek, the right to an interpreter must be ensured, and communication with the representative authorities of their home country in Greece (embassy, consulate) must be facilitated.

Information must also cover the forensic examination stage, explaining that this is a process of gathering evidence to be used in court. Information about rights helps the victim regain a sense of control over the process, reducing the feeling of loneliness and helplessness caused by the crime.

Example of good practice

The police officer informs the victim: “You have the right to be represented by a lawyer and to request the assistance of a psychologist during your testimony². You

² **For witnesses who are victims of human trafficking in accordance with Article 228 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Law 4620/2019):** ‘1. During the examination as a witness of the victim of the offences referred to in Articles 323A, 336, paragraph 4 of Article 337, Articles 338, 343, 345 and paragraph 3 of Article 349 of the Penal Code, a psychologist or psychiatrist shall be appointed and present as an expert witness, without Articles 204 to 208 applying in other respects. 2. The psychologist or psychiatrist shall prepare the victim for the examination, cooperating to this end with the investigating officers and judicial officials. To this end, they shall use appropriate diagnostic methods, assess the victim’s cognitive capacity and mental state, and set out their findings in a written report which shall form an integral part of the case file. The psychiatrist or psychologist is present during the examination, and the person concerned may be accompanied by their legal representative, unless the investigating judge prohibits the presence of that person by a reasoned decision for a serious reason, particularly in the event of a conflict of interest or the involvement of that person in the act under investigation. Paragraph 3 (F1) of the preceding article shall apply *mutatis mutandis*. 3. The victim’s statement shall be drawn up in writing and recorded on an electronic audiovisual medium, where possible. The electronic presentation of the victim’s statement shall replace their physical presence in the subsequent stages of the proceedings. 4. If electronic presentation is not possible, the victim’s written statement shall be read out in court. 5. Once a case concerning the acts referred to in paragraph 1 has been brought before the court, the prosecutor or the parties may request the presiding judge to examine the victim, if they have not been examined during the preliminary investigation or if further examination is required. If the request is granted, the examination of the victim shall be conducted on the basis of clearly formulated questions, without the presence of the parties, at the place where the victim is located, by an investigating officer appointed by the judge who ordered the examination. In any event, in respect of the criminal offences referred to in paragraph 1, with the exception of that under Article 323A of the Criminal Code, the court may, by a specially reasoned decision, request that the examination take place in the physical presence of the adult victim, in accordance with the formalities of Article 330 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, if deemed absolutely necessary for the discovery of the truth. Paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article shall also apply in such cases. 6. Paragraphs 2 and 3 of Article 68 of Law 4478/2017 (F2) shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to adult victims of the acts referred to in paragraph 1. In such cases, the social investigation may also be conducted by social workers employed by municipalities or regions.” **As well as in cases involving minor victims of sexual violence** (see Article 227(3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure and Article 68(2) and (3) of Law 4478/2017).

are also entitled to appoint your own forensic doctor as a technical adviser. Would you like us to contact someone you trust?"

4. Legal proceedings

4.1 Taking a statement & preventing secondary victimization

Taking a sworn statement forms the backbone of the preliminary investigation. The investigator must apply the "open narrative" method, allowing the victim to describe the events at their own pace, without interruptions for clarifications that may distort their memory. The use of video recording, where appropriate (in cases involving child victims), is best practice to avoid multiple interviews.

Police officers involved in handling the case prior to the Officer who will be in charge of compiling the criminal file must limit themselves to the essentials and avoid having multiple persons going into excessive detail. The repetition of the entire history, first to the Duty Officer, then to another officer, and finally to the investigating officers who will take the statement, puts pressure on the victim, re-triggers traumatic experiences, and causes them unnecessary distress and strain.

When taking the statement, the officer must identify details concerning the use of force, threats, coercion and evidence of "lack of consent". The investigator's body language must convey attentiveness and neutrality. The statement must include information on the perpetrator's behavior before, during and after the act, as well as any verbal threats that were made.

An example of appropriate behavior

The investigating officer avoids questions that imply doubt, such as "*Are you sure that's how it happened?*". Instead, they use phrases such as: "*Please describe to me in as much detail as possible what happened when...*" or "*What do you remember the perpetrator saying at that moment?*". If the victim becomes emotionally distressed, the police officer temporarily interrupts the statement, allows time for the victim to recover, and notes the emotional state in the report as part of the victim's clinical profile.

The following are typical examples that must be avoided at all costs:

1. Questions implying victim blaming

When, whilst taking a statement, the police officer focuses on the victim's choices rather than the perpetrator's actions. Questions such as "Why had you been drinking?" or "Why did you choose to walk through that dark spot?" shift the burden of responsibility onto the victim, reinforcing feelings of shame and guilt.

2. Inappropriate waiting and examination environments

The victim waits in communal areas of police stations or hospitals, where they are exposed to the gaze of strangers or, even worse, come into visual contact with the perpetrator or their relatives. The lack of privacy violates their dignity and increases levels of post-traumatic stress.

3. Questioning credibility due to a 'frozen' reaction

When the authorities interpret the victim's emotional detachment or calmness as a sign of lying. From a psychological perspective, this is often a defence mechanism (dissociation). Treating the victim with suspicion because they do not "cry enough" is a classic example of secondary victimization.

4. Multiple and repeated statements

The need for the victim to describe the traumatic event over and over again to different employees (duty officer, investigating officer, coroner, prosecutor). Each repetition forces the brain to relive the trauma (re-traumatisation), especially when there is no standardised management protocol.

5. Use of the victim's sexual history during the preliminary investigation

During the preliminary investigation stage (but also in subsequent stages), the victim's personal life (e.g. a sex worker who has been assaulted) or, more generally, previous relationships with multiple partners, do not confer on the perpetrator the right to abuse the victim. The tactic of morally demeaning the victim in order to exonerate and justify the perpetrator is not permitted under any circumstances.

6. Inadequate conduct of the preliminary investigation

Omissions of essential preliminary investigation procedures, failure to obtain evidence in a timely and valid manner, delayed referral for/ access to forensic examination, inadequate investigation of the complaint, and failure to examine witnesses who subsequently left the country (tourists) have a detrimental effect on the progress of the case. Combined with the chronic inefficiency of the Greek state and the excessive delays in the delivery of justice, this results in the victim being held “hostage” to the past. The system’s inability to conclude the case in a timely manner hinders psychological healing and the individual’s definitive transition from the status of “victim” to that of “survivor”.

7. Lack of information regarding the progress of the case

When the victim is ignored by the authorities after filing a complaint and is not informed of the perpetrator’s release or the progress of the investigation. This creates a feeling of utter helplessness and the impression that the state is indifferent to their personal safety.

8. Pressure for ‘reconciliation’ or downplaying of the incident

In cases of domestic sexual violence, when those around the victim or even the authorities urge the victim to “make amends” with the perpetrator for the sake of the family or because “it was a bad moment”. Downplaying the seriousness of the act invalidates the victim’s experience and leaves them exposed to a new cycle of violence.

9. Breach of anonymity by the media, breach of the confidentiality of the preliminary investigation

The publication of details that reveal the victim’s identity or the sensational description of the details of the violence for the sake of ratings. Public shaming and comments on social media constitute a modern and particularly aggressive form of secondary victimization.

Any leak to the media, under any circumstances, of photographs and/or videos containing details of the case under investigation, by a police officer involved in handling it, has extremely serious consequences in terms of the victim’s public

shaming and humiliation, not only in the eyes of the public but also within their immediate circle (family, professional, social). Such an act is subject to very serious criminal and disciplinary consequences for the perpetrator.

4.2 Collection of evidence

The handling of evidence in cases of sexual violence forms a “chain” which, if broken at any point, can lead to the acquittal of a guilty person or the inability to identify the perpetrator.

In Greece, the use of a “Sexual Assault Evidence Kit” (SAEK) has not yet been legislated or legally provided for, nor have Sexual Assault Referral Centers (SARCs) been established. Consequently, the responsibility for collecting evidence that can be obtained following a forensic medical examination remains the exclusive duty (and right) of the Forensic Medical Service.

Under these circumstances, it is a top priority for the police authorities involved to refer the victim to the competent forensic medical authority without delay and as a matter of absolute priority, and to facilitate their unimpeded access to the relevant service.

Until the forensic examination can be carried out, the victim is advised to take steps to minimize or prevent the risk of evidence being lost. For example:

- **Hair & combing:** the victim must not comb their hair or adjust their hairstyle to improve their appearance, nor remove foreign hair from their clothing by hand. The aim is to preserve the disheveled appearance, as the hairstyle is evidence of a struggle.
- **Nails & hands:** the victim must not wash their hands or clean/cut their nails due to a feeling of contamination. The aim is to collect DNA evidence of a struggle by taking swabs from under the nails, using a separate sterile swab for each hand. If there is a broken nail, it will be collected by the forensic pathologist as independent evidence, as it often carries a sufficient amount of the perpetrator’s skin.
- **Oral cavity:** the victim must not use mouthwash, brush their teeth, smoke, or consume food or liquids prior to the examination. The aim is to preserve saliva; if oral contact is reported, oral swabs should be taken first.
- **Urine collection:** one should not wait until the statement is completed to

collect the sample, nor should the victim be allowed to urinate in a public toilet without a sample being collected. The aim is to collect urine immediately; particularly where substance use is suspected (e.g. rape drugs), urine is collected during the first urination. The sample is sealed immediately and refrigerated. A delay of just a few hours renders many substances undetectable.

- **Abrasions and bruises:** a simple description in a statement, or the submission of photographs other than those taken by the forensic pathologist, would not satisfy the evidential requirements, particularly if taken without a scale or using a flash that obscures the color of the bruise. The aim is specialized photography, using a forensic ruler, and taking photographs at different times (some bruises are more visible after 24–48 hours), and the use of ultraviolet (UV) light for invisible injuries.
- **Clothing (outerwear and/or underwear):** the victim must not place their underwear in a plastic bag or throw it in the bin, nor should the police officer collect the clothes without gloves. The aim is to place each item of clothing in a separate package, i.e. in a separate paper bag (not plastic). Underwear must be handled with forceps or disposable gloves, which must be changed after each item to prevent contamination.

Evidence that has not been collected correctly is evidence that will collapse in court. Adherence to the prescribed legal procedures (timely referral and examination by a legally appointed forensic doctor) not only protects the evidence, but also the victim themselves, ensuring that the painful process of the examination will have a meaningful impact on the delivery of justice.

4.3 Site inspection

The crime scene must be cordoned off immediately to prevent evidence from being tampered with by third parties. The inspection involves detailed photography of the scene, tracing biological materials using special lighting (alternative light sources – ALS) and searching for signs of a struggle, such as broken objects or marks on furniture.

To this end, the police officer conducting the preliminary investigation immediately informs the relevant department of the Criminal Investigation Directorate, but this is preceded by securing the integrity of the crime scene.

4.4 Video footage & special investigative techniques

In order to make the most of modern technical capabilities for investigating the complaint, the collection of video footage and the use of special investigative techniques must not be overlooked, where deemed necessary.

Collection of video footage

When utilizing video footage to establish the objective and subjective elements of a sexual violence offence, the analysis must be conducted with methodological neutrality and without resorting to stereotypical interpretative frameworks regarding the victim's behavior. In particular, the actions before and after the incident in question are recorded, described and correlated exclusively as factual data, which are taken into account alongside the other means of evidence (forensic findings, statements, expert reports), with the central evaluative focus being the determination of the lack of consent. The evidential approach must explicitly substantiate the relevance of each visual finding to a specific factual allegation, whilst ensuring respect for the victim's dignity and mental state.

Special Investigative Techniques

The use of special investigative measures, and in particular the lifting of the confidentiality of communications, requires prior verification that the substantive and procedural legal conditions are met, as well as a full justification of their necessity and appropriateness for the investigation of the case. In the context of documenting the evidence, specific details are recorded regarding the nature of the crime under investigation, the serious indications of guilt, the inability to achieve the evidential objective by less intrusive means, and compliance with the principle of proportionality. The material collected is recorded in a manner that ensures the integrity of the chain of evidence, the legality of the procedure, and the possibility of judicial review regarding its use and assessment.

The above does not apply horizontally to every complaint, but where the legal conditions are met and the appropriateness is substantiated in the judgement of the senior officer conducting the preliminary investigation of the case.

5. Risk Assessment

5.1 Assessment Tools

Risk assessment is a dynamic process aimed at preventing a new attack. The police officer assesses the likelihood of the perpetrator reoffending. Factors such as a

history of violence, access to weapons, the perpetrator's presence in the area and their mental state (e.g. threats of suicide or murder) are weighed up rigorously.

Particular emphasis is placed on the risk of "lethal escalation". The assessment is not based solely on the officer's subjective opinion, but on objective criteria derived from the suspect's statement and criminal record.

Example of good practice

The officer asks the victim: "Do you believe the perpetrator is capable of harming you again or killing you? Has he ever used a weapon against you?". The victim's response, even if it appears subjective, is the most reliable indicator of risk. If the risk is assessed as "high", immediate measures such as home protection or transfer to a safe shelter are put in place.

5.2 Protective measures

Following the assessment, the police must take operational measures. These include the immediate search for and arrest of the perpetrator in flagrante delicto (flagrant crime), informing the Public Prosecutor to impose restrictive conditions, and providing the victim with means of immediate notification (e.g. a panic button).

This care also includes ensuring access to health services for preventive treatment (e.g. post-exposure prophylaxis, chemoprophylaxis for sexually transmitted diseases). The police officer notifies the medical services of the nearest hospital on duty.

6. Inter-agency cooperation

Handling cases of sexual violence is not the exclusive responsibility of the Greek Police, but the result of coordinated and institutionally organized cooperation between multiple stakeholders. Sexual violence constitutes a serious violation of the victim's physical integrity, human dignity and fundamental rights. The police response must be immediate, well-documented and fully in line with the applicable legal framework (Criminal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, Istanbul Convention, Law 5172/2025, etc.).

Inter-agency cooperation serves four key objectives:

- The immediate protection of the victim's life and health.
- The securing of crucial evidence.
- The prevention of secondary victimization.
- Providing holistic support to the victim at a medical, psychosocial and legal level.

The police often act as a liaison between the services involved, without this meaning that they replace their role or exceed the limits of their authority. Cooperation between the police, the justice system and health services reduces the risk of the victim "falling through the cracks" in the system. Information is exchanged with strict adherence to confidentiality, but with the best interests of the survivor in mind.

6.1 Cooperation with Health Services (Hospitals, Health Centers, Forensic Services)

In every case of sexual violence, protecting the victim's health takes precedence over the evidentiary process. Police officers must ensure that the victim is referred immediately to a public healthcare facility or, if necessary, that the National Ambulance Service (EKAV) is called for emergency transport.

The timely provision of medical care to the victim is critical for:

- Treating injuries.
- Preventing infections.
- Psychological stabilization
- Administering post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) against HIV.
Treatment must begin within 72 hours of the incident, lasts 28 days, and is administered following assessment by an infectious disease specialist.

Timely referral may be crucial in preventing infection, whilst a lack of information may deprive the victim of a critical treatment option.

The management of cases in a hospital setting, namely, the presence of police personnel in a hospital, whether following a call from medical/healthcare staff or during the transfer of a victim of sexual violence for examination, requires increased attention, a clear division of roles and respect for the scientific autonomy of medical practice. Cooperation between staff must be governed by:

- Respect for medical ethics.

- The protection of medical confidentiality.
- The avoidance of secondary victimization.
- Ensuring the integrity of evidence.

In cases where medical staff identify signs of sexual abuse and call the police, police officers should:

- Request a brief medical briefing limited to the nature and timing of the injuries and any immediate risk.
- Avoid taking a full statement within the examination room or in a space that compromises the privacy of the procedure.

The priority is to complete medical care, followed by taking statements (from the doctor, the victim, any witnesses) and/or issuing a medical certificate.

In cases where police officers transport the victim to the hospital, they act as guarantors of the victim's safety and the collection of evidence, as well as a liaison between the victim and the healthcare service. Thus, the police officer:

- Inform the victim to avoid, where possible, washing or changing their clothes.
- Ensure that clothing is collected and stored in suitable packaging (paper bags, not plastic).
- Informs medical staff that this is a case of sexual violence, without unnecessary details.

When working with and communicating with healthcare/medical staff, the following should be avoided:

- Discussions and judgements regarding the victim's "credibility".
- The presence of police officers inside the examination room.
- Unprofessional comments on injuries or the absence thereof.

The presence of police officers may increase the victim's anxiety. For this reason, police officers should:

- Keep a low profile (avoid an overly formal tone, avoid wearing their uniform, where possible).
- Explain each step of the process to the victim.
- Do not press for an immediate statement if the victim is in a state of shock.
- Ensure that the victim is aware that they can request psychological support.

A crucial stage of the criminal investigation is the forensic examination and the securing of evidence. For this reason, police officers should inform the victim that the forensic examination should ideally be carried out within 72 hours of the incident and that any delay may result in the loss of genetic material. Similarly, police officers must bear in mind that forensic procedures are carried out upon request of the prosecutorial, investigative and **pre-investigation authorities and officials**, as well as the judicial authorities in general operating in the territorial region of the Forensic Service. Despite the crucial role of police officers in the process, this must be distinguished from the forensic pathologist's scientific work. Consequently, their role is limited to:

- Issuing a request for a forensic examination.
- Ensuring the immediate and safe transfer to the Forensic Service.
- To prevent the destruction of evidence.
- The lawful collection and management of evidence.

6.2 Psychosocial Support Structures

Sexual violence has serious and long-term psychological consequences. Intervention is not limited to the collection of statements and evidence but extends to supporting the victim's psychological and social recovery.

Police officers involved in handling cases of sexual violence inform the victim about the support services available where they can seek psychological support, such as:

- The "SOS 15900" helpline of the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights of the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family, which is a nationwide service operating 24 hours a day, every day of the week, with the aim of providing psychosocial support and counselling to women victims. Similarly, it is possible to send an email to the address "sos15900@isotita.gr".
- The Emergency Social Assistance Helpline "197", operated by the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) of the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family, is available 24 hours a day, all year round, free of charge. All citizens can call this number to receive counselling, psychological support and information.
- The National Child Protection Helpline '1107', which is similarly operated by the National Centre for Social Solidarity (EKKA) and provides, 24 hours a day, every day, emergency counselling, psychological and social support to children and adolescents who are at risk or experiencing crisis

situations, as well as immediate information on issues that concern or interest them.

In addition, throughout the country, under the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights, Counselling Centers, which provide free information and advice, social and psychological support, and legal and employment advice, as well as Shelters for Abused Women.

For any mental health issue, the Ministry of Health's psychosocial support helpline "10306" is available, which is aimed at citizens of all genders and ages.

Example of good practice

Before the victim leaves the service, the staff member carries out a "warm handover": they contact the relevant social services by telephone in the victim's presence, book the first appointment and explain to the victim who they will meet and what help they will receive. This reduces the anxiety caused by uncertainty and strengthens trust in the institutions.

6.3 Legal Support

The Istanbul Convention stipulates that Member States are obliged to ensure that victims of sexual violence have immediate access to legal information, support and effective means of protection.

The provision of information is not a mere procedural formality, but an essential element in safeguarding the victim's rights and a prerequisite for their meaningful participation in criminal proceedings.

The police must, from the very first contact, inform the victim in a clear and understandable manner of the following:

a) The right to legal representation

The victim has the right:

- To appoint a lawyer of their choice.
- To be represented by a lawyer.
- To be represented throughout the pre-trial and main proceedings.

b) Free legal aid

The Istanbul Convention also stipulates that States must ensure access to legal aid where the victim lacks sufficient financial resources.

Police officers provide information on the availability of free legal aid where the conditions are met, whilst for further information they may direct the victim to contact the local Public Prosecutor's Office, the local Bar Association or the Advisory Centers of the General Secretariat for Equality and Human Rights.

c) Protective measure

Both the Istanbul Convention (Articles 55–56) and national criminal and procedural law stipulate that criminal proceedings must not depend solely on the victim's initiative (prosecution *ex officio*), whilst, similarly, victims must be protected from intimidation, retaliation and revictimization. Police officers inform the victim of the possibility of imposing restrictive measures (e.g. a restraining order, a communication ban, etc.) by the Public Prosecutor, as well as the possibility of the competent court issuing protective measures. Furthermore, for sexual offences committed within the domestic context, the competent police authority is empowered to take protective measures (transfer to a safe house, home surveillance/guard, etc.). Furthermore, police personnel are required to ensure the protection of the victim's personal data and the disclosure of information relevant to the case.

(d) Right to compensation

The Istanbul Convention (Article 30) and national legislation provide for the right of victims to claim compensation from the perpetrator or, under certain conditions, from the state (Greek Compensation Authority). In this context, police officers inform the victim that:

- They may bring a civil claim for compensation.
- State compensation is available in specific cases.
- Criminal proceedings do not preclude a parallel civil claim.

It is recommended that information regarding all the aforementioned categories of legal support be provided:

- Verbally, in simple and understandable language.
- In writing, by providing a relevant information leaflet.
- In a language the victim understands (with an interpreter

where necessary).

7. Monitoring and evaluation

7.1 Incident recording system

Reports of sexual abuse and exploitation, reported by any professional body in the course of their duties, are recorded in an incident recording system, which is cross-departmental and cross-sectoral. The system provides, on the one hand, the ability to record incidents and, on the other hand, the ability to access the stored information with tiered access rights, in accordance with current legislation. The bodies that will, at a minimum, be able to access and have rights to this system are those of the Ministry of the Interior (social services), the Ministry of Justice (public prosecutors' offices and courts), the Ministry of Citizen Protection (Greek police), and the Ministry of Health (physical and mental health services).

The file is digital and enables the automatic notification of the relevant agencies, with the aim of linking all potentially involved agencies, the immediate identification of the suspected incident, the recording of data for monitoring the phenomenon, and finally the formulation of targeted policies and strategies based on the data collected. In addition to the details of the new incident, the initial and immediate actions of the first agency involved and the initial referral actions to other relevant agencies will be recorded. In this way, the progress of the incident's management will be available from the time of the initial report through to its current status.

Measures for implementation and operation.

In order to achieve the above objective, it is proposed that the following minimum necessary and non-exhaustive set of measures be adopted to ensure the immediate identification of suspicious incidents, monitoring of the phenomenon, and the formulation of effective policies for the protection of victims:

A) Interconnection of Services: Creation of an integrated platform that will unify and interconnect all relevant services, such as the police, social protection services and medical examinations

B) Development of a Digital Platform: Implementation of a digital platform that will enable recording, assignment and monitoring of incidents in real time.

C) Staff Training: Training of staff from all relevant services to recognize and respond to incidents of abuse.

D) Creation of a Central Register: Creation of a central register to record all incidents and the actions taken to protect victims.

E) Data Analysis: Analysis of data collected to identify trends and areas of highest risk

F) Policy Development: Based on the data gathered, strategies and policies will be developed to prevent and address child abuse.

Compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is vital for ensuring the privacy and protection of citizens' personal data. With regard to compliance, the following is recommended:

- Data anonymization. Citizens' personal data relating to the report should be fully anonymized, unless this is necessary for the investigation of the incident.
- Information and consent. Citizens should be informed about how their personal data is collected, processed and stored, and should give their consent to the use of such data.
- Data Security. It is necessary to take appropriate security measures to protect personal data from loss, destruction, unauthorized access or unlawful processing.

7.2 Assessment of reports

Every incident of sexual violence must be subject to an internal debriefing by the service. The aim is to identify any weaknesses in the process, improve protocols and ensure that all ethical principles have been upheld. Accountability of officers is the guarantee that the state treats this crime with the seriousness it deserves.

Example of good practice

The Head of the service draws up an evaluation report on the handling of the case, examining whether deadlines were met, whether the collection of evidence was thorough and whether the victim was treated with due respect. These reports are submitted through the chain of command and are used for the ongoing training of staff, in accordance with modern international standards of police training.