

# BUILDING

# RESPECT

**Migrant Domestic Workers in Europe share advice and experiences**

# **Building RESPECT !**

Contributions from workers and staff at :

**Waling-Waling / UWA** and **KALAYAAN UK**  
**KASAPI**, Greece  
**CCEM / Babaylan**, France  
**In Via / Polska Rada Spoleczna**, Germany  
**VOMADE / MPDL**, Spain  
**CGIL**, Italy  
**CFMW / TNI**, Netherlands

Thank you to everybody who contributed to this book !

## HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL

### **TO ALL MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS**

This manual has been written by and for YOU ! We hope that it will give you some useful information and advice about working and living in Europe...

**BUT !**

The manual will NOT give you ALL the information that you need. Inside is a selection of details about your rights, but you should always get MORE ADVICE from a community organisation or solicitor about your own case. Just because information is not in this book does not mean that it is not important or useful.

### **TO ALL ORGANISATIONS**

It is hoped that organisations will be able to use this Manual as a framework for workshops or trainings. Many workers will not be familiar with using manuals, or will not be able to read a European language easily, so we are relying on organisations to help spread the information, ensure that it is fully understood, encourage debate, and add national expertise.

### **NAMES !**

Not all the names are real, but all the advice is from real migrant domestic workers.

In Europe, more women are returning to work soon after the birth of their first child, but childcare is expensive and hard to find.

The population fo Europe is ageing : there are more old people with fewer young people wo care for them, and governments are not helping to pay for their care.

European lifestyles need a lot of work and skill to maintain. Employers, often living in very big houses, demand that clothes are hand-washed, steam-ironed, dry cleaned; floors must be polished and buffed; and there are different cleaning products for every surface.

**EUROPE NEEDS DOMESTIC WORKERS !  
WE ARE POWERFUL !**

“Foreign labour is used by many households for care of small children and older persons, as well for house maintenance and repairs, where it provides low-priced and flexible labour.” (OECD Report on Greece)

“On 23 April 1999 the (Spanish) authorities offered 30.000 permits (or migrant workers) : they received 94.814 applications, almost twice as many as in 1998.” (Statewatch, vol. 9)

“An estimated 90% of employed African and Asian women (in Italy) are domestic workers in private households.”

**EUROPE NEEDS DOMESTIC WORKERS !  
WE ARE MANY!**

We are called by many names...

MAID! GIRL! SERVANT! MOTHER'S HELP!

...but we are WORKERS!

- with few WORKERS' RIGHTS
- often with NO WORK PERMITS
- often ABUSED and EXPLOITED

According to statistics from all over Europe, the majority of us will suffer psychological abuse in the workplace; many will be locked into the house or made to sleep on the floor. Most of us will work very long hours for very little pay. Some of us will not be paid at all, and some of us will suffer from sexual or physical abuse

**WE MUST ACT!**

## **A CHARTER OF RIGHTS FOR MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS IN EUROPE**

**Domestic work in private households is important to European family life, to European economies and to European support systems. It is demanding work which requires a variety of skills and is often done by women who have migrated to Europe. Many have left their families and children in an attempt to find a way out of poverty.**

**Migrant domestic workers are part of the fabric of European society. Their dignity and their rights as people and workers must be protected.**

**We call for justice and equity for all migrant domestic workers; whether documented or undocumented; whether live-in or live-out; whether first or second generation; whether born in Africa, Asia, South America or Europe. Member states of the European Union must recognise the intrinsic dignity and crucial importance of domestic work and seek to educate their citizens accordingly. Relevant organisations in the EU have a duty to ensure that migrant domestic workers have information and the means to access the following rights:**

- **THE RIGHT to an immigration status which recognises that domestic work in private households is proper work.**
- **THE RIGHT to an immigration status for the worker independent of any employer.**
- **THE RIGHT to travel both within the host country and between all countries of the European Union.**
- **THE RIGHT to full and non-discriminatory employment rights and social protection, including minimum wage, sickness and maternity pay, and pension.**
- **THE RIGHT to change employer.**
- **THE RIGHT to a legally enforceable contract of employment setting out minimum wages, maximum hours and responsibilities.**
- **THE RIGHT to work free from fear of physical, sexual or psychological abuse.**
- **THE RIGHT to join a trade union.**
- **THE RIGHT to live and work free from racism.**
- **THE RIGHT to family life, including health, education and social rights for the children of migrant domestic workers.**
- **THE RIGHT to recognition of qualifications, training and experience obtained in the home country.**
- **THE RIGHT to personal and leisure time.**



## **THE RESPECT NETWORK UNDERTAKES:**

- **To transform policy and practice at all levels, from the European Commission to the households of the European Union, to reflect this charter of rights.**
- **To ensure that migrant domestic workers are informed of their rights and have the means to access these rights.**
- **To work for the implementation of the charter of rights with migrants and refugees, trades unions, parliamentarians, human rights activists, and other relevant sectors.**

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **Pay, Hours and Conditions**

**“Did anybody give us advice when we first came? Nobody. We must shelter those who come here. They don’t know their rights.” Gemma, UK**

**Workers from all over the world look for jobs in Europe for many different reasons. Some can no longer make a living for themselves and their families in their home country, some have been widowed or have separated from their husbands, some have suffered from violence, some are fleeing conflict, others need to earn money to pay for medicine or education for their families. NOBODY WANTS TO leave home, or to be apart from FAMILY and FRIENDS.**

## **SHARING OUR EXPERIENCES**

***“My experience when I first arrived in Greece was very sad. I felt completely strange in this world. I did not understand a single word in this language and I did not know anybody except my employers. I was shocked because I thought I will only do household work, but no, I am a also a babysitter for a 7-month-old baby.”***

***Netty, Greece***

*“I was promised 400 Francs a month, but I first had to pay for my plane ticket. I did not receive any money for 8 years. My passport was taken. I had to get up at 5am and take care of five adults and five children. I had to do the cooking, cleaning, ironing as well as combing hair, and massaging and polishing the nails of the adults. I could only go to sleep at 1am when the employers went to bed. I had no time off and I was not allowed to leave the house. When visitors came, I was made to stay in the cellar or in a cupboard. I was not allowed to eat without asking permission. I was often beaten and I was made to sleep next to the dustbins during the winter.”* Josephine, France

***“I came to work for the American Embassy in London. I came in 1986. I was looking after two children. Sometimes 25 people came to the house and I had to serve them. I had to wash by hand. I had to do the gardening. He said he was sending money to Delhi, I told him that I needed the money. He told me to***

***wait for two years. I wanted to see my children. I waited 18 months but he hadn't given me any money. He asked for my passport. He wouldn't give it back. I had to go to the Indian Embassy. I couldn't write any letters to my children." Radha, UK***

*"I thought it would be easier in Spain. I have studied a profession, but I could not get any work here other than domestic work in a private house. I thought I was lucky because I was working in an enormous house in a luxurious area. But then I realised how hard the job was. I had spare evenings every week but my employer would not let me go out unless I had finished my job in the house, so I hardly got any spare time. I was the only worker, but before me, three workers were employed to do the job."*  
*Matilda, Spain*

## ***YOUR RIGHTS AS A WORKER!***

### **What rights do I have if my employer sacks me?**

In some countries the employer can sack you for no reason, in others they cannot – check with an adviser. In all countries you have the right to be given a period of notice and to be paid during this period.

#### Country examples

**SPAIN:** Employers can sack a domestic worker without any reason. However, domestic workers have the right to seven days' salary per year they have worked for the employer. If the employer has no reason to sack the worker, they must give them seven days' notice (if the job has lasted less than one year) or twenty days' notice (if the job has lasted longer than one year). The notice period can be substituted with money.

**UK:** Employers cannot sack you because you become pregnant or want to join a trade union. If you have worked with the same employer for over 1 year you can only be dismissed for a good reason. If there have been no serious problems, an employer should give you a chance to explain, a warning and a chance to improve. If you are dismissed, your employer should give you notice (or a period of pay). If you think you have been sacked with no good reason you should contact a union or organisation – you may be able to get compensation (money).

**Can I change my employer?**

Check with an adviser before you change your employer, unless you are suffering from abuse, in which case you should leave the house as soon as possible.

**Country Examples**

UK: Yes! You can change your employer within the same area of work. You may need to make an application to the Home Office (contact Kalayaan for further details). Some employers will tell you that you do not have this right and that you will be sent home if you leave. This is NOT TRUE.

Spain: It is sometimes impossible to change an employer within the first year of work in Spain. When you have renewed your work permit for the second year, then you can change your employer.

**Sexism**

In Europe, women should have the same treatment as men. If there are men employed in your household, you should not be paid less than them or have worse conditions just because you are a woman. If you are experiencing sexism, talk to an adviser.

**Solicitors, Lawyers and Legal Advisers**

Get a good solicitor who will not charge you more than the average rate. Some solicitors/advisers are not fully informed about migrant domestic workers' rights, and some will try to charge you too much money. Get advice from an organisation, and tell them if you think you are being charged too much. You may be able to get free legal advice if you are not earning (or have a very low salary) and some organisations provide free legal advice. Always ask how much it will cost first.

**Should I ask for a Contract?**

**Yes!** A contract is a written document that is signed by you and by your employer. It is an agreement about your employment – the tasks that you will be doing, your pay, your hours, your time off and your conditions of work. You should try to get a contract even if you are undocumented in Europe – a contract is a way of protecting your rights! In Europe employers must give workers a written document with details of pay and conditions. You need to read and understand your contract before you sign it. If there is anything in your contract that you do not understand or want to change, ask someone to help you. Make sure you get a copy of your contract and keep it safely.

Country examples :

In Italy, you must have a written contract by law in order to get a work permit. Try to read and understand this contract before you sign it, and that you keep a copy with you.

**What if my employer won't give me a contract?**

Try to make a spoken agreement with the employer – ask them to tell you about the work you will be doing, what time you will start and finish, how much you will be paid, when you will be paid, whether you will be paid overtime etc. Try to get as many details as you can. If you can, write down what the employer tells you and the date when they told you – this might be useful evidence.

**What if my employer does not keep to the contract?**

Nearly all migrant domestic workers who are given a contract find that the employer does not keep to it. You can agree to changes in your contract, but you do not have to. It is often very difficult to prove that the employer is not keeping to the contract (spoken or written).

(See some common problems)



## COMMON PROBLEMS

- I'm not being paid
- I'm not being paid the amount I was told at the interview
- The employer told me that he/she would pay my wages to my family
- I'm being forced to work extra hours with no extra pay
- I have to work in other peoples' houses
- The employer is giving me presents instead of my wages
- I'm being made to live in bad conditions

***If you are suffering from any of these problems, get advice ! By law the employer must pay you regularly and at least every month. If they do not you can try to get the money back with the help of a solicitor or organisation.***

**How much should I be paid?**

Some European countries have a MINIMUM WAGE – this means that, by law, an employer must not pay you less than a set amount. The minimum wage is the LOWEST sum you should be paid, if you can, try to get a higher wage. Even if you are not included in the minimum wage rules, you should still ask to be paid at least this amount:

UK:	£3.20 (under 21 years) £3.60 (over 21 years).
Belgium	Bef 258.05 per hour (??check!!)
France	FF 37.99 per hour (over 18)
Greece	DRS 5748 per day (single) DRS 8321 per day (married)
Luxemburg	LF 43.744 per month (over 18)
Netherlands	FL 101.70 per day (over 18)
Portugal	ESC 54600 per monght (over 18)
Spain	PTS 2.164 per day (over 18)

These figures may have changed, check with an adviser. In Denmark, Austria, Italy, Ireland, Germany and Sweden minimum wages are decided by the employment sector.

**How many hours should I be working?**

No full time workers in Europe should be expected to work more than 48 hours per week,

unless they agree to (Exception in Italy : 55 hours). You should have proper rest periods (at *least* 20 minutes each day and 11 hours between working days). In real life, most migrant domestic workers work for very long hours, and are sometimes 'on call' even at night. Employers often fail to see domestic tasks such as babysitting or washing up as 'proper' work. They may not include these tasks in your hours. Try to make sure that your employer knows that all the work that you do in their house is 'proper' work and they should be paying you for it. It might be a good idea to keep a record of how many hours you are working.

**Should I get holiday and sick pay ?**

Full time workers in Europe are entitled to paid holiday each year, but this does not always come into force the first year you are working : check with an adviser. You should also have some paid sick days (again : check). If you are pregnant you should not be sacked, and you should not have to work when you are very pregnant. You have the right to return to your job after you have had the baby. You may have the right to take time off if you have emergency family problems.

# **CHAPTER 2**

## **Getting better Working Conditions**

**“New workers must negotiate with the employer. They should not have to work for more than 8 hours a day. Any extra work should be paid for. They must negotiate time off, holiday pay, working hours, food and accommodation. Childcare is a great responsibility and should be better paid. Newcomers don’t know what to do, they must make sure that they ask what time they will finish.” Gemma, UK**

## **GETTING A JOB**

### **Where do I look for work?**

“You can put your own little adverts in shops in your area.”

“Community organisations can sometimes help you to find work.”

“You can look in the newspaper. (It’s better if you have papers.)

“The best way to find work is by word of mouth – recommended to you.”

“you can look in agencies (but you usually need papers) and on notice-boards in your local shops, church or library.”

### **Should I live-in or live-out?!**

Most migrant domestic workers in Europe begin working as a live-in worker. Many later chose to live-out so that they are less dependent on their employers.

*“Being live-out is better. I have freedom. I can go anywhere after work. If you are live-in you always have to do all the babysitting. But if you live-in, you don’t have to worry about rent and food and you don’t have to pay bills. You can’t save a lot of money if you live-out and you have to spend a lot on travel.” Susan, UK*

***“If you live-out you can have more than one employer and you can change employers more easily.” Greece***

*"For me, living-out makes you feel like a bird free of its cage. You can spend time doing other activities concerning life and your environment." Mary, Greece*

***"The advantages of living-out is that you have a private life, you can go out and sleep or eat when you want to. You are not always on edge or uncomfortable because it is not your house, and you can invite your friends round when you want." Pauline, France***

*The advantage of living-in is that you have the benefit of free food and lodging. You do not have to get up very early to get a train to work. But live-out workers earn more than live-in. They have a time limit on their work and can have a proper rest time after work. Live-in workers have to work until it is finished and anytime her employer needs her." Teresa, Greece*

***"If you live-in you have to take care of the children when they wake up at night." France***

Be careful and consider : when you are live-out, you have to pay your taxes yourself and you are not entitled to holiday pay.
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## **WHO MAKES A GOOD EMPLOYER ?**

It is very difficult to know from the interview which employers will be good to work for. But there are things to watch out for, here are some ideas from other workers:

“See how they react if you ask them for a contract.” France

“You must see how the employer treats you at the interview – do they offer you anything to drink, do they shake your hand or offer you a seat?” Gemma, UK

“In general, see how they react when you ask questions about the work, see how they address the issues.” Marie, France

“Notice the way in which they receive you when you arrive – are they warm or aggressive?” Pauline, France

“Watch out for those people who make you wonderful promises – don’t believe everything you hear.” Julie, France

### ***A GOOD EMPLOYER IS SOMEONE WHO...***

- "...pays you on time." Natasha, Germany
- "...explains to you what specific tasks you have to do and who shows you how to do them." Nanette, France
- "...always talks to you and makes conversation with you is a good employer and who pays you a good salary." Greece
- "...understands the situation of a migrant and who has a good heart and consideration." Mercy, Greece
- "...trusts you. They will let you go out with the children. They will let you handle the money for shopping." Chanti, France
- "...is kind and looks out for you. Not somebody who is always on your back criticising and watching you." Adeline, France
- "... will let you work on your own as though you were working in your own house." Mariam, UK
- "... RESPECTS YOU AS A HUMAN BEING!"



## **HAVING AN INTERVIEW**

Migrant domestic workers often need to get a job very urgently (especially if they do not have anywhere to live) and they do not feel in a position to ask the employers any questions about the job. However, the more you can find out about the job, the employer and the conditions, the better.

*Interviews are not just for the employer to find out about you. They are for you to find out as much as you can about the employer and about the job. It is a good idea to write down a list of questions to ask the employer, so that you do not forget anything. After the interview, you could also write down what they told you, so that you have a record*

### **What if the employer asks to keep my passport ?**

There is no reason why your employer should keep your passport. You need your passport to prove your right to stay in the country and to show your identity. You will, of course, also need it to return home. If your employer asks to keep your passport, you should try to refuse and explain why you need it. In Europe, the employer is NOT allowed to take your passport.

### ***Some questions you could ask at an interview***

- How much will I be paid each week?
- When will I be paid (what day of the week or month) and in what form (for example, cash or cheque)?
- How many hours will I have to work each day? What time will I start work and what time will I finish?
- If you need me to work any extra time (overtime), how much will you pay me per hour?
- Tell the employer how many days you would like to have free and arrange which days these will be, for example, Sunday and Wednesday. Tell the employer that you want proper breaks at mealtimes.
- What tasks and responsibilities will I have? Ask the employer to tell you exactly what sort of work you will have to do, for example, will it mainly be cleaning or will you be expected to go shopping or help with the cooking. Find out if the employer has children – will you have to help look after them or collect them from school?
- If the job is live-out, will the employer be paying towards your cost of travel?
- If the job is live-in, ask to see the room that you will be staying in and make sure there is a proper bed. The room should be your own private space and not somewhere that your employer or your employer's family also use.
- If the job is live-in, ask whether the employer will be providing your food, or if you will have to buy food for yourself.

“We shouldn't allow employer to reign us in. My advice to other workers is that we can be courageous and we can stand alone. We are not “Yes madam, yes madam”. We must speak up and communicate with the employer.” Evelyn, UK

## ***TIPS ON INTERVIEWS***

“Most people, when they leave an employer, have to take a job with the first employer they can find. They need the money. But it’s better to try and wait for a good job where you’ll be happy.” Happiness, UK

“I would advise new workers to make it clear to their employers that their salary should not be fixed. If the price of everything gets higher, the worker’s salary should rise too. Employers should follow rules about holidays. The worker should not be given work on a day off and the worker should be allowed to chose which day off they want to take. Workers are not used to being shouted at by an employer – migrants are not dogs that can be kicked or shouted at whenever the employer wants.” Josie, Greece

“The tip is not to tell them at once that their house is too small or too big, but instead first tell them wait and see for a day or so if you are satisfied with my work.” Greece

“I tried to use an agency. They didn’t ask to see any papers, but I think that lots of agencies do ask for papers. My advice to workers going for an interview is: be punctual, be honest – tell them your situation and they will try to help; ask when they’ll pay you, and tell them your status.” Susan, UK

“I told my employer my situation and he reported me to the police in 1992, and I went to prison because of that. Employers are not all good, so you must be careful. Wait until you are sure” Letty, UK

**What if I am asked to do work that I don't want to do?**

Most workers feel that employers should be clear at the interview about the tasks that they need done. However, there are tasks that some workers think that the employer should not ask them to do. If you feel uncomfortable with doing a particular task, you should tell your employer or discuss it with your community organisation. Here are some tasks that workers did not feel they should be asked to do:

- serve the employer's guests at the weekend
- stay to do extra work for no extra pay
- carry heavy things such as cases of wine, wood or ice boxes
- clean the swimming pool
- work in the garden or work outside the house
- do domestic work in the houses of friends or family of the employer
- clean the car
- look after pets or take the dog for walks
- hand-wash a large amount of clothes
- massage the employers or give them manicures

**Au Pairs**

Au pairs often suffer from similar abuse to migrant domestic workers. If this has happened to you, get advice?

"I was promised that I would work for 30 hours a week, but in reality I was working for 60 hours a week. Instead of taking care of two children, it was three." Lulu, Netherlands

"As a cultural exchange I was promised to study the language, but unfortunately I could not because of my many tasks." Vicky, Belgium

**The Police**

Do not panic if you are arrested by the police – KNOW YOUR RIGHTS.

- The right to call a solicitor who will be able to help you
- The right to ask for someone who speaks your language
- The right to know why you have been arrested
- The right to tell somebody about your arrest

Never give your passport to your employer, give a copy of all your papers to someone you trust.

## **IMMIGRATION**

Immigration problems (work permits, visas, papers) can be very complicated. Any information given here will be NOT BE COMPLETE. You will need to get full advice from an organisation or solicitor.

All European countries have rules for people from all nationalities, who want to work in Europe. Of course a great many domestic workers do not have permission to live and work in Europe. This does NOT mean you do not have any rights. Most employment rights do not depend upon whether or not you have papers. There are standards in European and international law that mean every person is entitled to respect and dignity at work. It is important that you know what these rights are, however difficult it is to assert them in practice. Just as important: your employer should know about them as well. They may be breaking the law if they do not keep to them.

People from different countries have different rights. If you are a national of the European Union or are married to someone who is, you have full rights to live and work in Europe. If you are from, or married to, someone from Eastern Europe (Poland, Romania, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria) or Turkey or Morocco you have rights to live and work in Europe if you or your partner are self-employed.??? People providing domestic services can set up a small business on their own or in a group on a self-employed basis can benefit from these rights.

**Your papers**

If your visa has expired you should seek advice as soon as possible about how to extend your stay – try going to an organisation or solicitor. You may be able to stay for reasons other than your employment, for example, if you have married or have a relationship with someone.

UK: If you have come legally with, or to join, your employer to work as a domestic worker, you will need to apply to the Home Office to extend your visa. You can extend your stay on a yearly basis for up to 4 years. After that you can apply to stay for as long as you like. (Indefinite leave to remain). You should ask your employer to renew your visa about one month before it runs out.

**Human Rights**

International Human Rights law does not allow conditions of slavery or bonded labour.

There are minimum standards for all people so they do not suffer from inhuman or degrading treatment, or are stopped from having basic human rights.

If an employer makes you work very long hours, for long periods, does not pay you properly, does not provide you with a proper place to live or sleep, stops you from leaving the house, or is abusive or violent, s/he is VIOLATING YOUR HUMAN RIGHTS.

Everybody has these rights, even if you have no papers or are in the country illegally.

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **Abuse of Rights**

**“Try not to blame yourself for any kind of abuse, it is NOT YOUR FAULT.” Pauline, France**

**We should never believe that we should put up with abuse for any reason, whatever our race, nationality, profession, religion, sex, age, immigration status, or ability to speak the language. We are workers, we perform skilled and difficult work, and we deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.**



Sadly, a large number of migrant domestic workers all over Europe face ABUSE. Abuse can take many different forms. Here are examples of abuse suffered by migrant domestic workers.

- *I was shouted at and called bad names*
- *I was forced to work very long hours without any break*
- *The employer took my passport and refused to give it back to me*
- *I was woken up during the night to get drinks for the employer's guests*
- *The employer slapped me if I did any little thing wrong*
- *The employer did not pay me any wages for six months*
- *I was locked into the house*
- *I was made to sleep on the floor in the kitchen*
- *The male employer would walk around the house naked in front of me*
- *When I tried to get a job, the employer told me that they would not employ an Indian woman*
- *When I asked for my salary to be higher, the employer accused me of stealing*
- *The employer pushed me and pulled my hair*
- *The male employer tried to kiss and cuddle me*
- *I was not given enough food to eat, if there was left-overs we could eat that, but if there was nothing left, we would not get any food*
- *I had no day off, not even to go to church*
- *I had to do all the washing by hand, until my hands were bleeding*

You could divide these abuses into different groups ~

**SEXUAL HARRASSMENT**

(any sexual advances that you do not want, spoken or physical...)

**VERBAL(spoken) ABUSE**

(shouting, calling you bad names, insults...)

**PHYSICAL ABUSE**

(hitting, pushing, throwing things at you, pulling your hair...)

**RACIST ABUSE**

(insulting you because of your colour, refusing to employ you because of your race...)

**ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION**

(low or no wages, very long hours, bad working conditions...)

ALL these abuses are AGAINST YOUR RIGHTS AS WORKERS. Abuse in the work-place is not normal and it should not be accepted. If you are suffering from any abuse, you should try to get help and advice as quickly as you can. If the abuse is serious, you should call the police or leave the house. If you are scared to report abuse because you don't have the right papers, make sure that you explain your immigration status to an adviser, so they can give you correct advice. Even if you can't make a complaint because you have no papers, you should not have to put up with bad treatment and you should try to leave.

*Experiences of abuse*

*"He doesn't know how to control his anger. The whole house shakes. He told me if I was late he would kill me." Rosemary UK*

***"Try not to show your fear if you are in a threatening situation." Surani, France***

*"If you get beaten, call or scream for help so that someone will help you." Pauline, France*

***"I did not complain about the conditions they made me live in because I was ashamed. Now I know I should complain and people will help." Alice, UK***

*"If you don't know anybody in the country, speak to anybody you meet in the street. If you see somebody from your country, tell them." Esther, France*

***"Try to find the right person who can help you with your problems. Be very careful not to confide in somebody who is pretending to help but who might give you more problems or abuse." Angie, Greece***

*"Know your rights and do not trust your employer too much." Celia, Greece*

**Your Rights**

All workers in Europe have the right not to be sexually harassed by the employer or any relative or friend of theirs. Sexual harassment can be any spoken or physical (bodily) actions of a sexual nature that you do not like, such as talking about your body, asking for sexual favours, touching, kissing you or forcing themselves on you. In every country in Europe women have the right to SAY NO to sexual advances of any sort made by any person, including your employer. Any contact with your body that you do not agree to is an assault and may be a criminal offence. Rape is a serious criminal offence in every European country.

If you experience sexual harassment you should leave the employer as soon as possible and always seek advice. If you have been assaulted you should seek medical attention and quickly consider making a complaint to the police. You also need legal advice about a claim for compensation.

If you do not leave your Employer straight away, still tell somebody what is happening and write down a record of everything that happens.

The same is true if you suffer any form of physical abuse or violence by anyone in the household, or if you are locked in or not permitted to leave the house by your employer. Nobody is allowed to do this. It is a criminal offence and you may be able to get compensation (money).

## ***GET OUT ! Leaving an abusive employer***

If your employer has abused you in any way, it is best to LEAVE THE HOUSE AS SOON AS YOU CAN. Do not stay and hope that the situation might improve or that the abuse might stop. If the abuse is serious, call the police, otherwise, call your nearest community organisation (see back of book) and they can give you advice about leaving. If you are running away, try to find and take your PASSPORT. This might have your visa in it and will be your proof of your identity. If your employer has taken your passport, try and find out where they are keeping it. Do not worry about taking your passport back – it is your property and your employer has no right to keep it.

If you are locked into the house and you can't get out, try to call the police and explain the situation. You will need to give them the address of the house, so that they can come to help you. If you cannot use the phone, try to attract the attention of a neighbour and tell them that you are being locked in. Or you could write a letter to an organisation telling them you are in trouble and give it to someone coming into the house – remember to put your address.

<b>EMERGENCY POLICE PHONE NUMBERS</b>		
UK: <b>999</b>	Germany: <b>110</b>	Greece: <b>100</b>
Spain: <b>091</b>	Italy: <b>112</b>	Netherlands : <b>112</b>
France: <b>17</b>	Belgium: <b>101</b>	Portugal : <b>112 / 115</b>

**Racial Abuse**

There are laws in Europe about treating people badly because of their race or colour. You should not be treated differently from other domestic workers in the house because of your race, nationality, colour, religion, or ethnic origin. If you are abused because of these things, it is against the law. Seek advice – you may be able to get compensation.

**Physical and sexual abuse**

If you are raped, you should try immediately to get help. If you do not wash yourself afterwards, then you will have evidence that can prove who has abused you. You can go directly to the police or to a hospital, but it might be better to ask someone to come with you and give you support, try a friend or community organisation.

If an employer hits you or hurts you physically, you should go to see a doctor as soon as possible. Explain to the doctor what has happened to you, and he or she will write you a report about your injuries. This will give you evidence if you want to take a case against your employer. You will then need to get further advice from a community organisation.

YOU HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO REASON TO FEEL ASHAMED OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO YOU. SEXUAL OR PHYSICAL ABUSE SHOULD NOT BE HIDDEN OR INVISIBLE IN ANY COUNTRY. IF NOBODY SPEAKS OUT ABOUT SEXUAL HARASSMENT IT IS EASIER FOR THE EMPLOYERS TO CONTINUE ABUSING WOMEN. IF YOU SPEAK OUT, YOU WILL NOT BE ALONE.

*“If you are raped, try to get to a hospital or a doctor, above all don’t wash yourself, don’t wash the evidence away...” France*

*“Be careful about accepting money from your employer apart from your wages. They can blackmail you afterwards, they can put pressure on you to sleep with them or with their friends.” France*

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **Self-Respect (and having fun !)**

**“Make time for yourself, take care of yourself, have a good time in the spare moments you have, spend money on yourself, do not try to save every penny. Live in the present.”**

**“It gives me hope that somewhere in Europe there are human beings who are aware of the suffering of domestic workers and they are working to stop this discrimination. I have been through so much, but I’m getting stronger and have the luck to help others.”**



*"I will be respected if I am not oppressed by others and if I respect other people myself." Teresa, Greece*

***"Self-respect is when you are regarded as a human being with equal rights."***  
**Mary, UK**

*"One thing that gives me self-respect is being fully trusted by my employer who always gives me credit in raising their daughter." Mariam, Greece*

***"I have to struggle and make a lot of effort to keep on fighting. But I must be empowered and consider myself as a person with dignity and entitled to respect."*** Josie, Greece

THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS TO SOCIETY IS VITAL.
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### **What gives you hope for the future?**

*"A very good salary and better working conditions is what gives me hope, so that I can have better living conditions." Lilian, Greece*

***"Being a legal or documented migrant worker is a big hope for me to fulfil."***  
**Josie, Greece**

*"Saving enough money to buy a house in my home country. Being able to support my family has given me the strength to carry on." Adela, Spain*

## **FEELING DEPRESSED**

Everyone sometimes feels down, but you are more likely to feel depressed if you are away from your country, your family, your children, your friends and your home, especially if you have a bad job. If you are feeling depressed, try talking to an organisation, they may be able to help. A doctor may also be able to help.

Most people feel much more depressed if they have nobody to talk to. It is often very helpful to be able to discuss how you feel with someone from the same country as you, who speaks your language and understands your problems more easily. An organisation may be able to help you meet other people in the same situation as you.

*"My advice is to get into a community, talk to others, or create groups of migrant domestic workers." Benita, Greece*

***"Try to meet lots of people so you don't feel lonely. Don't feel that you shouldn't talk to people, try and learn the language so you can communicate more easily." Asha, UK***

*"Don't think negatively, go out with your friends so you don't feel lonely or isolated." Greece*

***"Look for help and guidance and remember that YOU ARE NOT ALONE. If you feel very depressed and desperate, it is not good to bottle your feelings up. It is better to talk with someone." Kamala, Spain***

*"Know your legal rights and be aware of all the resources that you can use." Eva, Spain*

## **What do you do to have FUN?!**

*"I most enjoy my days off with my friends and relations. Sometimes my organisation arranges trips and we all go somewhere in the countryside by coach." Jane, UK*

***"I learn about the history and other aspects of Greece.  
I help other migrant workers in Greece." Matilda, Greece***

*"I enjoy taking up a hobby like singing lessons or language courses."  
Pauline, France*

***"Six days we work hard and then on Sunday we can laugh till Monday."  
Evelyn, UK***

**FAMILY REUNION**

Sadly, migrant domestic workers do not have rights for their close family members to come to Europe to live with them until they have got a permanent right to reside.

**Country Example**

UK: permanent right to reside is usually when you have got “indefinite leave to remain” after 4 years of continuous employment with a visa. You will have to show that you can support your family members without any help from public funds. You should keep records of the contributions that you make to your family abroad and any contact you have with them – visits, letters, phone calls...

**Looking after yourself !**

In some countries in Europe, healthcare is free to everybody even if they have no papers. If you are worried about going to a doctor or you cannot afford to pay, ask your organisation what to do. It is your right to get medical help and your employer has no right to stop you seeing a doctor.

**Country Example**

UK : healthcare is FREE to all whatever their immigration status. You need to register with a GP (doctor) and say you are a resident in the UK.

France : healthcare is very expensive. Try to get free help from organisations.

## WHERE CAN I GET HELP

Try to memorise the name and phone number of one organisation in case of an emergency. We have included organisations that we have been informed of, but there are other organisations in each country which can also offer help.

<b>BELGIUM</b>	Région Bruxelles <b>Pag-asa</b> Rue St-Christophe 38 B-1000 Bruxelles Tel 02/511 6464 Fax 02/511 5868	Région Wallonne <b>Sürya</b> Rue Hors-Chateau 28 B-4000 Liège Tel 04/221 3557 Fax 04/221 3201	Région Flamande <b>Payoke</b> Zirkstraat 27 B-2000 Antwerpen Tel 03/232 2440 Fax 03/233 2324
<b>FRANCE</b>	<b>Babaylan</b> 14 Allée du Glacis, appt 411 F-93160 Noisy-le-Grand Tel 01/45 92 02 16 Fax 01/4337 5433	<b>CCEM</b> 4, Place de Valois F-75001 Paris Tel 01/5535 3655 Fax 01/5535 3656	<b>CIMADE</b> 176 Rue de Grenelle F-75007 Paris Tel 01/4418 6050 Fax 01/4556 0859 Ouvert 9h00-18h00 lun-ven

<b>FRANCE</b>	4. GISTI 3 Villa Marces F- 75011 Paris Tel 01/4314 84 84 Fax 01/4314 6069 <a href="mailto:Gisti@ras.eu.org">Gisti@ras.eu.org</a> Ouvert 9h00-18h00 lun-ven	5. MEDECINS DU MONDE Centre MDM, 62bis Av. Parmentier F-75011 Paris Tel 01/4314 8181 Fax 01/4492 1432 8h00-13h00 lun-ven et 14h00-17h00 lun, mer, ven		6. RESO Hôpital Rothschild 33 Bld de Picpus F-75012 Paris Ligne verte 0800 232600 Tel 01/4340 1647 Fax 01/4340 3520 <a href="mailto:Reomed@yahoo.fr">Reomed@yahoo.fr</a> 9h00-20h00 lun-ven	
	Logement : Ligne d'appel d'urgence : 115 9h00-19h00 lun-sam très occupée – soyez patients !	<b>GERMANY</b>	IN VIA Pfalzburger Str. 18 D – 10719 Berlin Tel 030/ 8642 4850 Fax 030/ 8642 4879 Offers advice and support	ZAPO Oranienstr. 34, 2. Stock D – 10997 Berlin Tel 030/ 61402 409 Fax 030 /61402 410	
<b>GREECE</b>	Kasapi Tritis Septembriou 48 B GR – 102 Athens Tel 01 / 866 4527 Fax 01 / 866 4527 <a href="mailto:Kasapi@mail.hol.gr">Kasapi@mail.hol.gr</a>	<b>ITALY</b>	Filcams – CGIL Via Leopoldo Serra 31 I – 00153 Roma Tel 06 / 5885 102 Fax 06/ 5885 323	<b>NETHERLANDS</b>	C.F.M.W. Paulus Potterstraat 20 NL – 1071 DA Amsterdam Tel 020/ 664 6927 Fax 020/ 664 7093 <a href="mailto:Cfmw@open.net">Cfmw@open.net</a> Enquiries from migrant domestic workers from all nationalities

SPAIN	VOMADE (Assoc. Dominicana) C/ Antonio 27 esp Marcelina 14 E – 28029 Madrid Tel: 91 / 323 3923 / 45 Fax 91 / 323 3945 <a href="mailto:Vomade@sistelcom.com">Vomade@sistelcom.com</a> Courses, legal advice, job service, basic support, medical information	MPDL C/ Martos 15 E E – 28018 Madrid Tel 91 / 507 7168 Fax 91 / 507 7264 <a href="mailto:Mpdl@ran.es">Mpdl@ran.es</a> Offers advice and support	Bayt Al-Thaqafa C/ Princesa 14, 1 dcha E - 08003 Barcelona Tel 93 / 319 8869
	AICODE (Assoc. Ibero- Americana) C/ real Alta 12 bajo 28022 Majadahonda (Madrid) tel 91 / 639 7234 fax 91 / 638 8823 abierto 17:00-20:00 Lun-Dom	Entremujeres C/ Xucla 23, 4, 1a E – 08001 Barcelona Tel 93 / 317 2054	ATIME (assoc. Trabajadores Marroquies en Epaña) C/ López de Hoyos 98, 1 dcha E – 28002 Madrid Tel 91 / 562 6927 – 562 3356 Fax 91 / 562 7025 Ab. 9:00-14:00 & 17:00-20:00 lun-vie
ACCEM (Asoc. Catolica de Migrantes) C/ Calenzuela 10, 1a E – 28014 Madrid Tel 91 535 7478 / 79 Fax 91 / 532 2059	UK	Kalayaan St Francis Centre Entrance Hippodrome Place Pottery Lane London W11 4NQ Tel 0171 / 243 2942 Fax 0171 / 792 3060 <a href="mailto:100711.2262@compuserve.com">100711.2262@compuserve.com</a>	Waling Waling (now United Workers Association) See Kalayaan's details

TGWU	Southall Black Sisters		Women Against Rape
Housing Shelter Emergency Nightline 0800 446441 (free) offers hostel beds			





This manual was produced with the co-operation of the members of the RESPECT NETWORK of organisations working with migrant domestic workers. The Network was established as a result of the need for migrant domestic workers in the European Union to make themselves visible and to demand their rights. It was jointly founded by Kalayaan, a campaigning and support organisation and SOLIDAR, an alliance of development, social welfare and humanitarian aid NGOs. For more information about RESPECT, please contact SOLIDAR or Kalayaan.

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**Fax : +44 171 / 792 3060**  
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**Tel : +32 2 / 500 10 20**  
**Fax : +32 2 / 500 10 30**  
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**<http://www.solidar.org/>**

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