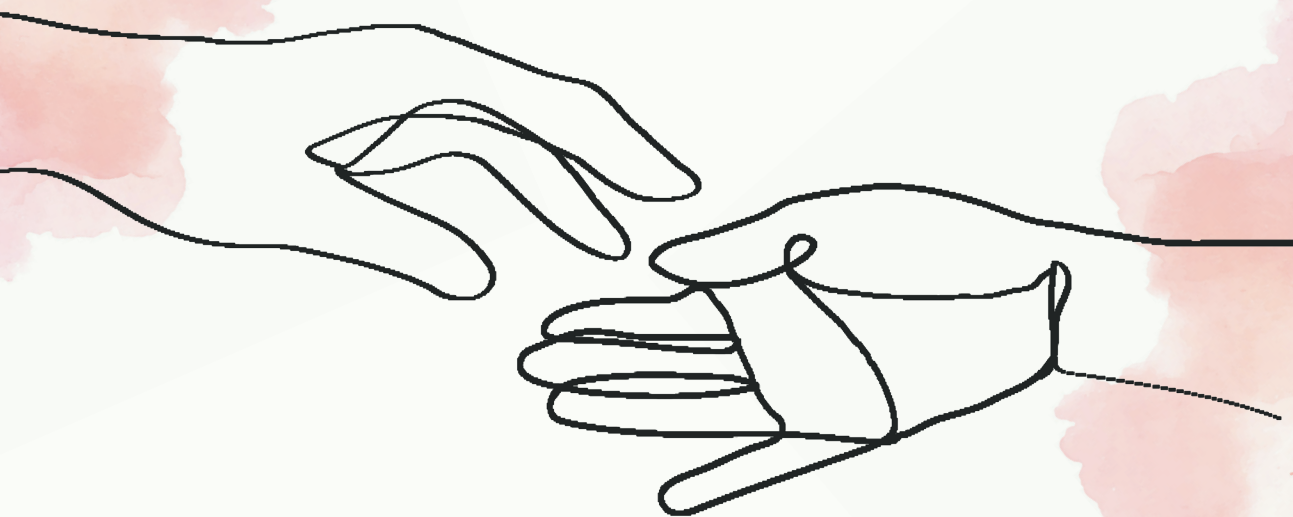


# **A GUIDE FOR VICTIMS AND WITNESSES OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES AND MISDEMEANOURS INVOLVING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

**3rd Edition**



**Deša Dubrovnik  
2025.**

**Note:**

***This guide is for informational purposes only and cannot replace professional counselling with a lawyer or legal practitioner.***

***Since laws and legal practices are often subject to change and some entries in this Guide may not be up to date, we recommend seeking additional consultation.***

***In case of uncertainty or doubt, we recommend contacting the employees of the association DEŠA Dubrovnik.***

# A GUIDE FOR VICTIMS AND WITNESSES OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES AND MISDEMEANOURS INVOLVING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**3rd Edition**



REPUBLIKA HRVATSKA  
Ministarstvo rada, mirovinskoga  
sustava, obitelji i socijalne politike



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The project *Bez Obiteljskog Nasilja (No to Domestic Violence)* (BON 3) is funded by the Ministry of Labour and Pension System, Family and Social Policy.

The content of the Guide for Victims and Witnesses of Criminal Offences and Misdemeanours Involving Domestic Violence is the sole responsibility of DEŠA and does not necessarily reflect the position of the Ministry of Labour and Pension System, Family and Social Policy.

The scope of work and the contacts of the various institutions and civil society organisations included in the Guide are the sole responsibility of the CSO/institution to which this information refers, as well as of the institutions that provided the information.

Gender-specific terms in the masculine/feminine form refer to both genders.

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Dear readers,

**DEŠA – Dubrovnik is a civil society organisation that has been providing support to victims and witnesses of criminal offences and misdemeanours involving domestic violence for many years.** Through continuous commitment and dedicated work, we have implemented support and assistance services in the Dubrovnik-Neretva County. Moreover, through many years of experience working with victims of domestic violence, we have contributed to building a more consistent support system for victims, which for the third consecutive year has been recognised and supported by the Ministry of Labour and Pension System, Family and Social Policy through the project *Bez Obiteljskog Nasilja (No to Domestic Violence)* (BON 3). As in previous years, our goal is to improve the situation of victims of domestic violence and to raise public awareness about the occurrence of this social issue, as well as the importance of reporting and combating domestic violence. With the current project “Local Network for Protection, Prevention and Support for Women Victims of Violence and Victims of Domestic Violence”, supported by the City of Dubrovnik, we are building, along with numerous partners from institutions and civil society, interdepartmental cooperation and fostering local capacities to support women victims of violence and victims of domestic violence.

The brochure in front of you is an updated and revised version of the second Guide for victims and witnesses of criminal offences and misdemeanours involving domestic violence. As in previous years, the Guide includes recent changes in the legislation of the Republic of Croatia and also covers social services that, based on daily practice, have proven to be insufficiently recognised both by professionals of different backgrounds and by the victims themselves. This third edition of the Guide also introduces a new feature – prompted by the increasing number of beneficiaries whose native language is not Croatian, we decided to expand the latest edition with an English version, making it accessible to more beneficiaries. Global population movements, the influx of foreign workers, ongoing changes in employment policies, and the fact that we are a globally recognized and frequently visited tourist destination are just some of the factors that oblige us to make our services more accessible to a wider range of beneficiaries.

We offer our beneficiaries support and assistance from the time the offence is committed, throughout the entire criminal proceedings, and afterwards, in order to minimize additional trauma and secondary victimization.

**If you are a victim or witness of criminal offence/misdemeanour involving domestic violence, please contact us on working days from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. by phone at: 020/311-625, e-mail: [info@desa-dubrovnik.hr](mailto:info@desa-dubrovnik.hr) or visit us in person at the premises of DEŠA in Lazareti, Frana Supila 8, 20 000 Dubrovnik.**

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**IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF ANY CRIMINAL OFFENCE OR MISDEMEANOUR INVOLVING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, YOU CAN ALSO GET HELP AT THE FOLLOWING PLACES:**

## **DEŠA Dubrovnik**

If you are a victim or witness of a criminal offence or misdemeanour involving domestic violence, please contact us with full confidence. We will **provide** you with **free** and **anonymous emotional support**. We will **provide you with information about your rights, legal advice, practical and technical information, as well as psychological counselling**. Our beneficiaries can be **accompanied by a “person of trust”** to the court, police, state attorney’s office, social welfare centre and other relevant institutions. We will accompany you throughout the entire court proceedings. DEŠA also provides support to individuals **who have not reported a criminal offence**, as well as support **after the completion of court proceedings**. Contact us by phone at: 020/311-625; by email at: [info@desa-dubrovnik.hr](mailto:info@desa-dubrovnik.hr) or in person in Lazareti, at the address: Frana Supila 8, 20 000 Dubrovnik.

## **Mental Health Department of the Public Health Institute of Dubrovnik-Neretva County**

You can seek psychological and psychiatric help **free of charge, anonymously**, and **without a referral** at the Mental Health Department of Dubrovnik General Hospital. Address: Dr. A. Šercer 4 a P.O. box 58.

At the phone number: 020/341-082; to e-mail address: [mentalno.zdravlje@zzjzdnz.hr](mailto:mentalno.zdravlje@zzjzdnz.hr), [prevencija.ovisnosti@zzjzdnz.hr](mailto:prevencija.ovisnosti@zzjzdnz.hr)

Within the Mental Health Department of the Public Health Institute of Dubrovnik-Neretva County, there is the Metković Counselling Centre, and counselling centres on the island of Korčula: Korčula, Vela Luka and Blato, as well as the counselling centre Orebić.

## **National Call Centre for Victims of Crimes and Misdemeanours 116 006**

If you are a victim or witness of a criminal offence or misdemeanour, please contact the National Call Centre to a standardized European number: **116 006**

The line is free and confidential. It is available 24/7, including weekends and public holidays. The scope of the National Call Centre comprises: informing victims and witnesses of criminal offences and misdemeanour about their rights, providing emotional support, referring them to relevant civil society organisations and institutions, providing various practical information and assisting with the completion of financial compensation requests.



## Croatian Institute for Social Work – County Office of Dubrovnik-Neretva

The Croatian Institute for Social Work is a public institution of the Republic of Croatia that provides social welfare services. Social welfare is an organised activity aimed at **providing assistance to socially disadvantaged persons**, as well as to those in **unfavourable personal or family circumstances**, and it includes prevention, the promotion of change, assistance in meeting essential life needs, and support for individuals, families, and groups, with the goal of improving quality of life, empowering beneficiaries to meet their basic needs independently, and promoting their active inclusion in society. The County Office of Dubrovnik-Neretva County, headquartered in Dubrovnik, includes regional offices in Ploče, Metković, Korčula and Dubrovnik. You can contact the employees of the Institute by phone or by email. A single e-mail address of the County Office: [zs-dubrovackoneretvanska@hzsr.hr](mailto:zs-dubrovackoneretvanska@hzsr.hr)

**The Dubrovnik Regional Office** is responsible for the City of Dubrovnik and the municipalities of Dubrovačko primorje, Janjina, Konavle, Mljet, Ston, and Župa Dubrovačka.

Phone numbers: 020/414-710 and 020/414-711; e-mail: [korisnik018@socskrb.hr](mailto:korisnik018@socskrb.hr)

**The Ploče Regional Office** is responsible for the City of Ploče.

Phone number: 020/679-071; e-mail: [korisnik112@socskrb.hr](mailto:korisnik112@socskrb.hr)

**The Metković Regional Office** is responsible for the cities of Metković and Opuzen, as well as the municipalities of Kula Norinska, Pojezerje, Slivno, and Žažablje.

Phone number: 020/690-999; e-mail: [korisnik049@socskrb.hr](mailto:korisnik049@socskrb.hr)

**The Korčula Regional Office** is responsible for the City of Korčula and the municipalities of Blato, Lastovo, Lumbarda, Orebić, Smokvice, Trpanj, and Vela Luka.

Phone number: 020/711-463; e-mail: [korisnik038@socskrb.hr](mailto:korisnik038@socskrb.hr)

**If you are a victim of domestic violence, you can report it to your regional office of the Institute for Social Work. The regional offices of the Institute shall respond to these reports and forward them to the police and/or the state attorney.**

## The Family Centre – The County Office of Dubrovnik-Neretva

The County Office of Dubrovnik-Neretva carries out counselling and preventive activities, thereby providing professional support and assistance to children, young people and families. You can contact the staff of the Family Centre by phone at: 020/447-558, mobile phone number: 099/162-8796 or by e-mail at: [oc-dubrovnik@obiteljski.hr](mailto:oc-dubrovnik@obiteljski.hr)

## FENIKS – Association for the Protection of Children, Youth and Families

The activities of Feniks can be split into:

- ✓ detection and prevention of child and youth abuse and neglect;
- ✓ assistance to abused and neglected children;
- ✓ professional assistance to the family members of abused and neglected children;
- ✓ counselling centre for the youth, marriage and family;
- ✓ implementation of psychosocial treatment for perpetrators of domestic violence;
- ✓ divorce mediation;
- ✓ preventive programs for children, youth, and families;
- ✓ family mediation;
- ✓ establishment, organisation, and participation in the operation of a safe house for victims of domestic violence;
- ✓ publication of printed works related to the association's activities;
- ✓ encouraging and training association members to deliver trainings;
- ✓ participation in joint programs with other associations and organisations;
- ✓ organisation of expert meetings, public forums, seminars, lectures, and exhibitions to promote non-violent conflict resolution;
- ✓ cooperation with scientific institutions, national authorities, other organisations and local authorities, other associations, and individuals whose work involves the protection of children youth, and family members of victims of domestic violence.

You can contact Feniks by e-mail at: [mfeniks@gmail.com](mailto:mfeniks@gmail.com)

## CARITAS of the Diocese of Dubrovnik

The activities of CARITAS can be divided into **charitable work** and the provision of **social services**. The **charitable work** includes: material assistance – distribution of food, hygiene products, clothing, footwear, and furniture; financial assistance – one-time financial help, payment of various living expenses such as utilities, rent, kindergarten, and extended school programmes, scholarships, tuition fees and medical treatment aid. Social services include: Family Counselling Centre services and accommodation for victims of domestic violence.

**The Family Counselling Centre** provides advisory support to individuals and families and, when needed, also organises focus groups and various workshops.

A shelter for victims of domestic violence “*Josipov dom*” has been operating since December 2023 at a permanent location in newly built premises, where victims of domestic violence are provided with accommodation, advisory and psychosocial support. You can contact **CARITAS** by phone at: 020/612-240 and by e-mail at: [caritas@db.hr](mailto:caritas@db.hr)

You can contact the **Family Counselling Centre** by phone at: 091/323-3905 and 091/323-3918 or by email at: [os@db.hr](mailto:os@db.hr)

## Free legal aid

The aim of free legal aid is to achieve equality before the law for all persons, to ensure effective legal protection, and to guarantee access to courts and other bodies governed by public law. It is provided as primary or secondary legal aid. When granting legal aid in civil judicial and administrative proceedings prescribed by law, consideration shall be given to the type of proceeding for which legal aid is requested, as well as to the financial situation of the applicant and the members of their household.

Secondary legal aid shall be granted without determining the financial situation, by way of exception, if the applicant is a victim of a criminal offence of violence who is in the process of exercising the right to compensation for damage caused by the commission of the criminal offence. According to the Crime Victims Compensation Act, a criminal offence of violence is considered to be the following:

- criminal offence committed intentionally, by use of force, or by violating sexual integrity,
- a criminal offence involving the endangerment of life and property through a generally dangerous act or means, resulting in death, serious bodily injury, or severe impairment of the health of one or more persons, and classified under the Criminal Code as a more serious form of underlying offence committed with intent.

The right to compensation under the Crime Victims Compensation Act applies to a direct victim who has suffered serious bodily injuries or a serious impairment of health as a result of a criminal offence of violence, and in the event that the criminal offence of violence caused the death of the direct victim, the indirect victim is also entitled to compensation.

The application for free legal aid shall be submitted to the Dubrovnik-Neretva County. Information about applications, supporting documents, and other details can be obtained by phone at: 020/351-206; or at e-mail address: [ivana.dedovic@dnz.hr](mailto:ivana.dedovic@dnz.hr)

Free legal aid in the Dubrovnik-Neretva County, Administrative Department for County Affairs and the County Assembly.

Address: Vukovarska 16, 20000 Dubrovnik, Phone number: 020/351-206,

E-mail: [ivana.dedovic@dnz.hr](mailto:ivana.dedovic@dnz.hr), **Web: [www.dnz.hr](http://www.dnz.hr)**

### Satellite offices:

**Stjepana Radića 3, 20350 Metković**, Phone number: 020/681-922,

E-mail: [lukica.provic@dnz.hr](mailto:lukica.provic@dnz.hr)

# THE COUNSELLING CENTRE DEŠA – DUBROVNIK

## AS PART OF ITS SERVICES, THE COUNSELLING CENTRE DEŠA – DUBROVNIK OFFERS:

- Emotional support
- Practical and technical information
- Information on rights
- Legal advice
- Psychological counselling
- Escorts to courts
- Escorts to other institutions (the state attorney, the police, the regional office of the Croatian Institute for Social Work, etc.)
- Psychological workshops
- Workshops for empowering women in need
- DEŠA Fund - Supporting Women in Need and Women Victims of Violence

### Emotional support

A criminal offence affects the victim not only physically and financially, but also psychologically. Mood and behaviour changes, feelings of fear, concern and anxiety, difficulties in focusing, and, in general, in performing everyday tasks are only some of the consequences a criminal offence can have on mental health. It is important to note that these can be experienced by any healthy person and that they have a negative impact on quality of life. Emotional support is intended to relieve unpleasant emotions, minimize the negative impact of a criminal offence on the victim's psychological health, and help the victim gain a sense of safety and acceptance. Such support also contributes to the quality of the statement in court proceedings and ensures the continuity of the hearing.

### Practical and technical information

For example, understanding what the courtroom looks like and its seating arrangement, the role of the organisation employee accompanying the victim to the court, what testifying involves (without going into the content of the testimonial) and other questions.

## **Providing victims with adequate information on available assistance services and legal measures**

In providing support and assistance to victims and witnesses of criminal offences and misdemeanours involving domestic violence, it is important for us to cooperate with institutions and civil society organisations located in our county. Therefore, we always refer our beneficiaries to particular institutions and/or civil society organisations based on their needs.

### **Information on rights**

We provide you with information on the rights you have as a victim and how to exercise them, and we clarify any possible ambiguities related to these rights. In the rest of this brochure, we will outline the basic rights that victims can exercise under different regulations.

### **Legal advice**

Under the Free Legal Aid Act (NN 98/19), legal advice provides comprehensive guidance on the ways and possibilities for exercising and/or protecting certain rights of the beneficiary.

### **Psychological counselling**

Psychological counselling is a form of professional assistance in which a psychologist-advisor provides the client, who is the beneficiary of the counselling, with support in understanding and addressing a specific ongoing life problem. It is a process in which, through guided conversation and a continuously developing relationship of trust, the advisor helps the client develop, strengthen, and improve the skills needed to confront and cope with one or more life problems that are currently hindering their functioning.

Unlike psychotherapy, psychological counselling does not involve a comprehensive “reconstruction” of the client’s personality – it does not delve deeply into the person’s past experiences or focus on changing long-standing patterns of behaviour that may have contributed to the current problem. Having these considerations in mind, counselling can be defined as a shorter-term process, although the number of sessions may vary from one to several, depending on the client’s needs and the agreement between the advisor and the client.

Counselling does not involve providing ready-made advice or solutions. On the contrary, building upon their expertise and professional skills, the advisor

helps clients find their own solutions to current problems and encourages them to consider specific changes in behaviour, as well as specific steps toward more effective coping with the problem. In other words, psychological counselling aims to empower individuals to take responsibility for their lives and to provide them with support in fulfilling their potential.

## **Personal escort to the court, the state attorney's office and other relevant institutions: police and regional offices of the Croatian Institute for Social Work**

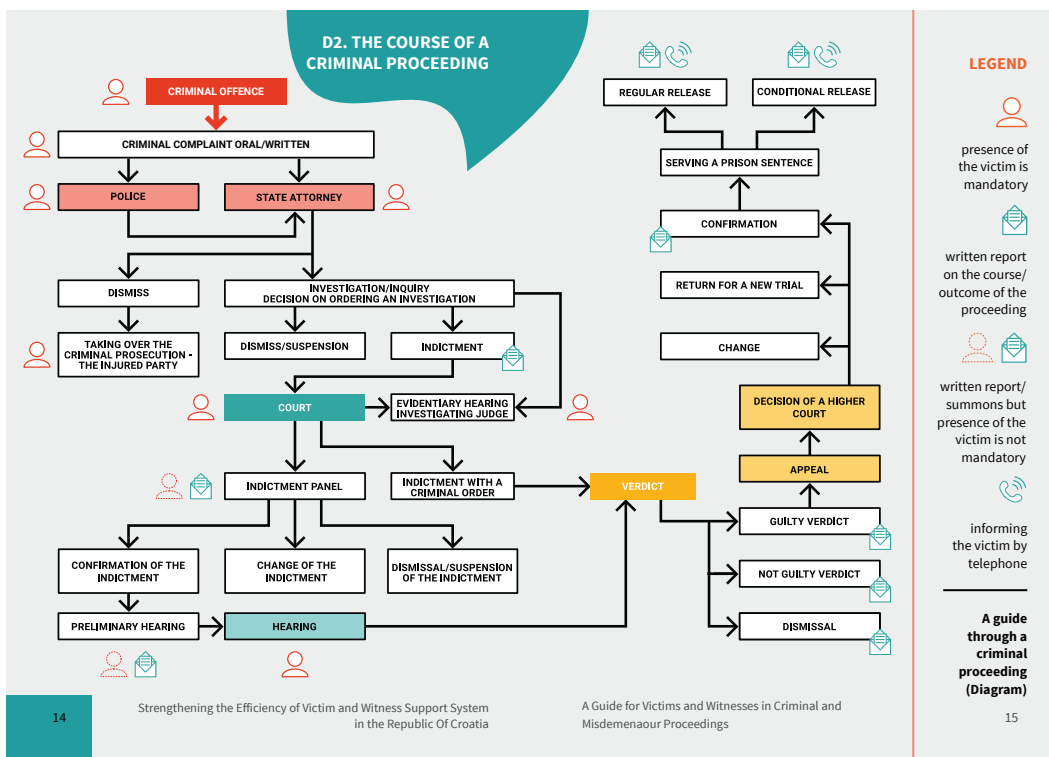
A victim of a criminal offence has the right to be accompanied by a person of trust of their own choice throughout the entire process, from reporting a crime to the final conclusion of proceedings, or whenever taking actions at the court, the state attorney's office, or other institutions. The exception is in cases where the law imposes restrictions. The person of trust can be someone the victim is close to, such as a mother, a friend, or a professional (for example, a staff member from victim support services). During accompaniment, the victim is provided with emotional support as well as practical and technical information.

*Giving evidence in court can be very stressful for the victim, as they have to recount the unpleasant event again. If you express the need, we will provide an escort to the court, meaning that one of our professional staff members will accompany you to court while giving evidence, to offer emotional support and make the testimony process easier for you.*

## **DEŠA Fund for the Support of Women in Need and Women Victims of Violence**

DEŠA's support fund was established in June 2023 with the aim of providing financial support to women in need and women victims of violence. More detailed information about DEŠA's fund can be found later in this guide, under the section on available social services in the community.

# THE COURSE OF A CRIMINAL PROCEEDING:



\*Image taken from the website of the Ministry of Justice, Administration and Digital Transformation

- ✓ **Victim of a criminal offence:** A natural person who has suffered physical and emotional consequences, property damage or a violation of basic rights and freedom that are a direct consequence of a criminal offence. A victim of a criminal act is considered to be a marital or extramarital partner or informal life partner and offspring, and if there are none, an ancestor, brother or sister of the person whose death was directly caused by the criminal offence or a person who on the basis of law they were responsible for supporting.
- ✓ **Injured party:** natural person or legal entity whose personal or property rights have been infringed on or endangered by a criminal offence
- ✓ **Witness:** A person who can provide information about a criminal offence or misdemeanour and the defendant and about other important circumstances.
- ✓ **Person of trust:** A legal representative or another person with legal capacity whom the victim can select to be with them during the criminal proceeding. A person of trust cannot be a witness in the criminal proceeding

## Crime report

If a person was a victim of a criminal offence, witnessed it, or has knowledge or information about committing a criminal offence, they can submit a crime report. Moreover, everyone is obliged to report criminal offences subject to public prosecution (ex officio). A crime report is submitted to the police or the state attorney's office in writing, orally, or by other means. For a criminal offence prosecuted ex officio, the police shall immediately forward the report to the state attorney's office.

## Action of the state attorney

The basic powers and main function of the state attorney shall be the prosecution of perpetrators of criminal offences subject to public prosecution. Moreover, the state attorney is competent to undertake the necessary measures aimed at discovering the commission of criminal offences and the perpetrators. The state attorney shall decide on a crime report within six months of its entry in the record of crime reports. The victim has the right, two months after submitting a crime report, to request information from the state attorney on the steps taken. The state attorney shall, within thirty days of receiving the request, inform the victim of the steps taken (unless doing so could jeopardize the efficiency of the proceedings). The state attorney may dismiss the crime report (and shall notify the victim thereof within eight days) or conduct an inquiry or investigation to decide whether to file an indictment or discontinue the proceedings. The victim, in the capacity of an injured party, may submit to the state attorney proposals to supplement the investigation or other proposals aimed at exercising the rights prescribed by law. The investigation must be completed within six months from the date on which the decision to conduct the investigation became final (in justified cases, the deadline may be extended for an additional six months, and, in exceptional circumstances, for a further six months). If the crime report is dismissed by the state attorney, the victim has the right, within eight days, to take over and continue the criminal prosecution in place of the state attorney.

## Evidentiary hearing

The evidentiary hearing is conducted by the investigating judge at the suggestion of the state attorney, the injured party acting as prosecutor, or the defendant. The evidentiary hearing will be held if it is necessary to question a witness via audio-visual equipment, if the witness cannot be questioned during the trial, if the witness has been tampered with in a way that calls into question the truthfulness of their testimony, or in other cases provided for by the Criminal Procedure Act. **The presence of the victim is mandatory at the evidentiary hearing.**

For further Information see Criminal Procedure Act. (artc. 235 and 236)



## Indictment

If the state attorney does not dismiss the crime report but conducts an investigation instead, the next step is the submission of an indictment. An indictment is also filed for acts that, under the law, do not require an investigation, but for which the collected information provides a sufficient basis for an indictment. The state attorney is obliged, within one month from the entry of the completion of the investigation or inquiry in the record of crime reports, to file an indictment or discontinue the investigation, or to dismiss the crime report (for justified reasons, a senior state attorney may extend this deadline by a maximum of two months, and the victim shall be informed thereof). The state attorney serves the indictment to the indictment panel, which, upon establishing that the indictment is well-founded, shall issue a ruling confirming indictment. The presence of the victim at the indictment panel is not mandatory, but if the victim is present, they may, acting as an injured party, use this opportunity to point out evidence regarding the culpability of the accused, provide reasons supporting a claim for indemnification, and suggest provisional measures to secure such a claim.

For further Information see Criminal Procedure Act. (artc. from 341 to 358)

## Preliminary hearing

The purpose of the preliminary hearing is to establish the subject of the hearing and thereby set a framework for it. The preliminary hearing shall not be public, and only summoned persons may be present.

The appearance of the victim or injured party is not mandatory, but if they do attend, the president of the panel shall instruct them, pursuant to Article 51 of the Criminal Procedure Act (submission of new evidence, submission of a proposal for indemnification, and submission of provisional measures to secure such a claim). If the injured party or victim is not present, the president of the panel shall read the previously submitted request.

## The trial

The trial is the central part of the proceedings which results in the rendering of a judgement. The trial shall be held in open court, except in cases such as the protection of a child or minor, the victim of a criminal offence against sexual freedom, or in other cases regulated by the Criminal Procedure Act. During the trial, order must be maintained in the courtroom, and the proceedings of the court must not be disturbed. Otherwise, a person may be punished with a fine not exceeding 6.630,00 € and may also be ordered to leave the courtroom. The trial concludes with the closing statements of the parties, which may also be delivered by the victim acting in the capacity of an injured party.

## The judgement

The judgement rendered may be convicting, acquitting, or rejecting the charge (for example, if the court lacks subject matter jurisdiction, if the proceedings were conducted without a request from the authorized prosecutor, or in other cases regulated by the Criminal Procedure Act). The judgement shall be pronounced publicly. If the trial was closed to the public, the ordering part of the judgement shall always be read out in open court. The panel shall decide on whether and to what extent the pronouncement of the reasons for the judgement shall be closed to the public. After the judgement is pronounced, the president of the panel shall present briefly the reasons for the judgement. The judgement is also sent in writing to the parties.

## Judicial remedies

Judicial remedies may be ordinary or extraordinary. Ordinary judicial remedies in criminal proceedings include an appeal against a first-instance judgement, an appeal against a second-instance judgement, and an appeal against a ruling. Extraordinary judicial remedies include the reopening of criminal proceedings, a request for the protection of legality, a request for the extraordinary review of a final judgement, and, in certain circumstances, revision.

# GENERAL RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF ALL CRIMINAL OFFENCES

## **1. The right to easily accessible, confidential and free of charge access to support services for victims of crime offences, available immediately after the crime has been committed and for as long as necessary**

The victim of a criminal offence has the right to access support services **before** reporting the offence, **during its reporting**, and **throughout the entire duration** of the criminal proceedings. The victim is also entitled to access support services even **if the criminal offence is not reported**.

## **2. The right to effective psychological and other professional support, as well as support provided by the authority, organisation, or institution competent for assisting victims of criminal offences in accordance with the law**

In order to alleviate the consequences of criminal offences and make the process of going through criminal proceedings easier for the victim, support services offer various forms of assistance, the most common being emotional support, practical and technical information, information on rights, psychological and legal counselling, escort services in the capacity of a person of trust, etc.

## **3. The right to protection from intimidation and retaliation**

Competent bodies (the police, the state attorney, and the court) shall ensure adequate protection for all persons who feel threatened or are subjected to threats or intimidation. It is important to report such behaviour in a timely manner to the competent authorities so they can take the measures within their competence – and, according to the law, impose investigative imprisonment or various protective measures, such as prohibiting stalking or harassment, forbidding establishing or maintaining contact with certain persons, prohibiting approaching a specific individual, removal from the home, etc.

## **4. The right to the protection of dignity during witness testimony**

Competent bodies shall treat victims of criminal offences in a respectful manner, protect the victim during questioning, prevent the asking of legally inadmissible questions, and safeguard the victim's privacy.

## **5. The right to a hearing without unjustified delay after reporting a crime and that further hearings are conducted only to the extent to which they are necessary for the criminal proceeding**

Following the report of a crime, the victim is first subjected to a hearing, most often at the police, **which does not constitute an official act of examination** and cannot be used as **evidence in criminal proceedings**. The first questioning is an opportunity

for the police to collect as much evidence as possible and, if necessary, ensure the protection of the victim. Following this, the victim is, as a rule, questioned by the state attorney (or by an investigator on behalf of the state attorney), and once the proceedings reach the court stage, the hearing is conducted by the judge.

**6. The right to be accompanied by a person of trust of their own choice when participating in all proceedings, from reporting a crime to the final conclusion of the case.**

The person of trust is a legal representative or another person with legal capacity **chosen by the victim**, unless that person is suggested or called as a witness in the same proceedings. The person of trust can be **someone close to the victim** (such as a mother or a friend) or a **professional** (for example, a staff member from victim support services). Their role is to provide emotional support, practical and technical information, as well as support during the giving of evidence. The person of trust can accompany the victim throughout the entire criminal proceedings, from reporting a crime to the final conclusion of the proceedings. Apart from escorting the victim to **court**, the person of trust can also accompany them at the **police** and at the **state attorney's office**.

**7. The right that medical examinations are kept to a minimum and are carried out only when strictly necessary for the criminal proceedings**

The victim has the right for medical procedures, including medical examinations and other types of assessments, to be kept to a minimum necessary and to be carried out only if the evidence required for the criminal proceedings cannot be obtained by other means, and only if they can be performed without harm to the victim's health.

**8. The right to file a motion for prosecution and a private lawsuit in accordance with the provisions of the Criminal Code, the right to participate in the criminal proceedings as the injured party, the right to be informed of the dismissal of the crime report and the withdrawal of the state attorney from the criminal prosecution, and the right to assume the prosecution instead of the state attorney**

The criminal proceedings shall be initiated by the public prosecution (ex officio), upon a motion, or by private charge. For most criminal offences, the proceedings are initiated ex officio. In such cases, the competent bodies shall take the actions prescribed by law as soon as they become aware of a suspicion that an offence has been committed, and the proceedings are initiated regardless of the victim's will.

For certain criminal offences, the decision to prosecute depends on the victim, which means that the victim must first file a motion for prosecution with the state attorney, who shall then act ex officio. The motion for prosecution may be submitted in writing, by phone, or in person, and it is important to emphasize that the content of the motion is not prescribed by law; however, it is essential to provide all necessary information to the state attorney in the motion.

For certain criminal offences (such as specific types of bodily injury, threats and coercion, certain property offences, and offences against honour and reputation), the state attorney cannot initiate criminal proceedings. The state attorney is not permitted to participate in the criminal proceedings, instead, the victim can initiate the proceedings by private charge and prosecute the perpetrator as a subsidiary prosecutor.

The victim can decide whether to participate in the criminal proceedings as the **injured party**, which means having the possibility to **participate actively** in the proceedings (calling attention to the facts and suggesting evidence, attending the evidentiary hearing, participating in the hearing and evidentiary proceeding, making final remarks, reviewing the case record, etc.). In order to exercise the aforementioned rights and options, the victim shall declare to the police, the state attorney, or the court their intention to assume the status of injured party. The state attorney shall notify the victim on the dismissal of the crime report or the withdrawal of the criminal prosecution, and in this case the victim may assume the prosecution. The deadline for assuming criminal prosecution is eight days from the receipt of a notification from the state attorney regarding the withdrawal of the criminal prosecution. If the victim decides to assume criminal prosecution, they also assume an active role in the proceedings, must propose evidence, represent the prosecution, and bear the costs of the criminal proceedings.

#### **9. The right to be notified by the state attorney on actions taken regarding the victim's report and to file a complaint with the senior state attorney**

The victim has the right to be informed of the status of their case. Within **two months** from the crime report, the victim may request information from the state attorney on the actions taken upon the report. If the state attorney's office fails to respond, or if the victim is not satisfied with the response and the actions taken, they may file a complaint to the higher state attorney within **thirty days**.

#### **10. The right to confidentiality of personal data whose disclosure would endanger the victim's safety or the safety of persons close to the victim.**

All procedural participants are bound to keep confidential any data whose disclosure would endanger the victim's safety or the safety of persons close to the victim. In police actions, a warning is also given to all those involved in inquiries and criminal investigations about their obligation to keep all facts, including personal data, confidential.

#### **11. The right to be informed without undue delay of the release of the defendant from custody or investigative imprisonment, the escape of the defendant, the release of the convicted person from prison, and measures that have been undertaken for the victim's protection, unless the victim waives this right**

The victim of the criminal offence has the right to be informed of the release of the defendant from custody or investigative imprisonment, the escape of the

defendant, the release of the convicted person from prison, and measures that have been undertaken for the victim's protection. The victim shall be notified of the aforementioned circumstances, **unless they have waived this right.**

**12. The right to be informed of every decision by which the criminal proceeding is legally terminated, unless the victim has waived this right.**

Dismissal of the crime report, discontinuation of the proceedings, and final judgement constitute possible outcomes of criminal proceedings. The victim of a criminal offence has the right to be informed of every final decision by which the criminal proceeding is terminated. The victim receives the notification from the state attorney (during the investigation stage) or from the court (during the stage of the court proceedings). The victim **may waive** this right, which means that they will not receive the aforementioned decision.

**13. The right to suggest being interviewed with audio-visual equipment**

Victims of all criminal offences can suggest to be interviewed with audio-visual equipment. Using audio-visual equipment allows the victim to avoid direct contact with the defendant and enables the interview to be recorded, so that the recording can be used later in the criminal proceedings. The existence of the recording minimizes the likelihood of the victim being subjected to a new interview (at the trial stage), except in cases where it is absolutely necessary. Using audio-visual equipment during the interview means that the victim is in a **separate room** and may be accompanied by professional staff from the court and/or a person of trust. The victim **does not come into contact** with the defendant and answers the questions posed by persons in the courtroom via the equipment. The defendant cannot pose questions to the victim directly; all questions are instead posed through the judge.

**14. Other rights prescribed by law**

In addition to the aforementioned rights, the victim may also exercise other rights prescribed by the Criminal Procedure Act. Such rights include, for example, the right to the assistance of an interpreter, the right to use one's native language (including the sign language of deaf or deaf-blind persons), the right to review the case record, and the right to receive confirmation of having reported a crime.

**15. The right to professional assistance from a counsellor financed from the state budget with the submission of a claim for indemnification**

In case of a criminal offence for which the prescribed sentence is **more than five years** and if the victim **suffers serious consequences** from that offence, they have the right to professional assistance from a counsellor financed from the state budget with the submission of a **claim for indemnification**. In such a case, the victim may submit a **claim** to the judge in writing or orally and shall receive assistance in submitting the claim for indemnification.

## **16. The right to financial compensation from the state budget in accordance with the Crime Victims Compensation Act**

The victim of an intentional crime committed on the territory of the Republic of Croatia after 1 July 2013, which resulted in serious bodily injury or severe impairment of health (the related criminal offence being classified by the Criminal Code as a more serious form of the underlying offence committed with intent), is entitled to financial compensation from the state budget in accordance with the Crime Victims Compensation Act (NN 80/08, 27/11).

It is important to note that, apart from the **direct victim**, compensation may also be claimed by an **indirect victim** (in the case of the direct victim's death). By law, this category includes a spouse, extramarital partner, child, parent, adoptive parent, foster child, stepparent, stepchild of the indirect victim, and a person who lived with the direct victim in a same-sex partnership.

**To exercise the right to financial compensation, the following criteria must be met:**

- The criminal offence in question must involve elements of violence
- The criminal offence must be committed with intent
- The criminal offence must be committed on the territory of the Republic of Croatia after 1 July 2013
- The victim must be a national of the Republic of Croatia or of a European Union member state, or must have permanent residence in its territory
- It is necessary that the victim has suffered serious bodily injury or a severe impairment of health as a result of the criminal offence
- The criminal offence must be reported to the police or the state attorney's office, irrespective of whether the identity of the perpetrator is known
- The victim shall submit a claim in writing using an official form and provide the necessary documentation

**There are four types of financial compensation that a person may claim:**

- Compensation of medical expenses for the amount of the healthcare standard, which can only be claimed by a person not covered by mandatory health insurance.
- Compensation for lost earnings up to the amount of EUR 4,645.30.
- Compensation for loss of legal maintenance, which may be claimed by an indirect victim who was financially dependent on the deceased direct victim, and which is granted in an amount of up to EUR 9,290.60.
- Compensation for funeral expenses up to EUR 663.61, which may be claimed by the person who paid them.

The deadline for submitting the claim to the **Ministry of Justice, Administration and Digital Transformation** is **six months** from the date of the crime, but it may be submitted later if the victim has valid reasons for not submitting it within the specified deadline, provided that it is submitted no later than **three months** from the date on which the valid reasons cease to exist. A claim may no longer be submitted if more than **three years** have passed since the commission of the criminal offence.

If the victim is a minor or deprived of legal capacity, and their legal guardian fails to submit the claim in the specified period of six months from the date of the crime, the six months' deadline starts on:

- the day the victim turns 18
- the day the criminal proceedings are initiated once the victim has reached legal adulthood
- the day the victim regains full legal capacity

**The claim form is available at the following link:**

<https://mpudt.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/%C5%BDrtve%20i%20svjedoci/Obrazac%20zahtjeva%20za%20novcanu%20naknadu%20zrtvama%20kaznenih%20djela.pdf>

The same form is also available at any police station, at the state attorney's office, at the courts, and on the official website of the Ministry of Justice, Administration and Digital Transformation.

**Please note!**

**By means of a claim for indemnification, the injured party seeks compensation for the damage from the perpetrator.**

**By means of a claim for financial compensation, the direct or indirect victim of a criminal offence committed with intent is entitled to seek compensation from the state budget in accordance with the Crime Victims Compensation Act.**

*If you believe that you are entitled to financial compensation in accordance with the mentioned criteria and wish to claim it, contact DEŠA with full confidence. We will assist you in completing the form and submitting your claim for financial compensation.*



## 17. The right of the victim to information about their rights

Before undertaking the first activity in which the victim will participate, the **court**, the **state attorney**, and the **police** must inform the victim of their rights in an appropriate manner and ensure that the victim has understood the information provided. When it comes to the right to information about the release of the accused from custody or investigative detention, the escape of the accused, the release of the convicted person from prison, and the measures undertaken for the victim's protection, as well as the right to be informed of any decision by which the criminal proceedings are legally concluded, the competent authorities must **record the victim's declaration** on whether they wish to exercise these rights **in the instruction** on rights or in the register, and inform the victim that they **may amend** this declaration at any time during the proceedings.

## 18. Rights of the injured party:

The victim has the right to declare to the police, the state attorney, or the court that they wish to participate in the criminal proceedings as the injured party. The injured party is not every victim, but only a **victim who wishes to actively participate in the criminal proceedings** in order to promote their interests.

The competent authorities shall inform the victim, in an appropriate manner, what it means to participate as an injured party and record the victim's declaration on whether they wish to participate in the proceedings in that capacity. If the victim decides to participate in the proceedings as an injured party, they are granted additional procedural rights:

1. To use their native language (if the person does not speak or understand Croatian; he or she has the right to use the sign language of deaf or deaf-blind people, and to the assistance of a translator or interpreter, or a translator of sign language in the case of a deaf or deaf-blind injured party)
2. To file a motion to assert a claim for indemnification and temporary security measures
3. Having a legal representative (at their own cost)
4. To call attention to the facts and to suggest evidence
5. To attend the evidentiary hearing
6. To attend the hearing and participate in the evidentiary proceeding and to make final remarks
7. To conduct a review of the record of the case (after testifying)
8. The right to be notified by the state attorney on actions taken regarding the injured party's report and to file a complaint with the senior state attorney
9. To file an appeal in cases covered by the Criminal Procedure Act

10. To request a return to the prior state of affairs
11. To be informed of the course and outcome of the proceeding
12. To submit a request for prosecution or bring a private action
13. To take over criminal prosecution instead of the state attorney

**The injured party's right that we particularly emphasize is the right to file a motion to assert a claim for indemnification, no later than the conclusion of the evidentiary proceeding (the trial).**

**In this claim the injured party can seek compensatory damages from the defendant, the return of items, or the annulment of a particular legal transaction.**

**If the victim files the claim during the criminal proceeding, the prerequisite for its acceptance is that the court finds the accused guilty.**

**It often happens that the court instructs the injured party to seek compensatory damages in civil proceedings. If the defendant in a criminal proceeding is convicted of the crime of violence, the victim, *regardless of their property situation*, can submit a request for free legal assistance in a civil proceeding for compensatory damages from the defendant.**

## RIGHTS OF CHILD VICTIMS OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES

In addition to the aforementioned rights, child victims of criminal offences shall also have the following rights:

### 1. The right to have a legal representative financed from the state budget

A child victim of any criminal offence has the right to free assistance from a legal representative appointed by the court.

### 2. The right to the confidentiality of personal data

All procedural participants shall respect the child victim's right to the confidentiality of personal data and are prohibited from disclosing any information that could reveal the child's identity.

### 3. The right to the exclusion of the public

The child victim is entitled to the exclusion of the public, meaning that the court shall exclude the public from the entire trial or from specific parts of it to protect the child's rights.

## RIGHTS OF VICTIMS OF CRIMINAL OFFENCES AGAINST SEXUAL FREEDOM AND OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

### 1. The right to talk to a counsel/advisor financed from the state budget before the interrogation

This right is exercised by the victim requesting a legal counsel/advisor from the state attorney or the court as soon as they receive the summons for interrogation. The consultation with the counsel/advisor is **free of charge**.

### 2. The right to have a legal representative financed from the state budget

The victims of criminal offences against sexual freedom and of human trafficking have the right to free assistance from a legal representative. This refers to an **attorney** who **represents** the victim in court, assists in exercising their rights, and provides guidance on all legal matters throughout the proceedings.

**3. The right of the victim to be interviewed by a person of the same sex by the police and in the state attorney's office, and if another interview is required, to have it conducted by that same person**

The victim can request to be interviewed by a person of the same sex by the police and in the state attorney's office. If additional interview is required at the police or the state attorney's office, the victim has the right to be interviewed by the same person who conducted the previous interview.

**4. The right to refuse to answer questions that have no connection to the criminal offence and that are related to the personal life of the victim.**

The victim has the right to refuse to answer questions that have **no** direct **connection** to the criminal offence and that are related to the strictly **personal life** (unless the answer is relevant to the offence and important for establishing the perpetrator's guilt).

**5. The right to be interviewed with audio-visual equipment, unless the victim demands to give their evidence in the courtroom**

For victims of criminal offences against sexual freedom and human trafficking, interviews via audio-visual equipment are **provided** as a standard procedure, whereas victims of other criminal offences must request this form of interview, and the final decision on the method of interview depends on the court's assessment. Victims of criminal offences against sexual freedom and human trafficking may choose **not to give their statement** in a separate room via audio-visual equipment.

**6. The right to the confidentiality of personal data**

All procedural participants shall respect this right of the victim and are prohibited from disclosing the victim's personal data or revealing their identity by any other means.

**7. The right to the exclusion of the public from the trial**

This right means that the court is obliged to exclude the public from the entire trial or specific parts of it in order to protect the victim, their privacy, and their interests.

**INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT**

Under the Criminal Procedure Act (NN 70/17), the authority conducting the interview shall, in cooperation with authorities, organisations, or institutions competent for assisting victims of criminal offences, carry out an individual assessment of the victim. The individual assessment is **carried out before the interview**.

It involves determining the need to apply special protective measures for the victim, taking into account the victim's personal characteristics and the presence of risks and/or the fear of harm.

If the victim of a criminal offence is a child, the need for special protective measures shall be presumed.

The individual assessment of a victim is carried out by **police officers, state attorneys, and judges**. **Civil society organisations** providing assistance to victims and witnesses may carry out the individual assessment of a victim, or they **may give a recommendation based on their work with the victim** for consideration by the authority conducting the assessment.

If the individual assessment of the victim's needs concludes that there is a risk of harm and/or further traumatisation, appropriate special protective measures shall be proposed and/or implemented, which may include:

- to have a consultation with legal counsel, financed from the state budget, before the interview
- to be interviewed by a person of the same sex by the police and in the state attorney's office, and if another interview is required, to have it conducted by that same person
- to refuse to answer questions that have no connection to the criminal offence and that are related to the strictly personal life of the victim
- to demand to be interviewed with audio-visual equipment
- the confidentiality of personal data
- to demand the exclusion of the public from the trial

**In carrying out an individual assessment for victims of violence against women, domestic violence, and violence in close relationships, particular attention shall be given to the risk factors for recurrence of violence, as well as to previous assessments of the victim's needs.**

## WHO IS A WITNESS?

The testimony of a witness is an exceptionally important part of the criminal proceedings and may be of significance in reaching a verdict. Persons summoned as witnesses are those likely to provide information about the criminal offence, the perpetrator, and other relevant circumstances. Except in specific circumstances, testimony is obligatory, and a witness who fails to respond to a summons may be forcibly brought in. If they refuse to give a statement, they may be fined up to EUR 6.630,00 or face imprisonment.

## Who is exempt from the obligation to testify?

- ✓ the defendant's spouse or common-law spouse,
- ✓ the defendant's linear relatives by blood, collateral relatives by blood to the third degree and relatives by affinity to the second degree,
- ✓ the defendant's adopted child and the defendant's adoptive parent,
- ✓ notaries public, tax consultants within the scope of a legally binding confidentiality obligation (they cannot refuse to give a statement if a legal ground exists exempting them from their duty to keep information confidential)
- ✓ attorneys, physicians, dentists, psychologists and social workers regarding information disclosed to them by the defendant while performing their respective professions (they cannot refuse to give a statement if a legal ground exists exempting them from their duty to keep information confidential)
- ✓ journalists and their editors in the media regarding sources of information and data coming to their knowledge in the performance of their profession and provided that their sources were used in the editorial process, except in criminal proceedings for offences against honour and reputation committed by the means of the media in a case prescribed by special law (they cannot refuse to give a statement if a legal ground exists exempting them from their duty to keep information confidential).
- ✓ In certain circumstances, this also applies to the person to whom the pecuniary benefit was transferred, with regard to its acquisition

***All aforementioned persons, except for the defence attorney, cannot refuse to testify with regard to criminal offences of criminal law protection of children and minors.***

## Brief overview of the witness testimony procedure:

First, you will be called to testify at the trial by the service of a summons indicating all the details and information on when and where you are required to appear. Before giving their statements, all summoned witnesses enter the courtroom so their presence can be established. After that, one witness remains in the courtroom, while the others leave. The witness shall be examined separately and in the absence of the other witnesses.

At the beginning of your testimony, you shall first be asked personal questions (occupation, address, place of birth, and similar details, as well as your relation to the victim, the defendant, and the injured party). Thereafter you shall be informed that you are bound to tell the truth, that you may not withhold any information and that giving false testimony is a criminal offence. After that, you will be called upon to state everything you know about the case and how you learned it. You will then be asked questions to verify, supplement, or clarify your testimony. Apart from the presiding judge or single judge, you may receive questions from the members of the panel, the

state attorney, the defence attorney (you will first be questioned by the party who proposed you), as well as the defendant. You should be prepared to answer detailed questions; however, the judge will not allow insulting, leading, or provocative questions.

*The witness is not obliged to answer specific questions if doing so would likely expose them or a close relative to criminal prosecution, serious disgrace, or considerable material damage.*

*The witness is entitled to express discomfort to the court panel when giving testimony in the presence of the public or the defendant.*

If you no longer recall the facts stated in a previous hearing, you may inform the judge, who will then read your previous statement and ask whether you wish to maintain it. Likewise, if you now provide a different statement, your previous testimony will be presented to you, and you will be asked to explain why it differs. **After the questioning, you may claim reimbursement for travel expenses.**

Under certain circumstances, the **witness can be interviewed with audio-visual equipment** in accordance with the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Act. Additionally, if a witness cannot respond to a summons due to age, health, or disability, they may be questioned at their residence or at their current location. Audio-visual equipment may also be used on that occasion. This also applies to domestic criminal offences, but only if requested by the individual. Audio-visual equipment may also be used to question witnesses and victims of criminal offences against sexual freedom and human trafficking. If the child is acting as a witness, the questioning using audio-visual equipment is mandatory for children under 16, whereas for older minors (16–18 years), an assessment is conducted to determine the need for this type of questioning.

*Good to know: according to Article 438 of the Criminal Procedure Act, the panel may exceptionally decide to **temporarily remove the defendant from the courtroom if a co-defendant or witness refuses to give a statement in their presence, or if the circumstances indicate that they would not tell the truth in the defendant's presence.** Upon the return of the accused to the session, the statement of the co-accused or witness shall be read to them. The accused has the right to question a co-accused or a witness. If proposed by the parties, the court may order a confrontation.*

*If you have been served with a court summons to testify, contact DEŠA and we will provide you with information on what testifying involves, as well as information regarding your rights as a witness. We will also accompany you to the court as an escort to make the process of testifying easier for you.*

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

Domestic violence represents a serious social problem. Very often, it was seen, and this view has persisted in social consciousness to this day, as a private problem that “occurs behind closed doors”, affecting only the family members directly involved. We tend to see the family as a place of safety, peace, togetherness, closeness, warmth, and protection, making it difficult and unsettling to consider the family as a source of threat and danger. Unfortunately, for some families, this is a painful reality they live with every day.

Domestic violence comprises a set of behaviours aimed at controlling family members through force, threats, and manipulation (Ajduković and Ajduković, 2010). Domestic violence includes any form of **physical, psychological, sexual, and economic violence**, where the perpetrator’s intent is to establish power and control over the victim through these means. Although violence is often associated with physical harm, in most domestic violence cases, physical violence is preceded by prolonged psychological violence. Actions such as insults, ridicule, belittlement, threats, reading someone’s mail, stalking, and other behaviours that undermine the victim’s dignity and cause distress or fear also constitute a form of domestic violence.

Domestic violence is to be distinguished from family disputes and conflicts. Violence results from the abuse of power and involves behaviours that cause the persons against whom it is directed to experience a continuous sense of fear, distress, and danger, potentially even leading to traumatic reactions.

Violence has a negative impact on numerous aspects of life, including the impaired physical and mental health of the person, their cognitive functioning, emotions and mood, behaviour, damaged or broken relationship with friends and other close individuals, reduced work efficiency, and even job loss.

Fortunately, the Croatian legislation increasingly situates violence within a social context and emphasizes that all forms of violence, including domestic violence, are unacceptable, thereby providing a legal framework for addressing violence and offering victims of domestic violence much-needed protection.

Violence is classified in the legal system primarily as a misdemeanour, even under a separate law - the **Act on Protection from Domestic Violence (NN 70/17, 126/19, 86/21, 116/22, 36/24)**, making the process from reporting to conviction faster and more simple compared to criminal proceedings. Severe domestic violence is classified as a criminal offence under Article 179a of the **Criminal Code (NN 101/17)** and punished with prison sentence of up to three years.

Under the Act on Protection from Domestic Violence, the victim has almost identical rights as those provided by the Criminal Procedure Act, for example, being interviewed by a person of the same sex, confidentiality of personal data, and exclusion of the public.



## Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)

The Istanbul Convention is the first legally binding international act to combat violence against women, and it is an integral part of the domestic legislative framework of the Republic of Croatia.

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, which was ratified in 2018 (the so-called Istanbul Convention) recognises violence against women as a **violation of human rights and a form of discrimination** against women and means **“all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”**

The notion of gender **refers to “socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a society considers appropriate for women and men”**, and concludes that gender-based violence against women means violence directed at a woman because she is a woman or that disproportionately affects a woman (with the category of women also including girls under 18).

The Convention defines domestic violence as **“all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim”**.

Pursuant to Article 1, the purpose of the Convention is:

- ✓ to protect women against all forms of violence, and to prevent, prosecute and eliminate violence against women and domestic violence;
- ✓ to contribute to the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and to promote full equality between women and men, including women’s empowerment;
- ✓ to design a comprehensive framework, policies and measures of protection and assistance to all victims of violence against women and of domestic violence;
- ✓ to promote international cooperation with the aim of combating violence against women and domestic violence;
- ✓ to provide support and assistance to organisations and authorities responsible for enforcing the law through effective cooperation, with the aim of adopting a comprehensive approach to combating violence against women and domestic violence.

## Rules of Procedure in Cases of Family Violence

The Rules of Procedure are a document that brings together various national and international regulations on the protection of victims of domestic violence. It ensures the efficient and timely enforcement of regulations and the cooperation of competent authorities responsible for implementing provisions that protect victims of domestic violence.

*Procedures regarding domestic violence should be carried out **urgently, without delay, while taking into consideration the rights of all victims** (Rules of Procedure in Cases of Family Violence, 2019).*

The document outlines the roles of various authorities in the implementation of regulations on the protection against domestic violence. It explains the work of the police, healthcare, the judiciary, the victim and witness support system (Victim and Witness Support Service and Department for Victim and Witness Support), the probation service, social welfare centres, educational institutions, civil society organizations aimed at protecting victims of domestic violence, as well as the media.

## Rights of victims of domestic violence under the Act on Protection from Domestic Violence:

- ✓ Right to access support services for victims of domestic violence
- ✓ The right to effective psychological and other professional support, as well as support provided by the authority, organisation, or institution competent for assisting victims of domestic violence
- ✓ The right to protection from intimidation and retaliation
- ✓ The right to the protection of dignity during witness testimony
- ✓ The right to be accompanied by a person of trust when taking part in any acts
- ✓ The right to be notified, upon request and without undue delay, of the suspension of detention or the escape of the defendant, of the repeal of decisions imposing protective measures, of the revocation of precautionary measures taken to protect the victim, as well as of the release of the convicted person from imprisonment.
- ✓ The right to the confidentiality of data whose disclosure could endanger the victim's safety or the safety of the persons referred to in Article 8. of the Act and the right to demand that proceedings before the court be closed to the public
- ✓ The right to have a legal representative in the proceedings
- ✓ The right to be notified, upon request, of the actions taken in response to the complaint and of the outcome of the proceedings

- ✓ The right to be interviewed without unjustified delay shortly after filing a complaint; the right to be interviewed in the proceedings before the court and the right to be further interviewed only to the extent necessary for the purposes of the proceedings
- ✓ The right to be interviewed at the police by a person of the same sex
- ✓ The right to avoidance of contact with the offender before and during proceedings, unless misdemeanour proceedings require such contact
- ✓ The right to temporary accommodation in an appropriate institution in accordance with a special law
- ✓ The right to be provided with police protection, upon a court order, when collecting personal belongings upon leaving the common household
- ✓ Other rights laid down by the law regulating criminal proceedings, except those that, by their nature, apply only to victims of a criminal offence.

## MISDEMEANOUR OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

Misdemeanours are conducts that violate or threaten public order, social discipline or social values guaranteed and protected by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, national and international laws. Misdemeanours are subject to misdemeanour sanctions. Misdemeanour sanctions are often used to punish domestic violence, except in cases of severe domestic violence, which is listed as a criminal offence under the Criminal Code.

**The aforementioned Act on Protection from Domestic Violence (NN 70/17, 126/19, 84/21, 114/22, 36/24) and its provisions provide for the possibility of applying either misdemeanour or criminal sanctions for domestic violence, depending on whether domestic violence is characterised as a misdemeanour or a criminal offence.**

A misdemeanour can be reported to the police, the state attorney, and/or the Institute for Social Work (which will forward the report to the police or the state attorney's office).

When reporting domestic violence, the police shall classify the act either as a misdemeanour under Article 10 of the Act on Protection from Domestic Violence (NN 70/17, 126/19, 84/21, 114/22, 36/24), or as one of the criminal offences covered by the Criminal Code (NN 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15, 101/17, 118/18, 126/19, 84/21, 114/22, 114/23, 36/24, 136/25).

**Pursuing to Article 10 of the Act on Protection from Domestic Violence, domestic violence is:**

1. Use of physical force not resulting in bodily injury
2. Corporal punishment or other forms of degrading treatment of children
3. Psychological violence that results in a violation of the victim's dignity or distress.
4. Economic violence such as banning or preventing the use of joint or personal property, having personal income or property acquired by personal work or inheritance at one's disposal, preventing employment, and withholding funds for maintaining the common household and caring for children.
5. Neglecting the needs of a person with disability or an elderly person which results in the person's distress or violates their dignity, thereby inflicting physical or mental suffering.

**It should be noted that a victim of a domestic violence misdemeanour has the right to be accompanied by a person of trust of their choice when taking part in any acts, from reporting the misdemeanour to the final conclusion of the case, as well as the right to a legal representative in the proceedings, the right to be interviewed by a police officer of the same sex, etc.**

***A new provision in the Act on Protection from Domestic Violence is that the victim has the right to suggest to be interviewed using audio-visual equipment. It is important to point out that the victim can request the imposition of protective measures even before the start of the misdemeanour proceedings or during the proceedings. Protective measures can be imposed before initiating the misdemeanour proceedings at the request of the victim or another authorised prosecutor if there is an imminent danger to the safety of the victim, their family members, or a member of the common household.***

Protective measures can also be imposed ex officio, at the request of the authorised prosecutor, the victim, or the Croatian Institute for Social Work.

Under the Misdemeanour Act (NN 107/07, 39/13, 157/13, 110/15, 70/17, 118/18, 114/22), authorised prosecutors are: a state attorney, a state administrative body, a legal entity with public authority, and the injured party.

An authorised prosecutor in the criminal proceedings can be: a state attorney, a private prosecutor (a prosecutor who has filed a private complaint for prosecution of a criminal offence that is prosecuted as a private complaint) and the injured party as a prosecutor (a prosecutor who has taken over the prosecution from a state attorney who has not initiated or has withdrawn from the prosecution of the criminal case).

Criminal proceedings shall be conducted upon the request of the authorised prosecutor.

In cases involving offences subject to public prosecution, the authorized prosecutor shall be the state attorney, and in cases involving offences subject to private charge, the authorized prosecutor shall be a private prosecutor.

For certain criminal offences, when prescribed by law, the state attorney shall institute criminal proceedings only upon the motion of the victim. Except where otherwise prescribed by law, the state attorney shall be bound to institute the prosecution when there is reasonable suspicion that a certain person committed an offence which is subject to public prosecution and when there are no legal obstacles to the prosecution of that person.

**The court shall decide whether to impose any of the protective measures upon the perpetrator of domestic violence.** Protective measures shall be prescribed by the Misdemeanour Act (NN 107/07, 39/13, 157/13, 110/15, 70/17, 118/18, 114/22) and by the laws regulating misdemeanours. This means that the court may impose on the perpetrator of violence any of the measures provided by the Misdemeanour Act, as well as any measure laid down by the Act on Protection from Domestic Violence.

**Protective measures based on the Misdemeanour Act (NN39/13,157/13, 110/15):**

1. Mandatory addiction treatment
2. Prohibition on performing certain tasks or activities
3. Prohibition on engaging in certain activities or performing specific tasks for legal entities
4. Prohibition on acquiring permits, authorisations, concessions, or subsidies
5. Prohibition on engaging in business activities with beneficiaries of the state or local budget
6. Prohibition on operating a motor vehicle
7. Prohibition on visiting specific places or areas

**Types of protective measures based on the Act on Protection from Domestic Violence:**

1. Mandatory psychosocial treatment
2. Prohibition on approaching, harassing or stalking the victim of domestic violence
3. Removal from the joint household
4. Mandatory addiction treatment

***More information on protective measures and the rights of victims can be found in the Act on Protection from Domestic Violence.***

# CRIMINAL OFFENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The **Criminal Code** defines the criminal offence of domestic violence in Article 179a and provides that:

A person who commits a serious breach of the regulations on protection from family violence, thus, causing a family member or another close person to feel fear for their safety or the safety of persons closely related to them or placing them in a humiliating position, provided that no more serious offence has been committed, shall be punished with imprisonment from one to three years.

\*Pursuant to the provisions of the Criminal Code, family members are: spouse or common-law partner, life partner or informal life partner, their joint children and children of each of them, blood relative in the direct lineage, relative in the collateral line up to the third degree, in-law relatives up to the second degree, adoptive parent and adoptee.

\*Close persons are family members, former spouse or common-law partner, former life partner or informal life partner, current or former partner in an intimate relationship, persons who have a joint child and persons living in a joint household.

\*According to the Criminal Code, a common-law partner is a person who lives in a non-marital partnership of long-term character, or a short-term partnership if a child has been born within it.

\*An informal life partner is a person who lives in a same-sex partnership of long-term character.

The Criminal Code additionally provides protection from violence against close persons. Accordingly, criminal offences include punishable acts causing harm to a close person, such as murder (Art. 110), aggravated murder (Art. 111), aggravated murder of a woman (Art. 111a), manslaughter (Art. 112), female genital mutilation (Art. 116 par. 3), bodily injury (Art. 117 par. 2), serious bodily injury (Art. 118 par. 2), particularly serious bodily injury (Art. 119 par. 2), serious bodily injury resulting in death (Art. 120), serious bodily injury caused by negligence (Art. 121), coercion (Art. 138, par. 2), threat (Art. 139, par. 4), stalking (Art. 140, par. 2), non-consensual sexual intercourse (Art. 152), rape (Art. 153), and sexual harassment (Art. 156).

## **Act on Protection from Domestic Violence**

(NN 70/17, 126/19, 84/21, 114/22 and 36/24)

**Criminal Code** (NN 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15, 101/17, 118/18, 126/19, 84/21, 114/23 and 36/24, 136/25)

## Protection of the victim of a criminal offence

Precautionary measures may be imposed upon the defendant both before and during the criminal proceedings. The state attorney may order, prolong, or vacate a precautionary measure by a ruling before the indictment, whereas the investigating judge may do the same when deciding on investigative imprisonment. The state attorney or investigative judge are competent for extending or vacating the measures they ordered. After the indictment is preferred and until the judgement becomes final or enforceable, the precautionary measure shall be ordered by the court of first instance.

### Precautionary measures that are imposed on the defendant:

- ✓ Prohibition on leaving the place or residence
- ✓ Prohibition on visiting specific places or areas
- ✓ Obligation of the defendant to call periodically a certain person or authority
- ✓ Prohibition on approaching certain people
- ✓ Prohibition on establishing or maintaining contact with certain people
- ✓ Prohibition on engaging in a certain business activity
- ✓ Temporary seizure of a passport or other document which serves to cross the state border
- ✓ Temporary seizure of a license to drive a motor vehicle
- ✓ Prohibition on approaching or harassing the victim or other persons
- ✓ Removal from the residence
- ✓ Prohibition on using the internet

Against the ruling ordering, prolonging, or vacating a precautionary measure, the parties and the victim of a criminal offence of violence against women, domestic violence, or violence against close persons may file an appeal, which does not stay the execution of the ruling. A single judge or a panel of judges shall decide on the appeal against the ruling.

In the Croatian criminal law, security measures are never imposed as independent criminal sanctions, but only as additional sanctions to a conviction of imprisonment or a suspended sentence.

Security measures are listed exhaustively in the Criminal Code as follows:

- Mandatory psychiatric treatment
- Mandatory addiction treatment
- Mandatory psychosocial treatment
- Prohibition on engaging in a certain duty or exercising a certain profession

- Prohibition on operating a motor vehicle
- Prohibition on approaching, harassing or stalking a person
- Removal from the joint household
- Prohibition on using the internet
- Protective supervision after serving a full prison sentence and prohibition on keeping or acquiring animals

*\*More information on security measures can be found in the Criminal Code.*

## SOCIAL SERVICES AVAILABLE TO VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

### Social services and social benefits of the Croatian Institute for Social Work (HZZSR)

Among social services, special attention should be given to **emergency accommodation**, to which victims of domestic violence are entitled. It is provided in cases where the life, health, or welfare of the person is threatened, for up to six months, or in exceptional cases, for up to one year.

The service of emergency accommodation is provided to a child without adequate parental care, a child or young adult with behaviour problems, an unaccompanied foreign child or a child without citizenship, a child whose parents are temporarily unable to care for them due to illness, unresolved housing issues, or other life difficulties, a pregnant woman or a parent with a child under one year of age who has no accommodation or who cannot remain with their child in the family due to problematic family relationship, a victim of domestic violence, a victim of human trafficking, a person found outside their place of residence or who has no residence or domicile and is unable to care for themselves, a person whose life is at risk due to illness, disability, addiction, or social exclusion, and a homeless person.

When it comes to **social benefits**, the victim is usually referred to a **lump-sum benefit in case of unexpected living costs**, or to the **minimum income benefit in case of unemployment**.

More information on social services can be found in **DEŠA's Guide for the Social and Occupational Integration of Victims of Domestic Violence**. The guide is available on the website of DEŠA, under **Media Materials**.

**Link to the guide:** <https://desa-dubrovnik.hr/storage/Vodic-za-socijalno-i-radno-ukljucivanje-zrtava-nasilja-u-obitelji-2.pdf>



## Family Centre, the County Office of Dubrovnik– Neretva County

The Family Centre provides social services for Dubrovnik-Neretva County.

Four social services are provided under the Social Welfare Act: **counselling, psychosocial counselling, psychosocial treatment to prevent violent behaviour, and family mediation.**

The employees of the County Office work **directly with victims of violence**, and it should be noted that the County Office operates as a counselling centre **where anyone can spontaneously contact the team and participate in counselling related to family, parental, or partnership difficulties.** The County Office of Dubrovnik-Neretva provides preventive programs, among which the program “Let’s Grow Together” is highlighted.

## Mental Health Department of the Croatian Institute for Public Health in Dubrovnik-Neretva County

The department is part of the Service for Promoting Health and is focused on mental

healthcare. It operates five counselling centres, distributed to ensure the best possible accessibility for service users (Dubrovnik, Metković, Korčula, Vela Luka, and Orebić).

The activities of the Department of Mental Health can be divided into two areas:

### **1 Prevention of mental disorders**

### **2 Diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders**

Within the framework of prevention, victims of violence can receive several services:

- Support in coming to terms with major life changes (such as moving, divorce, or the loss of a close person)
- Support related to difficulties in social relationships (empowerment through assertiveness training and social skills training),
- Support in stressful situations (empowerment through relaxation techniques)

Within the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders, victims of violence can access services through psychiatric, therapeutic, or psychotherapeutic work, which can be provided individually or in groups. The Department of Mental Health also offers psychodiagnostics services and caters to the following users: children, youth, and adults.

## Shelter for victims of violence in the Dubrovnik-Neretva County

The safe house *Josipov Dom* has been operating since 2021 and provides accommodation, counselling, and psychosocial support to victims of domestic violence.

It can accommodate 8 persons. The accommodation, provided for 6 months or up to one year in exceptional cases, offers the following services: housing, meals, psychosocial support and healthcare assistance, help with employment, as well as early childhood education and schooling.

The shelter team consists of a house manager, a social worker, and a psychologist.

Our professional team's work is based on an interdisciplinary approach, with members complementing one another and establishing the framework for the House's activities.

### Contact details:

**Safe House in Dubrovnik-Neretva County: 095/351-6500**

E-mail: [info@sigurnakuca-dnz.hr](mailto:info@sigurnakuca-dnz.hr)

## PROCEDURE FOR ADMISSION TO THE SAFE HOUSE

**It starts with reporting the violence to the police at number 192 or to the competent Institute for Social Work based on the place of residence.**

Upon reviewing the situation, the Croatian Institute for Social Work – regional office, in agreement with the beneficiary, may provide access to the social service of emergency accommodation in the Safe House.

**The basic eligibility criterion for accommodation is the presence of physical, sexual, psychological, economic, or other forms of violence.**

## Housing solutions for victims of domestic violence at the national level

The Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets carries out housing care for victims of domestic violence across the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia through the leasing of appropriate housing units.

Under the Act on Housing Care in Assisted Areas (NN 106/18, 98/19, 82/23), a victim of domestic violence is entitled to housing care across the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia through the leasing of an appropriate housing unit.

The conditions for exercising the right to housing are:

1. a final court judgement on domestic violence committed against the applicant
2. that the applicant does not own or co-own another habitable family house or apartment in the territory of the Republic of Croatia
3. that the applicant does not have sufficient funds to provide an adequate housing unit necessary for housing, and they cannot obtain it through their work, income from property, from the debtor or otherwise, or when the total income of the applicant and adult members of their household per month does not exceed the amount of one budget base per household member
4. a recommendation from the competent regional office of the Croatian Institute for Social Work on the need for housing for victims of domestic violence

A victim of domestic violence **submits a request for housing to the ADMINISTRATIVE DEPARTMENT FOR GENERAL ADMINISTRATION AND PROPERTY AND LEGAL AFFAIRS, at the following address: Vukovarska 16, 20000 Dubrovnik. The request may be submitted by registered mail.**

The County shall pass a decision on the housing of a victim of domestic violence for a period of up to two years and forward the decision to the Ministry for execution.

***After the two-year period expires, the decision may be extended at the request of the victim of domestic violence if the reasons for which the decision was made are still present. The extension shall be decided again by the first-instance authority – the County. An appeal of the decision on housing shall be decided upon by the second-instance authority – the Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets.***

**The request for housing must be accompanied by the following documents:**

1. A final court judgement on the violence committed against the applicant, with a notice of entry confirming that the judgement is final.
2. A statement regarding the second eligibility criteria, confirming that the applicant does not own or co-own any other habitable family house or apartment within the territory of the Republic of Croatia. This statement must be filled out and certified by a notary public in 2 copies. One copy shall be retained by the applicant.
3. A confirmation from the Tax Authority - that the applicant does not have sufficient funds to provide an adequate housing unit necessary for housing, and they cannot obtain it through their work, income from property, from

the debtor or otherwise, or when the total income of the applicant and adult members of their household per month does not exceed the amount of one budget base per household member. The confirmation from the Tax Authority must cover all household members.

4. A recommendation from the competent regional office of the Croatian Institute for Social Work on the need for housing for victims of domestic violence.
5. A copy of the ID card of the victim and of the children

***The request and supporting documents are available on the website of the competent Administrative Department of DNŽ: <https://www.dnz.hr/services/upravni-odjel-za-opcu-upravu-i-imovinsko-pravne-poslove/>***

***Click on “Documents and Forms” and select:***

- 1 Application Form for Housing***
- 2 Statement for a Notary Public***

## **Housing care for victims of violence in the City of Dubrovnik**

***Upon benefiting from the housing measure provided by the Ministry, a person can apply for housing assistance through the City of Dubrovnik.***

The City of Dubrovnik recognizes the housing needs of victims of domestic violence.

With this guide, we present to you Art. 10 of the Decision on the Lease of Flats Owned by the City of Dubrovnik (2023)

Pursuant to this article, victims of domestic violence are identified as eligible tenants of city-owned flats.

The City of Dubrovnik may lease a city-owned flat to individuals with the status of victims of domestic violence outside the priority list, provided they meet certain conditions:

1. to have permanent residence in the City of Dubrovnik (for at least 7 consecutive years prior to submitting the request, or 15 years in total with interruptions), as proven by a residence certificate issued by the relevant department of the Police Directorate;
2. to have a final court judgement on domestic violence committed against the applicant (not older than 7 years from the date the judgement became final);

3. that the applicant does not own or co-own another habitable family house or apartment within the territory of the Republic of Croatia, as proven by a certificate issued by the land registry department of the competent Municipal Court confirming that the applicant and members of their household are not registered as owners or co-owners of a family house or apartment, or by a notarized statement, given under moral and criminal responsibility, declaring that they do not own another habitable family house or apartment within the territory of the Republic of Croatia;
4. that the applicant does not have sufficient funds to provide an adequate housing unit necessary for housing, and they cannot obtain it through their work, income from property, from the debtor or otherwise, or when the total income of the applicant and adult members of their household per month does not exceed the amount of one budget base per household member, whereby they provide a statement authorising the City of Dubrovnik to verify, process, store, and use data on the income and earnings of the applicant and members of their family;
5. that they have already exercised their right to housing care through the competent state office, which is confirmed by a certificate issued by the Central State Office for Reconstruction and Housing Care;
6. that they have a recommendation from the competent Administrative Department for Social Welfare of the City of Dubrovnik, as well as from the competent regional office of the Croatian Institute for Social Work on the need for housing for victims of domestic violence.

**Individuals with the status of victims of domestic violence are required to reside continuously in the leased apartment and to notify the lessor of any changes. If they no longer meet the aforementioned criteria, they shall lose the right to tenancy.**

**Individuals who exercise the right to rent an apartment under this Article enter into a fixed-term lease agreement, with the rent mutually agreed upon in accordance with the provisions of this Decision and the resolution of the City Council, for a period of up to 5 years.**

**Further information on the above is available in the Decision on the Lease of Flats Owned by the City of Dubrovnik (2023)**

## DEŠA Fund for the Support of Women in Need and Women Victims of Violence

DEŠA's support fund was established in June 2023.

According to the Rules of procedure of the DEŠA Fund for the Support of Women in Need and Women Victims of Violence, abbreviated as: DEŠA Support Fund, the right to financial assistance is granted to:

1. A single woman or a member of a household who does not have sufficient means to cover basic living needs and cannot obtain them through work, income, income from property, from a debtor, or by other means.
2. A woman with serious health problems, for assistance with medical treatment (covering supplemental health insurance, additional treatment costs not covered by basic or supplemental health insurance, etc.).
3. A woman who previously benefited from the right to housing or organized accommodation but lost this right upon the expiration of the granted period and has not yet been able to support herself, for a maximum of 3 months.
4. A pregnant woman or a parent with a child no older than one year, or in exceptional cases up to three years, who has no family support and is without adequate living conditions.
5. A woman who, due to problematic family relationships or other unfavourable circumstances, is in need of professional assistance or other support (e.g., legal fees, psychotherapy, rent, etc.).
6. An adult woman who is a victim of domestic violence, other forms of violence, or human trafficking, and who is in need of support to meet basic living conditions.
7. A woman victim of violence who due to her age or illness is unable to take care of her basic living needs independently.
8. A woman who independently cares for her children, a single parent, or a parent in a single-parent family (a single-parent family is one in which one or more children live with a single parent who cares for and supports them).
9. A woman victim of domestic violence who previously benefited from the housing care measure under the Act on Housing Care in Assisted Areas, no more than three 3 after the expiry of this right (submission of the decision on exercising the right and a copy of the ID card is required).
10. Individuals in need, according to the assessment of the Executive Board of DEŠA.

**All potential beneficiaries must have resided in Dubrovnik-Neretva County for more than six months, except in cases where the Executive Board of DEŠA decides otherwise.**

Forms of support available to beneficiaries

1. direct financial support, provided as a lump sum or in instalments (depending on the declared need and the decision of the Executive Board of DEŠA), paid to the account of the persons in need;
2. assistance with the payment of services (legal, medical, housing, etc.) ;
3. assistance in covering basic living costs (food vouchers, vouchers for baby supplies or baby food, payment of utility bills, kindergarten fees, short-term rent, firewood or other heating fuel, basic school supplies for children, etc.);
4. covering the costs of short-term accommodation, travel expenses, and food in urgent intervention cases, based on the assessment of the Executive Director or the Executive Board of DEŠA;
5. provided legal assistance, psychological counselling, counselling with a social worker;
6. all other forms of assistance not covered here that the Executive Board deems necessary and indispensable.

**An individual requests assistance using the application form available on the DEŠA website, along with submitting all necessary documents describing their needs. The documents should be delivered to the DEŠA office, Frana Supila 8, 20 000 Dubrovnik, either in person, by mail, or by e-mail to [info@desa-dubrovnik.hr](mailto:info@desa-dubrovnik.hr)**

**The decision on granting assistance is made by the Executive Board within 7 days of receiving the documents. If the Executive Director determines that an urgent situation exists, the Executive Board may make the decision in an expeditious procedure by phone. In such a case, the Executive Director urgently contacts the members of the DEŠA Executive Board**

**List of documents to be submitted:**

1. The application form, which can be downloaded from the DEŠA website;
2. A copy of ID card;
3. A copy of the bank account card;
4. Original utility bills (electricity, telephone, water, municipal services,...) ;
5. Lease agreement for the apartment, if funds are requested for paying the rent or utilities for the apartment in question,
6. A copy of medical records;

7. A signed statement regarding household members, if requested by the DEŠA Executive Board;
8. Income certificates for all household members, if requested by the DEŠA Administrative Board;
9. A contract of employment, if requested by the DEŠA Administrative Board;
10. A sick leave certificate, if requested by the DEŠA Administrative Board;
11. A certificate of unemployment, if requested by the DEŠA Administrative Board;
12. Upon request by DEŠA staff, the applicant shall also submit any other documents and information necessary to establish certain facts.

**The decision to grant assistance is made by the DEŠA Executive Board.**

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Ministry of Justice and Administration: <https://mpudt.gov.hr/UserDocImages/24832>

National Call Centre (NPC): <https://pzs.hr/nacionalni-pozivni-centar-za-zrtve-kaznenih-djela-i-preksaja-2/>

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Act on Gender Equality (NN 82/08, 69/17)

Social Welfare Act (NN 18/22, 46/22, 119/22, 71/23, 156/23, 61/25)

Act on Housing Care in Assisted Areas (NN 106/18, 98/19, 82/23)

Act on Protection from Domestic Violence (NN 70/17, 126/19, 84/21, 114/22, 36/24)