

Violence and harassment in European workplaces: Extent, impacts and policies



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Executive summary

Introduction

This report presents the extent of workplace violence and harassment in the EU28 and Norway. It is based on national-level surveys conducted between 2009 and 2013, as well as on results from Eurofound's fifth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS). It analyses the links between working conditions and violence and harassment at work, indicates the impact on workers and companies, and compares the policies that governments and social partners have developed to address the issue.

Policy context

The 1989 Framework Directive on measures to improve safety and health at work obliges employers to implement preventive measures to guard against occupational accidents and diseases. In line with this, psychosocial risks must be addressed in organisations' health and safety strategies. However, violence and harassment has been more specifically addressed in equal treatment directives. Council Directive 2000/43 implements the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin while Directive 2000/78 establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. The concept of harassment was also introduced into the amendment to Directive 76/207/EEC on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for women and men as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion, and working conditions (as revised by Directive 2002/73).

More recently, EU policy on the topic has been developed mainly through the 2007 Autonomous Framework Agreement on harassment and violence at work signed by the European social partners. The agreement is a cornerstone both in adopting a shared definition by the social partners and in proposing agreed guidelines for preventing violence and harassment.

Key findings

Evidence from the EWCS shows divergent trends over time: physical violence is declining, while other forms of adverse social behaviour (ASB) persist. Overall, 14% of workers in 2010 reported having been subjected to at least one type of ASB. National sources of information show small increases in violence and harassment over time across Europe, due largely to increases in third-party violence (an increasing proportion of the workforce being in direct contact with customers, clients, patients and students). However, it is difficult to draw definite conclusions; different forms of violence may interrelate and overlap, creating difficulties in distinguishing between them.

Being subjected to violence and harassment at work has a marked impact on workers' health and productivity and undermines the sustainability of work over the life course. Working conditions – such as greater work intensity, greater psychological and physical job demands, greater job insecurity, workplace conflict and poor managerial practices – can foster a greater likelihood of violence and harassment at work.

National survey findings indicate that women generally report having experienced violence and harassment more than men. Workers in certain sectors are also more likely to experience the phenomenon: in health and social work, transport and storage, and accommodation and food services (all sectors with substantial interaction with third parties). In many countries, non-native workers are more likely to be subjected to violence and harassment. And temporary agency workers and apprentices are more likely to experience it than workers with an indefinite contract. The extent of the issue varies throughout Europe: workers in southern Europe are less likely to report experiencing ASB than those in central European countries and Scandinavia.

Since 2000, some countries – especially those in northern Europe (Scandinavia, Benelux, Ireland and the UK) where comparatively high proportions of workers report experiencing violence and harassment – have developed a variety of policies to address the issue. In most of these countries, tripartite initiatives exist and social partners are able to influence policymaking to some degree. However, the extent to which countries incorporate the issue into their legislation varies – as does the type of legislation it is addressed in. In Belgium, legislation on violence and harassment is more developed than in the UK, although both countries have long-standing initiatives to address the issue. In this group of northern European countries, there is also a high proportion of small companies (fewer than 10 employees) that have implemented preventive procedures. Some countries have seen positive results: in the Netherlands, for instance, there has been an ongoing small decrease reported in the phenomenon.

The legislation enacted to address violence and harassment varies across Europe, reflecting both cultural peculiarities and differences in labour law – especially in terms of health and safety at work. Most countries deal with violence and harassment through equal treatment legislation or general labour law rather than through specific occupational safety and health (OSH) legislation. Legal definitions of violence and harassment at work have recently been introduced in Ireland and Slovenia.

Despite such advances in some European countries, many people subjected to violence and harassment do not take court action because of the limited prospects of success. Similarly, the number of claims made to governmental equality bodies are low because these bodies have limited scope to intervene in workplace-related issues, and claimants are potentially exposed to the risk of retaliation. Thus, underreporting is a shared problem among almost all countries.

Policy pointers

- Despite the complexity of the issue, attention should be paid to countries where the following elements coincide: people displaying a low level of awareness of the causes and consequences of violence and harassment; a large proportion of workers reporting that they have been subjected to it; scant development of policies to address the issue.
- Existing social, cultural, legal and administrative differences in Member States influence the perception of an incident of violence and harassment. In turn, whether or not an incident is considered a violation of someone's dignity impacts on the likelihood that it will be reported as a case of violence and harassment. Working towards an EU-wide approach on defining, surveying and studying the issue is desirable for EU-level initiatives.
- Greater understanding is required of the impact of prolonged exposure to violence and harassment on the sustainability of work – in terms of, for instance, participation in employment and the productivity of workers.
- Raising awareness remains a key element in fostering a decrease of violence and harassment at work, regardless of the national context and other specific circumstances.
- A continuous, coordinated policy with the participation of all stakeholders contributes to effectively addressing the issue at company level. To this end, the gains that have been observed in some Member States should be disseminated in other countries – especially those where a high level of reporting coincides with a lack of policies addressing the issue.
- Extensive legislation may not on its own be sufficient to tackle effectively violence and harassment at the workplace; however, it would appear necessary that the issue should at least be included in work-related legislation to make employers and workers more aware of their obligations and rights.
- It is at company level that initiatives must be implemented: for that reason, practical guidelines and labour inspections that monitor implementation play a role.

Introduction

Over the past decade, focus has expanded beyond physical health and safety risks towards a more encompassing ‘well-being at work’ approach associated with psychosocial factors. This is consistent with the World Health Organization (WHO) definition of health as ‘a state of well-being’. The focus on well-being includes psychosocial risk factors that may cause both psychological and physical diseases. Absences and, in the most serious cases, incapacity to work are the main effects of poor health and well-being, while poor personal motivation at work negatively affects firms’ performance because of lower productivity and increased turnover. Violence and harassment at work are increasingly seen as an important part of the psychosocial risk factors affecting individual health and well-being. According to the [Community strategy 2007–2012 on health and safety at work \(COM\(2007\)62\)](#), they lead to poor mental health, which was ‘the fourth most frequent cause of incapacity’. The recently published [European Commission Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014–2020](#) does not specifically mention violence and harassment. However, it does mention the need to promote well-being and prevent mental health problems. Moreover, in the context of the challenge of ‘improving prevention of work-related diseases by tackling existing and new risks’, the Strategic Framework refers to a Eurobarometer survey finding that 53% of workers consider stress to be one of the main occupational risks. As the next sections will show, violence and harassment are strongly associated with work-related stress and mental health.

The concept of adverse social behaviour (ASB) that was developed for the overview report of the [Fifth European Working Conditions Survey \(EWCS\)](#) will be mainly used when describing results of the survey. ASB is an index based on six questions from the questionnaire of the Fifth EWCS conducted in 2010, which ask the person if, during the course of their work, they have been subjected to verbal abuse, unwanted sexual attention, threats or humiliating behaviour during the last month, or during the previous 12 months.

The 2004 Eurofound report [Violence, bullying and harassment in the workplace](#) outlines differences among various forms of ASB, reflecting the fact that different meanings of these concepts reflect cultural contexts, thus raising difficulties and limitations in capturing them in surveys. However, both the EWCS results and national survey findings among Member States show increases in violence and harassment in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Evidence from the 2005–2010 waves of the EWCS display divergent trends. While physical violence declined, other forms of violence and harassment, such as threats, intimidation, bullying, harassment and unwanted sexual attention remained stable over time. The overall share of respondents reporting ASB increased from 11.2% in 2005 to 14.9% in 2010. As pointed out by the Eurofound publication [Physical and psychological violence at the workplace](#), different forms of violence may interrelate and overlap, which makes it difficult to distinguish them. Such difficulties further increase when we attempt to define psychological violence, because of the uncertain boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

According to [the 2010 EU-OSHA report, Workplace violence and harassment: A European picture](#), reviewing both existing literature and official definitions from national-level and supranational institutions reveals that no single uniform definition for workplace harassment and violence so far exists due to their multiple dimensions, even though there have been plenty of efforts to establish a comprehensive approach, as shown by a growing literature on these problems (Leather et al, 1999; Chappell and Di Martino, 2006; Einarsen et al, 2011). The report defines violence and harassment as follows.

- Work-related violence is used to refer to all kinds of violent incidents at work, including third party violence and harassment (bullying, mobbing) at work.
- Harassment is used to refer to the phenomenon also called bullying or mobbing, describing repeated, unreasonable behaviour directed towards and employee, or group of employees by a colleague, supervisor or subordinate, aimed at victimising, humiliating, undermining or threatening them.

Violence and harassment have been described as [relating to interpersonal relationships at work](#). Distinctive features of violence and harassment include the following:

- an imbalance of power among actors (Einarsen et al, 2011);
- high levels of tension among colleagues due to, for instance, workplace jealousy and envy (Vecchio, 1995);
- a hostile work environment (Einarsen et al, 2011).

Furthermore, cultural factors at national, occupational and sectoral level affect how workers perceive incidents.

The [European social partners' 2007 framework agreement on harassment and violence at work](#) was a milestone both in the adopting of a shared definition by the EU social partners and in agreeing on prevention guidelines. The 2011 [implementation report of the framework agreement \(300 KB PDF\)](#) compiled by the social partners highlights the importance of a national legislative framework in shaping social partners' action at national level. Some initiatives began since the agreement was signed.

However, the conceptualisation of the phenomenon also includes new perspectives. Emerging types of violence and harassment are under investigation, such as cyberbullying (Privitera and Campbell, 2009). Third-party violence is becoming increasingly important among policymakers and social partners, as highlighted in the multisectoral [EU social partners guidelines on tackling third-party violence and harassment \(205 KB PDF\)](#) agreed in July 2010 by the public services, services in general, education, hospital and healthcare, commerce and security services (EPSU, UNI Europa, ETUCE, HOSPEEM, CEMR, EFEE, EuroCommerce and CoESS). Furthermore, the economic crisis has increased the amount of attention paid to the connection between restructuring and violence and harassment and violence, and [the relationship between employment status and suicide \(176 KB PDF\)](#).

This comparative analytical report summarises national contributions from Member States and Norway. It compiles national and European sources of information about the extent of violence and harassment, such as the EWCS and the [European Survey of Enterprises on New and Emerging Risks \(ESENER\) \(6.45 MB PDF\)](#). In addition, it examines public policies that seek to tackle violence and harassment by monitoring it and devising suitable prevention policies.

The report presents evidence from national surveys investigating violence and harassment as well as information about how the topic is surveyed and its prevalence. This information is complemented by qualitative studies and evidence on new emerging forms, such as cyberbullying, the relationship with working conditions and the outcome of these behaviours for workers' health and their labour market participation. The report also summarises evidence on prevention policies and recent legislative changes in the Member States and Norway. Finally, it

suggests possible explanations for the different levels of the prevalence of violence and harassment in European countries. Policy pointers and recommendations are given in the conclusion.

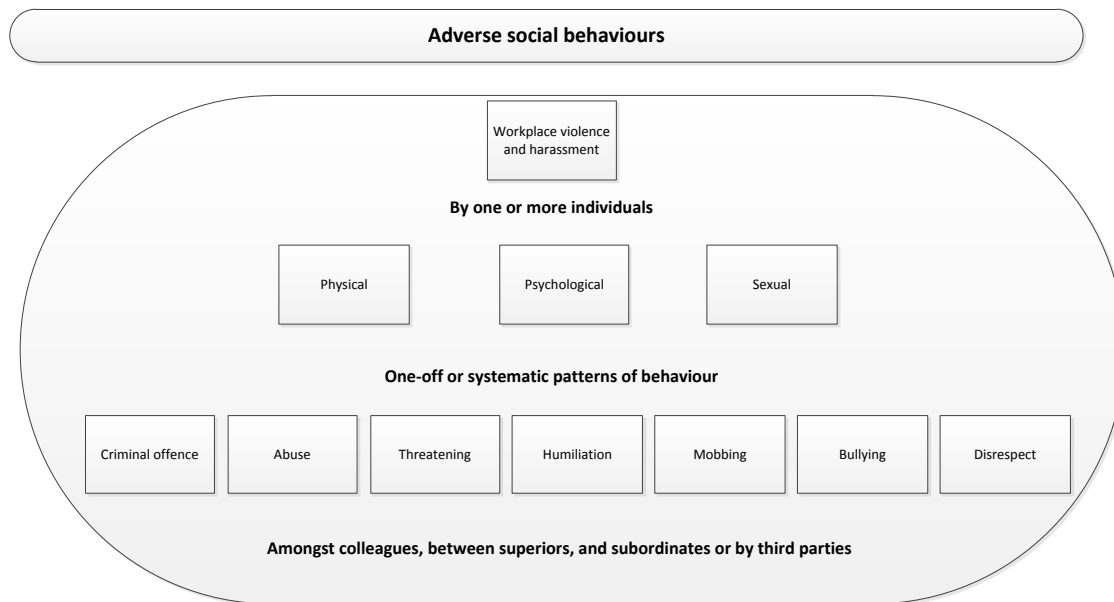
Definitions of violence and harassment

Definitions used in legal provisions differ between countries. Most of the national legislation is based on the [European social partners' 2007 framework agreement on harassment and violence at work](#) and the [2000 Equal Treatment Directive](#). The reference definition in this report is based on the 2007 framework agreement, in which violence and harassment are defined as 'unacceptable behaviour by one or more individuals and can take many different forms'. It goes on to say 'Violence occurs when one or more worker or manager are assaulted in circumstances relating to work', while 'harassment occurs when one or more worker or manager are repeatedly and deliberately abused, threatened and/or humiliated in circumstances relating to work'.

The agreement states that violence and harassment can take the following forms.

- They can be physical, psychological and/or sexual.
- They may be performed by one or more individuals.
- They may be one-off incidents or more systematic patterns of behaviour.
- They may take place amongst colleagues, between superiors and subordinates or by third parties such as clients, customers, patients or pupils.
- They can range from cases of disrespect to criminal offences.

Since this conceptualisation of violence and harassment has been agreed by the EU social partners and because it looks at the overall concept, it can be used as a reference for definitions established at national level. Third-party violence is included in the concept, but it should be considered separately because of its nature and source. It is defined as violence and harassment conducted by people who are not employed by the same employer as the person who has experienced acts of violence and harassment. People who are violent towards or harass an employee could be customers, clients, patients, students or pupils of this person.

Figure 1: Mapping the reference definition for the report

Source: [European social partners' 2007 framework agreement on harassment and violence at work](#)

Most Member States regulate violence under general criminal, civil and administrative laws, but the general obligation on the employer to ensure health and safety under all aspects related to work is less developed. In Belgium, Germany and Italy, national legislation includes provisions for specific prevention against third-party violence.

The picture is more differentiated when it comes to harassment. By combining contributions from national experts and [the 2010 EU-OSHA report, Workplace violence and harassment: A European picture](#), most countries adopted the definition of harassment set by the [2000 Equal Treatment Directive](#) as 'an unwanted conduct related to racial or ethnic origin (which) takes place with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment'.

According to [the joint report on developing anti-discrimination law in Europe, COM\(2014\) 2](#), definitions of harassment in general legislation differ from the one proposed by the equal treatment directive in several countries. In Denmark, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Sweden, the definition does not include the unwanted aspect of the behaviour, while in Spain, 'hostile' and 'degrading' are not included in the national definition, which refers to the creation of an intimidating, humiliating or offensive environment only. The Swedish general legislation requires simply that the incident violates the dignity of a person. The Finnish definition covers the violation of physical integrity in addition to the violation of dignity and includes groups as well as individuals. These countries have thus adopted a more extensive definition of harassment.

Only a few countries provide a definition of abusive behaviours; this may be done in labour law (Estonia, France, Latvia and Slovenia) or in occupational health and safety (OHS) legislation (for example, Belgium).

Belgian legislation that came into force in 2014 broadens the previous definition of violence and harassment at work by using the [more generic term 'psychosocial risks' \(page in Dutch\)](#). Therefore, it encompasses other situations like stress, burnout and interpersonal conflicts that

might have been caused by aggressive behaviour. [The Slovenian 2013 Act distinguishes between harassment and bullying \(page in Slovenian\)](#): harassment is defined as ‘any undesired behaviour associated with any personal circumstance’, while bullying at the workplace is defined as ‘any repetitive or systematic, reprehensible or clearly negative and insulting action or behaviour aimed at individual workers in the workplace or in connection with work’. In the Irish 2012 order revising the 1998 Employment Equality Act, [bullying is considered as an incident not linked to discrimination](#), which is why it is not covered by the Employment Equality Act.

The French legal definition of ‘moral harassment’ at work focuses on ‘a behaviour of any person abusing the authority conferred on him/her or him/her position’ (see the EIRO IU FR0101121F), undermining the physical and mental health of the target or compromising their professional future. Similarly, ‘the abuse or misuse of power’ is part of the UK definition of bullying as part of general law. Legislation in Italy and Poland defines only ‘mobbing’, which is considered to be a persistent action and behaviour that damages the worker’s productivity. While in Italian legislation the minimum period for the duration of mobbing is specified (six months), in Poland the negative impact on perceived professional abilities and the purpose of perpetrator(s) in ‘humiliating or ridiculing the employee, isolating or eliminating him or her from the group of co-worker’ (EU-OSHA, 2010) is highlighted. [Spanish legislation defines harassment \(1.21 MB PDF\)](#), viewing it as intended to ‘humiliate the victim, imposing situations that greatly offend human dignity’. It provides a definition that is very close to that of mobbing in Italy and Poland, thus narrowing the scope of the definition of harassment defined in general legislation. Finally, Cyprus and Malta define only sexual harassment at work.

In general, national legal definitions include descending top-down harassment (or bossing), horizontal harassment (among colleagues) and ascending bottom-up harassment (towards the superior). This is also true for the French, Italian and Polish definitions, although they focus on descending forms. The French definition also includes violence and harassment from third parties.

Less than half the Member States provide work-related specific definitions of violence and/or harassment at work in their legislation. In some, only guidelines or social partner agreements provide definitions. The focus of the definition varies from country to country, while some countries share the concept of the repetitive or systematic nature of the occurrences.

Surveying methodology

In discussing the extent of violence and harassment measured through surveys, the 2004 Eurofound report [Violence, bullying and harassment in the workplace](#) pointed out some key issues that make comparative analysis difficult.

- The concepts used do not always relate to people's everyday life or their own concepts.
- Surveys do not allow scope for subjective meanings.
- Violence and harassment are social issues that are difficult to capture in surveys.
- Surveys fail to see the progressive nature of the problems.
- Translations in international surveys are problematic due to different meanings and concepts.

The report [Workplace violence and harassment: A European picture](#) from EU-OSHA, also identifies several limitations for comparative studies:

- the use of different definitions and classifications;
- the use of different methodologies for collecting and processing information, including quantitative and qualitative research, case studies and different ways of reporting a case of violence;
- differing levels of accuracy in measuring the nature of the incident;
- the use of different time limits;
- the use of different criteria for assessment;
- different foci of data collection;
- cultural differences in experiencing violence and harassment.

The aim of this section is to show the variety of methods used to measure violence and harassment. Mapping methods allow evidence to be framed at national level and provide information in order to explore if it is possible to work towards common standards for monitoring the problem among Member States and Norway in the future. This would increase the comparability of data across countries and allow analysis over time.

Extent of violence and harassment

Reporting harassment or psychological violence is the result of observable offensive acts that cause the target person to perceive that they are being degraded and that there is a lack of respect for his or her personal dignity. The way it is experienced and reported is influenced not only by personal perception, but also by how it is defined in the cultural context and the level of individual awareness.

This reliance on perception raises several problems when measuring the extent of violence and harassment through surveys. Tables A.1 to A.4 in the Annex summarise the main analytical dimensions used across Europe in over 60 surveys in relation to violence and harassment, such as the methodological approach, reference period, key words, perpetrators and the intensity and duration. Table A.5 displays the adopted approaches by their scope (national, sectoral, regional and occupational).

The self-labelling approach asks the respondent directly if they have experienced violence or harassment. The aggregate sum of answers equals the final level of violence and harassment. The self-labelling approach tends to be less objective because it focuses on self-identified experience.

The operational approach derives information about the level of violence and harassment by asking the respondent a set of questions about a variety of types of aggressive behaviours.

Respondents indicate how they were exposed to different forms of violence and harassment without referring explicitly to the concepts of violence and harassment. A set of predefined coding rules is used to work out the level of violence and harassment. The operational approach tends to provide more objective estimates of the prevalence of violence and harassment because the respondent is only indirectly asked about their experience of violence and harassment through a set of questions on negative behaviours.

The self-labelling approach has the clear advantage of providing synthetic information about these acts. It is therefore used by surveys that analyse working conditions and quality of work (such as Eurofound's EWCS) and labour force surveys (such as the ad hoc modules on health and safety at work of Eurostat's Labour Force Survey, LFS). This approach is at risk of under-reporting and displays severe problems in terms of comparability (discussed below). Several reasons can be given for under-reporting, such as poor personal awareness, personal characteristics or social and cultural factors. As highlighted by Eurofound report [Physical and psychological violence at the workplace](#), these surveys 'rely on the willingness of respondents to disclose the problem and identify themselves as victim or target', thus generating a selection bias. In order to reduce such bias, some surveys include a definition of the most challenging and elusive terms used, such as 'bullying' (the Finnish national work and health survey carried out by FIOSH, the quality of working life survey by Statistics Finland and the Irish Bullying in the Workplace survey from the Economic and Social Research Institute) or 'moral harassment' (the French SUMER and working conditions surveys carried out by the Ministry of Labour). According to national contributions, the Danish Copenhagen Psychosocial Questionnaire (COPSOQ) is the most accepted survey using the self-labelling approach. It provides the most detailed information in terms of investigated behaviours (gossip and slander, quarrel and conflicts, unpleasant teasing, undesired sexual attention, threats of violence, violence, bullying), the intensity of the attacks and the perpetrators.

Using the operational approach, it is possible to measure the duration of a respondent's exposure to violence and harassment. Because of definitions provided for violence and harassment, this approach is preferred when the investigated population is quite homogeneous (in terms of company, sector or occupation) in order to maximise shared understanding. The most widespread questionnaires developed using this approach are the Negative Acts Questionnaire-Revised (NAQ-R), proposed by Einarsen et al (2009), and the Leyman Inventory Psychological Terrorisation (LIPT) questionnaire developed by Leyman in various versions (31 or 45 items). According to the NAQ-R, employees reporting at least two negative behaviours in a week are considered as having been bullied, while according to the LIPT questionnaire, having experienced violence and harassment once a week is sufficient for identifying a bullied employee.

When using these standard questionnaires, operational approaches have the advantage of sharing the same format as the most well-known questionnaires, thus providing a consistent way to investigate such behaviours across countries, which ensures wide comparability (see for all Nielsen et al, 2010). Nevertheless, they are quite long and therefore it is hard to add them as a module to wide-spectrum surveys such as those investigating quality of work and employment.

The advantages of both approaches (self-labelling and operational) are combined in an integrated approach. The most common strategy is to pick some of the most relevant negative behaviours included in the NAQ-R or LIPT questionnaires and assess them against the self-labelling approach. Eleven surveys with an integrated approach were reported, combining both incidents that were personally experienced (direct approach) and witnessed or observed (indirect approach); eight of these surveys were conducted at national level (see Table A.6).

Focusing on the work environment in interviews, rather than on personal experience, can spare people feelings of embarrassment or shame. In such surveys, interviewees are asked about their social work environment (the Spanish National Survey on Quality of Life in the Workplace,

ECTV, for example), whether certain risks are present (the Dutch Netherlands Employers Work Survey “NEWS”) or whether respondents have noticed or witnessed (in contrast to personally experienced) ASBs in the workplace (for instance, the Italian quality of work survey). In that case, the investigation is considered self-labelled but indirect. Surveys taking the workplace as the unit of analysis adopt this approach.

Box 1: The 2013 French survey on working conditions: Examples of integrated approaches

The 2013 [French survey on working conditions \(page in French\)](#) asked the employee if they had been:

- ignored as if they were not present;
- prohibited from expressing themselves;
- ridiculed in public;
- criticised in an unjustified way for their work;
- given useless or condescending tasks;
- subject to sabotage or hindrance so that their tasks could not be carried out correctly;
- told that they are mentally incapable;
- subject to obscene or condescending remarks;
- subject to insistent sexual propositions;
- the butt of offensive or crude jokes or mockery.

Employees were then asked about the source of aggression (coworkers, clients, users or patients, employees from another company, others) and why they think they had been harassed (on grounds of gender, health or disability, skin colour, national origin, style of dress, age, sexual orientation, profession).

A second set of items asks more directly about psychological or physical violence. Using a four-item scale (Never, Sometimes, Often, Always), the participant was asked whether in the past 12 months in the context of their work they had been subject to:

- verbal aggression from the public;
- physical aggression from the public;
- verbal aggression from a colleague or superior;
- physical aggression from a colleague or superior.

The French [Medical Monitoring Survey of Professional Risks \(Sumer 2010, in French\)](#) use the same set of questions. While the self-labelling approach is used when the respondent is questioned by the interviewer, the operational questions are asked in a separate form that is filled out privately by the respondent and given to the interviewer anonymously.

Prevention policies and interventions by different actors

Surveys investigating health and safety at work typically ask about prevention policies addressing specific issues, such as internal procedures dealing with psychosocial risks. Some national surveys take different approaches. The Irish bullying at work survey provides the most complete picture: it asks respondents whether the company they are working for has an anti-bullying policy, whether it is implemented and what the impact of the policy is. The Italian quality of work survey and ad hoc module and the Cypriot survey on gender discrimination in work and employment investigate who workers approached (whether at the workplace or externally) for advice or legal assistance. The Estonian gender equality monitoring survey seeks to identify the person responsible for solving the problem. In general, these surveys do not differentiate by the type of violence and harassment nor by the type of perpetrator (whether internal or a third party).

Some surveys investigate negative behaviours by using the workplace as the reference unit. The Irish Bullying in the Workplace survey includes a questionnaire addressed to the employer. It undertakes the most complete investigation on the employers' side by asking how prevalent various forms of bullying (horizontal, ascending and descending) were over the two years preceding the survey. It also asks questions about; the impact of ASB on motivation, productivity, absenteeism and turnover; the employer's familiarity with the codes of conduct recommended by Irish legislation; and the existence and impact of formal procedures for dealing with ASB and the frequency of their use.

The [German WSI works council survey \(page in German\)](#) is addressed to a representative sample of establishments with 20 or more employees and with a works or staff council. It investigates whether the works or staff council were asked to intervene in cases of violence and harassment in the previous two years. The UK Trades Union Congress (TUC) survey asks OHS representatives about the five issues of major concern at the workplace, including violence and harassment. Both surveys are carried out every second year.

At EU level, the Enterprise Survey on New and Emerging Risks (ESENER), carried out by EU-OSHA, whose first wave was addressed to both employers' and workers' representatives, devotes a section to psychosocial risk factors, including questions related to violence and harassment (the level of concern, procedures in place, occurrence in the workplace and the importance of the issue).

Reference period for and frequency of incidents

The reference period is important with regard to harassment and psychological violence, where the recurrence of negative behaviour is common. Thus, repetition over time implies both a reference period within which these behaviours impact on the target and a measure of the frequency of these abuses.

The reference period is also relevant when comparing surveys in order to ensure a minimal criterion of homogeneity. Most surveys using the self-labelling approach take the previous 12 months as the reference period, with a few exceptions: the Italian ISfol quality of work survey (QWS) refers to the entire working life, while the Slovak survey on violence against women refers to the previous five years). Operational surveys commonly refer to the previous six months, although this varies across countries and surveys. Analysis by occupational psychologists has ascertained that the recurrence of these behaviours over a period of six months affects the work environment in a lasting way.

The frequency and duration of incidents of violence and harassment are an important indicator of their seriousness, and usually included by international definitions, such as those presented in the 2010 EU-OSHA report [Workplace violence and harassment: A European picture](#). The [European social partners' 2007 framework agreement on harassment and violence at work](#) highlights that negative behaviours have to be systematic in order to foster an abuse of power. As summarised in

Table A.8, some 26 surveys investigate recurrence of abuse. Of these, 12 adopt a self-labelling approach and six an integrated approach. None of the EU-level surveys, including the EWCS, investigates recurrence of incidents.

The intensity of incidents of violence and harassment is investigated in terms of the number of attacks over a given time unit (daily, weekly, monthly, yearly) or in ordinal terms, such as the COPSOQ questionnaire (Never, Rarely, Often, Daily) (Table A.8).

The time period during which incidents occur is indication of an abuse of power. The time period is investigated in five surveys: those using the LIPT questionnaire and several integrated surveys. The Irish Bullying in the Workplace Survey and the Italian Istat ad hoc module investigate both duration and intensity, thus providing a more complete range of information (Table A.10).

Finally, only a few surveys investigate whether these behaviours are happening on a continuous basis or if they occurred in the past: the Finnish Quality of Work Life Survey (QWLS), the French Sumer and the Italian ad hoc module ask if it is 'current or in the past', the Irish Bullying in the Workplace Survey and the French Health and Career Path survey (SIP) outline a full timeline of their occurrence. This distinction provides relevant information about the available resources for both targeted individuals (social support, individual psychological attitudes) and workplaces that favour solutions for abusive behaviours (in terms of the social environment, personnel management and prevention policies).

Attempts to investigate perpetrators

As defined by the 2007 European social partners' framework agreement, perpetrators can be either internal or they can be external (a third party). An increasing number of workers in some sectors deal with third parties (clients, customers, patients, pupils) on a daily basis. This reflects the growth of the service industry. In this context, the possibility of being harassed by an external perpetrator becomes more likely.

According to Table A.9, all surveys that adopt an integrated approach make some type of distinction between internal and external perpetrators, except the Italian Istat ad hoc citizen safety module, which considers only horizontal forms of harassment (mobbing) and descending forms (bossing). Among surveys implementing an operational approach, the NAQ-R does not consider perpetrators, while 15 out of 28 self-labelling surveys consider both internal and external perpetrators, for at least one form of violence and harassment. The Hungarian survey on dangers at school also considers pupils' negative behaviours. The Danish COPSOQ questionnaire displays the most complete mapping of perpetrators by distinguishing colleagues, superiors and subordinates among internal perpetrators from external perpetrators. The Irish Bullying in the Workplace Survey, the Luxembourgish survey on workers' representation of work conditions and the Estonian survey on gender equality monitoring also consider whether there was one perpetrator or several for each incident investigated. On the other hand, none of the EU-level workers' surveys draws any distinction between the perpetrators. The company survey ESENER differentiates between internal harassment and third party violence.

Prevalence of violence and harassment in Europe

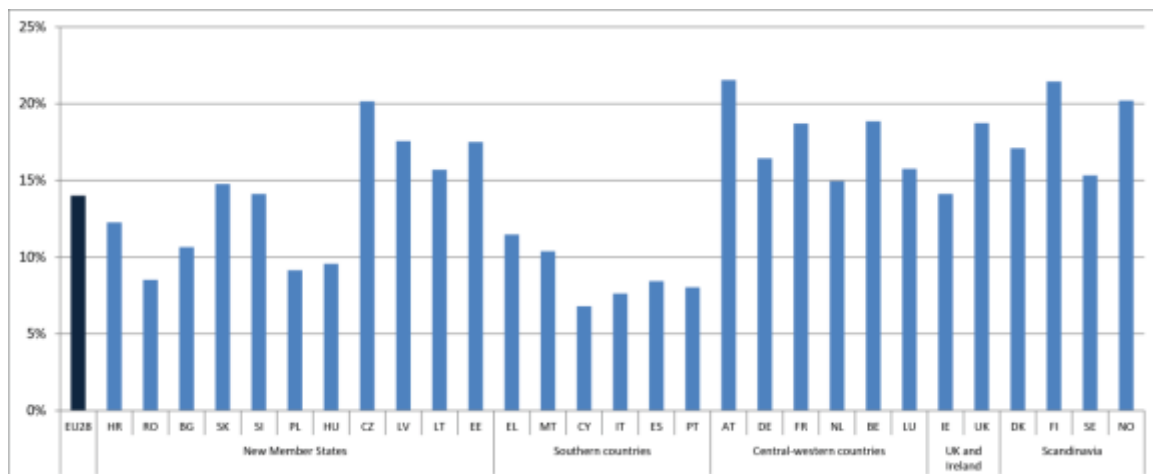
As shown in the previous section, most national surveys using a self-labelling approach use different concept definitions, methodologies and question design. Definitions proposed by legislation, case law and administrative acts often impact on what is asked and how it is asked. Operational approaches ensure comparability only among those surveys that share the same questionnaire, such as the NAQ-R and LIPT. These approaches have been implemented mainly at company or sectoral level. Integrated approaches carried out at national level all differ from each other for both operational and self-labelling questions. Thus, for the time being, only cross-national surveys – such as Eurofound’s EWCS and EU-OSHA’s ESENER – ensure comparability between countries. The EU Fundamental Rights Agency’s survey on violence against women provides additional information on Europe-wide harassment at work. Data from the EWCS – specifically, the waves from 1995 to 2005 for the Member States that constituted the EU15 – was used in the study [Workplace violence and the changing nature of work in Europe](#) to investigate individual-level and organisational-level risk factors as determinants of self-reported third-party violence.

In order to assess the prevalence of violence and harassment, results of the prevalence of ASB in the EU28 and Norway are presented in this section. However, because different methodologies and questions are used in these surveys, it is not always possible to compare indicators related to violence and harassment. The main sources of information are the fifth EWCS (2010) and the national-level surveys that have been reported by the national correspondents. While the 2010 EWCS allows comparisons based on the same survey to be applied to the EU28 and Norway, information from national contributions allows trends to be updated and shows different findings due to the different methodologies used in relation to the definitions and questions included in the various surveys.

Latest trends in ASBs

Eurofound’s index of ASBs includes all workers reporting at least one form of violence or harassment as asked in the EWCS.

Figure 2: Proportion of workers affected by ASB, by country (%)



Source: EWCS 2010

Figure 2 shows a geographical pattern: the Baltic states, central and western European countries, and the Scandinavian countries are above the EU28 average of 14%. Austria, the Czech Republic and Finland show the highest percentages of workers reporting violence or harassment at the workplace (more than 20%), whereas in half of the eastern European countries (except Slovakia,

Slovenia and the Baltic states) and in all the southern European countries, a smaller proportion of workers reports ASB (from 6% in Cyprus to 12% in Croatia).

Table A.10 summarises evidence from national cross-national surveys. National data are compared with the latest index data from the fifth EWCS. Because of differences in the ways behaviours are grouped as well as lexical differences, it is possible to compare only a subset of surveys. Even with this approach, comparability is limited due to differences in definitions and methodology.

Information from the national contributions shows that verbal and psychological aggression – ranging from threats, intimidation, verbal abuse, bullying, harassment, mobbing and psychological violence – constitute the most reported forms of violence and harassment in the EU. Few surveys allow a direct comparison between internal and external incidents. In Bulgaria and Spain (only in 2011), internal aggression is reported more than external aggression, while the reverse is true in France, the Netherlands and Sweden. Generally, incidents of violence and harassment that have been witnessed or observed are more common than incidents of first-hand experience. This is the case in Denmark and Finland.

In order to provide a review of Member States' positioning, [the questionnaire for the fifth EWCS](#) is used as a reference. Table 1 shows national surveys with questions that are similar to the questions in the EWCS. The prevalence of the different adverse behaviours as measured by most national surveys – is often higher than the results obtained from the EWCS.

Table 1: Proportion of people subjected to ASBs, by country

	Physical violence	Threats of physical violence	Bullying and harassment	Sexual harassment	Synthetic indicators: ASB
Fifth EWCS EU average	1.9%	5.0%	4.1%	2%	14.9%
Below EU average	BG, SI	BG	BG, NO	ES	IE
Above EU average	BE (Flanders), DK, EE, FI, LV, NO	DK, FI	BE, BG,* DK, EE, ES, FI, IT, LV, PL, SE, SI	BE, FI, BG, EE, NO, PL, SE, SI	CZ, FR, LV, NL

Note: In case of multiple waves, those closest to 2010 are used. National surveys are not available for CY, DE, EL, HR, LT and MT. Please see Annex 2 for an explanation of the country codes.

**Work Climate Index 2012 only.*

Source: EWCS 2010 and national contributions

Results from only nine Member States' national-level cross-sectoral survey match those of the EWCS. Overall, the EWCS indicates a lower level of reporting than national sources. Figures related to violence and harassment from the Eurostat Labour Force Survey (LFS) are also generally lower, as the questions are restricted to violence and harassment with a negative impact on health. However, this comparison is only indicative of the outcomes of the different methodologies used. Few national surveys use synthetic indicators: in France (the only indicator based on an operational approach) and the Netherlands the reported incidence of ASBs is higher than the results of the fifth EWCS, while in Ireland figures are considerably lower than the EWCS. Although referring to 2007, and therefore not fully comparable, the Czech STAM/MARK survey displays figures that are higher in 2009 and lower in 2011 than the EWCS.

Comparability of figures among Member States is relevant, as national decision-making on both the regulatory framework and prevention policies relies mainly on national-level sources, including both administrative and working conditions surveys.

The Eurofound report [Physical and psychological violence at the workplace](#) shows a downward trend in levels of exposure to physical violence at EU level (for example, from 5% of workers in 2005 to 2% in 2010). Reported levels of workplace harassment and bullying remained relatively constant or only declined slightly from 2005 to 2010.

Few national contributions provide trends on violence and harassment, and reported periods vary among countries. For example, figures from Finland and Norway are available since the mid-1990s, while in the Netherlands they have been provided only since 2007. Except for Italy, all surveys share the same reference period of 12 months.

As a general pattern, violence and harassment were increasingly reported during the past decade by countries reporting a longer time series, such as Finland and Norway. The 2013 wave of the Norwegian survey shows an increase in both violence and unwanted sexual attention, but the reported average number of attacks is declining, signalling a decrease in serious cases (Table 2).

An increase is reported in Bulgaria, Finland and the Netherlands (for sexual harassment), Spain (verbal violence) and France (the indirect synthetic indicator increased from 17% in 2003 to 22.3% in 2009). There was an increase in witnessed violence and harassment in Denmark and Finland, while the number of personally experienced incidents is generally declining.

In general in Europe, violence and harassment have increased over the long term. However, between 2005 and 2010, the overall levels of violence and harassment were relatively stable. An increase in violence and harassment has been reported in some countries in more recent times, partly in connection to changes in workplaces affected by the economic crisis, as shown in the Eurofound report [Impact of the crisis on working conditions in Europe](#). This contrasts with the information provided by the national contributions, where nine surveys from seven countries show a decline in violence and harassment.

Table 2: Trends in reported violence and harassment

	SE	LV ^a	ES	NL	FI ^b	FR	BG ^b	CZ	DK	NO	IT ^d	BE ^d
Time period	2009 – 2011	2006 – 2013	2007 – 2013	2007 – 2012	2009 – 2012	2003 – 2009	2010 – 2012	2007 – 2011	2010 – 2012	2006 – 2013	2002 – 2010	2004 – 2010
Behaviours												
Violence and threats	=	+/-	=	=	+		-		-	+ ^d		+ ^c
Gender/sexual harassment	=			=, + ^f	+		+		-	=		+ ^c
Threats					+							
Bullying/harassment	-	+/-		-	-		- / +		= ^e			= ^c
Third-party violence			-	=								
Conflicts	-			-	-		-			-		
Verbal violence, intimidation				=			-					
Teasing/hassling										-		
Witnessed bullying/sexual harassment					+				+		+/-	
Synthetic indicator				=, - ^f		+		+/-				

Notes: = stable situation; + increase; - decrease.

^a Two periods; ^b Discrepancy among surveys; ^c Observed; ^d Only 2009/2013; ^e Small variation; ^f From third parties.

Source: National contributions

Administrative sources for ASB trends

Administrative data, cases filed by public administrations such as labour inspectorates, cases filed by work insurers and court judgements are strongly affected by institutional changes. Changes in legislation, the establishment of new institutions (such as an equality ombudsman and counsellors), or the emergence of case law can pave the way for new juridical approaches and policy changes. This information complements surveys and reveals how violence and harassment are dealt with in practice by both victims and public institutions. Under-reporting is a central issue when dealing with both types of sources. When it comes to data other than that gained from surveys, under-reporting is linked to difficulties in proving perpetrators' responsibility in cases of recourse to the courts or proving limitations to their employability in cases of incapacity claims.

Evidence from Member States comes from a variety of sources. Most sources refer to either ministries of labour or of welfare, such as an equality ombudsman or committees (reported by eight countries), labour inspectorates (six countries) and health and safety authorities and registers

(three countries). Other important sources of information are court case laws (five countries), and crime statistics and human rights committees (one country each).

Most countries have more than one administrative source. For instance, in Sweden an equality ombudsman dealt with 24 complaints in 2009, and labour inspectorate files show that violence or abuse accounted for 5% of work accidents and work-related diseases among women and 2.5% among men, with over 700 cases addressed. In Slovakia, numbers from the labour inspectorate are negligible (except in 2010), while those reported by the Ministry of Labour or a human rights association are higher. However, the number of overall reported claims increased from 16 in 2008 to an annual average of around 300 in 2009–2011.

Under-reporting is less pronounced when administrative sources do not rely on the target person's claims. This is the case for health and safety authorities that classify violence and harassment as work accidents. They range from about 2.5% of total work accidents in Slovenia to 5% in Latvia and 7% in Ireland. As a general trend, under-reporting declines as the probability of the claim being successful increases. Across countries, legal action is rarely taken because the likelihood of success often seems low.

Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom have a variety of administrative sources available to assess the level of violence and harassment. Some sources in these countries address just one type of violence and harassment (third-party violence). In Germany, the German Statutory Accident Insurance ([DGUV](#)) sickness scheme, related to leave of more than three days due to violence, attacks and intimidation from internal perpetrators, remained stable between 2005 and 2012. Crime statistics show that the number of robberies and assaults almost halved in the financial sector from 2007 to 2012 but increased by almost 28% against other cash points and businesses such as gambling halls. Violence and harassment remained stable for other professions, such as motorists (including taxi drivers) and cash transports. Lone workers are most at risk of being subjected to violence and harassment, especially workers in gambling halls and small shops. The individuals concerned in the cases of violence and harassment reported to the German DGUV are confirmed by doctors as being entitled to take sick leave. The mediating role of doctors, a feature of the system, might give the victim more confidence to report cases, which might help reduce under-reporting. The German DGUV is therefore a relatively reliable source for estimating the impact of violence and harassment in terms of both personal health and societal costs.

In the UK, according to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) survey based on the British Crime Survey, assaults increased by 18.5% from 2006–2007 to 2010–2011 and threats declined by 21.3%. The proportion of workers who experienced a violent incident at work declined from 1.7% in 2006–2007 to 1.5% in 2010–2011 due to a decline in threats. On the other hand, the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) survey, which collates the number of accidents at work, remained quite stable from 2009–2010 to 2011–2012. The number of accidents at work declined in 2012–2013.

In the Netherlands, registers for violent and harassing incidents at work were established in the sectors most at risk of third-party violence, such as railways, social security, the police force and ambulance services. These registers provide information for designing suitable interventions as part of the Dutch OHS prevention policy strategy and for monitoring their success. One in every five employees (full-time equivalent) of the Dutch Railways has reported an attack and 12% of those were reported to the police. Employees with the police force reported the second-highest proportion of workers being subjected to attacks (more than one in seven), followed by those working in the ambulance services (one in 18) and those employed by the Social Security Agency (one in 30).

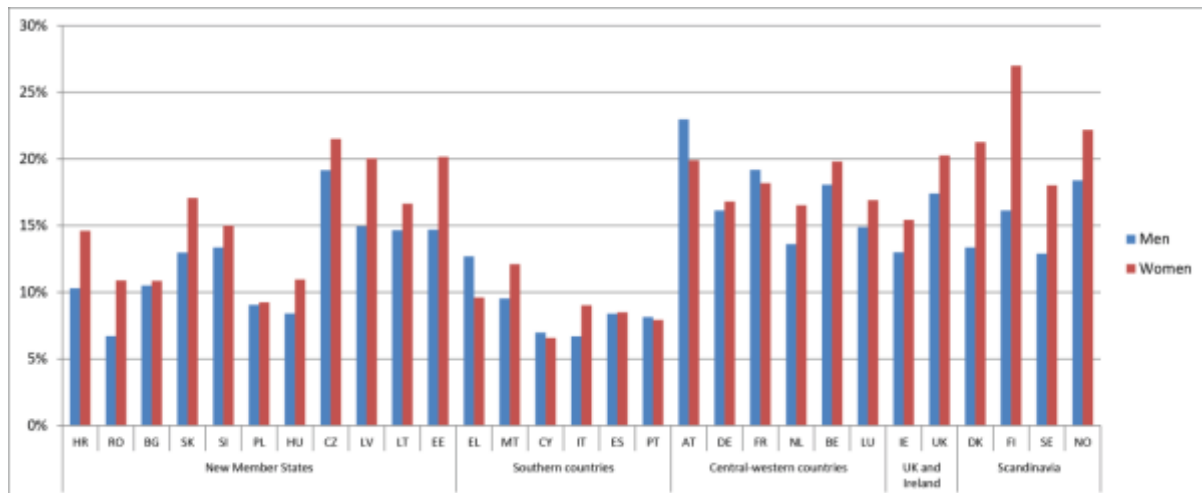
As outlined above, several factors discourage people from reporting incidents at workplace level or to public authorities, such as limitations in the legal framework, including imprecise definitions

of the phenomenon, and a fear of how employers, colleagues or society will react. Poor legal recognition and little chance of succeeding in any action are reported in many national contributions, such as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Italy and Luxembourg. Limits in both the legal framework and prevention policies reinforce the targets' fear in reporting cases. Targets are afraid of the consequences, such as losing their current job (Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia), retaliation from the employer (Greece, Malta, Slovenia) and social consequences. These factors are mutually reinforcing, creating a vicious circle of under-reporting and a lack of information about the topic. This can lead to the issue being less visible in public debate and having a low priority on policymakers' agendas.

Who is subjected to ASBs at work?

According to the EWCS 2010, the proportion of women subjected to ASBs is slightly higher (15.1%) than the proportion of men (13.3%). The difference between women and men is more pronounced in some Scandinavian and Baltic countries. In Finland, for instance, nearly twice as many women are subjected to ASBs than men. The difference between women and men is partially explained by women's higher levels of exposure to sexual harassment (Figure 3).

Figure 3: ASB by country and gender (%)

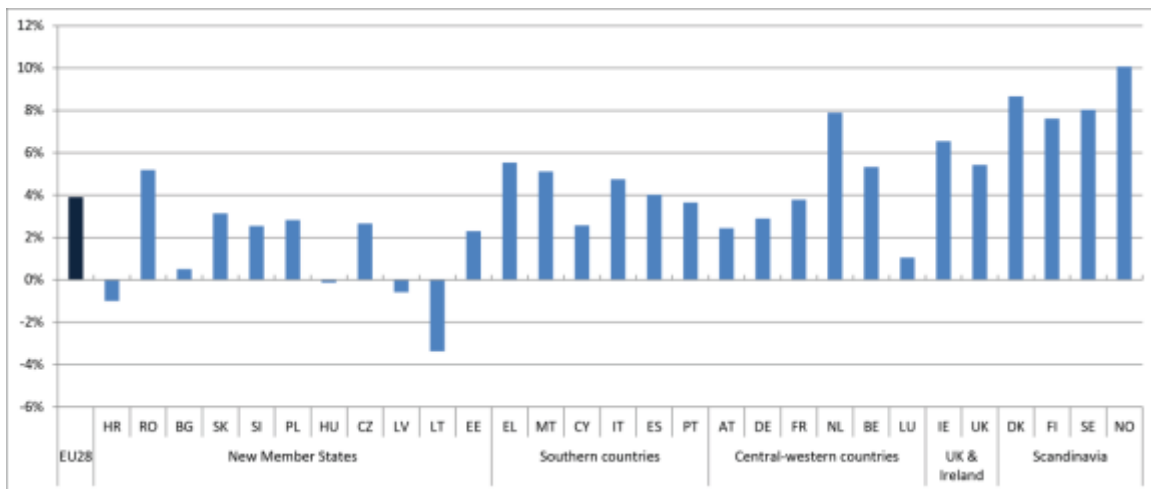


Source: EWCS 2010

Women are subjected to sexual harassment more than men, while men show higher levels of exposure to physical violence than women. In relation to some economic sectors, significant differences between women and men are found in education and human health and social work activities. As will be described later, these are sectors with relatively high levels of violence and harassment.

The share of workers younger than 35 years old reporting ASB is higher (16.1%) than that of other age groups (13.8% of those aged 35 to 49 years and 12.2% of those aged 50 years and over). This pattern is present in most countries, with higher differences between the younger and the older group in Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands.

Figure 4: Age differences in reporting of ASB, by country (%)



Note: Percentages indicate the age differences in reporting of ASB between workers younger than 35 years and older than 50.

Source: EWCS 2010

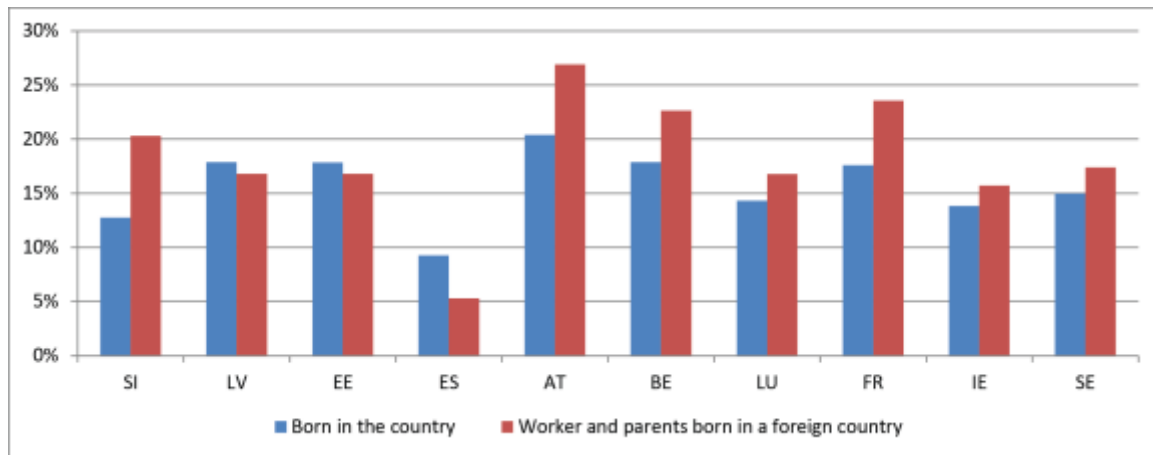
Taking into account both sex and age characteristics, younger workers, especially women, are disproportionately affected by ASBs, especially in terms of sexual harassment. Some national surveys confirm this pattern. In France and Norway, younger workers report being exposed to various forms of violence and harassment more than older workers: in France, 9.4% of young workers report verbal aggression as occurring ‘often’ or ‘always’, which is 2% more than average.

A higher share of workers aged 30–49 years report being subjected to physical aggression in France (14.5% against a general average of 12.7%). In Slovenia, workers aged 25–39 years report the highest figures for most ASBs.

Italian and Spanish workers who are older are more likely to report being a target of bullying and/or harassment. Surveys among teachers in Croatia and trainee doctors in Slovenia show that young workers are more exposed to harassment in the workplace than older workers and are probably harassed by their older colleagues, possibly because of cultural norms that still place younger employees in a subordinate position. In Croatian schools, older employees have better, more secure positions and have established stronger social and power networks in schools, while younger colleagues compete more among themselves due to the job insecurity they face. Slovenian trainee doctors report high figures of harassment for similar reasons.

At EU28 level, workers who were born in a foreign country and whose parents were born in a foreign country (constituting 17.5% of the EWCS sample in total) are disproportionately affected by ASBs compared to those workers born in the country they work in (13.7%). The same pattern can be observed in most countries.

Figure 5: Proportion of workers subjected to ASB, by country of birth for selected countries (%)



Note: The selected countries are those in which more than 15% of workers were born in a foreign country and at least one parent born in a foreign country.

Source: EWCS 2010

Only three countries report evidence about the impact of nationality on the level of exposure to violence and harassment. In Spain, non-nationals report being victims of violence and discrimination more than nationals. Dutch nationals are more exposed to external violence (a synthetic indicator) than those who have a non-national background. This might be due to a greater concentration of Dutch nationals in medium- to high-skilled positions who deal with third parties. And 18% of Estonian nationals report that they have been harassed at some point in their working life, while 10% of workers with a non-national background in Estonia report this.

The EWCS shows that at the EU level, workers with indefinite contracts are less subject to ASB (14.5%) than workers with a fixed-term contract (17.1%), temporary agency workers (21.7%) and those in an apprenticeship (22%). Interestingly, there is no significant difference between the proportion of workers who are employed full time and part time who are subjected to ASBs. Nevertheless, there are some exceptions. In Italy, involuntary part-time workers report the highest figures for having noticed bullying and rights violations over their working life while in the Netherlands, fixed-term and especially on-call employees are the most exposed to external violence (25% and 29% respectively), while temporary agency workers are the least exposed (16%); subsidised workers, temporary agency workers and permanent workers are most exposed to internal violence (26%, 18% and 16% respectively), while on-call workers are exposed the least (12%).

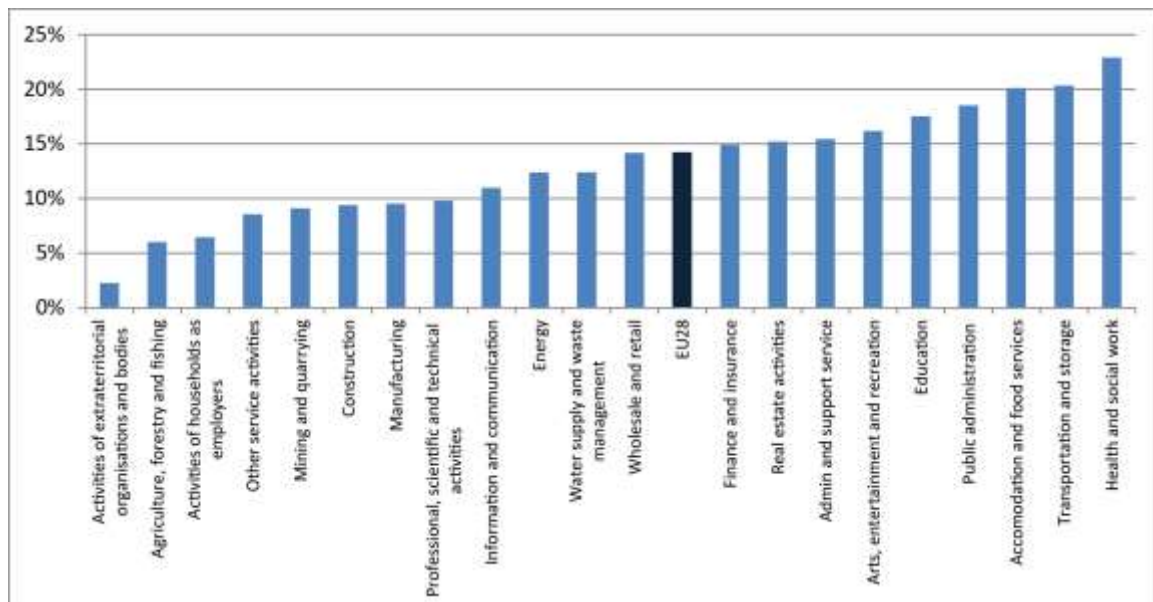
According to the EWCS 2010, in the EU28 the proportion of workers with a lower educational level (that is, pre-primary) who have been subjected to ASBs – 24% – is higher than workers with higher levels of educational attainment. Workers with a tertiary level of education (a university degree or similar) are the next most likely, 16% of workers reporting being subjected to the same type of behaviours. However, there are cases that show other patterns for specific forms of violence and harassment. In Lithuania, the higher the level of education of the respondents in the organisations surveyed, the greater the probability of their experiencing mobbing. This is apparently in contrast to evidence from literature and is partly related to sectoral and occupational specificities. In fact, many surveys highlight that exposure to violence and harassment is higher in the education sector, where both qualifications and skills are higher than average.

Third-party violence is increasingly an issue as both service sector and production cycle fragmentation increase. The issue has been extensively investigated in [the report Workplace violence and the changing nature of work in Europe](#), whose findings contrast with most of the national evidence reported above because of the recourse to sensitivity analysis. Women are less likely to be exposed to third-party violence than men (a difference of 24%), while young workers aged under 30, and especially workers in the 30–44 years age group, are more likely to be exposed (20% and 34% higher respectively) than older workers. Furthermore, fixed-term and temporary agency workers report a lower probability (of 28% and 31% respectively) than their permanent colleagues.

Vulnerable workers

There is a shared consensus from both national and EWCS data that workers in service sectors experience a higher occurrence of ASBs because employees have to deal with their colleagues, superiors and inferiors as well as third parties, and because the management of interpersonal relationships is increasingly complex.

Figure 6: Proportion of people subjected to ASB, by sector (%)



Source: EWCS 2010

Analysis of the EWCS 2010 shows, as illustrated in Figure 6, that the sectors where the prevalence of ASB is much higher than the EU28 average are the following:

- health and social work;
- transportation and storage;
- accommodation and food services;
- public administration;
- education.

Research confirms these results in relation to third-party violence. At the EU15 level, [Workplace violence and the changing nature of work in Europe](#) shows that employees in hotels and restaurants, health, education and social care, and public administration are more likely to be exposed to third-party violence. The evidence reported by national contributions largely confirms this.

The French SUMER survey provides an interesting insight. Hospitals report the highest figures, within the public sector, for verbal and physical aggression by both internal and external perpetrators; the public sector, in turn, reports higher figures than the overall economy.

According to the Irish Health and Safety Authority (HSA) statistics on work accidents, 44% of violence- and bullying-related incidents occur in health and social activities, while 38% of such incidents occur in public administration, defence and social security.

The Dutch working conditions survey (NWCS) outlines that while there is a moderate dispersion of internal violence among sectors, third-party violence displays interesting differences in both the public and the private sectors. In the public sector, the incidence of external violence is significantly above average in the judicial sector, the police force and primary and secondary education; in tertiary education, however, it is well below average. In the private sector, both the hotels, restaurants and catering sector (horeca) and the retail sector display figures that are significantly above average. Finally, Sweden also has higher figures in service sectors with extensive exposure to third-party contact.

According to analysis of the EWCS 2010, within those sectors where violence and harassment is more prevalent, some occupations are particularly exposed to ASBs. These are ‘professionals’ in the health and social work sector, ‘service and sales workers’ in the transport sector, ‘technicians and associate professionals’ in the accommodation and food industry and ‘service and sales workers’ in public administration.

Secondary analysis based on the Danish [AH2012 survey \(page in Danish\)](#) shows that [police and correctional officers are among the most exposed](#) to violence. Service workers show a high level of exposure to sexual harassment. In Belgium, white-collar workers performing caring and educational functions report the highest figures in the workforce for physical violence (24%), bullying (16.9%) and sexual harassment (6.9%), while blue-collar workers report the lowest figures for physical violence (2.9%) and sexual harassment (1.6%). The Austrian overview of the NAQ-R shows that clerks and sales workers are among the most exposed to internal bullying (20.4%). And according to the French Sumer 2010 survey, clerks in the service sectors report higher levels of a ‘hostile environment’ (24% against a 22.3% general average).

National contributions show that in the health sector, nurses, trainee doctors and physiotherapists report greater exposure to violent behaviours. There are several possible reasons for why the reporting of violence and harassment by these groups should be well above national averages. In some professions, constant contact is required with third parties, and dealing with third parties can involve psychologically and sometimes emotionally demanding tasks, which exposes employees to a high risk of burnout. Several countries have surveys that specifically address

health and social care professionals: the Czech Republic, Germany, Slovenia and the UK, but especially Lithuania, for which four such surveys are reported.

According to a 2012 [German survey among care staff](#), 56% experienced physical violence (63% in inpatient geriatric care) and 78% experienced verbal aggression in the 12 months preceding the survey. In all, 44% of respondents said they had experienced physical violence and 68% experienced verbal aggression once per month or more.

According to a 2009 [Slovenian survey among trainee doctors \(372 KB PDF, in Slovenian\)](#), 70.8% are subject to bullying during training. The most common behaviour is the withholding of important information, making verbal attacks regarding work assignments, assigning work assignments below or above the trainee's capacity and spreading rumours.

According to the Czech survey 'Improvements in social dialogue' among health professionals, personal experience of violence increased from 25.4% in 2004 to 31.8% in 2010, verbal attacks increased from 38.4% to 46.3% and physical violence increased from 12.2% to 16.9%, while personal experience of mobbing/bullying, race-related humiliation and sexual harassment are relatively stable or declining. (The survey was a diagnostic survey within the Improvement of Social Dialogue – Prevention of Violence project carried out by the non-governmental organisation Euro Educa.)

The Lithuanian national contribution summarises findings from four surveys in the health and care sector. According to the HI-LSMU survey among teachers and doctors in 10 Lithuanian towns, 47.7% of the respondent doctors (45.9% of women and 35.8% of men) and 29.2% of the respondent teachers (31.1% of women and 17.2% of men) had suffered psychological violence in the workplace. Doctors were often exposed to psychological violence, unfair task distribution, frequent conflicts at work, disagreements between colleagues, contradictory work demands and office abuse by direct superiors. Meanwhile, 62.5% of mental health nurses in the Klaipeda hospital report having suffered violence at work and 17.1% of nurses in Kaunas county are victims of bullying. Finally, according to the survey among social workers carried out by the Lithuanian Social Research Centre (LSRC) in 2012, around 90% had been exposed to some form of violence at work. The most frequent types were swearing (83.1%), harassment (74.4%) and verbal threats (57.1%).

The annual UK survey by the National Health Service (NHS) shows a considerable increase in violent and harassing behaviour in 2012 compared to 2009. For example, 15% of staff reported physical violence from patients, their relatives or the public in the previous 12 months, compared with 9% in 2009. Meanwhile, 30% of staff experienced harassment, bullying and abuse from patients, their relatives or the public in the previous 12 months (as against 19% in 2009 and 13% in 2010–2011), and 23% experienced this from their colleagues (16% in 2009).

Factors that can foster violence and harassment

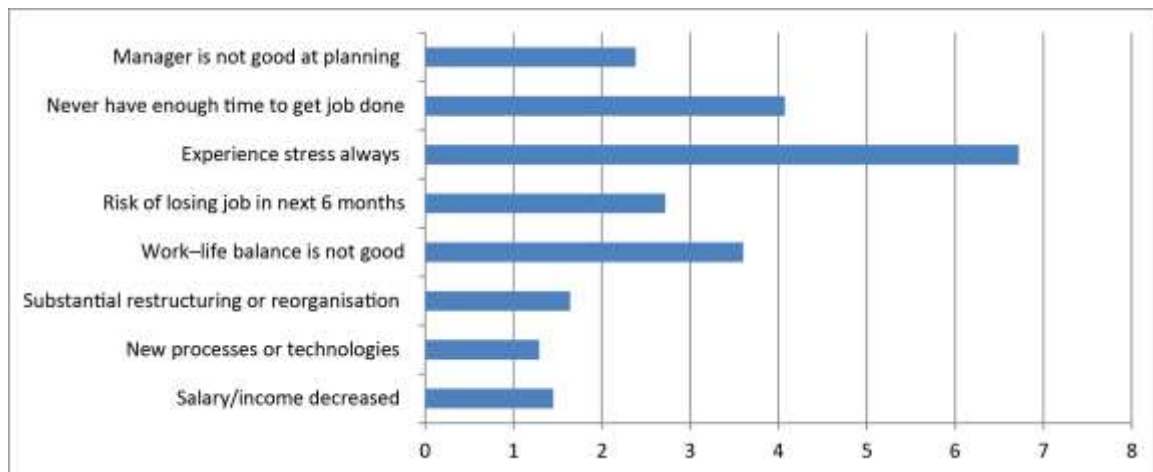
Literature, and national information, suggest that organisational change and certain working conditions seem to be related to a higher level of violence and harassment at work. Figure 7 shows that different aspects of working conditions are associated with reporting ASB to differing extents. Factors such as a decrease in income, the introduction of new processes or technologies or experiencing substantial restructuring or reorganisation in the workplace are associated with ASB, which means that workers exposed to these factors are more likely to report ASBs than those who not exposed to them.

However, there is a stronger relationship between reporting ASB and indicators related to subjective experiences, such as not having a good work–life balance, feeling that the job is at risk, not having enough time to get the job done and thinking that the manager is not good at planning.

Reporting that one always experiences stress shows a strong association with ASB, which could mean that in the context of a stressful work environment, workers are highly likely to report

violence and harassment or that those who experience them are very likely to report stress. Both statements seem to hold, as suggested by other analyses and relevant literature.

Figure 7: Reporting ASB and selected working conditions



Note: Results of logistic regression of certain aspects of working conditions on reporting any type of ASB. Control variables for country, sector, occupation, education, age and sex.

Figures show odds ratios. Odds ratios indicate the strength of the association between a specific working condition and ASB – in other words, the relative probability that a worker experiencing one specific condition has of reporting ASB in comparison to a worker who does not experience that condition. For example, the chances of reporting ASB is almost seven times higher among workers ‘experiencing stress always’ than those who do not experience stress always.

Source: EWCS 2010

The findings of the Eurofound report [Impact of the crisis on working conditions in Europe](#) and the Eurofound and EU-OSHA [joint report on psychosocial risks in workplaces](#) show that workers have experienced: a decrease in their weekly working hours; high work intensity (but which is not increasing overall); and greater job insecurity. However, country differences and trends make the picture more complex. For example, in the context of the economic crisis, work intensity has been reduced in some sectors and countries, while in others it has increased. As for work-life balance, there is evidence of increasing difficulties in some countries – partly due to the increased participation of women in the labour market, which has not been coupled with adequate policies or practices at the workplace and in society.

National contributions provide extensive evidence about both case studies and secondary analysis investigating the relationships between violence and harassment and organisational factors, which have been summarised in Table 3.

Organisational-level factors can be clustered into three groups:

- **factors that increase job demands:** high workload, demanding tasks, poor autonomy or job control, unsocial hours, staff shortages, increased pressure at work to meet deadlines;
- **factors associated with change and increasing uncertainties:** greater job insecurity, restructuring, organisational and management change;
- **organisational and social resources at the workplace:** managerial style and leadership profiles, role clarity and social relationships among employees.

A good example of the interaction between work demands and violence and harassment is provided by the [Danish study on mobbing \(2.95 MB PDF, in Danish\)](#). Employees who are exposed to bullying report having greater demands at work, less influence and less social support at work, less satisfaction with their working environment and less trust in their managers; they also experience less organisational justice and more role conflicts. Similarly, as outlined by a [Swedish study on violence in the workplace \(769 KB PDF, in Swedish\)](#) from 2010, increased exposure to difficult working conditions reduces tolerance for additional stress in the work environment, such as violence or threats of violence. This reduction in tolerance could also lead to an increase in the likelihood of a person reporting cases of violence and harassment.

The Norwegian studies, especially those carried out by the University of Bergen's Centre on Bullying, highlight the role of leadership as an enabling factor for the insurgence of harassment and bullying. They provide extensive evidence that harassment and bullying are largely related to lower levels of job satisfaction and higher levels of exposure to tyrannical (or 'toxic', Einarsen et al, 2007) leadership, role conflict and interpersonal conflicts at the workplace (Berthelsen et al, 2008). In these cases, violence and harassment are used as a tool of managerial control that can supplement other control methods and approaches (Beale and Hoel, 2011, p.11). It may also be a spontaneous response to particular situations, such as a stressful work environment due to high demands or increasing uncertainty. Recent Italian studies report evidence on the importance of participative management and leadership by example (Caporale et al, 2012) and of HR policies aimed at personnel development (selection, career development, meritocracy practices, training) in [reducing the probability of violence and harassment \(939 KB PDF, in Italian\)](#), while HR practices exclusively focused on control (administration, trade union relations, vigilance) and power centralisation increase the risk of such behaviour.

Table 3: Main organisational risk factors and working conditions associated with violence and harassment

Organisational risk factors and working conditions	Specific risk and country's national contribution
Job demands	Work intensity (FR), time pressure (FI), high workload (CZ, DE, SE, SI), physically and mentally demanding (FI), tasks work demands (FR), fear and mental strain (DE), high quantitative demands (DE), work pressure (AT, LT), emotionally demanding tasks (FR, IT), job mentally demanding (IT), working with tight deadlines (IT), volume of tasks (CZ)
Unsocial hours	Night shifts (ES), shift changes (DE)
Autonomy	Job control (FR), low influence at work (DE), low work discretion (IT)
Job insecurity	Job insecurity, uncertainty (ES), fear of job loss (AT)
Managerial style	Tyrannical leadership (NO), managerial authoritarian styles (ES, IT), managerial conduct (DE), limited managerial support (CZ), non-participative leadership (IT), autocratic style (UK), abusive management (MT), inadequate staff policy (SK)
Social environment	Hostile environment (SE), internal conflicts (BE, ES, LV), poor social relationships (DE, ES, FI, FR), poor personal relationships (SK), internal competition (AT, BE, LV), poor/lack of communication (CZ, ES), lack of social support (DE), rivalry among colleagues and personal resentment (AT), poor level of cooperation (CZ), informal groups and cliques (CZ), strong identity groups (DK)
Organisational factors	Ambiguous job roles (ES), inappropriate work organisation and conflict management (ES), role conflicts (DE), poor organisational structure (DE), bad organisation (SI), staff shortage (ES)
Changes in management	Changes in the organisation (FI), changes in management (CZ, FI, IT)
Organisational changes/restructuring	Restructuring (FR), offshoring (FR)
Conflicting values	FR

Source: National contributions

The connection between restructuring and ASB is investigated by the 2012 Eurofound report [After restructuring: Labour markets, working conditions and life satisfaction](#), which carried out a secondary analysis based on the fifth EWCS. Employees at workplaces that have faced restructuring report ASBs more than those working in non-restructured workplaces. They report 1.5 times more verbal abuse, 1.6 times more unwanted sexual attention, 1.9 times more threats and humiliating behaviour and almost twice as much bullying and harassment as people working in a non-restructured workplace. The difference can be explained both in direct and indirect terms. Nielsen et al (2010) explain indirect effects by considering that restructuring often involves coercive change and reduced job security. These circumstances are stressful and may also provide opportunities for the misuse of organisational power. Increased job demands, less control over new tasks and possible conflicts among employees are the main factors that are indirectly linked to restructuring. Some national-level evidence reinforces and extends these findings. The Finnish

National Work and Health survey and a clinical overview of Italian victims of violence and harassment who are being treated both highlight that changes in supervision and management are associated with an increase in inappropriate or violent behaviour. The Finnish 2012 Annual Working Life Barometer (AWLB) highlights that organisations with a poor financial situation had more reports of bullying by both coworkers and superiors than those performing well financially.

When turning to third parties' abusive behaviour, the UK's HSE shows that lone workers are among those particularly at risk. Lone workers are a diverse group. They might be:

- people working at their premises – a small workshop, petrol station, kiosk or shop;
- people working on their own outside normal hours – cleaners and security, maintenance or repair staff;
- mobile workers (workers in construction, maintenance and repair and plant installation; cleaning staff, postal workers, social and medical services, engineers, estate agents, and sales or service representatives).

According to the 2012 report [Workplace violence and the changing nature of work in Europe](#), huge time pressure and especially a high level of exposure to third parties increase the risk of being exposed to third-party violence (by 24% and 181% respectively).

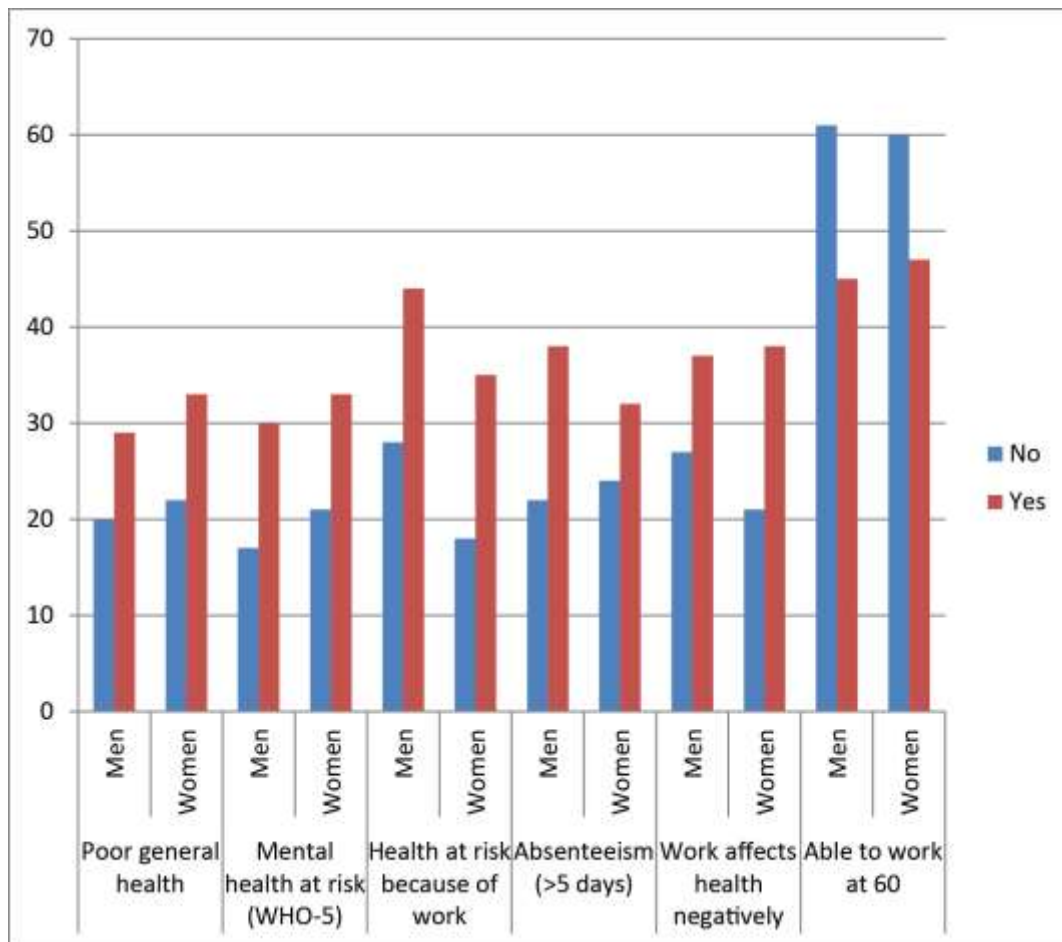
The information presented in this section suggests that some conditions at the workplace can increase the prevalence of violence and harassment in the workplace. In addition to such working conditions as good management, good organisation of work, freedom from high levels of work intensity and a good work–life balance, the national contributions also mentioned job autonomy, social support and worker involvement as factors that help to prevent violence and harassment.

Impacts of violence and harassment on workers and companies

According to Leymann (1992), the objective of bullying is to exclude someone from working life. The ultimate goal of the perpetrator(s) is to discharge or internally relocate the target without any explicit assessment of his or her behaviour or performance. A 2014 [study on workplace bullying as an antecedent to job insecurity](#) summarises the debate by pointing out that exclusion at the workplace leads the target to perceive that the continuity of his or her job is threatened. Work psychologists consider powerlessness to be at the core of the notion of job insecurity. Powerlessness is labelled as qualitative when any valued aspect of a person's job is threatened and as quantitative when a person is worried about losing their job.

As pointed out in [a longitudinal study of intentions to leave and exclusion from working life among targets of workplace bullying](#), the target of violence and harassment may suffer health impairment with subsequent sick leave, rehabilitation or disability pension. Their working conditions may become so unbearable that they choose to 'voluntarily' quit the job. The strong interconnectedness of different types of behaviour make it difficult to disentangle the impact on health, absenteeism, motivation to work, qualitative job security and job mobility.

Figure 8: Health and well-being outcomes of workers subjected to violence or harassment, by gender (%)



Source: EWCS 2010

Analysis of the 2010 EWCS confirms what has been suggested in Figure 8: that the proportion of workers reporting negative health outcomes is higher among those subjected to violence or harassment. According to the 2014 report [Psychosocial risks in Europe: Prevalence and strategies for prevention](#), ASB is also related to higher levels of absenteeism and to employees' expectations of being unable to work when they are 60 years old.

This section will shed more light on the relationship between ASB, health, absenteeism and labour market participation, particularly at the national level. These associations are in general confirmed by logistic regression models.

Damage to workers' mental health

As reported in a [report on the health impact of psychosocial hazards at work](#), there is a strong relation between violence and harassment and the emergence of a range of mental health problems

- stress (Hoel et al, 2001; Smith et al, 2000);
- anxiety, depression, insomnia, loss of concentration (Barling et al, 1996; Richman et al, 1999; Schneider et al, 1997);
- other post-traumatic disorders, such as drug abuse, and a heightened risk for suicide (Einarsen et al, 1994).

As outlined by the Eurofound report [Physical and psychological violence at the workplace](#), workers exposed to physical violence report a greater probability of mental health problems than workers who are not exposed:

- a probability of depression over three times greater (28% as against 9% respectively);
- 2.2 times more sleeping problems (40% and 18% respectively);
- 1.7 times more overall fatigue (35% and 55% respectively);
- about twice the likelihood of reporting stress (52% and 26% respectively).

Those workers reporting being bullied or harassed also report a greater rate of mental health issues than those who do not:

- four times more depression (32% and 8% respectively);
- almost three times more sleeping problems (47% and 16%);
- almost 1.8 times more overall fatigue (62% and 34%)
- over twice the likelihood of reporting stress (52% and 24%).

Most national contributions provide evidence of negative health outcomes associated with violence and harassment. In particular, evidence provided by public institutions, especially social security and OHS institutes, signals policymakers' increasing concern about the impacts of violence and harassment on health and labour market participation.

A poorer lower level of mental health is probably the most reported set of symptoms from the information provided by national correspondents (Table 4). A good example is provided by figures from the Spanish National Survey on Working Conditions (ENCT), where workers having experienced any violence or harassment report 2.6 times more stress, anxiety and nervousness than those who have not experienced them (38.2% and 14.6% respectively). Evidence is often provided in qualitative terms: 15 national contributions out of 29 report evidence that violence and harassment are associated with higher levels of stress and related symptoms, such as depression and anxiety. Surveys in seven countries report sleeping problems as being common among targets, while irritability and burnout are reported by surveys in five countries, especially in the health and social care and education sectors. Negative impacts on targets' personality reported by national contributions are low self-esteem, feeling guilty or ashamed and – in the

most severe cases – suicidal, especially among those lacking appropriate social and psychological support.

According to two 2010 studies carried out by Norwegian OHS institute STAMI, summarised in the Eurofound article [New studies on long-term effects of bullying](#), being bullied in the workplace increases employees' risk of developing mental problems later in life, especially among those who feel that they cannot defend themselves against the bully. The findings also show that employees who already have mental health problems are more likely to report that they are exposed to bullying.

The impact of third-party violence on health is dealt with mainly by studies addressing health, social care and welfare service. A [survey of employees in German employment services \(page in German\)](#) found that 5.9% of victims needed medical or psychological therapy after having experienced violence and harassment; 7.6% were still in treatment six months after the first wave of interviews.

Table 4: Impact of violence and harassment on workers' mental health

Impacts of ASB	Countries
Decreasing mental health in general	FI, SK
Increased stress levels	FI, BE, BG, CY, DK, IT, LT, MT, NO, SK, SE (post-traumatic stress)
Depression, bad mood, helplessness	DE, DK, ES, FI, FR, LT, MT, NO, SI, SK, UK
Anxiety	BG, DE, DK, EE, ES, FR, LT, NO, SE, SI, UK
Suicidal thoughts	BE, FR, SE, UK
Low self-esteem, feeling guilty, feeling shame	DE, ES, FR, LT, SE
Sleeping problems, insomnia, nightmares	BG, ES, FI, SE, SI, UK
Irritability, nervousness, hate	BG, FI, FR, LT, SI
Burnout	FR (staff in hospitals), LT (staff in education), BE, NL, UK,
Concentration, forgetting things	CZ, FI, FR

Source: National contributions

Psychosomatic symptoms are diverse: musculoskeletal disorders (including back pain), cardiovascular diseases and headaches are the most reported ones. Victims also report significantly more digestion problems, chronic fatigue, dizziness and weight gain in some countries. Victims also display a higher consumption of alcohol and drugs and take more medicines, especially anti-depressants (Table 5).

Table 5: Psychosomatic diseases among victims of violence and harassment

Symptoms	Countries
Headaches	BG, ES, SE, SI
Chronic fatigue	FR, SE
Digestion/stomach problems	BG, SE
Cardiovascular diseases	ES, FR, SI, UK
Musculoskeletal disorders, back pain	BG, FI, FR, IT, LT, SE, SI, UK
Dizziness	SE
High body mass index	SE
Psychosomatic disorders in general	DE, LT
Use of alcohol or drugs	BE, AT, FR
Use of medicines or anti-depressants	BE, DK, FR

Source: National contributions

The 2012 Finnish NWHS report outlines diverse impacts on victims' health by type of violence and harassment. Targets of sexual harassment, inappropriate behaviour by third parties and threats at work report higher figures than average for both work-related stress and mental health symptoms. Targets of bullying, inappropriate behaviour by third parties and physical violence report more musculoskeletal disorders. According to the Netherlands Working Conditions Survey, workers who have experienced internal violence report over three times more burnout symptoms than non-affected workers (30.7% and 9.9% respectively). These findings are confirmed by [a longitudinal study carried out on different waves of this survey](#). According to the study, general health is significantly worse for those who have experienced internal violence. In any case, both burnout symptoms and general health tend to improve after two years, although they are still significantly worse than for non-targets.

Two sets of results, from the Swedish Work Environment Authority and from a French study that includes a [secondary analysis of Sumer 2003 \(165 KB PDF, in French\)](#) provide the widest overview of the impact of violence and harassment on targets' health.

According to the Swedish study, victims report severe impacts on their psychological equilibrium, such as higher levels of anxiety, symptoms of post-traumatic stress, lower self-confidence and an increased frequency of suicidal thoughts, as well as impacts on their physical health, such as dizziness, problems with digestion, headaches, back pain, chronic fatigue, sleeping disorders and a higher body mass index (BMI). These symptoms can result in longer periods of absence from work.

The French study highlights that targets of hostile behaviours are more likely to have worse general health conditions than the average worker. They show higher rates of absenteeism and an increased consumption of both prescription drugs and alcohol. Furthermore, the report shows the possible negative impacts on harassed workers when they do not receive suitable support.

Poor motivation at work – greater job turnover

The negative impact of ASBs on motivation and job satisfaction is a consolidated issue. As outlined by studies quoted in 10 national contributions, individuals display less job satisfaction and lower involvement in both their tasks and organisational goals. The French study carried out by the INRS outlines that targets might become less willing to take initiative or make important decisions. They also report professional disinvestment and isolation as frequent consequences of persistent unaddressed harassment.

According to several Swedish studies summarised by Göransson et al (2011), targets tend to stop accepting reciprocal obligations from their superiors, especially in cases of sexual harassment, which reduces their willingness to make an effort, makes them careless with the company's resources and increases their chances of not performing their tasks correctly. Similarly, according to a Polish survey carried out by trade union Solidarity and the Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine, workers more affected by psychosocial stressors such as ASBs report lower job satisfaction. Targets also feel less emotionally involved in their work and display a 'survival'-type of involvement, feeling that there are no alternative jobs open to them. Finally, according to [a German survey of workers in employment services](#), those who have experienced violence and harassment, especially from third parties, perceive a lack of purpose in their work. Furthermore, [a report on bullying at work \(357 KB PDF, in Spanish\)](#) from the Spanish National Institute of Safety and Health in the Workplace (INSHT) outlines that harassment may result in demotivated and unsatisfied individuals who find the organisational climate hostile, which negatively affects communication and collaboration among workers. These reactions are consistent with a breach in trust, which leads to lower commitment on the part of the employees, in terms of the withdrawal of cooperation and higher absenteeism, and therefore lower productivity and performance or a decision to change their employer.

This argument in support of the psychological breach of contract is outlined by [a UK study on the effect of harassment on hospital nurses](#), which found that workers were less likely to experience job burnout or express an intention to leave if they believed that their employer had effective anti-harassment policies. Similarly, according to the Swedish overview by Göransson et al (2011), employees who received support from management were more likely to choose to stay than those who did not receive enough support.

Poor performance is therefore a direct consequence of a poor-quality work environment, distrust among colleagues (especially with respect to superiors) and the withdrawal of cooperation and initiative, which are activated to a different extent as a reaction to violent or harassing behaviour, while low motivation and lower concentration increase the probability of mistakes. Evidence about the link between violence and harassment and company performance is available only indirectly as derived from surveys addressed to employees by means of indicators such as job satisfaction, the meaningfulness of the job and motivation at work.

Higher levels of temporary absence and fear of returning to work

Victims of violence and harassment at work display behavioural changes at work. They are scared to go to work and try to avoid contact with their perpetrators and thus they report more sickness absence (reported by surveys in seven and nine national contributions respectively). Targets also display lower concentration levels at work and thus more work accidents (Table 6). In that context, higher levels of presenteeism of targets in Italy and Denmark demonstrate the target's attempt to show that he or she does not deserve to be excluded. These outcomes, reported by about half of the Member States, are consistent with the theoretical predictions summarised above.

As outlined by the Eurofound report [Physical and psychological violence at the workplace](#), workers exposed to bullying and harassment and – in particular – physical violence, report more and longer periods of absence from work due to work-related health problems.

Table 6: Behaviours of workers who have been subjected to violence and harassment

Behaviour	Countries
Absenteeism	BE, DE, DK, FR, IE, MT, NL, SE, UK
Presenteeism	DK, IT
Lack of concentration	CY, FI
Work accidents	BE, ES
Fear of work	CY, DE, EE, FR, MT, SK

Source: National contributions

A [Dutch longitudinal study based on the NWCS](#) investigates the impact of both internal and external violence one year and two years after the attack. Victims report more symptoms of burnout, higher levels of sickness absence, a greater intention to quit the current job, a reduced ability to work until retirement, lower job satisfaction and worse general health. The impacts of internal violence were wider, more severe and longer-lasting than the impacts of external violence.

Intentions to leave one's job

Thoughts of quitting a current job are recurrent among targets, although it may take some time before such thoughts are triggered. As an outcome of poorer health, their feelings of isolation and damage to their personality, targeted employees show lower productivity and often leave their jobs or plan to do so (as indicated by the previously cited articles from Eurofound on [Norwegian research into effects of bullying](#) and on the [greater harassment reported by younger Italian workers](#)). Findings of Dutch research indicate that, if subjected to violence and harassment from supervisors or colleagues, [targets are less willing to work until retirement age](#). However, unequivocal and statistically grounded evidence about early dropouts from the labour market is not yet available.

Several national contributions highlight that targets are more likely to express their intention to quit their current job:

- [in Germany's regional public administration](#);
- [in the health care sector in Sweden \(300 KB PDF, in Swedish\)](#);
- [in Norway](#);
- the Finnish NWHS 2012;
- the Italian Istat ad hoc module;
- a Polish survey carried out by trade union Solidarity and the Nofer Institute of Occupational Medicine.

The longitudinal studies based on the Dutch NWCS indicate that targets of internal violence show a 60% greater intention to quit than people who are not targets one year after the attack; more than two years after the event, the intention is still 41% greater. Targets of external violence show an intention to quit that is 21% greater than non-targets one year after the attack. Similarly, according to the previously cited [UK study on the effect of harassment on hospital nurses](#), nurses

at the NHS who had experienced harassment were between two and four times more likely to express an intention to leave their job than those that had not.

A report by the Swedish Work Environment Authority points out that victims of bullying and harassment leave their jobs more frequently than on average, and that those who leave their jobs due to bullying or harassment also report higher levels of anxiety and depression than those who remain at their workplace. This might suggest that quitting the job actually increases negative feelings (Göransson et al, 2011, p. 37).

According to the Italian [Istat ad hoc survey \(160 KB PDF, in Italian\)](#), targets experience job loss more often than perpetrators:

- 16% of targets resigned (21.5% in the case of task deprivation);
- 5.2% were fired;
- 2.2% did not get their labour contract renewed;
- 5.3% were transferred to another sector;
- 6.8% reported that the perpetrators had been transferred or fired.

Women resigned more than twice as often as men (22.4% and 10.9% respectively).

Two Danish studies in the elder care sector found that violence and harassment predict both dropouts two years later (Hogh et al, 2012) and an increase in the risk of higher staff turnover (Clausen et al, 2012). These findings were confirmed by [a study among offshore oil workers in Norway](#), where workers who had been bullied six months earlier reported both a greater feeling of job insecurity and a greater intention to leave.

The evidence reported by both national contributions and academic reviews shows a clear connection between the experience of violence and harassment and the intention to quit and actually quitting a job. This is consistent with the Leyman hypothesis formulated above. Differences at national level may emerge as a consequence of both legal frameworks and work-related stereotypes. Furthermore, most surveys investigating violence and harassment address people in employment, while people who have lost their jobs are often ignored. An interesting piece of information about people who have lost their job is provided by the Czech survey STAM/MARK: unemployed people in 2011 and people on parental and maternity leave in 2013 show the highest levels of experience of violence and harassment.

The cost of violence and harassment

It is difficult to estimate the actual costs of violence and harassment both for companies and national economies due to the extent of under-reporting and because of the difficulties in ascertaining that violence and harassment were the actual driving causes for work incapacity. [A 2008 study on the costs of workplace bullying](#) is the most complete exercise using an inductive approach. By considering only those costs associated with absenteeism, turnover and productivity loss, the authors estimated a loss of GBP 17.65 billion (€22 billion as at 18 December 2014) to the UK economy, equating to a loss of 1.5% of GDP.

Public measures: Legislation and prevention policies

Mapping Member States' policies that address violence and harassment at work is complex, as the issues range from the establishment of a suitable legal framework, including a definition, to forms of protection and the design of prevention policies.

Prevention policies are set along three main criteria:

- the inclusion of a specific role for the employer in preventing psychosocial risks in general – by the presence of a legislative framework, by promoting preventive measures and by raising awareness among workers and employers;
- the scope of intervention and their content;
- the actors that are actively contributing to both their establishment and implementation – governmental institutions, social partners and NGOs, who may act unilaterally or in bipartite or tripartite social dialogue.

A combined analysis of the legal framework and prevention policies, coordinated between governmental institutions and social partners, allows several strategic patterns to be identified. An [analysis of organisational and psychosocial risks in labour law](#) outlines the importance of the legal framework. A lack of specific legislation addressing violence and harassment at work negatively affects claimants' chances of success, both in court and when applying for work incapacity, because of the difficulties in proving them. Furthermore, that same lack of specific legislation might reduce the chances of prevention policies being implemented effectively. National laws on health and safety, labour laws and criminal codes often provide only general provisions to protect psychological health and human dignity without suggesting detailed interventions at workplaces to prevent and tackle violence and harassment. Furthermore, as pointed out by Lerouge (2013), case law has an important role at national level when the legal framework is imprecise, as it provides judges' interpretations of the law and the adaptation of the general law to each specific case.

This section first maps the national prevention strategies in tackling violence and harassment on the basis of their main regulatory characteristics and the configuration of national governance. It then describes the contribution of social dialogue to policy design and implementation, especially by means of social dialogue at EU, national and company levels, with a specific review of guidelines and actions both at company and sectoral level.

Recent changes in general and workplace legislation

Legislative changes since 2008 that address violence and harassments can be grouped according to their scope:

- changes in the general legislation in France, Greece and Italy;
- changes in workplace legislation in Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, Slovenia, Spain and the UK;
- changes affecting both general and workplace legislation in Finland and Norway.

These changes have taken place in criminal, discrimination, labour or OHS law, depending on the country's approach to legislating on violence and harassment. Most countries include violence and harassment in criminal-, discrimination- or equal treatment-related legislation (for example, Germany); some include it in the employment law (France); others tackle the problem through specific OHS legislation (Belgium). Anti-discrimination legislation has become more relevant, addressing violence and harassment based on the EU equal treatment directives. The coverage of the topic differs from country to country. Some countries make very generic references, while others include specific provisions on preventive measures and employers' responsibilities.

Increasingly, in some countries OHS legislation mentions psychosocial risks as part of the generic provisions on risks assessment (for example, the Netherlands).

In terms of changes in the legislation addressing violence and harassment from a general perspective (not only the workplace), a broader definition of sexual harassment was introduced in France in 2010. [Greek law 3896/2010 reversed the burden of proof](#) from the victim to the alleged perpetrator. [Italian law 38/2009 introduced the crime of stalking](#) (recurring and obsessive bullying and harassment), while [law 119/2013 in Italy addressed the murders of women](#), often as the end point in a case of stalking. The impact of this Italian legislation on workplaces is still unclear: in 2005 [Italian courts invalidated the 2003 guidelines of the national work accident insurance scheme](#) (Inail), which aimed to prevent psychosocial risks.

Turning to legislative changes addressing the workplace in the various types of legislation, incremental revisions can be distinguished from in-depth revisions. In terms of incremental revisions, a 2013 amendment to the **Bulgarian** criminal code that criminalises physical assaults to physicians and teachers can be included. However, the amendment does not introduce any provision for legal reparations. Croatia, Ireland and Spain introduced a definition of harassment at work. For example, the 2012 **Irish** order integrates a definition of sexual harassment and harassment in the workplace with guidelines on prevention actions to ensure that adequate procedures are readily available to deal with the problem and to prevent its recurrence without imposing any legal obligation. Finally, after a new law on the organisation of working environment efforts was passed in **Denmark** in 2010, the 2011 executive order states that ‘work must be conducted in such a manner that it ensures that the work does not cause a risk for mental or physical health impairment due to mobbing, including sexual harassment’, thus introducing a specific reference to violence and harassment at work.

In **Slovenia**, the revision has been more in depth. The 2008 amendment to the Criminal Code regulates mobbing at the workplace: sexual harassment, psychological violence, bullying or unequal treatment, which causes humiliation or fear in another person, are punishable by up to two years’ imprisonment. The 2011 law on health and safety at work more specifically stipulates the employer’s responsibility for the protection of and provision for employees’ dignity at work. Finally, the 2013 amendment of the Employment Relationships Act prohibits violence and harassment at work by providing legal definitions.

In the **UK**, the 2010 extension of the Equality Act to third-party aggression introduced a substantive change in the approach by making the employer liable for harassment by a third party if it had occurred on two or more previous occasions and if the employer was aware of the behaviour and had not taken reasonable steps to prevent it from happening again. The Act was repealed in 2013.

Finally, new legislation came into force in **Belgium** in September 2014 that placed violence and harassment in the more general framework of psychosocial risks. Employers have to recognise violence and harassment just like any other risk to employees’ health. The new legislative framework introduces a counsellor for psychosocial risks, mandates a five-day compulsory training for confidence counsellors and extends the definition of ‘moral harassment’. Workers reporting any abusive attack benefit from shorter response times by the prevention counsellor, who has to carry out an inspection unless the employer takes suitable measures, offers better protection against retaliation and sets the right to compensation.

Finland and **Norway** combine legislative changes both at general and at workplace level. In Finland, the right to compensation is extended to third parties’ aggressions, thus complementing the special ‘harassment at work’ section of the 2002 Finnish Occupational Safety and Health Act, which obliges the employer to take action after becoming aware of harassment or other inappropriate behaviour at the workplace.

Public prevention policies, actors and activities in Europe

In this section, countries are classified according to their national legislation framework related to violence and harassment and actors involved in policy development. An overall assessment of the policy development in the countries shows that most of the countries lack long-term, systematic prevention policies with a high level of coordination between governments and social partners.

As pointed out by Lerouge (2013), national legislation regulates these behaviours consistently with their general and OHS framework and regulatory traditions. Member States can be put into three main groups:

- countries without any legal definitions of violence and harassment at work but with a strong focus on prevention in the work environment (the Scandinavian countries, Estonia and the Netherlands);
- countries with at least some legal definitions of violence and harassment at work (Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain), while prevention policies mainly rely on general OHS provisions, except for Ireland and Belgium;
- countries that do not rely on any specific legal definitions or violence and harassment at work provided by the general legislation (all other countries) and rely on general OHS provisions for prevention policies instead.

Box 2 Sweden: Harassment equals the violation of a person's dignity

In Sweden, harassment is defined in general legislation. For an act to be considered as harassment, it needs to violate a person's dignity. This is the most extensive definition found among all Member States.

The 1993 Swedish Work Environment Regulation and the Discrimination Act (2008:567) states that all employers concerned shall:

- have a policy where the employer states that all harassment relating to – among other things – gender, ethnicity, religion is not tolerated in the workplace;
- have an action plan that contains a definition of harassment and examples of harassing behaviour. The plan should also clearly state what is expected from the employer if harassment does occur. It should also contain information on who the target should turn to, whose responsibility it is that the event is investigated and what the possible consequences for a person who harasses a coworker are;
- train managers on rules and regulations relating to harassment and on how to prevent harassment.

The Swedish Work Environment Authority (WEA) takes issues related to violence and harassment and working conditions seriously and continuously publishes reports related to the area. In 2012, the WEA performed over 400 inspections on the topic of psychosocial risk assessments.

If OHS or work environment legislation alone is considered, governmental intervention at the workplace moves along three main lines.

The prevention of psychosocial risks in general: This is done by considering violence and harassment among the possible causes generating stress. This is a default option unless national legislation and OHS authorities address specific measures (as in Austria, Germany, Luxembourg and the UK as well as all the southern and eastern countries).

The promotion of non-binding measures encouraging employers' actions: An example of this is the Irish code of conduct set by the Health and Safety Authority (HSA), which acts as a non-binding recommendation.

A legal obligation on the employer to intervene (beyond general risk prevention): The 2010 Danish Work Environment Act states that ‘work must be conducted in such a manner that it ensures that the work does not cause a risk for mental or physical health impairment due to mobbing, including sexual harassment’. Such an obligation is complemented by a strong role of national OHS agencies in terms of monitoring, advice, issuing guidelines and recommendations, and inspective powers, thus ensuring their implementation. It is reported in the Scandinavian countries, Belgium, France and the Netherlands. National working environment agencies in these countries monitor and inspect prevention by using the definitions used by researchers.

The development of partnerships among social actors (public institutions, social partners and civil society organisations) is part of effective prevention strategy implementation. Extensive partnerships are part of a deliberative process aimed at constructing a shared understanding of abusive behaviours, its causes and consequences. The density of the network of partnerships is an important indicator for implementing policy measures successfully.

Five national-level patterns of governance for prevention policy can be identified (Table 7).

Decentralised activities: Initiatives are carried out by social partners (mainly at company level) by means of social dialogue and/or unilaterally. This is the case for Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Latvia and Slovakia. NGOs play an important role in these countries by keeping social partners and governments focused on the issue through promoting initiatives and supplying resources for training and awareness-raising.

Weakly coordinated prevention policies: The coordinating actor could be a public institution, either at national (Austria, Cyprus, Hungary) or local level (Italy), or social partners at inter-sectoral level, as in Luxembourg. In Luxembourg, the association [Mobbing Asbl \(page in French\)](#) plays a pivotal role in spreading information about violence and harassment and guidelines supporting social partners’ action. In Poland, a social partner joint group established an anti-mobbing procedure. It is worth noting that in Austria and Italy, the public institutions mainly act by promoting good practices at company level.

Public initiatives only: Government bodies, usually labour inspectorates, issue guidelines in order to tackle violence and harassment. This is the case for Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, Portugal and Romania.

Government initiatives integrated and complemented by the social partners: These can take the form of bipartite prevention initiatives at inter-sectoral level (Belgium, Denmark, France and the Netherlands), by social dialogue in some sectors (Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) or unilateral actions by social partners (Ireland).

Coordinated governmental initiatives with social partners: (These may sometimes involve other civil society organisations). This is the case for the United Kingdom, as summarised by the [Dignity at Work Partnership, the world’s largest anti-bullying project](#), and the joint initiatives of the HSE, the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) and social partners, summarised in [Preventing workplace harassment and violence \(552 KB PDF\)](#). In Finland and Norway, NGOs are also involved in taking joint actions by establishing ‘tripartite plus’ partnerships (Baccaro, 2001), which reinforces their systematic efforts in tackling violence and harassment. In Germany, there is a high level of coordination between the government and social partners because of the way its institutions operate. Social security institutions issuing guidelines are a bipartite option, while the Joint Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Strategy ([GDA, 34.3 KB PDF](#)) is jointly supported by the German government, the federal states and accident insurance institutions, mostly established on a bipartite basis.

Table 7 combines general or specific obligations to prevent violence and harassment at work and the way actors contribute to the design and implementation of prevention policies.

Table 7: Policies grouped by coordination of actors and employer obligation

	General obligation	Specific obligation
Decentralised	BG, CZ, LV, SK, HR	
Weak coordination	AT, CY, HU, IT, LU, PL	
Only public actors	EE, EL, LT, PT, RO	
Government–social partners integration	DE, ES, MT, SI	BE, DK, FR, NL, SE
Government and tripartite actors	UK*	FI, NO, UK*

Notes: *Only 2010–2013. Ireland is not included in this table because it did not fit under either a specific or general obligation.

Source: National contributions, [EU-OSHA report, Workplace violence and harassment: A European picture](#), Lerouge (2013)

In countries where coordination among actors is weak, legislation and related obligations tend to be general. In contrast, in countries where the legislative framework addresses violence and harassment specifically, employers have a clear obligation to implement preventative measures in relation to violence and harassment. Civil society organisations often play an important role in designing a continuum of intervention in this context. Within the group where governmental action is complemented by bipartite social partner activities, there may be just a general employer duty on OHS, a specific duty addressing violence and harassment as part of the work environment or psychosocial risk prevention, or just a public recommendation-based approach, as in Ireland. Finally, the UK displays a specific pattern after the 2010 Equality Act, which imposed a specific duty on the employer; however, this was repealed in 2013 with the national simplification strategy on OHS.

Countries can be grouped into three main categories (Table 8):

Piecemeal prevention activities: These are associated with countries where these actions are implemented at a decentralised level and where prevention policies address only sexual harassment (such as Cyprus and Greece).

Non-systematic prevention policies: National-level coordination is established but there is no obligation to have preventative actions addressing violence and harassment specifically at workplace level or to frame them explicitly within psychosocial risks. Policies mainly address secondary prevention and information dissemination. This group is diverse, ranging from Member States where prevention policies are at an early stage, such as Lithuania and Poland, to countries where they are quite consolidated, as in Ireland and the UK.

Long-term systematic prevention policies: These can be found when legal obligations are specifically focused on violence and harassment and combined with broad-spectrum activities addressing both primary and secondary prevention in an integrated form (such as Belgium, the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries. Primary-level interventions are proactive by nature and aim to prevent exposure to different occupational hazards by reducing the risks. In relation to harassment, the aim of primary-level intervention is to minimise the risks of this. Secondary-level interventions aim to modify an individual's response to harmful work environment factors. In the case of harassment, this might also mean slowing down the progression and escalation of the harassment situation and preventing the ill-health of individuals or the work unit from becoming more serious. Finally, tertiary-level interventions are reactive in nature and aim to reduce or minimise the negative health effects associated with chronic exposure to psychosocial risks ([Eurofound, 2014](#)).

Table 8: Type of public prevention policies

Type of policies	Countries
Piecemeal prevention (including early-stage strategies)	BG, CY, CZ, EL, HR, LV, RO
Non-systematic prevention policies	AT, DE, EE, ES, FR, HU, IT, LT, MT, PL, PT, SI, SK
Long-term systematic prevention policies	BE, DK, FI, IE, NL, NO, SE

Source: National contributions

Member States with long-term systematic prevention policies use a wide range of interventions at multiple levels with the aim of addressing each specific problem related to violence and harassment at work by providing specific guidelines and orientations for prevention.

In Denmark, a country with a long-term systematic approach, the Working Environment Authority (WEA) has developed [guidelines on mobbing and harassment 2012 \(in Danish\)](#). The guidelines cover mobbing and sexual harassment between employees and between employees and managers. They describe how to prevent mobbing and harassment – for example, by using conflict resolution and having clear rules for acceptable behaviour at work. Finally, the guidelines also explain what to do if mobbing and sexual harassment occurs. Violence is considered to be a work accident and the [WEA guidelines on work-related violence 2011 \(in Danish\)](#) cover physical and mental violence initiated by clients or customers (not between employees or managers). The guidelines define the concept of work-related violence, list occupations characterised by a high risk of work-related violence, and outline health-related reactions to violence and how companies might prevent and follow up on episodes of violence. WEA guidelines are based on regulations, but are not binding. Also in Denmark, the government launched prevention packages targeting sectors with a high risk of work impairment due to violence and harassment. In 2013 the Fund for a Better Working Environment and Labour Market Retention launched [a new package to prevent violence in elder care and residential institutions \(in Danish\)](#). Companies participating in the package will get advice from a consultant and must follow a plan to prevent violence.

In 2008, France – an example of a country with a non-systematic policy approach – amended the labour code to introduce a specific legal duty on the employer to prevent moral harassment. Public prevention policies addressing ASBs are mainly focused on providing information, such as the [INRS report on the consequences of harassment or violence at work \(in French\)](#) mentioned above for the benefit of both employers and Committee for Hygiene, Safety and Working Conditions (CHSCTs), and on violence against women, as defined by [the national plan 2011–2013 \(in French\)](#). There is no evidence of a consolidated network that includes social partners in promoting primary prevention at workplaces. Rather, as Lerouge (2013) points out, the introduction of legal definitions increased the recourse to courts.

In the Czech Republic, an example of a country using piecemeal interventions, the [Work and Relations NGO \(in Czech\)](#) focuses on mobbing, bullying, whistle-blowing and bossing. In order to spread information on the topic, the NGO carries out video interviews with people who experienced mobbing at work and puts them online. Similarly, the [online consultancy Bullying at Work – Mobbing-Free Company \(in Czech\)](#) has been established both for victims or witnesses of bullying and for managers who would like to prevent bullying in their establishments. The association provides guidance, organises lectures and carries out case studies in companies. Social partners in the health service sector jointly implemented a project between 2010 and 2012, funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), aimed at preventing violence at workplaces in health

and social services through social dialogue. There has been a follow-up project since 2012 on [the prevention of violence by third parties in Prague \(in Czech\)](#), supported by Norway Grants and realised by the Union of Employers' Associations of the Czech Republic ([Uzs](#)) together with the Trade Union of Health and Social Care ([OSZSP](#)) and Norwegian partners in organisations providing health and social care.

Social partner initiatives

As discussed above, the 2007 autonomous [framework agreement on harassment and violence at work](#) was signed by the European social partners ETUC/CES, BUSINESSEUROPE, UEAPME and CEEP. It marked a turning point for both social partners' actions and public prevention policies at national level in some countries. As explained in the 2011 [implementation report of the framework agreement \(300 KB PDF\)](#) compiled by the social partners, the agreement fits into a larger framework of existing national and EU legislation (for example, directives on non-discrimination and health and safety at work). In many countries, implementing measures have focused on assessing and in some cases fine-tuning existing regulations in line with the framework agreement. It has thus proven useful among Member States by increasing awareness about harassment and violence and by initiating actions in a number of sectors and countries.

In 2010, EU-level employer and trade union organisations signed [multi-sectoral guidelines to help tackle third-party violence and harassment at work](#). The guidelines set out the practical steps that can be taken by employers, workers and their representatives or trade unions to reduce, prevent and mitigate problems, including new forms of violence and harassment, such as cyberbullying.

At sectoral level in July 2013, the European social partners in the maritime sector – the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and the European Community Shipowners' Associations (ECSA) – launched a [project](#) aimed at eradicating harassment and bullying practices in the workplace in the maritime industry. First, they updated their training toolkit, including guidelines, a video and an associated workbook. The [video on saying 'No' to harassment and bullying](#) includes new types of violence and harassment, like cyberbullying, while the guidelines provide information on how to identify incidents of harassment and bullying and how to implement formal and informal processes of resolution of the case. The project also includes dissemination activities and the establishment of a 24/7 helpline.

At national level, social partners' contributions can take various forms – in regulatory terms, by providing actual contributions through social dialogue and by influencing government policies, or by taking a wide range of actions. Guidelines and campaigns are the most commonly used tools, which aim to improve awareness and skills on these issues. Pilot interventions at sectoral level are also taking place. In some cases, the social partners develop support activities for workers and create networks at national level. These activities can be grouped as in Table 9 by combining regulatory patterns and the level of intervention.

Table 9: Social partners' actions by level of activities and regulatory pattern

Regulatory pattern Level	Tripartite (social partners and governments)	Bipartite (social partners)	Employers	Trade unions
Cross-sectoral	FI, NO, UK	AT, BE, DK, FR, LV, PL	IE	IE, IT, NO
Sectoral		AT, BG, CY, CZ, ES, LU, SE		BG, FI, NL, SE, SI

Source: National contributions

Recent tripartite activities

Between 2010 and 2011 in **Finland**, a wide network of social partners and the government organised a countrywide training tour and published a leaflet called [Good behaviour preferred – inappropriate behaviour unacceptable \(639 KB PDF\)](#).

[The UK Dignity at Work Partnership](#), promoted by trade union UNITE with the financial support of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), includes representatives from the HSE, ACAS, TUC and BERR. The partnership encourages employee representatives and employers to build cultures in which respect for individuals is regarded as an essential part of the conduct of all those who work in the organisation. It provides advice and guidance for anyone suffering from workplace bullying or harassment and develops an employers' code of conduct by bringing all parties together.

Recent bipartite, national and sector-level activities

As a consequence of the European framework agreement, social partners in **France** concluded a [national agreement on harassment at work \(173 KB PDF, in French\)](#) in March 2010, which was extended by the Ministry of Labour in July of the same year. It thus applies to all companies in France. Unions and employers agreed that employers have to communicate to their workforce that harassment and violence at work will not be tolerated. Employers must also develop a set of appropriate prevention measures. These measures include an appropriate follow-up on harassment claims, respecting confidentiality, taking the views and opinions of all parties concerned into account, sanctions against false accusations, the possibility of obtaining third-party opinions from outside the workplace and access to mediation. The employer is responsible for handling claims and monitoring an appropriate response and is asked to consult with its workforce or their representatives.

In 2012, the [Belgian National Employment Council evaluated legislation on preventing violence and harassment \(184 KB PDF, in French\)](#). The social partners recommended a concrete, attainable policy based on existing instruments. They underlined the importance of prevention by hiring a prevention advisor and the importance of informal deliberation through a confidential counsellor for cases of harassment and mobbing at work. Concrete procedures are not only needed in case of complaints, but also in concrete preventative (informal) actions. People must become conscious of violence and harassment, recognise the problem and flag an incident at an early stage.

In **Poland**, social partners launched a new phase of negotiations concerning stress at work by establishing a permanent bipartite committee in 2013. One of the important outcomes achieved by the team was the development of a model of an anti-mobbing procedure that employers and trade unions are advised to apply at company level.

In **Luxembourg**, social partners in the banking sector signed an agreement on moral harassment in September 2013, transposing the 2009 cross-industry collective agreement. It defines moral harassment, makes rules for prevention and outlines employers' duty of prevention by requiring them to adopt a declaration that moral harassment will not be tolerated in the enterprise and by making them introduce measures to raise employee awareness, implement training on prevention and protection and appoint a 'discussion partner' with the authority to deal with the issue. Finally, employers must also define the ['means and procedures made available to the victim'](#) within reference standards set out in the agreement and penalties may be imposed on the perpetrator of acts of moral harassment. The agreement also created a counselling body, the Association for Health at Work in the Financial Sector (ASTF), which gives free advice anonymously to the victims with the support of a psychologist (see also the [Eurofound article on social partners'](#)

[involvement in pension system reform](#)). However, initiatives at sectoral level are more often developed in the health and care and transport sectors.

In **Bulgaria**, the 2012–2014 collective agreement in the transport sector includes a special chapter on ‘Protection against violence at the workplace and gender equality’, which foresees provisions for joint actions by employers and trade unions to prevent violence and harassment within a zero-tolerance approach, complemented by joint actions tackling violence and harassment against women working on the Sofia urban transport system.

Recent guidelines, campaigns and support by social partners

In 2010 the **Austrian** social partner organisations published a joint brochure, *Harassment and violence at the workplace: Instruments for prevention*, which is a contribution to the implementation of the 2007 EU framework agreement. The [network of employer organisations and trade unions in the health and social services sector, MOBnet](#), offers information on methods for prevention and intervention against workplace bullying and harassment on a dedicated website and intends to take actions against bullying and harassment at the workplace.

In **Ireland**, the Irish Business and Employers’ Confederation (IBEC) advises its members on the issue of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace through an employment law guideline, which was updated in 2013. This guideline addresses the following:

- the identification of the legal position and definitions of bullying, harassment and sexual harassment;
- how to recognise bullying and harassing behaviour;
- the effects of bullying and harassment on the individual and organisation;
- codes of practice on workplace bullying, harassment and sexual harassment.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) formed an advisory commission on stress, bullying and violence at work in 2010 in order to:

- assess the effectiveness of prevention measures and the current legal framework, risk assessment and codes of practice on workplace bullying, stress and violence;
- identify any weaknesses in workplace procedures;
- recommend improvements to the legal framework, codes of practice and dispute resolution procedures;
- identify specific measures that unions can take to intervene or respond to incidences of bullying and violence in the workplace and in respect of workplace stress.

In **Spain** in 2011, the General Union of Workers ([UGT](#)), together with experts on this issue, elaborated Prevention Notes 891 and 892 for the National Institute of Safety and Hygiene at Work ([INSHT](#)), which present a procedure for resolving psychological and physical violence conflicts at the workplace internally and independently. The UGT has offered specific training courses on this process.

In **Norway**, the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) has prepared an information brochure about bullying and harassment entitled *What can employee representatives do?*.

In Sweden, initiatives amongst social partners since 2010 have had different focuses. Many unions have focused more on bullying or harassment between colleagues or between employees and managers than on threats and violence. One example is *A handbook in how to handle ASB: Bullied, harassed, ignored – what should you do?*, published by the Public Employees’ Negotiation Council ([OFR](#)). Another example is the handbook *When someone is being bullied at work*, published by the Swedish Trade Union Confederation.

In Denmark, the [Danish Sectoral Bipartite Work Environment Council \(in Danish\)](#) continuously produces and distributes materials on working environment issues, including violence and harassment. These initiatives include workplace meetings on violence and different publications on mobbing and other types of violence and harassment.

Actions in the transport and health sectors

It seems that activities that try to prevent and tackle violence and harassment are concentrated in sectors where interpersonal relations play an important role for the company, both in terms of relationships among workers and those with customers and clients. As such, many examples can be found in the transport and health sectors.

In the transport sector, the **Austrian** trade union Vida (covering transport, social, personal and private services) launched the project ‘Together against violence at the workplace’. It addresses all forms of violence and harassment and aims to raise awareness of the issue and illustrate the everyday strain employees suffer from. It includes a survey (AT1 in Table A.1 in Annex 1) and a dedicated website with [information on the legal situation of companies, and examples of best practice and of the personal experiences of employees and works councils \(in German\)](#).

In **Spain**, the General Union of Workers ([UGT](#)) and the Trade Union Confederation of Workers’ Commissions ([CCOO](#)), together with the federation of passenger transport companies ([Asintra](#)) and the national business federation of bus transport, ([Fenebús](#)), in 2010 published a [protocol for preventing violence at work among Spanish bus drivers \(235 KB PDF, in Spanish\)](#).

In the **Czech Republic’s** health sector, [a joint project between the social partners \(202 KB PDF, in Czech\)](#) was promoted with the support of the European Social fund. Between 2010 and 2012, it aimed to prevent violence at workplaces in the sector through social dialogue. It also includes a survey (CZ2 in Table A.1 in Annex 1). Since 2012 the project has been followed by the [Prevention of violence by third parties in Prague project \(in Czech\)](#), supported by Norway Grants and realised by the Union of Employer Associations of the Czech Republic ([UZS](#)) together with the Union of Health and Social Care ([OSZSP](#)) and Norwegian partners in health and social care.

In the health sector, trade unions also launched unilateral projects in Bulgaria, Finland, the Netherlands and Slovenia. In **Slovenia**, a partnership between the Healthcare Trade Union, the SOS Association and the Chamber of Nursing and Midwifery Services of Slovenia prepared a joint project, ‘Advisory phone for people with experience of violence at the workplace’, which provides support and information to people who have been victims of any kind of harassment or violence at work or would like to stop the violence and take action. The Association of Free Trade Unions also carried out a project, [Workers’ safety representatives’ training for better occupational health of workers \(98.2 KB PDF, in Slovenian\)](#), cofinanced by the Health Insurance Institute of Slovenia, which started in 2013 and ended in November 2014. The project aimed to enhance workers’ occupational health and to increase the number of workers with an elected worker safety representative. The trade union has already established an e-network of workers’ safety representatives and will provide them with professional training.

According to [an international 2013 seminar on workplace bullying and harassment \(2.51 MB PDF\)](#), training addressed to both management and health and safety representatives and the implementation of anti-bullying policies and guidelines seem to be the strategies that are used most often in European workplaces to tackle workplace bullying. However, few studies have examined the effectiveness of these interventions. Some evidence has been found for a [reduction in bullying when policies are used as part of a broader zero-tolerance approach](#), with, for example, compulsory training for all personnel. It has also been suggested that a well-designed and coordinated anti-bullying policy can work effectively, but conversely, a policy that is designed by one department in isolation from users and other service providers can have no impact at all (Rayner and Lewis, 2011).

Procedures and measures in the workplace

In this section, findings about the procedures in place in companies to tackle violence and harassment are presented, drawing from the ESENER survey developed by EU-OSHA. An attempt to link them to national policy context is then carried out.

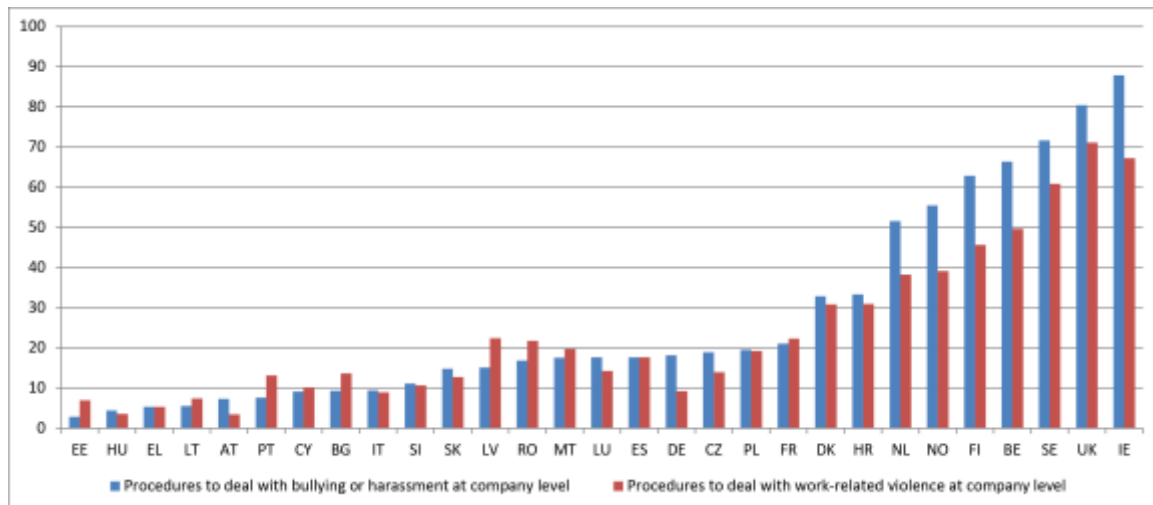
The EU-OSHA ESENER survey, launched in 2009, complements the Eurofound EWCS in providing a comparative framework on prevention policies at company level among employers with more than 10 employees – namely, the presence of a confidential counsellor, as foreseen by the 2007 framework agreement, and the establishment of procedures for conflict resolution and for dealing with third-party violence, bullying and harassment.

The survey found that, at company level, there is a positive relationship between the presence of procedures and company size, with the highest presence in the biggest companies, except in Bulgaria (both bullying/harassment and violence), Lithuania (bullying and harassment) and Poland (violence).

It also found that in the EU27, 30% of establishments had procedures in place to deal with bullying and harassment at work. Procedures were most common in companies in the Scandinavian countries and Belgium and less observed in the southern and eastern countries as well as in some continental countries, such as Austria and Germany. Procedures to deal with violence are less widespread than procedures dealing with bullying and harassment at the workplace.

Procedures to cope with bullying and harassment are more widespread in the public sector than in the private sector. This is observed both in countries with a good proportion of companies with procedures and in those countries with a low prevalence of procedures in companies. If the private sector is examined, procedures are usually more frequent in the service sectors than in manufacturing.

Figure 9: Proportion of companies with procedures to deal with bullying/harassment and work-related violence (%)



Source: ESENER 2009

When the relationship between legislative measures and public policies is analysed with the ESENER findings, it transpires that all countries with a long-term strategy have a high rate of companies with procedures to deal with work-related violence and bullying. This is true for Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, while Denmark is just above the EU average because of the relatively high number of small and micro firms. Thus, long-term and systematic policies tend to increase the probability that procedures are implemented at company level.

Table 10: Procedures in companies to combat violence and harassment by type of coordination of national prevention policies

	Below EU average	Above EU average
Early stage activities	BG, CY, CZ, EL, LV, RO	HR
Non-systematic policies	AT, DE, FR, EE, ES, HU, IT, LT, MT, PL, PT, SI, SK	BE, UK
Long-term, systematic policies		DK, FI, IE, NL, NO, SE

Source: National contributions, ESENER 2009

According to the ESENER, confidential counselling for employees is present in 25% of all establishments in the EU and a conflict resolution procedure has been established in 28% of cases. They are both relevant, as they implement a suggestion from the 2007 framework agreement and pave the way for a management alternative to legal action, where the targets' chances of success are quite low. In general, both are more widespread as company size increases, except in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic for conflict resolution procedures and in Malta, Poland, Portugal and Romania for both.

There is a lot of variability among EU countries, which can be better highlighted by grouping countries according to their public prevention policies (Table 11).

Table 11: Conflict resolution and confidential counsellors at the workplace, by type of national prevention policies

	Confidential counsellors		Conflict resolution procedures	
	Below EU average	Above EU average	Below EU average	Above EU average
Piecemeal activities	EL, HR	BG, CY, LV, RO	CZ, EL, HR, LV	BG, CY, RO
Non-systematic policies	EE, ES, HU, IT, SI, SK	AT, DE, FR, LT, MT, PL, PT, UK	AT, EE, ES, DE, FR, HU, IT, LT, MT, PL, PT, SI, SK	UK
Long-term, systematic policies		BE, DK, FI, IE, NL, NO, SE	DK, NL, NO	BE, FI, IE, SE

Source: National contributions, ESENER 2009

Among the countries with prevention strategies that are still at an early stage, Bulgaria, Cyprus and Romania show figures that are above the EU average for both confidential counselling and a conflict resolution procedure, thus highlighting a cluster of employers that are giving attention to secondary prevention issues on violence and harassment. Countries with long-term, systematic prevention policies display some differences, either due to the extent of micro firms (as in Denmark) or the establishment of functionally equivalent alternatives, such as workers' representatives, which are widespread in small and micro companies, as outlined by the Eurofound report [Social dialogue in micro and small companies](#). The low presence of conflict resolution procedures in the Netherlands is consistent with national expert findings, outlining the relatively limited activism of social partners at company level, while the presence of workers' representatives is around the EU average.

Impact of awareness and sociocultural characteristics

The public discussion and political debate surrounding a topic can indicate the level of awareness of it. Discussion and debate also have the potential to raise awareness about a specific subject. Interestingly, the issue of harassment and violence is not part of the main public discussions or political debates in most Member States, except for the Scandinavian countries, France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Awareness also impacts on the level of reporting violence and harassment. The more information people have about the topic and its causes and consequences, the more likely it is that people will report an incident as violent or harassing behaviour. Strong sociocultural attitudes, stereotypes and pressures can impact on the level of violence and harassment both positively and negatively. For instance, condemning violent behaviours and supporting targets regardless of their social, political, economic and cultural background can lead to higher levels of reporting. On the other hand, tolerating and covering up violent behaviour can lead to lower levels of reporting for multiple reasons, as outlined below.

Awareness of and level of violence and harassment

Awareness of the causes and consequences of violence and harassment at work varies greatly among Member States. Awareness is generally low in southern and eastern European countries and tends to increase in Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and the UK. The criteria used for classifying awareness as high or low is based on:

- information and knowledge about the problem in society (for example, academic reviews, media);
- the level of general sociocultural tolerance;
- the extent of discussions and policies among both social partners and governments, reflected in campaigns, social partner agreements and initiatives, multistakeholder actions and legislation (see the section on public measures).

Lack of information and limited knowledge about the phenomenon are the most reported reasons for low levels of awareness in southern European countries such as Cyprus, Malta and Portugal and eastern European countries like Estonia, Hungary and Lithuania. But in these countries, as shown in Bulgaria, employees and management have started to think about the causes and consequences and to act, especially in cases of extreme physical assaults and injuries and in professions that are the most exposed to third parties, such as health, public transport, and financial and retail services. Employees in these countries display limited awareness, or none, about the employer's responsibility to prevent and tackle violence and harassment.

Lack of societal sanctions towards abusive behaviours is probably the most widespread indication of a lack of societal awareness. Many work psychologists (see Giorgi, 2008) consider tolerance or indifference to be key factors. In some countries, this is associated with the feeling that such behaviours are just part of the job (especially from third parties in care activities) or of the work environment, especially in the Member States that have transitioned towards capitalism, such as Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Tolerance and indifference are mostly reported in some southern countries (Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal) and in some eastern countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovenia). Such tolerance is sometimes based on prejudices and stereotypes, as reported by contributions from Cyprus, Estonia and Lithuania. A serious outcome of this lack of sanctions against perpetrators is the widespread reporting among Member States of re-victimisation affecting attacked workers, mostly concentrated in some southern and eastern Member States (Italy, Malta and Portugal; and Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia and Slovakia).

On the other hand, tolerance towards these behaviours is very low in Finland and Sweden, as employees' expectations for appropriate, fair, respectful and decent treatment at work are high. The threshold for reporting any inappropriate behaviour may be lower compared to other countries with a different work culture. This societal attitude is often reported as the main reason that Nordic countries display high levels of violence and harassment. However, the conclusion will show that awareness levels in the countries do not seem to fully explain the differences in the prevalence of violence and harassment.

Finally, countries where the phenomenon is high on the agenda of policymakers and social partners are mostly northern European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK).

Reporting violence and harassment through surveys depends on whether or not the workers are affected by violence or harassment at the workplace. However, different sources of information have suggested that the level of reporting is also influenced by the above-mentioned level of awareness in the country, whether or not the subject is considered to be taboo, or other sociocultural characteristics, like the power imbalance between, for instance, a manager and a subordinate.

The perception that violence and harassment is a taboo subject is widespread in some southern and eastern European countries, such as Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic and Portugal, where they are reinforced by gender prejudices and stereotypes (which is also reported in Estonia and Lithuania, but especially Cyprus). However, this is also true for countries where general awareness is high and where policymakers keep the issue high on their agenda, such as in Denmark and Finland.

Sociocultural attitudes and the level of violence and harassment

As explained above, the level of violence and harassment in a country can depend on the level of awareness of what is considered to be violent behaviour in the workplace. Some authors also explain differences in the level of prevalence among countries with different sociocultural attitudes, for example the degree of tolerance about what is an offense to a person's dignity.

- Self-containment (Vveinhardt and Žukauskas, 2010) and the fear of intruding in victims' private lives characterise the relationship with the work environment in Estonia and Lithuania.
- In some Mediterranean countries like Croatia, Italy and Malta, there are daily conflicts in companies and institutions and some conflictual behaviours are tolerated (Ege, 1997, 1999), while in Greece and Lithuania they are considered to be natural aspects of relations at work.
- Cultural societal factors – such as familiar or local-level forms of control exerted by local closed oligarchies, such as a patriarchal culture in Croatia (Russo et al, 2008), and the prevalence of an individualist-masculine culture, as stated by Giorgi (2008) in the case of Italy – contribute to the social acceptance of behaviours that would be considered abusive in other social contexts.

The relevance of sociocultural aspects is raised in Finland and the Netherlands. In Finland, sociocultural differences in the meaning of words and terms and in the perception of inappropriate behaviour may partly explain the difference in relation to countries that share a similar work situation. Some of the sociocultural factors that explain workplace violence in the Netherlands – individualisation, self-expression and self-realisation – are highly valued when compared to many other EU countries.

Authors raised the issue of such a discrepancy by calling on cultural and societal reasons, (although they sometimes do not take into account sample representativeness; see Giorgi, 2008), by making extensive recourse to Hofstede's (1991) indicators measuring national cultures,

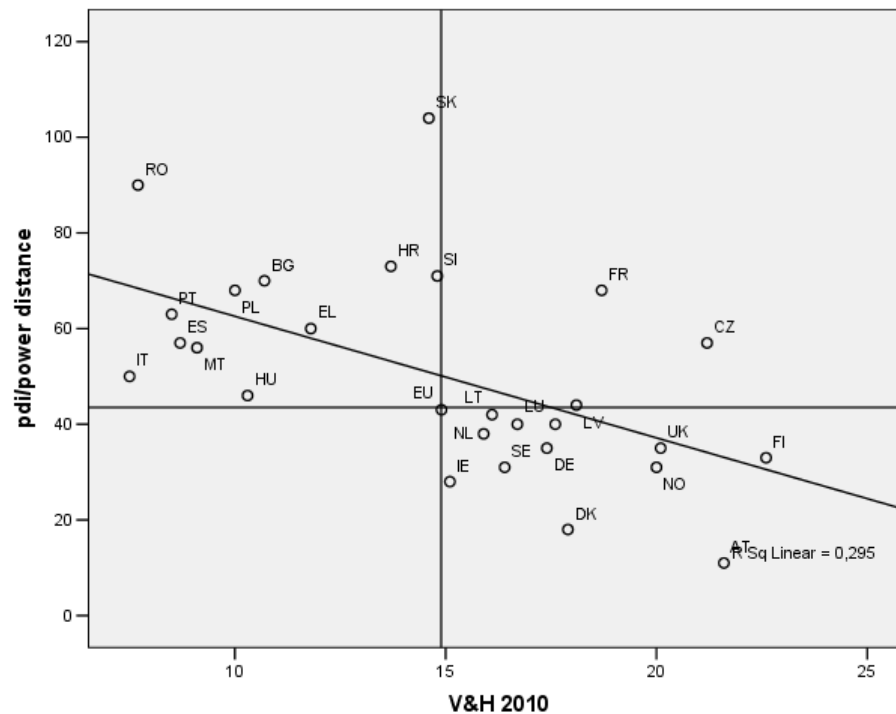
especially his idea of ‘power distance’ or, equivalently, a ‘high level of asymmetry of power’. Power distance expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power be distributed unequally. People in societies that exhibit a large degree of power distance accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification, thus tolerating unfair behaviour. In societies with low power distance, people strive to equalise the distribution of power, demand justification for inequalities of power and call for more respect of personal dignity.

High power distance is alleged in order to explain large discrepancies among self-reported and ‘actual’ levels of bullying in Italy and Lithuania, while the Finnish contribution says that low power distance and employees’ high expectations for appropriate, fair, respectful and decent treatment keep the tolerance threshold low. For similar reasons, perpetrators in Denmark are colleagues more often than superiors because of flat organisation and low power distance.

By using [the indicators available by country on the Hofstede website](#) and the EWCS 2010 synthetic indicator of ASB, Figure 10 outlines a negative relationship between violent behaviours and power distance. All countries with self-labelled ASBs below the EU average also report power distance above the EU average, while all countries with below-average power distance report ASBs above the EU average. Only the Czech Republic and France report both indicators as being above average, thus outlining a particularly tense situation.

The explanatory power of such a relationship is not negligible (about 30% of the variance), but it still leaves room for other explanatory factors, referring to both work-related sociocultural specificities and organisational factors (Figure 10). Further, the question of whether higher reporting is due to lower tolerance towards ASBs or gaps in their effective occurrences remains unanswered. This certainly requires a more systematic and extensive investigation among Member States.

Figure 10: ASB and power distance



Note: The EU average for PDI is unweighted.

Source: [Hofstede Centre website](#), EWCS

Extent of violence and harassment, awareness, policies and procedures

Taking into account some of the aspects considered in this report, countries can be classified considering the prevalence of the phenomena, the policies and the procedures in place at company level and the awareness in the country. There are other social and cultural elements at work and the society might also play a role in the level of prevalence. However, the study of these is beyond the scope of this comparative analytical report.

Group A

Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, UK

In this group, violence and harassment is considered an issue and policies are in place to prevent and tackle it.

In these countries, there are long-standing and relatively systematic policies in place to prevent and deal with violence and harassment. Policies have been adopted by governments and social partners, sometimes including tripartite initiatives or bipartite social dialogue, and the policy action is extended to the company level. The high relative level of awareness seems to contribute to policy initiatives and companies' implementation of procedures. Most of these countries have higher proportions of workers reporting violence and harassment than the EU average (exceptions are Ireland and the Netherlands), which seems to be influenced by both the level of awareness and sociocultural characteristics (for example, power distance) and the development of policies by governments and social partners. The effectiveness of these actions can be measured by the recent, slow decline of incidents in the countries with consolidated intervention, such as Nordic

countries and the Netherlands. Some of these countries have a high share of workers in the service sector, which might have an impact on the overall reporting levels.

Group B

Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain

Violence and harassment is not considered to be a major issue in this group. Awareness of it is low or increasing.

These countries are characterised by low levels of reporting of violence and harassment by workers. In general, the policies developed by social partners and governments are not developed to the same level as in Group A. Within this group, some countries have initiatives developed by governments and/or social partners at sectoral or national level (Italy, Poland, Spain), but most of them have only developed non-systematic policies and in general they are at an early stage of development and implementation. Moreover, less attention is paid to this issue in Greece and Romania because other issues related to the economic crisis are prioritised instead. Awareness in general is low, but it is increasing in some of the countries, which is reflected in the still-low share of companies with procedures in place to tackle violence and harassment. This low level of awareness can influence low reporting. Sociocultural characteristics of workplaces might not be as conducive for the emergence of ASBs (for example, higher power distance, non-avoidance of conflicts in southern Europe) as in other countries.

Group C

France, Germany, Luxembourg

In this group, violence and harassment is increasingly considered a relevant policy issue and awareness of violence and harassment is steadily increasing.

Surveys show that there is a growing concern among the population about the importance of violence and harassment at work and therefore awareness is increasing. It does not reach the levels of Group A yet, but it is higher than in Group B. Moreover, psychosocial risks are of increasing concern in these countries and have been included in the government's and social partners' agenda. This is more the case in France than in Germany, because of social partners' initiatives and the alarming situation created by a number of suicides in the automotive and the telecom sectors. Prevalence is higher than the EU28 average, especially in France. There are policies in place, but they are not as systematic as in Group A. Social dialogue at cross-sectoral level has been reported in France. The level of procedures in place in companies lags behind Group A and is closer to Group B. Luxembourg has more similarities with France and Germany than with the countries in Group A.

Group D

Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia

In this group, awareness of violence and harassment is low. Policies and procedures are developing or do not yet exist.

This group is made up of countries that transitioned from a planned economy to a capitalist one at the beginning of the 1990s, which might have had implications for work organisation and experiences of work intensity and work-life balance. Most of them have higher proportions of workers reporting violence and harassment than the EU28 average and the overall level of awareness is low. Some of these countries are at an early stage of developing policies to tackle the issue (Latvia). However, others have already developed more systematic policies (Slovenia). There is no strong role for social dialogue in most of these countries. The rather limited action by

governments and the lack of social dialogue on this topic in many of these countries are reflected in the low percentage of companies implementing procedures to tackle violence and harassment. In some of these countries, self-containment and the consideration of violence and harassment as an area of private life might make it more difficult to address the issue in the workplace.

Group C outlier: Austria

Austria has a comparatively high share of workers reporting violence and harassment. There are some work-related policies, but none are systematic (for example, the government and social partners published a joint brochure in 2009 on guidelines developed by social partners to implement the EU framework agreement). Violence and harassment are not explicitly included in the legislation, but some agreements exist at the sectoral level. In this context, the proportion of companies implementing procedures is comparatively low. Therefore, Austria is one of the countries where there is a need to increase efforts to tackle violence and harassment. Awareness of the issue is increasing, as it is in Germany. This aspect might only partly explain the high level of prevalence of this problem. The power distance aspect might also partially influence the levels of reporting in Austria.

Overall, even in countries with low levels of awareness, the general population and policymakers have started to pay some attention to the issue, such as in Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania and Portugal.

Finally, it is worth noting that because of the crisis, some countries show a decline in attention about the issue. This is the case in the Czech Republic and Romania, but especially in Greece, where sexual harassment was very high on the agenda, reflecting high societal attention to the issue.

Conclusions

Some conclusions can be drawn from this comparative analysis.

- Sociocultural aspects influence both the appearance of violence and harassment and the level of reporting on it.
- Working conditions (organisation of work, high work intensity and stress levels, poor management, poor work–life balance) can foster violent and harassing behaviour in the workplace.
- The level of awareness plays a role in identifying an incident as violent or harassing. Thus, a higher level of awareness might lead to higher levels of reporting.
- The high level of under-reporting limits accurate information-gathering. Policies built on incomplete knowledge of the characteristics and scope of violence and harassment are less meaningful and effective.
- A legislative definition of violence and harassment increases claimants' chances of successfully resolving their case. A legislative definition also promotes policy initiatives and better coordination.
- Policy coherence and the integration of different actors into strategic activities are not well developed in most countries in Europe.
- Comparative analysis is limited due to the variety of survey methodologies used when collecting data.
- A high level of awareness in a country often goes hand in hand with long-term, systematic policies developed through social dialogue and implemented through company procedures and national policies.

As highlighted by the 2014 Eurofound/EU-OSHA report [Psychosocial risks in Europe: Prevalence and strategies for prevention](#), violence and harassment are associated with negative impacts on work and health.

Understanding the level of reporting violence and harassment is complex because of multiple factors, such as the level of awareness, sociocultural aspects, and policies and procedures, which impact on the aggregate number of reported cases. Legislative codification varies among countries, reflecting both sociocultural differences and differences in labour law and social protection as well as its inclusion in health and safety legislation at work.

There are few claims in courts (apart from Belgium and France) because of the poor chances of success. There are also few claims made to equality bodies acting as conciliation bodies set up by governments according to the [Equal Treatment Directive](#) (apart from Slovakia and Sweden) because of their limited opportunities to intervene at the workplace level and due to the claimants' exposure to retaliation risks. Thus, official under-reporting is a widespread issue in almost all Member States, with a few notable exceptions for third-party violence in the Dutch and UK public services, where employers show a stronger commitment to tackling abusive behaviour.

Reporting is a central issue because different meanings of these concepts reflect differences in sociocultural contexts, both among countries and groups of workers. Furthermore, differences among countries in survey methodology, question design, reference periods and the labelling and grouping of behaviours as well as the limited availability of synthetic indicators limits extensive comparative efforts. Currently, only cross-country surveys, such as Eurofound's EWCS and the EU-OSHA ESENER, ensure comparability among countries.

In order to overcome such difficulties, operational approaches, such as the NAR-Q and the LIPT questionnaires, try to limit respondents' reluctance to answer questions on violence and harassment. They have been implemented mostly at company and sectoral level: when combined

with direct questions about personal experience of violence and harassment (integrated approach), discrepancies emerge as under-reporting. When the integrated approach is implemented into national surveys, such as in France, Ireland, Italy and Slovenia, the set of investigated abusive behaviours is reduced, thus leaving the comparability issue unsolved.

Notwithstanding these methodological difficulties, the analysis of violence and harassment based on national surveys provides important insights about their individual characteristics, the influence of organisational risk factors and health outcomes. As a general picture, while findings from both consolidated literature and secondary analysis based on the EWCS are confirmed by showing a moderate long-term increase and higher figures among women and in service sectors, their reporting by age classes and educational attainment display conflicting evidence, mainly due to country-specific social characteristics of the labour market.

In general, a high share of workers in Scandinavian countries report experiencing violence and harassment, followed by other countries in northern and central Europe. Overall, violence and harassment is less reported in southern countries.

There is shared evidence that violence and harassment shows a long-lasting moderate increase among Member States, which seems to be mainly related to greater reporting of third-party violence. This seems to be mainly due to the increasing share of the workforce carrying out service tasks in direct contact with third parties, work that is probably combined with the increasing use of ICT. Furthermore, there is extensive evidence on the association between violence and harassment and higher levels of job demands (time pressure, workload, tight deadlines), poor work–life balance, inadequate work organisation (managerial performance, conflicts), job insecurity and stress.

At the EU level, some workers in certain employment conditions report having being subjected to violence and harassment more often, such as temporary workers, workers of foreign origin or people working in the health sector. Overall, workers suffering from violence and harassment report worse well-being outcomes, which in the long term can lead to a greater probability of early retirement and makes work less sustainable over the life course.

There is wide consensus from national-level evidence on the negative impact of violence and harassment on mental health, especially in terms of higher levels of stress, depression and anxiety, thus validating figures from the fifth EWCS. There is limited direct evidence on the impact on firms' performance. Lower motivation acts as an indirect indicator. According to some UK and Swedish studies, the breach in trust between the employer and employees is the main consequence of violence and harassment.

Differences exist between countries on the type of legislation dealing with violence and harassment. This aspect might influence the extent of the implementation of procedures and measures at establishment level, especially if they are part of employment or OHS legislation. However, it has more of an influence on how systematic, coherent and coordinated policies are at national level. In general, countries with long-term, systematic policies engage more in cross-sectoral social dialogue and workplace measures.

In the EU there is a low proportion of companies with procedures or measures to tackle violence and harassment. The group of countries where more companies have policies are those where violence and harassment are more clearly included in policy initiatives (collective agreements or OHS and employment legislation). The Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands consider such an obligation to be part of the general duty of the employer to prevent negative behaviour in the workplace in order to safeguard employees' mental and physical health. This approach seems to be related to the use of the broader concept of well-being when referring to health issues at work. Legislation in Belgium and France has introduced a specific duty on the employer to prevent violence and harassment. In Ireland, employers are advised to introduce a code of conduct in

order to show their commitment to tackling abusive behaviour, which is highly relevant in case of a court claim.

There is still limited evidence about the impact of these policies, as societal sensitivity tends to increase over time. However, some signs of decline in the extent of the problem emerged after 2008. These seem to be more evident in the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands, which have set up consistent long-term prevention strategies that combine adequate legislative frameworks based on specific employer duty of work environment prevention and an integrated prevention approach with intense awareness campaigns and social partner and civil society mobilisation.

Finally, from a comparative perspective it must be acknowledged that the levels of prevalence seem to be influenced by the existing awareness in the countries. However, it is not the only explanation and various aspects that have already been mentioned related to employment and working conditions, sociocultural characteristics and effectiveness of policy also play a role. For example, some countries have high levels of prevalence and low general awareness. Interestingly, across Europe not one country reports a high level of awareness of violence and harassment and low prevalence. This scenario could be considered ideal because people would be aware of the issue, increasing the likelihood of reported figures better reflecting reality. Therefore, a low level of reporting when people are aware of the issue might indicate genuinely low levels of prevailing violent and harassing behaviour.

In general in Europe, the issue is not very high on the policy agenda (except in the Scandinavian countries and the Benelux countries), but more attention is being paid to the issue even in countries where there is less awareness (in southern and eastern Europe).

Violence and harassment at work is a complex issue and identifying it is strongly influenced by sociocultural aspects. These difficulties are thus greater when considering the issue from a comparative perspective, as it is difficult to disentangle societal awareness, especially in terms of tolerance towards certain behaviours, from their effective occurrence and their determinants.

Comparability has been limited to cross-country surveys such as Eurofound's EWCS. By supporting a better understanding of the issue and by setting some common standards of analysis, such as shared reference periods, perpetrators and investigation of the intensity of violence and harassment, the comparability between surveys could be increased. The introduction of shared synthetic indicators would also support the comparability of national sources.

When turning to policies, the legal framework plays a central role in outlining the employer's duty of prevention and the active role that governments (for example, OHS agencies) play in promoting both enforceability and better understanding by means of surveys and case studies and by issuing guidelines and recommendations. Social partners' contribution ranges from policy design, as in the 2007 autonomous framework agreement, to policy implementation by, for example, providing specific expertise in preventive actions at workplace level and by providing support to those who are targeted. For these reasons, their involvement in prevention policies and the deliberative process as a whole is essential. It is therefore unsurprising that workplace preventative measures against violence and harassment, such as specific procedures and the presence of confidential counsellors, tend to be more widespread as policy coordination increases and prevention policies are oriented towards the long term.

Outlook: Cyberbullying as an emerging issue

Cyberbullying is an emerging issue because of the increasing pervasiveness of ICT and mobile devices in the workplace. The 2010 [multisectoral guidelines to tackle third-party violence and harassment related to work](#) agreed by the EU social partners from both private and public sectors (EPSU, UNI Europa, ETUCE, HOSPEEM, CEMR, EFEE, EuroCommerce and CoESS) included cyberbullying as one new form of violence and harassment at work.

While the public, policymakers and researchers pay a lot of attention to cyberbullying, there is limited evidence about its extent and impact at work.

The Swedish contribution summarises a report on behalf of the WEA, the Swedish environment authority, carried out by Göransson et al (2011). This report first defines ‘cyberbullying’ or ‘cyber aggression’ as aggressive behaviour, such as threats or bullying, taking place over the internet. ‘Cyber incivility’ is defined as less serious forms of aggression. The report provides some evidence on third-party cyberbullying, while none of the very few studies published in Sweden investigate internal cyberbullying. People who have experienced cyberbullying are less satisfied at work, less involved in the organisation, are more likely to wish to leave the organisation and are more involved in different forms of negative behaviour towards the organisation. Cyberbullying is a frequent issue for journalists in Sweden. According to a 2009 survey carried out by the Swedish Union of Journalists ([SJF](#)), 22% of respondents report having been victims of online threats.

According to a survey carried out by the German Teachers Union ([GEW](#)) in 2007, 8% of unionised teachers had experienced cyberbullying via the internet or mobile phone, with a higher prevalence in secondary schools.

There is little information on prevention measures against cyberbullying in workplace-related situations. Most of the activities still focus on providing information and on raising awareness. The Estonian Data Protection Inspectorate has published several guides regarding processing and protecting personal data in work relations, the privacy of employees’ computer use and recording phone calls. The social partners in Norway have in recent years emphasised that employers must be aware of the use of digital platforms in their business and they should have an active policy on the prevention of sexual harassment using such media. They should also have clear procedures for dealing with cases of sexual harassment and threats via digital platforms.

Overall, the issue of cyberbullying seems to be restricted to third-party violence. However, issues related to data protection and its link to violence and harassment are reported. As it is expected to be a growing aspect of concern, policymakers should pay attention to it in the future.

The information collected confirms that in the context of the widespread use of ICT devices, there is a need for further research and monitoring of cyberbullying in workplaces.

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Annex 1: Classifying national surveys

Table A.1: Mapping employee survey countries

<p><i>Austria</i></p> <p>AT1: Violence at workplace VIDA (services TU)-IFES Repeated (last year): No Focus: Violence Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled, classification as violence of behaviours, self-labelled notice of ASB, personally experienced, causes. No time span. Items: Teasing, mocking; screaming, intimidation; exclusion; insinuating or discriminating jokes or comments; verbal sexual harassment; physical sexual assault or harassment; verbal abuse, insults; physical assault; coercion, blackmailing. Causes: increasing work pressure; bad leadership; personal resentments; competition and rivalry; fear of job loss; alcohol and/or drug use. Frequency/recurrence: Frequency: daily, weekly, monthly, less Perpetrators: Superiors, colleagues, clients Definition proposed: No</p> <p>AT2: Workplace bullying Repeated (last year): Span of time Focus: Companies over time Methodology and reference period: Operational, past 6 months Items: NAQ-R 16 Frequency/recurrence: Frequency Perpetrators: Internal Definition proposed: No</p>
<p><i>Belgium</i></p> <p>BE1: Flemish workability monitor Repeated (last year): Yes, 2013 Focus: Regional Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled: noticed (until 2010), personal (2013) past 12 months Items: Physical violence, unwanted sexual behaviour, harassment Frequency/recurrence: Frequency</p>

Bulgaria

BG1: Women in public transport Sofia

Repeated (last year): No, 2010

Focus: Sectoral trade union

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled personal, environment, no reference period

Items: Risk of violence, personal exposure to bullying, victim of physical violence

Frequency/recurrence: No

Perpetrators: Colleague; passenger, client; manager

Definition proposed: No

BG2: Work climate survey

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2012

Focus: Index, TU

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled, past 12 months

Items: Physical violence; psychological harassment or bullying; unwanted sexual advances, sexual harassment; physical abuse, beating

Frequency/recurrence: No

Perpetrators: No

Definition proposed: No

Cyprus

CY1: Gender discrimination in work and employment

Repeated (last year): No, 2012

Focus: Gender – harassment

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled, no time specification

Items: Harassment (including sexual), personal and noticed

CY2: Sexual harassment in the workplace

Repeated (last year): No, 2007

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled harassment, personal and noticed, no time specification

Items: Listed behaviours, personal, colleagues' and relatives' reaction, causes

Frequency/recurrence: No

Perpetrators: No

Definition proposed: No

Czech Republic

CZ1: Omnibus GHK (then STAM-MARK)

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2013

Focus: General poll

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled personal actions taken

Items: Mobbing and harassment, employment status

Frequency/recurrence: Recurrently

Perpetrators: Superiors and colleagues

Definition proposed: No

CZ2: Improvement of Social Dialogue

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2010

Focus: Health and social care

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled experienced and observed, past 12 months

Items: Physical violence, verbal attacks, bullying, sexual harassment, race-related humiliation, witnessed physical violence

Frequency/recurrence: Yes

Perpetrators: Patients/clients, other employees, relatives of patients/clients, superiors, external employees, unknown persons

CZ3: Survey on workplace bullying

Repeated (last year): No, 2010–2011

Focus: University, bullying

Methodology and reference period: Integrated (self-labelling both personal and witnessed), past 12 months

Items: NAR-Q (16), self-labelling: victim of mobbing, witness of bullying

Frequency/recurrence: Yes

Perpetrators: Superiors, colleagues, students, subordinate

Definition proposed: Bullying

CZ4: Don't fear equal opportunities

Repeated (last year): 2011

Focus: Gender discrimination and sexual harassment

Methodology and reference period: Small companies

Items: Sexual harassment

CZ5: Monthly omnibus

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2008–2013

Methodology and reference period: Evaluation of the situation with violence and bullying at the workplace

Items: Importance of violence and bullying – awareness

Denmark

DK1: AH2012 (DWECS)

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2012

Focus: General longitudinal survey

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled, personal and witnessed, past 12 months

Items: Personal: conflicts and quarrels, bullying, sexual harassment, threat of violence, physical violence. Witnessed: bullying.

Frequency/recurrence: Frequency

Definition proposed: Bullying

DK2: COPSOQ/DPQ

Repeated (last year): Yes

Focus: Psychosocial factors at work

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled, personal and witnessed, past 12 months

Items: Personal: gossip, conflicts and quarrels, bullying, sexual harassment, threat of violence, physical violence. Witnessed: bullying.

Frequency/recurrence: Frequency

Perpetrators: Colleagues, superiors, external

Definition proposed: Bullying

Estonia

EE1: Gender Equality Monitor

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2013. Changed 2009.

Focus: Gender-based, overall workforce

Methodology and reference period: Fear; self-labelled questions personal and observed (2009); integrated (2013), past 12 months

Items: Sexual harassment: Disturbing remarks, obscene jokes, unwanted proposals, unpleasant approaching, obscene (sexist) messages, e-mails, comments. Place it occurred, awareness, responsible for solving.

Perpetrators: Coworker, superior, client

EE3: Bullying at work

Repeated (last year): No, 2010

Focus: Specific overall workforce

Methodology and reference period: Operational, past 6 months

Items: NAQ-R 22

Frequency/recurrence: How often in previous 6 months

Definition proposed: Bullying

EE6: Prevalence of psychosocial risks

Repeated (last year): 2010

Focus: Psychosocial risk

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled, past 12 months, stratified representative sample

Items: Unwanted sexual attention, threats of violence, verbal harassment, experience of mental or physical violence or bullying

Finland

FI1: Finnish National Work and Health

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2012

Focus: OHS

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled personal, 12 months

Items: Psychological violence or harassment, sexual harassment, third-party inappropriate behaviour, threats, physical violence

Frequency/recurrence: Harassment: moment in time. Sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour: frequency.

Perpetrators: No

Definition proposed: Psychological violence and harassment

FI2: Finnish Quality of Working Life Survey (QWLS)

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2008

Focus: Quality of work

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled personal and observed, past 12 months

Items: Harassment and inappropriate treatment, bullying (presence, personal experience), violence or threats, personally (now, previously)

Frequency/recurrence: Harassment, violence and threats: frequency. Bullying: recursiveness at workplace, moment in time.

Perpetrators: No

Definition proposed: Bullying

FI3: Annual working life barometer (AWLB)

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2012

Focus: Quality of work

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled personal and observed, past 12 months

Items: Harassment, third-party violence

Frequency/recurrence: Frequency

Perpetrators: Third-party violence

Definition proposed: Psychological violence and bullying

France

FR1: Conditions de Travail (CT)

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2013

Focus: Working conditions

Methodology and reference period: 2005: self-labelled personal, unspecified time. 2013: integrated, past 12 months.

Items: 2005: Aggressions (physical/verbal or insults or threats). 2013: self-labelled

verbal/physical or sexual aggression.

Frequency/recurrence: 2005: N=never, sometimes, often, always. 2013: systematic behaviour (operational).

Perpetrators: 2005: no. 2013: (operational) internal, clients, other employees, others; (self-labelled) internal, external.

Definition proposed: No

FR2: Santé et Itinéraire Professionnel (SIP)

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2010

Focus: Labour market paths, panel

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled, past 12 months

Items: See CT 2013

Frequency/recurrence: Present or previous jobs (biography)

Perpetrators: Internal/external

Definition proposed: No

FR3: Sumer

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2010

Focus: OHS

Methodology and reference period: Employees: integrated, 12 months

Items: Self-labelled, see CT 2013

Frequency/recurrence: 2003: Number of times. 2010: currently, in the past (operational), number of times (self-labelled).

Perpetrators: 2003: only third parties. 2010: see CT 2013.

Definition proposed: No

Germany

DE1: BIBB/BAUA

Repeated (last year): No, 2011

Focus: Public administration

Methodology and reference period: Operational. LIPT 31 + Berlin SSS a, GPSES, PANAS.

Items: Mobbing, causes, health and behaviour outcomes

Frequency/recurrence: Frequency, duration

Perpetrators: Superiors, colleagues, inferiors, others; gender, number

Definition proposed: No

DE2: Violence in the healthcare and social sectors

Repeated (last year): No, 2008

Focus: Healthcare and welfare, no working conditions

Methodology and reference period: Operational, SOAS-R

Items: Analysis of each reported attack

Perpetrators: Superiors, colleagues, inferiors, others

Definition proposed: No

DE3: ABBA-DGUV

Repeated (last year): No, 2001

Focus: Employment services after Hartz IV

Methodology and reference period: Integrated COPSOQ + FOBK, past 12 months

Items: Personal: gossip, conflicts and quarrels, bullying, sexual harassment, threat of violence, physical violence. Witnessed: bullying.

Frequency/recurrence: Frequency

Perpetrators: Colleagues, superiors, external

Definition proposed: No

Hungary

HU1: Psychosocial factors at work

Repeated (last year): No

Focus: Active and inactive

Methodology and reference period: Past 12 months self-labelled

Items: Undesired sexual attention, violent threat, physical violence, intimidation, bullying

Frequency/recurrence: Frequency

Perpetrators: Colleagues, superiors, external

HU3: Equal treatment

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2012

Focus: Stereotypes

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled experience

Items: Verbal harassment, public humiliation, violent threat, physical insult

Frequency/recurrence: Unclear

Perpetrators: Not specified

Definition proposed: No

HU4: Danger at schools

Repeated (last year): No, 2009

Focus: Education

Methodology and reference period: General items

Items: Shouted and sworn at, humiliated, exposed to physical aggression by pupils

Italy

IT1: Isfol Quality of Work Survey (QWS)

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2010

Focus: Quality of work

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled observed, reference person in case, no reference period

Items: Bullying and right violation, sexual harassment

Definition proposed: No

IT2: Donna Perla

Focus: Women at work and health

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled personal (COPSOQ), past 12 months

Items: Personal: bullying, sexual harassment, threat of violence, physical violence

Frequency/recurrence: Frequency

Perpetrators: Colleagues, superiors, external

Definition proposed: No

IT3: NAQ-R testing

Methodology and reference period: Operational, past 6 months

Items: NAQ-R-17 questions

Frequency/recurrence: Frequency

IT4: Istat ad hoc module on citizen safety survey

Repeated (last year): No

Focus: General

Methodology and reference period: Integrated personal. Time: working life, past 3 years and 1 year.

Items: Self-labelled: mobbing, sexual violence and harassment, sexual blackmail related to hires and career. Operational: mobbing 16 items.

Frequency/recurrence: Frequency, duration

Perpetrators: Perpetrator: colleagues, superiors

Lithuania

LT1: Work accidents and work-related health problems

Repeated (last year): No, 2013

Focus: OHS, overall

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled, personal, past 12 months

LT2: Occupational well-being LSRC

Repeated (last year): No, 2011

Focus: Social work sector

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled, personal

Luxembourg

LU: Workers' representation of working conditions

Repeated (last year): No, 2009

Focus: Working conditions

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled personal, no reference period

Items: Work atmosphere, supervisor attitude, harassment, verbal aggression, physical aggression, sexual insinuation

Frequency/recurrence: No

Perpetrators: Internal/external (harassment only internal)

Malta

MT: Predictors of workplace bullying

Repeated (last year): No

Focus: Bullying

Methodology and reference period: Operational

Items: NAQ-R

Frequency/recurrence: Frequency

Netherlands

NL1: NWCS

Repeated (last year): Yes, yearly

Focus: General

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled, personal, past 12 months. Need of intervention.

Items: Unwanted sexual attention, intimidation, bullying, physical violence

Frequency/recurrence: Frequency qualitative

Perpetrators: Internal/external

Definition proposed: No

NL2: NEWS

Repeated (last year): Biennial

Focus: General

Methodology and reference period: Main risks at workplace

Definition proposed: No

*Norway***NO1: LKU****Repeated (last year):** Yes, 2012**Focus:** Living conditions**Methodology and reference period:** Integrated, personal experience and observed, past 12 months**Items:** Self-labelled: violence with visible marks or injuries; violence without visible marks; threats of violence causing freight; exposure to hassle of teasing, sexual harassment, displeasure, uncomfortable conflicts**Frequency/recurrence:** Number of times**Perpetrators:** Hassle and teasing: internal and overall; displeasure and conflicts: managers, colleagues**Definition proposed:** No*Slovakia***SK1: Violence against women****Repeated (last year):** Yes, 2008**Focus:** Violence against women**Methodology and reference period:** Self-labelled personal and observed, past 5 years**Items:** Bullying, sexual harassment*Slovenia***SI1: Harassment****Repeated (last year):** No, 2007**Focus:** Trade Union Equal Opportunities Department - Harassment and reaction**Methodology and reference period:** Self-labelled, observed and personal, past 12 months**Items:** Sexual harassment: non-verbal, physical, other forms of harassment, reaction**Frequency/recurrence:** Yes, not specified**Perpetrators:** Perpetrator, not specified**SI2: Bullying****Repeated (last year):** 2007**Focus:** Banking**Methodology and reference period:** Self-labelled, personal and observed**Items:** Bullying situations**Frequency/recurrence:** Regularly/occasionally, currently/in the past**Perpetrators:** Perpetrator, not specified

Definition proposed: Mobbing or bossing

SI3: Bullying

Repeated (last year): 2008

Methodology and reference period: Integrated, past 6 months

Items: NAQ-R

Frequency/recurrence: NAQ-R

Definition proposed: Bullying

SI6: Bullying at work

Repeated (last year): 2009

Focus: Trainee doctors

Methodology and reference period: Operational personal; support; reasons; outcomes

Items: LIPT

Frequency/recurrence: Frequency per time unit. Length of time.

Perpetrators: Superiors, colleagues, inferiors, others; gender, number

SI7: Special module EWCS

Repeated (last year): 2010

Focus: Psychosocial risks

Methodology and reference period: Integrated: 12 months (self-labelled), 6 months (operational)

Items: Self-labelled: EWCS. Operational: 15 items.

Frequency/recurrence: -never, - occasionally, - monthly, - weekly, - daily

Perpetrators: not specified

Definition proposed: Psychological violence

Spain

ES1: ENCT-INSHT

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2011

Focus: Working conditions

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled personal (2007 witnessed), past 12 months. Main risks include robberies, physical aggressions and other violent acts.

Items: Physical violence threats, physical violence, sexual harassment, verbal aggressions, rumours or social exclusion

Frequency/recurrence: How often

Perpetrators: Internal/external physical violence only

Definition proposed: Sexual harassment

ES2: ECTV

Repeated (last year): Yes, yearly

Focus: Quality of work

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled, scale 1–10, work environment

Items: Aggregate discrimination, psychological and sexual harassment

Sweden

SE1: Work environment survey

Repeated (last year): Yes, annual

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled personal

Items: Conflicts, violence or threat of violence, bullying or violations, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment

Frequency/recurrence: No

Perpetrators: Internal, external only for conflicts and sexual harassment

SE2: W-R disorders survey

Repeated (last year): Yes, annual

Methodology and reference period: Self-labelled personal as cause of health problems, past 12 months

Items: Health problems caused by bullying and harassment, violence or threat of violence

Frequency/recurrence: No

Perpetrators: No

Definition proposed: No

Source: National contributions

Table A.2 Mapping surveys – EU level and international

<p>EU-OSHA (EU1): Pan-European Opinion Poll on OSH</p> <p>Repeated (last year): Yes, 2013</p> <p>Focus: OSH</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: CATI, to employees</p> <p>Items: Unacceptable behaviour as the most common cause of stress</p> <p>Definition proposed: No</p>
<p>EU-OSHA (EU2): ESENER</p> <p>Repeated (last year): Yes, 2009</p> <p>Focus: OSH management</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: Employers-Managers (workers' reps in ESENER-1 only) , past 3 years</p> <p>Items: Violence and threat of violence, bullying and harassment both: level of concern, procedures to deal with, contributing factors, preventative measures. ER: requests from employees.</p> <p>Frequency/recurrence: No</p> <p>Perpetrators: No</p> <p>Definition proposed: Violence, harassment and third party violence</p>
<p>Eurofound (EU3): EWCS</p> <p>Repeated (last year): Yes, 2010</p> <p>Focus: Quality of work and employment</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: CAPI, self-labelled, past 12 months</p> <p>Items: Physical violence, threat of physical violence, bullying or harassment, intimidation, unwanted sexual attention, sexual harassment</p> <p>Frequency/recurrence: No</p> <p>Perpetrators: No</p> <p>Definition proposed: No</p>
<p>Eurostat (EU4): LFS ad hoc module</p> <p>Repeated (last year): Yes, 2007</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: Direct personal</p> <p>Definition proposed: No</p>
<p>IPSOS (EU5): Global advisors</p> <p>Repeated (last year): No, 2010</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: Direct personal</p> <p>Definition proposed: No</p>
<p>Kelly services (EU6): Global workforce index</p> <p>Definition proposed: No</p>

<p><i>EU-OSHA (EU1): Pan-European Opinion Poll on OSH</i></p> <p>Repeated (last year): Yes, 2013</p> <p>Focus: OSH</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: CATI, to employees</p> <p>Items: Unacceptable behaviour as the most common cause of stress</p>
<p><i>EU-OSHA (EU2): ESENER</i></p> <p>Repeated (last year): Yes, 2011</p> <p>Focus: OSH management</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: Employers-workers' reps, past 3 years</p> <p>Items: Violence and threat of violence, bullying and harassment both: level of concern, procedures to deal with, contributing factors, preventative measures. ER: requests from employees.</p> <p>Frequency/recurrence: No</p> <p>Perpetrators: No</p> <p>Definition proposed: Violence</p>
<p><i>Eurofound (EU3): EWCS</i></p> <p>Repeated (last year): Yes, 2010</p> <p>Focus: Quality of work and employment</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: CAPI, self-labelled, past 12 months</p> <p>Items: Physical violence, threat of physical violence, bullying or harassment, intimidation, unwanted sexual attention, sexual harassment</p> <p>Frequency/recurrence: No</p> <p>Perpetrators: No</p> <p>Definition proposed: No</p>
<p><i>Eurostat (EU4): LFS ad hoc module</i></p> <p>Repeated (last year): Yes, 2007</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: Factors negatively affecting wellbeing</p> <p>Items: Harassment/bullying, violence or threat of violence</p>
<p><i>IPSOS (EU5): Global advisors</i></p> <p>Repeated (last year): No, 2010</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: Direct personal</p>
<p><i>Kelly services (EU6): Global workforce index</i></p>

Table A.3: Workplace-based surveys

<p><i>Germany DE4: WSI work councils survey</i></p> <p>Repeated (last year): Yes, 2011</p> <p>Focus: Social dialogue</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: Works council action and concern</p> <p>Level of analysis: Synthetic, previous 2 years</p> <p>Perpetrators: No</p>
<p><i>Estonia EE2: Working life in Estonia</i></p> <p>Repeated (last year): No, 2010</p> <p>Focus: Prevention</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: Events, interventions, past 12 months</p> <p>Level of analysis: Employees in organisation experiencing insults and verbal abuse, attacks or violence, malevolent obstructions or disturbances while working, sexual harassment</p> <p>Perpetrators: n.a.</p> <p>Definitions: No</p>
<p><i>Hungary HU5: NES-WCS</i></p> <p>Repeated (last year): No, 2010</p> <p>Focus: Employers</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: Complaints and disciplinary proceedings (list), 12 months</p> <p>Level of analysis: Violence</p> <p>Perpetrators: No</p> <p>Definitions: No</p>
<p><i>Hungary HU6: Psychosocial risk assessment</i></p> <p>Repeated (last year): Yes, 2012</p> <p>Focus: Prevention measures</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: Psychosocial risk assessment, significance of violence and harassment</p> <p>Perpetrators: No</p>
<p><i>Slovenia SI5: Survey of prevention</i></p> <p>Repeated (last year): 2009</p> <p>Focus: Trade Union Equal Opportunities Department</p> <p>Methodology and reference period: Employers; risk prevention</p> <p>Perpetrators: No</p> <p>Definitions: Sexual harassment, harassment, bullying</p>

United Kingdom UK5: TUC biennial OSH survey

Repeated (last year): Yes, 2011

Focus: Workers' representatives

Methodology and reference period: Five OSH issues of main concern

Perpetrators: No

Table A.4: National surveys addressed to both employers and employees

Country	Name of survey	Repeated (last year)	Focus	Methodology and reference period	Items	Frequency/ recurrence	Perpetrators
EE5	Working life	2009	General	Only employers: experience; solving measures	Aggregate		
BG3	NWCS	No, 2010		Employees: self-labelled, 12 months OSH experts employers: work environment	Threats of physical violence; physical violence; bullying/harassment; unwanted sexual courtship	no	Internal/external only for physical violence
BG4	General OSH profile	No, 2012	OSH profiles, prevention policies	Same as NWCS	See NWCS	no	See NWCS
IE	Bullying at WP	No, 2007	Bullying	Employees: integrated personal, past 6 months Employers: self-labelled, Factors, , impact on performance, procedures, training Bullying policy at WP	Employees, self-labelled: verbal abuse/insults; physical abuse; Sexual harassment; intrusion – pestering, spying or stalking; threats (explicit or implicit); intimidation or harassment; aggression; humiliation. Employees, operational; cases in working life employers: bullying, Target persons' reaction and consequences	Employees: duration, frequency, biography Employers: Past two years	Perpetrator: one/several colleagues; one/several supervisors; one/several subordinates; clients/ customers. Employer: perpetrator (ascending, horizontal, descending, external)
LV	Work environment risks (working conditions and risks in data)	Yes, 2013		Employees Employers OSH specialists	Not specified	Not specified	Not specified

Table A.5: Surveys addressed to employed persons by questionnaire design and scope

Scope/questionnaire design	Self-labelling	Operational	Integrated	Indirect/work environment
National/regional intersectoral	BE1, BG2, BG3, BG4, CY1, CZ1, DK1, DK2, EE2, EE6, FI1, FI2, FI3, FR2, HU1, HU3, IT2, LT1, LU, NL1, NL2, RO, SE1, SE2, SK1, SI1	CY2, IT6, SI3, EE3	EE1, ES1, FR1, FR3, IE, IT4, NO1, SI7	BE1(04-10), CY1, CZ5, DE3, DK1, DK2, ES1(2007), ES2, FI2, FI3, NL2, NO1, IT1, LU,
Sectoral	AT1, BG1, LT2, CZ2, SI2	DE1, DE2	DE3	AT1, BG1, SI2
Occupational	HR1	HU4, LT3, LT4, SI6		
Firm or groups of firms	BG1	AT2, BG1, IT3, MT	CZ3	CZ4

Source: National contributions

Table A.6: Investigating violence and harassment at the workplace – questionnaire design and personal or observed behaviour

Questionnaire design/ personal or observed behaviour	Personally experienced	Observed or reported at the workplace	Both personal and observed/reported
Self-labelled	BE1(2013), BG2–4, CZ1, EE6, EU1,3–6, FI1, FR1(2005), FR2, HU1, HU3, HU4, HU5, IT2, LT1, LT2, LU, NL1, RO, SE1, SE2	BE1(4–10), CZ5, ES1(2007), ES2, IT1, NL2	BG1, CZ1, CZ2, DK1, DK2, ES1(2011), FI2, FI3, HR1, SK1, SI1, SI2
Operational	AT2,* CY1, DE1, DE2, EE3,* IE1, IT3,* LT3,* MT,* SI2, SI6		AT1
Integrated	EE1(2009), FR1(2013–), DE3, IT4, NO1, SI3,* SI7		CY2, CZ3,* EE1(2013), IE

Note: Only surveys involving employees. *Implementing NAQ/NAQ-R.

Source: National contributions

Table A.7: Reference period of ASBs by questionnaire design

Reference period/ questionnaire design	Self-labelling	Operational	Integrated	Work environment
6 months		EE3,* SI3*	IE, SI7	
12 months	BE1, BG2, BG3, BG4, CZ2, CZ3, DK1, DK2, EE2, , FI1, FI2, FI3, FR2, HU1, IT2, LT1, NL1, SE1, SE2	IT6	EE1, ES1, FR1, FR3, NO1	
3 to 5 years	SK1	IT6		
None/working life	CZ1, IT1, LU	CY1, IT6	EE1(2013)	CZ5, ES2, NL2

Source: National contributions

Table A.8: Time, frequency and duration of ASB by type of questionnaire design

Time, frequency or duration/ questionnaire design	Self-labelling	Operational	Integrated
Present/past	FI1 **		FR3
Present/previous job(s)	FI2,*** FR2		IE
Duration	CZ1	DE1, SI6	IE, IT6
Frequency of assaults	BE1, CZ1, DE3, DK1, DK2, ES1, FI1,*** FI2, FI3, FR1/2005, HU1, NL1	AT2,* DE1, EE3,* IT3,* MT, SI2, SI3,* SI6	AT1, IE, IT6, NO1, SI7
Number of attacks			FR3

Notes: *NAQ-R, ** third parties *** sexual harassment only

Source: National contributions

Table A.9: Perpetrators by questionnaire design

Perpetrators/ questionnaire design	Self-labelling	Operational	Integrated
Colleagues, superiors, third parties	BG1, CZ2, DK1, DK2, HU1, IT2, LU, SE2	DE1, DE2, SI6	AT1, CZ3,* DE3, EE1, IE, IT4
Internal or external	BG3–4,* ES1, FI1, FI3,* FR2, LU, NL1, SE1		FR1, FR3, NO1,** SI7
Yes, not specified or open		CY2	SI1, SI2
Only third parties	HU4		
Perpetrators not specified	BE1, BG2, CZ2, CZ5, ES2, EE6, FI2, HU3, IT1, NL2, SE2, SK1		
Only internal	CZ1, CZ4	AT2,* EE3,* IT3,* MT,* SI3	IT4

*Only physical violence. **Hassle and teasing.

Source: National contributions

Table A.10 Reported ASBs among EU countries

Country	Years	National sources, cross-sectoral	Fifth EWCS
Austria	n.a.		21.6%
Belgium	2004– 2013	Physical violence: 5.4% (2004, noticed), 7.5% (2010, noticed), 4.6% (2013, personal experience) Sexual harassment: 2.1% (2004, noticed), 3.0% (2010, noticed), 2.2% (2013, personal experience) Bullying, harassment, mobbing: 14.4% (2004, noticed) 14.2% (2010, noticed), 9.6% (2013, personal experience)	19.9%
Bulgaria NWCS – General OSH profile survey	2010– 2012	Threats of physical violence (employees): 2.4% (2010), 2.1% (2012) Physical violence from colleagues (employees): 0.3% (2010), 0.2% (2012) Third-party physical violence (employees): 1.2% (2010), 1.0% (2012) Bullying-harassment (employees): 1.3% (2010), 0.3% (2012) Unwanted sexual courtship (employees): 1.5% (2010), 2.7% (2012)	10.7%
Bulgaria WCI	2010– 2012	Psychological harassment, pressure: 3.5% (2010), 4.8% (2012) Physical abuse, beating: 0.1% (2010), 0.2% (2012) Sexual hints and harassment: 0.2% (2010), 0.3% (2012)	
Croatia	n.a.		13.7%
Cyprus	n.a.		7.8%
Czech Republic CZ1	2007– 2013	Personal experience of different types of mobbing/harassment: 16% (2007), 27.5% (2009), 19.3% (2011), 20.7% (2013)	21.2%
CZ – our society CZ5	2008– 2013	Dissatisfied on violence and bullying: 5.9% (2008), 5.4% (2013)	

Country	Years	National sources, cross-sectoral	Fifth EWCS
Denmark	2010–2012	Bullying: 12.5% (2010), 12.1% (2012) Verbal threats: 10.6% (2010), 9.0% (2012) Violence: 7.5% (2010), 6.0% (2012) Witnessed bullying: 21.4% (2010), 29% (2012)	17.9%
Estonia – GEM	2009–2013	Harassment 6% men 9% women (2009), 16% working life (2013), sexual harassment 6% (2013), one unpleasant gender-based harassment 43% (2013)	17.6%
Estonia – EE2	2010	Harassment 10%, physical or mental violence 5%, unwanted sexual attention 5%	
Estonia – EE3 Bullying at work	2012	At least one negative act per week: 24%, two negative acts/week: 11%, 87% bullied daily, 8% occasionally bullied	
Finland – NWHS	1997–2012	Bullying: 6% (2009), 4% (2012) Sexual harassment 1.9% (2009), 3.5% (2012) Third-party inappropriate behaviour: 6.5% (only 2012) Threats: 6.3% (2009), 7.4% (2012) Physical violence: 3.7% (2009), 3.3% (2012)	22.6%
Finland – AWLB		Observed internal bullying: 27% (2009), 40% (2012) Third-party violence and threats: 6% (2009), 9% (2012)	
France – CT	2005	Verbal aggression, insults threats (always + often) 6.2%, sometimes 31.2 Physical aggression (always + often) 1.7%, sometimes 11%	18.7%
France Sumer	2010	Self-labelling: Internal verbal aggression 10.9% (at least one), 4.9% (more than one); third-party verbal aggression (at least one) 15.1% (more than one) 8.8%; at least one physical or sexual aggression 1.7%. Operational: degrading attacks 2.8%, denial of work acknowledgement 11.6%, expression of contempt 7.6% At least one hostile behaviour: 17% (2003), 22.3% (2009)	
Germany	n.a.		17.4%
Greece	n.a.		11.8%
Hungary equal treatment	2008–2012	Violence or harassment 12.8%	10.3%
Ireland	2007	7.9% bullied, of which: 76.7% verbal abuse, 7.7% physical abuse, 4.7% sexual harassment, 33.4% intrusions, 30.7% threats, 62.5% intimidation, 50.2% aggression, 57.9% humiliation	15.1%
Italy – QWS	2010	Notice of bullying 9.5%, notice of sexual harassment 1.3% (working life)	7.5%
Italy – Istat	2009	4.3% harassment or deprived of their assigned tasks without motivation	
Latvia	2006–2013	Mobbing: 2% (2006), 9% (2010), 4% (2013) Physical violence: 2% (2006), 9% (2010), 4% (2013) Sexual harassment: 0% (2006), 3% (2010), 2% (2013)	18.1%

Country	Years	National sources, cross-sectoral	Fifth EWCS
Lithuania – STD			16.1%
Luxembourg	2009	Dissatisfaction about physical violence 7%, verbal aggressions 31%, harassment 5% (coworkers), superiors 11%	16.7%
Malta			9.1%
Netherlands	2007–2011	External violence 24% (2011), internal violence 16% (2011)	15.9%
Norway	2013	Bullying and teasing 2%, bullying from superior 2%, unwanted sexual attention once a month 3.4%, violence and threats of violence 6%	20%
Poland	2012	Sexual harassment 3.9%, mobbing 17.3%	10%
Portugal			8.5%
Romania			7.7%
Slovakia			14.6%
Slovenia – ad hoc EWCS	2010	2.9% intimidation, 1.7% physical threats or violence, 1.5% physical violence, 8.5% verbal abuse, 6.6% threats and humiliating behaviours	14.8%
Slovenia – sexual harassment	2007	Verbal sexual harassment 27.1%, non-verbal 15%, physical 14.8%	
Spain	2007–2011	Exposure to discrimination or violence 11% (2011) Verbal aggression, rumours or social exclusion 2.9% (2009), 7.3% (2011) Physical violence threats 3.8% Third-party physical violence 3.8% (2007), 2.4% (2011) Internal physical violence 0.9% (2007), 0.6% (2011) Sexual harassment 0.7% (2007), 0.6% (2011) Risk of robberies, physical aggressions and other violent acts 7.1% (2009), 8.9% (2011)	8.7%
Sweden	2009–2011	Physical and verbal violence, abuse, threats intimidation 14% (2009–2011) Bullying, harassment/mobbing 9% (2009), 8% (2011) Gender-based harassment 8% Conflict or quarrels with third parties 36% (2009), 34% (2011)	16.4%
United Kingdom			20.1%

Annex 2: Country codes

AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
FR	France
HR	Croatia
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
NO	Norway
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
UK	United Kingdom

EF/14/73/EN

Violence and harassment are attacks on personal dignity, the right to equal and non-discriminatory treatment and often a person's health. Workers affected by it feel insecure about their work; they are more frequently absent and may even be unable to work, with consequent impacts on productivity and corporate and public costs. Some national-level surveys point to a long-standing increase in reported violence and harassment. Certain European countries, such as the Scandinavian countries, have more coordinated, established policies on preventing and tackling violence and harassment. Awareness of the topic at the national level, its inclusion in legislation and the degree of the social partners' involvement in policies and interventions all contribute to the effectiveness of policies to address it.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency, whose role is to provide knowledge in the area of social and work-related policies. Eurofound was established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1365/75, to contribute to the planning and design of better living and working conditions in Europe.