

## **Social security for single mothers**

### **Question:**

I am a citizen of Ukraine and I have been living in Cyprus for three years by now. I have a child born from the Cypriot out of wedlock, but his Cypriot citizenship is recognized through the court. Paternity is established through DNA analysis. I am currently pregnant again by the same man. The term is eight months; the child's father does not want to help. I went to the social security service 1.5 months ago. They promised to help, but so far have not done anything. To what authority can I apply in my situation?

### **Response:**

According to the provisions of the relevant Cyprus Law, (i.e. Law 216/1990), the parental responsibility of a child who was born and remains out of wedlock belongs to the mother. If however, the father recognises the child as his own, then the father acquires parental responsibility also. Hence, the fact that the father of your first child recognised the same as his own does not automatically create any legal obligation to him to recognise the second child. Since your child will be born out of wedlock and the biological father refuses to recognise it as his, then the parental responsibility and the custody of your child will be your exclusive right and obligation. As such, it is important for you to exercise your legal right to submit an application to the Family Court of your District for the judicial recognition of your child according to the provisions of the Law 187/1991 (articles 15, 20,21 & 22). The application of the child regarding the judicial recognition is made against the parent who does not proceed to the necessary voluntary recognition statement for his biological child. The application can be submitted either by you no later than 5 years after your child is born or either by your child but no later than 3 years after he/she reaches the 18 years of age. In the case that the Court issues the order for the judicial recognition of your child, then the father will be obliged to exercise his parental responsibilities and obligations towards his child.

Moreover, the Governmental Authority that you should turn to for help is the Social Welfare Services, to their Department regarding Families and Children. The Social Welfare will be able to prepare a socio-economic report in order to provide the Court with important information and therefore reach a decision on the best interests of the child. The Family Court itself requests from the Social Welfare Services to undertake a research regarding the family and to prepare a report to be presented before it in such cases.