

Notification code for reporting forced marriages for civil registrars

Reminder: A forced marriage is not a sham marriage.

In forced marriages, there is a coercer (not necessarily the partner) and at least one victim.

Marriage certificate: you do a joint interview

Always be alert for contextual risk factors and watch out for the following signs:

(see publication for more information)

- Unusual behaviour, such as clothing that is not appropriate for the occasion.
- A despondent attitude (red eyes, extremely passive, avoidant or apathetic gaze, etc.).
- Despair from one of the parties entering into the marriage.
- The potential presence of physical injuries (this does not necessarily indicate a forced marriage, but could be an indicator).
- The victim may be being controlled: there is a dominant presence from the family or members of the community.
- One of the parties answers when the marriage contract is being signed and/or is reticent to allow the other to speak.
- Both parties cannot communicate with each other in the same language.
- One of the parties knows little about the other, in particular when they cannot answer simple questions.
- Any allegations of a forced marriage by a third party.

A number of risk factors and signs are present. The dynamic between the two is unpleasant and you do notice some signs (see publication). You suspect that this may be a forced marriage.

Ask some further questions (see publication) and have the courage to continue to insist.

Try to speak to the people individually. Make sure that there are no interpreters present from the community (see publication).

You are certain that this is a forced marriage or the potential victim or the 'coercer' has stated as such.

Inform the reference magistrate appointed by the public prosecutor and having jurisdiction over the way forced marriages are handled. Report the danger posed to the victim. Consult the tips and the COL 6/2017 mentioned in the publication.

No risk factors. You do not notice any signals. The dynamics seem normal, the interview is positive. You have no suspicions.

The suspicions are gone.

Let the marriage take place.

There is still doubt. You still suspect that this may be a forced marriage.

Ask for advice from the reference magistrate appointed by the public prosecutor and having jurisdiction over the way forced marriages are handled. Postpone the marriage. Provide contact information for aid organisations (see publication). Mention the need to protect the victim.

IMPORTANT

If (potential) victims attempt to avoid or escape from a forced marriage, this may lead to death in the form of an honour killing or suicide!