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

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Key messages

1. It is difficult to measure and compare violence and harassment

2. The prevalence of VH is relatively constant

3. The focus should be on raising awareness and on improving policy coherence and legislation
Measuring violence and harassment
Definition

Adverse social behaviours

By one or more individuals

- Workplace violence and harassment
- Physical
- Psychological
- Sexual

One-off or systematic patterns of behaviour

- Criminal offences
- Abuse
- Threatening
- Humiliation
- Mobbing
- Bullying
- Disrespect

Amongst colleagues, between superiors, and subordinates or by third parties
Perpetrators

- Horizontal:

- Vertical:

- Third party violence:
Prevalence of violence and harassment
Prevalence in the EU – by country of birth

- born in the country
- worker or parents born in a foreign country

Graph showing prevalence by country of birth in the EU.
Prevalence in the EU – by type of contract

- Indefinite
- Fixed-term
- Temporary agency
- Apprenticeship
Prevalence in the EU – by sector

Activities of extraterritorial organisations and bodies
Agriculture, forestry and fishing
Activities of households as employers
Mining and quarrying
Construction
Manufacturing
Professional, scientific and technical activities
Information and communication
Energy
Water supply and waste management
Wholesale and retail
Finance and insurance
Real estate activities
Admin and support service
Arts, entertainment and recreation
Education
Public administration
Accommodation and food services
Transportation and storage
Health and social work
What fosters violence and harassment
Certain working conditions can foster violence and harassment

- increased job demands
  (“Experience stress always”)

- change and re-structuring
  (“poor work-life balance” and “work intensity (never have time to do the job”)}

- organisational and social resources
  (“Risk of losing a job” and “Manager is not good at planning”)
Impacts on the worker

- Poor general health
- Mental health at risk (WHO-5)
- Health at risk because of work
- Absenteeism (>5 days)
- Work affects health negatively
- Able to work at 60

*No reporting violence and harassment* vs *subjected to violence and harassment*
Impacts on the business

• Higher job turnover

• Lower productivity

• Lower willingness/ability of workers to work until retirement age

• Higher absence rates
Prevention of violence and harassment
Public prevention policies

• Prevention of violence and harassment is generally **not** part of the public discussions and political debates

• Good legal definition → existence of long term strategy → presence of measures on company level
Government activities

• Adoption of legislation

• Supporting OHS activities

• Defining the scope and content of intervention

• Cooperation with other actors on the implementation of policies
Social partner initiatives

• Collective agreements

• Guidelines and awareness raising campaigns

• Bipartite activities and union activities

• Training of counsellors and health and safety representatives

• Helplines, websites, toolkits

• Events related to broader issues (well-being)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weakly coordinated activities</td>
<td>AT, CY, HU, IT, PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public activities only</td>
<td>EE, EL, LT, PT, RO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government initiatives integrated and complemented by social partners</td>
<td>BE, DK, FR, NT, ES, SE, SI, DE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government initiatives integrated by at least tripartite actions</td>
<td>DE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decentralised activities (sectoral and company level)</td>
<td>BG, CZ, LV, SI, HR</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Recommendations

• Raising awareness and reporting

• Improving and clarifying legislation

• Improving working conditions

• Improving policy coherence and integration of different actors
Government to start tracking sexual misconduct in the workplace

"Many women have had unsafe experiences in the workplace - this needs to stop, and there needs to be consequences for workplaces that don't take action," she said.

"The more people know about the scale of the problem, the more we can do to address it."

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