DIGNITY

Violence against women: an EU-wide survey

Main results

FRA
EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

This report addresses matters related to, in particular, the right to human dignity (Article 1), the right to the integrity of the person (Article 3), the principle of non-discrimination, including on the ground of sex (Article 21), the right to equality between women and men (Article 23), the right to an effective remedy and to a fair trial (Article 47) falling under Titles I 'Dignity', III 'Equality' and IV 'Justice' of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

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FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
Schwarzenbergplatz 11 – 1040 Vienna – Austria
Tel.: +43 158030-0 – Fax: +43 158030-699
Email: info@fra.europa.eu – fra.europa.eu

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Violence against women: an EU-wide survey

Main results

Foreword

This report is based on interviews with 42,000 women across the 28 Member States of the European Union (EU). It shows that violence against women, and specifically gender-based violence that disproportionately affects women, is an extensive human rights abuse that the EU cannot afford to overlook.

The survey asked women about their experiences of physical, sexual and psychological violence, including incidents of intimate partner violence ('domestic violence'), and also asked about stalking, sexual harassment, and the role played by new technologies in women's experiences of abuse. In addition, it asked about their experiences of violence in childhood. What emerges is a picture of extensive abuse that affects many women's lives, but is systematically under-reported to the authorities. For example, one in 10 women has experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 15, and one in 20 has been raped. Just over one in five women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence from either a current or previous partner, and just over one in 10 women indicates that they have experienced some form of sexual violence by an adult before they were 15 years old. Yet, as an illustration, only 14 % of women reported their most serious incident of intimate partner violence to the police, and 13 % reported their most serious incident of non-partner violence to the police.

There have been repeated calls over several years from different quarters for comprehensive data on violence against women – including various Presidencies of the Council of the EU, monitoring bodies such as the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the Council of Europe. It is clear, with the publication of these results, that the time is now ripe to address violence against women on the basis of the evidence supplied by the survey for 28 countries. Future EU strategies on equality between women and men could build on the survey's findings to address key areas of concern about women's experiences of violence. The survey results also provide ample support for EU Member States to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), and for the EU to explore the possibility of accession to the convention. The findings further reinforce the need to ensure implementation of existing EU measures for victims of crime, most notably through the EU Victims' Directive. They also serve to underline the importance of targeted EU legislation and policies addressing violence against women, such as the European Protection Order and the Regulation on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters, which need to be applied in practice if they are to be effective.

Alongside responses to violence against women at the level of EU institutions and Member States, action to combat violence against women needs to come from different quarters, including employers, health professionals and internet service providers – to name just a few. This is particularly important because many women do not report their experiences of abuse to the authorities, so that the majority of violence against women continues to be hidden and, as a result, perpetrators are not confronted. Therefore, different avenues for highlighting and combating violence against women need to be explored further. With the publication of the survey and the necessary follow-up measures by politicians and policy makers, women who have been a victim of violence and have remained silent can be encouraged to speak up. This is crucial in those countries, and among certain groups, where it is not yet widespread to openly talk about personal experiences of violence, where reporting of incidents to the authorities is low, and where violence against women is not addressed as a mainstream policy issue.

In sum, this report presents the first results from the most comprehensive survey to date at the level of the EU (and worldwide) on women's diverse experiences of violence. It is hoped that the report's findings – read alongside the online data explorer tool – are taken up by those women and men who can advocate and initiate change to address violence against women.

Finally, the results presented in this report were only made possible by the participation of women in the survey who gave their time to talk about very personal and difficult experiences. It was the first time many of them had spoken to anyone about their abuse. For this, the FRA would like to thank them.

Morten Kjaerum
Director

Acronyms

CAPI	Computer-assisted personal interviewing
CDC	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, USA
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EU	European Union
EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
HEUNI	European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations
PAPI	Paper and pen interviewing
UNICRI	United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute

Country codes

Country code	Country
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

Country code	Country
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
UK	United Kingdom

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1

An EU-wide survey on violence against women: why it is needed

1.1. Survey background and objectives

Violence against women can be addressed through a fundamental rights lens. It is a violation of human dignity and, in its worst form, it violates the right to life. It is also an extreme expression of inequality on the ground of sex.

Violence against women exists in every society, and encompasses different forms of physical, sexual and psychological abuse. However, despite its scale and social impact, it remains largely under-reported and relatively under-researched in key areas. This report is based on findings from FRA's survey of 42,000 women. It presents EU-wide data for the first time on the extent, nature and consequences of violence against women in all 28 Member States of the EU.

Women can perpetrate violence, and men and boys can be victims of violence at the hands of both sexes, but the results of this survey, together with other data collection, show that violence against women is predominantly perpetrated by men. This is overwhelmingly the case when it comes to sexual violence and sexual harassment. With this in mind, the majority of violence against women can be understood as gender-based violence.

In most EU Member States, until relatively recently, violence against women – particularly domestic violence – was considered a private matter in which the state played only a limited role. It is only since the 1990s that violence against women has emerged as a fundamental rights concern that warrants legal and political recognition at the highest level, and as an area where State Parties, as those with a duty to protect, have an obligation to safeguard victims.

In the EU, the current legislative and policy focus on violence against women is looking into phenomena such as trafficking in women and girls, and female genital mutilation (FGM), as the (often) transnational nature of these crimes provides the EU with an entry point for addressing them. However, most women who do experience violence experience it in other ways, such as intimate partner violence or sexual harassment – to name just two examples that are covered in FRA's survey. Although EU law is in place to address certain forms of violence against women – such as Directive 2006/54/EC (recast),[1] which encompasses 'sexual harassment' – many forms of violence against women are still not addressed explicitly through EU law.

Those working to address violence against women at the EU and Member State levels are confronted by an absence of comprehensive, robust and comparable data on its extent and nature. Existing police and criminal justice statistics, or evidence from case law, paint only a partial picture of the 'true' extent and nature of violence against women. This is partly because women under-report a broad range of incidents, and also because many criminal justice systems have difficulty in bringing offenders to account and accurately serving the needs and rights of victims. For example, where criminal justice data are available for analysis, they have traditionally shown high 'attrition rates' for rape; in other words, conviction of rapists is low in comparison with the number of reported rapes.[2]

[1] Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast), OJ 2006 L 204.

[2] Daly, K. and Bouhours, B. (2010), 'Rape and attrition in the legal process: A comparative analysis of five countries', *Crime and Criminal Justice: A Review of Research*, Vol. 39, pp. 565–650.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is an EU agency, which was established in 2007.[3] Its establishment has raised the issue of gender equality higher on the EU's agenda, including the area of violence against women. Working with existing data from Eurostat and other data providers, EIGE launched its gender equality index in 2013. The index measures gender equality between men and women in different fields, including a 'satellite domain' on violence against women that "remains empty due to the lack of data".[4] The absence of data within the domain of violence against women emphasises that the EU and Member States give greater priority to data collection in other areas, such as employment. As agreed with FRA, data from the present survey on violence against women will be used by EIGE to populate this part of the index.

The continued lack of comprehensive and comparable data at the EU and Member State levels on the extent and nature of all forms of violence against women (apart from the results of FRA's survey) means that policy initiatives to address this phenomenon are hampered. In the absence of robust data, decisions could be made that may not accurately reflect victims' experiences and needs. However, violence against women is increasingly recognised as a fundamental rights abuse, and it is hoped that this means that the need to accurately document the phenomenon, to be able to effectively respond to it, will also be addressed.

The FRA EU-wide survey responds to a request for data on violence against women from the European Parliament in 2009, which was reiterated by the Council of the EU in its March 2010 Conclusions on the eradication of violence against women in the European Union.[5] Namely, the European Parliament called for *"the collection and compilation by the FRA of reliable, comparable statistics on all grounds of discrimination [...], including comparative data on violence against women within the EU"*.[6]

With the above in mind, and in line with FRA's mandate to collect data on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU – including data on discrimination on the ground of gender, on victims of crime and on access to justice – FRA's survey on gender-based violence against women has the following objectives:

- to provide the first EU-wide dataset on the extent, nature and consequences of violence against women, as reported by women, which can be used to inform policy and action on the ground;
- to highlight the manifestation of gender-based violence against women as a fundamental rights abuse in the EU.

The publication of the FRA survey results serves to demonstrate that it is feasible to collect EU-wide data on violence against women. These data can be compared with criminal justice statistics, which are reliant on women reporting their experiences of victimisation to the authorities, regarding the extent and nature of violence against women. This can, in turn, encourage EU Member States that are not already doing so to collect data in this area.

The development of the survey was undertaken in-house by FRA staff.

We thank the following people, who helped by providing their valuable expertise and time at a series of expert meetings where the survey was discussed: Stéphanie Condon (Institut national d'études démographiques – INED – France); Claudia Garcia-Moreno (World Health Organization); Carol Hagemann-White (University of Osnabrück, Germany); Markku Heiskanen (European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations); Henriette Jansen (independent consultant); Kristiina Kangaspunta (United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime); Liz Kelly (London Metropolitan University, the United Kingdom); Agnieszka Litwinska (Eurostat); Manuela Martínez (University of Valencia, Spain); Santiago Moran Medina (Ministry of Equality, Spain); Els Mortier (European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice); Maria Giuseppina Muratore (Istat, Italy); Natalia Ollus (European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations); Jurgita Pečiūrienė (European Institute for Gender Equality – EIGE); Renée Römkens (Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History, the Netherlands); Monika Schröttle (University of Bielefeld, Germany); and Sylvia Walby (Lancaster University, the United Kingdom). In addition, the EU-wide non-governmental organisation (NGO) Women against Violence Europe (WAVE), and in particular Rosa Logar from WAVE, played an important role in identifying and clarifying the names of key organisations in each EU Member State that work to support victims of violence against women, to which interviewees could turn for assistance if needed. Alongside Rosa Logar, we would also like to thank Colette de Troy, Director of the European Women's Lobby, for having supported the survey's launch.

[3] EIGE's founding regulation dates from 2006; its first annual work programme was adopted in 2010.

[4] See the Gender Equality Index, available at: http://eige.europa.eu/content/gender-equality-index.

[5] Council of the EU, Council conclusions on the eradication of violence against women in the European Union, 3000th Employment and social policy meeting, Brussels, 8 March 2010.

[6] European Parliament (2009), Resolution on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – An area of freedom, security and justice serving the citizen – Stockholm programme, Brussels, P7_TA(2009)0090, para. 29.

1.2. Violence against women: a fundamental rights abuse

1.2.1. Defining the problem

Whereas violence against women has always existed, it is only in the last two decades or so that the international community has begun to highlight and systematically define the problem. It is increasingly addressed as 'gender-based violence' and recognised as a form of human rights abuse.

In 1992, the General Recommendation of the United Nations (UN) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee)[7] established that gender-based violence is "violence that is directed against a woman because she is a woman or that affects women disproportionately" (Article 6) and that it "is a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men" (Article 1).[8]

Following this, the first internationally agreed definition of violence against women was introduced in the 1993 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (Article 1), which states that:

> *" 'violence against women' means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."*[9]

The recognition of violence against women as a hindrance to women's full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms was further strengthened at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995,[10] and in the resulting Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.[11] The concluding document set out the definition of violence against women to incorporate violence in a variety of settings, including (Article 113):

> *"(a) physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;*
>
> *"(b) physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution;*
>
> *"(c) physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs."*[12]

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention),[13] adopted in 2011, largely follows these earlier definitions. The Istanbul Convention defines both terms 'violence against women' and 'domestic violence' (Article 3):

> *"(a) 'violence against women' is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life;*
>
> *"(b) 'domestic violence' shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim."*[14]

The EU has not adopted its own definition of violence against women, nor has it enacted specific legislation encompassing the full range of women's experiences of violence; instead, the EU makes reference to definitions developed by the UN and the Council of Europe.

7 The CEDAW Committee is a body of 23 independent experts on women's rights around the world; it monitors the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which entered into force on 3 September 1981. As at January 2014, 187 countries have ratified or acceded to the convention.

8 UN, CEDAW Committee (1992), General Recommendation No. 19 on Violence against women, adopted at the 11th session, 1992, A/47/38, 29 January 1992.

9 UN, General Assembly, *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women*, A/RES/48/104, 20 December 1993, p. 3.

10 The UN Commission on the Status of Women organised this conference 'Action for equality, development and peace' in Beijing (China) on 4–15 September 1995.

11 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the 16th Plenary session, 15 September 1995.

12 UN, *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women*, A/CONF.177/20/Rev.1, 4–15 September 1995, pp. 48–49.

13 The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers adopted the convention on 7 April 2011. It opened for signature on 11 May 2011 on the occasion of the 121st Session of the Committee of Ministers in Istanbul, available at: www.conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ChercheSig.asp?NT=210&CM=&DF=&CL=ENG.

14 Council of Europe, Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, CETS No. 210, 2011, p. 8.

To date, the EU's legal and policy approach has been to focus attention on specific forms of violence that have an impact on women, such as trafficking and female genital mutilation.

FRA's survey on violence against women has drawn from these various international definitions of 'violence against women', as well as existing research on the phenomenon of violence against women, to encompass a wide range of women's experiences. It should be noted, however, that the survey did not use a definition of violence against women when introducing the survey to potential interviewees or when conducting survey interviews.

The introductory text about the FRA survey avoided an explicit definition of 'violence against women'. This was to ensure the safety of interviewees when interviewers were first talking about the survey on people's doorsteps, which potentially could be in the presence of or overheard by others. A definition of violence was also not provided during the survey interview. This was to avoid restricting women's understanding of violence to a fixed definition. Rather, specific acts or situations involving different forms of violence were described in detail in the course of interviews. For example, women were asked a range of questions, such as if they had been punched or kicked, if their hair had been pulled and if they had received unwanted and sexually explicit emails or text messages. If they had experienced specific acts or situations, they were asked to identify who the perpetrator or perpetrators were, including their sex. In this way, the nature of the violence – as gender-based – was documented in detail and a wide range of experiences captured, some of which may or may not be encompassed by Member States' existing legislation.

1.2.2. Legal and policy recognition: key developments

Until recently, a number of acts of violence against women – especially in the family and in intimate relationships – were not considered criminal acts.[15] However, this situation has changed in recent years. Member States have increased the criminalisation of different forms of violence against women while, in parallel, there has been growing recognition of violence against women as a human rights violation. Legislative developments have also been matched by policy initiatives that set out to tackle violence against women in practice – both its causes and its consequences.

One of the most active fields for international and national level legislation and policy action in recent years has been in the area of trafficking in human beings. This has a disproportionate impact on women and girls in relation to sexual exploitation.[16] The FRA survey did not, however, address this form of violence against women, or female genital mutilation, because they affect certain groups within the female population and therefore are hard to capture through a general population survey. Given this, the remainder of this report will not refer to these forms of violence against women. Suffice to say that the level of recent international policy activity in the anti-trafficking field has not been matched by similar levels of activity with respect to some other forms of violence against women. This situation reflects how political and policy attention is focused on certain forms of crime, such as organised crime, of which human trafficking is one element.

At the UN level, there are several international legal instruments and resolutions that deal with violence against women in a broad sense. One is the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Although violence against women is not included in the text of the instrument, a General Recommendation from 1992,[17] supplementing the Convention, defined gender-based violence as a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits women's ability to enjoy rights and freedoms on a basis of equality with men. In addition – amongst numerous other initiatives – the United Nations established the UN Task Force on Violence Against Women to provide enhanced and systematic support at the national level (A/RES/61/143),[18] and also created the Secretary-General's database on violence against women. This follows the UN Secretary-General's 2006 in-depth study on all forms of violence against women[19] and gathers information from UN Member States about the nature of all forms of violence and the impact of various national responses to such violence.

At the regional level, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe prepared recommendations and resolutions on violence against women and girls. A Task Force to combat violence against women was established in 2005 to evaluate measures on violence against women and girls implemented both nationally and internationally, and a Campaign to combat violence

[15] European Commission (2010), *Feasibility study to assess the possibilities, opportunities and needs to standardise national legislation on violence against women, violence against children and sexual orientation,* Brussels, Directorate-General for Justice, Directorate B – Criminal Justice.

[16] Directive 2011/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 April 2011 on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/629/JHA, OJ 2011 L 101/1.

[17] UN, CEDAW Committee (1992), General Recommendation No. 19 on Violence against Women, adopted at the eleventh session, 1992, A/47/38, 29 January 1992.

[18] UN, General Assembly, Resolution on Intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women, A/RES/61/143, 19 December 2006, p. 6.

[19] UN, Secretary-General (2006), *Ending violence against women: From words to action. Study of the Secretary-General*, A/61/122/Add.1, 6 July 2006.

against women ran from 2006 until 2008 to promote public awareness, support for and protection of victims, and to advance data collection and encourage legislation.[20] The most recent and the most all-encompassing regional instrument to address violence against women is the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), which was adopted in April 2011.[21] The convention obliges its Parties to criminalise, inter alia, psychological violence, stalking, physical violence, sexual violence, including rape, and sexual harassment.[22] As at the beginning of 2014, 20 EU Member States have signed the convention and eight countries have ratified the convention, three of which are EU Member States. A total of 10 ratifications is needed for the convention to enter into force.[23] In turn, a number of decisions by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) concerning cases relating to violence against women show that a state's response – or rather lack of response – to violence against women is being acknowledged at the highest level as a human rights violation.[24]

Whereas the Council of Europe has recently adopted the Istanbul Convention, there is currently no legislation in place at the level of the EU that addresses violence against women in a comprehensive manner, although there is legislation addressing specific forms of violence such as sexual harassment (Gender Equality Directive (recast)[25]). The ratification of the Istanbul Convention by the EU could address this situation. However, at the level of EU Member States – according to a recent study funded by the European Commission – most have criminalised some forms of violence against women. For example, rape is a crime in all EU Member States although there are differences in the definition of what constitutes rape. Some EU Member States have criminalised sexual harassment while others address it through administrative penal sanctions. For intimate partner violence, most EU Member States rely on existing criminal statutes and only some countries have a specific criminal offence addressing violence in intimate relationships. Almost all EU Member States that have legislation in the area of intimate partner violence also have some form of protection measure in place for victims, including different types of protection orders. The authors of the Commission-funded study conclude that EU Member States' criminal laws address violence in principle, but there are still barriers to effective and consistent implementation of existing legislation and, as a result, there is a lack of access to equal redress and protection across the EU.[26]

Although there is no specific comprehensive legislation addressing violence against women at the EU level, generic legislation has been enacted concerning victims of crime. In May 2011, the European Commission adopted a package of legislative proposals to enhance the rights of victims of crime, which includes the EU Victims' Directive[27] establishing minimum standards on the rights, protection and support of victims of crime (replacing the Framework Decision on the standing of victims in criminal proceedings[28]). Specifically, the package also included a Regulation on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters, which is in place and should be of benefit to victims of domestic violence and other vulnerable people at risk of violence as they move between Member States[29] (in turn, this is complemented by the European Protection Order).

The EU Victims' Directive has several goals that can impact positively on victims of crime, including ensuring that all victims of crime have access to support services, protecting particularly vulnerable victims, and preventing 'secondary victimisation' of victims with respect to their treatment by the criminal justice system. Notably, the Victims' Directive variously recognises victims of gender-based violence, victims of sexual violence and victims of violence in a close relationship as being vulnerable as a result of the nature or type of crime to which they have fallen victim.[30] Reference to these vulnerable victims means that the specific needs of women can be duly recognised under this new legislation. What the realities of implementing this legislation in practice will mean has yet to be seen; but it is clear that significant legislative developments

20 Both the Task Force to combat violence against women, including domestic violence (EG-TFV), and the campaign were measures included in the action plan adopted at the Third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 16–17 May 2005).

21 Council of Europe, Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, CETS No. 210, 2011.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18.

23 As at 5 February 2014, for the full list of signatories, see http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/Commun/ChercheSig.asp?NT=210&CM=1&DF=&CL=ENG.

24 Council of Europe (July 2013), Factsheet – Violence against women.

25 Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast), OJ 2006 L 204.

26 European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice, *Feasibility study to assess the possibilities, opportunities and needs to standardise national legislation on violence against women, violence against children and sexual orientation (2010),* Brussels, Directorate B – Criminal Justice.

27 Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, OJ 2012 L 315.

28 Council of the European Union (2001), Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA of 15 March 2001 on the standing of victims in criminal proceedings, OJ 2001 L 82.

29 Regulation (EU) No. 606/2013), OJ 2013 L 181, p. 4.

30 Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, OJ 2012 L 315.

are taking place which serve to recognise the rights of victims of crime, including women who are victims of violence.

Whereas no general legal instrument on gender-based violence exists at the EU level, various EU policy initiatives refer to violence against women, often within an equality framework; for example, the European Commission's 2010 Communication concerning the *Women's Charter*.[31] In the Commission's mid-term review of the Strategy for equality between women and men (2010–2015), the specific action for 2011 to adopt an EU-wide Strategy on combating violence against women was, however, repealed. The mid-term review gives as a justification for repealing this action that: "The Commission focuses on concrete actions to combat violence in areas where there is a clear legal basis for action in the Lisbon Treaty."[32] In this regard, future strategies for equality between women and men could explore the results of the present survey to address areas of violence against women that may warrant a specific response. For example, in the period 2013–2015 the European Commission indicates that it will undertake specific actions addressing violence against women within the overall framework of the Strategy for equality between women and men, such as launching an EU-wide campaign on gender-based violence; adopting new EU action to end female genital mutilation; developing knowledge on the gender dimensions of trafficking in human beings; and exchanging information and best practice on Member States' actions to combat violence and abuse against women with disabilities.[33] The wide-ranging and detailed evidence from the survey can support future action in other areas.

In turn, different Presidencies of the EU have been variously active in highlighting violence against women. The joint declaration of the January 2010 to June 2011 Trio Presidency (Spain, Belgium and Hungary) on equality between women and men[34] stressed cooperation in the fight against gender-based violence. The Council Presidency countries assured their continued support for implementation of the 2008 EU guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them.[35] However, these guidelines cover only the EU's external actions. At the same time, it can be acknowledged that since 2000 the Commission's Daphne Programme has provided significant funding for civil society, local authorities and researchers to address violence against women in the EU.

Against the backdrop of these actions, European NGOs, such as the European Women's Lobby, have criticised the European Commission for continuing to lack a specific strategy to address violence against women. The European Parliament, most notably the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM Committee), has also challenged the European Commission about the need for targeted legislation on violence against women. It also remains the case that there is a continued absence of solid, comparable data at the EU Member State level, and hence across the EU, on violence against women – data that could be used to inform calls for action and policy responses to violence against women.

1.3. Lack of comprehensive and comparable data

One area where there is agreement – embracing the UN, the Council of Europe, the European Commission, the European Parliament and civil society – is with respect to the continued lack of comprehensive, comparable data on the phenomenon of violence against women.

In 2002, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe noted that research and data collection on violence against women needed to be developed further both nationally and internationally. This message was repeated by the stocktaking study on measures and actions addressing violence against women across Europe,[36] which identified the persistent dearth of Europe-wide research on violence against women.

This situation was echoed by the 2009 European Parliament Resolution on the elimination of violence against women,[37] which noted deficiencies in data collection. It was followed by another European Parliament Resolution in 2009 – referred to earlier in this chapter – which called on FRA to collect data on violence against women.

31 European Commission (2010), *A strengthened commitment to equality between women and men – A Women's Charter – Declaration by the European Commission on the occasion of the 2010 International Women's Day in commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the adoption of a Declaration and Platform for Action at the Beijing UN World Conference on Women and of the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,* COM(2010) 0078 final, Brussels, 5 March 2010.

32 European Commission (2013), *Mid-term review of the Strategy for equality between women and men (2010–2015)*, SWD (2013) 339 final, Brussels, p. 45.

33 *Ibid*.

34 Trio Presidency (Spain, Belgium and Hungary) (2010), Joint declaration on equality between women and men, Valencia, 26 March 2010.

35 Council of the European Union, General Affairs, *EU guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them*, 8 December 2008.

36 Hagemann-White, C., University of Osnabrück (2006), *Combating violence against women: Stocktaking study on the measures and actions taken in Council of Europe Member States*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, Directorate General of Human Rights.

37 European Parliament (2009), Resolution on the elimination of violence against women, P7_TA(2009) 0098, Brussels, 26 November 2009.

In turn, the European Commission Action Plan 2006–2010[38] for 'Developing an EU strategy to measure crime and criminal justice' made "measuring violence against women" and "measuring domestic violence" objectives to support the development of a common EU framework for indicators and data collection on crime. However, the new action plan on crime statistics 2011–2015[39] does not include data collection on violence against women or domestic violence, although a focus is on data collection in the field of trafficking in human beings, which by default includes both women and men.

From another quarter, the first report[40] on monitoring progress concerning the European Commission's Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006–2010)[41] noted the need for "reliable and comparable statistics", but it did not include specific reference to indicators on violence against women. The European Commission's mid-term review of the 2010–2015 Strategy for equality between women and men has repealed the proposed action for a targeted EU-wide Strategy on combating violence against women, which can impact negatively on data collection on violence against women in general.

EIGE's Gender Equality Index uses data collected by Eurostat and other sources. Its launch in 2013 serves to underline the continued absence of comprehensive EU-wide data on violence against women, in comparison with other fields such as education and employment.[42]

The need for comparable data on violence against women is recognised to some extent at the EU level, for example, with respect to trafficking. The reality at the level of many individual EU Member States is, however, that data collection on violence against women in general – in the form of official criminal justice statistics and victimisation surveys (using the same approach as FRA's survey) – is under-developed and not comparable across the EU.

With this in mind, the next few pages outline the extent of what we do and do not know about violence against women from existing data sources. The first subsection briefly looks at official criminal justice data on rape, and the second examines victimisation surveys covering violence against women.

1.3.1. Comparing criminal justice data: the example of rape

To highlight some of the challenges when looking at official criminal justice data to try to estimate the extent of violence against women, the example of data on rape is illustrative.

The *European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics*[43] is one of the few initiatives that have tried to systematically compare official crime data across the EU over several years. Within its work, it defines 'rape' to encompass a range of different criminal justice definitions.[44] However, official data on rape from each Member State – even when encompassing a broad definition – cannot be interpreted as representing the 'true' extent of the crime. Member States' definitions of rape differ, as do women's reporting rates, as do prosecution and conviction rates. This means that data in the *European Sourcebook* are only approximately comparable. Rather, the picture that is painted in the *European Sourcebook* of the extent of rape in a country, based on official data, reflects the following:

- the extent to which a country has a narrow or broad legal definition of rape;
- the extent to which women recognise that rape by an intimate partner or 'marital rape' is a crime, which affects reporting rates;
- the extent to which women are willing and feel able to report rape to the authorities – in other words, whether or not there is a culture of reporting that reflects women's confidence in the authorities to respond appropriately and effectively;
- the point in the investigation (e.g. beginning, middle or end) when the case is recorded by the authorities as a statistical unit;
- the rate of successful prosecutions and convictions in a country.

In sum, official crime statistics say more about official data collection mechanisms and the culture of reporting rape than they do about the 'real' extent of rape. Given that existing studies to date all indicate that rape is grossly under-reported, this would seem to indicate that the higher the recorded figures are – when

38 European Commission (2006), *Developing a comprehensive and coherent EU strategy to measure crime and criminal justice – An EU Action Plan 2006–2010*, COM(2006) 437 final, Brussels, 7 August 2006.

39 European Commission (2012), *Measuring crime in the EU – Statistics Action Plan 2011–2015*, COM(2011) 713 final, Brussels, 18 January 2012.

40 European Commission (2008), *Mid-term progress report on the roadmap for equality between women and men (2006–2010)*, COM(2008) 760 final, Brussels, 26 November 2008.

41 European Commission (2006), *A Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006–2010*, COM(2006) 92 final, Brussels, 1 March 2006.

42 EIGE (2013), *Study on international activities in the field of data collection on gender-based violence across the EU*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union.

43 Aebi, M. F., Aubusson de Cavarlay, B., Barclay, G., Gruszczyńska, B., Harrendorf, S., Heiskanen, M., Vasilika, H., Jaquier, V., Jehle, J.-M., Killias, M., Shostko, O., Smit, P. and Þórisdóttir, R. (2010), *European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics – 2010*, The Hague, Boom Juridische uitgevers, pp. 354–356.

44 The penal codes of 24 EU Member States also recognise that men can be victims of rape (European Commission, 2010); therefore, a percentage of cases within official criminal justice data involves men as victims.

compared across EU Member States – the more this reflects that the system for encouraging reporting, recording and prosecution of rape is working.

European Sourcebook data show considerable differences between EU Member States. For example, the average annual figures from official data in the period 2005–2007 range from 47 reported rapes per 100,000 population in Sweden, 27 per 100,000 in Belgium and 25 per 100,000 in England and Wales, through to 2 per 100,000 in Greece and Hungary, and 3 per 100,000 in Croatia, Malta, Portugal and Slovakia.

On average – looking at all Member States for which data were available for the period 2005–2007 – the police have recorded 11 reported rapes per 100,000 population per year; a suspected offender is found for five cases per 100,000 population; and two perpetrators per 100,000 population are convicted in court.[45] These figures can be critically reviewed alongside data from this survey – reported in Chapter 2 – which indicate that 1 in 20 women has been raped since the age of 15.

Having noted the relatively low rate of recorded rape in official statistics, a trend can be seen in the EU of the police increasingly recording rapes, as noted in the *Sourcebook*.[46] In the mid-1990s, the police recorded rate for rape was 7 per 100,000 population (both mean and median[47]). The median value has remained quite stable (varying between six and seven rapes per 100,000 population between the years 1995 and 2007), but the mean has increased from seven rapes per 100,000 population in 1995 to 11 rapes per 100,000 population in 2007. This development reflects the fact that, in some countries, the rate for police recording of rape is high and has increased in comparison with other EU Member States; for example, in Sweden, Belgium and the United Kingdom (England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland).

1.3.2. Existing surveys on violence against women

Administrative data sources, such as police statistics and other criminal justice data, can be used to describe trends over time in reporting, recording and prosecution rates, but their use is limited in describing the prevalence of violence as victims actually experience it. Police statistics and other criminal justice statistics do not provide a good estimate of the prevalence of crime because many incidents are not reported. The reasons for not reporting vary, and include the trouble involved in reporting an incident and a sense that the police will not be able to do anything about the crime. Victimisation surveys have been developed to provide a better estimate of the prevalence of crime; they record the number of women who report incidents to the police and, importantly, the number who do not. At the same time, surveys can ask questions about incidents that may not be legislated for in some countries. The results can serve to inform policy and legislative developments.

Today, population-based victimisation surveys that ask women about their experiences of violence are considered the most reliable and established method for obtaining information about the scale and nature of violence against women in a general population.[48] When based on a random sample of the population, these surveys have established themselves in a number of countries as an integral part of the data collection system on criminal victimisation.

Whereas general crime victimisation surveys have been in existence since the 1960s, it is only since the 1980s, and increasingly since the 1990s, that specific local, national and international surveys measuring violence against women have been developed. Worldwide, to date, some 99 countries have carried out surveys that have measured violence against women in different ways.[49] They include countries such as Canada and the UK that regularly include questions on violence against women in national crime victimisation surveys, which allows trends in violence and reporting rates to be analysed over time.

National surveys specifically on violence against women have been implemented in many EU Member States. In some cases, items on violence against women have been integrated in national surveys that are not primarily focused on violence against women. Up until 2014, there has been at least one survey in 23 EU Member States that has measured, in various ways, women's experiences of violence. Of these, 14 EU Member States have conducted dedicated violence against women surveys. Most EU Member States have integrated some questions on violence against women into other national surveys. Available information indicates that five EU Member States have not specifically collected data on violence against women using a victimisation

45 Aebi *et al.* (2010), *European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics – 2010*, The Hague, Boom Juridische uitgevers, pp. 354–356.

46 *Ibid.*, pp. 354–356.

47 Mean and median are both statistical measures indicating the centre of a group of values (measures of central tendency). Mean (used here to refer to the *arithmetic* mean) is the sum of all measurements divided by the number of observations. Median is the value which separates the data into two parts so that both parts have an equal number of observations.

48 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2010), *Manual on Victimization Surveys*, Geneva, United Nations.

49 UN Women (2013), *Violence against women prevalence data: Surveys by country*. All of these surveys are not specifically dedicated to violence against women, that is, targeted only to look at women's experiences of violence. Some may be general victimisation surveys that also measure other victimisation experiences or target groups, such as property crimes, and including male victimisation.

survey instrument (see Annex 1; although research using other methods – such as qualitative fieldwork – may have been used).

The results of existing national surveys are, however, not fully comparable for the following reasons: surveys focus on different groups (for example, with the youngest and oldest age groups differing); different sample sizes and sampling approaches are used (ranging from population databases through to random route sampling); different survey modes are used (face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, postal questionnaires; with and without interviewers); and – most importantly, which puts a limit on direct comparability – different interview questions are asked covering different subjects.

Researchers have attempted to overcome some of the limitations on comparability through various means, for example, by re-analysing the existing survey datasets to arrive at harmonised variables,[50] or by carrying out meta-analysis based on a large set of surveys in order to draw broad general conclusions.[51] These studies have, however, not been able to resolve many of the comparability issues which are the result of choices made during survey development and data collection. For this reason, they have had to limit themselves to looking at a small number of variables and a few forms of violence where comparisons can be more easily made.

To solve the problem of non-comparability, standardised international surveys on violence against women were developed in the first decade of the 21st century: the WHO Multi-country Study on women's health and domestic violence against women,[52] which covered 10 non-EU Member States, and the International violence against women survey[53] (IVAWS), which covered 11 countries around the world, three of which were EU Member States (Czech Republic, Denmark and Poland). Other international surveys such as demographic and health surveys (DHSs) and multi-indicator cluster surveys (MICSs) have also variously asked questions on violence, among other topics – again without covering the EU Member States in a comprehensive way. In sum:

> The FRA survey on violence against women is the first survey of its kind to capture the scope and nature of violence against women in all 28 EU Member States, using the same questionnaire, with the same mode of application and based on random sampling.

The limitations in data comparability notwithstanding, the results of these earlier surveys indicate that physical and sexual violence against women in the EU is a serious issue. Depending on the survey and what was asked about, between 9.6 % and 67.8 % of women reported having been subject to some form of physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, by either an intimate partner or another person. Annex 1 presents an overview of existing surveys in the EU on violence against women and a summary of some of their main results.

Chapters 2 to 9 present the main prevalence counts from the FRA survey, which show the extent of violence against women, in its different forms, across the EU. The maps present the mainland of all 28 EU Member States; in certain cases, islands belonging to Member States may not be shown.

1.4. About the survey

This section summarises the survey's development and oversight, its sampling and methodological approach, and its content.

Methodological annex

The methodological annex of this report (Annex 2) describes the composition of the sample and the characteristics of the respondents. For a comprehensive overview of the survey's development and technical aspects, see the technical report available at: http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/vaw-survey-technical-report.

1.4.1. Development and oversight

Working with experts

Before fieldwork began, the survey was developed over the course of two years, beginning in 2010. The FRA survey team received valuable input from a group of established academic experts and practitioners in the field of violence against women, who variously took part in a series of technical expert meetings at FRA's premises. In addition, FRA convened meetings with government representatives and policy experts

50 See, for example, Co-ordination Action on Human Rights Violations (2006), *Comparative reanalysis of prevalence of violence against women and health impact in Europe – obstacles and possible solutions: Testing a comparative approach on selected studies*.

51 See, for example, WHO (2013), *Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*, Geneva; and Alhabib, S., Nur, U. and Jones, R. (2010), 'Domestic violence against women: Systematic review of prevalence studies', *Journal of Family Violence*, Vol. 25, No. 4, pp. 369–382.

52 Garcia-Moreno, C., Jansen, H. A. F.M, Ellsberg, M., Heise, L. and Watts, C. (2005), *WHO Multi-country Study on Women's Health and Domestic Violence against Women*, Geneva, World Health Organization.

53 Johnson, H., Ollus, N. and Nevala, S. (2008), *Violence against Women: An International Perspective*, New York, Springer.

working in the area of violence against women, as well as with specialist NGOs working with female victims of violence.

Working with contractors

FRA issued an open call for tender to test the survey and carry out the fieldwork interviews and related components of the project work. It awarded the contract to Ipsos MORI, a large international survey company, working in partnership with HEUNI (the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, which is affiliated with the United Nations) and UNICRI (the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute).

Piloting the survey

Before launching the full-scale fieldwork for the survey, FRA undertook a pilot exercise in two phases. This was done in an effort to ensure that the final questionnaire reflected FRA's needs with respect to the project's objectives, and that the content was understandable and relevant to women's experiences. FRA drew from the best examples of questionnaires on violence against women when developing the survey instrument.

Given that the questionnaire was aimed at women in the general population – to try and gauge the extent of different forms of violence that women might experience – the draft questionnaire content was tested both with women who had been victims of violence (who were identified through women's shelters) and with a sample of women from the general population who had not been pre-identified as having been victims. As a result of the testing exercise, the questionnaire went through several stages of redrafting in house. Before the full-scale survey fieldwork began, the questionnaire was piloted in each EU Member State to identify and resolve any issues.

Questions were phrased without strict ties to legislative definitions of crime. This is necessary for multi-country victimisation surveys, since the scope of legislation differs from one country to another. Core questions can, however, be matched with existing legislation at the Member State level.

The initial questionnaire was developed in English and then translated, including a series of built-in checks (such as back-translations), into the official language or languages of each EU Member State.

1.4.2. Sampling and methodology

In each EU Member State, a minimum of 1,500 women took part in the survey, with the exception of Luxembourg where 908 women were interviewed. The total number of interviewees ranged from 1,500 women in Estonia to 1,620 in the Czech Republic.

The survey targeted the general population of women living in an EU Member State, who spoke at least one of the country's official languages.

The survey is based on a random sample of women aged 18 to 74 years in the general population in each EU Member State. This means that questions that apply to specific groups in the population, such as women who have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM), were not included because the number of women who could answer such questions would have been extremely low. Similarly, as with all survey research on the general population, women in institutional settings were not interviewed because of problems in gaining access to these settings. In this regard, targeted studies of specific populations are required if detailed survey data are needed concerning certain groups in the population (see the survey's 'Questions and answers', available at: http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2012/fra-survey-gender-based-violence-against-women).

Respondents were selected to take part in this survey using multistage random (probability) sampling. This means that a series of sampling steps was used to try to ensure that each interviewee had a chance of being selected for interview among the general population of women in each EU Member State. In turn, the sample was stratified by geographical region and urban/rural character to make it more representative. This sampling approach is important for two main reasons:

- it results in a sample that is representative of the female population aged 18 to 74 years living in each EU Member State;
- it increases the comparability of the survey results, as people were selected to take part in the survey using the same approach in each EU Member State.

Two approaches were adopted to identify possible interviewees. Comprehensive address lists were used to preselect addresses at random, which was feasible only in those EU Member States where such lists are accessible to survey companies. In other EU Member States, the long-established random-route walk method was used. An explanation of this method can be found in this survey's technical report, as well as in FRA's technical report from the EU-MIDIS survey, available at: http://fra.europa.eu/en/survey/2012/eu-midis-european-union-minorities-and-discrimination-survey.

The random sampling approach adopted for the survey employed strict criteria when selecting women for interviewing, including: no substitutions of persons who had been selected at random from the household to take part in the survey were allowed (for example,

within a household a mother could not be interviewed instead of her grown-up daughter if the daughter who was selected at random for interviewing was unavailable); and a minimum of three repeat visits were made to a randomly selected address to increase the likelihood of someone selected at random from that household being able to take part in the survey (with visits being on different days and at different times).

Interviews were conducted face-to-face by female interviewers in interviewees' homes. Questionnaires were filled out by interviewers using either pen and paper interviewing (PAPI) or computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI), whereby interviewers use laptops to fill out the questionnaire.

1.4.3. Survey content

The FRA survey sets out to provide data that can answer a number of questions relating to women's experiences of violence, including the following:

- What is the extent of violence experienced by women in EU Member States?
- What different forms of violence do women experience in the EU?
- Who are the perpetrators of violence against women?
- What are the consequences of violence?
- Do women report their experiences to the police or other authorities or organisations?
- Are there differences between women's experiences depending on their age, education or professional status?

To answer these questions, the survey covers a variety of different forms of violence; it asks a series of detailed questions about women's experiences of physical, sexual and psychological violence, including sexual harassment and stalking.

The survey includes questions on violence experienced since the interviewee was 15 years old (which is the same approach as the one adopted by the WHO in its 10-country study on violence against women), as well as violence experienced in the 12 months preceding the survey. In addition, the survey has specific questions on respondents' experiences of violence in childhood.

The survey also captures repeated experiences of victimisation, which are important to document in a number of areas, such as intimate partner violence.

The questions ask about a variety of perpetrators, including both current and previous intimate partners, as well as other persons such as relatives, friends, acquaintances, colleagues and strangers. Within a framework of addressing violence against women as gender-based violence, the survey collects information on the gender of perpetrators (male and female).

The survey also covers issues such as women's fear of violence, as well as information about their levels of awareness of legislation addressing violence against women. These kinds of questions help to contextualise the survey results.

From two weeks before the start of fieldwork through to the end of the fieldwork period, media monitoring took place on a daily basis at the national level. This was done to identify media stories about violence against women at the national level that could influence how interviewees responded to questions. Both print and online news sources were reviewed. Where the findings of this media monitoring could have had an impact on women's responses to the questions asked, the results are referred to in the body of this report.

Legal desk research

To provide a context for some of the survey's findings, desk research was undertaken across the 28 EU Member States on specific areas of law relating to violence against women. The results of this research will be followed up in a report to accompany the survey findings; they are referred to in places in the opinions section at the end of each chapter in this report.

The final analysis of the survey data and the content of this report were done in-house by FRA staff.

HOW TO READ THE SURVEY DATA AND KEY TERMINOLOGY

Reading the survey data

Multiple response options

Although many results that are presented in the text in this report also appear in the tables and graphs, some results are only mentioned in the text. In some cases, the text refers to results as a combination of two or more answer categories, which may be presented separately in the figures and tables. For example, the percentage of respondents who say that the perpetrator of stalking is somebody from the workplace is the result of combining the perpetrator categories 'boss/supervisor', 'colleague/co-worker' and 'client/customer/patient'). In these cases, the normal rounding error may result in a small difference of ±1 percentage point between the percentage quoted in the text (e.g. percentage of respondents who have been stalked by somebody from the workplace) and the result which one would get from adding up the results from the individual answer categories as presented in the tables and graphs (that is, summing up the percentage of respondents who have been stalked by a boss/supervisor, and the percentage of respondents who have been stalked by a colleague/co-worker, and the percentage of respondents who have been stalked by a client/customer/patient).

Under each table and figure reporting on the survey results, the question wording is summarised. The full question wording can be found in the survey questionnaire, which is annexed to the survey's technical report, see: http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/vaw-survey-technical-report.

Experiences of violence since the age of 15

When asked about their experiences of non-partner violence, respondents were asked to think about events that have happened to them since they were 15 years old.

Questions concerning violence by a partner refer to any acts of violence which took place during the relationship.

When presenting the results on non-partner violence since the age of 15 and partner violence during a relationship, in both cases reference is made simply to experiences of violence since the age of 15.

Selected terminology

The following paragraphs outline selected terminology and refer to how it is used in the survey.

Prevalence

Prevalence is used to explain how many, or what proportion (percentage), of the population are affected by a certain phenomenon during a given period of time (e.g. lifetime prevalence, or 12-month prevalence). For example, a 10 % prevalence of violence in the past 12 months means that, on average, one in 10 people were victimised once or more often during the 12-month period. Since prevalence counts each victim only once, regardless of whether they have experienced one or more incidents, prevalence of violence does not reflect the intensity of violence or repeat victimisation; it simply measures the number, or proportion, of the population that has experienced violence. When the survey sample is representative of the national (or wider) population, the prevalence measured in the sample can be taken to correspond with the prevalence in the population, within confidence intervals which differ from one survey to another.

Reference period

The FRA survey asked women about their experiences of physical and sexual violence, sexual harassment and stalking, based on two reference periods. In each case, the shorter reference period used is 12 months. The longer reference period is 'since the age of 15' in the case of questions on non-partner violence, and 'during the relationship' in the case of partner violence questions.

The shorter reference period offers a picture of the current situation with regard to various forms of violence, and therefore offers more up-to-date findings for policy. The longer reference period helps to assess how many women in total are affected by violence at some stage in their lives. In addition to the above, the questions on childhood victimisation focus on the period in women's lives before they turned 15 years old. The cut-off age of 15 years is the same as has been used, for example, by the WHO in its 2005 Multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women. National surveys of violence against women have varied in terms of the lower age limit of their target population, as is shown in Annex 1.

Categories of perpetrators

Respondents are considered to have a *current partner* if they are married, in a recognised civil partnership or registered partnership, living together with a partner without being married, or involved in a relationship with a partner without living together. Respondents who have previously had one of the above-mentioned partners are considered to have had a *previous partner*. Results referring to women's experiences with *any partner* are based on the responses of those respondents who have a current partner or who have had at least one previous partner.

Non-partners include all possible perpetrators other than current or previous partners. Victims of violence were asked to describe the person or persons involved, and this could involve, for example, co-workers, supervisors, customers, teachers, other family members, friends and acquaintances, dates, or persons who were not known to the respondent.

'Domestic violence' or 'intimate partner violence'

In the EU Member States, the term 'domestic violence' is used variously, either to refer exclusively to intimate partner violence or also encompassing intergenerational violence, such as violence against children, as well as children's violence against their parents.

The Istanbul Convention specifies that, in the context of the convention, 'domestic violence' shall mean all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit, or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim. Therefore the definition in the Convention includes both intimate partner violence and intergenerational violence.[a]

Most of the measures outlined in the convention, however, refer to 'violence against women and domestic violence'; only a few articles in the convention refer exclusively to domestic violence. Article 2, concerning the scope of the convention, states that: "This Convention shall apply to all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, which affects women disproportionately." In other words, domestic violence against women is subsumed under the term 'violence against women'. Articles of the Istanbul Convention that refer exclusively to domestic violence concern preventive intervention and treatment programmes (Article 16) and emergency barring orders (Article 52).

In conformity with the Istanbul convention, the FRA survey on gender-based violence against women captured incidents when the perpetrator was a current or previous partner or boyfriend/girlfriend, irrespective of whether the persons involved shared the same residence or not. This information can be interpreted as estimating the extent and forms of domestic violence in the stricter sense – that is, involving intimate partner violence. The FRA survey also recorded cases in which the perpetrator was a relative or family member (other than partner). These incidents can be added to the figures on intimate partner violence to produce an estimate of domestic violence in a broader sense. However, the results concerning partner violence, which are presented in this report, are based on women's experiences with their current and/or previous partners or boyfriends/girlfriends. The results on partner violence, therefore, exclude intergenerational violence.

[a] See Council of Europe (2011), *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence: Explanatory report*, Strasbourg.

Neither the Istanbul Convention nor its Explanatory Report give an exhaustive description of the perpetrators and contexts of violence, which should be considered as domestic violence. The Explanatory Report notes in paragraph 41 that: "Domestic violence includes mainly two types of violence: *intimate-partner violence* between current or former spouses or partners and *inter-generational violence* which typically occurs between parents and children."

Given the lack of a generally accepted and clear definition of 'domestic violence', the term is not used in this report when describing the results of the survey. Reference is made instead to 'intimate partner violence'.

2

Prevalence of physical and sexual violence

MAIN FINDINGS

Extent of the problem

- An estimated 13 million women in the EU have experienced physical violence in the course of 12 months before the survey interviews.
- An estimated 3.7 million women in the EU have experienced sexual violence in the course of 12 months before the survey interviews.

Overall prevalence of physical and sexual violence

- One in three women (33 %) has experienced physical and/or sexual violence since she was 15 years old.
- Some 8 % of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the 12 months before the survey interview.
- Out of all women who have a (current or previous) partner, 22 % have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner since the age of 15.

Characteristics of physical violence

- Some 31 % of women have experienced one or more acts of *physical* violence since the age of 15. While women are most likely to indicate that they were pushed or shoved, excluding this form of violence has only a limited effect on the overall prevalence of physical violence, bringing it down from 31 % to 25 %. This result reflects the fact that many women who say they have been pushed or shoved have also experienced other forms of physical violence.

Characteristics of sexual violence

- In total, 11 % of women have experienced some form of *sexual* violence since they were 15 years old, either by a partner or some other person.
- One in 20 women (5 %) has been raped since the age of 15.
- Of those women who indicate they have been victims of sexual violence by a non-partner, almost one in 10 women indicates that more than one perpetrator was involved in the incident when describing the details of the *most serious* incident of sexual violence they have experienced.

Details of intimate partner violence

- One third of victims (34 %) of physical violence by a previous partner experienced four or more different forms of physical violence.
- The most common forms of physical violence involve pushing or shoving, slapping or grabbing, or pulling a woman's hair.

- Whereas in most cases violence by a previous partner occurred during the relationship, one in six women (16 %) who has been victimised by a previous partner experienced violence after the relationship had broken up.
- Of those women who experienced violence by a previous partner and were pregnant during this relationship, 42 % experienced violence by this previous partner while pregnant. In comparison, 20 % experienced violence by their current partner while pregnant.

Details of non-partner violence

- One in five women (22%) has experienced physical violence by someone other than their partner since the age of 15.

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the survey results concerning the extent and nature of physical and sexual violence against women in the EU. Later chapters separately address sexual harassment, stalking and victimisation in childhood.

This section describes the overall prevalence of physical and sexual violence experienced by women. Understanding of the context and consequences of various forms of physical and sexual violence is then deepened in sub-sections, which focus on women's experiences by type of violence and perpetrator (intimate partners and non-partners).

Chapter 3 then looks at the effect that violence has on women's lives and at the action women have taken as a consequence of violence – for example, reporting to the police or other organisations.

EXPLAINING COUNTRY DIFFERENCES

Recognising and offering possible explanations for variations in violence against women between EU Member States

Given that there are variations in levels of violence reported in the FRA survey between EU Member States, which can be looked at in detail in the online data explorer tool, the following paragraphs set out to explore these differences.

Just as official criminal justice data on recorded crime vary significantly between countries, countries often exhibit large differences in levels of reported victimisation when people are interviewed for a victimisation survey. This applies to crime incidents in general and to incidents of violence against women in particular, which are sensitive to talk about in a survey. Variations between countries in the prevalence of violence reported in the FRA survey need, therefore, to be looked at within the broader context of existing differences between countries with regard to both official crime data and the results of existing survey research on victimisation.

Recognising differences between countries

Officially recorded rates for violent crime, including rates for violence against women – where data are available – differ significantly across countries

- This reflects variations in the law and legal categorisation, differences in patterns of reporting to the police and differences in recording crime, as well as differences in actual levels of crime.[1] For example, official crime data for the period 2005–2007 show that reported rape ranges from 47 per 100,000

[1] Tavares, C. and Thomas, G. (2010), 'Crime and criminal justice', *Statistics in Focus Series* 58/2010, Eurostat; Aebi *et al.* (2010), *European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics – 2010*, The Hague, Boom Juridische uitgevers.

in Sweden, 27 per 100,000 in Belgium and 25 per 100,000 in England and Wales, to two per 100,000 in Greece and Hungary, and three per 100,000 in Croatia, Malta, Portugal and Slovakia.[2]

General crime survey data and surveys on violence against women always show differences between countries

- Differences between countries in the level of violence against women are normal in survey research, particularly when results are compared across different surveys that may not include the same questions or take the same methodological approach.
- Differences between countries are also normal in survey research where the same questionnaire and the same methodological approach are used to measure experiences of victimisation.[3]
- A purpose of international crime surveys is to be able to highlight differences in results between countries. If the same results were found across countries, there would be little point in undertaking international surveys.

The FRA survey shows less variation between countries in rates of domestic violence than another international survey on women's experiences of domestic violence

The differences observed between 28 countries in the FRA survey findings on rates of 'domestic violence' are lower than the differences observed across 10 countries for the WHO's survey on domestic violence against women.[4] For example:

- The WHO's 10-country survey on women's health and domestic violence against women, which is based on face-to-face interviews with 24,000 randomly sampled women, reports significant differences in levels of domestic violence experienced by women, ranging from 13 % to 61 % depending on the country surveyed. Therefore, the difference in reported rates of domestic violence among the 10 countries surveyed by the WHO is 48 percentage points. In comparison, FRA's survey results across 28 countries shows a difference in prevalence of physical violence by a partner (either a current or a previous partner) that ranges from 12 % to 31 %, which is 19 percentage points.
- Looking at the WHO survey findings in consideration of interview sites (selected major cities and provincial locations where the interviews have taken place) in countries that fell within a less extreme range of the number of incidents reported in the survey, the difference is reduced to 26 percentage points, as most interview sites recorded rates of between 23 % and 49 %. However, this variation is still greater than that reported in the FRA survey.
- The 2010 national intimate partner and sexual violence survey from the United States (US) is not an international survey, but it is worth looking at its results.[5] It covers all 50 US states and shows variations in rates of violence experienced by women (and men) depending on the state concerned. The proportion of women who report having been raped ranges from 11.4 % in Virginia to 29.2 % in Alaska, whereas the FRA survey shows a range of between 4 % and 17 % depending on the EU Member State surveyed, taking into consideration those questions that match most closely with the US survey questions on rape.

The FRA survey results are broadly in line with results from national surveys on violence against women

For those EU Member States that have carried out national surveys on violence against women, the results of these surveys are broadly in line with findings from the FRA survey. To make the FRA survey results and the results of national violence against women surveys more comparable, efforts have been made to match the content of the items that are compared. The FRA survey results mentioned below may therefore differ from the results presented elsewhere in this report. For example, whereas the report generally presents prevalence rates of physical and/or sexual violence without including being threatened with violence,

2 Aebi *et al*. (2010).
3 Van Dijk, J., Manchin, R., van Kesteren, J. and Hideg, G. (2007), *European Crime and Safety Survey*, 2005, Tilburg University.
4 WHO (2005), *WHO Multi-country Study on women's health and domestic violence against women*, Geneva, WHO.
5 The US survey is available at: www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf.

threats have been included in the figure below if they have also been included in the prevalence count in the respective national surveys.

- A survey of 10,000 randomly sampled women in Germany by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth reported that 37 % of all women interviewees have experienced at least one form of physical attack or threat of violence by a partner or a non-partner since the age of 16.[6] The FRA survey found that 35 % of women in Germany have experienced physical violence or threats by a partner or a non-partner since the age of 15.
- Figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (formerly the British Crime Survey) for a 12-month period based on self-completion responses from a sample of 46,000 women and men, found that 18 % of women have experienced some form of stalking since the age of 16 (in comparison with 10 % of men).[7] The FRA survey found that 19 % of women in the United Kingdom have experienced stalking since the age of 15.
- In Malta, a 2011 report on the findings from a survey of 1,200 female respondents found that 16 % said they had experienced physical violence, sexual violence or both by a current or former partner since the age of 15.[8] The FRA survey found that 15 % of women in Malta have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a current or a previous partner since the age of 15.
- In Sweden, a postal survey carried out in 1999–2000 found that, among 6,926 women, 35 % had experienced physical or sexual violence by a previous male partner since the age of 15.[9] The FRA survey found that 32 % of women in Sweden have experienced physical and/or sexual violence or threats by a previous partner since the age of 15.
- In Finland, a 2005 postal questionnaire to 4,464 women found that 29 % had experienced physical or sexual violence, or threat from a non-partner, since the age of 15. The FRA survey found that 37 % of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence or threats from a non-partner since the age of 15.[10]
- In Denmark, a telephone survey of 3,552 women found that 50 % of women had experienced physical or sexual violence, or threat from a partner or a non-partner, since the age of 16.[11] The FRA survey found that in Denmark 55 % of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence or threat from a partner or a non-partner since the age of 15.
- In Italy, a telephone survey of 25,065 women in 2006 found that 32 % of women had experienced physical violence, sexual violence or threats by a partner or a non-partner since the age of 16.[12] In the FRA survey, 29 % of women in Italy have experienced physical and/or sexual violence or threat by a partner or a non-partner since the age of 15.

Possible explanations for differences

Although it is to be expected that the survey's results on rates of violence against women will differ between countries, in line with other survey findings, explanations for these differences are more difficult to develop, and generalise from, when looking across 28 diverse countries. At face value, the results present a picture of what women were able to talk about during the survey interview, but they also need to be read with respect to the context in each Member State in which violence against women is experienced and acknowledged.

The 2010 US survey on national intimate partner and sexual violence observes significant differences across all 50 states in the prevalence rates for intimate partner and sexual violence. The report on the findings does not offer explanations for these observed differences but simply notes that:

6 Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (2004), *Health, well-being and personal safety of women in Germany: A representative survey of violence against women in Germany – summary of the central research results*, Berlin, Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, p. 9.

7 Office for National Statistics (2013), *Focus on: Violent crime and sexual offences, 2011/12 – appendix tables*, Table 4.01: Prevalence of intimate violence among adults aged 16 to 59, by category, 2011/12 CSEW.

8 Commission on Domestic Violence (2011), *A nationwide research study on the prevalence of domestic violence against women in Malta and its impact on their employment prospects*, p. 5.

9 Lundgren, E., Heimer, G., Westerstrand, J. and Kalliokoski, A. M. (2002), *Captured queen: Men's violence against women in 'equal' Sweden – a prevalence study*, Umeå, The Swedish Crime Victim Compensation and Support Authority and Uppsala University, p. 8.

10 Piispa, M., Heiskanen, M., Kääriäinen, J. and Sirén, R. (2006), *Naisiin kohdistunut väkivalta 2005*, Helsinki, National Research Institute of Legal Policy and the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations, p. 21.

11 Balvig, F., and Kyvsgaard, B. (2006), *Vold og overgrep mod kvinder*, Copenhagen, University of Copenhagen and the Ministry of Justice, p. 16.

12 ISTAT (2008), *La violenza contro le donne*, Rome, ISTAT, p. 13.

> *"although there are variations between states, the purpose in presenting these data is not to compare states but rather to help states understand the burden of the problem in their populations. The states, themselves, vary in a number of ways, including in their demographic characteristics (e.g., age distribution), social, economic and cultural characteristics, as well as external stressors (e.g., economic downturn, job loss, poverty), and other factors."*[13]

Results reported in a survey cannot be said to offer causal explanations for what is found, but they do describe observed patterns that can point to possible explanations when looked at alongside other research findings.

Here, five possible explanations for observed differences between EU Member States in prevalence rates for violence against women are tentatively put forward. They require further exploration and research for corroboration.

Whether it is acceptable to talk with other people about experiences of violence against women

- In a number of EU Member States, the survey found lower rates of violence against women where respondents also indicated lower levels of knowledge about domestic violence experienced by other people, such as friends or family. The results from a 2010 Special Eurobarometer survey on domestic violence against women, which interviewed a representative sample of women and men in 27 EU Member States, found the following with respect to Sweden (a high-prevalence country in the FRA survey) and Bulgaria (a low-prevalence country in the FRA survey):
  - 3 % of male and female respondents in Bulgaria have heard of domestic violence through their family circle, compared with 32 % of male and female respondents in Sweden.
  - 33 % of male and female respondents in Bulgaria stated that they have heard about domestic violence through friends, compared with 47 % of respondents in Sweden.
  - 6 % of male and female respondents in Bulgaria have heard about domestic violence through colleagues or other contacts at their workplace, compared with 43 % of respondents in Sweden.
- The above can be explained in different ways: either overall rates of domestic violence are much lower in Bulgaria than in Sweden; or the fact that people in Bulgaria hear considerably less than people in Sweden from family members and colleagues about domestic violence – but they hear more from friends than from those groups – is an indication that the matter is considered to be private in relation to two domains, the family and the workplace. In this regard, it could be suggested that in Bulgaria, for example, the subject of violence against women could be considered as something you do not talk about in certain settings and with certain people – including an interviewer who has just entered your home to conduct a survey.

Increased gender equality leads to higher levels of disclosure about violence against women

- Increased equality between the sexes at the EU Member State level is reflected in greater awareness about violence against women at different levels in society, including the media. It is often accompanied by enhanced mechanisms to encourage and facilitate reporting of incidents. This could mean that more women are willing to disclose their experiences of violence to the police, and in a survey interview, as the subject of violence against women is 'normalised' within society.
- Looking at FRA's survey results alongside EIGE's gender equality index for all EU Member States, it can be observed that Member States that are ranked highest in terms of gender equality tend also to have higher prevalence levels of violence against women in the FRA survey (see Figure 2.4).

Women's exposure to risk factors for violence, particularly outside the home

- Another possible explanation for women's experiences of violence is their exposure to different risk factors. For example, being young is linked to higher rates of victimisation, which holds true across all countries surveyed. However, selected survey results could be looked at alongside other data at EU Member State level with respect to factors that could influence the risk of victimisation, such as employment

[13] Available at: www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf, p. 67.

patterns for women. For example, where more women in a Member State are in employment or in specific types of employment, they are also likely to be more at risk of sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Here, the survey found that, in relation to experiences of sexual harassment, women in professional and higher management positions were at greater risk than women in some other occupational groups.
- At the same time, it could be suggested that, when women gain more equality and start to challenge traditional gender roles – for example, by going out more at night to socialise, by being in work, by not staying in violent or otherwise abusive relationships – then they are more exposed to risk of violence.

Differences between countries in overall levels of violent crime

- Differences between countries in rates of violence experienced by women might be partly explained by looking at the overall violent crime rate in a country.
- In turn, overall levels of violent crime need to be looked at alongside possible explanatory factors such as the level of urbanisation in a country, or the number of young people (specifically young men) in the population. These factors tend to increase crime rates; urban areas are more crime prone than rural areas, and young men tend to commit most of the crime – such as violent crime – that people are concerned about.
- The 2005 European Survey on Crime and Safety (which is a general population survey covering both men and women and different types of crime) points to a general relationship between urbanisation and crime: more urban countries tend to have higher levels of crime. Urbanisation may help to explain the prevalence of crime to some extent, but is less able to explain differences in crime in the private sphere, such as domestic violence.
- Rates of violent crime have generally declined in recent years in the EU, according to official criminal justice statistics and victimisation surveys, but there is variation in overall rates of violent crime across EU Member States. Eurostat notes that rates of violent crime have increased in Cyprus, Denmark, Luxembourg, Greece and Sweden in the period 2003–2009.

Different drinking patterns in EU Member States

- A perpetrator's consumption of alcohol is often put forward as an explanation for women's experiences of violence, particularly in intimate partner relationships. However, at the EU Member State level any explanation linking overall alcohol consumption and levels of violence against women has to be treated cautiously. Factors such as periodic heavy drinking rather than the volume of alcohol consumed in a country, together with data about the context in which alcohol is consumed (during a meal or on an occasion where alcohol consumption is the main activity), need to be looked at in combination with other factors when exploring the relationship between violence against women and drinking patterns in EU Member States. Such other factors include an individual perpetrator's predisposition towards violence.
- The survey did find heavy alcohol use by perpetrators of domestic violence, but further analysis is needed to understand the relationship between alcohol and other factors that contribute to violence.

These five possible explanations are far from exhaustive when trying to offer reasons for differences between EU Member States in levels of violence against women. Further research – both quantitative and qualitative – is needed at the Member State level to be able to understand the context in which violence occurs and to test possible explanations for reporting rates in the survey. In addition, existing data from other sources can be looked at in combination with FRA's survey results.

The following sections describe the results as they were reported by women, and highlight certain observed patterns in the findings that can assist in developing these explanations.

2.2. Prevalence rates of physical and sexual violence since the age of 15

As shown in Box 2.1, women were asked about their personal experiences of various forms of physical and sexual violence. In order to help respondents recall relevant events, the questions were asked separately with regard to different perpetrators: the current partner, the previous partners and any other persons. These questions were administered based on women's description of their relationships at the beginning of the survey; questions relating to partners were asked only if women said that they had a current and/or a previous partner, whereas all women were asked about their experiences with non-partners.

Table 2.1 presents the overall prevalence of physical and sexual violence across the EU Member States – that is, how many women as a proportion of all women aged 18 to 74 years have been exposed to violence (or as a proportion of all women aged 18–74 years who have a current or previous partner, in the case of intimate partner violence).

According to the FRA survey, since the age of 15, one woman in five (22 %) who is or has been involved in a relationship with a partner[14] has experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence. Equally, one in five women (22 %) has experienced this type of violence by somebody other than an intimate partner – for example a stranger, acquaintance, relative, boss or colleague. Overall, one in three women in the EU has been a victim of physical and sexual violence by a partner, a non-partner or both.

> One woman in three in the EU has experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15.

[14] Women who indicated that they have a partner were asked about the gender of the partner. Few women indicated that they have a same-sex partner: 151 women referred to experiences with a current female partner, whereas 30,486 women described their experiences with a current male partner. Given the small number of respondents in same-sex relationships, this does not have a significant impact on the overall results. For example, if respondents with female partners are excluded when computing the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 by a current partner, the prevalence for the EU-28 is 8 %, the same prevalence as when female partners are included.

Box 2.1: What the survey asked – physical and sexual violence

Physical violence

Since you were 15 years old until now/in the past 12 months, how often has someone:

- Pushed you or shoved you?
- Slapped you?
- Thrown a hard object at you?
- Grabbed you or pulled your hair?
- Beaten you with a fist or a hard object, or kicked you?
- Burned you?
- Tried to suffocate you or strangle you?
- Cut or stabbed you, or shot at you?
- Beaten your head against something?

Sexual violence

Since you were 15 years old until now/in the past 12 months, how often has someone:

- Forced you into sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way? [IF NEEDED: By sexual intercourse we mean here forced oral sex, forced anal or vaginal penetration.]
- Apart from this, attempted to force you into sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way? [IF NEEDED: By sexual intercourse we mean here forced oral sex, forced anal or vaginal penetration.]
- Apart from this, made you take part in any form of sexual activity when you did not want to or you were unable to refuse?
- Or have you consented to sexual activity because you were afraid of what might happen if you refused?

The questions on physical and sexual violence were asked separately regarding the current partner, previous partner and other persons.

Box 2.2: Experiences of violence since the age of 15

- When asked about their experiences of non-partner violence, respondents were asked to think about events that had happened to them since they were 15 years old.
- Questions concerning violence by a partner referred to any acts of violence which took place during the relationship.
- In the following, when presenting the results on non-partner violence since the age of 15 and partner violence during the relationship, in both cases reference is made simply to experiences of violence since the age of 15.

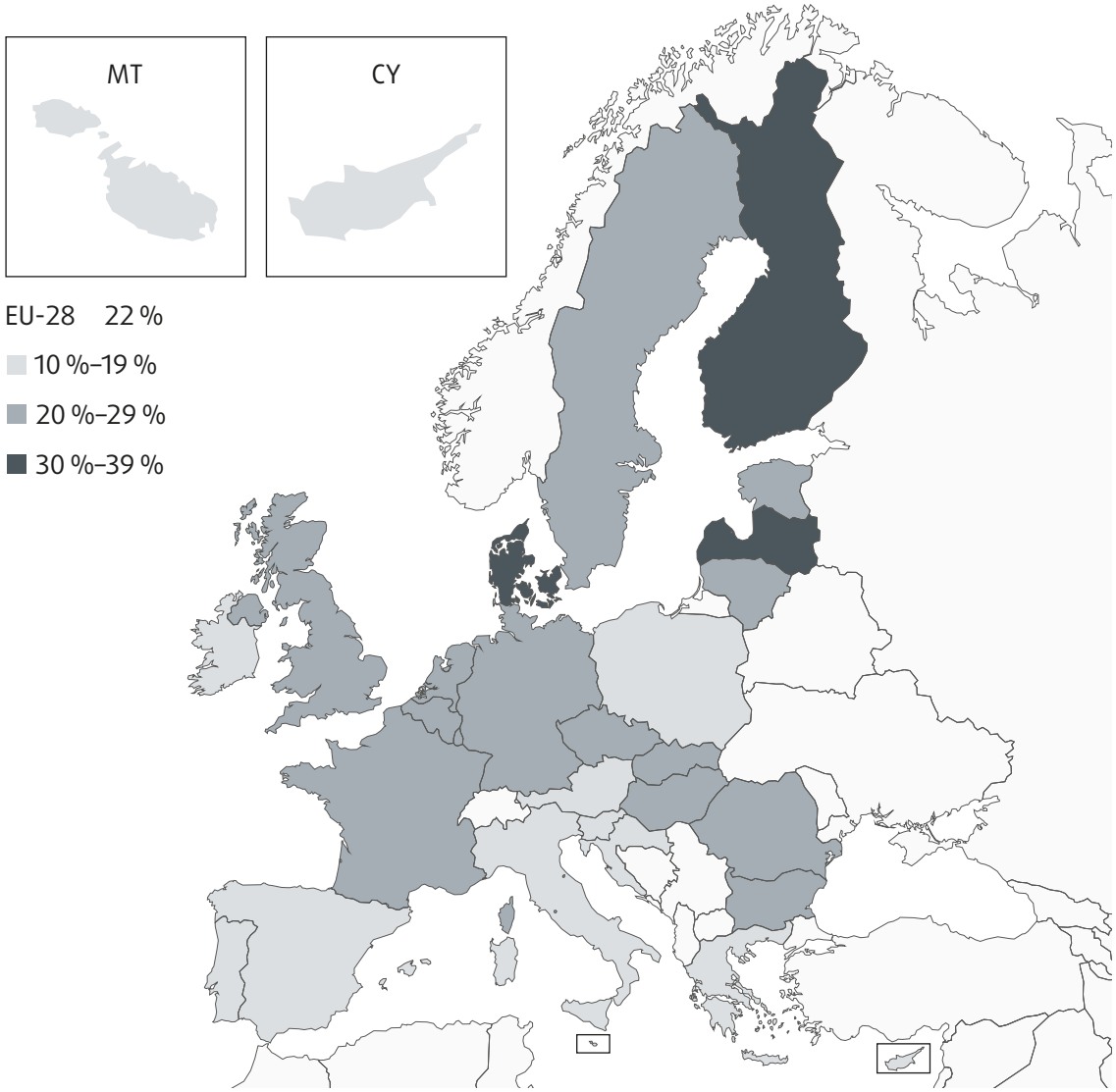
Table 2.1: Women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by current and/or previous partner, or by any other person since the age of 15, by EU Member State (%)

EU Member State	Current partner [a]	Previous partner [b]	Any partner (current and/or previous) [c]	Non-partner [d]	Any partner and/or non-partner [d]
AT	3	15	13	12	20
BE	8	29	24	25	36
BG	11	38	23	14	28
CY	6	24	15	12	22
CZ	6	23	21	21	32
DE	7	24	22	24	35
DK	12	31	32	40	52
EE	7	23	20	22	33
EL	10	17	19	10	25
ES	4	18	13	16	22
FI	11	31	30	33	47
FR	11	31	26	33	44
HR	7	13	13	13	21
HU	7	23	21	14	28
IE	4	19	15	19	26
IT	9	25	19	17	27
LT	11	31	24	16	31
LU	7	26	22	25	38
LV	13	38	32	17	39
MT	5	28	15	15	22
NL	9	27	25	35	45
PL	5	17	13	11	19
PT	8	28	19	10	24
RO	14	30	24	14	30
SE	7	29	28	34	46
SI	5	21	13	15	22

EU Member State	Current partner [a]	Previous partner [b]	Any partner (current and/or previous) [c]	Non-partner [d]	Any partner and/or non-partner [d]
SK	12	26	23	22	34
UK	5	34	29	30	44
EU-28	**8**	**26**	**22**	**22**	**33**

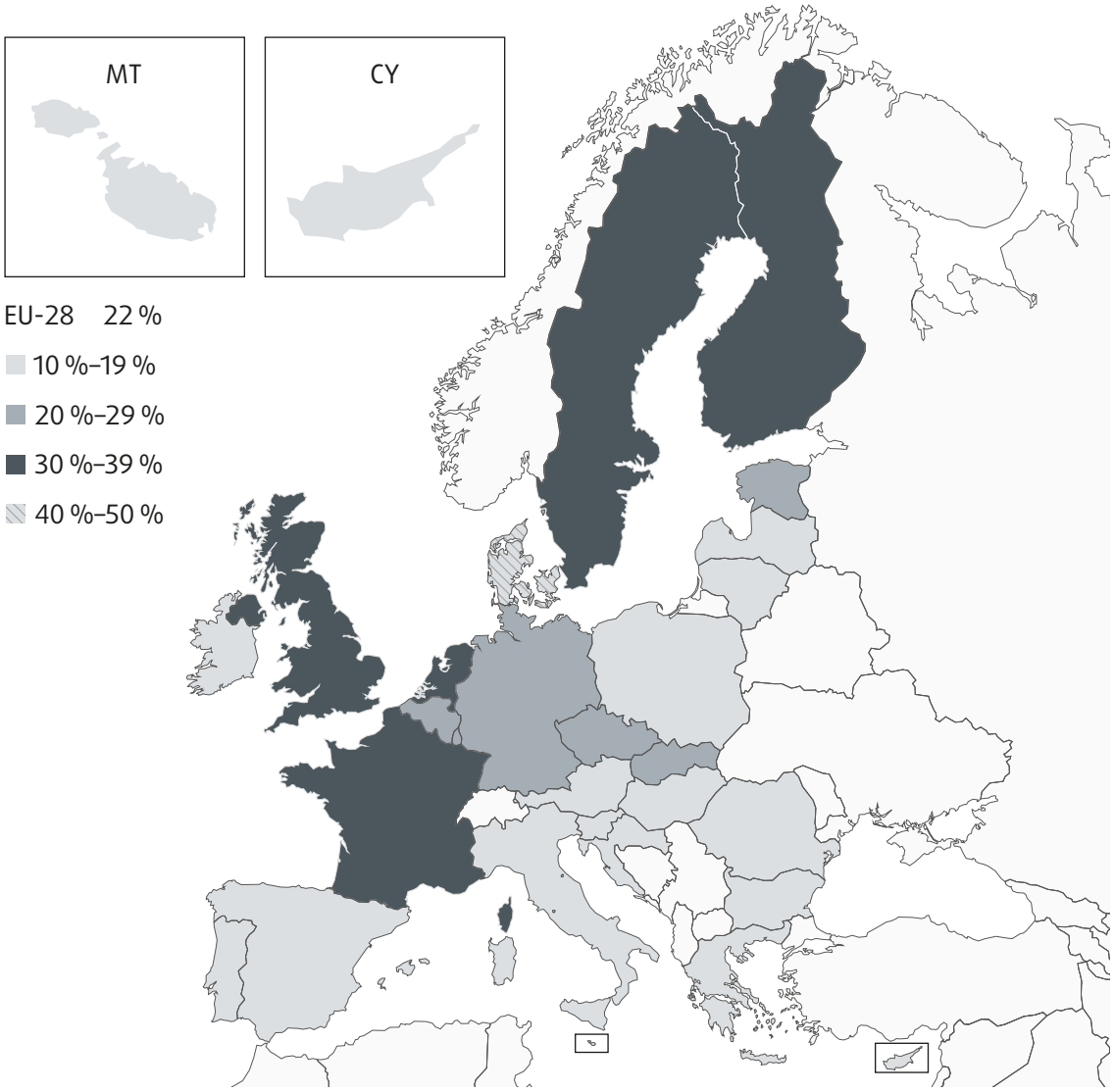
Notes: *a Out of all women who were married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship (without living together) at the time of the interview (n = 30,675).*
b Out of all women who had, in the past, been married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship (without living together) at least once (n = 25,870).
c Out of all women who were married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship (without living together) at the time of the interview or at any time in the past (n = 40,192).
d Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Figure 2.1: Physical and/or sexual *partner* violence since the age of 15, EU-28 (%)



Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Figure 2.2: Physical and/or sexual *non-partner* violence since the age of 15, EU-28 (%)

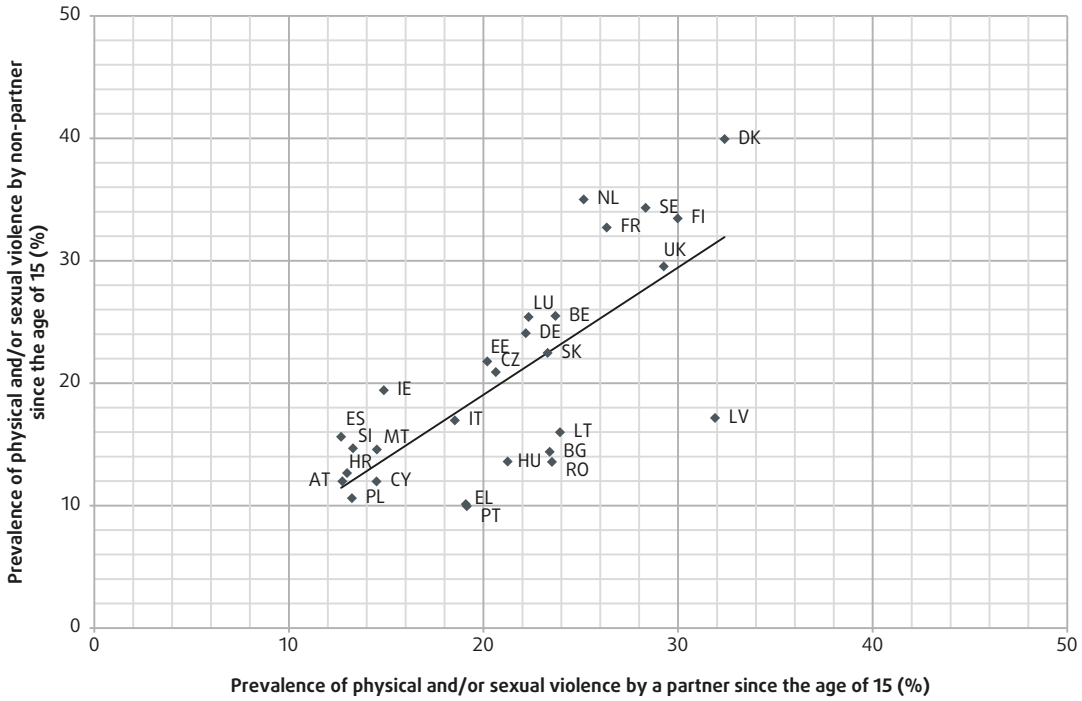


Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Considering the results at the country level (Table 2.1), the rates of partner violence range from 30 %–32 % in Finland, Denmark and Latvia to 13 % in Austria, Croatia, Poland, Slovenia and Spain. The prevalence rates for non-partner violence present a similar degree of spread, from a high of 34 %–40 % in Sweden, the Netherlands and Denmark to 10 %–11 % in Portugal, Greece and Poland.

The rates of partner and non-partner violence are positively correlated, meaning that countries with a higher prevalence of partner violence also, in most cases, display higher rates of non-partner violence (Figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3: Relationship between the prevalence of partner and non-partner violence since the age of 15 [a,b]



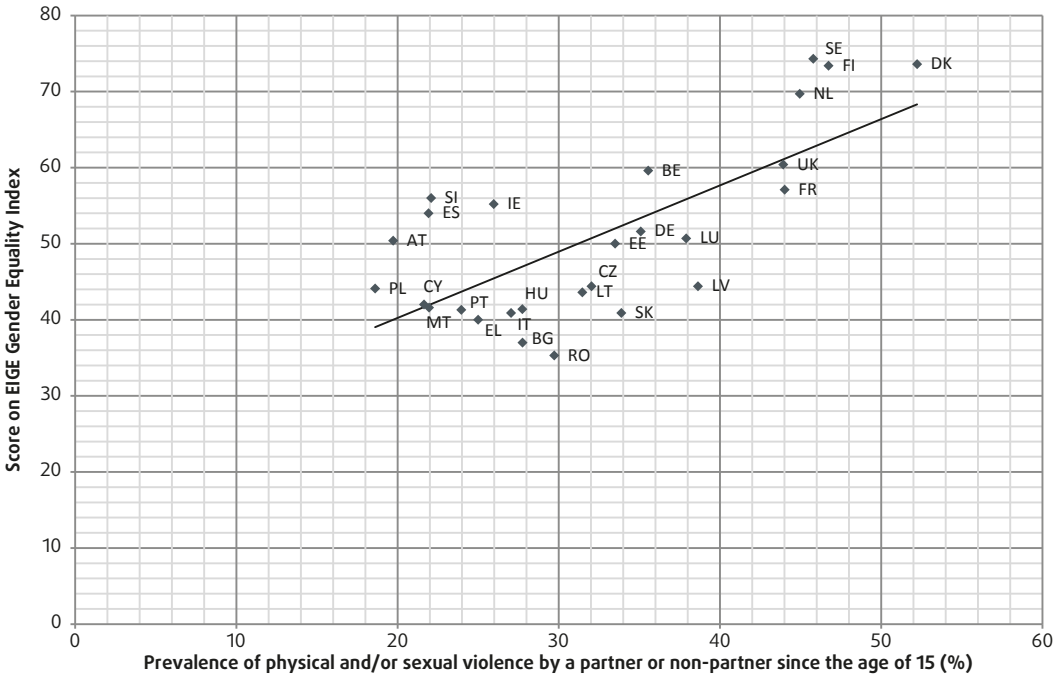
Notes: *a Correlation coefficient 0.724, $R^2 = 0.524$.*
b Based on all respondents (N = 42,002).
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

This correlation may suggest that partner and non-partner violence do not take place in isolation and that this indicates the degree to which violence is prevalent both in public and in private life. It has also been suggested, however, that victimisation rates, as established through survey research, reflect the extent to which it is socially acceptable to talk openly about violence – and, by extension, to talk about it in a survey (see Chapter 9 which explores this in more detail).

To further support this argument, it is possible to consider a datum that is not shown in Figure 2.3: with the exception of Latvia, no country displays high rates of partner violence together with low rates of non-partner violence. The correlation (0.724) between the experience of violence by two perpetrator groups (partner and non-partner) suggests the existence of underlying factors, which may be related to the extent of violence in a country or to the ways in which women respond to violent experiences and feel able to report them in a survey.

At the EU Member State level, the FRA survey results on women's experiences of violence can be compared with countries' scores on the Gender Equality Index developed by EIGE. Figure 2.4 shows a close correlation: Member States scoring higher on the Gender Equality Index also tend to have a higher prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence against women since the age of 15. In the section looking at variations in violence against women across Member States at the beginning of this chapter, possible explanations for this pattern are briefly explored.

Figure 2.4: Relationship between women's experiences of physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15, by a partner and/or a non-partner (%), and EU Member States' scores on the EIGE Gender Equality Index [a,b]



Notes : a Correlation coefficient 0.714, $R^2 = 0.510$.
b Croatia is not included in EIGE's Gender Equality Index, so Croatia is excluded from this analysis.
Sources: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012; EIGE Gender Equality Index 2013

2.2.1. Self-completion questionnaire

Box 2.3: Self-completion questionnaire

After the survey interview, respondents were asked to answer on paper 'yes' or 'no' to the following six statements:

- My partner or an ex-partner has been physically violent against me.
- My partner or an ex-partner has been sexually violent against me.
- Since I was 15 years or above, somebody other than my partner or an ex-partner has been physically violent against me.
- Since I was 15 years or above, somebody other than my partner or an ex-partner has been sexually violent against me.
- When I was under 15 years old, somebody was physically violent against me.
- When I was under 15 years old, somebody was sexually violent against me.

In view of concerns that some respondents might be reluctant to discuss their experiences of violence with the interviewers, the respondents were asked after the interview to fill in a short anonymous questionnaire with six questions concerning their experiences of partner and non-partner violence as well as childhood victimisation, in each case differentiating between physical and sexual incidents. Respondents were advised to fill in the questionnaire at their own pace before sealing it in an envelope which would not be opened by the interviewer but would be taken directly to the fieldwork office for separate data entry. The results of the self-completion questionnaire can be merged with those of the interviews, taking into consideration the number of respondents who disclosed violence in the self-completion questionnaire without having done so in the interview, in order to assess the effect of the survey mode on the results concerning prevalence.[15]

[15] Survey mode refers to the data collection method, which in the case of the FRA survey involved face-to-face interviews. Other survey modes include, for example, telephone interviewing as well as data collection using self-completion questionnaires (such as in postal or online surveys).

Table 2.2: Prevalence of violence based on interviews alone and on interviews and women's answers on the self-completion questionnaire (%)

		Interviews	Interviews and self-completion component
Partner	Physical violence	20	24
	Sexual violence	7	9
Non-partner	Physical violence	20	24
	Sexual violence	6	8

Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Overall, Table 2.2 shows that including the answers from the self-completion questionnaire adds slightly to the prevalence estimates for physical and sexual violence by a partner and a non-partner. At the same time, it is important to note that the questions used in the self-completion questionnaire differ from the questions which were asked during the survey interview. In order to minimise respondent burden after a lengthy interview and to make it easier to answer, the questions in the self-completion questionnaire were kept short, without asking further questions concerning the forms of physical and sexual violence. This let respondents use their own definition of 'violence'. Therefore, it is also possible that the incidents which the respondents indicated in the self-completion questionnaire are incidents which for one reason or another did not come up during the interview because of how violence was defined through the survey question – that is, not as including one or more of the acts outlined earlier in Box 2.1. The self-completion questions related to childhood victimisation show a similar pattern to that presented in Table 2.2; these results will be discussed in Chapter 7 on 'Experience of violence in childhood'.

EU Member States differ in the extent to which the use of the self-completion questionnaire contributed information on experiences of violence which were not disclosed during the survey interview. Focusing on experiences of physical violence by a partner since the age of 15, the results of the self-completion questionnaire would add 1 to 3 percentage points to the prevalence of this type of violence in 18 EU Member States. In nine Member States, the information collected through the self-completion questionnaire would add 4 to 6 percentage points to the prevalence of violence. Hungary stands out among the countries surveyed. Here, relatively many respondents indicated experiences of violence in the self-completion questionnaire without having mentioned these experiences in the survey interview. According to the interview alone, 19 % of women in Hungary have experienced physical violence by a partner since the age of 15, but the prevalence of this form of violence reaches 33 % if the experiences indicated in the self-completion questionnaire are added to those experiences shared during the interview.

There is no correlation between the prevalence of various forms of violence and the additional contribution of the self-completion mode. For example, including the results from the self-completion questionnaire would introduce an additional 1 to 2 percentage points to the prevalence of physical partner violence since the age of 15 in Denmark and the United Kingdom; in these two countries, the prevalence of this form of violence is among the highest of all EU Member States at 29 % and 28 %, respectively. At the same time, the additional contribution from the self-completion component is the same at 1 to 2 percentage points for countries such as Austria and Spain, where the prevalence of physical partner violence – as indicated in the interview – is the lowest among the 28 EU Member States (12 % in both Austria and Spain).

2.3. Prevalence rates of physical and sexual violence in the last 12 months

Looking at the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence in the 12 months before the survey interview, 8 % of women in the EU (18–74 years old) have been victims of physical violence, sexual violence or both (Table 2.3). Considered in proportion to the number of women in the EU who are 18 to 74 years old,[16] this corresponds to the following:

- An estimated 13 million women in the EU have experienced physical violence in the course of 12 months.
- An estimated 3.7 million women in the EU have experienced sexual violence in the course of 12 months.

[16] According to the Eurostat online database, 186,590,848 women aged 18 to 74 years were living in the EU-28 on 1 January 2013 (data code demo_pjan, data extracted on 16 August 2013, available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/statistics/search_database).

Table 2.3: Women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the 12 months before the interview, by type of perpetrator and EU Member State (%) [a]

EU Member State	Current partner[b]	Previous partner[c]	Any partner (current and/or previous)[d]	Non-partner[e]	Any partner and/or non-partner[e]
AT	(2)	(2)	3	2	5
BE	4	4	6	7	11
BG	6	(5)	6	3	8
CY	(2)	(2)	3	2	5
CZ	3	(2)	4	5	8
DE	3	(1)	3	6	8
DK	4	(2)	4	8	11
EE	(3)	(1)	(2)	3	5
EL	5	3	6	2	7
ES	(1)	(1)	(2)	2	4
FI	4	(2)	5	7	10
FR	4	4	5	7	11
HR	(2)	(1)	3	3	5
HU	5	4	6	5	9
IE	(2)	3	3	5	8
IT	5	(5)	6	4	7
LT	4	(1)	4	2	6
LU	(2)	(2)	(3)	4	7
LV	6	(1)	5	(2)	6
MT	2	(4)	4	2	5
NL	4	(3)	5	7	11
PL	2	(1)	2	3	4
PT	4	(4)	5	(2)	6
RO	6	(3)	6	2	7
SE	(2)	4	5	7	11
SI	(1)	(1)	(2)	(2)	3
SK	7	(2)	6	5	10
UK	(2)	4	5	5	8
EU-28	**3**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**8**

Notes: *a Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').*
b Out of all women who were married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship (without living together) at the time of the interview (n = 30,675).
c Out of all women who had, in the past, been married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship (without living together) at least once (n = 25,870).
d Out of all women who were married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship (without living together) at the time of the interview or at any time in the past (n = 40,192).
e Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Considering the results at EU Member State level, the experience of physical and/or sexual partner violence in the past 12 months does not show big variations between the Member States. The rates range from 6 % of women who have a current or previous partner experiencing physical and/or sexual partner (current or previous) violence in the past 12 months in Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Romania and Slovakia, to some 2 % of women with a current or previous partner experiencing such violence in Estonia, Poland, Slovenia and Spain. These particular results are less reliable in Estonia, Slovenia and Spain because of the small number of women in the sample who have been in this situation. There is somewhat more variation between

EU Member States if physical and/or sexual violence by any partner or non-partner in the past 12 months is considered. In this case, the victimisation rates range from 11 % in Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Sweden to 3 %–4 % in Slovenia, Poland and Spain.

2.4. Characteristics of victims of physical and sexual violence

The survey collected a variety of detail from all respondents concerning topics that could be used to analyse, at a general level, whether or not certain groups in society are at higher risk of experiencing violence. Issues examined in this analysis include:

- age
- education
- household composition
- income
- type of area where women live (urban/rural)
- employment status
- occupation

Respondents were also asked about other characteristics such as their immigrant and ethnic minority background, their health and any disability, and their sexual orientation. Given the low self-identification rate under some of these categories in a number of EU Member States, the results for these characteristics are reported in Annex 3.

The analysis according to respondents' background characteristics was undertaken with respect to both physical and sexual violence in the past 12 months, and physical and sexual violence experienced since the age of 15. Although the latter prevalence rate offers a long-term perspective on violence experienced, the respondent's characteristics measured at the time of the survey may not reflect the respondent's situation (such as employment status) when the victimisation took place.

In many cases, the analysis of these features does not reveal notable differences between the various respondent groups and their experience of physical or sexual violence. This suggests that women in various socio-economic groups are equally exposed to victimisation, regarding both partner and non-partner violence. There are, nevertheless, some differences which the following paragraphs highlight.

Age

On most measures, both partner and non-partner violence have the highest prevalence in the youngest age group, women who are 18–29 years old. The exception to this result is the prevalence of partner violence since the age of 15, which is slightly higher among 30- to 59-year-old respondents than younger and older age groups (Table 2.4). On the other measures – partner violence in the past 12 months, and non-partner violence since the age of 15 and in the past 12 months – the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence decreases with age, with the lowest rate of occurrence among women who are 60 years old or older.

One might assume that older respondents' experiences over their lifetime – or, here, since the age of 15 years – should surpass in number the experiences of the younger respondents, simply because, over the years, older women would have accumulated more experiences, including incidents of violence. This is not the case. Therefore, although the 12-month rates of violence reflect the current situation for women from different age groups, older women may not be indicating all instances of physical and/or sexual violence over the years, possibly because some incidents would be from many years ago (in some cases, these incidents may have taken place over 30 years ago).

Table 2.4: Experience of physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 and in the 12 months before the interview, by type of perpetrator (%)

	Partner violence			Non-partner violence		
Age groups	Since the age of 15 (%)	In the past 12 months (%)	*n*	Since the age of 15 (%)	In the past 12 months (%)	*n*
18–29	20	6	5,976	26	9	6,827
30–44	23	5	11,317	23	5	11,580
45–59	23	4	12,192	21	3	12,471
60+	19	3	10,622	17	3	11,017

Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Education

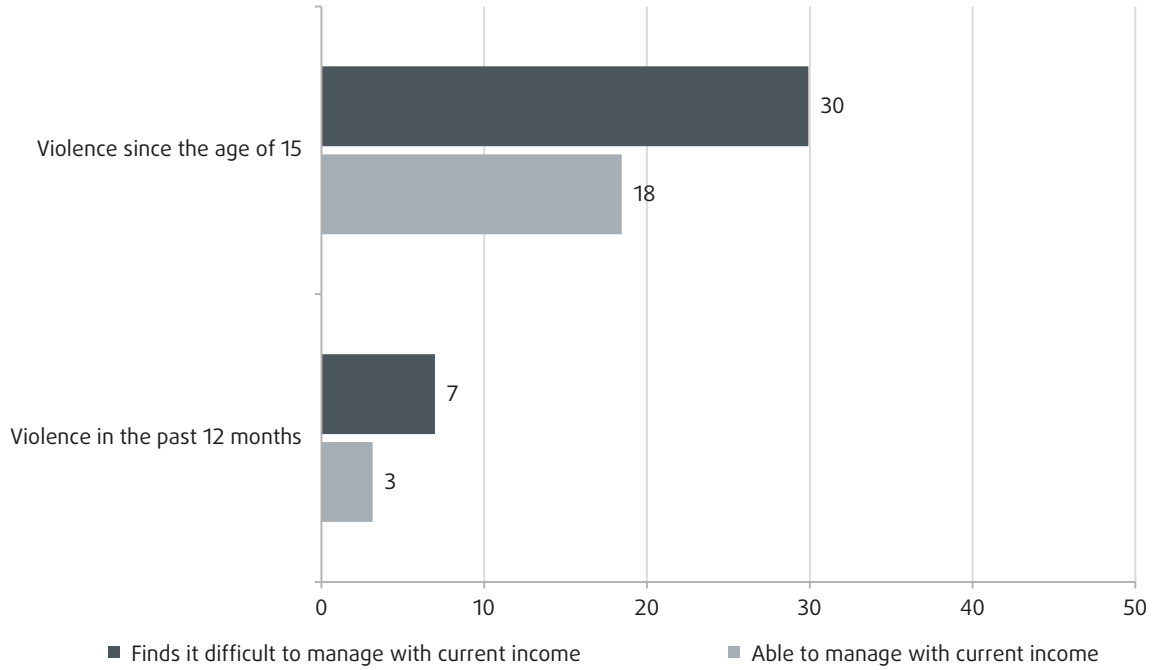
The survey asked women about the highest level of education which they have completed. Among women with only primary education, 23 % have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by any partner since the age of 15, compared with 21 % of women with secondary education and 20 % of women with tertiary education. Therefore, differences in partner violence in terms of women's education are not significant. However, women with higher levels of education experience higher levels of violence by non-partners: 19 % of women with primary education have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a non-partner since the age of 15, whereas 22 % of women with secondary education and 27 % of women with tertiary education indicate that they have experienced this type of violence by a non-partner since the age of 15. This finding is explored further in Chapter 6 on 'Sexual harassment'.

Income

Respondents were asked how they would describe their household income: whether it is enough to manage on or if they find it difficult to cope with their present income. Women who are dissatisfied with their household income – who said that they find it difficult or very difficult to cope with their present income – are more likely to indicate that they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in a relationship with any partner, compared with women who said their household is living comfortably or can cope on its present income (Figure 2.5). These differences remain with respect to both physical and sexual violence by a current partner or by a previous partner.

It can be suggested that a reason why women who are dissatisfied with their household income indicate higher rates of violence by a current partner is that financial strain has a negative effect on a relationship. Women who have left a previous partner who was violent also indicate financial strain; this reflects the economic vulnerability of many women who decide to leave a violent relationship. For example, 39 % of women who experienced violence in a previous relationship say that they find it difficult to cope with their current household income, whereas among women who have not experienced physical or sexual violence by a previous partner 26 % find it difficult to manage with their current household income. Women who have experienced violence by a previous partner are also more likely to be currently living in a single-person household or with children; 37 % of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence by a previous partner live in such households, compared with 27 % of women who have not experienced physical or sexual violence by a previous partner.

Figure 2.5: Experience of physical and sexual violence by any partner since the age of 15, by respondents' satisfaction with their household income (%)



Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Area

Respondents were asked to characterise in basic terms the area where they live. Table 2.5 shows the results concerning respondents' experiences of violence since the age of 15 and in the last 12 months by the type of area where they live. Observed differences between these areas are mostly small. The biggest difference in prevalence of violence is between women who say they live in a suburban area and women living in the countryside.

Employment status and occupation

In terms of physical and/or sexual violence by a non-partner since the age of 15, 16 % of women who categorise themselves as retired and 17 % of women who are home makers have experienced this type of violence, compared with 28 % of women who are unemployed, 27 % of women who are employed part-time and 26 % of women who are in education (21 % of women in full-time employment have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a non-partner). During the past 12 months, 11 % of women in education have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a non-partner, compared with only 2 % of women who are retired. The average prevalence for non-partner violence in the past 12 months is 5 % for all women. The impact of age on the results can again be noted: women's exposure to risk decreases with age.

Considering women's experiences of *non-partner* physical or sexual violence since the age of 15 by their present occupational position reveals that physical and/or sexual non-partner violence is highest among women who are managers or directors, professionals (such as lawyers, doctors, accountants and architects) or supervisors. Depending on the category, 28 %–30 % of women in these positions have experienced violence by a non-partner since the age of 15. In comparison, 13 % of women who have never done paid work and 17 % of women engaged in skilled manual work have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a non-partner since the age of 15. The average prevalence rate of non-partner violence for all respondents was 22 %. Only small differences between women in different occupational groups were detected when 12-month rates of physical and/or sexual non-partner violence were analysed.

Differences between women from various occupational groups are generally smaller in the case of *partner* violence. The highest rate of physical and/or sexual partner violence since the age of 15 is, however, among women working as supervisors (28 %), in contrast to women who have never done paid work (14 %). The average for all respondents who have a current or previous partner is 22 %. Considering only the last 12 months, 14 % of women working in agriculture or fisheries have experienced partner violence, compared with an average of 4 % for all women with a current or previous partner.

2.5. Perpetrator characteristics: physical and sexual violence by a current partner

In addition to focusing on the experiences and background characteristics of respondents, the survey collected some information about the perpetrators of violence. In particular, respondents who at the time of the

Table 2.5: Experience of physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 and in the 12 months before the interview, by type of perpetrator and the area where the respondent lives (%)

	Partner violence			Non-partner violence		
Area	Since the age of 15 (%)	In the past 12 months (%)	*n*	Since the age of 15 (%)	In the past 12 months (%)	*n*
Big city	23	5	9,871	23	5	10,296
Suburban area	27	6	4,029	31	7	4,197
Town or small city	22	4	14,151	22	5	14,808
Countryside[a]	18	4	11,917	17	3	12,452

Note: a *The category 'countryside' is a combination of two answer categories which respondents could use to describe the area where they live: 'a country village' and 'a farm or home in the countryside'. The other answer categories shown above correspond to the categories used in the survey.*

Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

interview were in a relationship[17] were asked to provide some basic socio-demographic information about their current partner. The survey collected this information only for the current partner because doing so for (potentially) several previous partners would have imposed a considerable burden for the respondents, and the information might not have been very accurate because, in some cases, a long time would have elapsed since the respondent separated from a partner. Regarding non-partner violence, the survey also asked about the type of perpetrator involved. The results of this are presented in Section 2.9.

According to the survey, a partner's age does not have an impact on the prevalence of physical or sexual violence in the relationship. The time spent together is not reflected in the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months. In other words, violence is roughly as common among women who have been together with their partner less than a year as among women who have spent more than 20 years with their partner. Respondents with long relationships are slightly more likely to have experienced violence since the age of 15 than respondents whose relationship has started more recently.

Partner's education

A partner's education seems to have an impact on women's experiences of violence. The prevalence of physical and sexual current partner violence since the age of 15 is 16 % among women whose partner has not completed primary education, compared with 6 % for women whose partner has tertiary education. The direction of this effect is consistent across education groups: the higher the partner's education, the lower the prevalence of physical and sexual violence perpetrated.

Partner's employment situation and occupation

A partner's employment situation and occupation does not reveal any consistent relationship with victimisation results, with two exceptions. The prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 by a current partner is somewhat higher than the overall prevalence of 8 % when the current partner is working in agriculture or fishing (13 %) or unskilled manual labour (15 %).

Equal say concerning household resources

Women were also asked if they feel that they have an equal say in how the household resources are used. Of women who say that they do not have an equal say concerning the use of the household's resources, 29 % have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their current partner since the age of 15, compared with 7 % of women who say that they are able to decide on the use of the household resources on an equal basis with their partner.

Respondents were also asked whether they earn more than their partner, they both earn roughly an equal amount or the partner earns more than the respondent. The differences in earnings do not seem to be reflected in the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence by the current partner.

Alcohol and violence

Prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence by a current partner is also markedly higher among women whose partner gets drunk frequently. If a current partner is said never to drink, or never to drink so much as to get drunk, the prevalence of this type of violence was 5 %. The prevalence climbs, however, to 23 % for women whose current partner gets drunk once a month or more often. Women whose partners are known to be violent outside the home are more likely to experience violence in the home (27 % of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their current partner) than those with partners who have not been violent outside their own home (6 %).

2.6. Forms of physical violence

The survey asked a series of nine questions on physical violence to help respondents think about various acts of violence that they may have faced in their lives. Respondents could indicate all the forms of violence that they had experienced, whether these related to a single incident or occurred over multiple incidents.

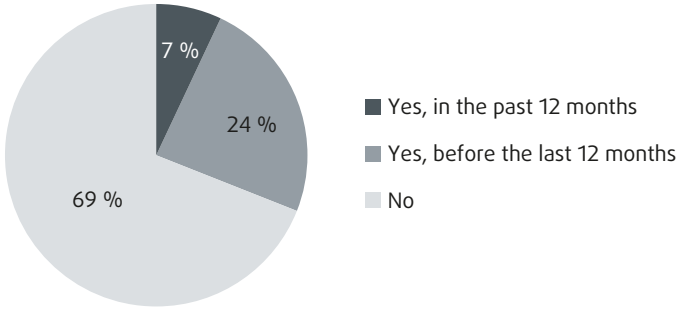
Box 2.4: What the survey asked – physical violence

Since you were 15 years old until now/in the past 12 months, how often has someone:

- pushed you or shoved you?
- slapped you?
- thrown a hard object at you?
- grabbed you or pulled your hair?
- beaten you with a fist or a hard object, or kicked you?
- burned you?
- tried to suffocate you or strangle you?
- cut or stabbed you, or shot at you?
- beaten your head against something?

[17] This includes respondents who, at the time of the interview, were married, in a recognised civil partnership or registered partnership, living together with a partner without being married, or involved in a relationship with a partner without living together.

Figure 2.6: Responses on experiencing physical violence by any partner or non-partner, by time of victimisation (%)



Note: Based on the experiences of all respondents (N = 42,002) since the age of 15 and in the past 12 months before the survey interview.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

The questions concerning various forms of physical violence can be considered as roughly a progression from less severe forms of violence to more severe, but the consequences of each act of violence vary greatly from one incident to the other.

Overall, as shown in Figure 2.6, 31 % of women in the EU-28 have experienced physical violence by either a partner or a non-partner since the age of 15 and 7 % of women have experienced physical violence by anyone in the 12 months before the survey interview. This corresponds to an estimated 13 million women in the EU-28 having experienced physical violence – by either a partner or a non-partner – in the last 12 months. Removing the most common experience of being 'pushed' or 'shoved' from the overall count of women's experience of violence lowers the prevalence rate for violence only to 25 % in the past 12 months (see Table 2.6). This indicates that women experience a range of severe forms of violence in their lifetime.

The Council of Europe[18] has estimated, based on various national surveys on violence against women, that one fifth to one quarter of all women have experienced physical violence during their adult lives. The estimate obtained in the FRA survey exceeds this Council of Europe estimate; the survey results indicate that close to one third of women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15.

The results concerning the prevalence of physical violence were obtained by asking women if they have experienced any of the nine acts of physical violence, as listed in the survey (see Box 2.4). Table 2.6 presents results on the prevalence of each of the nine acts of physical violence against women in the EU, differentiating between current partners, previous partners and other persons as perpetrators.

Comparing the results on the prevalence of physical violence by current partner and previous partner, the prevalence of violence by a previous partner since the age of 15 is higher than the prevalence of violence by a current partner, as indicated by the respondents. There may be several reasons for this. For example, respondents who have had several partners in the past were allowed to describe incidents committed by any of them, in which case respondents may be referring to incidents committed by several people. Respondents may also be less inclined to talk about violence in a current relationship, as opposed to a past relationship.

The most common form of physical violence, irrespective of the perpetrator, was being pushed or shoved, followed by incidents of being slapped, and then of being grabbed or pulled by the hair. Although some acts of physical violence, as described in the survey, could be construed as less or more serious for the victims, it is necessary to remember that each category may cover a range of different situations which differ in their seriousness. Furthermore, women's exposure to physical violence may not be limited to individual acts; instead, they can involve a combination of violent acts in the same incident or an accumulation of various acts of physical violence over time across a number of incidents. This is illustrated in Table 2.6, which indicates the prevalence of physical violence if one of the categories – being pushed or shoved – were to be excluded from the count. Although this category individually has the highest prevalence of all forms of physical violence, excluding it from the total prevalence of physical violence has a much smaller effect.

Out of all women who had a previous partner, one in 10 women (9 %) indicates that her previous partner has beaten her with a fist or a hard object, or kicked her, and 5 % indicate that a previous partner has tried to suffocate or strangle them. Focusing on victims of physical violence and their experiences, 34 % of victims of physical violence by a previous partner indicate that they have experienced four or more different types of violence from those listed in Table 2.6, compared with 18 % of victims of physical violence by a current partner and 16 % of victims of physical violence by a non-partner.

[18] Council of Europe (2006), *Combating violence against women: Stocktaking study on the measures and actions taken in Council of Europe Member States*, CDEG(2006)3, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, p. 7.

Table 2.6: Women who have experienced various forms of physical violence by a partner or other persons since the age of 15 (%)

Type of physical violence	Current partner[a]	Previous partner[b]	Non-partner[c]	Any partner and/or non-partner
Pushed or shoved	5	19	13	23
Slapped	4	15	8	17
Hard object thrown at them	2	8	4	9
Grabbed or pulled by the hair	2	10	7	13
Beaten with a fist or a hard object, or kicked	1	9	5	10
Burned	0	1	0	1
Tried to suffocate or strangle	1	5	1	4
Cut, stabbed or shot	0	1	1	1
Beaten head against something	1	5	2	4
Any of the above	7	24	20	31
Any of the above, excluding 'pushed or shoved'	5	20	15	25
Number of categories selected				
1	48	33	50	38
2–3	34	32	34	34
4 or more	18	34	16	28

Notes: *a Out of all women who were married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship (without living together) at the time of the interview (n = 30,675).*
b Out of all women who had, in the past, been married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship (without living together) at least once (n = 25,870).
c Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

2.7. Forms of sexual violence

This section will describe the results concerning the prevalence – or extent – of sexual violence against women in the EU and the various forms that this violence can take.

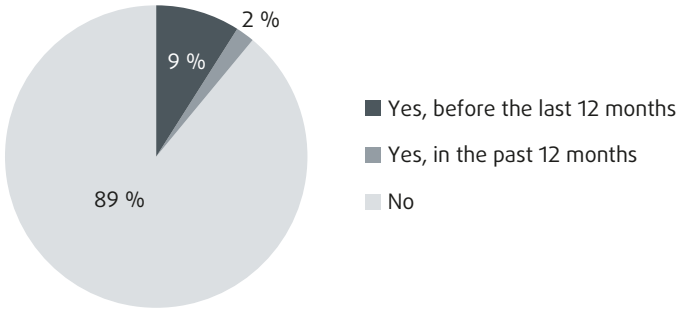
After having asked women about non-sexual acts against them, the survey went on to ask respondents about sexual violence. Respondents were presented with four acts of sexual violence, and they could indicate if any of these forms of sexual violence had happened to them.

Box 2.5: What the survey asked – sexual violence

Since you were 15 years old until now/in the past 12 months, how often has someone:

- forced you into sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way? [IF NEEDED ADD: By sexual intercourse we mean here oral sex, forced anal or vaginal penetration.]
- apart from this, attempted to force you into sexual intercourse by holding you down or hurting you in some way? [IF NEEDED ADD: By sexual intercourse we mean here oral sex, forced anal or vaginal penetration.]
- apart from this, made you take part in any form of sexual activity when you did not want to or you were unable to refuse?
- or have you consented to sexual activity because you were afraid of what might happen if you refused?

Figure 2.7: Responses on experiencing sexual violence by any partner or non-partner, by time of victimisation (%)



Note: *Based on the experiences of all respondents (N = 42,002) since the age of 15 and in the past 12 months before the survey interview.*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Given the variation in legislation concerning sexual violence in the EU Member States, some forms of sexual violence – as described in the survey – may not be criminalised equally in all Member States. In the survey, the items concerning sexual violence start with a question on forced sexual intercourse, which is criminalised variously in all EU Member States, and then proceed to cover attempted forced intercourse and other unwanted sexual activity. In contrast to the questions concerning physical violence, where respondents were asked to indicate all acts that they have experienced, regardless of whether these acts occurred in the same incident or in different incidents, the questions on sexual violence were defined as mutually exclusive. When moving from one question to another, the respondent was advised to exclude the events mentioned earlier.

Considering any form of sexual violence by a partner and non-partner since women were 15 years old, a total of 11 % of women in the EU-28 have experienced this type of violence. Some 2 % of women have experienced it in the last 12 months (Figure 2.7). At the EU level, this corresponds to an estimated 3.7 million women who have experienced sexual violence in the past 12 months. This is generally in line with an earlier estimate presented by the Council of Europe, which suggested, based on available national surveys of violence against women, that *"[…] more than one-tenth have suffered sexual violence involving the use of force"*.[19]

One woman in 20 (5 %) has been raped since the age of 15, either by a partner or by someone else.

Looking at Table 2.7, one in 20 women (5 %) has been raped since the age of 15, either by a partner or someone else. Thinking about all women aged 18 to 74 years in the 28 EU Member States, this corresponds to more than 9 million women who have been raped since they were 15 years old, either by a partner or another person. Furthermore, according to the survey, 0.8 % of women (aged 18–74 years) have been raped in the past 12 months, which corresponds to some 1.5 million women being raped in the EU in one year.

Some 6 % of women have experienced an attempted rape since the age of 15. The same proportion of women have at least once been made to take part in some form of sexual activity against their will or have consented to sexual activity because they were afraid of what might happen if they did not. Overall, 11 % of women have experienced some form of sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner since the age of 15. Table 2.7 shows that the individual prevalence estimates of the four forms of sexual violence add up to more than twice the overall prevalence. This indicates that women who said in the survey that they have experienced sexual violence were likely to indicate having experienced more than one form of sexual violence since the age of 15.

[19] Council of Europe (2006), *Combating violence against women: Stocktaking study on the measures and actions taken in Council of Europe Member States*, CDEG(2006)3, Strasbourg, Council of Europe, p. 7.

Table 2.7: Women who have experienced various forms of sexual violence by a partner or other persons since the age of 15 (%)

	Current partner[a]	Previous partner[b]	Any partner (current or previous)	Non-partner[c]	Any partner and/or non-partner
Since the age of 15					
Forced into sexual intercourse	1	5	4	2	5
Attempted to force into sexual intercourse	1	5	4	3	6
Made to take part in sexual activity against her will	1	5	4	2	6
Consented to sexual activity because was afraid what might happen	1	6	5	2	6
In the past 12 months					
Forced into sexual intercourse	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.3	0.8
Attempted to force into sexual intercourse	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.8
Made to take part in sexual activity against her will	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.3	0.9
Consented to sexual activity because was afraid what might happen	0.8	0.4	0.9	0.2	0.9

Notes: *a Out of all women who were married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship (without living together) at the time of the interview (n = 30,675).*
b Out of all women who had, in the past, been married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship (without living together) at least once (n = 25,870).
c Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

2.8. Details about intimate partner violence

In addition to asking women about the number of incidents that they have experienced, the survey asked victims of intimate partner violence some further questions, which were not covered in the case of non-partner violence. These questions were necessary to take into account the specificities of intimate partner violence: the fact that it may involve violence by the same perpetrator over a long period of time; that it can play a part in the decision to end the relationship; and that, for some women, violence continues after they have separated from a violent partner.

2.8.1. Repeat victimisation: capturing the volume of intimate partner violence incidents

Accurate measures of the incidence of intimate partner violence are hampered by the nature of this violence: that it can take place over a long period of time and can involve various types of violent acts. Violence may permeate a relationship, or it may occur only at a certain point in time, for example, when partners are separating. It may be difficult for victims to enumerate each incident of violence, especially when these occur often. To assist the respondent in answering, the question on incidence allowed for respondents to answer using a small number of answer categories, indicating whether there has been one incident, two to five incidents, or six or more incidents.

Table 2.8: Repeat victimisation by type of physical violence and perpetrator (current and/or previous partner), by type of violence (%)

	Once (%)	2–5 times (%)	6 or more times (%)	*n*
Current partner				
Pushed you or shoved you	45	37	18	1,725
Slapped you	53	30	17	1,283
Threw a hard object at you	61	24	15	483
Grabbed you or pulled your hair	45	34	21	651
Beat you with a fist or a hard object, or kicked you	46	27	27	485
Burned you	(69)	(28)	–	33
Tried to suffocate you or strangle you	59	34	(7)	203
Cut or stabbed you, or shot at you	(65)	(30)	(6)	39
Beat your head against something	50	30	20	198
Previous partner				
Pushed you or shoved you	29	34	37	4,965
Slapped you	34	29	37	4,066
Threw a hard object at you	37	30	33	2,023
Grabbed you or pulled your hair	28	33	39	2,772
Beat you with a fist or a hard object, or kicked you	31	28	42	2,241
Burned you	64	18	19	265
Tried to suffocate you or strangle you	56	27	18	1,138
Cut or stabbed you, or shot at you	76	14	11	269
Beat your head against something	41	31	28	1,245

Notes: *Based on respondents who have experienced a certain type of physical violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15. Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Table 2.8 indicates that, among women who have experienced violence at the hands of a partner, repeat incidents are a widespread feature of many forms of violence. The forms of violence most likely to recur are being pushed or shoved; slapped, grabbed or pulled by the hair; or beaten with a fist or a hard object. This is the case for roughly half of women who have experienced one of these forms of violence by a current partner and for two thirds of women who have experienced such violence by a previous partner.

Repeated incidents of sexual violence

As Table 2.9 indicates, incidents of sexual violence in a partnership are also likely to reoccur. That is, over half of women who have been raped by their current partner, or whose current partner has attempted to rape them or to make them take part in sexual activity when they were unable to refuse, have experienced more than one incident. About one third of victims of rape (31%) have experienced six or more incidents by their current partner. The results concerning sexual violence by previous partners show a similar pattern: depending on the type of sexual violence, one third to one quarter of victims have experienced more than one incident.

Table 2.9: Repeat victimisation by type of sexual violence and perpetrator (current and/or previous partner), by type of violence (%)

	Once (%)	2–5 times (%)	6 or more times (%)	*n*
Current partner				
Forced you into sexual intercourse	46	22	31	213
Attempted to force you into sexual intercourse	45	33	22	228
Made you take part in sexual activity when you did not want to or you were unable to refuse	48	34	18	280
Consented to sexual activity because you were afraid of what your current partner might do if you refused	34	33	32	391
Previous partner				
Forced you into sexual intercourse	32	28	40	1,300
Attempted to force you into sexual intercourse	33	30	37	1,266
Made you take part in sexual activity when you did not want to or you were unable to refuse	29	34	37	1,231
Consented to sexual activity because you were afraid of what your current partner might do if you refused	26	28	45	1,565

Notes: *Based on respondents who have experienced a certain type of sexual violence by an intimate partner since the age of 15.*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

2.8.2. Patterns in partner violence

To reflect the specificity of intimate partner violence – that violence may be continuous rather than isolated incidents – the survey asked women who have experienced violence by a partner about the time when the first incident occurred and the time of the most recent incident. Regarding violence by a previous partner, the respondent was advised to answer based on experiences with respect to the previous partner who had perpetrated the most serious incident of violence (in case the respondent has had more than one previous partner).

Out of the victims of violence who experienced the first incident of physical and/or sexual violence five or more years ago, one in four women (26 %) experienced the most recent incident in the last year, indicating that the violence in the relationship has taken place over several years. A further 15 % of victims whose first incident of physical and/or sexual violence took place five or more years ago were subject to this type of violence one to four years ago (but not in the past year). Close to one third of victims (31 %) who experienced their first incident one to four years ago have also been victimised in the past year.

Violence may first occur in different stages of a relationship. Out of women whose current partner has been violent towards them, 82 % say that the first incident of physical and/or sexual violence took place when they were living together (Table 2.10). The same is true of 65 % of the cases involving a violent previous partner, whereas 34 % have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a previous partner when they were not living together. In the latter cases, it is possible that violence contributed to a woman's decision to terminate the relationship before moving in together, or else the violence occurred once they had separated and the woman was no longer living with her partner. This is supported by evidence concerning those who have separated from a violent partner and their responses to questions concerning when the violence occurred: 91 % experienced violent incidents during the relationship, 33 % say that violence also took place during the break-up and about one respondent in six (16 %) indicates that the violence continued – or started – after the separation (Table 2.11).

Table 2.10: Women who have experienced physical and/or sexual partner violence, indicating whether or not they were living together with their partner at the time of the first incident of violence, by type of partner (%)

	Living together (%)	Not living together (%)	No answer (%)	*n*
Current partner	82	15	3	2,762
Previous partner	65	34	1	6,400

Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

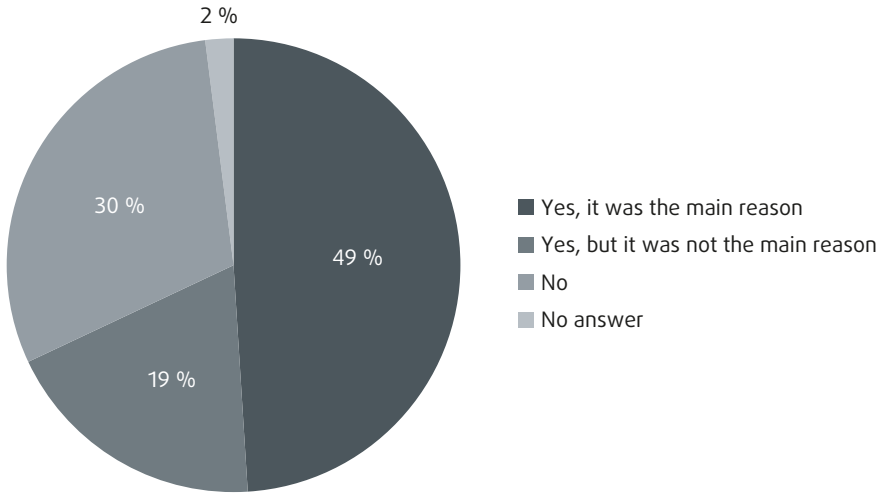
Table 2.11: Women who have separated from a violent partner, indicating when the violence took place during the relationship (%)

	Yes	No	No answer
During the relationship	91	9	0
During the break-up	33	65	2
After the break-up	16	82	2

Note: Based on respondents who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a previous partner (n = 6,400)
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

As indicated in Figure 2.8, in half (49 %) of the cases where women have separated from their violent previous partner, violence was the main reason for separation. In a further 19 % of the cases, violence contributed to the decision to end the relationship.

Figure 2.8: Respondents who have separated from a violent partner, indicating whether or not violence was the reason for ending the relationship (%)



Note: Based on respondents who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a previous partner (n = 6,400).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Pregnancy and violence

Violence occurring during pregnancy poses a danger to both the woman and her unborn child. Among the respondents who were pregnant during the relationship with their partner and who experienced violence in the relationship, 20 % of the victims of current partner violence and 42 % of victims of previous partner violence say that physical or sexual violence also took place during pregnancy (Table 2.12).

Table 2.12: Women who were pregnant during the relationship with a violent partner, and whether or not the partner was violent against them during the pregnancy (%)

	Partner violent during the pregnancy (%)	Partner not violent during the pregnancy (%)	No answer (%)	Total (%)	*n*
Current partner	20	77	2	100	1,762
Previous partner	42	56	1	100	3,120

Note: *Taken individually, the sum of categories 'Partner violent during the pregnancy', 'Partner not violent during the pregnancy' and 'No answer' can differ from the total indicated in the table by +/- one percentage point. This difference is due to rounding.*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

2.8.3. Overcoming violence

Most respondents interviewed in the survey who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner say that they have put the violent incidents behind them and they have been able to overcome the violence. Some 7 % of respondents state that they have not been able to do so (Table 2.13). Respondents, who have overcome the violence, primarily refer to the support of family and friends (35 %) or their personal strength and decisiveness (32 %). Close to one third of respondents (30 %) indicate that separating and moving away helped them overcome the violence. Few respondents refer to organised support measures, such as counselling or victim support, or to criminal justice proceedings as having assisted them to overcome violence. This suggests that much needs to be done to improve the availability and appropriateness of services for women who have been victims of violence.

Table 2.13: Women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by their partner on what helped them to overcome the violence (%) [a,b]

Support from family and friends	35
My personal strength and decisiveness	32
Divorce/separation/moving away	30
There were no consequences of the violence	24
I have dealt with the issue and it does not concern me any more	19
Telling others about the experiences	12
Acknowledging that the violence was/is wrong	10
The perpetrator made amends/changed behaviour	9
Professional support including counselling and victim support	6
Partner died (category available only in case of a previous partner)	2
Charges brought against the perpetrator/conviction in court	2
Other means	4
I have not overcome the violence	7

Notes: *a Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.*
b Based on respondents who describe the most serious incident of physical and/or sexual violence by any partner (n = 7,278).
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

2.9. Details about non-partner violence

Women who have experienced violence by a non-partner were asked about the incidence of this type of violence, as well as further questions of particular relevance to non-partner violence. Women were asked to specify where the violence took place and how many perpetrators were involved in the most serious incident by a non-partner. Details on the location where violent incidents take place can be used to identify places or areas where prevention efforts should be targeted.

2.9.1. Repeat victimisation: capturing the number of incidents of non-partner violence

Women who have experienced non-partner violence could indicate how many times they have been faced with particular acts of physical or sexual violence. Results presented in Section 2.8.1 show that, in many instances of partner violence, victims often experience multiple incidents. According to the results in Table 2.14, many victims of physical violence by a non-partner have also suffered multiple incidents. In five out of the nine acts of physical violence surveyed, roughly half of women have experienced this more than once. Depending on the form of violence, some 10 %–20 % have faced this six times or more.

Table 2.14: Repeat subjection to physical violence by non-partner, by type of violence (%) [a,b]

	Once (%)	2–5 times (%)	6 or more times (%)	*n*
Pushed you or shoved you	44	36	19	4,872
Slapped you	49	31	20	3,292
Threw a hard object at you	51	32	17	1,453
Grabbed you or pulled your hair	52	33	16	2,610
Beat you with a fist or a hard object, or kicked you	50	30	20	1,633
Burned you	71	(12)	(18)	130
Tried to suffocate you or strangle you	73	18	9	529
Cut or stabbed you, or shot at you	77	(13)	(10)	188
Beat your head against something	59	25	16	533

Notes: *a Based on respondents who have experienced a certain type of physical violence by a non-partner since the age of 15.*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Table 2.15: Repeat subjection to sexual violence by non-partner, by type of violence (%)

	Once (%)	2–5 times (%)	6 or more times (%)	*n*
Forced you into sexual intercourse	68	21	11	1,013
Attempted to force you into sexual intercourse	74	19	7	1,354
Made you take part in sexual activity when you did not want to or you were unable to refuse	62	25	13	895
Consented to sexual activity because you were afraid of what might happen if you refuse	59	23	18	731

Notes: Based on respondents who have experienced a certain type of sexual violence by a non-partner since the age of 15.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

On the other hand, victims of sexual violence by a non-partner experience fewer repeat incidents (Table 2.15) than victims of sexual violence by a current or previous partner (Table 2.9). Depending on the type of sexual violence by a non-partner, 59 %–74 % of victims have experienced only one incident. However, one in 10 victims has been raped six or more times by a non-partner; this can be either by the same person or by different persons.

2.9.2. Patterns in non-partner violence

The overwhelming majority of sexual violence against women is gender-based, and the majority of physical violence against women is also gender-based. However, one in four incidents (26 %) of non-partner *physical* violence is carried out by a female perpetrator, whereas female perpetrators of sexual violence are rare: 2 % (Table 2.16).

The overwhelming majority of partner violence referred to in the survey involves heterosexual couples. Some 151 women indicate that their current partner is a woman; this ranges from zero to only 18 women depending on the country. Given the small number of cases available for analysis, the results should not be generalised to represent all women living with a same-sex partner. However, from these 151 respondents, eight women, or 11 % after weighting, indicate that their current partner has used physical and/or sexual violence against them in the relationship.

When asking about violence by previous partners, the survey does not identify whether the violence was committed by a male previous partner or a female previous partner if the respondent has had both. What can be said is that 93 women surveyed indicate that they have had in the past only female partners; this ranges from zero to nine depending on the country. Out of these 93 respondents, 29 women, or 45 % after weighting, indicate that they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a previous – in this case female – partner. The numbers involved are, however, very small; this finding can, therefore, not be generalised to the wider population of same-sex partnerships.

Comparing incidents of non-partner physical violence by form of violence used, incidents by a female perpetrator are more likely to involve grabbing the respondent or pulling her by her hair, compared with incidents by male perpetrators. Incidents where the perpetrator is male are more likely to include pushing or shoving the respondent. There are no other notable differences between male and female perpetrators in the forms of violence used. The youngest age group of women surveyed, 18- to 29-year-olds, are the most likely to indicate that they have experienced physical violence by other women since the age of 15. This finding is striking because one might assume that older women have acquired more experiences of violence over their lifetime than younger women, involving also incidents where the perpetrator was a woman. This could suggest either that older women have forgotten such incidents (because they seem to concern younger women in particular) or that there has been a recent increase in violence by women against other women. This pattern – that physical violence perpetrated by women is more likely to happen to younger women – is confirmed by the age breakdown of the experiences of physical violence in the past 12 months. The number of respondents in the older age groups is, however, too small for definitive conclusions. Regarding sexual violence, the number of cases where women have experienced sexual violence on the part of other (non-partner) women is too small for further analysis of the perpetrators and the forms of violence used.

Table 2.16: Sex of the perpetrators of physical and sexual violence since the age of 15 when perpetrator was other than a current or previous partner (%)

	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Male	67	97
Female	26	2
Both	7	0
No answer	1	0
n	7,207	2,296

Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Table 2.17: Perpetrators of non-partner violence by type of violence, incidents since the age of 15 (%) [a,b,c]

	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Total
Boss/supervisor	1	3	2
Colleague/co-worker	4	5	4
Client/customer/patient	7	(3)	7
Teacher/trainer/coach	2	2	2
Another pupil/co-student	13	5	13
Doctor/healthcare worker	(0)	(2)	1
Relative/family member (other than partner)	31	9	30
A date/someone you just met	2	15	5
Friend/acquaintance	19	27	22
Somebody else you knew	20	24	22
Somebody you did not know	31	23	31
n	7,372	2,355	8,316

Notes: *a Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
c Reference population: victims of physical or sexual violence by a perpetrator who was not a current or previous partner.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by somebody other than their partner were asked to describe the perpetrator using a predefined list of categories. This allows for the examination of results separately for various perpetrator groups and the likely context where the violence took place. For example, incidents that involve a boss or supervisor, a co-worker, a client or a patient can be classified as incidents that are likely to have taken place in the context of a respondent's work.

Incidents of sexual violence typically involve a friend or an acquaintance, or a stranger. On the other hand, almost a third (30 %) of women who have experienced physical violence indicate a relative or a family member (other than a partner) as the perpetrator. This may indicate that the problem of 'domestic violence' goes beyond a woman's immediate partner and has a wider context. About one in four women who has experienced physical violence (25 %) says that this involved somebody whom she did not know beforehand (Table 2.17).

In total, 11 % of women who have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a non-partner indicate that the perpetrator was somebody from a work context, such as a supervisor, colleague or customer.[20] These results could be taken into account by the European Social Partners in the context of the Framework agreement on harassment and violence at work (2007), and could be considered in any follow-up to the European Strategy on Safety and Health at Work 2007–2012.

Women who have experienced physical and/or sexual non-partner violence were also asked a number of follow-up questions related to the most serious incidents of non-partner violence that they have experienced since the age of 15. These questions mostly concerned consequences of the most serious incident, of which the results will be described in Chapter 3. Victims of non-partner violence were also asked to describe the place where the most serious incident happened.

Examining the context of the most serious incident of violence by a non-partner, physical violence is most likely to occur in the victim's own home (30 %). Public environments, such as the workplace or a school (20 %) and out in the street, a car park or other public area (20 %), also served as settings on a number of occasions (Table 2.18). When the most serious incident involved sexual violence, this took most often place in the victim's own home or another house or apartment. All in all, these results support the notion that, in addition to sometimes serving as a stage for partner violence, a victim's own home is where many incidents of non-partner violence against women take place as well. Since many incidents of partner violence are also likely to take place in the home, the home can be considered as one of the most dangerous places for women in terms of exposure to violence. These results

[20] The sum of the corresponding categories in Table 2.17 – boss/supervisor, colleague/co-worker, client/customer/patient – is more than 11 % because some respondents indicate that they have experienced violence by perpetrators from more than one of the three categories.

Table 2.18: Place where the most serious incident of non-partner violence happened, since the age of 15, by type of violence (%)

	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Total
Own home	30	19	27
Other house or apartment	9	29	14
Elsewhere in a residential building	2	3	2
At school or workplace	20	6	16
In a café, restaurant, pub, club, disco	10	4	8
In a shop	1	(1)	1
In a car	1	11	4
In public transport	4	(2)	3
Elsewhere indoors	3	7	4
In the street, a square, car park or other public place	20	12	18
In a park, forest	1	6	3
Elsewhere outdoors	4	8	5
n	4,237	1,847	6,084

Note: *Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

further emphasise the importance of addressing any remaining obstacles which may hinder women from seeking assistance to combat violence in the private sphere.

In 81 % of the cases where the most serious incident consisted of physical violence, only one perpetrator was involved, in 9 % two perpetrators and in 8 % three or more (in the remaining 1 % of cases the respondent could not say). In 90 % of cases where sexual violence occurred, only one perpetrator was involved, in 4 % there were two perpetrators and in 5 % three or more (again, in 1 % of cases the respondent could not say). These findings indicate that 'gang rape' or other forms of multiple-perpetrator sexual violence against women have happened to almost one in 10 women who have experienced sexual violence by non-partners and who describe the details of the most serious incident of sexual violence they have experienced.

FRA opinions

The following FRA opinions relate to the results reported in Chapter 2 on the overall extent and nature of violence against women, including intimate partner violence.

Responding to the scale and specific nature of physical and sexual violence against women

The scale of physical and sexual violence experienced by women across the EU calls for renewed policy attention.

- The survey results indicate that violence against women is a pervasive problem in the EU. One in three women has experienced some form of physical and/or sexual assault since the age of 15. Some 8 % of women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence in the last 12 months before the survey interview. In the number of victims that are affected, the scale of the problem far exceeds many areas of crime on which the EU currently has a political and policy focus. Given that women make up half the population, attention needs to be drawn to the impact that gender-based violence has on significant numbers of women in the EU.

As a minimum, EU Member States need to review their legislation to ensure that it is in line with the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention and the EU Victims' Directive, both of which set new standards for responding to victims of gender-based violence.

- For example, some EU Member States, such as Belgium, Croatia, Ireland and the United Kingdom, have introduced reforms aimed at extending definitions of sexual violence to include all forms of non-consensual sexual acts. This serves to emphasise that violence against women cannot be condoned under any circumstances. In comparison, the criminal codes of most EU Member States contain definitions of sexual violence that afford protection not on the mere basis of a lack of consent to sexual acts but only if certain additional requirements are met. Such requirements include specific means of coercion or a particular state of dependency or defencelessness on the part of the victim, such as after the loss of consciousness. It is suggested that EU Member States review criminal law definitions providing protection against sexual violence to ensure that all forms of intentional non-consensual acts of a sexual nature are covered by criminal law definitions, in line with Article 36 of the Istanbul Convention. Recognition by the law of women's experiences of violence needs to be underpinned by victim support.

Sexual violence is a pervasive crime that calls for concerted action to address attitudes towards and sexual violence against women.

- One in 10 women has experienced some form of sexual violence since she was 15 years old. This includes the one in 20 women who has been raped since the age of 15. The widespread experience of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women requires recognition at different levels in society so that victims' needs are addressed and perpetrators cannot act with impunity. A number of programmes (targeting both sexes) have been shown to be successful in addressing attitudes towards and sexual violence against women. The EU and Member States could identify and roll out such educational initiatives, including workplace schemes, as well as programmes that address the specific needs of the many women who have been sexually victimised.

Sexual offences involving more than one perpetrator need to be recognised and require enhanced specialist support for victims.

- Of those women who say in the survey that they have experienced sexual violence by a non-partner since the age of 15, almost one in 10 (0.4 % of all women surveyed) indicate that more than one perpetrator was involved in the most serious incident. Therefore, the reality of 'gang rape' and other predatory sexual acts against women by groups of offenders needs to be addressed in the open so that action can be taken to confront and punish these crimes. Women should also be offered enhanced support, where needed, if they decide to report to the police and other services.

Targeted prevention and awareness raising are needed for young women, who, as a group, are particularly vulnerable to victimisation.

- Young women are particularly vulnerable to becoming victims of violence. Targeted prevention and awareness-raising initiatives for young women could be developed. These would address issues of safety in relationships and other settings, and should also work with men with the aim of reducing offending.

In parallel with campaigns and responses directed at women, men need to be positively engaged in initiatives that confront men's violence against women.

- The majority of physical and sexual violence reported in the survey was carried out by male perpetrators. Consequently, men should be encouraged to reinforce a duty to respect and protect the dignity of women. For example, a number of countries worldwide have established the White Ribbon Campaign, whereby men address and actively campaign against violence against women. These types of campaigns could be supported and rolled out at EU and Member State levels.

Responding to the scale and specific nature of violence against women by intimate partners

The scale of intimate partner violence requires a renewed political and policy focus at the EU and Member State levels.

- Of those women who currently have or previously had a partner, just over one in five have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a

partner. This means that intimate partner violence is a widespread reality that requires targeted efforts to combat it and to respond effectively to the specific needs of victims. For example, the survey results indicate the economic and social vulnerability of many women who are victims, so that financial support could be made available, where needed, to allow a woman to leave a violent relationship.

The state must treat intimate partner violence as a public matter rather than a private one.

- All measures addressing intimate partner violence should aim to emphasise that 'domestic violence' is a public concern and not a private matter to be left to the family. Interventions must aim at protecting the rights of women as victims, rather than seek to preserve the integrity of families.

Marital rape is a reality for a number of women, many of whom have experienced multiple incidents. This demands that the law in all EU Member States responds to married women as victims of rape on an equal footing with unmarried women.

- Of women who have been raped by their current partner, about one third (31 %) have experienced six or more incidents of rape by their partner. This finding sheds light on the need to recognise the extent and repetitive nature of this abuse that a proportion of women experience in their most intimate relationships. There is no justification for affording married women less protection under the criminal law than is given to unmarried women. However, it appears that in one Member State married women are not offered the same protection. Hence – drawing on the weight of evidence presented in the survey – it is suggested that the Member State concerned reviews its legal provisions with a view to ensuring that the protection given to married women against rape and sexual violence within their relationships is at least not weaker than the protection granted to unmarried women.

Evidence shows that a significant number continue to be vulnerable to abuse in the aftermath of violent relationships. Protection needs to be offered to women in this situation.

- One in six women who had been abused by their previous partner experienced violence after the relationship had ended. Protection needs to be offered to women in the aftermath of abusive relationships, and perpetrators must be closely monitored to counteract the potential for violent recidivism against women. Where national policies address 'domestic violence', this should be defined in a way that is not limited to the victim and the perpetrator sharing (or having shared) the same residence, in line with Article 3 of the Istanbul Convention.

Heavy alcohol use needs to be highlighted and addressed as a factor contributing to men's violence against women in intimate relationships.

- As the survey indicates, a partner's heavy alcohol use is strongly related to violence in a relationship. National violence prevention measures should consider addressing heavy alcohol use. The alcoholic drinks industry can support this when promoting responsible drinking.

- Existing practices record road traffic accidents in which alcohol was involved. In the same way, police could systematically collect data on alcohol abuse in cases of domestic violence when they are called to intervene. This information could be used in the analysis of and responses to patterns of violence.

Healthcare professionals need to be aware of the vulnerability of pregnant women to violence so that they are in a position to effectively address this.

- Of those who have been pregnant during a violent relationship, 20 % of victims of current partner violence and 42 % of victims of previous partner violence say that physical or sexual violence by their partner occurred during pregnancy. Measures could be taken to encourage antenatal care providers in the health service to routinely check if a woman is at risk of violence. Existing good practices could be identified at the Member State and EU levels.

The characteristics and behaviour of perpetrators of violence in intimate partnerships need to be looked at to explore possible risk factors contributing to violence.

- A partner's level of education seems to have an impact on women's experiences of violence. In general, the higher a partner's level of education, the lower the level of physical and sexual violence experienced by a woman. This finding warrants further exploration alongside other factors contributing to women's victimisation. For example, women who indicate they have an equal say in how household resources are used also tend to experience lower levels of violence. Therefore, policy interventions could address a combination

of high risk factors to identify women who are more at risk of violence, taking into account the characteristics of both women and men.

Repeat victimisation is a particular characteristic of intimate partner violence. EU Member States should be encouraged to review their legislation for its capacity to recognise and effectively respond to the impact of repeat victimisation on many women's lives.

- Many women experience repeat victimisation at the hands of partners. As the primary objective of any intervention is to safeguard the rights of victims, to ensure that violence – and the threat of violence – should stop, measures protecting women against repeat victimisation are paramount (as a general obligation under Article 18 of the Istanbul Convention). Recognising that intimate partner violence is often repetitive in nature, legislation in several EU Member States – including Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Sweden – reflects this by providing criminal law definitions that allow criminal proceedings to address the wider pattern of relational violence. Other Member States could consider following this path by adopting comprehensive criminal law definitions that encompass the reality of repeat victimisation experienced by women. This would be in line with Article 22 of the EU Victims' Directive, which provides for an individual assessment of the victim's specific protection needs, including protection against repeat victimisation. Importantly, this provision brings, beyond doubt, the issue of the victim's protection against repeat victimisation under the scope of EU law.

Making sure that polices are based on evidence

Comprehensive data on women's experiences of violence are essential for the development and monitoring of policies to combat violence against women.

- To effectively understand and respond to the huge scale and specific nature of violence against women in its different forms, time and effort should be invested in collecting accurate data that can shed light on the nature of this human rights abuse so that policies can be more effectively targeted. For example, one in 10 incidents of sexual violence reported in the survey involved more than one perpetrator and one in six women who have been victimised by a previous partner experienced violence after the relationship ended. That is the type of information that is needed, but which many EU Member States currently lack, to be able to initiate targeted policy responses.

There is a clear need for improvements to and harmonisation of data collection on violence against women, both within and between EU Member States, to more effectively use data to address this EU-wide abuse.

- The scale of violence against women in the EU demands that particular attention should be paid to improving and harmonising, where possible, data collection on this widespread form of human rights abuse. For example, working groups at the level of the EU and Eurostat – namely on crime prevention and on data collection in the field of crime and criminal justice statistics – could examine the situation of data collection on violence against women. This is currently done with respect to specific areas, such as trafficking in women and girls for sexual exploitation. These could offer an example of how to go about enhancing data collection in other areas.

3

Consequences of physical and sexual violence

MAIN FINDINGS

Effects of violence on the victim

- When talking about the most serious incident of sexual violence, women say that their emotional responses at the time were mostly those of fear, anger and shame about what has happened to them.
- Victimisation by partners or other persons made victims suffer from a loss of self-confidence. It left them feeling vulnerable and anxious. Victims of sexual violence indicated that they often suffer from a number of psychological consequences.

Contact with police and other services

- One third of victims of partner violence (33 %) and one quarter of victims of non-partner violence (26 %) contacted either the police or some other organisation, such as a victim support organisation, following the most serious incident of violence.
- In total, victims reported the most serious incident of partner violence to the police in 14 % of cases and the most serious incident of non-partner violence in 13 % of cases.
- For about a quarter of victims, feeling ashamed or embarrassed about what had happened was the reason for not reporting the most serious incident of sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner to the police or any other organisation.

Unmet needs of victims

- When asked which type of help would have been useful, women indicate that, as a result of the most serious incident of violence, first and foremost they wanted to have someone to talk to and support them (33 %–54 % depending on the type of violence and perpetrator), followed by protection (12 %–25 %) and other practical help (13 %–21 %).

Overcoming the violence

- Most victims (57 %–60 % depending on the perpetrator and type of violence) have shared their experiences with someone concerning the most serious incident that they have experienced. About one third of victims of partner violence (35 %) credited the support of their family and friends with helping them to overcome the violence.

3.1. Introduction

In the survey, women who say that they have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence were asked further questions concerning the most serious incident and the impact it had on them. This includes emotional reactions to the incident, long-term psychological consequences and injuries. Women were also asked if they ever talk about the incident to anyone.

On the next pages, various tables describe the results concerning the impact of violent incidents on women. In addition to the results describing how common various consequences are, the tables show to which extent respondents have suffered from multiple consequences. This can be considered as one possible indicator of the seriousness of violent incidents. Although some consequences may already be considered as more serious than others (for example, concussion is more serious than bruises or scratches), each of the categories can contain a range of outcomes, from very serious to less serious. To some extent, the seriousness is also something that depends on the specific experience and perception of the victim. For example, to many victims the long-term psychological consequences may be more serious than physical injuries.

The following sections differentiate between victims' *emotional responses* to the most serious incident of violence and the long-term *psychological consequences* of the same event. These two categories are used to differentiate between:

- victims' immediate reactions (short-term responses, referred to here as *emotional responses*) and
- consequences resulting from an incident that can emerge and persist some time after an incident occurred (referred to here as long-term *psychological consequences*).

The pretest carried out before the full-scale survey was used to test these questions. The results of the pretest confirmed that respondents were able to differentiate meaningfully between these two sets of responses.

3.2. Emotional responses

Practically all respondents, when describing the most serious incident of partner or non-partner violence, indicate that they have had one or several emotional responses following the incident (Table 3.1). There are only small differences between the reactions to partner and non-partner violence. In contrast, some differences emerge when looking at the results separately for physical and sexual violence.

Women who have experienced sexual violence are more likely to say that they feel ashamed, embarrassed and/or guilty. These reactions may partly indicate a stigma which women still experience as a victim of sexual violence. It is also more common for victims of sexual violence to be fearful; almost two thirds (64 %) of victims of sexual violence by any *partner* (current or previous) say they feel fearful as a result of the incident.

The most serious incident of sexual violence by a *non-partner* makes women feel afraid in 62 % of cases, compared with 42 % of victims of physical non-partner violence experiencing fear. Sexual non-partner violence often (in 50 % of cases) results in a feeling of shock. In the case of intimate partner violence, the incident may not have been the first time that a partner has used violence against the victim.

Table 3.1: Emotional response following the most serious incident of violence since the age of 15, by type of violence and perpetrator (%) [a,b]

	Any partner		Non-partner	
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Type of emotional response				
Anger	63	58	58	56
Aggressiveness	23	26	22	23
Shock	34	37	34	50
Fear	52	64	42	62
Shame	21	47	12	49
Embarrassment	18	34	12	37
Guilt	12	32	8	32
Annoyance	32	37	35	30
Other	3	9	5	9

	Any partner		Non-partner	
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Number of categories selected				
None	1	(1)	2	(1)
1	28	14	30	11
2–3	48	44	53	45
4 or more	23	40	15	42
No answer	0	(0)	(0)	(0)
n	5,415	1,863	4,237	1,847

Notes: *a Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

The results in Table 3.1 concerning the extent to which respondents experience a combination of different emotional reactions show a marked difference between incidents of sexual violence and physical violence. When the most serious incident involves sexual violence, victims are more likely to experience a number of different consequences: 40 % or more indicate that they have experienced four or more of the listed emotions when the most serious incident involved sexual violence (40 % in the case of sexual violence by a partner, 42 % for sexual violence by a non-partner). This reflects the heightened impact of sexual violence.

3.3. Psychological consequences

Compared with emotional reactions following the most serious incident of violence, fewer respondents have experienced long-term psychological consequences (Table 3.2). However, such consequences are more common following an incident of partner violence than non-partner violence. Victims of sexual violence are also more likely to experience a combination of long-term consequences, as shown in the number of different categories selected by the respondents. Across different perpetrators and types of violence, the most common long-term psychological consequences of physical and sexual violence are anxiety, feeling vulnerable and loss of self-confidence.

Practically all listed psychological consequences are more common among victims of sexual incidents. In contrast to emotional responses, where few differences can be discerned between incidents of physical violence by a partner and a non-partner, long-term psychological consequences are more likely to surface as a result of partner violence. These results are likely to reflect the consequences of a pattern of repeat victimisation in intimate partner violence.

Table 3.2: Long-term psychological consequences of the most serious incident of violence since the age of 15, by type of violence and perpetrator (%) [a,b]

	Any partner		Non-partner	
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Type of psychological consequence				
Depression	20	35	8	23
Anxiety	32	45	23	37
Panic attacks	12	21	8	19
Loss of self-confidence	31	50	17	40
Feeling vulnerable	30	48	24	47

	Any partner		Non-partner	
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Difficulty in sleeping	23	41	13	29
Concentration difficulties	12	21	7	16
Difficulties in relationships	24	43	9	31
Other	3	5	4	4
Number of categories selected				
None	28	9	43	16
1	26	21	28	25
2–3	27	31	19	35
4 or more	17	38	8	24
No answer	2	(1)	2	1
n	5,415	1,863	4,237	1,847

Notes: *a Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

3.4. Physical injuries

About half of victims of physical and/or sexual violence say that they did not suffer any injuries, such as bruises or broken teeth, as a result of the most serious incident of violence; this ranges from 45 % of victims of sexual violence by an intimate partner to 55 % of victims of physical violence by a non-partner (Table 3.3). In incidents that do not result in injuries, women are most often pushed, shoved or slapped. In contrast, other forms of violence, such as being burnt or stabbed, almost certainly lead to injuries.

Comparing the results by perpetrator, the most serious incident of *partner violence* – as described by the respondents – is more likely to result in injuries to the victim than the most serious incident of *non-partner violence*, which in most cases results in bruises or scratches. The most serious incident of violence by a partner leads to several different types of injuries slightly more often than non-partner violence. For example, 17 % of victims of sexual violence by a partner indicate that the most serious incident resulted in two to three different types of physical injuries, and a further 3 % had four or more injuries.

Table 3.3: Physical injuries resulting from the most serious incident of violence since the age of 15, by type of violence and perpetrator (%) [a,b]

	Any partner		Non-partner	
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Type of injury				
Bruises, scratches	42	42	32	35
Wounds, sprains, burns	10	14	8	7
Fractures, broken bones, broken teeth	5	7	3	1
Concussion or other brain injury	3	4	2	2
Internal injuries	2	5	1	5
Miscarriage	1	5	(0)	(2)
Other	2	5	2	5

	Any partner		Non-partner	
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Number of categories selected				
No injuries	47	45	55	53
1	35	29	32	31
2–3	11	17	7	9
4 or more	1	3	(0)	(1)
No answer	6	6	6	5
n	5,415	1,863	4,237	1,847

Notes: *a Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

3.5. Contact with police or other services

Respondents who have experienced some form of physical and/or sexual violence were asked if they contacted any service or organisation following the incident. This could include reporting the incident to the police, going to see a doctor or seeking help from a women's shelter or a victim support organisation.

Table 3.4: Women who contacted police or other organisations or services as a result of the most serious incident of violence since the age of 15, by type of perpetrator (%) [a,b]

	Any partner (current and/or previous)		Non-partner	
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Police	14	15	13	14
Hospital	11	12	9	12
Doctor, health centre or other healthcare institution	15	22	10	16
Social services	5	7	2	2
Women's shelter	3	6	(0)	(1)
Victim support organisation	4	4	1	4
Church/faith-based organisation	3	4	2	2
Legal service/lawyer	10	15	4	6
Another service/organisation	3	5	3	3
Any of the above	31	39	24	30
n	5,415	1,863	4,237	1,847

Note: *a Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Victim support services

The 2012 European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) report provides information on the availability of a range of support measures – such as counselling centres, 24-hour hotlines and women's crisis centres – across the EU-28 for women victims of violence. It compares the availability of these services with the level recommended by the Council of Europe. As an example, the available data show that only five EU Member States have at least one place per 10,000 women in women's shelters, which is the level of service the Council of Europe recommends.

Source: EIGE (2012), Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: Violence against women – victim support*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union (Publications Office)*

In 2014–2015, FRA will publish a comparative report on generic victim support services and models of victim support throughout the EU. The report will present promising practices and models of victim support, and will systematically compare standards set out in the EU Victims' Directive with what the research shows is the actual situation on the ground in all 28 EU Member States.

FRA will also present findings on the specific situation of victims of hate crime, addressing the legal and organisational framework of measures relating to hate crime in all EU Member States. As part of the research, a limited number of interviews were conducted with police, prosecutors, judges, staff of victim support services and other civil society organisations with a human rights remit to find out how experts assess the gravity of the situation of hate crime, where they see deficiencies in policies, institutions and measures responding to hate crimes and where they believe that improvements would be particularly important. Overall, more than 200 experts were interviewed. Findings from this research can be compared with the level of provision offered to women who are victims.

For more information on the FRA project on victims support services in the EU, see: http://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2012/victim-support-services-eu-overview-and-assessment-victims-rights-practice.

Although one in three (33 %) of victims of physical and/or sexual *partner* violence and one in four (26 %) victims of physical and/or sexual *non-partner* violence contacted one or more of the listed services and organisations, in two thirds (66 %) of cases the most serious incident of partner violence experienced by the respondents did not come to the attention of any service or organisation, and in three quarters of cases (75 %) where the most serious incident involved non-partner violence. Women are more likely to contact the listed services following an incident of sexual violence than physical violence. As a result of the most serious incident of sexual violence by a current or previous partner, 39% of women contacted one of the listed services; 30 % of women did so following the most serious incident of sexual violence by a non-partner.

Of the listed organisations and services, women are most likely to contact healthcare services (hospital, doctor or other healthcare provider),[1] followed by reporting the incident to the police. Victims of partner and non-partner violence are equally likely to report the most serious incident to the police. However, given that partner violence more often involves repeated incidents, reporting to the police may occur only after a series of violent incidents. About half of those who sought help or assistance following the most serious incident of physical or sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner say that they contacted two or more of the listed services. In this count, victims who contacted either of the two categories relating to healthcare services have been considered only once.

Figures 3.1 and 3.2 present the results on reporting the most serious incident to the police by EU Member State. In the case of both partner and non-partner violence, up to about 30 % of the most serious incidents come to the attention of the police in those countries where reporting to the police is most common. In other countries where reporting to the police is less common, only about 10 % of the most serious incidents come to the attention of the police. At the same time, it must be remembered that incidents not identified as 'most serious' may not come to the attention of the police at all.

[1] As shown in Table 3.4, when asked if they contacted any service or organisation following the most serious incident of violence, the respondents could indicate that they contacted health services using two different answer categories: 'Hospital' and 'Doctor, healthcare centre or other healthcare institution'. Combining these two categories shows that 15 % of victims of physical non-partner violence and 21 % of victims of sexual non-partner violence contacted health services as a result of the most serious incident. These figures take into account that some respondents contacted both a hospital and a doctor, healthcare centre or other healthcare institution. In the case of partner violence, 19 % of women victims of *physical* violence contacted health services, and 27 % of women victims of *sexual* violence did so following the most serious incident.

Table 3.5 Women who indicate that the most serious incident of violence came to the attention of the police, by type of perpetrator (%) [a,b]

EU Member State	Partner violence	Non-partner violence
AT	19	(18)
BE	27	21
BG	17	22
CY	(27)	(9)
CZ	14	(9)
DE	15	17
DK	10	16
EE	11	(11)
EL	14	(17)
ES	24	17
FI	10	15
FR	18	18
HR	22	20
HU	16	(12)
IE	28	24
IT	19	(18)
LT	30	(17)
LU	31	19
LV	21	13
MT	28	23
NL	18	21
PL	28	(29)
PT	23	(21)
RO	23	23
SE	17	14
SI	(18)	(21)
SK	12	14
UK	25	26
EU-28	20	19
n	7,278	6,084

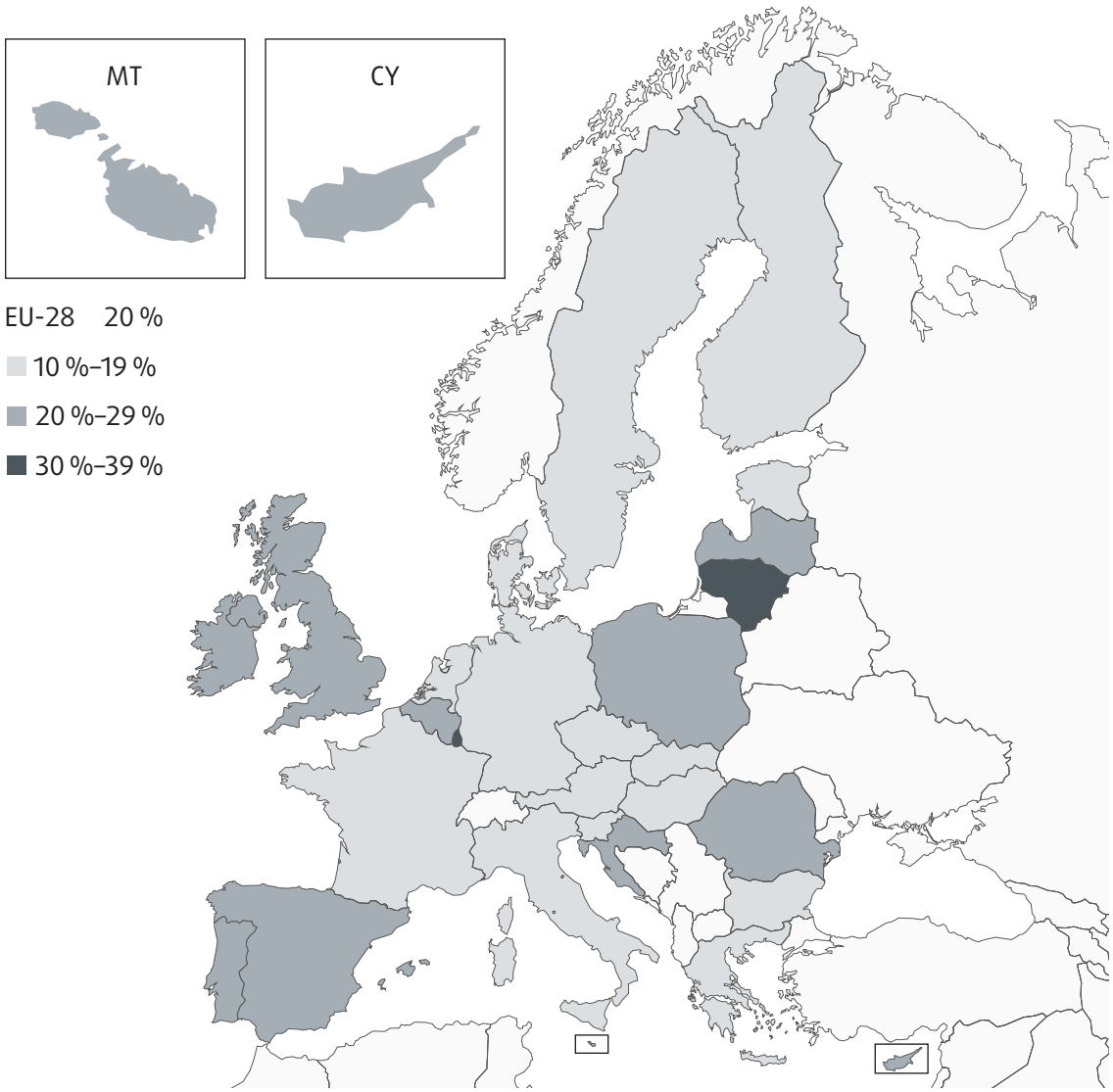
Note: *a Incidents that 'came to the attention of the police' include incidents reported to the police by the victims, incidents where somebody else than the victim reported it to the police and incidents where police came to know about the incident on their own.*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

On average, across all 28 EU Member States, besides victims reporting to the police themselves, a further 5 % of victims of partner violence and 6 % of victims of non-partner violence indicate that the police came to know about the incident in some other way; for example, when somebody else reported the incident to the police (such as a neighbour or a passer-by).

The results concerning the number of victims of violence who have not contacted services suggest that many victims do not come to the attention of the authorities and other service providers, and therefore may not receive information on their rights and assistance that would be available. Results concerning the use and non-use of services can be looked into as an important component in estimating the costs of violence against women. In addition to the direct costs, which are incurred through the burden that violence places on society in terms of costs of hospital treatment, social services and the police, violence can also create indirect costs, for example in the form of lost working hours.[2]

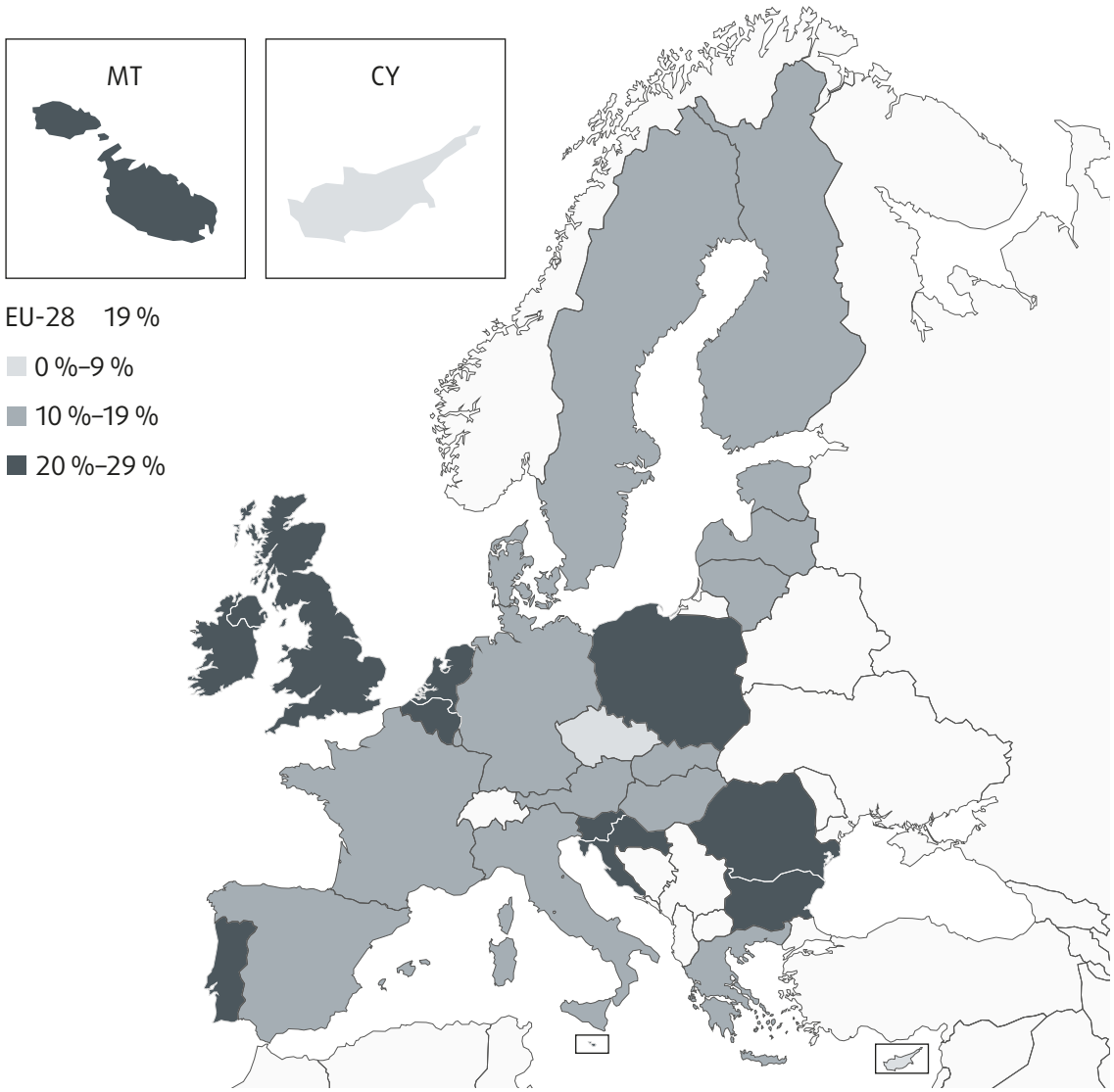
[2] For an overview on research on costs of violence against women, see Day, T., McKenna, K. and Bowlus, A. (2005), *The economic costs of violence against women: An evaluation of the literature*, Expert brief compiled in preparation for the Secretary-General's in-depth study on all forms of violence against women, United Nations, available at: www.un.org/womenwatch/daw//vaw/expert%20brief%20costs.pdf.

Figure 3.1: Victims of physical and/or sexual partner violence who say that the most serious incident came to the attention of the police (%)



Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Figure 3.2: Victims of physical and/or sexual non-partner violence who say that the most serious incident came to the attention of the police (%)



Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

In some EU Member States, there are comparatively low rates of partner violence alongside relatively high levels of incidents coming to the attention of the police. This may suggest that in these countries respondents were willing to disclose in the survey only those incidents which were fairly serious and therefore more likely to come to the attention of the police. For example, in Austria and Poland, compared with other EU Member States, respondents were less likely to say that they have been victims of partner violence, but in over 60 % of cases the most serious incident of partner violence had resulted in injuries. On average in the EU, the most serious incident of physical partner violence caused injuries in 47 % of cases, and 49 % of incidents of sexual partner violence resulted in physical injuries. In Denmark, which displays a relatively high rate of partner violence, 42 % of the most serious incidents of partner violence resulted in injuries. Therefore, respondents in Denmark were more likely to identify as the most serious incident a case which did not result in injuries, whereas respondents in Poland – a country which at first glance has a low rate of partner violence – suffered injuries in a majority of cases.

The respondents who did not personally contact the police in the most serious incident of violence were asked which reasons led them not to approach the police. The reasons range across a number of grounds; there are, however, no substantial differences between the reasons which the respondents mentioned in relation to incidents of violence by a partner and other perpetrators. In both cases, the respondents are most likely to indicate either that they preferred to deal with the situation themselves or with the help of family and friends, or that they did not consider the incident to merit contacting the police (Table 3.6).

Table 3.6: Reasons for not contacting the police following the most serious incident of violence since the age of 15, by type of violence and perpetrator (%) [a,b]

	Any partner (current and/or previous)		Non-partner	
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Dealt with it myself/involved a friend/ family matter	41	33	36	26
Too minor/not serious enough/ never occurred to me	34	17	38	16
Did not think they would do anything	7	13	6	12
Did not think they could do anything	5	12	6	9
Fear of offender, or reprisal	11	20	6	14
Somebody stopped me or discouraged me	2	3	1	2
Shame, embarrassment	11	23	5	26
Thought it was my fault	4	6	4	13
Did not want anyone to know/kept it private	11	21	4	18
Too emotionally upset to contact the police	4	5	3	7
Did not want the offender arrested or to get in trouble with police	5	5	3	2
Would not be believed	2	9	2	14
Afraid I would lose the children[c]	2	4	n/a	n/a
Did not want the relationship to end[c]	4	6	n/a	n/a
Went directly to a magistrate or judge to report the incident	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)
Somebody else had reported it, or police came to know about it on their own	1	2	3	3
Went somewhere else for help	2	2	3	4
Other reason	7	13	11	13
n	4,606	1,562	3,709	1,615

Notes: *a Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
c This answer category was available to the respondents only when they were asked about partner violence.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Victims who have been in contact with the police or some other service after the most serious incident of physical and/or sexual violence were asked to assess if they were satisfied with the assistance they received.

Victims are less satisfied with how the police responded to their situation than with other services (Table 3.7). This may indicate a need to improve how the police respond to incidents of violence against women; it may also reflect women's expectations and the degree to which the police are able to meet them. Table 3.10 shows the survey results concerning victims' unmet needs: types of assistance victims would have appreciated after the most serious incident of violence. Among the top three needs mentioned by victims is providing protection, which is something that victims may seek when contacting the police. Lower levels of satisfaction with the police response may indicate that women do not feel that the police can offer them effective protection.

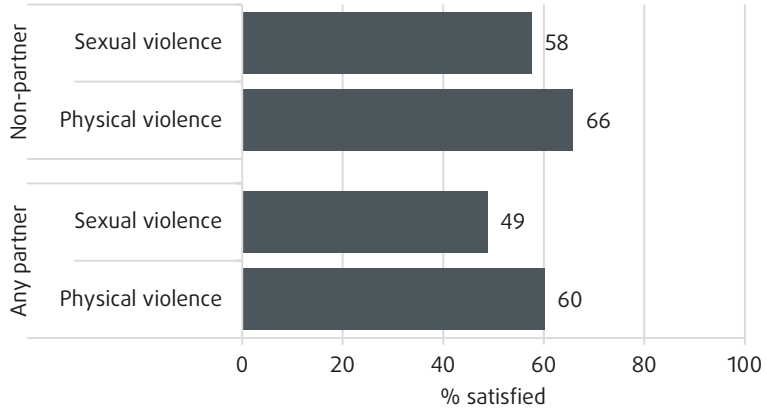
Victims of sexual violence tend to be less satisfied than victims of physical violence with the help received. This may indicate a systematic deficiency, across service providers, in their responses to the needs of victims of sexual violence.

Table 3.7: Victims of violence who say they were satisfied with the assistance they received following the most serious incident since the age of 15, by type of violence and perpetrator (%) [a,b]

	Any partner (current and/or previous)				Non-partner			
	Physical violence		Sexual violence		Physical violence		Sexual violence	
	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*
Police	60	578	49	211	66	461	58	191
Hospital	88	483	84	205	86	285	65	148
Doctor, health centre or other healthcare institution	87	699	77	319	89	411	81	236
Social services	73	171	60	96	75	54	70	36
Women's shelter	88	102	62	65	(72)	18	(80)	13
Victim support organisation	86	102	72	64	(88)	29	72	42
Church/faith-based organisation	91	124	88	66	88	56	83	39
Legal service/lawyer	90	432	79	206	79	134	82	66
Another service/organisation	85	120	88	79	84	105	78	48

Notes: *a Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Figure 3.3: Satisfaction with assistance received from the police, by type of violence and perpetrator (%)



Notes: *Any partner physical violence n = 1,021, any partner sexual violence n = 405, non-partner physical violence n = 777, non-partner sexual violence n = 323.*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Just as victims who did not contact the people were asked about their reasons, respondents who said that they did not contact any of the listed organisations and services after the most serious incident of violence were asked to specify what stopped them from turning to any service or organisation for help (Table 3.8). In most cases, the victims simply indicate that they chose not to seek outside assistance because they felt they could deal with the situation themselves or with the help of friends or family members. Again, victims of sexual violence in particular mentioned shame or embarrassment as a reason for not contacting any organisation for assistance, as well as not wanting anyone to know about the incident (Table 3.8). Compared with women whose most serious incident involved physical violence, victims of sexual violence are less likely to say that they did not contact any organisation for help because the incident was too minor. Instead, some victims of sexual violence say that they did not contact any organisation because they did not know where to turn to.

Table 3.8: Reasons for not contacting any organisation or service (other than the police) following the most serious incident, by type of violence and perpetrator (%) [a,b]

	Any partner (current and/or previous)		Non-partner	
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Dealt with it myself/involved a friend/family matter	55	47	49	37
Too minor/not serious enough/never occurred to me	34	21	40	20
Did not believe that anyone could help	8	15	7	15
Did not know where to turn to	6	9	5	10
No services were available	2	4	2	5
Services were too far away or difficult to get to	0	(1)	0	(2)
Could not afford it	2	2	(1)	(2)
The queues for services were too long	(0)	–	–	–
Fear of offender, of reprisal	6	10	4	9
Somebody stopped me or discouraged me	1	3	1	(1)
Shame, embarrassment	9	22	4	23
Did not want anyone to know/kept it private	9	21	4	20
Afraid I would be blamed	2	6	1	9
Thought it was my fault	2	5	2	7
Too emotionally upset	3	3	2	6
Would not be believed	2	5	2	8
Other reason	6	9	7	10
n	3,935	1,164	3,435	1,391

Notes: *a Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Table 3.9: Contacting services and talking to other people about the most serious incident since the age of 15, by type of violence and perpetrator (%) [a]

	Any partner (current and/or previous)		Non-partner	
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Respondent contacted the police or other services	31	39	24	30
Talked to somebody else	36	28	44	37
Did not talk to anyone	32	32	31	33
No answer	1	(0)	1	1
n	5,415	1,863	4,237	1,847

Note: *a Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets.*
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Besides contacting the police or other organisations or services, the survey also asked victims of partner or non-partner violence whether they had talked about the most serious incident they had experienced with anybody else; this could be, for example, a friend, a relative, a colleague at work or another acquaintance. Depending on the type of violence, about one in three victims has not talked about the most serious incident with anyone, and therefore these women shared their experiences for the first time in the survey interview (Table 3.9). This indicates that the survey interviewers were able to gain women's trust when talking about incidents of victimisation.

3.6. Unmet needs of victims

All respondents who have been victims of physical or sexual violence were asked if, following the most serious incident of violence that they have experienced, they needed some type of assistance – be it advice, practical help or just someone to talk to. This question was asked to find out whether women who have been victims of violence expect to receive some form of assistance which they do not get, and who or which organisation could provide this.

Thinking back to the most serious incident of physical or sexual violence that they have experienced, women in the survey are most likely to say that, following the incident, they would have appreciated having someone to talk to or another form of moral support, as well as to have someone to help with practical affairs (Table 3.10). Relatively few respondents indicate that they wanted medical help or information from the police. This does not necessarily mean that help from the police or from medical services was not needed; rather, these needs were less likely to go unmet. That is, victims may be better informed about where to go when they need the help of the police or some form of medical assistance, whereas they might feel less certain where to turn to for other types of support. Several respondents do note, however, that they wanted protection from further victimisation, beyond just being informed about security issues. Although two in five victims of physical violence by a partner or a non-partner say that they did not need any of the listed forms of support after the most serious incident of physical violence, about three quarters of victims of sexual violence would have appreciated some form of assistance which they did not get. Some 24 % of victims of sexual violence by a partner could do without any help after the most serious incident, and 27 % of victims of sexual violence by a non-partner say the same.

Table 3.10: Victims' needs for assistance following the most serious incident since the age of 15, by type of violence and perpetrator (%) [a]

	Any partner (current and/or previous)		Non-partner	
	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Physical violence	Sexual violence
Information from the police	6	7	6	6
Information about security/crime prevention	6	8	5	9
Practical help	14	21	13	16
Someone to talk to/moral support	39	54	33	51
Help with insurance/compensation claim	1	2	1	2
Protection from further victimisation/harassment	15	25	12	21
Help in reporting the incident/dealing with the police	5	13	5	12
Medical help	5	10	4	10
Financial support	4	7	1	3
Other	2	3	3	3
None of these/did not want any support	38	24	39	27
n	5,415	1,863	4,237	1,847

Note: a *Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.*
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

FRA opinions

The following FRA opinions relate to the results reported in Chapter 3 on the consequences of physical and sexual violence against women, including intimate partner violence.

Addressing under-reporting to the police and other services

Incidents of violence against women are seldom reported to the police and other services. Reporting rates need to be increased.

- Violence against women is a pervasive problem that is under-reported in the EU. Only one in three victims of partner violence and one in four victims of non-partner violence report their most recent serious incident to the police or some other service. Higher rates for reporting partner violence reflect that women often experience several incidents of abuse from a partner before they decide to report, whereas non-partner violence may be a one-off incident. Systemic impunity for violence against women is unacceptable, and therefore it is important for victims, for offenders and for society as a whole that violent acts be reported and do not go unpunished. Hence, low rates of violent offences coming to the attention of the police are a serious problem that must be addressed; for example, by learning from those EU Member States where reporting rates to the police have increased in recent years.

The culture of policing needs to change to encourage women to report violence.

- Many women in the survey indicate that they did not report to the police because they had little faith that the police would be able to do anything. Therefore, initiatives to encourage victims to report to the police should concentrate their efforts on reviewing and changing police culture so that violence against women is responded to seriously and sensitively as a fundamental rights abuse.

Lack of victim satisfaction with the police needs to be addressed by applying, and monitoring in practice, the provisions set out for victims under the Istanbul Convention and the EU Victims' Directive.

- The survey shows that significantly fewer victims are satisfied with the assistance they received from the police than with the services of any other organisation. This corresponds to the survey findings that victims do not contact the police following the most serious incident of violence because they do not think the police will do anything, or because victims assume that they will not be believed. In addition, victims of sexual violence are even less content than victims of physical violence as regards their treatment by the police. These results show that action is needed to independently review and revise the police's current response to women as victims of violence. This should be done in line with the standards of intervention set out in both the Istanbul Convention and the EU Victims' Directive. For example, in accordance with Article 4 of the directive, victims have the right to receive information from their first contact with a competent authority – which in many instances is the police.

Different models of police intervention to protect victims need to be reviewed to see the extent to which they protect victims in practice.

- For cases of 'domestic violence', where the police are often called to intervene, it can be said that two main models for police intervention exist at present in the EU. They should be reviewed with respect to the protection they offer victims. The first empowers the police to issue a restraining or protection order which takes immediate effect, banning the suspected offender from the victim's home even when this is the place where the offender also lives. After this, the police order is typically replaced by a civil or criminal court's interim injunction. At least 11 EU Member States have adopted such a model: Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Latvia,[3] Luxembourg, Hungary, the Netherlands and Slovenia. In the United Kingdom (specifically England and Wales), at the time of publication, the results from three pilot projects implementing Domestic Violence Protection Orders are being reviewed. The second model combines the arrest of the suspect with the possibility of a restraining order subsequently issued by a court or a public prosecutor. This approach has been adopted in at least five EU Member States: Belgium, France, Ireland, Spain and Sweden. Given that victims are happier with the support offered by victim support services, it should be stressed that, although both the above models rely on the police and the justice system, there is an essential role for specialist victim support services in this process to ensure that any intervention works effectively for victims in practice.

[3] On 13 June 2013, the Latvian Parliament (*Saeima*) adopted amendments to the police law in its second reading. The third reading was expected for the second half of the year and the new legislation was to enter into force by 1 January 2014.

Other services, besides the police, should be enhanced to encourage victims to report and receive support concerning experiences of violence.

- EU Member States should be encouraged to develop measures that can address violence against women beyond the scope of those cases that currently come to the attention of the police; for example, through initiatives such as dedicated helplines for victims and accompanying specialist victim support services.

The role of healthcare

Healthcare professionals can play an enhanced role in identifying and channelling cases of violence against women.

- According to the survey findings, doctors and healthcare institutions are most often contacted by women who are victims of violence. Therefore, there is considerable potential for health professionals to identify violence, inform the police, secure forensic evidence and initiate intervention processes that set out to end violence.

Confidentiality rules should be clarified so that health professionals can report abuse.

- Article 28 of the Istanbul Convention sets out, in clear terms, that parties "shall take the necessary measures to ensure that confidentiality rules imposed by internal law on certain professionals do not constitute an obstacle to the possibility, under appropriate conditions, of their reporting to the competent organisation or authorities if they have reasonable grounds to believe that a serious act of violence covered by the scope of this Convention has been committed and further serious acts of violence are to be expected". EU Member States could be encouraged to review their legislation and practitioner guidelines with a view to ensuring that doctors and health institutions are obliged – under appropriate conditions – to inform the police when there is real suspicion that a woman has been subjected to violence.

- In support of this (as referred to in Chapter 9), the survey results show that 87 % of women would find it acceptable if doctors routinely ask about violence when patients exhibit certain injuries. This finding backs the idea of targeted training for health professionals to be able to identify instances of potential abuse and to develop the appropriate skill-set that can encourage women to talk about abuse with health professionals. At the same time, the development of routine questioning by health practitioners concerning signs of violence must also ensure that appropriate checks are in place to identify the potential for any abuse by health practitioners themselves.

The role of specialist victim support services

In line with the EU Victims' Directive and the Istanbul Convention, there is a pressing need across the EU to enhance resources for specialist victim support services that are able to respond to the needs of women who are victims of violence.

- Compared with the number of women who contacted healthcare services as a result of violence, few women contacted victim support organisations or women's shelters as a result of the most serious incident of physical and/or sexual violence (4 % or fewer victims depending on the service). This finding suggests that a number of factors come into play when women report, such as their awareness of these services, which can depend on where a woman lives in a country and the availability of such services, which in turn can reflect the resource capabilities of these services. Given the enhanced role given to victim support services in the EU's Victims' Directive, it is evident that, in the case of violence against women, much needs to be done to enhance the capacity and use of these services in order to fulfil the requirements under the directive.

Responses to women's victimisation that reinforce negative cultures of 'victim blaming' need to be vigorously counteracted.

- About one in four victims of sexual assault (either by a partner or a non-partner) does not contact the police or any other organisation after the most serious incident because of feelings of shame and embarrassment. This shows that specialist support is needed which can assure victims that they will not be responded to negatively for the abuse they have suffered. At the same time, cultures of 'victim blaming' need to be challenged at different levels, from police investigations through to the courtroom, and with respect to society's responses to women's victimisation. The EU Victims' Directive serves, at the level of the EU, to underpin a culture that does not blame the victim.

Specialist support services are required to address the needs of victims who suffer from negative emotions in the aftermath of victimisation, and who find themselves unable to talk about their experiences.

- Up to 40 % of women have not talked about or otherwise shared their experience of victimisation with anyone, including friends and family. This requires that more needs be done to reach out to hidden victims and meet their needs. In this regard, many women's feelings of shame, embarrassment and guilt in the aftermath of abuse, which are reported in the survey, should be addressed through targeted investment in specialised victim support services that can meet the needs of these women (in line with Article 9 (3) b in the EU Victims' Directive).

Data are essential to measure if victims' needs are being met in practice by different services, and to determine where resources should be spent to assist victims.

- The specific needs of victims should be listened to and addressed. It is vital to collect data regularly on victims' needs and satisfaction with the services they have received, to avoid misplaced initiatives that do not serve victims. In turn, services that respond to the needs of victims can mean a reduction in expenditure in some areas that are not a priority for victims, together with a refocusing of resources and training in areas where there is most need.

Joined-up responses to violence against women

Multi-agency responses to violence against women, working together, are needed to effectively tackle and meet the needs – and rights – of women who are victims of violence.

- Considerable efforts have been made by EU Member States in recent years, but the findings of this survey show that much more needs to be done to address violence against women in all its forms. In line with Chapter 2 of the Istanbul Convention, it is recommended that EU Member States review existing policies and adopt comprehensive reform strategies, where needed, to ensure that all relevant stakeholders with a duty to prevent, protect and punish in cases of violence against women, including specialist victim support organisations, are able to contribute effectively towards this goal. The effectiveness of current legislation, policy initiatives and practitioner interventions can be judged by looking at the evidence on the ground with respect to women's willingness to report abuse, and their satisfaction with the service they receive, as outlined in the survey's findings.

For harmonised and efficient data collection and exchanges concerning cases of violence against women, interinstitutional cooperation is essential.

- No intervention to address violence against women that relies on one institution alone is effective. This is particularly true of intimate partner violence and cases of repeat victimisation in general. As indicated in the survey, a number of women who are victims contact several services. Therefore, cooperation is indispensable, involving – as appropriate – the police, specialised support services, health professionals and courts, and encompassing actions such as harmonised and efficient data exchanges on cases and individuals (with appropriate safeguards) to ensure the safety of victims.

4

Psychological partner violence

MAIN FINDINGS

- One in three women (32 %) has experienced psychologically abusive behaviour by an intimate partner, either by her current partner or a previous partner. This includes behaviour such as belittling or humiliating the respondent in public or private; forbidding her to leave the house or locking her up; making her watch pornographic material against her wishes; scaring or intimidating her on purpose; and threatening her with violence or threatening to hurt someone else the respondent cares about.
- Overall, 43 % of women have experienced some form of psychological violence by an intimate partner, which includes other forms of abuse alongside psychologically abusive behaviour. This may include psychologically abusive behaviour and other forms of psychological violence such as controlling behaviour (for example, trying to keep the respondent from seeing her friends or visiting her family or relatives), economic violence (such as forbidding a woman to work outside the home) and blackmail.
- The most common forms of psychological violence involve a partner belittling or humiliating a woman in private, insisting on knowing where she is in a way that goes beyond general concern, and getting angry if she speaks to other men. One in four women has experienced each of these in their intimate relationships.
- Some 5 % of women have experienced economic violence in their current relationship, and 13 % of women have experienced some form of economic violence in past relationships. This includes the partner preventing her from making independent decisions on family finances, or forbidding her to work outside the home.
- Of women who are currently in a relationship, 7 % have experienced four or more different forms of psychological violence by their current partner.
- Most women who experience several (four or more) forms of psychological violence also indicated in the survey that their current partner has been physically and/or sexually violent against them.
- The likelihood of psychological violence in a woman's current relationship increases together with an increase in her partner's heavy alcohol use. The more often a current partner drinks so much that he gets drunk, the more common it is for the relationship to involve psychological violence.

4.1. Introduction

The UN Secretary-General's study on all forms of violence against women[1] notes that psychological and emotional partner violence has been studied less than other forms of intimate partner violence. This is partly due to the lack of agreement on how psychological violence should be measured, particularly across countries and cultures.

[1] UN (2006), *Ending violence against women: From words to action*, Study of the Secretary-General, UN.

The FRA survey approached this issue using a total of 17 questions about psychological violence by a respondent's current or any previous partner. The situations described in the questions have to do with issues such as:

- restricting a respondent's movements;
- jealousy or suspicion;
- economic control;
- making the respondent feel unworthy or fearful (directly or indirectly through threats/actions against children or others).

Women were asked how often they have experienced each behaviour in the relationship with their current partner, or if they ever experienced them in their earlier relationships. Whereas questions on physical and sexual violence seek to collect more detail on the number of times a given type of violence has taken place, the psychological violence items describe situations which are typically ongoing and where it would be difficult for the respondent to indicate a clear count of the number of incidents.

Whereas this chapter focuses on psychological violence in a relationship, certain forms of stalking (Chapter 5) and sexual harassment (Chapter 6) can also be viewed as forms of psychological violence. Furthermore, Chapter 7 deals with results concerning psychological violence and children: both psychological violence against women before the age of 15 and threats involving the custody or safety of their children.

4.2. Extent and forms of psychological partner violence

In total, 43 % of women indicate that they have experienced some form of psychological violence in their relationships, with either their current partner or a previous partner (based on women who indicate that they have a current partner or at least one previous partner). This prevalence rate is achieved by taking into account all 17 forms of psychological violence which were asked about in the FRA survey. Table 4.1 presents the results concerning psychological partner violence, summarising the various forms of psychological violence in four categories. These have been constructed from the survey questions as follows:

- **controlling behaviour**: trying to keep the respondent from seeing her friends or visiting her family or relatives, insisting on knowing where she is, getting angry if she speaks to other men (or women), suspecting her of being unfaithful;
- **economic violence**: preventing the respondent from making decisions on family finances or shopping independently, or forbidding her to work outside the home;
- **abusive behaviour**: belittling or humiliating the respondent in public or in private, forbidding her to leave the house or locking her up, making her watch pornographic material against her wishes, scaring or intimidating her on purpose, threatening her with

Box 4.1: What the survey asked – psychological violence

How often does your current partner/Did any previous partner ever...

- try to keep you from seeing your friends?
- try to restrict your contact with your family of birth or relatives?
- insist on knowing where you are in a way that goes beyond general concern?
- get angry if you speak with another man? (or another woman, if the partner is a woman)
- become suspicious that you are unfaithful?
- prevent you from making decisions about family finances and from shopping independently?
- forbid you to work outside the home?
- forbid you to leave the house, take away car keys or lock you up?

How often would you say that your current partner has/Has any previous partner ever...

- belittled or humiliated you in front of other people?
- belittled or humiliated you in private?
- done things to scare or intimidate you on purpose, for example by yelling and smashing things?
- made you watch or look at pornographic material against your wishes?
- threatened to take the children away from you?
- threatened to hurt your children?
- hurt your children?
- threatened to hurt or kill someone else you care about?

How often has something like this happened to you? Your current partner/any of your previous partners has...

- threatened to hurt you physically?

Table 4.1: Psychological partner violence, by type of abuse and partner (%) [a]

	Current partner [b]	Previous partner [c]	Any partner (current and/or previous) [d]
Controlling behaviour	16	40	35
Economic violence	5	13	12
Abusive behaviour	15	37	32
Blackmail with/abuse of children	2	14	8
Any psychological abuse	23	48	43

Notes: *a For current partners, the percentage refers to respondents who say that they have experienced a particular form of psychological violence at least sometimes during the relationship. In the case of previous partners, the survey asked if respondents have ever experienced each of the forms of psychological violence by any previous partner. The column 'Any partner' refers to the combination of these two figures, that is, respondents who have experienced psychological violence at least sometimes in the current relationship or ever by any previous partners.*

b Based on all women who have a current partner, that is, those who were married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship at the time of the interview (n = 30,675), except the item on blackmail with/abuse of children; this is based on all women who have a current partner and who have or have had children in their care (n = 24,770).

c Based on all women who have a previous partner, that is who had been married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship at least once in the past (n = 25,870), except the item on blackmail with/abuse of children; this is based on all women who have a previous partner and who have or have had children in their care (n = 14,469).

d Out of all women who were married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship at the time of the interview, or at any time in the past (n = 40,192), except the item on blackmail with/abuse of children, which is based on all women who have a current or previous partner and who have or have had children in their care (n = 31,418).

Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

violence or threatening to hurt someone else the respondent cares about;

- **blackmail with/abuse of children**: threatening to take the children away from the respondent, threatening to hurt them, or hurting them.

Respondents could indicate all forms of psychological partner violence to which they had been subjected. According to the results, while 35 % of women have experienced controlling behaviour from their current or previous partner, almost equally as many (32 %) have experienced some form of psychologically abusive behaviour. Therefore, women's experiences of psychological violence are not limited to forms of controlling behaviour that might not seem so severe to some, such as 'getting angry' when a woman speaks to other men. But psychological violence encompasses a range of behaviour that is both controlling and abusive, and which serves to restrict women's autonomy, freedom and sense of security in a variety of ways.

At the EU Member State level, the results range from 60 % of women in Denmark and Latvia, and 53 % of women in Finland having experienced some form of psychological violence in their relationships, to one in three women in Ireland (31 %), Greece (33 %) and Spain (33 %) having experienced this.

Table 4.2: Women who have experienced psychological violence during the relationship, by type of perpetrator and EU Member State (%) [a]

EU Member State	Current partner [b]	Previous partner [c]	Any partner (current and/or previous) [d]
AT	24	36	38
BE	23	52	44
BG	25	58	39
CY	27	50	39
CZ	23	50	47
DE	25	51	50
DK	35	56	60
EE	32	54	50
EL	21	30	33

EU Member State	Current partner [b]	Previous partner [c]	Any partner (current and/or previous) [d]
ES	17	37	33
FI	27	55	53
FR	25	56	47
HR	21	46	42
HU	29	50	49
IE	11	37	31
IT	25	46	38
LT	38	56	51
LU	23	55	49
LV	41	63	60
MT	22	59	37
NL	27	51	50
PL	25	41	37
PT	21	47	36
RO	30	45	39
SE	20	51	51
SI	20	46	34
SK	34	46	47
UK	15	52	46
EU-28	**23**	**48**	**43**

Notes: *a For current partners, the percentage refers to respondents who say that they have experienced a particular form of psychological violence at least sometimes during the relationship. In the case of previous partners, the survey asked if respondents have ever experienced each of the forms of psychological violence by any previous partner. The column 'Any partner' refers to the combination of these two figures, that is, respondents who have experienced psychological violence at least sometimes in the current relationship or ever by any previous partners.*

b Based on all women who have a current partner, that is, who were married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship at the time of the interview (n = 30,675).

c Based on all women who have a previous partner, that is, those who had been married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship at least once in the past (n = 25,870).

d Out of all women who were married, living together with someone without being married, or involved in a relationship at the time of the interview, or at any time in the past (n = 40,192).

Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Most respondents who have experienced psychological violence by their current partner indicate that it has happened 'sometimes'. About one in four victims says that at least one form of psychological violence has occurred often or all the time in her current relationship. Three in four victims say that it happens sometimes.

The various forms of psychological violence, as listed in the survey, differ in terms of their prevalence (Table 4.3). In the case of both the current partner and previous partners, the three most common forms of psychological violence involve the partner belittling or humiliating the respondent in private, insisting on knowing where she is in a way that goes beyond general concern, and getting angry if she talks to another man or if she speaks to another woman, in those cases in the survey where a woman has a female partner. Women associate all forms of psychological violence more often with their previous partners than their current partners. This difference may reflect the reasons why women have left their partners – because of their abusive behaviour – or they can also be a sign of reluctance to disclose negative characteristics in a current partnership.

Table 4.3: Women who have experienced various forms of psychological partner violence, by type of partner (%) [a]

	Current partner [b]	Previous partner [c]	Any partner (current and/or previous) [d]
Controlling behaviour			
Insisting on knowing where she is in a way that goes beyond general concern	8	29	23
Getting angry if she speaks with another man/woman	9	27	23
Becoming suspicious that she is unfaithful	7	27	21
Trying to keep her from seeing her friends	6	23	19
Trying to restrict her contact with her family of birth or relatives	4	15	12
Economic violence			
Preventing her from making decisions about family finances and from shopping independently	5	11	10
Forbidding her to work outside the home	2	5	5
Abusive behaviour			
Belittling or humiliating her in private	11	28	25
Belittling or humiliating her in front of other people	7	21	19
Doing things to scare or intimidate her on purpose	7	22	18
Threatening to hurt her physically	4	18	14
Forbidding her to leave the house, taking away her car keys or locking her up	1	7	5
Threatening to hurt or kill someone else she cares about	1	4	3
Making her watch or look at pornographic material against her wishes	1	2	2
Blackmail with/abuse of children			
Threatening to take the children away from her	2	9	7
Hurting her children	1	4	3
Threatening to hurt her children	1	4	3

Notes: *a For current partners, the percentage refers to respondents who say that they have experienced a particular form of psychological violence at least sometimes during the relationship. In the case of previous partners, the survey asked if respondents have ever experienced each of the forms of psychological violence by any previous partner. The column 'Any partner' refers to the combination of these two figures, that is respondents who have experienced psychological violence at least sometimes in the current relationship or ever by any previous partners.*

b Based on all women who have a current partner (n = 30,675), except for items concerning children, in which case the results are based on all women who have a current partner and who have children or have had children in their care (n = 24,770).

c Based on all women who have a previous partner (n = 25,870), except for items concerning children, in which case the results are based on all women who have a previous partner and who have children or have had children in their care (n = 14,469).

d Based on all women who have a current or a previous partner (n = 40,192), except for items concerning children, in which case the results are based on all women who have a current or a previous partner and who have children or have had children in their care (n = 31,418).

Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

4.2.1. Economic violence

Two of the psychological violence items – preventing a woman from making decisions about family finances and from shopping independently, and forbidding her to work outside the home – can be considered economic violence. Such violence is included in the definition of both 'violence against women' and 'domestic violence' in the Istanbul Convention (Article 3). The convention's explanatory report notes that economic violence or harm – which, for example, the Council of Europe or the United Nations have not

separately addressed in some of the earlier definitions – can be related to psychological violence. Considering two of the items asked in the FRA survey as a measure of economic violence, the results indicate that, in total, 5 % of women have experienced this during the relationship with their current partner, and 13 % of women have experienced economic violence in an earlier relationship.

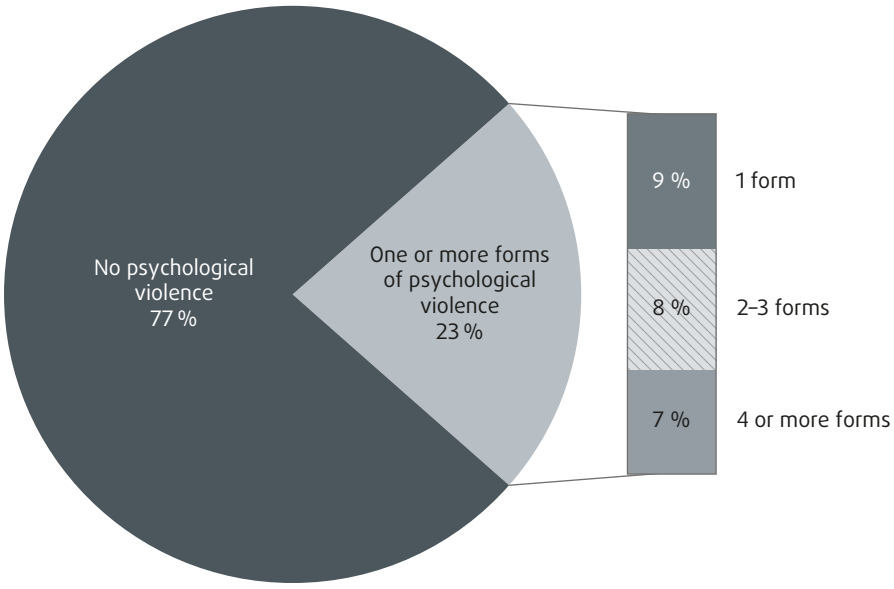
Women were also asked if in their current relationship they have an equal say on how the household income is used. The results related to the characteristics of the current partner and the extent of psychological violence by this partner (Section 4.4) show that women who report that they do not have an equal say concerning the use of household income are more likely to indicate that they have experienced psychological violence by their current partner than women who have an equal say in the use of household income. The results in relation to the current partner's characteristics and the extent of physical and/or sexual violence (Section 2.5) show a similar connection between women's experiences of physical and/or sexual violence by the current partner since the age of 15 and being able to participate in decisions concerning the use of household income.

4.2.2. Intensity of psychological violence

Regarding psychological violence by a current partner, 9 % of women who have a current partner say that they have experienced, at least sometimes, one of the 17 forms of psychological violence surveyed (Figure 4.1). On the other hand, 7 % of women who have a current partner said that during the relationship they have experienced, at least sometimes, four or more forms of psychological violence.

Women who have experienced several forms of psychological violence are more likely to have also experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a current partner than women who have experienced fewer forms of psychological violence or none at all (Table 4.4). For example, out of women who have not experienced any form of psychological violence by their current partner, only 2 % indicate that they have been physically or sexually abused by the same partner. However, out of those women who have experienced four or more types of current partner psychological violence, 58 % say that they have also experienced physical or sexual violence by this partner.

Figure 4.1: Psychological violence by current partner during the relationship and the number of different forms of psychological violence experienced by women [a,b]



Notes: *a Based on all respondents who have a current partner (n = 30,675).*
b Taken individually, the sum of the categories 'one form', '2–3 forms' and '4 or more forms' totals 24 %, whereas on the whole 23 % of women have experienced one or more forms of psychological violence. This difference is due to rounding.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Table 4.4: Physical or sexual violence by current partner, by the number of forms of psychological violence experienced by the women (%)

Number of different forms of psychological violence by the current partner	Women experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by current partner	
	No	Yes
None	98	2
1	90	10
2–3	78	22
4 or more	42	58

Note: *Based on all respondents who have a current partner (n = 30,675).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

4.3. Characteristics of victims of psychological partner violence

Section 2.4 presented a breakdown of the results on physical and/or sexual violence and the characteristics of the victim. The same background variables – age; education; household composition; income; type of area where women live; employment status and occupation – can be used to highlight differences between women in the extent to which they have experienced psychological violence by their partners.

Age

The age of a respondent does not seem to be related to the extent to which women indicate that their current partner has exerted some form of psychological violence on them. The prevalence of psychological violence by a previous partner is, however, somewhat lower in the oldest respondent group, namely women who are 60 years old or older. This might reflect the fact that in this age group the psychological violence by a previous partner may involve incidents that happened a long time ago.

Education

Of those women who have not completed primary education, 34 % have experienced some form of psychological violence by their current partner, compared with 23 % of women overall. There is no corresponding link between women's education and experiencing psychological violence when experiences with previous partners are examined. The prevalence of psychological violence by a previous partner since the age of 15 is, nevertheless, one percentage point lower among women who have completed the second stage of tertiary education: 42 %, as opposed to 48 % for all women.

Household composition

The most striking differences emerge with regard to previous partner psychological violence and women living alone with children or with another adult woman; this could be, for example, a grown-up child or a respondent's mother. Some 70 % of single mothers and 61 % of women living with another adult woman have experienced psychological violence by a previous partner, in contrast to the average of 48 % for all women with one or more previous partners. These two household types may include many women who have separated from a partner, sometimes as a result of physical, sexual or psychological violence.

Area

In terms of the area where women live, respondents from suburban areas have a slightly higher prevalence of psychological violence by both current and previous partners. Prevalence of psychological violence also seems to be somewhat higher among women who do not have the citizenship of the country where they are living.

Income, employment and occupation

Women who are finding it difficult to cope on their present household income show a higher rate of psychological violence, by the current partner as well as by a previous partner. On the other hand, there is no clear link between women's employment and exposure to psychological partner violence. Current partner psychological violence is slightly more common among women who are in education (30 % victimised) than among all women who have a current partner (23 %). Previous partner psychological violence is somewhat higher among women who are self-employed (54 %) or unemployed (55 %) than women who are retired (41 %). Similarly, women's occupations do not show clear patterns in terms of victimisation risk. Women working in

agriculture or fishing have the highest rate of psychological violence by a current partner – 33 %, compared with 23 % on average – but this is not reflected in the rate of psychological violence by a previous partner. In contrast, 61 % of women working in a supervisory capacity have experienced psychological violence by a previous partner, which is above the average of 48 % for all women with one or more previous partners. Yet again, there is no corresponding effect in terms of current partner psychological violence.

4.4. Characteristics of perpetrators: psychological violence by current partner

The analysis of the extent of psychological violence and the characteristics of perpetrators is limited to incidents where the perpetrator was the respondent's current partner (similar to the earlier analysis of the characteristics of the current partner and the extent of physical and/or sexual violence by this partner, see Section 2.5).

The age of a partner does not have a notable influence on the extent of psychological violence by the current partner. On the other hand, in terms of a partner's education, the prevalence of psychological violence is the highest – 33 % since the age of 15 – among women whose partner has not completed primary education. The prevalence of psychological violence decreases steadily as a partner's education level rises, so that 21 % of women whose partner has tertiary education have experienced psychological violence.

The risk of psychological violence is also found to be slightly elevated if the partner is working part-time, unemployed or taking care of the home. It should be noted that the last group – partners classified as home makers – is quite small in the survey. Depending on the category, 32 %–36 % of women whose partner's main activity is described in these terms have experienced psychological violence since the age of 15, compared with the 25 % average of all women who have a current partner. The prevalence of psychological violence reaches 33 % also among women whose partner is engaged in unskilled manual work, compared with 19 %–21 % among women whose partner is working in a middle management position or as an employee in a desk job.

In addition to the basic socio-economic questions, the respondents were asked to characterise their partners in other terms. These questions explored risk factors of violence which have been suggested in other surveys,[2] namely:

- women who feel that they do not have an equal say on how the household income is used are more likely to experience psychological violence than women who feel they have an equal say (Table 4.5). Out of women who say that they do not have an equal say on how the household income is used, 58 % have experienced, at least sometimes, one or more forms of psychological violence by their current partner, compared with 22 % of women who have an equal say concerning the income of the household;

- of women whose current partner drinks so much that he gets drunk once a month, or more often, 46 % say that they have experienced, at least sometimes, one or more forms of psychological violence. This is in contrast with women whose partner never drinks or drinks but never gets drunk; in this group, 19 % of women say that they have experienced psychological violence by the current partner at least sometimes;

- women whose partner is also known to be violent outside the home are more likely to say that they have experienced some form of psychological violence by this partner. Of women whose partner has been violent outside the home, 51 % indicate that they have experienced psychological violence by that partner, compared with 22 % of women whose partner has not been physically violent outside the home.

[2] See, for example: Johnson, H., Ollus, N. and Nevala, S. (2008), *Violence against women: An international perspective*, New York, Springer, and WHO (2005), *WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence against women*, Geneva, WHO.

Table 4.5: Women experiencing psychological violence by the current partner, by relationship and partner characteristics (%)

	Psychological violence by current partner	
	No	Yes
Do you feel you have an equal say with regard to the use of the household income? [a]		
Yes	78	22
No	42	58
How often does your partner drink so much that he/she gets drunk? [b]		
Never drinks/drinks but does not get drunk	81	19
Once every two months or less often	71	29
Once a month or more	54	46
Has your partner ever been physically violent towards anyone outside the family? [c]		
Yes	48	52
No	78	22

Notes: *a Based on all women who have a current partner, excluding 'don't know', 'no answer', 'refused' or 'not applicable' responses to the question on the use of household income (n = 26,818).*
b Based on all women who have a current partner, excluding 'don't know', 'no answer', 'refused' or 'not applicable' responses to the question on partner's drinking (n = 30,040).
c Based on all women who have a current partner, excluding 'don't know', 'no answer', 'refused' or 'not applicable' responses to the question on partner's violent behaviour outside the home (n = 29,249).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

FRA opinions

The following FRA opinions relate to the results reported in Chapter 4 on the extent and nature of psychological partner violence against women.

Recognising the scale and specific nature of psychological partner violence

Multiple and repetitive forms of psychological violence by intimate partners need to be recognised as undermining a woman's autonomy, which equates to the loss of an autonomous private and family life.

- The survey results show that just over two in five women (43 %) have experienced some form of psychological violence by either a current or a previous partner. This ranges from one in four women (25 %) indicating that they have been belittled or humiliated in private by a partner, through 14 % of women whose partner has threatened to hurt them physically, to 5 % of women whose partner has forbidden them to leave the house, taken away their car keys or locked them up – to name just a few examples. Given that 7 % of women who are currently in a relationship have experienced four or more different forms of psychological violence, it is apparent that various forms of abusive and controlling behaviour towards women are common and that a certain percentage of women are particularly vulnerable to multiple forms of psychological violence. These findings need to be looked at through a fundamental rights lens, since they indicate that a number of women are exposed to being with partners whose controlling behaviour serves to undermine a woman's sense of autonomy, which equates to the loss of an autonomous private and family life.

Those who have a duty to care – such as employers in relation to their staff – should consider adopting awareness-raising and related training activities to be able to identify and respond to the needs of staff who are suffering from psychologically controlling behaviour.

- Women who indicate in the survey that they experience several forms of psychological violence also tend to indicate that their current partner has been physically or sexually violent towards them. This finding shows the importance of monitoring signs of psychologically controlling and abusive behaviour that may also indicate ongoing, or increased likelihood of, physical and sexual abuse. For example, employers could regularly undertake awareness-raising among staff

and supervisors so that colleagues are aware of the signs of controlling behaviour which could underline more worrying patterns of abuse in relationships. The NGO Corporate Alliance against Domestic Violence (CAADV) is a group of companies that works to raise awareness of the impact of domestic violence in the workplace. It trains companies to be able to identify and effectively respond to the problem.

- Alcohol abuse by a male partner is a potential warning sign, together with other indicators, that a woman could be experiencing psychological violence.

- Women are more likely to experience psychological abuse from their partner if he is a heavy alcohol abuser. This indicates that attention needs to be paid to patterns in the behaviour of a woman's partner to be able to identify possible risk indicators of potential abuse. This, in turn, means that healthcare professionals and other support services should be alert to, and ask about, these risk factors when concerned about possible abuse.

Recognising the impact of psychological violence when intervening in abuse

EU Member States should review legislation to assess if it encompasses the various forms and impact of repetitive psychological abuse on victims.

- Some EU Member States have adopted substantive criminal law provisions that aim to capture not only the repetitive nature of physical violence but also other forms of violence and their consequences. For example, under Swedish law an offender can be sentenced to imprisonment for between nine months and six years for gross violation of a woman's integrity if he has committed repeated violations of a victim's integrity, either during or in the aftermath of an intimate relationship, and if these acts were liable to severely damage the victim's self-esteem; and in Slovenia the criminal law definition of family violence includes various aspects of subordination and discriminatory treatment, for which an offender can be sentenced to imprisonment for up to five years. It is, therefore, suggested that EU Member States assess their legislation with a view to adopting criminal law definitions that cover various forms and aspects of psychological violence.

The police and other services should be trained to recognise and understand the impact of psychological abuse on victims.

- Police officers and other authorities who intervene in cases of intimate partner violence against women need to understand the impact that living in a violent relationship has on the mindset and mental status of victims. For example, a victim may refuse intervention by the police or support services. Lack of understanding of these situations can add to a victim's trauma instead of supporting the victim to overcome the consequences of victimisation. It is suggested that EU Member States ensure that police officers and others – ranging from lawyers and judges to victim support services – are trained to understand the consequences of partner violence, and accompanying abusive and controlling behaviour, on the mindset and reactions of victims.

Controlling and abusive behaviour by offenders may require that the police intervene directly to protect victims and to refer them to victim support services, rather than waiting for a victim to seek assistance herself.

- Recognising the potential controlling behaviour of an offender towards a victim in a case of intimate partner violence, EU Member States are encouraged to ensure that immediate protection measures can be implemented by the police either without a request from the victim or with her consent. In the same vein, it is also suggested that Member States review existing victim support referral mechanisms to ensure that the police can, immediately following their intervention, inform a specialist victim support service to allow that service to contact the victim to offer support and advice free of charge. In parallel, there is a need for services to engage with perpetrators to address their psychologically abusive behaviour, alongside addressing any violent behaviour.

5 Stalking

MAIN FINDINGS

- In the EU-28, 18 % of women have experienced stalking since the age of 15, and 5 % of women have experienced it in the 12 months before the survey interview. This corresponds to about 9 million women in the EU-28 experiencing stalking within a period of 12 months.
- Some 14 % of women have received offensive or threatening messages or phone calls repeatedly from the same person, and 8 % have been followed around or experienced somebody loitering outside their home or workplace. Out of all women surveyed, 3 % have experienced stalking that involved the same person repeatedly damaging their property.
- One in 10 women (9 %) has been stalked by her previous partner.
- Cyberstalking – stalking by means of email, text messages or the internet – concerns young women in particular. Of all 18- to 29-year-old women, 4 % have experienced cyberstalking in the 12 months before the survey interview, compared with 0.3 % of women who are 60 years old or older.
- Out of all women victims of stalking, one in five (21 %) has experienced stalking that lasted more than two years.
- One in five victims of stalking (23 %) has had to change her phone number or email address as a result of the most serious incident of stalking.
- Three quarters (74 %) of stalking cases never come to the attention of the police, even the most serious cases of stalking that the respondents refer to in the survey.

5.1. Introduction

Stalking may involve acts which are individually innocuous, but combined they are intended to undermine the victim's sense of safety. In the past, and to some extent also today, victims of stalking may have found it difficult to receive help and recognition because of a lack of laws which would take into account such cumulative offences: series of incidents where the individual acts are not considered a crime under the criminal law, but these acts are, nevertheless, carried out intentionally to threaten the victim.

This chapter presents the results of the survey concerning the prevalence of stalking, as well as details on stalking incidents, including information on the specific forms that stalking takes, the perpetrators and the consequences for women. The survey results also provide an overview of the extent to which stalking incidents are brought to the attention of the authorities, as well as barriers to reporting to the police.

Box 5.1: What the survey asked – stalking

You may have been in a situation where the same person has been repeatedly offensive or threatening towards you. For the next questions, I would like to ask you to think about both your current and previous partners as well as other people. Since you were 15 years old until now/in the past 12 months, has the same person repeatedly done one or more of the following things to you:

- sent you emails, text messages (SMS) or instant messages that were offensive or threatening?
- sent you letters or cards that were offensive or threatening?
- made offensive, threatening or silent phone calls to you?
- posted offensive comments about you on the internet?
- shared intimate photos or videos of you, on the internet or by mobile phone?
- loitered or waited for you outside your home, workplace or school without a legitimate reason?
- deliberately followed you around?
- deliberately interfered with or damaged your property?

5.2. Stalking as measured in the survey

In this survey, stalking involves repeated offensive or threatening acts perpetrated a number of times by the same person against the respondent.

The survey questions did not use the word 'stalking'. This was done to ensure that respondents consider all types of repeated incidents and not only those which correspond to any preconceived ideas of stalking.

The Council of Europe Istanbul Convention calls on the parties to the convention to criminalise the intentional conduct of repeatedly engaging in threatening conduct directed at another person, causing her or him to fear for her or his safety. The explanatory report of the convention argues that stalking refers to a course of conduct where individual acts might not always amount to a crime, but taken together they have the aim of undermining a victim's safety. The text of the convention and the FRA survey questions focus on incidents against the victim. The explanatory report of the Istanbul Convention notes, however, that stalking can also be indirect, targeting a victim's family members, friends or colleagues (for example, by spreading untruthful information about the victim) in an attempt to jeopardise the victim's sense of security.

In the following, the survey results are presented as an overall prevalence – that is, as an estimate of what proportion of women in the EU have been stalked, either in the last 12 months or since the age of 15 years. The chapter then continues by examining the prevalence of specific forms of stalking, including cyberstalking.

Because of the nature of stalking, which involves repeated incidents, the events experienced by the victim must be considered as a whole rather than as individual incidents. Reference is thus made to a 'case of stalking'; this means a string of incidents by the same perpetrator (as far as the respondents could determine this) which together amount to stalking, and which may or may not have ended. The term 'act(s) of stalking' is used in reference to the various forms that stalking has taken (e.g. making silent phone calls or loitering outside the home).

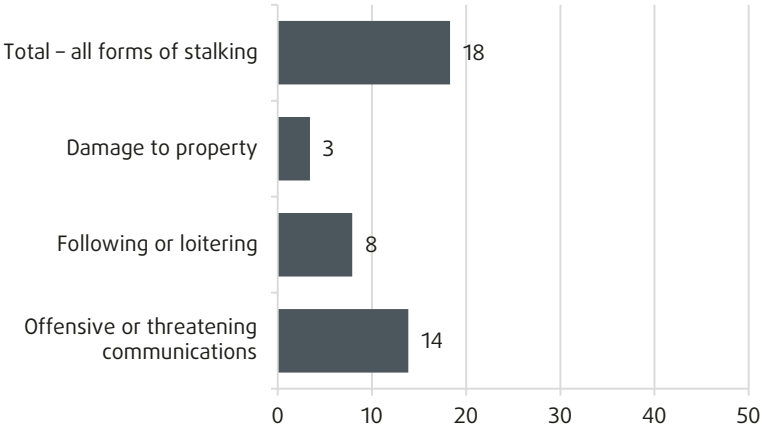
5.2.1. Prevalence of stalking

The overall prevalence of stalking is presented here as the percentage of respondents who in a given period of time – either in the last 12 months or since the age of 15 – have repeatedly experienced at least one of the eight acts of stalking that were included in the survey (see Box 5.1). Stalking as experienced by respondents could, therefore, involve either repeated incidents of a certain type (such as receiving offensive or threatening letters) or a combination of various acts listed in the survey, as long as the perpetrator was the same person with respect to a case of stalking.

In total, according to the survey, 18 % of women in the EU have experienced stalking and 5 % have experienced it in the last 12 months. This corresponds to some 9 million women in the EU-28 experiencing stalking within a period of one year. Figure 5.3 presents the overall prevalence of stalking since the age of 15 and by type of stalking involved. The various acts of stalking are divided here into three categories:

- **offensive or threatening communications**: stalking which takes place using various means of communication, such as letters or cards, phone calls, emails or other online messaging;
- **following or loitering**: stalking which involves threatening or offensive behaviour through the physical presence of the perpetrator in close proximity to the victim;
- **damage to property**: stalking which involves damaging or interfering with the victim's property.

Figure 5.1: Prevalence of stalking since the age of 15, by type of stalking behaviour (%)



Note: *Based on all respondents (N = 42,002).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

The results in Figure 5.1 show that receiving repeated offensive or threatening communications from the same person is the most common type of stalking experienced by women since the age of 15. Close to one in 10 women (8 %) has also experienced stalking which involves the physical presence of the stalker, either following the respondent around, or waiting or loitering outside her home or workplace.

Examining the results separately for the EU Member States, the 12-month prevalence of stalking is seen to be highest in Sweden (9 %), France (8 %) and Luxembourg (7 %), and lowest in Lithuania (close to 0 %) and Estonia (1 %) (see Table 5.1 and Figure 5.2).

Table 5.1: Prevalence of stalking since the age of 15 and in the 12 months before the interview, by EU Member State (%)

EU Member State	Since the age of 15	In the past 12 months
AT	15	6
BE	24	6
BG	10	4
CY	11	3
CZ	9	(2)
DE	24	4
DK	24	5
EE	13	(1)
EL	12	(2)
ES	11	3
FI	24	4
FR	29	8
HR	13	3
HU	12	5
IE	12	3
IT	18	5
LT	8	(0)
LU	30	7

EU Member State	Since the age of 15	In the past 12 months
LV	14	4
MT	26	6
NL	26	6
PL	9	3
PT	9	3
RO	8	2
SE	33	9
SI	14	3
SK	16	6
UK	19	5
EU-28	**18**	**5**

Note: *Based on all respondents (N = 42,002).*
Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

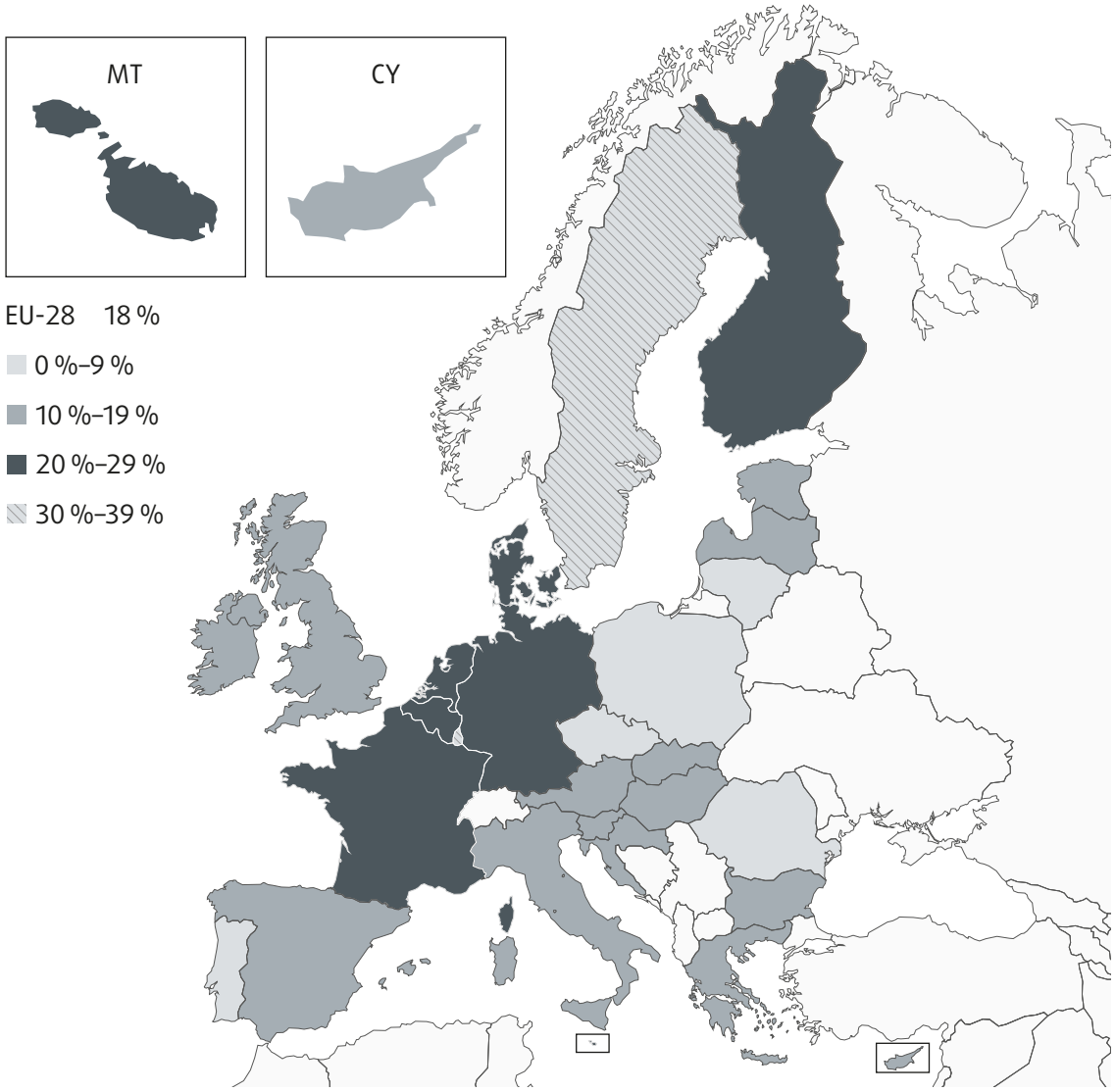
The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have estimated – based on a nationwide survey in 2010 – that 16 % to 25 % of women in the US have experienced stalking at some point in their lifetime, depending on the definition of stalking that is adopted. Between 4 % and 6.5 % of women have experienced stalking in the 12 months before the survey interview.[1] Comparisons between these results and the FRA survey are, nevertheless, not straightforward because differences exist in the scope of the survey questions and the survey methods used. The CDC survey also estimated the prevalence of stalking among men and found that men are less likely than women to have experienced stalking. Based on the CDC survey, 5 %–8 % of men in the US have experienced stalking during their lifetime, and 1 %–2 % of men have experienced stalking during the 12 months before the survey.

5.2.2. Forms of stalking

The overall prevalence of stalking can be broken down into its components based on survey respondents' answers concerning the eight forms of stalking that were included in the survey (see Box 5.1). Examining the prevalence of these since the age of 15, the most frequent type of stalking is offensive, threatening or silent phone calls. All in all, 11 % of women in the 28 EU Member States have, at one point in their lives since the age of 15, received such phone calls repeatedly from the same person (Table 5.2). The next most common forms of stalking involve someone loitering or waiting around where the woman lives or works, or following her around (both 6 %).

[1] Some legal definitions in the US require that, to qualify as stalking, the incident must have induced fear in the victim. The CDC survey can produce estimates on the prevalence of stalking with reference to a stricter or less strict application of this requirement. In the results presented above, the prevalence estimate of 16 % corresponds to stalking incidents that made the victim feel very fearful, whereas the 25 % prevalence is based on a lower threshold of fear (feeling little, somewhat or very fearful). The FRA survey questions on stalking did not include the requirement of fear, but stalking was described as repeated incidents that have been offensive and/or threatening. For more information on the results of the CDC survey in the US, see: Black, M. C., Basile, K. C., Breiding, M. J., Smith, S. G., Walters, M. L., Merrick, M. T., Chen, J., & Stevens, M. R. (2011), *The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS): 2010 Summary Report*, Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Figure 5.2: Prevalence of stalking in the EU, women's experiences since the age of 15 (%)



Note: *Based on all respondents (N = 42,002).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Table 5.2: Prevalence of various forms of stalking since the age of 15 (%)

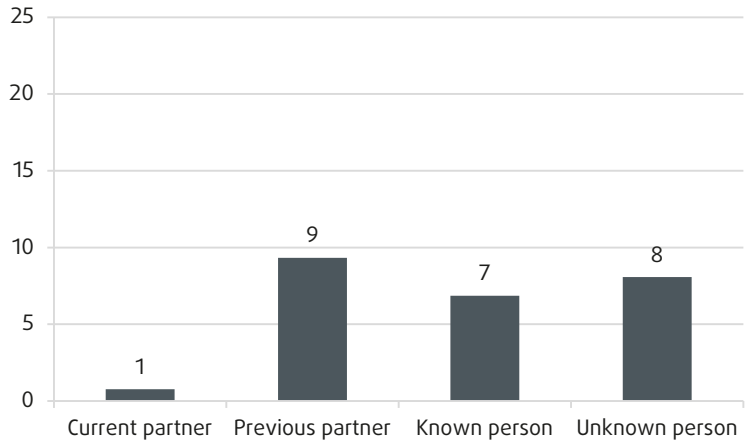
Phone calls	11
Followed around	6
Loitered or waited around	6
Emails, text messages, instant messages	5
Damaged property	3
Letters or cards	1
Comments on the internet	1
Shared intimate photos or videos	0

Note: *Based on all respondents (N = 42,002).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

5.3. Stalking by type of offender

According to the FRA survey results, 9 % of women who have had a previous partner have been stalked by this partner (since the age of 15; Figure 5.3). Some 7 % of women have been stalked by someone else they know; this includes people from work, school and other friends and acquaintances. Some 8 % of women did not know their stalker, or had no way of identifying the person (for example, in the case of repeated anonymous messages or repeated silent phone calls, which nevertheless women perceived to be offensive or threatening and considered to be from the same person or persons).

Figure 5.3: Prevalence of stalking since the age of 15, by type of perpetrator (%)



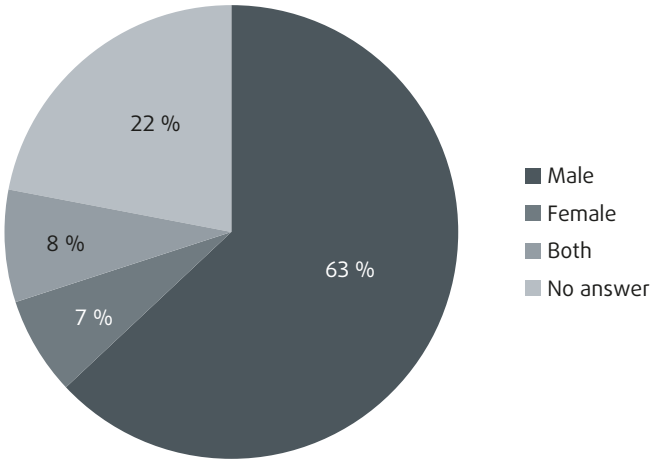
Notes: *Current partner n = 31,007, previous partner n = 25,936, known person N = 42,002, unknown person N = 42,002. Based on the incident(s) they have experienced, women can indicate more than one perpetrator.*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Results concerning the nature of the perpetrator include women who have experienced stalking by more than one perpetrator. In other words, a woman who has experienced stalking by a previous partner, as well as an unknown person is taken into account for both categories when calculating the prevalence of stalking by type of perpetrator.

The category 'known person' as shown in Figure 5.3 is a combination of a number of answer categories which were used in the survey to allow respondents to describe perpetrators. However, many respondents did not find a suitable category to describe a perpetrator who was familiar to them before the start of stalking, opting rather to answer that the perpetrator was 'somebody else' she knew. Otherwise, respondents' answers were distributed across several answer categories for known persons – such as a boss, colleague, client, relative, friend, acquaintance – without any one category standing out from the rest.

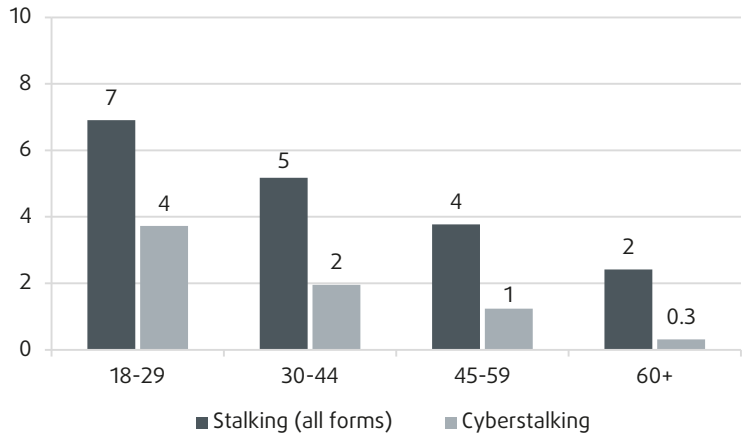
When asked about the gender of the perpetrator, in those cases where it was possible for the victim to tell, 63 % of stalking cases were carried out by male perpetrators (Figure 5.4). In 7 % of cases, female perpetrators were involved, and 8 % of respondents who have been victims of stalking have experienced it by both female and male perpetrators (it could have taken place either within a single case of stalking where several people were involved, or in separate stalking cases). In 22 % of cases, women were not able to identify the sex of the perpetrator; this may be the case with some forms of stalking, such as receiving anonymous letters, emails or silent phone calls.

Figure 5.4: Sex of the perpetrator(s) in stalking cases since the woman was 15 years old



Note: *Based on respondents who have experienced stalking since the age of 15 (n = 6,829).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Figure 5.5: 12-month prevalence of stalking (all forms) and cyberstalking, by victim's age (%)



Note: *Based on all respondents for whom information on age is available (n = 41,895).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

In cases where the stalker was female, the survey respondents more often identify the person as a friend or a relative, or another known person, than in cases where the perpetrator was male. The male perpetrators are more often identified as being the current or previous partner or somebody whom the woman did not know beforehand. Male perpetrators are more likely to loiter outside a woman's home or workplace, or to follow her around, whereas female perpetrators more often use offensive or threatening messages or phone calls.

5.3.1. Cyberstalking

The survey described eight types of acts which may have taken place in a case of stalking. Three of these acts could be considered as cyberstalking – that is stalking which involves the use of the internet, email or mobile phones.

In this context, the following three items from the survey can be examined as cyberstalking:

- sending emails, text messages (SMS) or instant messages that are offensive or threatening;
- posting offensive comments about the respondent on the internet;
- sharing intimate photos or videos of the respondent, on the internet or by mobile phone.

To be considered as stalking, these and all the other acts described in this part of the survey must take place repeatedly and be perpetrated by the same person.

Based on the FRA survey, 5 % of women in the EU have experienced one or more forms of cyberstalking since the age of 15, and 2 % have experienced it in the 12 months preceding the survey. Taking the victim's age into consideration, the 12-month rates vary from 4 % among 18- to 29-year-olds to 0.3 % among women 60 years old or older (Figure 5.5). However, this pattern concerning the decreasing prevalence of stalking by age is not specific to cyberstalking; it can be observed for all forms of stalking taken as a whole.

5.4. Stalking by respondent background variables

The prevalence of stalking since the age of 15 years and in the past 12 months are examined in the light of various socio-economic variables, which take into consideration a respondent's age, education, household composition, income and residential area, as well as employment and occupation.

Age

Younger women are more likely to experience stalking than older women. In the 12 months before the survey interview, 7 % of women aged 18–29 years have been stalked, compared with 2 % of women who are 60 years old or older. Furthermore, one in five women (20 %) in the 18–29 age group has been the subject of stalking since she was 15 years old, whereas 16 % of women who are 60 years old or older say that they have been stalked since the age of 15. The lower percentage of older women saying that they have been stalked may indicate that they have forgotten stalking that occurred some time ago. As the 12-month prevalence rates show, the prevalence of stalking is highest in the youngest age group (18–29 years old). For respondents, who at the time of the interview were 60 years old or older, events that took place when they were 18–29 years old may have been difficult to recall from more than 30 years ago.

Education

Of women with primary education or the first stage of basic education, 12 % have been stalked since the age of 15, compared with 23 % of women with post-secondary (but non-tertiary) education. Besides this difference, there is no clear pattern concerning women's education and their specific experiences of stalking.

Household composition

Whereas, on average, 18 % of women (aged 18–74 years) have experienced stalking since the age of 15, this prevalence can go up to 34 % for single mothers. Also, in the last 12 months, one in 10 single mothers (11 %) has experienced stalking, compared with an average of 5 % for all women. This may partly reflect the large proportion of perpetrators of stalking who are previous partners (as shown in Section 5.3 on 'Stalking by type of offender'). No particular differences exist in the prevalence of stalking for women in other household types.

Employment, occupation, income

In terms of current employment status, women who are retired show the lowest rates of stalking, both since the age of 15 and in the last 12 months. These results reflect the relationship between age and stalking experience. For women in other employment categories, the rate of stalking varies within ± 3 percentage points from the average of all women: 18 % have experienced stalking since the age of 15. Considering occupation, the highest rates of stalking since the age of 15 are found among women who work in general management (26 %) and business owners (23 %), whereas the lowest rates are among women engaged in skilled manual work (13 %) and women who have never done paid work (12 %). There are no notable differences in the prevalence of stalking in relation to women's household income.

5.5. Details about the most serious case of stalking

In the survey, respondents were asked to provide more details on the most serious case of stalking – that is, a series of incidents which may have involved various acts of stalking at different times and places. The respondents could concentrate on the case that has had the biggest impact on them, on whatever grounds the respondent felt were most significant for her, be it the length of the case, the forms of stalking involved or the consequences stalking had on her.

In describing in more detail the most serious case of stalking, women refer particularly to cases where they have received offensive, threatening or silent phone calls (41 % of cases that the respondents identified as being most serious for them involved such calls) (Table 5.3). About one in five victims of stalking relate their most serious cases of stalking to being followed around, having someone loitering outside the home or workplace, or receiving offensive or threatening emails, text messages or instant messages (22 %, 21 % and 19 %, respectively). Although multiple responses were possible to accommodate cases where several different forms of stalking were used, most women concentrated on a case that had involved just one single type of repeated offensive or threatening conduct by the same person.

Table 5.3: What happened in the most serious incident of stalking since the age of 15 (%) [a,b]

Made offensive, threatening or silent phone calls to you	41
Deliberately followed you around	22
Loitered or waited for you outside your home, workplace or school without a legitimate reason	21
Sent you emails, text messages (SMS) or instant messages that were offensive or threatening	19
Deliberately interfered with or damaged your property	12
Sent you letters or cards that were offensive or threatening	5
Posted offensive comments about you on the internet	3
Shared intimate photos or videos of you, on the internet or by mobile phone	1

Notes: *a Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.*
b Based on respondents who describe the most serious incident of stalking since the age of 15 (n = 5,605).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

About three in four women (76 %) who have experienced stalking since the age of 15 say that the most serious case involved one person, whereas 14 % are not able to say because of the nature of the case (for example, if stalking involved the use of messages that did not reveal the identity of the perpetrator) (Table 5.4).

Women were also asked how long the stalking went on or, if it was still taking place at the time of the survey, how long it had been going on so far. Overall, 29 % of women who have experienced stalking since the age of 15 answer that the most serious case of stalking lasted up to one month, and for 36 % stalking has continued from one month up to one year (Table 5.5). For about 29 % of stalking victims, the most serious case of stalking as disclosed in the survey has an extended

duration, from one year upwards. Furthermore, referring to the most serious case of stalking, about one in 10 victims (9 %) indicates that stalking is still continuing, whereas most victims are able to say that stalking has ended (Table 5.6).

Table 5.4: Number of perpetrators in the most serious incident of stalking since the age of 15 (%) [a,b]

One	76
Two	5
Three or more	3
One or more, depending on the incident	2
No answer	14

Notes: *a Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.*
b Based on respondents who describe the most serious incident of stalking since the age of 15 (n = 5,605).
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Table 5.5: Duration of the most serious case of stalking since the age of 15 (%)

Up to one month	29
One to three months	16
Three to six months	10
Six months to one year	10
One to two years	8
Two to five years	10
Five years or more	11
No answer	5

Note: *Based on respondents who describe the most serious incident of stalking since the age of 15 (n = 5,605).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Table 5.6: Whether or not the most serious case of stalking (since the age of 15) was still ongoing at the time of the interview (%)

Yes	9
No	87
No answer	4

Note: *Based on respondents who describe the most serious incident of stalking since the age of 15 (n = 5,605).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

5.6. Effects of stalking on the victim

Victims are equally likely to feel anger over incidents of stalking as over incidents of physical and sexual violence, as presented in Chapter 3, and they are more likely to feel annoyance over the events that have happened. As with other forms of violence, almost all victims of stalking indicate some type of emotional response following the most serious case of stalking (only 3 % of victims of stalking say that the most serious case of stalking did not affect them in any way) (Table 5.7). The most common forms of response as expressed by the women are anger (57 %) and annoyance (50 %), but 45 % of victims of stalking also say that the most serious case of stalking evoked fear. Women could indicate one or more forms of emotional response to the most serious case of stalking. Close to half (49 %) of women who have experienced stalking selected a combination of two to three different emotional responses, whereas 36 % selected only one category.

Table 5.7: Emotional response following the most serious case of stalking since the age of 15 (%) [a]

Type of emotional response [b]	
Anger	57
Aggressiveness	16
Shock	15
Fear	45
Shame	8
Embarrassment	13
Guilt	6
Annoyance	50
Other	4
Number of categories selected	
None	3
1	36
2–3	49
4 or more	12
No answer	0

Notes: *a Based on respondents who describe the most serious incident of stalking since the age of 15 (n = 5,605).*
b Concerning the type of emotional response, respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

About three in five victims of stalking (57 %) indicate that the most serious case of stalking had one or more long-term psychological consequences for them, based on the categories presented in the survey. Conversely, about two in five of victims (41 %) did not suffer from any of the listed consequences as a result of the most serious case of stalking (and 2 % could not give an answer) (Table 5.8). The most common psychological consequences of stalking are anxiety (30 % of victims indicate this), feeling vulnerable (24 %) and difficulties in sleeping (19 %). Women were able to select one or more categories related to the psychological consequences of the most serious case of stalking. Close to one in 10 victims of stalking (9 %) selected four or more consequence categories based on the most serious case of stalking, and 20 % of victims have experienced two or three of the consequences listed in the survey.

Table 5.8: Long-term psychological consequences of the most serious case of stalking since the age of 15 (%) [a]

Type of psychological consequence [b]	
Depression	11
Anxiety	30
Panic attacks	9
Loss of self-confidence	13
Feeling vulnerable	24
Difficulty in sleeping	19
Concentration difficulties	10
Difficulties in relationships	9
Other	2
None	41
Number of categories selected	
None	41
1	28
2–3	20
4 or more	9
No answer	2

Notes: *a Based on respondents who describe the most serious incident of stalking since the age of 15 (n = 5,605).*
b Concerning the type of long-term psychological consequence, respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Stalking has the aim of undermining the victim's sense of safety, but victims may respond to the threat that stalking represents in many different ways. Responses may involve challenging the perpetrator and their actions – that is, actively pursuing an end to the repeated threatening behaviour of the perpetrator. However, stalking may also lead the victim to limit her activities, for example by avoiding certain places or routes where the perpetrator might be likely to show up. In serious cases, victims of stalking may be forced to relocate or change their contact details in an effort to remove the stalker from their lives.

The survey asked victims of stalking about the actions which the most serious case of stalking led them to take. About three in four victims of stalking (77 %) say that they talked about the most serious case with friends or relatives (Table 5.9). This may indicate a propensity to seek informal support and assistance, although in some cases women may be forced to warn other people about the stalker. About two in five victims (43 %) indicate that they confronted the perpetrator and one in three (32 %) threatened the perpetrator with police or court action in an effort to put an end to the stalking.

Close to one quarter (23 %) of victims of stalking say that the most serious case led them to change their telephone number or email address in an effort to stop the perpetrator contacting them, and 14 % were forced to move home as a consequence of stalking. Only 4 % of victims indicate that they contacted a victim support organisation as a result of the most serious case of stalking.

Table 5.9: Action taken in response to the most serious case of stalking since the age of 15 (%) [a,b]

Talked about the incidents with friends or relatives	77
Confronted the perpetrator about what he/she was doing	43
Threatened the perpetrator with police/court action	32
Changed the phone number/email address	23
Went somewhere else for help	17
Moved home	14
Closed the social networking (e.g. Facebook) account	7
Contacted a victim support organisation	4

Notes: *a Based on respondents who describe the most serious incident of stalking since the age of 15 (n = 5,605).*
b Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

5.7. Contact with police

Victims of stalking were asked in the survey if the most serious cases of stalking ever came to the attention of the police. This could involve the victim reporting the incident, somebody else reporting it (for example, a neighbour, or a victim's friend or relative) or the police otherwise coming to know about the case. Considering the most serious case of stalking experienced by women who were interviewed in the survey, three out of four (74 %) did not come to the attention of the police (Table 5.10). In most cases where the police were involved, the victim sought help herself from the police (21 % of women victims of stalking did so as a result of the most serious incident).

The most serious case of stalking was somewhat more likely to be reported to the police than the most serious case of physical and sexual violence by a partner or a non-partner (see Section 3.5).

Examining the results by country, women in Austria are most likely to indicate that the most serious case of stalking came to the attention of the police, by the victim or somebody else reporting it, or by the police coming to know about it some other way. Some 40 % of victims of stalking in Austria indicate so, followed by 35 % of victims of stalking in Malta and Slovenia, and 34 % of victims in the United Kingdom (Table 5.11). On the other hand, according to victims in Greece, the police either were notified or otherwise became aware of the most serious case of stalking in 8 % of cases, followed by 10 % in Estonia and 15 % in both Cyprus and Hungary. The results for the EU Member States where the police were least likely to be informed about stalking are based on relatively small numbers of respondents.

Table 5.10: Did the most serious case of stalking (since the age of 15) ever come to the attention of the police? (%)

Yes, respondent reported	21
Yes, somebody else reported	4
Yes, police came to know about it on their own	1
No	74
No answer	1

Note: *Based on respondents who describe the most serious incident of stalking since the age of 15 (n = 5,605).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Table 5.11: Most serious cases of stalking since the age of 15 that came to the attention of the police, by EU Member State (%) [a,b]

EU Member State	Police aware of most serious cases of stalking
AT	40
BE	32
BG	28
CY	(15)
CZ	(24)
DE	21
DK	19
EE	(10)
EL	(8)
ES	26
FI	24
FR	25
HR	22
HU	(15)
IE	33
IT	31
LT	(16)
LU	30
LV	20
MT	35
NL	28
PL	(25)
PT	(17)
RO	(21)
SE	25
SI	35
SK	17
UK	34
EU-28	**26**

Notes: *a Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets.*
b Based on respondents who describe the most serious incident of stalking since the age of 15 (n = 5,605).
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Women who did not themselves report the most serious case of stalking to the police were asked about their reasons for not doing so. The most often-cited reasons for not reporting the most serious case of stalking to

the police are that the victim was able to deal with the incident herself or with the help of family and friends (45 % of victims of stalking indicate this to have been the case) and that the case was perceived as not serious enough to merit reporting (35 %) (Table 5.12). About one in 10 victims (9 %) indicate lack of confidence that the police could do anything in the situation or that they would not do anything to help the victim.

Table 5.12: Reasons for not reporting the most serious case of stalking since the age of 15 to the police (multiple responses allowed) (%) [a,b]

Dealt with it myself/involved a friend/ family matter	45
Too minor/not serious enough/never occurred to me	35
Did not think they would do anything	9
Did not think they could do anything	9
Fear of offender, of reprisal	5
Partner or somebody else stopped me or discouraged me	1
Shame, embarrassment	3
Thought it was my fault	1
Did not want anyone to know/kept it private	5
Too emotionally upset to contact the police	1
Did not want the offender arrested or to get in trouble with police	2
Would not be believed	3
Went directly to a magistrate or judge to report the incident[b]	(0)
Somebody else had reported it, or police came to know about it on their own	2
Went somewhere else for help	4
Other reason	8

Notes: *a Based on respondents who did not report the most serious incident of stalking since the age of 15 to the police (n = 4,412).*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

FRA opinions

The following FRA opinions relate to the results reported in Chapter 5 on the extent and nature of stalking.

Improving responses to stalking in law and practice

Women need to be informed when stalking is recognised by the law and should be encouraged to report stalking when it occurs.

- The survey results show that just under one in five women has experienced some form of stalking since the age of 15, and 5 % have experienced it in the 12 months preceding the survey. However, three out of four stalking cases surveyed never come to the attention of the police. Having noted this, it can be seen that the majority of EU Member States have introduced some sort of definition of stalking in their substantive criminal laws, although the existing approaches differ widely between jurisdictions. What this shows is that, although the law may recognise aspects of stalking to varying degrees in different Member States, women are not reporting their experiences of stalking. This warrants further investigation to identify why and to be able to rectify the situation. For example, women may not recognise or know that stalking comes under the law, so awareness-raising campaigns may be warranted in some Member States.

EU Member States should review the use and effectiveness of legal provisions on stalking.

- According to desk research by the FRA, in several EU Member States legislation on stalking is hardly used by the police or courts. Therefore, it is suggested that Member States which have enacted legislation addressing stalking assess the effectiveness of the measures adopted. Whereas many Member States have adopted procedures to grant protection to victims of domestic violence, the appropriate measures to immediately protect victims of stalking against the risk of repeat victimisation have not yet been considered, with the exception of a few Member States that enable the police to issue restraining orders against stalkers in certain contexts (Denmark, Germany, Hungary and Slovenia). Here, good practices with respect to improvements in responses to repeat victimisation in cases of intimate partner violence can be drawn on to enhance police and criminal justice action on stalking.

Victims of stalking should receive adequate protection from the state, building on the type of protection developed in response to cases of domestic violence.

- In line with Article 50 of the Istanbul Convention, which obliges parties to the convention to take the necessary measures to ensure that the police respond to all forms of violence "promptly and appropriately by offering adequate and immediate protection to victims", it is suggested that EU Member States which have not yet done so enact sufficiently deterrent and comprehensive criminal law provisions protecting women in cases of stalking.

Given the particular nature of stalking, specialist support services are required for victims.

- Among women who have had a previous partner, one in 10 has been stalked by a previous partner. Accordingly, support services should be alerted to the realities of stalking in the aftermath of relationships so that these patterns of behaviour are not overlooked and can be addressed.

- One in five women who has experienced stalking indicates that it lasted for more than two years. As with physical and sexual violence, the emotional and psychological consequences of stalking, as indicated in the survey, can be long-lasting and deep-seated. Specialist victim support services need to be available that can assist victims of stalking to recover.

- EU Member States should ensure that women who contact the police or other services as a result of stalking are informed about ways to document this course of conduct and how to obtain the necessary evidence so that all individual incidents can be taken into account in an investigation. However, these procedures should seek to lift the burden of reporting from victims to service providers, who can assist the victim to take the appropriate course of action. Victims also need easy access to advice concerning safety measures in view of possible further stalking incidents.

The role of the internet and social media

Internet service providers and social media platforms should take steps to proactively assist victims of stalking to report abuse, and should also proactively address perpetrators' behaviour.

- Twenty-three per cent of victims of stalking indicate that they had to change their email address or phone number in response to the most serious case of stalking. Rather than victims having to change their behaviour, the onus should be on internet service providers to address cases of repetitive abuse or stalking in order to protect the victim and inform the perpetrator that they cannot act with impunity, and ultimately to change the perpetrator's behaviour. This approach was considered by Twitter in the summer of 2013 after a prominent woman campaigner in the UK received repetitive threats via Twitter; thereupon, Twitter indicated it would simplify its 'report abuse' function.

- Harassment and stalking online – 'cyberstalking' – is a particular problem for young women because of their greater use of and exposure in these mediums. Where cyberstalking exists, operators of social media platforms should ensure that victims have quick and effective recourse to assistance if they are targeted by repetitive abusive behaviour. This is particularly important for young people, who may not be in a position to easily stand up to a deluge of abuse that can be in the form of sexual threats and 'hate' in the form of misogyny.

- Social media could do more to highlight and respond to abusive behaviour by focusing on the responsibilities of perpetrators, and by outlining where online comment becomes threatening and abusive behaviour under the terms of the law and has little to do with the fundamental right of freedom of expression.

6

Sexual harassment

MAIN FINDINGS

Extent of the problem

- Depending on the number of different forms of sexual harassment that were asked about in the survey, an estimated 83 million to 102 million women (45 % to 55 % of women) in the EU-28 have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15.
- An estimated 24 million to 39 million women (13 % to 21 %) in the EU-28 have experienced sexual harassment in the 12 months before the survey interview alone.

Overall prevalence of sexual harassment

- Based on *all* 11 items used in the survey to measure sexual harassment, every second woman (55 %) in the EU has experienced sexual harassment at least once since the age of 15, and one in five women (21 %) in the 12 months before the survey.
- When looking *only* at six specific forms of sexual harassment, which have been identified in the survey as more threatening and serious for the respondent: 45 % of women in the EU have experienced these forms of sexual harassment at least once in their lifetime, and 13 % in the 12 months before the interview.
- Among women who have experienced sexual harassment at least once since the age of 15, 32 % indicated somebody from the employment context – such as a colleague, a boss or a customer – as a perpetrator.

Characteristics of sexual harassment

- Sexual harassment is multidimensional, ranging from physical forms through to verbal acts and non-verbal forms such as cyberharassment. Some examples are:
  - physical forms of harassment – 29 % of women in the EU have experienced unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing since they were 15 years old;
  - verbal acts of harassment – 24 % of women have been subjected to sexually suggestive comments or jokes that offended them since the age of 15;
  - non-verbal forms including cyberharassment – 11 % of women have received unwanted, offensive sexually explicit emails or SMS messages, or offensive, inappropriate advances on social networking sites (referring to experiences since the age of 15).
- Looking at repeat victimisation, one in five women (19 %) has experienced unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing at least twice since she was 15 years old, and 6 % of women have been subjected to this physical form of harassment more than six times since the age of 15. Some 37 % of all victimised women have been confronted with two or three different forms of sexual harassment since the age of 15, 27 % with four to six different forms, and 8 % with seven or more different forms.

Details of sexual harassment

- Generally, the risk of exposure to sexual harassment is above average for women aged between 18 and 39 years. More than one in three women (38 %) aged between 18 and 29 years experienced at least one form of sexual harassment in the 12 months before the survey, as well as almost one in five women (24 %) aged between 30 and 39 years.
- The risk of young women aged between 18 and 29 years becoming a target of threatening and offensive advances on the internet is twice as high as the risk for women aged between 40 and 49 years, and more than three times as high as the risk for women aged between 50 and 59 years.
- Sexual harassment is more commonly experienced by women with a university degree and by women in the highest occupational groups: 75 % of women in the top management category and 74 % of those in the professional occupational category have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime, compared with 44 % of women in the occupational category 'skilled manual worker' or 41 % of women who state that they have never done paid work.
- In most cases of sexual harassment since a woman was 15 years old (68 %), the perpetrator was somebody she did not know. Other perpetrators of sexual harassment include people whom the woman knows (without specifying it further) (35 %), someone related to a woman's employment such as a colleague, boss or customer (32 %), or a friend or an acquaintance (31 %).
- Out of all women who described the most serious incident of sexual harassment that has happened to them, 35 % kept the incident to themselves and did not speak about it to anyone,, 28 % talked to a friend, 24 % spoke to a family member or a relative and 14 % informed their partner. Only 4 % of women reported to the police, 4 % talked to an employer or boss at their workplace and less than 1 % consulted a lawyer, a victim support organisation or a trade union representative.

6.1. Introduction

This chapter presents selected findings on women's experiences of sexual harassment. The survey questionnaire specified sexual harassment as acts that respondents felt to be unwanted and which they experienced as *offensive* or *intimidating*. As with other forms of violence covered in the survey, victimisation was measured using two reference periods – since the age of 15 years, and during the 12 months before the interview – and differentiated between incidents committed by different perpetrators.

The chapter outlines key findings from the survey with regard to the extent, forms and consequences of sexual harassment in the EU, and also presents data on repeat victimisation.

A number of legal instruments at the EU and international level provide definitions of sexual harassment. Despite differences in focus, a common feature of these definitions is that sexual harassment constitutes a breach of the principle of equal treatment between men and women and its practical realisation, and is therefore recognised as discrimination on the grounds of sex. Another commonality of existing definitions is the understanding of sexual harassment as a form of gender-based violence and, hence, as a form of sexual abuse.

The FRA survey takes account of the fact that verbal, non-verbal and physical behaviours or other acts constituting sexual harassment are also common outside the work environment. Consequently, the survey expands the set of possible perpetrators. This is of particular relevance since the calculated prevalence and incidence rates are dependent on the scope of the questions asked, which extend to areas currently not covered by some legal instruments.

Box 6.1: What the survey asked – sexual harassment

Now some questions about experiences that women may have.
At times you may have experienced people acting towards you in a way that you felt was unwanted and offensive. How often have you experienced any of the following? How often has this happened to you in the past 12 months?

- Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing?
- Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended?
- Inappropriate invitations to go out on dates?
- Intrusive questions about your private life that made you feel offended?
- Intrusive comments about your physical appearance that made you feel offended?
- Inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimidated?
- Somebody sending or showing you sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that made you feel offended?
- Somebody indecently exposing themselves to you?
- Somebody made you watch or look at pornographic material against your wishes?
- Unwanted sexually explicit emails or SMS messages that offended you?
- Inappropriate advances that offended you on social networking websites such as Facebook, or in internet chat rooms?

6.2. Measuring sexual harassment

Existing studies about sexual harassment are mostly focused on working life or educational environments.[1] The FRA survey adopted a broader scope, asking respondents first if they have experienced specific forms of sexual harassment in any situation, before asking in more detail who was involved. The information concerning the perpetrators allows the survey to distinguish incidents which are linked to various situations, not only in the context of employment.

The survey covered 11 possible acts of sexual harassment (Box 6.1) which were unwanted and offensive according to respondents. In addition to examining the prevalence and nature of these acts, they can also be analysed in four broad groups:

- **physical forms of harassment**: unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing;
- **verbal forms of harassment**: sexually suggestive, offensive, comments or jokes; inappropriate invitations to go out on dates; intrusive, offensive questions about private life; intrusive, offensive comments about a woman's physical appearance;
- **non-verbal forms of harassment**: inappropriate, intimidating staring or leering; receiving or being shown offensive, sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts; somebody indecently exposing themselves; being made to watch or look at pornographic material against one's wishes;
- **cyberharassment**: receiving unwanted, offensive, sexually explicit emails or SMS messages; inappropriate, offensive advances on social networking websites or in internet chat rooms.

As estimates concerning the extent of sexual harassment are usually based on women's personal experiences, the estimates depend on the subjective meaning respondents attach to what might be subsumed under unwanted and offensive conduct. Research has shown that respondents differ in their perception of what behaviour constitutes sexual harassment.[2] The variation in the ascribed subjective meaning is shown to be affected not only by gender cultures at work (such as the recognition of gender equality and non-discrimination on the ground of sex at the workplace versus a culture that 'permits' or 'rewards' harassment in an organisation), but also by the prevalent social and cultural values, norms and attitudes in a society. They also vary by the respondents' overall level of awareness and information about their legal rights in general, and existing laws in particular.[3] Women's preconceived notions of what 'sexual harassment' is and is not might also differ from country to country. To minimise such culturally determined variations in the subjective interpretations of sexual harassment, the FRA survey did not ask the respondents about 'sexual harassment' as an issue; rather, it asked about experiencing specific unwanted and offensive acts. Nevertheless, there may still be differences in the degree to which women in different cultural contexts find the described acts offensive or intimidating.

[1] See, for example, European Commission (1998), *Sexual harassment in the workplace in the European Union,* Brussels, European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs.

[2] *Ibid*., p. iv.

[3] Zippel, K. (2009), 'The European Union 2002 Directive on sexual harassment: A feminist success?', *Comparative European Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 137–159. See also Chapter 9, 'Attitudes and awareness', of this report.

6.3. The extent of sexual harassment

The extent of sexual harassment depends on the scope of the applied study definition and consequently on the number of items used to measure it (Figure 6.1). The prevalence rates have therefore been calculated first on the basis of the full set of 11 items asked about in the survey and then based on a set of six items.

The selection of six from 11 items asked about in the survey includes only those incidents that have been interpreted as potentially the most serious and threatening for the respondent, namely 'Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing', 'Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended', 'Somebody sending or showing you sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that made you feel offended', 'Somebody indecently exposing themselves to you', 'Somebody made you watch or look at pornographic material against your wishes' and 'Unwanted sexually explicit emails or SMS messages that offended you'.

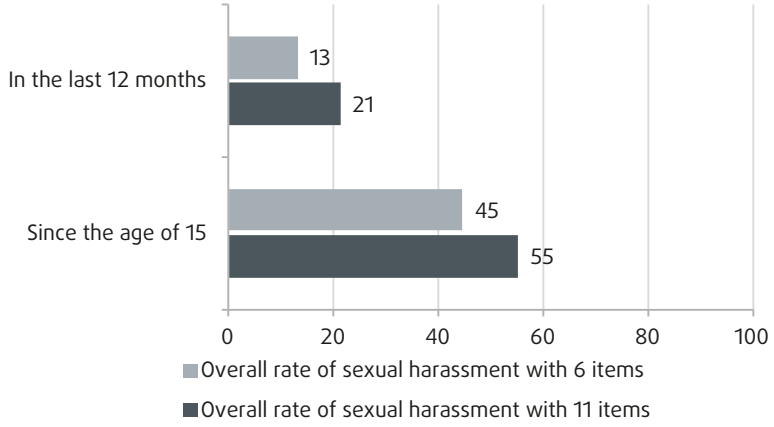
6.3.1. Prevalence of sexual harassment

Based on the full set of 11 items, every second woman (55 %) in the EU has experienced sexual harassment at least once since the age of 15, and one woman in five (21 %) in the year before the survey.

Based on the shorter set of six items, 45 % of women in the EU have experienced sexual harassment at least once during their lifetime, and 13 % have experienced at least one of the six incidents in the 12 months before the survey.

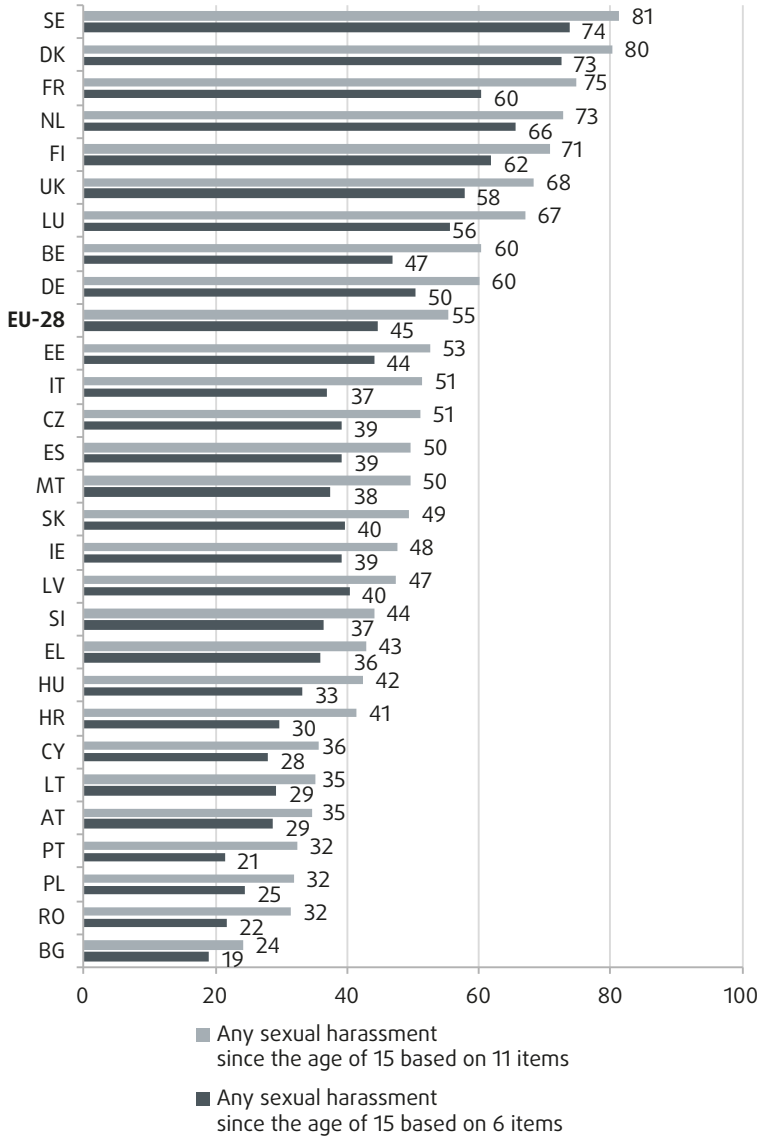
Figure 6.2 and Figure 6.3 show the prevalence of sexual harassment across EU Member States for both reference periods and both the full set and the short set of sexual harassment items (11 questions and six questions, respectively). The prevalence rates range from 81 %–71 % in Sweden, Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Finland, to 32 %–24 % in Portugal, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria, when looking at victims' experiences since the age of 15 and referring to the full set of 11 items (Figure 6.2). There are only minimal changes in the positioning of the countries for the prevalence rates produced with the full set of items and the short set. Based on the short set of sexual harassment items, the prevalence ranges from 74 %–60 % in Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland and France to 25 %–19 % in Poland, Romania, Portugal and Bulgaria. The rates for women's experiences of sexual harassment in the year before the interview are generally lower than the lifetime prevalence, they follow, nevertheless, to a great extent the same trend (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.1: Prevalence of sexual harassment, based on full and short sets of items measuring sexual harassment (%) [a,b,c]



Notes: *a Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).*
b The full set includes all 11 items used in the questionnaire to measure sexual harassment (see Box 6.1).
c The short set includes the following six items: 'Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing', 'Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended', 'Somebody indecently exposing themselves to you', 'Sexually explicit emails or SMS messages that offended you', 'Sending or showing sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that made you feel offended', 'Someone made you watch or look at pornographic material against your wishes'.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Figure 6.2: Prevalence of sexual harassment since the age of 15, based on full and short sets of items measuring sexual harassment, by EU Member State (%) [a,b,c]



Notes: *a Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).*
b Full set includes all 11 items used in the questionnaire to measure sexual harassment (see Box 6.1).
c The short set includes the following six items: 'Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing', 'Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended', 'Somebody indecently exposing themselves to you', 'Sexually explicit emails or SMS messages that offended you', 'Sending or showing sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that made you feel offended', 'Someone made you watch or look at pornographic material against your wishes.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

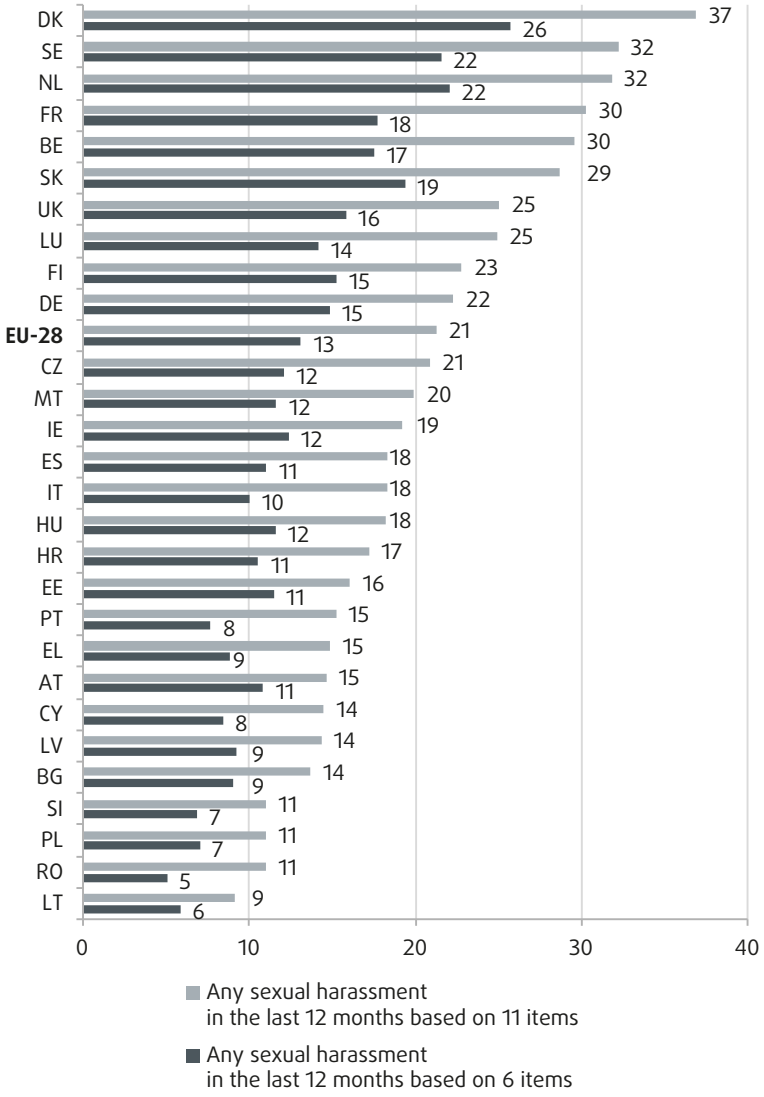
Although not directly comparable, a similar distribution pattern across EU Member States has been observed in the fifth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS). The EWCS survey, conducted by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), contains six questions on various types of adverse social behaviour relating to verbal abuse, unwanted sexual attention, threats and humiliating behaviour, physical violence, bullying and harassment, and sexual harassment.[4] According to the EWCS, and other research by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) in 2010,[5] higher prevalence rates with respect to the above are generally found in northern Member States than in southern Member States. Eurofound indicates three reasons for the observed differences between Member States concerning the exposure to adverse social behaviour:

- variations in the actual prevalence of adverse social behaviour;
- cultural differences with regard to the type of behaviour that is considered adverse (e.g. when does

[4] Eurofound (2012), *Fifth European Working Conditions Survey*, Luxembourg, Publications Office, pp. 57–58.

[5] EU-OSHA, Milczarek, M. (2010), *Workplace violence and harassment: A European picture*, Luxembourg, Publications Office, p. 10.

Figure 6.3: Prevalence of sexual harassment in the 12 months before the interview based on full and short sets of items measuring sexual harassment, by EU Member State (%) [a,b,c]



Notes: *a Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).*
b Full set includes all 11 items used in the questionnaire to measure sexual harassment (see Box 6.1).
c The short set includes the following six items: 'Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing', 'Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended', 'Somebody indecently exposing themselves to you', 'Sexually explicit emails or SMS messages that offended you', 'Sending or showing sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that made you feel offended', 'Someone made you watch or look at pornographic material against your wishes'.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

'playful teasing' turn into bullying? What type of sexual attention is unwanted?);

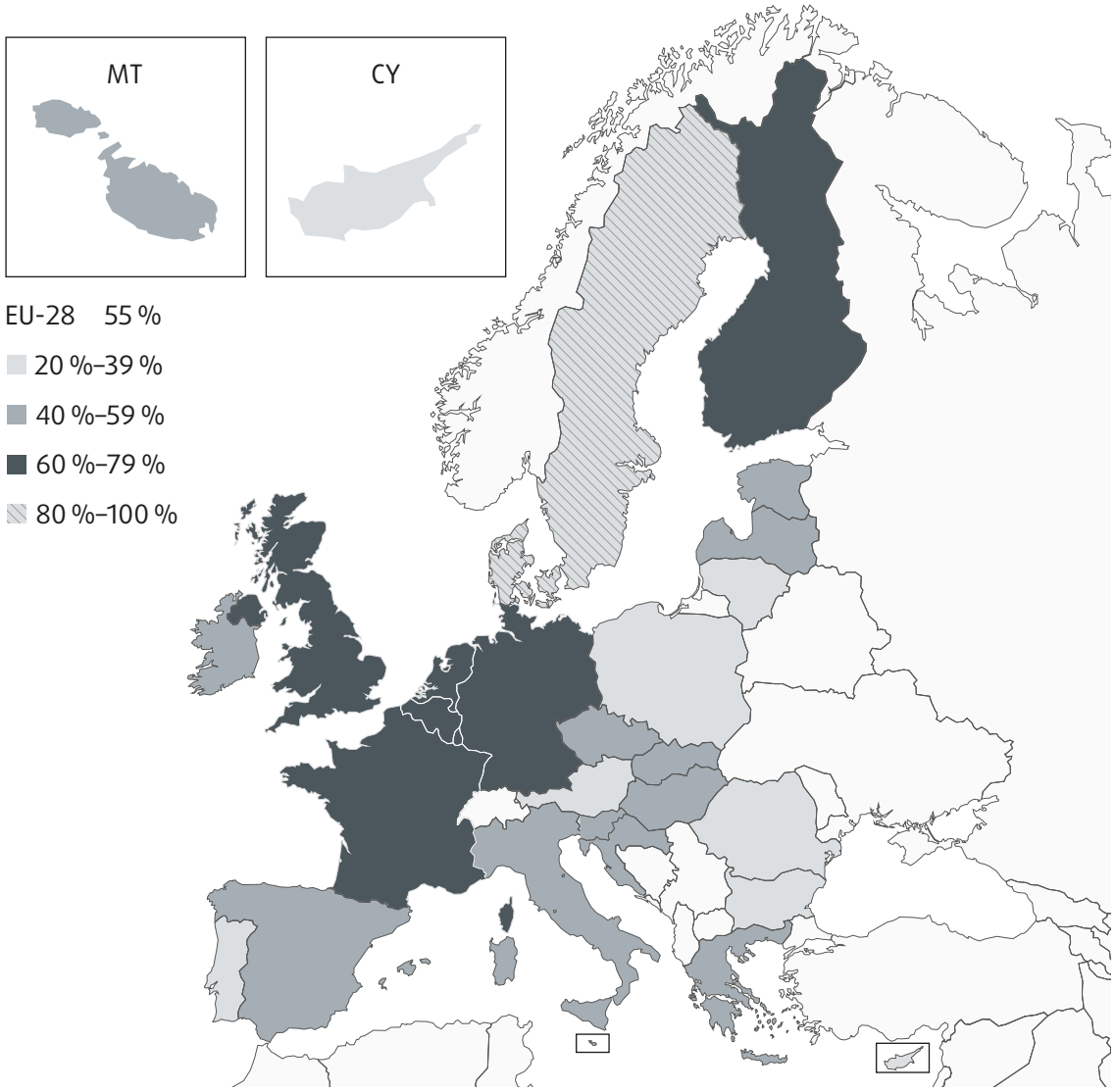
- country differences in the likelihood of people reporting that they were subjected to any of these types of behaviour (although people might recognise that they are being harassed, they could feel that reporting it is less socially desirable).[6]

Significant gender differences have been observed in the fifth EWCS survey regarding unwanted sexual attention: women are twice as likely as men to have received unwanted sexual attention in the month preceding the interview, and almost three times as likely to be subjected to sexual harassment as men.[7]

[6] Eurofound (2012), *Fifth European Working Conditions Survey*, Luxembourg, Publication Office of the European Union, p. 57.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 57.

Figure 6.4: Prevalence of sexual harassment since the age of 15, EU-28 (%)

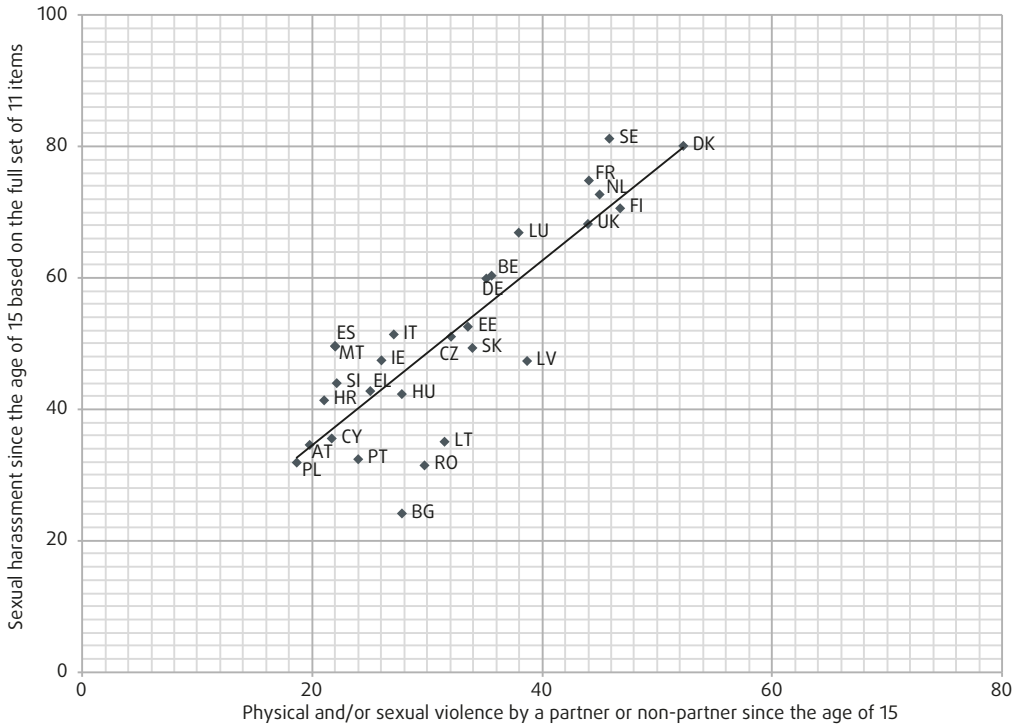


Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

The observed variations between EU Member States in the prevalence rates of sexual harassment can be explained by a number of factors looked at in combination. For example, the different level of acknowledgement of sexual harassment in national legislation and its prioritisation in specific policies and political debates might be reflected in women's overall level of awareness of sexual harassment as a fundamental rights abuse, and their disclosure of such experiences in the survey. Estimates on the extent of sexual harassment are, therefore, partly dependent on accustomed ways of perceiving, defining and disclosing acts of violence against women, including sexual harassment. In parallel, in some Member States domestic violence is still considered a private matter, which is rarely shared with friends and colleagues and much less reported to the authorities. This may also affect women's likelihood to disclose other experiences which may be perceived as embarrassing or shameful, such as sexual harassment.

As Figure 6.5 and later sections in this chapter show, observed prevalence rates of sexual harassment and prevalence rates for other forms of gender-based violence are strongly related.

Figure 6.5: Relationship between average prevalence rate of physical and/or sexual partner and non-partner violence since the age of 15 and the average rate of sexual harassment (%)



Note: $R^2 = 0.711$.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

6.3.2. Forms of sexual harassment

Inappropriate staring or leering that made women feel intimidated (30 %) and unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing (29 %) are the forms of sexual harassment women have experienced most frequently since the age of 15. Inappropriate staring or leering that made women feel intimidated is also the form of sexual harassment experienced most frequently in the 12 months before the survey (10 %). Some 5 % of all women have been victims of unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing in the past 12 months.

Table 6.1 and Table 6.2 outline the various forms of sexual harassment that women have been exposed to since the age of 15 and in the last 12 months. In addition to inappropriate staring or leering that made women feel intimidated and unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing, the tables show that women have been frequently subjected to verbal forms of sexual harassment, such as sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made them feel offended (24 % since the age of 15 and 7 % in the last 12 months) or intrusive questions about their private life that made them feel offended (20 % since the age of 15 and 6 % in the last 12 months).

Table 6.1: Forms and frequency of sexual harassment since the age of 15 (%) [a,b,c]

Form of sexual harassment	6 or more times	2–5 times	Once	Total
Inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimidated	10	14	6	30
Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing	6	13	9	29
Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended	8	11	5	24
Intrusive comments about your physical appearance that made you feel offended	7	9	4	20
Intrusive questions about your private life that made you feel offended	4	8	5	16
Somebody indecently exposing themselves to you	1	5	10	16

Form of sexual harassment	6 or more times	2–5 times	Once	Total
Inappropriate invitations to go out on dates	2	7	6	16
Unwanted sexually explicit emails or SMS messages that offended you	2	3	2	7
Inappropriate advances that offended you on social networking websites such as Facebook, or in internet chat rooms	1	3	2	6
Somebody sending or showing sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that made you feel offended	1	2	3	5
Someone made you watch or look at pornographic material against your wishes	0	0	1	2

Notes: *a Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).*
b Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
c Taken individually, the sum of categories '6 or more times', '2–5 times' and 'Once' can differ from the total indicated in the table by +/- one percentage point. This difference is due to rounding.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

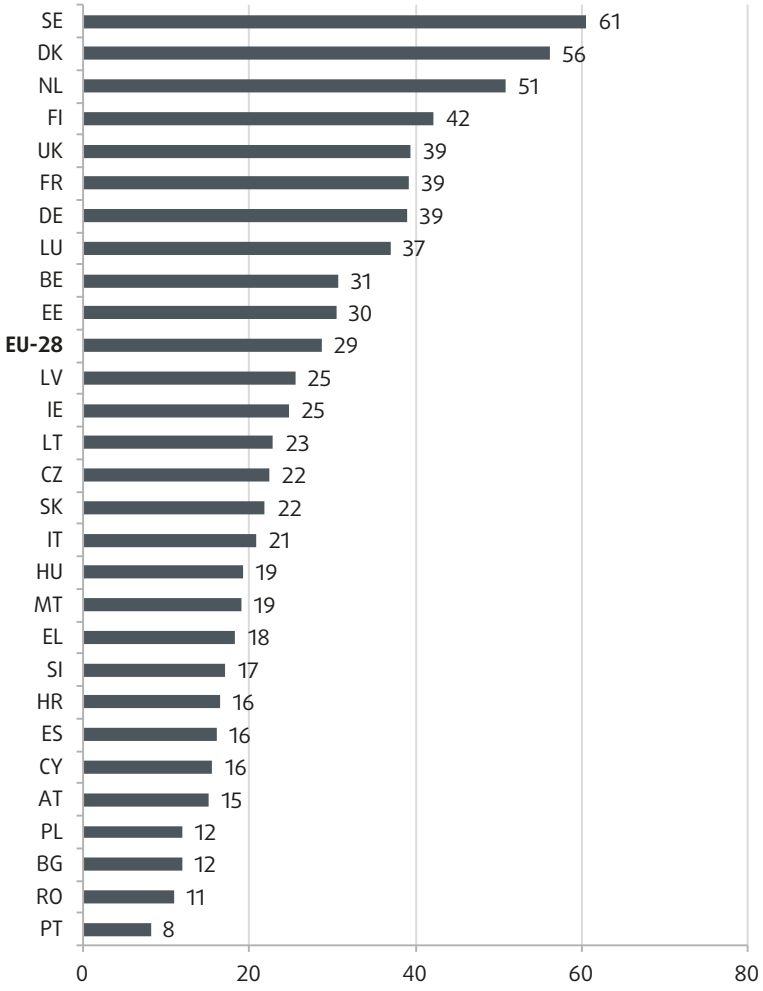
Table 6.2: Forms and frequency of sexual harassment in the last 12 months (%) [a,b,c,d]

Form of sexual harassment	6 or more times	2–5 times	Once	Total
Inappropriate staring or leering that made you feel intimidated	2	4	4	10
Intrusive comments about your physical appearance that made you feel offended	1	3	3	7
Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you feel offended	1	3	3	7
Intrusive questions about your private life that made you feel offended	1	3	2	6
Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing	1	2	2	5
Inappropriate invitations to go out on dates	0	2	2	4
Inappropriate advances on social networking websites such as Facebook, or in internet chat rooms	1	1	1	3
Unwanted sexually explicit emails or SMS messages that offended you	1	1	1	3
Somebody indecently exposing themselves to you	0	0	1	2
Somebody sending or showing you sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts that made you feel	0	0	1	1
Someone made you watch or look at pornographic material against your wishes	(0)	(0)	0	0

Notes: *a Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than 5 responses are suppressed (denoted with '-').
c Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
d Taken individually, the sum of categories '6 or more times', '2–5 times' and 'Once' can differ from the total indicated in the table by +/- one percentage point. This difference is due to rounding.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Of the 11 items designed to measure sexual harassment in the FRA survey, 'unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing' describes a distinctly physical act of harassment, as it involves a breach of physical integrity. It can therefore be considered more threatening when presented on a continuum from verbal harassment to physical assault. Almost one third of women in the EU (29 %) have experienced this type of physical sexual harassment since the age of 15 (Table 6.1). Figure 6.6 shows the prevalence rates for 'unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing' since the age of 15 in EU Member States.

Figure 6.6: Prevalence of unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing since the age of 15, by EU Member State (%) [a]



Note: a Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

6.3.3. Cyberharassment

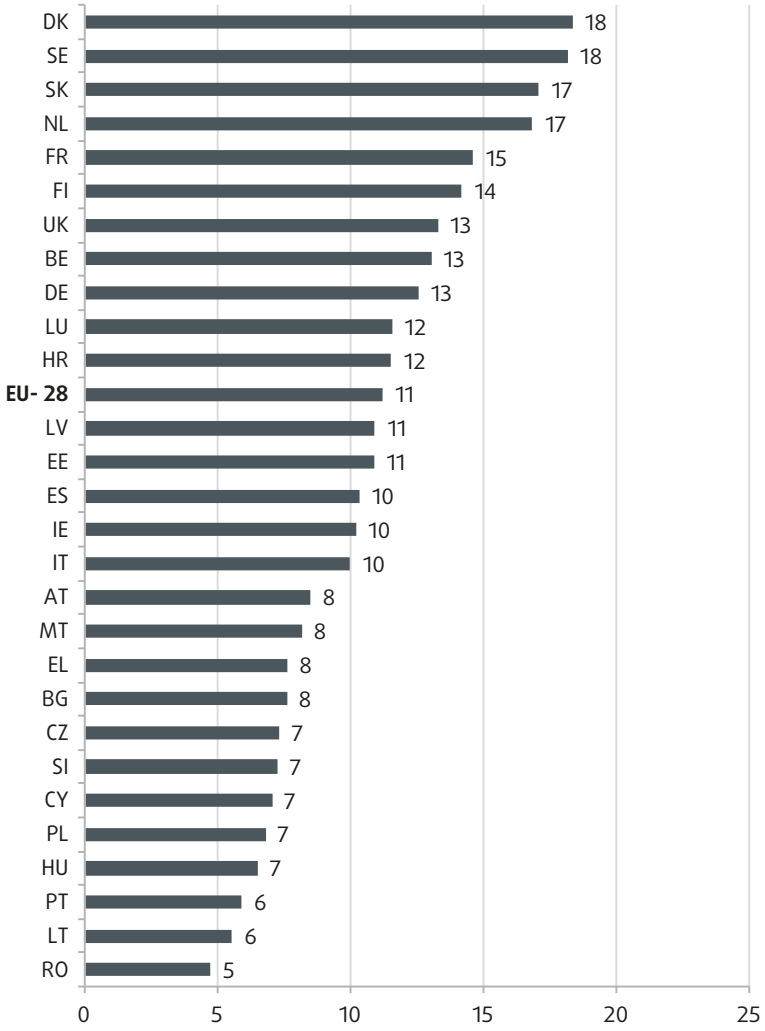
To assess the extent to which new technologies have been used for sexual harassment of women, two items from the survey – 'unwanted sexually explicit emails or SMS messages' and 'inappropriate advances on social networking websites' – can be analysed as forms of 'cyberharassment'. In this way, it can be seen that one in 10 women (11 %) has faced at least one of the two forms of cyberharassment since the age of 15, and one in 20 (5 %) in the 12 months before the survey.[8]

At EU Member State level, countries cluster at the upper and lower ends of the scale in close accord with the distribution of the overall lifetime prevalence of sexual harassment. Denmark and Sweden (both 18 %), and Slovakia and the Netherlands (both 17 %) show the highest prevalence rates (Figure 6.7). The lowest rates are in Romania (5 %), and in Lithuania and Portugal (both 6 %). The variation in the prevalence of cyberharassment ranges between 5 % and 18 % across Member States. It is possible to exclude from the calculations those respondents who do not use or have no access to such tools as email, SMS and social networking sites. The variation, however, appears to reflect the use of the internet as a communication tool for both victims and perpetrators in the different Member States. Acts of cyberharassment are more common in countries with high rates of internet access, such as Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Finland, and less marked in those with low rates of internet access, such as Romania, Lithuania and Portugal.[9]

[8] The estimates of the prevalence of cyberharassment have been calculated based on respondents who referred to applicable answer categories on both items measuring it. The answer category "not applicable" includes women who do not have access to or do not use tools such as email, SMS and social networking websites. The proportion of women who fall into this category equals about 14 % of the whole sample.

[9] For figures about internet access by households, individuals and enterprises, see Eurostat (2012), *Community survey on ICT usage in households and by individuals: Information society statistics*, Data for the period 2010 and 2011.

Figure 6.7: Cyberharassment since the age of 15, by EU Member State (%) [a]



Note: *a Out of all women excluding cases where the answer to the questions on cyberharassment was "not applicable" (n = 35,918; 6,084 respondents answered "not applicable" on both items, information on age was missing for 98 cases).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

The risk of young women aged between 18 and 29 years becoming a target of threatening and offensive advances on the internet is twice as high as the risk for women aged between 40 and 49 years, and more than three times as high as the risk for women aged between 50 and 59 years (Figure 6.8).

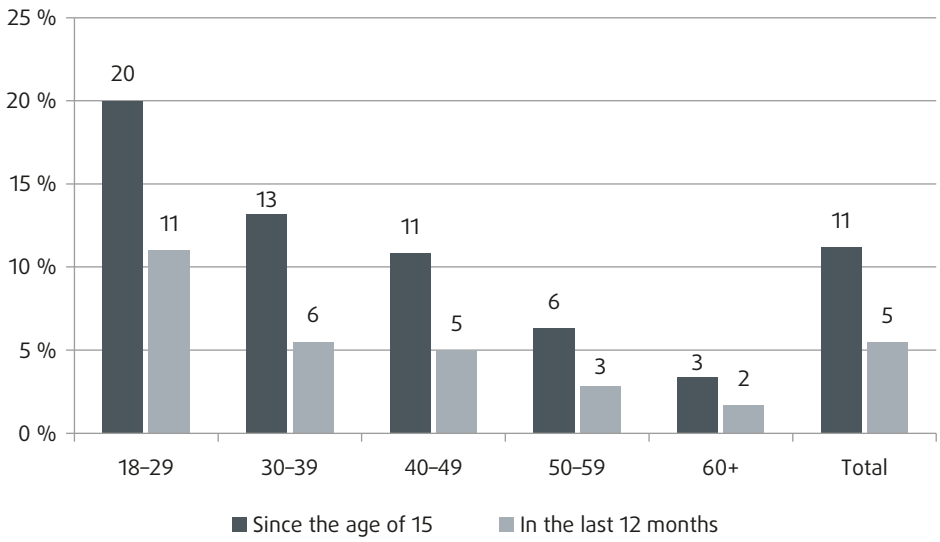
The observed differences in the prevalence of cyberharassment across age groups is likely to be at least partly related to the fact that younger women and their male peers use the internet more actively than older women do. Although not directly comparable, Eurostat *Information Society* statistics show that the proportion of individuals aged 55 to 74 years using social networks stands at 11 %, in contrast to the 80 % recorded for those aged 16 to 24 years.[10] Statistics from the UN Economic Commission for Europe indicate that 93 % of women aged 16 to 24 years in the EU use the internet at least once a week, as do 76 % of women aged 25 to 54 years and 35 % of women aged 55 to 74 years. Younger women are, thus, more active on the internet, including on social networking sites, and are therefore also more exposed to unwanted and inappropriate advances online.[11]

The rapid expansion in access to new technologies (social networking sites, text messages, mobile phone and email communication) and their increased use make the above result of particular policy relevance. There is potential for cyberharassment to increase and for perpetrators to act with impunity because they can be anonymous and victims have inadequate legal recourse.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] United Nations (2010), Statistics Division, *The world's women 2010: Trends and statistics*, United Nations Publication.

Figure 6.8: Forms of sexual cyberharassment since the age of 15 and in the 12 months before the interview, by age group (%) [a]



Notes: *a Out of all women excluding cases where the answer to the questions on cyberharassment was not applicable (n = 35,820); 6,084 respondents answered "not applicable" on both items; information on age was missing for 98 cases.*
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

6.3.4. Repeat victimisation

Looking at Figure 6.9, one in 10 women (10 %) has been subjected to inappropriate staring or leering that made her feel intimidated six or more times since the age of 15, and 14 % of women have experienced this type of non-verbal sexual harassment two to five times (Figure 6.9). Almost one in five women (19 %) has experienced unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing at least twice since the age of 15, and more than one in 20 (6 %) has been subjected to this physical form of harassment six or more times. In addition, 5 % of women have experienced indecent exposure two to five times since the age of 15.

Figure 6.10 furthermore shows that, in the 12 months before the survey, many verbal forms of sexual harassment happened repeatedly.

Considering the number of incidents across the 11 different forms of sexual harassment, the majority of victimised women have experienced more than one type of sexual harassment in their lifetime (median = 3).[12] Thirty-seven per cent of all victimised women have been confronted with two or three different forms of sexual harassment since the age of 15, 27 % with four to six different forms and 8 % with seven or more different forms. Evidence of repeat victimisation in the area of sexual harassment shows the burden imposed on some women by the persistent nature of many abusive acts. Analysis of the frequency of the 11 different forms of sexual harassment by the number of perpetrators shows that women have been subjected to both repeat victimisation by the same perpetrator and repeat victimisation by different perpetrators.

6.3.5. Sexual harassment by socio-demographic background variables of women

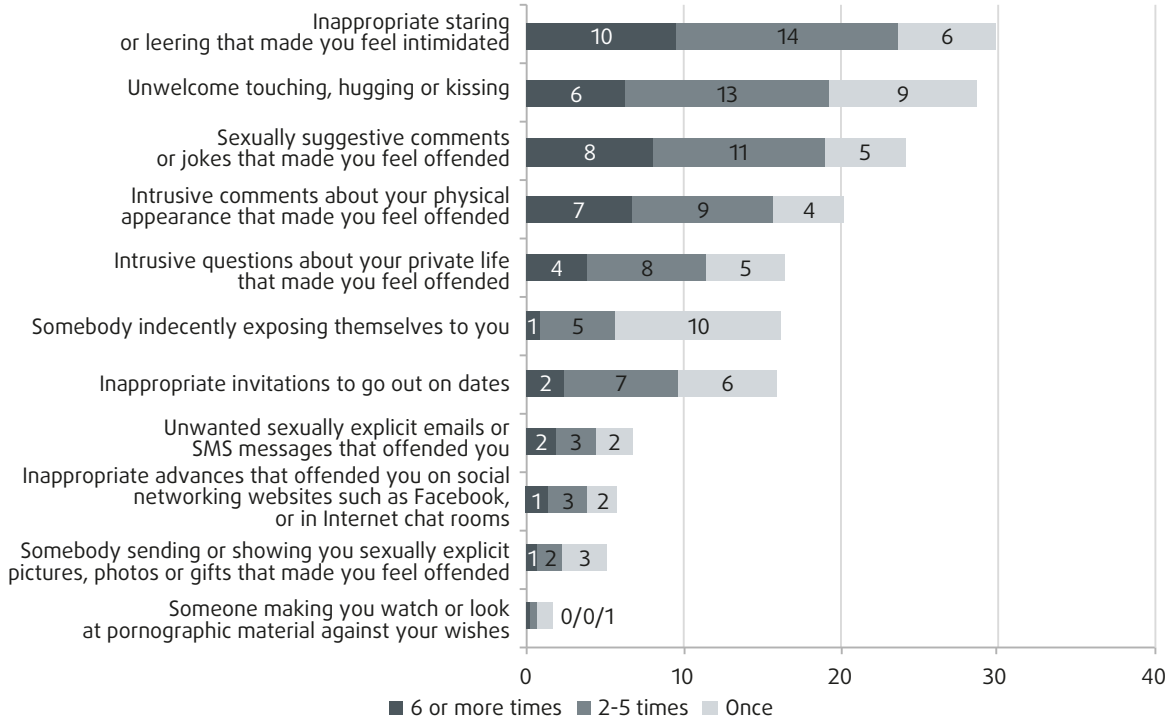
Age

In all EU Member States (except Luxembourg), young women aged between 18 and 29 years represent the age group that is most vulnerable to sexual harassment.

According to this FRA survey, the extent of sexual harassment differs considerably across age groups and seems to follow a linear trend across age cohorts, for prevalence of sexual harassment since the age of 15 as well as in the past 12 months. Overall, the prevalence rates for women aged 18–39 are above average. Figure 6.11 shows that more than one in three women (38 %) aged between 18 and 29 years experienced sexual harassment in the 12 months before the survey, as well as almost one in five women (24 %) between 30 and 39 years of age.

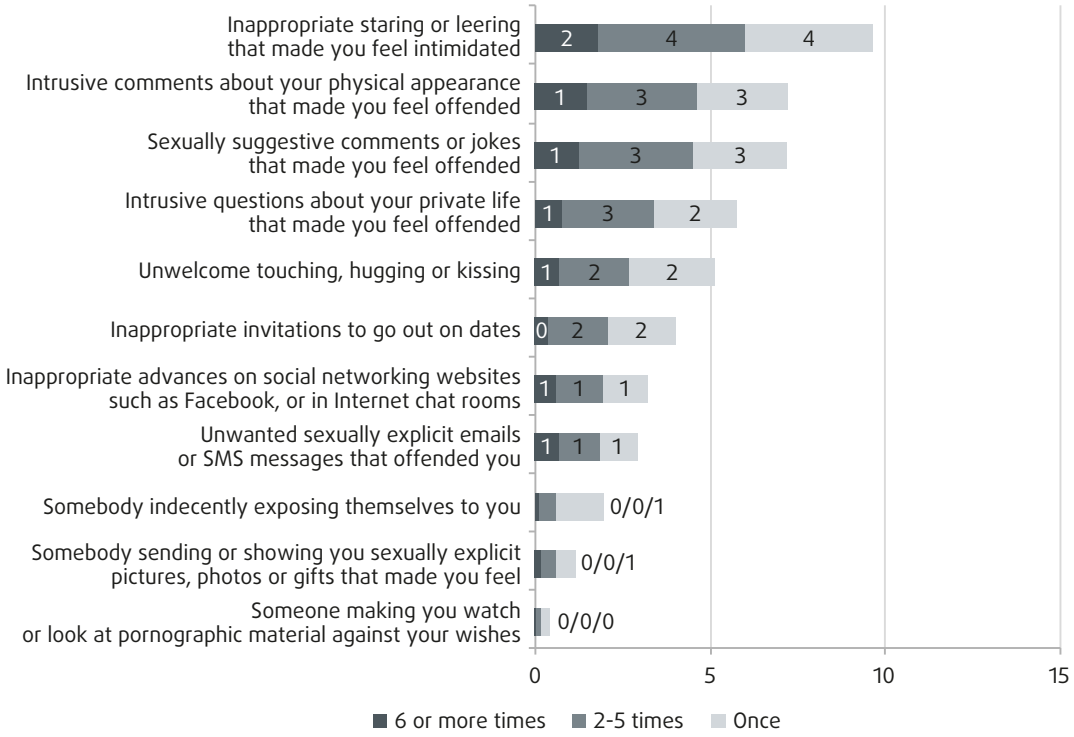
[12] The median is another value to represent the average. It is the value in the middle of a distribution, i.e. it divides the distribution into two equal parts with 50 % of cases below and 50 % of cases above it.

Figure 6.9: Forms and frequency of sexual harassment since the age of 15 (%) [a,b]



Notes: *a Out of all women (N = 42,002).*
b Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

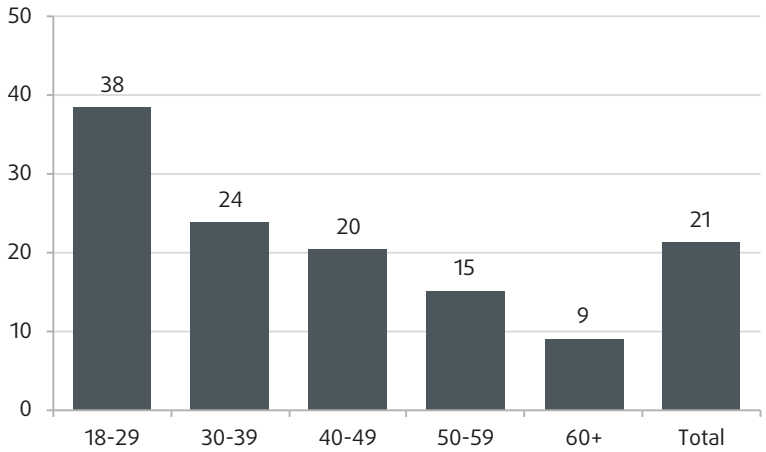
Figure 6.10: Forms and frequency of sexual harassment in the 12 months before the interview (%) [a,b]



Notes: *a Out of all women (N = 42,002).*
b Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

This general trend can be observed equally when looking at the results at the country level or across different forms of sexual harassment. In all EU Member States (except Luxembourg), young women aged between 18 and 29 years represent the group most vulnerable to almost all 11 forms of sexual harassment. The exception is the behaviour 'forced to watch pornographic material', which has been most frequently experienced by women between 40 and 49 years of age (30 %) and between 30 and 39 years of age (27 %); see Table 6.3.

Figure 6.11: Sexual harassment in the 12 months before the interview, by age group (%) [a]



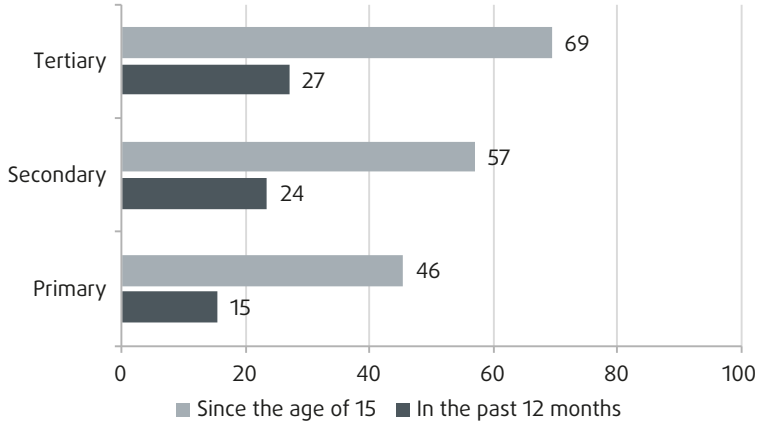
Note: a Out of all women whose age was recorded (n = 41,895; information on age was missing for 107 cases).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Table 6.3: Sexual harassment in the 12 months before the interview, by age group (%) [a,b,c]

Form of sexual harassment	Respondent's age group				
	18–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60+
Unwelcome, touching, hugging or kissing	43	18	18	13	8
Inappropriate staring or leering	47	23	16	9	6
Sexually suggestive comments or jokes	39	24	18	13	6
Sending sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts	27	26	22	15	11
Inappropriate invitations to go out on dates	38	23	22	9	7
Intrusive questions about private life	37	24	20	13	7
Intrusive comments about physical appearance	43	21	18	11	7
Sexually explicit emails or SMS messages	34	24	22	12	8
Inappropriate advances on social networking sites	53	19	17	7	5
Indecent exposure	28	20	20	14	17
Forced to watch pornographic material	(13)	27	30	(17)	(13)

Notes: a Out of all women who have been sexually harassed at least once in the 12 months before the interview (n = 7,724).
b Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
c Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than 5 responses are suppressed (denoted with '-').
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Figure 6.12: Overall sexual harassment across educational groups in the EU (%) [a]



Note: *a Out of all women who gave details of education (n = 41,831; information on education was missing for 171 cases).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

The results furthermore show that more than half (53 %) of all women who have experienced inappropriate advances on social networking sites are between 18 and 29 years of age (as the age group that is likely to use such platforms most).

Education

Although sexual harassment is common in all educational groups, the distribution of the overall prevalence rates across educational levels suggests that women with higher educational qualifications indicate that they are sexually harassed more frequently than women with lower educational attainment (Figure 6.12). More than two thirds of all women who have acquired a university degree (69 %) have been subjected to sexual harassment since the age of 15, whereas 46 % of all women who have completed primary education have experienced sexual harassment at least once since the age of 15.

Although existing research is not conclusive about the distribution of prevalence rates across levels of education, there is some evidence that women with a university degree may not tolerate incidents of sexual harassment (such as sexually suggestive remarks) or may regard them as more severe than women with lower levels of educational attainment (Figure 6.13). Women with a higher level of education are more likely to be in higher occupational positions, better informed about legal provisions in this regard and therefore perhaps less likely to tolerate such forms of behaviour from colleagues and supervisors.[13] As Figure 6.13 shows, the differences between EU Member States in terms of prevalence of sexual harassment do not become less or more pronounced when one looks at women with tertiary education and compare the results with those of all respondents. What changes significantly, however, is the overall level of sexual harassment within Member States. For example, nine in 10 women with a university degree in France (91 %) have experienced at least one form of sexual harassment since the age of 15, compared with a prevalence rate of 75 % among all respondents in France. The same pattern applies for almost all Member States.

Employment status and occupation

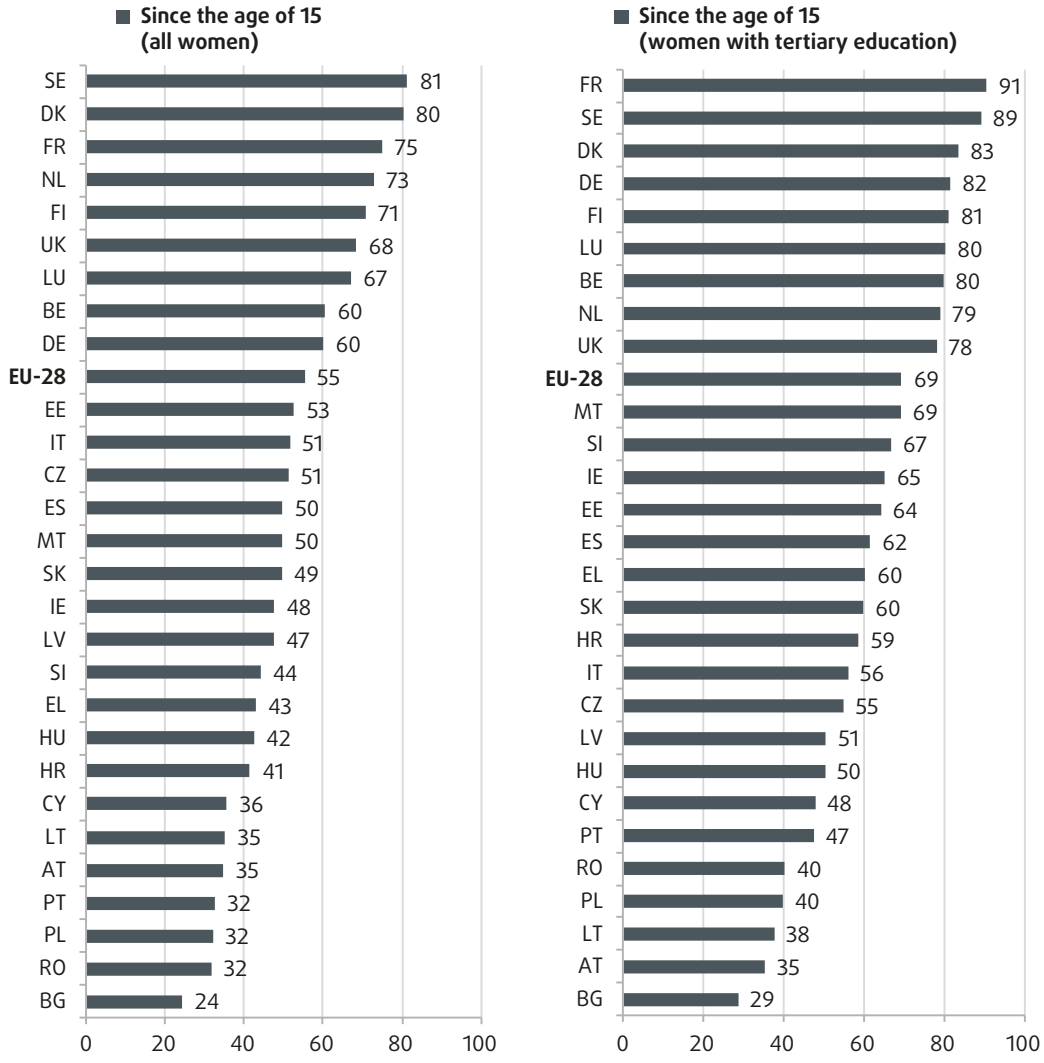
Scrutinising the distribution of the prevalence rates of sexual harassment across respondents' employment status shows that women's labour market participation is reflected in their experiences of sexual harassment. Women's employment status is examined in four categories:

- women who were employed at the time of the interview;
- women who have been working in the past 12 months, but not at the time of the interview (short-term unemployed);
- women who have worked before in their lives, but not in the past 12 months (longer-term unemployed);
- women who have never done paid work.

Women who were working at the time when the survey took place experienced sexual harassment more frequently than women who have never done paid work or women who were unemployed during the time of the survey (Figure 6.14). One third (35 %) of women who were not working at the time of the interview – but who had been at work at some point in the 12 months before the interview– indicate having been sexually harassed in the past 12 months. One in 10 women (12 %) who were also not employed at the time of the interview, but who have been employed at some point *before* the past 12 months, indicate having been sexually harassed in the past 12 months.

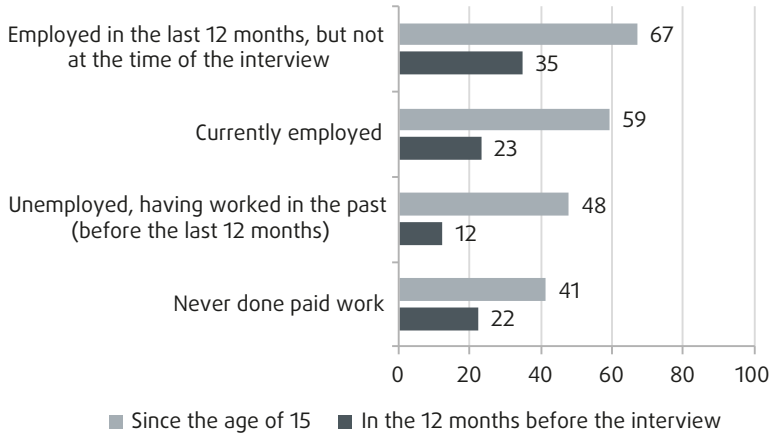
[13] European Commission (1999), *Sexual harassment at the workplace in the European Union,* Luxembourg, Publications Office, p. 48.

Figure 6.13: Sexual harassment since the age of 15 based on a full set of items, measuring sexual harassment for all women and for women with tertiary education, by EU Member State (%) [a,b]



Notes: *a All women: N = 42,002.*
b Women with tertiary education: n = 9,186.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Figure 6.14: Prevalence of sexual harassment since the age of 15 and in the 12 months before the interview, by women's employment status (%) [a]



Note: *a Out of all women (N = 42,002).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Professional and other women at risk of sexual harassment

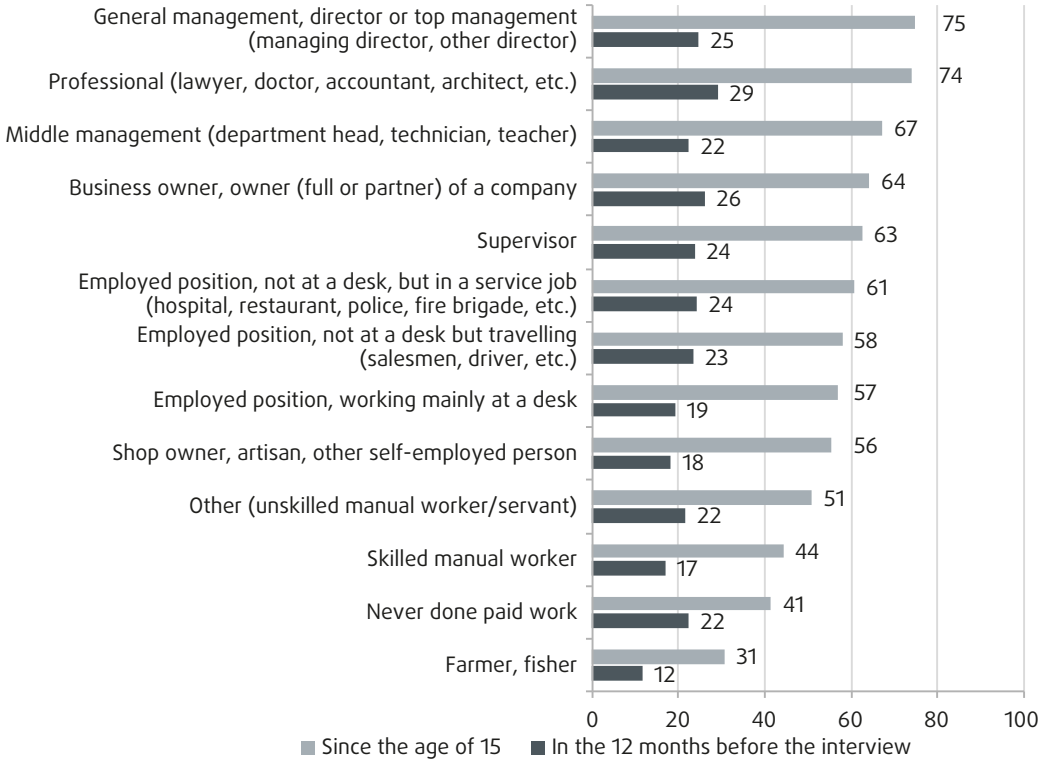
According to the survey, sexual harassment is more commonly experienced by women in the highest occupational groups: 75 % of women in the top management category and 74 % of those in the professional occupational category have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime (Figure 6.15). More than one in four women employed in one of these two occupational categories (25 % and 29 %, respectively) has been confronted with sexual harassment in the last 12 months as well.

As ascertained in other studies, women with irregular or precarious employment contracts, which are common for many jobs in the services sector, are also more susceptible to sexual harassment.[14] More than half (61 %) of women employed in the services sector have been subjected to sexual harassment at least once in their lifetime. Women in this employment category also show high prevalence in the 12 months before the survey interview (24 %). Women in the agricultural sector have the lowest prevalence of sexual harassment: 31 % since the age of 15 and 12 % in the last year. Women employed as skilled manual workers also show a lower prevalence, with 44 % having experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime and 17 % in the last 12 months.

There are also some discernible variations in the results by country. Although the prevalence in 'western European' EU Member States corresponds to the EU average, according to which women located in higher professional categories or in the services sector experience sexual harassment more frequently, women in mobile jobs (such as salespersons and drivers) are more at risk in central and eastern EU Member States.

[14] McDonald, P. (2012), 'Workplace sexual harassment 30 years on: A review of the literature', *International Journal of Management Reviews,* Vol. 14, No. 1, pp. 1–17, p. 7.

Figure 6.15: Overall sexual harassment since the age of 15 and in the 12 months before the interview across occupational groups (%) [a]



Note: *a Out of all women who gave details of occupation (n = 41,676; information on occupation was missing for 326 cases).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Although it is difficult to give definitive explanations for these differences, the higher prevalence of sexual harassment among women in the top occupational categories could be related to their greater exposure to situations in which harassment may occur, such as at work or when travelling for work. It may also be related to their level of education and, therefore, to the varying subjective meaning of what constitutes sexual harassment, and whether or not such behaviour is unwanted and not tolerated, and thus reported in a survey of this kind. Women working in male-dominated jobs could also be at higher risk of sexual harassment than women in gender-balanced or female-dominated workplaces. For example, across the EU, women are under-represented in positions of responsibility in all fields, especially in the business and finance sector. On average, in 2012, the shares of women in executive and non-executive decision-making positions were 10 % and 17 %, respectively.[15] Moreover, a sexualised work environment and tolerance of such behaviour in the workplace facilitate sexual harassment.[16]

6.4. Perpetrators of sexual harassment

Table 6.4 presents a detailed account of the forms of sexual harassment since the age of 15 by perpetrator groups covered in this survey. In most cases of sexual harassment faced by women since they were 15 years old, the perpetrator is an unknown person (68 %), followed by somebody the respondent knows (without specifying it further) (35 %) or somebody from the employment context such as a colleague, supervisor or a client (32 %). In the survey, women were able to identify one or more perpetrator categories, based on their experiences, so the percentages of various perpetrator categories add up to over 100 %. In 31 % of cases, the victim reported a friend or an acquaintance as the perpetrator. This pattern is also apparent from the results about the perpetrators of sexual harassment in the 12 months before the interview.

The most common forms of sexual harassment committed by an unknown perpetrator since the age of 15 are indecent exposure (83 % of victims indicated that the perpetrator was unknown) and cyberharassment (73 % of women who have received inappropriate advances on social networking sites and 46 % of those who have received sexually explicit emails or SMS messages have been subjected to the experience by an unknown person). Whereas intrusive and offensive questions about a woman's private life are most commonly posed by persons in the workplace (33 % of the victims locate the perpetrator in the employment context), a person who forces a woman to watch pornographic material against her wish is often a previous partner (in 35 % of cases). The latter was the only form of sexual harassment where the perpetrator was most likely to be a partner, compared with other perpetrator groups (Table 6.4).

Victims of sexual harassment typically name perpetrators from more than one perpetrator category. That is, they have experienced either incidents where multiple perpetrators were involved or multiple incidents by different perpetrators. When asked whether the perpetrator of sexual harassment was male or female, 71 % of victims indicated that the perpetrator of an incident since the age of 15 was a man, 2 % indicated a female perpetrator and 21 % pointed to both male and female harassers. The results reflect that, although the gender of many perpetrators is unknown because of the nature of harassment – such as through the internet – this form of violence against women is perpetrated mostly by men.

6.5. Consequences of sexual harassment

Women who have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15 were asked to focus on one of these incidents, the one that was most serious to them. They were asked to provide further details about what happened, the impact of the incident on them and any follow-up actions, such as talking about the incident or reporting it to some authority or organisation. The analysis of the most serious incident of sexual harassment takes into account all forms of sexual harassment – that is incidents that involve at least one of the 11 forms of sexual harassment listed in the survey.

6.5.1. The most serious incident of sexual harassment

This section presents data on the most serious incident of sexual harassment that has happened to respondents since the age of 15. The most serious incident refers to the case that has had the biggest impact on the respondent either physically or psychologically.

Of all women who have experienced some form of sexual harassment since the age of 15, 33 % indicate that the most serious incident involved unwelcome

[15] See European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice, *Database: Gender balance in decision-making positions*. The EU average has been calculated based on 27 EU Member States.

[16] See, for example, European Commission (1998), *Sexual harassment in the workplace in the European Union,* Brussels, European Commission Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations and Social Affairs, p. 26, and the Irish Presidency of the European Union in association with FGS Consulting and Professor Aileen McGolgan (2004), *Report on sexual harassment in the workplace in EU Member States*, Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Government of Ireland.

touching, hugging or kissing (see Figure 6.16). In the majority of cases, the women refer to an incident which took place in the year up to the survey.

In many cases (42 %), the perpetrator of the most serious incident is an unknown person (Figure 6.17), followed by a person located in the workplace, such as a colleague, a supervisor or a customer (in 18 % of cases), or somebody else whom the respondent knows (18 %).

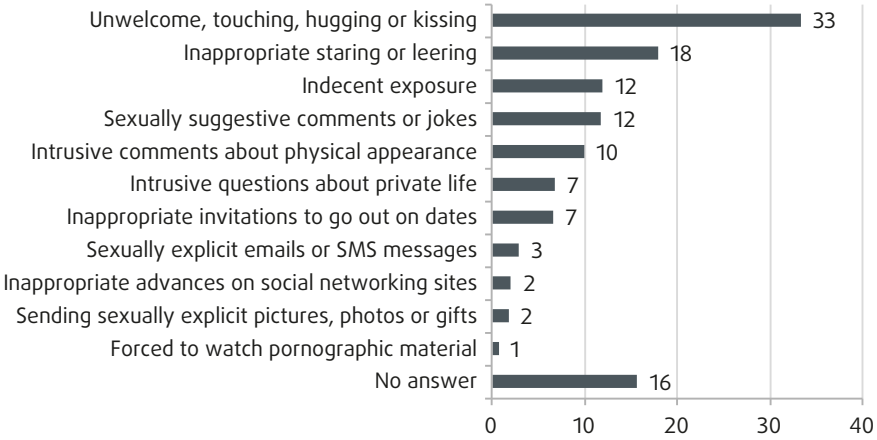
The vast majority of the perpetrators of the most serious incident of sexual harassment across all perpetrator groups are men. For example, perpetrators from the employment context are male in 86 % of cases.

Table 6.4: Perpetrators of sexual harassment since the age of 15, by form of sexual harassment (%) [a,b,c]

Form of sexual harassment	Current partner	Previous partner	Somebody from employment context	Somebody from school context	Relative, family member	Date	Friend	Other known person	Unknown	*n*
Unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing	2	15	23	8	8	9	21	23	33	11,007
Inappropriate staring or leering	1	4	17	5	3	3	10	18	69	10,599
Sexually suggestive comments or jokes	2	8	32	8	4	4	22	24	41	9,531
Sending or showing sexually explicit pictures, photos or gifts	4	11	21	5	5	3	23	16	27	1,838
Inappropriate invitations to go out on dates	(1)	4	28	6	2	7	22	29	31	6,305
Intrusive questions about private life	2	7	33	6	8	6	27	29	24	7,018
Intrusive comments about physical appearance	3	11	23	14	10	4	24	24	39	7,527
Unwanted sexually explicit emails or SMS messages	3	11	10	3	2	4	19	17	46	2,529
Inappropriate advances on social networking websites	(3)	5	3	2	(2)	3	10	13	73	1,961
Indecent exposure	(1)	2	4	1	2	1	3	8	83	6,510
Forced to watch or look at pornographic material against one's will	12	35	13	(2)	(4)	(2)	12	8	16	591
Total	3	14	32	12	10	9	31	35	68	21,180

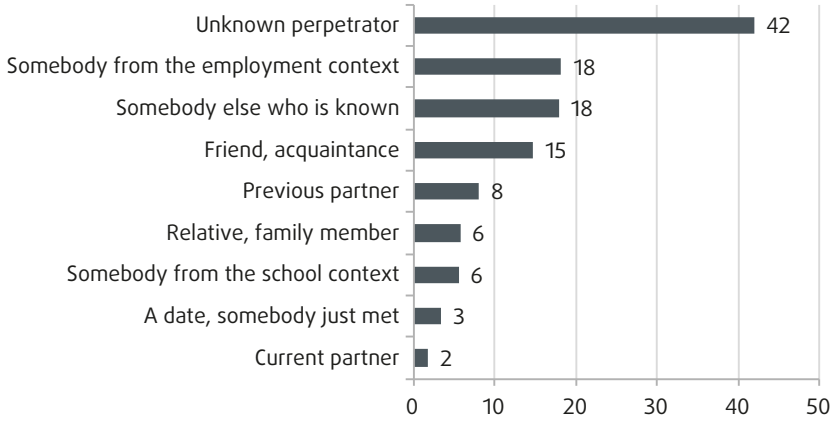
Notes: *a Out of all women who have been sexually harassed at least once in their lifetime (n = 21,180).*
b Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
c Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in bracketsand observations based on fewer than 5 responses are suppressed (denoted with '-').
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Figure 6.16: Form or forms of sexual harassment involved in the most serious incident of sexual harassment since the age of 15 (%) [a,b]



Notes: *a Out of all women who have been sexually harassed at least once in their lifetime (n = 21,180).*
b Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Figure 6.17: Perpetrator of the most serious incident since the age of 15 (%) [a,b]



Notes: *a Out of all women who described the most serious incident of sexual harassment that has happened to them since the age of 15 (n = 17,335).*
b Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

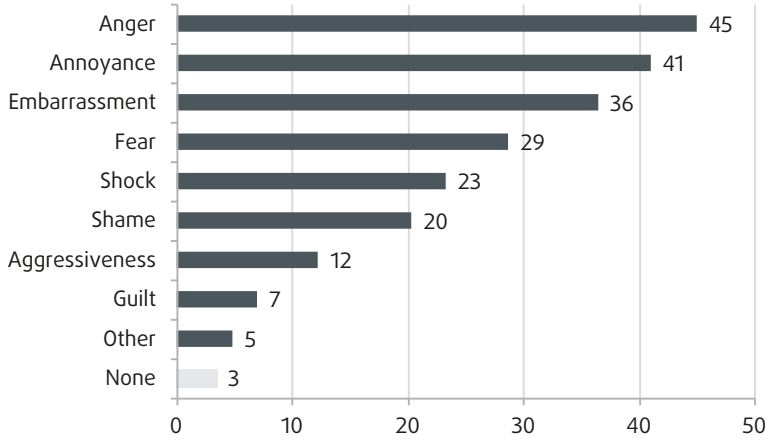
6.5.2. Effects on the victim

Victims were also asked to name the feelings that resulted from the most serious incident. Anger, annoyance and embarrassment were the most common emotional responses, with 45 % of women feeling anger, 41 % annoyance and 36 % embarrassment. Furthermore, close to one in three women (29 %) who has experienced sexual harassment says that she felt fearful as a result of the most serious incident, while one in five (20 %) victims say that the most serious incident made her feel ashamed of what had taken place.

Subsequently, feelings of vulnerability were experienced by 20 % of women, anxiety by 14 % and loss of self-confidence by 13 % (Figure 6.19). In contrast, the majority of women (55 %) did not indicate any of the long-term psychological consequences listed in Figure 6.19 as a result of the most serious incident of sexual harassment.

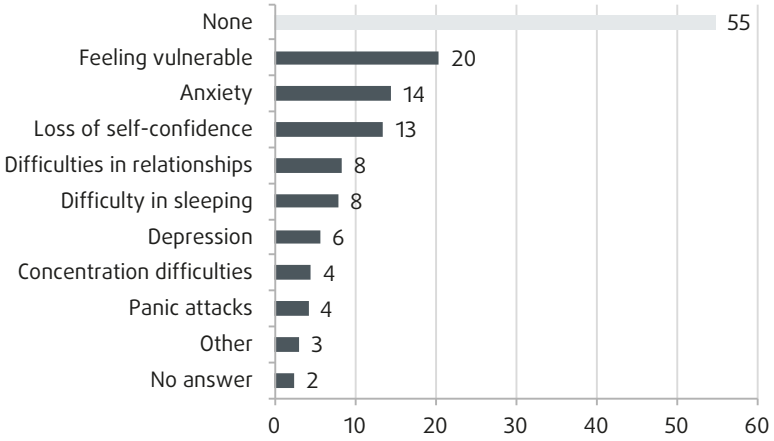
Women were asked if they talked about the most serious incident of sexual harassment with anyone. This could be a friend or a relative, but also an organisation or authority empowered to process complaints, or provide advice to victims on how to have their cases heard. Of all women who indicate at least one serious incident of sexual harassment, 37 % did not talk about what happened to anyone before the survey interview (Figure 6.20 and Figure 6.21).

Figure 6.18: Emotional response following the most serious incident of sexual harassment since the age of 15 (%) [a,b]



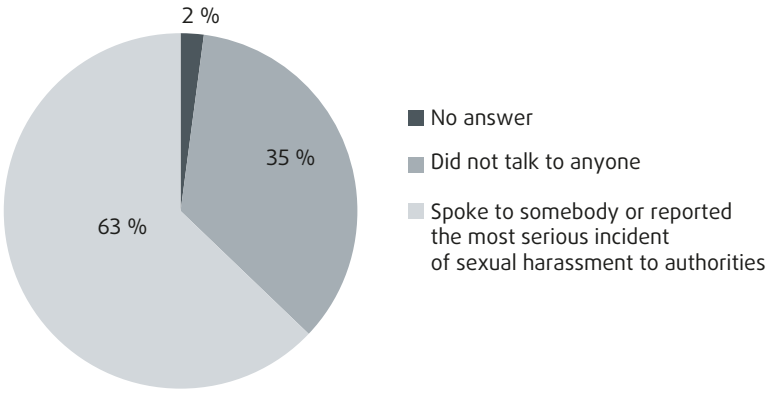
Notes: *a Out of all women who described the most serious incident of sexual harassment that they have experienced (n = 17,335).*
b Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Figure 6.19: Long-term psychological consequences of the most serious incident of sexual harassment since the age of 15 (%) [a,b]



Notes: *a Out of all women who described the most serious incident of sexual harassment that they have experienced (n = 17,335).*
b Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Figure 6.20: Victims of sexual harassment indicating whether or not they talked about or reported the most serious incident since the age of 15 to anyone (%) [a]



Note: *a Out of all women who described the most serious incident of sexual harassment that they have experienced (n = 17,335).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

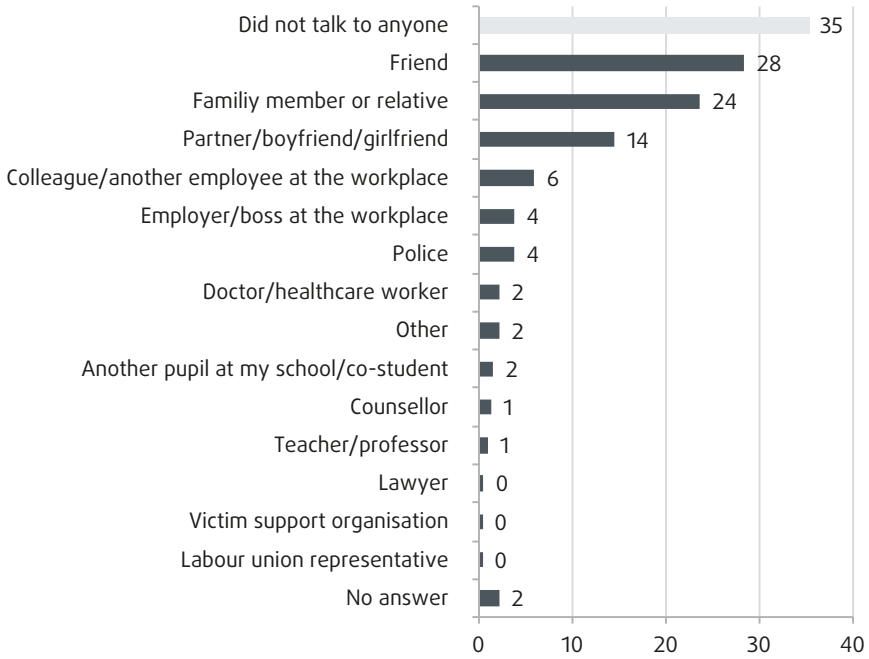
Of those women who spoke to somebody or reported the most serious incident to some authority, 28 % of respondents talked to a friend, 24 % spoke to a family member or a relative, and 14 % talked to their partner (Figure 6.21). Some 4 % of victims contacted the police, and less than 1 % spoke to a lawyer about the most serious incident, approached a victim support organisation or contacted a trade union representative.

Although very few women in general contacted any authorities or services as a result of the most serious incident of sexual harassment, the majority of women who did contact agencies or professionals – such as their employer, a labour union, a doctor, a counsellor or a victim support organisation, depending on the type of harassment and the context – are either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the response they received.

The respondents who say that they have not talked to anyone about the incident were asked a follow-up question to explore their reasons for not doing so. As Figure 6.22 shows, the majority of them dealt with the harassment themselves (52 %).

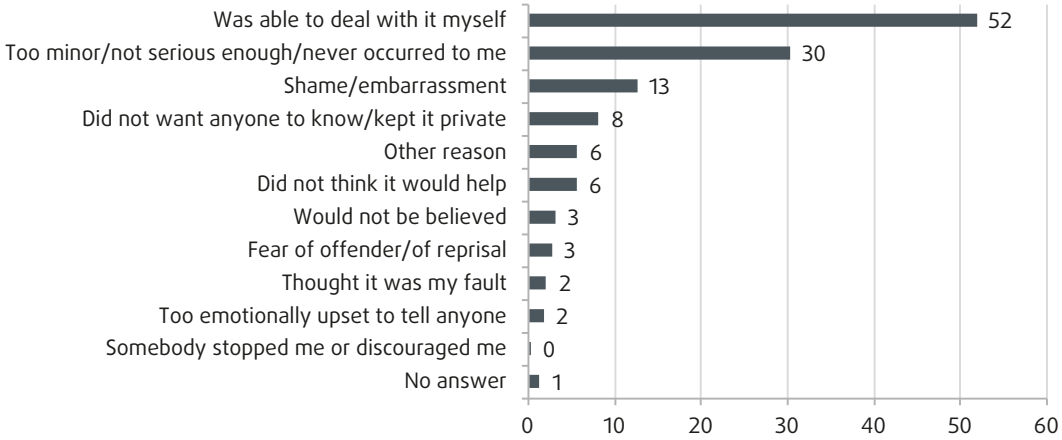
The findings seem to indicate that few incidents of sexual harassment are considered worth bringing to the attention of any authority, although the incidents are serious enough that women discuss them with friends and family. The results also show that women experience many more incidents of sexual harassment in addition to the one that they describe as the most serious. It can be assumed that reporting to the authorities is even less frequent for incidents that respondents perceive as less serious, but nonetheless are unwanted and offensive. There might be an overall tendency by women to downplay the seriousness of incidents, particularly if the cultural context suggests that sexual harassment is 'normal' or something that women should consider as – at best – 'welcome' rather than unwanted attention in the course of everyday gender relations.

Figure 6.21: To whom women talked or reported the most serious incident of sexual harassment since the age of 15 (%) [a,b]



Notes: *a Out of all women who have indicated at least one serious incident (n = 17,335).*
b Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Figure 6.22: Reasons for not talking to anyone about the most serious incident of sexual harassment since the age of 15 (%) [a,b]



Notes: *a Out of all women who indicate that they have talked to anyone about the most serious incident (n = 5,990).*
b Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

FRA opinions

The following FRA opinions relate to the results reported in Chapter 6 on the extent and nature of sexual harassment.

Encouraging awareness and reporting of sexual harassment

Employers' organisations and trade unions should further promote awareness of sexual harassment and encourage women to report incidents.

- Sexual harassment is a pervasive and common experience for many women in the EU: for example, one in five women have experienced unwelcome touching, hugging or kissing since the age of 15, and 6 % of all women have experienced this type of harassment at least six times since they were 15. Of women who have experienced sexual harassment at least once since the age of 15, 32 % indicate a colleague, a boss or a customer as the perpetrator. Many women, however, do not talk about their experiences of sexual harassment with anyone and very few report the most serious incidents to their hierarchy or a responsible authority. Given this, employers' organisations and trade unions – which have a duty to protect workers – should make efforts to promote awareness of sexual harassment and to encourage women to report abuse, particularly as this is an area that is covered by EU law, such as the 2006 Gender Equality Directive (recast).

- The European Social Dialogue has developed Multi-Sectoral Guidelines to Tackle Third-Party Violence and Harassment Related to Work, and the WHO has guidelines for addressing workplace violence in the health sector. They set out practical steps that employers, workers and their representatives/trade unions can take to reduce, prevent and mitigate problems. These guidelines, and others, can be considered relevant reference tools for the development of targeted instruments for different needs.

EU Member States need to review the existing scope of legislative and policy responses to sexual harassment in recognition that it can occur in various settings and can use different mediums, such as the internet.

- EU Member States are encouraged to evaluate and, where necessary, review definitions of sexual harassment in existing legislation (e.g. employment legislation, criminal law, anti-discrimination law), and to review relevant codes of conduct or guidelines that encompass sexual harassment with regard to:
  - the extent to which they explicitly deal with sexual harassment;
  - the type of harassment covered (verbal, non-verbal, physical) and the extent to which all possible forms of behaviour are encompassed; and
  - the identity of the perpetrator and the requirements for liability (e.g. third-party harassment, same-sex harassment, sexual harassment of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons), since they can differ depending on the specific situation in which the conduct takes place.

- The survey results indicate that sexual harassment against women involves a range of different perpetrators and can include the use of 'new'

technologies. The results indicate that one in 10 women (11 %) has experienced inappropriate advances on social websites or has been subjected to sexually explicit emails or SMS messages. These modes of sexual harassment disproportionately affect younger women. Therefore, the scope of current EU and Member State legislation on sexual harassment could be considered too narrow with respect to its focus on workplace and educational settings. The Council of Europe Istanbul Convention provides a broad definition of sexual harassment (Article 40). In turn, as illustrated by the survey findings, recognition should be given to the fact that this type of conduct can also take place in formal and informal educational settings, and in relation to healthcare and leisure facilities. The realities of sexual harassment – as the survey indicates – also extend to the virtual world, which is not dependent on location or context.

Vulnerabilities of professional women alongside other women

Recognition needs to be given to the fact that professional women in management and other top positions are at risk of sexual harassment, as are other women. Awareness raising and practical initiatives by employers and other organisations would be beneficial to address this reality.

- The survey shows that sexual harassment is more commonly experienced by women with a university degree and women in the highest occupational groups. Three in four women in a professional capacity or in top management jobs have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime, and one in four of these women faced sexual harassment in the 12 months before the survey. In comparison, 44 % of women in the skilled manual worker occupational category have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime, and 17 % of these women have experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months. In this regard, a common impression of the nature of sexual harassment in the workplace – which conjures up the image of a male manager as the perpetrator and female subordinates as victims – needs also to acknowledge the potential vulnerabilities of women in top positions. Recalling the European Commission's commitment to improve persistent gender inequalities in leadership positions (e.g. *Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010–2015)*,[17] *A Women's Charter*[18]), this finding is relevant to consider.

- Professional women may be exposed to situations of risk in occupations where they frequently come into contact with men or in work environments whose cultures fail to address sexual harassment. This is also likely to be the case for women in some other areas of work. Professional women may be more alert to what constitutes sexual harassment. In this regard, more could be done to inform employers and employees of their duty to address sexual harassment at all levels.

Evidence to highlight and combat sexual harassment

Administrative data and existing surveys on work and education should be enhanced to include regular and detailed questions about sexual harassment, so that the data from these sources can be used to inform policy and action to address this abuse.

- To provide evidence for the development of targeted policies and action to address sexual harassment, the EU – through Eurostat, working with the EU Member States – could ensure the availability of regular statistical data on sexual harassment in work-related and educational settings, as well as in other settings and through mediums such as the internet. Such information could be implemented through modules inserted in existing regular surveys such as EU-SILC and the Labour Force Survey. To this end, reliable indicators to monitor progress with respect to increased reporting of harassment and responses to these reports, from the standpoint of victims, should be developed and assessed with respect to cross-country comparisons. These data can be looked at alongside research commissioned to evaluate the implementation in practice of EU and other legislation addressing sexual harassment at the level of Member States.

- EU agencies regularly conduct surveys and related research on work and working conditions, which have variously included questions on sexual harassment. Examples are Eurofound's European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) and European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA) research on Workplace Violence and Harassment. Their findings could be more widely used to

[17] European Commission, *Strategy for equality between women and men,* Brussels, Publications Office.

[18] European Commission (2010), *A strengthened commitment to equality between women and men: A women's charter*, Brussels, COM (2010) yyy final.

highlight the problem of, and responses to, sexual harassment in the EU and at Member State level.

- Following the Beijing Platform for Action, the Council of the EU decided in November 2002 and 2004 on relevant EU-wide indicators to be used when monitoring progress in the area of violence against women. Two of the indicators suggested by the Council cover sexual harassment:
  - the number of employees who report incidents of sexual harassment at the workplace, as a percentage of the total workforce; and
  - the number of private and public enterprises which have a preventative policy regarding sexual harassment at the workplace, as a percentage of the total number of employers. As suggested in the Swedish presidency report (Beijing +15), to draw any conclusions in relation to these indicators EU Member States should gather the relevant information about these issues.[19]

[19] Report from the Swedish Presidency of the Council of European Union (2009), *Beijing + 15: The Platform for Action and the European Union*, pp. 69–70.

7

Experience of violence in childhood

MAIN FINDINGS

Prevalence of physical and sexual violence

- On average, 33 % of women have experienced physical or sexual violence by an adult in childhood – that is, before they were 15 years of age. This translates to roughly 61 million women in the EU who were physically or sexually abused in childhood by an adult.
- Some 12 % of women indicate that they experienced some form of sexual violence by an adult before the age of 15, which corresponds to about 21 million women in the EU.
- Of the different forms of violence asked about – physical, sexual and psychological – women are most likely to have experienced physical violence in childhood (27 %).

Details about the perpetrators of violence in childhood

- Perpetrators of *physical* violence in childhood mainly came from within the family. More than half of the women who experienced some form of physical violence before the age of 15 identify their father as a perpetrator (55 %), and almost half of women name the mother as a perpetrator (46 %) (women could indicate one or more perpetrators).
- Almost all (97 %) perpetrators of *sexual* violence in childhood are men. Every second woman who was a victim of sexual violence in childhood states that the perpetrator was a man she did not know before.

Forms of physical violence

- Some 22 % of all the women surveyed say that an adult, aged 18 years or over, "slapped or pulled her hair so that it hurt". The majority of them state that this happened more than once (16 % of the total surveyed).

Relationship between violence in childhood and later experiences

- Close to one third (30 %) of women who experienced sexual victimisation in a former or current partnership indicate experiences of sexual violence in childhood.

Forms of psychological violence

- One in 10 women (10 %) refers to forms of psychological victimisation in childhood within the family; 6 % of women remember having been told they were not loved.

Children's exposure to violence in the family

- Overall, 73 % of women who have been victims of violent incidents by their previous or current partner indicate that children living with them were aware of the violence.

7.1. Introduction

This chapter summarises experiences of violence in childhood as indicated by women in the survey, which asked questions about different experiences before the age of 15, involving physical, sexual and psychological forms of violence. For each, it asked whether a particular kind of violence had occurred once or multiple times, and who the perpetrator was. The survey questions focused only on incidents by adult perpetrators (aged 18 years or over).

These are particularly sensitive questions for a personal interview. Therefore, in an effort to encourage women to identify incidents of violence that may have happened to them when they were children, respondents were also given a questionnaire for self-completion at the end of the interview. This questionnaire included two overall questions on whether or not physical or sexual violence had been experienced during childhood. This gave women the opportunity to report experiences of violence which they were not willing to reveal in a personal interview. The results from these two approaches (interview and self-completion questionnaire) could then be compared.

The next section of this chapter describes the results, overall and by EU Member State, and then analyses different forms of violence and the type of perpetrator involved. More detailed analysis of the three types of childhood victimisation recorded in the survey (physical, sexual and psychological) follow in later sections. Section 7.7 presents results on the relationship between childhood experiences and violence experienced later in life. Section 7.8 refers to survey questions about women's experiences of domestic violence being witnessed by or directed against their own children.

7.2. Prevalence of violence in childhood

The questions asked in the survey about physical, sexual or psychological violence are shown in Box 7.1.

As forms of physical and sexual violence often incorporate a psychological component, experiences of psychological violence are mostly indicated together with physical and sexual violence. Therefore, although 10 % of women say that they experienced some form of psychological violence before they were 15 years old by an adult perpetrator, adding these experiences of psychological violence to the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence (33 % of all women experienced physical and/or sexual violence before the age of 15) results in the only slightly higher overall prevalence of 35 % for any form of violence experienced in childhood (physical, sexual or psychological) (Table 7.1).

There is considerable variation in the prevalence of different forms of violence by country. Belgium (14 %) and the Netherlands (16 %) show relatively low prevalences of physical violence in childhood but have an above average percentage of sexual violence. In the Netherlands, 20 % of women experienced sexual violence by an adult before the age of 15, which women indicate more frequently in the Netherlands than physical violence. In Belgium, 14 % of women say they experienced sexual violence in childhood. In Estonia and Finland, which show the highest overall prevalence of violence in childhood, rates of sexual abuse are slightly below average. However, these numbers on violence experienced in childhood can only be taken as a crude approximation of prevalence. Results may well be affected by under-reporting in the survey, as there may

Box 7.1: What the survey asked – childhood experience of violence

Physical violence
Before the age of 15, how often did an adult who was 18 years or over do the following to you?

- Slap or pull you by the hair so that it hurt.
- Hit you very hard so that it hurt.
- Kick you very hard so that it hurt.
- Beat you very hard with an object such as a stick, cane or belt.
- Stab or cut you with something.

Sexual violence
Before the age of 15, how often did an adult who was 18 years or over do the following to you, when you did not want them to?

- Expose their genitals to you.
- Make you pose naked in front of any person or in photographs, video or an internet webcam.
- Touch your genitals or breasts against your will.
- Force you to have sexual intercourse.

Psychological violence
Before the age of 15, how often did an adult family member do the following to you?

- Say that you were not loved.
- Say that they wished you had never been born.
- Threaten to abandon you or throw you out of the family home.
- Any adult: threaten to hurt you badly or kill you.

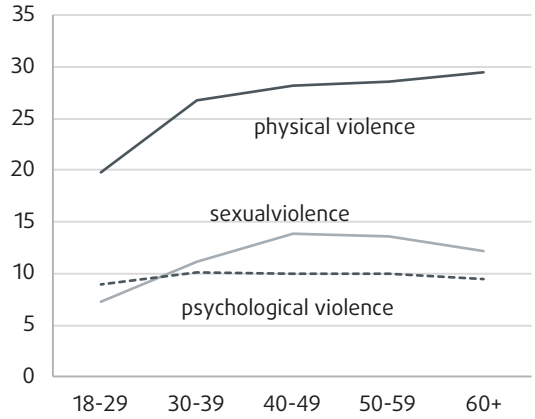
be a lack of recall and the issue is sensitive. Variations between countries may also depend on respondents' general awareness of child abuse (see also Chapter 9), which can be influenced by past and current legislation and cultural practices to address child abuse in a particular society.

Table 7.1: Childhood experience of any violence before the age of 15, by adult perpetrators (%) [a,b]

EU Member State	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Any physical or sexual violence	Psychological violence by a family member	Any physical, sexual or psychological violence
AT	27	5	30	9	31
BE	14	14	25	11	30
BG	28	3	29	5	30
CY	10	4	12	5	15
CZ	30	3	32	8	34
DE	37	13	42	13	44
DK	36	13	42	12	46
EE	43	10	48	9	50
EL	20	5	23	7	25
ES	21	11	28	6	30
FI	46	11	51	10	53
FR	33	20	44	14	47
HR	28	2	30	5	31
HU	20	5	24	8	27
IE	21	9	26	5	27
IT	25	11	31	9	33
LT	15	6	18	8	20
LU	35	15	43	13	44
LV	30	7	33	8	34
MT	16	10	21	4	23
NL	16	20	30	14	35
PL	14	4	17	5	18
PT	24	3	25	5	27
RO	23	(1)	23	4	24
SE	33	15	41	12	44
SI	8	6	12	7	16
SK	33	4	34	8	36
UK	25	18	36	11	40
EU-28	**27**	**12**	**33**	**10**	**35**

Notes: *a Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than 5 responses are suppressed (denoted with '-').*
b Multiple response possible; at least one incident of physical or sexual or psychological violence occurred (N = 42,002).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Figure 7.1: Childhood experience of any violence before the age of 15, by age group and type of violence (%)



Note: *Out of all women who report at least one incident of violence in childhood (N = 42,002).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

All women aged 18 to 74 years were asked about their experiences in childhood before the age of 15. Therefore, depending on a woman's age at the time of the interview, respondents were asked to recall incidents which had taken place between three and 59 years before. On average, the younger the women are, the less often they indicate experiences of violence in childhood. With increasing age, it can be expected that women remember old incidents less well. If younger women report a lower proportion of violent experiences, this result could be interpreted as an overall reduction of violence against children, but would require further research for clarification.

For physical violence, a stronger decline can be observed for the age group younger than 30 years, covering a period of 15 to 25 years of recall, depending on the age of respondents at the time of the interview. This pattern coincides with the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989, after which many countries changed national legislation and launched awareness campaigns to protect children and to ban physical violence against them.

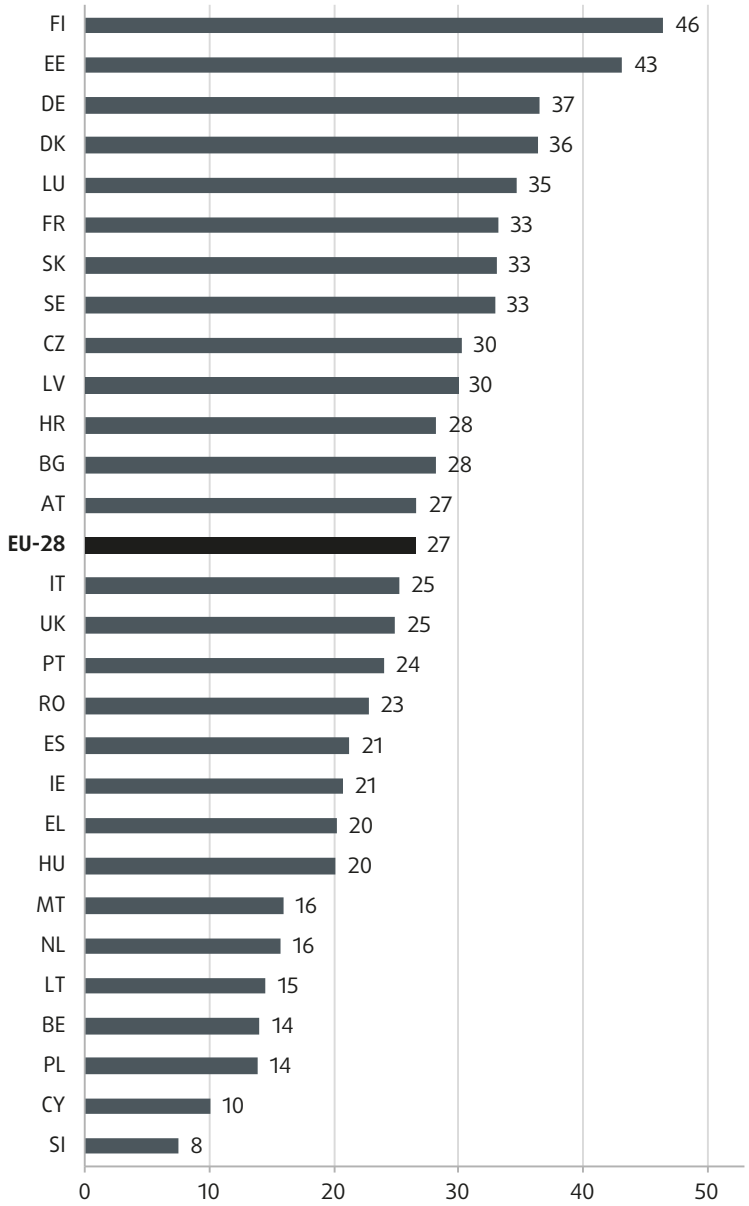
7.2.1. Prevalence of physical violence in childhood

Looking at the results alongside the legal situation in EU Member States with respect to when corporal punishment of children was prohibited, the results indicate a potentially interesting pattern. Taking two countries as an example, in 1983, Finland was one of the first countries in Europe to ban corporal punishment of children, while Slovenia is one of the few countries in the EU which still does not explicitly forbid it. Comparing Member States, Figure 7.2 indicates a high prevalence of physical violence in childhood in Finland, 46 %, and the lowest prevalence in Slovenia, 8 %. There can be multiple explanations for these results, as the question is retrospective and covers, in the case of some respondents, a period of more than 60 years encompassing significant cultural and legal changes. However, reporting on incidences in the past may be enhanced by legal and cultural traditions that recognise child abuse, both in the past and the present.

Awareness about and condemnation of violence against children may be influenced by focused campaigns as well as media coverage on the subject. The FRA survey fieldwork was accompanied by a media analysis of press articles on violence against women and children. In Slovenia, for example, which has the lowest prevalence of childhood experiences of violence, 40 % fewer articles were observed during fieldwork than in Finland in the same period. This observation does not hold true, however, for other countries. Estonia, which had not explicitly banned corporal punishment by 2011 according to the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review for Estonia,[1] has the second highest prevalence rate of childhood experiences of physical violence (43 %) but low media coverage of the issue during fieldwork. At the same time, the existence of campaigns to raise public awareness of legislation against corporal punishment of children may have an impact on the survey results (see Chapter 9 on awareness and attitudes).

[1] Human Rights Council (2011) Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review: Estonia, A/HRC/17/17, United Nations.

Figure 7.2: Childhood experience of any physical violence before the age of 15 (%)



Note: *Out of all women who reported at least one incidence of violence in childhood (N = 42,002).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Sweden: ending corporal punishment

In 1979, Sweden was the first country in the world to explicitly prohibit corporal punishment by caregivers. Thanks to large-scale and nationwide public awareness campaigns, more than 90 % of the population was familiar with the law within one year after its introduction.[2] The effects of the new legislation were evaluated, showing a strong decline in support for corporal punishment in child rearing. Between 1965 and 1981, public support for corporal punishment was halved, from 53 % to 26 %, and it decreased to 11 % by 1994.[3] In the present FRA survey, Swedish women report an above average level of incidents of physical violence in childhood (33 %). It could be assumed that the comparatively high reported prevalence in Sweden reflects, in part, higher levels of awareness that violence in childhood is unacceptable, as well as higher rates of violence against children in the past.

The impact of the introduction of legislation and awareness campaigns is difficult to assess in the FRA survey, but a comparative study of parents, conducted in five EU Member States 2009, confirmed the importance of these campaigns. The study covered Austria, France, Germany, Spain and Sweden to reflect the heterogeneous situation in Europe.[4]

The comparative five-country study showed that Sweden, the first country in the world to introduce legal measures to fully protect children from violence, had the lowest proportion of supportive attitudes towards all forms of corporal punishment. Austria showed higher support rates, similar to attitudes in Germany. Austria prohibited corporal punishment against children in 1989, whereas Germany fully banned it only in 2000. The introduction of the law in Austria was not accompanied by a nationwide information campaign as in Germany.

At the time of the comparative five-country study in 2007, Spain had not fully abolished corporal punishment but had made efforts through campaigns to raise public awareness about the consequences of violence in child rearing. In France, corporal punishment was neither forbidden nor a subject of public discussion at the time of the study. In both countries, attitudes towards corporal punishment were more supportive than in Austria, Germany or Sweden. However, the difference between France and Spain was still significant, confirming that awareness campaigns are similar in importance to the introduction of legislation itself.[5]

However, a number of EU Member States have not fully banned corporal punishment to protect children from physical violence within the family or in institutions.[6] Considering the impact on victimisation in later life, as the data indicate (see Section 7.7), full protection of children against violence is a key factor in breaking the cycle of violence.

7.2.2. Prevalence of sexual violence in childhood

Sexual violence experienced in childhood is even more diverse between countries than physical violence (as illustrated in Figures 7.2 and 7.3). In France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, 20 % of women indicate that they experienced some form of sexual violence at least once before the age of 15. This contrasts with the situation in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Portugal and Romania, where less than 4 % of all women say that they faced sexual violence in childhood.

In many countries, talking about sexual violence – and particularly sexual violence in childhood – is still a taboo and little is known about actual prevalence. These differences may possibly also reflect levels of awareness and be influenced by media coverage on violence against children and women. For example, for some time during the FRA survey fieldwork, the Dutch press followed a case of child abuse, and the British media covered prominently the arrest of a paedophile ring. In France, the media featured some cases of sexual harassment at the time of fieldwork, which may have had some impact on the French results. For the countries with a lower prevalence of childhood victimisation, only a few articles on sexual abuse or harassment of children were highlighted during the period of fieldwork. Coverage of violent crimes against women in general was low in the media in Bulgaria, Portugal and Romania – where attention was focused on reports about the

2 Bussmann, K. D., Erthal, C. and Schroth, A. (2009), *The effect of banning corporal punishment in Europe: A five-nation comparison*, Halle-Wittenberg, Martin-Luther-University.

3 Durrant, J. E. (1999), 'Evaluating the success of Sweden's corporal punishment ban', *Child Abuse & Neglect*, Vol. 23, No. 5, pp. 435–448.

4 Bussmann *et al.* (2009), *The effect of banning corporal punishment in Europe: A five-nation comparison*, Halle-Wittenberg, Martin-Luther-University.

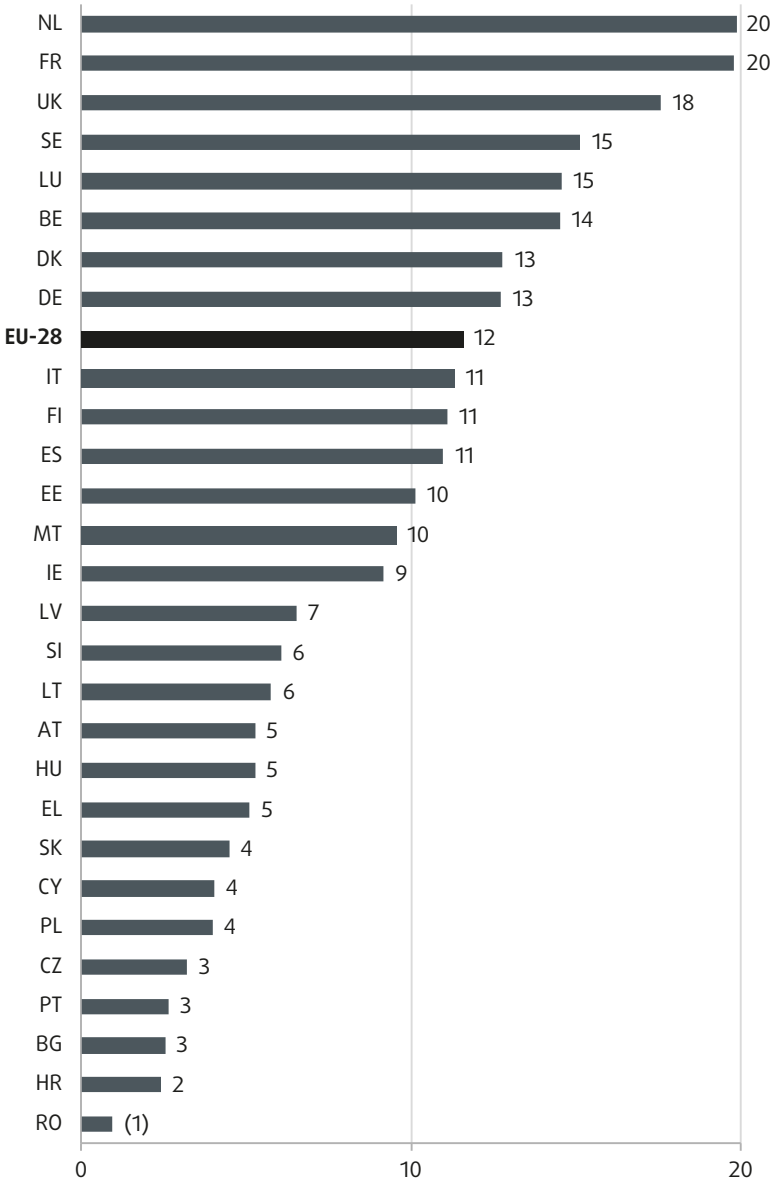
5 *Ibid.*

6 European Union (2010), *Feasibility study to assess the possibilities, opportunities and needs to standardise national legislation on violence against women, violence against children and sexual orientation violence*, Luxembourg, Publications Office; see annex on Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia, United Kingdom.

ongoing economic crisis and political struggles – and also in Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia and Malta and to some extent in the Czech Republic.

Notably, the qualitative pilot study for the present survey encountered issues in some countries, such as Romania and Bulgaria, with questions concerning the 'most serious incident' of childhood sexual violence. Some women in these countries refused to classify their experiences as 'serious'; as a result, further instructions were added to the questionnaire to guide interviewers who faced this situation. This gives some indication that prevalence rates of childhood experience of sexual violence may depend greatly on cultural attitudes, memory and overall awareness in a country. A possible result may be that certain issues are not addressed.

Figure 7.3: Childhood experience of any sexual violence before the age of 15 (%) [a,b]



Notes: *a Out of all women who reported at least one incidence of violence in childhood (N = 42,002).*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than 5 responses are suppressed (denoted with '-').
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

7.3. Characteristics of perpetrators of violence in childhood

Respondents who referred to at least one incident of physical or sexual violence before the age of 15 were given a show card with various possible perpetrators, within or outside the family, and asked to choose all options which apply. Psychological violence was asked about only if it occurred within the family, and the choice of answer categories for such incidents was reduced to eight possible perpetrators. Table 7.2 provides information on (adult) persons who were named as responsible for incidents of physical, sexual and psychological violence which women experienced before the age of 15.[7]

Physical violence

Perpetrators of physical violence in childhood mainly come from within the family. More than half of the women who experienced some form of physical violence before the age of 15 identify their father as a perpetrator (55 %), whereas almost half of the women name the mother as a perpetrator (46 %). Based on their experiences, women could indicate one or more perpetrators, so the percentages for perpetrators identified can total to more than 100 %. In 10 % of the cases, another male relative was indicated as the responsible person, 6 % of informants state that they were exposed to physical violence by a male authority figure such as a male teacher, priest or doctor, and 5 % experienced physical violence by a female authority figure.

Sexual violence

Of women who experienced sexual violence before the age of 15, 97 % indicate that the perpetrators were men. In contrast to physical violence, women experience sexual violence in childhood often from perpetrators outside the core family. Every second woman who was a victim of sexual violence in childhood states that the perpetrator was a man she did not know before. Every fourth woman experienced sexual violence from a male acquaintance. As regards core family members, only 4 % of women state that they were sexually abused by their father or step-father, whereas 17 % name a male relative as a perpetrator of sexual abuse in childhood.

Some empirical studies show that sexual abuse in childhood is one of the risk factors for victimisation later in life. There is also some indication that the relationship to the perpetrator may affect rates of repeat victimisation and that sexual abuse suffered in childhood from a family member particularly increases the risk of sexual victimisation in later life.[8] This research should not, however, be interpreted to suggest that childhood abuse inevitably leads to abuse in later life.

Psychological violence

Male and female perpetrators of psychological violence are named with almost equal frequency. Most frequently the mother (48 %) is named as the perpetrator, followed by the father, named by 41 % of women. Another 11 % indicate that they experienced severe psychological violence by a male relative and 7 % by a step- or foster father.

7.4. Forms of physical violence in childhood

The survey questions cover five acts of physical violence in childhood. According to the results, 22 % of all the women surveyed say that an adult, somebody who was 18 years or over, slapped them or pulled their hair, so that it hurt them, when they were under 15 years old. Some 14 % of women say that they were hit hard and 9 % say that they were beaten very hard before the age of 15. Sixteen per cent of women state that they were slapped or pulled by the hair more than once and 10 % indicate being hit hard more than once.

The respondent's father is most frequently identified as the perpetrator of all forms of physical violence (Table 7.4). Fifty-two per cent of women who were hit hard so that it hurt and 49 % of women who were slapped or pulled by their hair say that their father did this to them. However, mothers are almost as likely as fathers to be identified as perpetrators when it comes to being slapped or pulled by the hair; 46 % of women who were slapped or pulled by the hair say that their mother did this to them. Regarding other forms of physical violence listed in the survey, women who were victimised in childhood are somewhat less likely to say that the perpetrator was their mother.

With regard to other perpetrators, 21 % of women who were kicked so hard that it hurt indicate that a male relative was responsible for the act, and 17 % say that the perpetrator was a friend, an acquaintance or another known or unknown person.

[7] Equally many answer categories were available to indicate female and male perpetrators. Some of these categories have been combined in Table 7.2 (for example, category "Other female" includes friend, acquaintance or unknown female).

[8] Classen C. C., Palesh, O. G. and Aggarwal, R. (2005), 'Sexual revictimization: A review of the empirical literature', *Trauma violence and abuse*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 103–129.

Table 7.2: Perpetrator of violence before the age of 15 (%) [a,b,c,d]

	Physical violence	Sexual violence	Psychological violence
Father	55	4	41
Step- or fosterfather	4	4	7
Male relative	10	17	11
Male teacher, doctor, priest	6	3	n/a
Male friend	2	4	n/a
Male aquaintance, neighbour	2	25	n/a
Men unknown before	1	51	n/a
Mother	46	(0)	48
Step- or fostermother	1	–	3
Female relative	6	(1)	9
Female teacher, doctor, priest	5	(0)	n/a
Other female	4	2	n/a
n	10,821	3,759	3,470

Notes: *a Out of all women who reported at least one incident of violence in the childhood (n = 13,803).*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
c n/a = not applicable. The questions concerning psychological violence before the age of 15 were asked only with reference to family members and relatives as perpetrators.
d Respondents were able to give more than one answer, so categories may total to more than 100 %.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Table 7.3: Experiences of physical violence before the age of 15 (%) [a,b]

	Total	Once	More than once
Slapped or pulled by the hair	22	5	16
Hit hard so that it hurt	14	4	10
Kicked very hard so that it hurt	3	1	2
Beaten very hard with stick, cane or belt	9	2	6
Stabbed or cut	0	0	0
Any physical violence before the age of 15.	27	–	–

Note: *a Out of all women (N = 42,002).*
b Taken individually, the sum of categories 'Once' and 'More than once' can differ from the total indicated in the table by +/- one percentage point. This difference is due to rounding.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Table 7.4: Perpetrators of physical violence in childhood before the age of 15 (%) [a,b,c]

	Father	Step- or fosterfather	Male relative	Male teacher, doctor, priest	Mother	Step- or fostermother	Female relative	Female teacher, doctor, priest	Other [b]
Slapped or pulled by the hair	49	3	10	4	46	1	7	5	8
Hit hard so that it hurt	52	4	9	4	38	1	5	4	6
Kicked very hard so that it hurt	36	6	21	(2)	16	3	8	(1)	17
Beaten very hard with stick, cane or belt	49	4	5	8	36	1	4	9	(2)
Stabbed or cut	33	(8)	(16)	–	(14)	–	(9)	–	(14)

Notes: *a Out of all women who report at least one incident of physical violence in childhood (n = 10,821).*
b Category 'Other' includes female and male friends, acquaintances and unknown persons.
c Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

7.5. Forms of sexual violence in childhood

According to the FRA survey, the experience of sexual abuse in childhood is often distinct from other forms of violence. Whereas perpetrators of physical and psychological violence mainly come from the family or are authority figures, half of the women who experienced sexual violence before the age of 15 indicate that the perpetrator was a man they did not know before. This finding can be looked at alongside the results that show that 8 % of women say that somebody exposed their genitals to them against their will and 5 % had their breasts or genitals touched against their will before the age of 15. Some 3 % of women say that they were forced to touch a perpetrator's genitals and 1 % said that they were forced to have sexual intercourse before the age of 15 (Table 7.5).

Table 7.5: Experiences of sexual violence before the age of 15 (%) [a,b]

... a person who was 18 years or older has done the following to you when you did not want it ...	Total	Once	More than once
Exposed their genitals	8	6	3
Forced to pose naked in front of a person or in photographs or video	1	0	0
Touched genitals or breasts	5	3	2
Forced to touch somebody's genitals or breasts	3	1	1
Forced into sexual intercourse	1	1	1
Any sexual violence before the age of 15	12		

Note: *a Out of all women (N = 42,002).*
b Taken individually, the sum of categories 'Once' and 'More than once' can differ from the total indicated in the table by +/- one percentage point. This difference is due to rounding.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Table 7.6: Experiences of psychological violence before the age of 15 (%) [a,b,c]

A family member who was 18 years or older has done the following to you:	Total	Once	More than once
Said that you were not loved	6	2	4
Said that they wished you had never been born	5	2	3
Threatened to abandon you or throw you out	5	2	4
Threatened to hurt you badly or kill you [b]	2	1	1
Any psychological violence before the age of 15	10		

Notes: *a Out of all women (N = 42,002).*
b Threats to hurt badly or kill were asked about with respect to all possible (adult) perpetrators, whereas other forms of psychological violence were asked about with respect to family members as perpetrators.
c Taken individually, the sum of categories 'Once' and 'More than once' can differ from the total indicated in the table by +/- one percentage point. This difference is due to rounding.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

7.6. Forms of psychological violence in childhood

All forms of physical and sexual violence can be said to involve a psychological component of violence as well. The WHO operational definition[9] of violence identifies emotional abuse as a distinct dimension of violence, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states that children have to be protected from being hurt and mistreated, physically or mentally. The Council of Europe Istanbul Convention defines violence against women as "acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women", whereas " 'women' includes girls under the age of 18".[10] In line with the Istanbul Convention, the survey also asked about women's experiences of psychological violence in childhood. The survey questions were limited to instances of serious forms of psychological violence, with core questions addressing incidents of abuse within the family. An exception to this is threats to one's life and physical safety, which the survey covered with respect to all possible perpetrators. Overall, 2 % of women say that, before they were 15 years old, an adult threatened to hurt them badly or kill them.

In the survey, women rarely indicate that they experienced isolated incidents of psychological violence in childhood. Most of the respondents also experienced some form of physical or sexual violence, in addition to psychological violence.

In total, 10 % of women experienced psychological violence in childhood. This includes:

- 6 % of women having been told by an adult family member they were not loved;
- 5 % having been told by an adult family member that they wished the survey respondent had not been born;
- 5 % having been threatened by an adult family member with abandonment or with being thrown out of the family home;
- 2 % having been threatened by an adult, including family members as well as other adult persons, with being hurt badly or killed.

Most incidents of psychological violence occur more than once, showing repeat victimisation for this form of violence (Table 7.6).

Whereas perpetrators of physical and sexual violence are predominantly male, men and women are identified to an equal extent as using psychological violence against children. The questions in the survey on psychological violence were asked as a way of measuring severe forms of emotional abuse. Table 7.7 shows such abuse by type of perpetrator. The patterns by type of perpetrator do not differ significantly between the questions. About half of the women who were told that they were not loved indicate that either their mother (45 %) or their father (44 %) told them so. In cases where a family member or a relative told women that they wished the respondent had never been born, 56 % indicate hearing this from their mother and 35 % from their father. Threats to abandon the respondent or throw her out were equally likely to come from the mother or the father.

9 WHO (2005), *Women's health and domestic violence against women*, Geneva, World Health Organization.
10 Council of Europe (2011), *Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*, CETS No. 210, p. 7.

Table 7.7: Perpetrator of psychological violence by a family member or a relative before the age of 15 (%) [a]

	Father	Mother	Other male relative	Other female relative	Other adult outside the family [b]
Said that you were not loved [b]	44	45	13	11	n/a
Said they wished you were not born [b]	35	56	9	6	n/a
Threaten to abandon you or throw you out [b]	54	51	3	3	n/a
Threaten to hurt or kill you badly [c]	50	22	10	4	16

Notes: *a Out of all women who reported at least one type of psychological violence in childhood (n = 4,359).*
b Asked only if it occurred within the family. Multiple responses possible.
c Asked for all perpetrators. 'Other' includes friends, acquaintances, neighbours, teachers, doctors, priests and unknown persons, female or male. Multiple responses possible.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Physical threats to hurt or kill somebody were also mostly experienced within the family, although in this question respondents could also name adult perpetrators outside the family. Only 16 % of the women indicate that the person who threatened them with severe physical harm or killing was an adult outside the family. Mostly, women name the father (50 %), but almost every fourth woman names the mother as having threatened her with physical harm (22 %).

7.7. Relationship between violence in childhood and later experiences

The questions on experiences of violence in childhood were asked retrospectively, so contextual factors at the time of the incident and during a woman's life are unknown. Therefore, pathways between childhood violence and a woman's current situation cannot be deduced. However, when investigating the current living circumstances of women, some relationship between their current health status and the prevalence of experiences of violence in childhood can be observed.

Women who say in the survey that they are experiencing bad health, are limited in their daily activities because of health problems, or consider themselves disabled in some way also indicated a higher prevalence of physical or sexual violence in childhood (Figure 7.4).

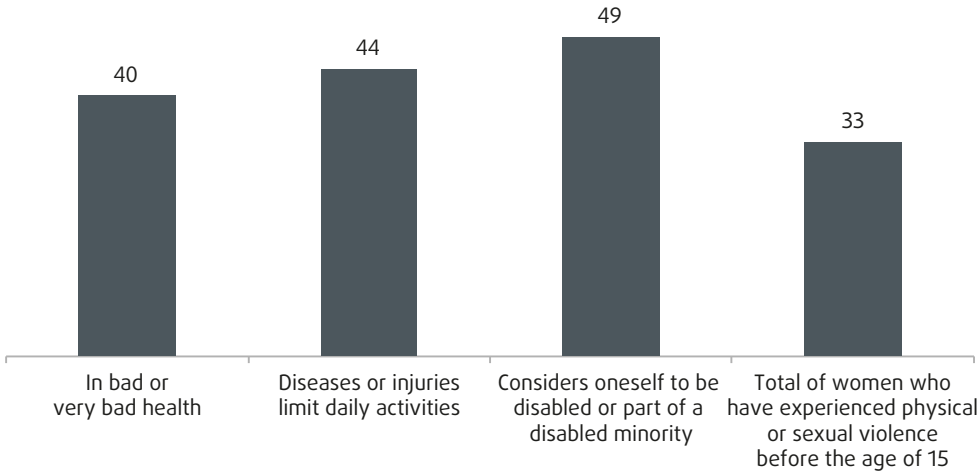
The survey shows that women who faced physical or sexual violence in childhood are more likely to have been victimised later in adulthood. This pattern can be observed throughout all countries and is also true for psychological forms of violence such as threats and emotional abuse. Figure 7.5 shows that, in most countries, a high prevalence of physical or sexual violence in childhood is related to a higher level of physical violence against women in adulthood. There are some exceptions. Austria, for example, is one of the countries with the lowest prevalence rates of physical and/or sexual violence after the age of 15, whereas physical and sexual violence women experienced in childhood in Austria is just below the EU-28 average.

The relationship between violence in childhood and violence experienced later in life can also be observed at the individual level: women who have experienced any form of physical and/or sexual violence in childhood are more likely to face violence, by a partner or other persons, in later life. Any direct relationship between violence in childhood and in adulthood needs to be interpreted with caution, however, when contextual factors are not controlled for. Women who are able to recall more recent experiences of violence in adulthood may also tend to have greater awareness of, and perhaps a greater ability to reflect upon, incidents in the past.

Empirical research shows that experiences of violence in childhood can cause long-lasting physical and emotional damage to children. As Figure 7.6 shows, one woman in three who experienced any physical violence by a current or previous partner since the age of 15 also indicates multiple incidents of physical violence in childhood (35 %). Some research has also shown that boys who were exposed to domestic violence in their childhood homes are more likely to engage in domestic violence as adults, and girls who have been exposed to domestic violence as children are more likely to be victims of domestic violence in their adult lives.[11]

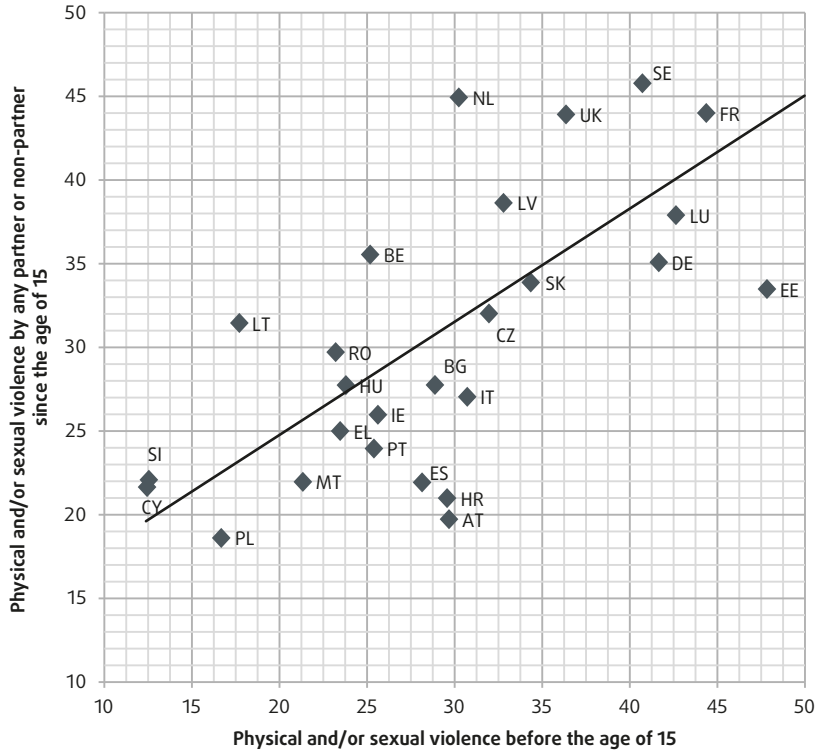
[11] Brown, B. and Bzostek, S. (2003), *Violence in the lives of children*, CrossCurrents, No. 1.

Figure 7.4: Current health status and experiences of any physical or sexual violence before the age of 15 (%)



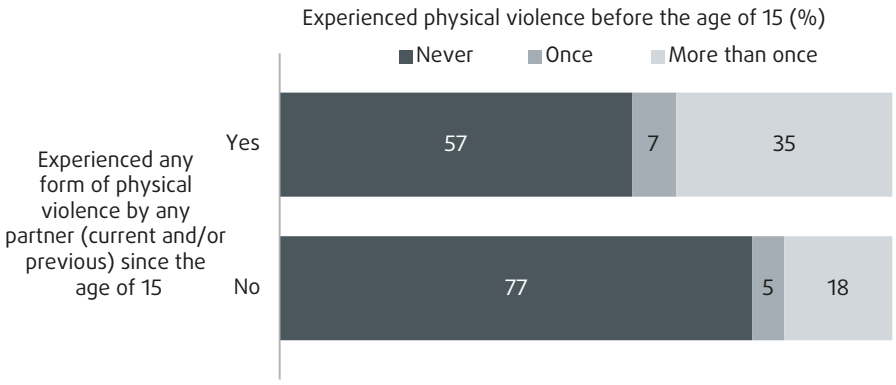
Note: *Out of all women who experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence in childhood (n = 12,938).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Figure 7.5: Physical and/or sexual violence before the age of 15 and since the age of 15 (%)



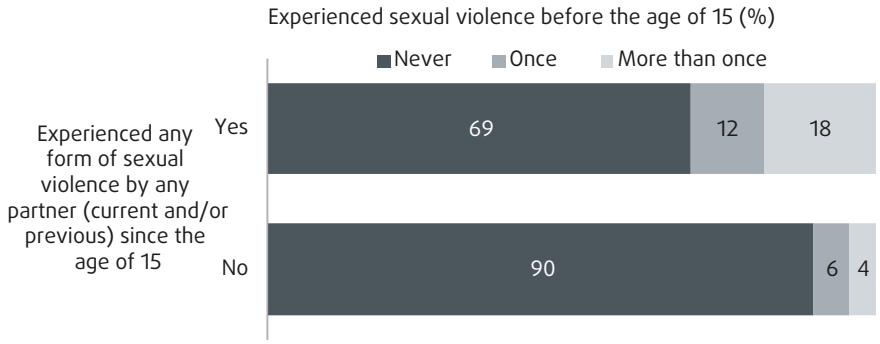
Note: $R^2 = 0.502$.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Figure 7.6: Relationship between physical violence before the age of 15 and experiences of physical violence by a partner later in life (%)



Note: *Out of all women (N = 42,002).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Figure 7.7: Relationship between sexual violence before the age of 15 and experiences of sexual violence by a partner later in life (%)



Note: *Out of all women (N = 42,002).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Childhood experience of sexual abuse has been established as a possible risk factor for sexual victimisation in adulthood.[12] Ten per cent of women who have *not* been exposed to sexual violence as an adult say they experienced some form of sexual violence in childhood either once or more than once, whereas 30 % of women who have experienced sexual victimisation in a former or current partnership indicate experiences of sexual violence in childhood (see Figure 7.7).

7.8. Adult women's children's exposure to violence in the family

When asking women about any experiences of violence by current or previous partners, the survey also asked if children in the women's care had been exposed to violence or threats. These questions were asked only of women who have children or who look after children other than their own. Women were asked if their current or previous partner had ever:

- threatened to take the children away from her;
- threatened to hurt the children;
- hurt the children.

In addition to these three items, women who have experienced any form of physical or sexual violence in the relationship were asked if – as far as they could tell – children living in the same home had ever become aware of the violent incidents between the respondent and her partner.

Of women who have experienced violence by a current or a previous partner, 73 % indicate that their children have become aware of the violence between partners (Table 7.8). At the same time, 7 % of women who have a (current or previous) partner indicate that the partner has at some point threatened to take the children away from her, 3 % say that the partner has threatened to hurt the children and 3 % say that the partner has hurt the children.

[12] Pinheiro, P. S. (2006), *World report on violence against children*, Geneva, The United Nations Secretary-General's Study on violence against children.

Table 7.8: Women in current or previous partnership experiencing violence against and in front of their children (%)

	Yes	No
Current or previous partner threatened to take the children away [a]	7	93
Current or previous partner threatened to hurt the children [a]	3	97
Current or previous partner hurt the children [a]	3	97
Child/ren being aware of violent incidents in a current or previous partnership [b]	73	27

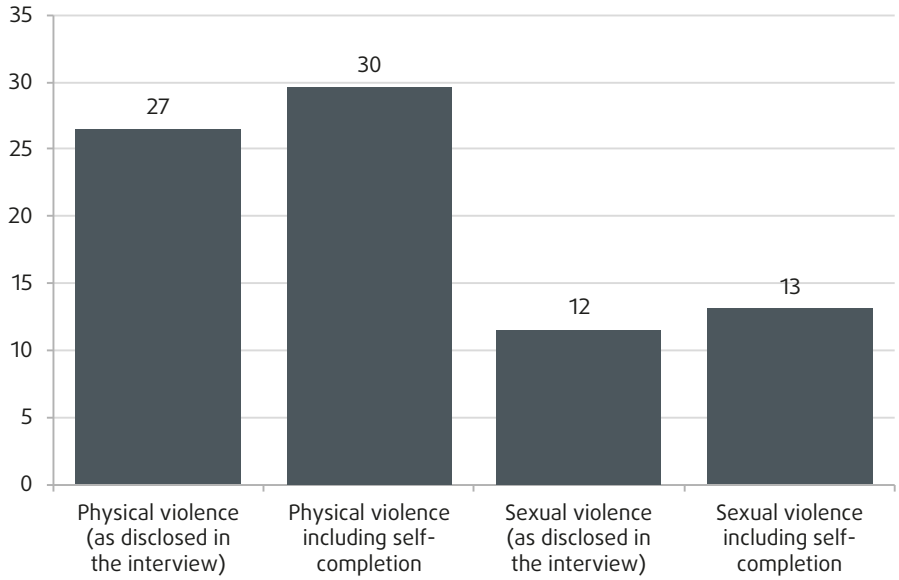
Notes: *a Out of women with a current or previous partner and children (n = 29,086).*
b Out of women with a current or previous partner and children, who report any incidence of domestic violence (n = 4,258).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Asking about a partner's violence directed against a child is a particularly sensitive survey question, and under-reporting or even refusals could be expected. However, less than 1 % of respondents who were asked this question chose not to answer. This is in line with many other questions in the survey.

7.9. Exploring the effect of the interview mode when asking sensitive questions

Asking respondents in a survey about personal experiences of violence can cause stress and discomfort. To take account of the fact that, in some cases, respondents may have felt uneasy about disclosing their experiences to the interviewer, a short self-completion questionnaire was attached at the end of the interview. Respondents were asked to complete the paper questionnaire by themselves, without the help of the interviewer, and they were requested to seal their answers in an envelope which would be processed separately from the main part of the survey questions. On average, when combining the two sources of information results in a prevalence of childhood victimisation, it is 3 percentage points higher for physical violence and 1.5 for sexual violence. This shows that similar results are produced under different modes, thus supporting the survey results. The ranking of countries was not affected. Because the two questionnaires have different definitions of violence (the self-completion questionnaire was kept very brief to minimise response burden), the results of the self-completion questionnaire were not included in the further analysis. However, this result supports the accuracy of the responses collected through face-to-face interviews.

Figure 7.8: Prevalence of physical and sexual violence experienced before the age of 15 based on the survey interview and the self-completion questionnaire (%)



Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

FRA opinions

The following FRA opinions relate to the results reported in Chapter 7 on the extent and nature of women's experiences of violence in childhood.

The scale of childhood abuse and under-reporting

The EU needs to place a renewed focus on the widespread and under-reported abuse that women experienced when they were children. Evidence of this can be used to address both current and past abuse of children.

- The survey indicates that 27 % of women in the EU experienced some form of physical violence in childhood at the hands of an adult. It typically involved being slapped or having their hair pulled so that it hurt (22 %), being hit hard so that it hurt (14 %) and being beaten very hard with a stick, cane or belt (9 %). In turn, just over one in 10 women (12 %) indicate that they have experienced some form of sexual violence by an adult before the age of 15. This typically involved an adult exposing their genitals (8 %) or the child having her genitals or breasts touched by an adult (5 %); 1 % of women indicate that they were made to have sexual intercourse with an adult when they were a child. The scale of this abuse is not matched by the number of incidents that are reported to the authorities; this means that perpetrators are not brought to justice. The EU needs to focus anew on the widespread abuse that women experience as girls, so that it can both address the present-day abuse of girls and assist those victims who have experienced abuse in the past and need support from specialist services, which can encourage reporting. In turn, these initiatives can benefit boys who are abused.

The characteristics of abuse

Detailed data on abuse in childhood, including surveys that can capture unreported abuse, are needed to identify and corroborate evidence about the characteristics of abuse, to target interventions on preventing abuse, protecting victims and punishing offenders.

- In the survey, 97 % of women who experienced sexual violence before the age of 15 indicate that the perpetrator was male. Half of the victims characterise the perpetrators as strangers, whereas in the remaining cases the perpetrators were men who were known to their victims in some way, including 4 % of women who were abused by a father or step-father, and 17 % who were abused by another male relative. In comparison, 55 % of women who experienced physical abuse in childhood name their father as a perpetrator and 45 % name their mother. They also experienced physical abuse at the hands of others, including other male relatives and authority figures such as teachers. These results demand that evidence about who perpetrators are and the nature of their abuse be closely assessed to identify potential gaps and oversight in responsible authorities' responses to child abuse. For example, the fact that half of sexual abuse is committed by strangers demands that 'stranger danger' be looked at again to emphasise that it can form an equal share of childhood abuse alongside abuse by men known to their victims.

Lifting legal time limits on reporting

In line with the Istanbul Convention, EU Member States should be encouraged to review their legislation to reassess the justification of time limits, where these exist, on reporting abuse that occurred in childhood.

- The right of victims of violence to effective investigation and prosecution leading to the punishment of offenders can be seriously hampered by time limits restricting prosecution. This is the case in a number of EU Member States. If a child is victimised, then prosecution will often be time-barred by the time the victim comes of age, unless the legislation of a country extends the time period for prosecution in such cases. This means that the victim is prevented from deciding as an adult person to seek access to justice as a means of coming to terms with her victimisation. There are currently different ways to address this problem at the level of Member States, ranging from extending the length of the time period through to delaying the beginning of the time period until the victim reaches a certain age (usually 18, although in some Member States it can be longer). Notably, in Ireland and the United Kingdom (most recently within the jurisdictions of Scotland and Northern Ireland) the law has been changed so that there are no time limits in place should a woman want to bring a case against an offender or offenders. Therefore, in order to ensure that victims have access to justice and that perpetrators do not go unpunished, it is suggested that Member States review their legislation to reassess the justification of time limits where these exist.

Rethinking responses to 'domestic' violence against children

Consideration could be given to responses to child abuse that require the offender, rather than the child victim, to be rehoused, provided that this is in line with protection safeguards and is in the best interests of the child.

- Responses to domestic violence against adult women have gradually shifted towards expecting that, if anyone, the offender and not the victim should be required to leave the premises where the victim lives. However, the response to violence against girls is often that the victim is removed from her family and placed with another family or in some form of shelter or child protection accommodation. Although this may be an appropriate response, it can be suggested that EU Member States review their policies and measures that aim to afford children, as victims of violence, protection in line with the policy principles that have emerged in the context of protection of women against domestic violence. In other words, if another parent or guardian living in the same house played no part in the abuse, then the onus could be on the offender to move (provided that adequate protection from further abuse is afforded to the child). These responses should be undertaken within the framework on the best interests of the child, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Preventing cycles of abuse

Programmes should target children and families at risk of violence in order to stop the cycle of abuse – with respect to both the present and the future.

- Thirty per cent of women who indicate they have experienced sexual victimisation by a former or current partner also indicate that they experienced sexual violence in childhood. This exceeds the average rate of childhood sexual violence, which stands at 12 %. The survey also indicates that children are frequently indirect victims of domestic violence. For example, 73 % of mothers who have been victims of physical and/or sexual violence by a partner indicate that at least one of the children has become aware of violence taking place. There is some indication that violence experienced and witnessed in childhood can increase vulnerability to violence in adulthood, for example through cycles of violence that can 'normalise' abusive behaviour. To prevent these cycles of abuse, early interventions that focus on fostering healthy relationships are necessary. They should create awareness that violence is unacceptable under any circumstances.

- The WHO has provided some evidence that programmes aimed at parents, including home visits and education, can reduce or prevent child abuse and maltreatment, and can also help to address child conduct problems and later violent behaviour.[13]

Using evidence to reinforce law and policy in practice

Evidence, based on children's own experiences of abuse, is essential to formulate policies and courses of action to prevent and protect children from abuse.

- The evidence presented in the survey serves to underline the need to enhance the application of legislation and relevant policies which exist to address violence against children, and to respond to the needs of children as victims. For example, the EU Victims' Directive states in paragraph 19 that "Child victims should be considered and treated as the full bearers of rights set out in this Directive and should be entitled to exercise those rights in a manner that takes into account their capacity to form their own views"; and the EU Guidelines on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child include general actions to protect children's rights with regard to protection against violence.[14]

[13] WHO (2012), *Intimate partner violence*, Understanding and addressing violence against women information sheet, p. 8.

[14] EU Guidelines for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child 2007, pp. 12–13, paras. (i) and (f).

8

Fear of victimisation and its impact

MAIN FINDINGS

- Women who have heightened levels of fear of assault tend also to have experienced physical or sexual violence in their lives.
- One in five women (21 %) has worried (at least) sometimes in the 12 months before the survey interview about the possibility of being physically or sexually assaulted.
- Women are most worried about possible assault by strangers – 15 % of women have worried about this at least sometimes in the 12 months before the interview.
- Of all women surveyed, 7 % have worried about the possibility of physical or sexual assault by a previous partner in the past 12 months.
- Slightly more than half of all women in the EU (53 %) avoid certain situations or places, at least sometimes, for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted:
  - four out of 10 women (40 %) avoid public places where there are no other people around, and a similar percentage (37 %) deliberately avoid taking certain streets or going to certain areas for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted;
  - one in seven women (14 %) avoids leaving home alone for fear of physical or sexual assault;
  - three out of 10 women (31 %) avoid opening their front door when home alone;
  - 4 % of women avoid going home because of what might happen there, fearing physical and sexual assault;
  - 3 % of women avoid being alone with a colleague or boss for fear of physical or sexual assault.
- Across the 28 EU Member States, 8 % of women say that in the 12 months before the interview they have, at least sometimes, carried something for self-defence.
- Younger women worry more than older women about physical or sexual assault in public places, and are more worried than older women about assault by strangers.

8.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on women's experiences of fear of crime and the impact this has on their everyday lives.

Women and men experience crime victimisation differently – differences that are also reflected in how they experience fear of crime. This situation has been recorded since the earliest days of crime victimisation surveys, when questions about fear of crime were inserted and significant differences were noted between how men and women respond. Women, in general, indicate higher levels of fear than men. Some early studies referred to the seeming irrationality of women's fear – because, for example, they were less vulnerable to violence in public places than young men[1] – but this interpretation has subsequently been

[1] Conversely, the rationality of young men showing low levels of fear when they are particularly vulnerable to physical assault in the public domain has also been explored since the 1990s.

Box 8.1: What the survey asked – fear of crime

- Respondents were asked about the extent to which they worry about being physically or sexually assaulted by different perpetrators, including partners and non-partners.
- They were asked about whether they avoid certain situations or places – both public (such as certain streets) and private (such as the home) – because of worry about physical or sexual assault.
- They were also asked about the effects that worry about personal safety has on them in terms of carrying something for self-defence.

Questions in relation to the above were asked with respect to the last 12 months before the survey interview.

critiqued by a number of experts in the field of gender-based violence. It fails to recognise that women's heightened fear reflects the following:[2]

- women's particular vulnerability to sexual violence, which is reflected in precautionary risk avoidance behaviour;
- the cumulative impact of being exposed to threats and/or violence, particularly of a sexual nature, that many women experience over a lifetime;
- social recognition of and responses to women's and girls' risk of sexual violence, which is reflected in social norms and advice to women and girls about where they can and cannot go, and what they can and cannot do, in order to 'stay safe';
- women's high levels of exposure to threats and violence by known perpetrators (for example, intimate partner violence), which is inadequately reflected in official criminal justice statistics but has an impact on women's sense of safety.

Bearing this in mind, women's fear of crime cannot be interpreted simply as the 'flight' response to a 'fight or flight' situation in which one is exposed to violence; rather, women's fear of crime needs to be understood in terms of the complex interaction of the above, and as a gendered response to crime.

As the results from FRA's survey on violence against women demonstrate:

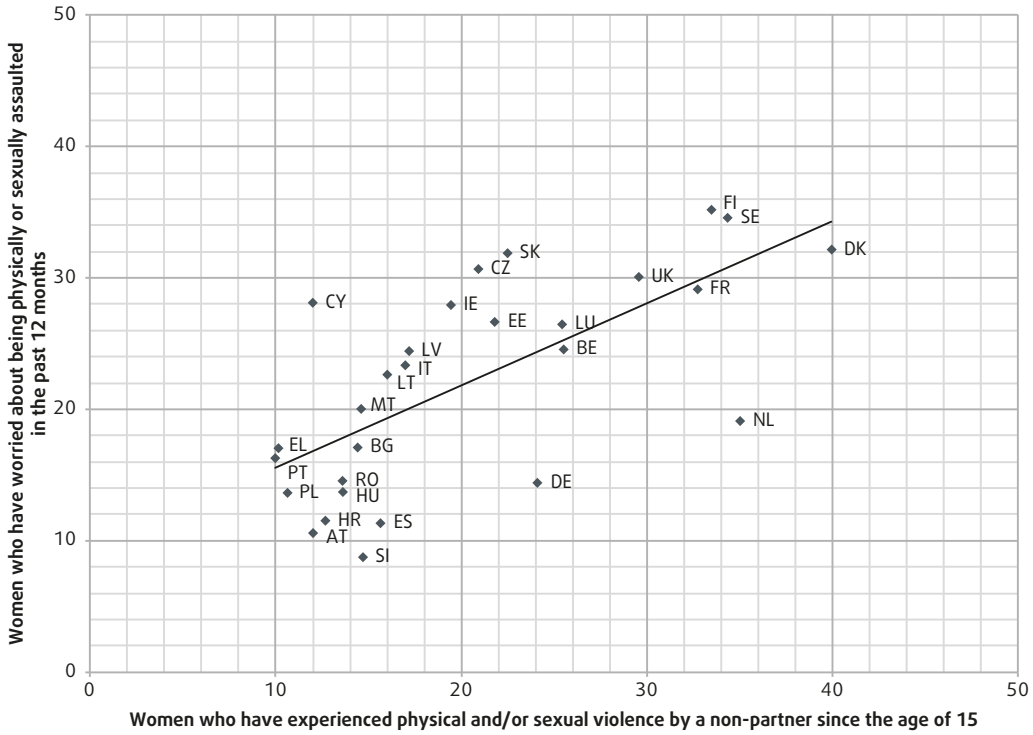
> Women's fear of crime is a rational response to a real threat with respect to the extent and varied nature of violence that women are exposed to at different points in their lives.

As an illustration, Figure 8.1 shows a general positive correlation between women's levels of worry about physical and sexual assault in the last 12 months, and their overall experience of physical or sexual violence by a non-partner since the age of 15. In other words, in countries where women have heightened levels of fear of assault, they also tend to have experienced more physical or sexual violence in their lives.

Women may not describe their everyday actions as a response to their 'fear' of victimisation, but may display risk avoidance behaviour in response to the unspoken threat of violence, and in particular sexual violence. In this regard, women tend to restrict certain activities, which many men may undertake without question, for fear of victimisation. Whereas it is possible for men to try to avoid situations where they are most at risk – that is certain public places and times – women have a heightened risk of violence in the private sphere, such as their home which is harder to avoid.

[2] See Stanko, E.A. (1990), *Everyday violence*, London, Pandora; Kelly, L. (1988), *Surviving sexual violence*, Oxford, Polity; and Goodey, J. (1996), 'Adolescence and the socialisation of gendered fear', in Milovanovic, D. and Schwartz, M. (eds.), *Race, gender and class in criminology*, USA, Garland, pp. 267–291.

Figure 8.1: Worry about physical and/or sexual violence and victimisation experiences, by EU Member State (%) [a]



Note: a $R^2 = 0.462$.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

As shown by evidence from existing national victimisation surveys, such as the Crime Survey for England and Wales (formerly the British Crime Survey),[3] women tend to avoid doing certain things or avoid certain places as part of their risk avoidance behaviour. Women's restricted activities outside the home partly reflect the fact that, in many countries, women still have primary responsibility for care of the home and family, but it is still the case that women (more than men) indicate that they do not or would not leave the home because of fear about possible victimisation. These concerns are underlined by women's past exposure to different forms of threat and violence, and the collective experiences of other women that can reinforce a sense of threat.

As reflected in the survey's results, many women's freedom of movement is restricted because of fear of victimisation. In this regard, women's restricted use of public space at certain times, and particularly when alone, can be looked at through a gender equality lens.

The findings reported in this chapter should be read alongside Chapter 3, which looks at women's reactions in the aftermath of victimisation. Fear is one response to victimisation. Other reactions might include anger, guilt and shame. As Chapter 3 shows, these reactions indicate the range of responses that women can have to victimisation, some of which serve to compound a sense of fear and, hence, reinforce the finding that women forgo certain activities to avoid exposure to risk of victimisation.

Fear of crime

'Fear of crime' is an established term in victimisation survey research. In itself, the term may not accurately reflect how people feel with respect to criminal victimisation.

For this reason, and reflecting expert input during the survey's development and the piloting of the survey questionnaire, the word 'worry' was used in the survey questions. It was thought to better reflect a range of responses from 'concern' through to 'fear'.

[3] Available at: http://www.crimesurvey.co.uk/.

8.2. Worry about physical or sexual assault

One in five of all women indicate that they have worried (at least) sometimes in the last 12 months about the possibility of being physically or sexually assaulted (Table 8.1).

In most cases where respondents indicate that they worry about being physically or sexually assaulted by one of the listed perpetrators, women say that they worry about it 'sometimes', and only a few women say they worry about it 'often' or 'all the time'.

Levels of worry about being assaulted 'sometimes' vary between EU Member States, ranging from 7 % in Slovenia to 31 % in Finland. Fewer indicate that they are worried 'often' or 'all of the time', ranging from 1 % in Slovenia to 8 % in Slovakia (see Figure 8.2).

Women are most worried about possible assault by strangers. Levels of concern about assault by a range of other people known to them – including current and previous partners – are lower. When these levels of worry are compared with the survey's findings about levels of violence by current or previous partners, or other persons, it is clear that women's fear of violence across different settings and by different people is not grossly exaggerated.

Box 8.2: What the survey asked – worry about physical or sexual assault

Women were asked:
In the past 12 months, how often, if at all, have you been worried that any of the following might physically or sexually attack or hurt you?

- Someone you don't know.
- Someone from work, school or training.
- Another acquaintance or a friend.
- A relative or family member other than your partner.
- Your current partner.
- Your previous partner.

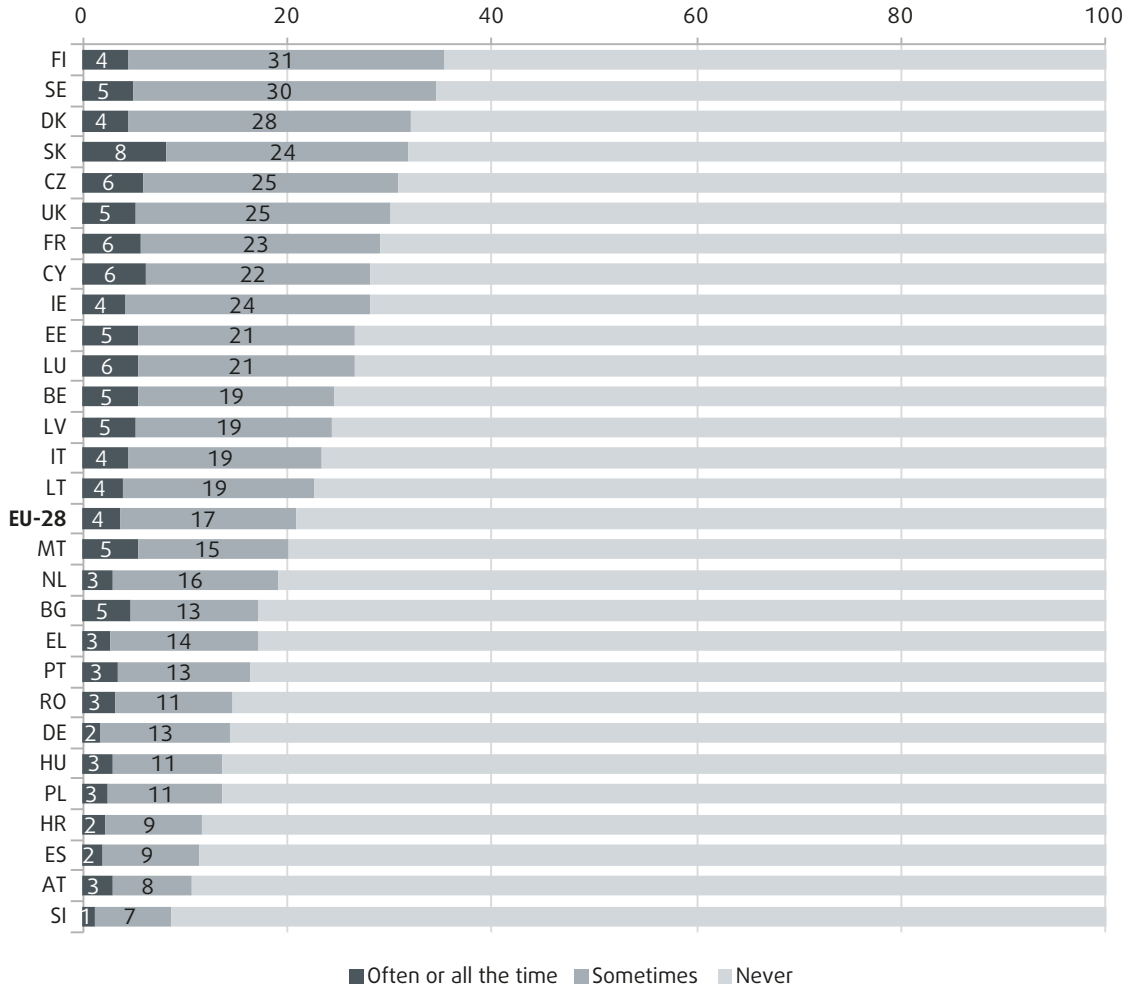
The answer categories were 'never', 'sometimes', 'often' and 'all of the time'.

Table 8.1: Women who have worried at least sometimes in the 12 months before the interview about being physically or sexually assaulted, by type of perpetrator (%)

Perpetrator	%	n
Unknown person [a]	15	41,841
Someone from work, school or training [b]	4	38,246
Another acquaintance or a friend [a]	3	41,800
A relative or family member (other than your partner) [a]	2	41,481
Current partner [b]	2	30,488
Previous partner [b]	7	24,613
At least one of the above	21	

Notes: *a Based on all respondents, excluding the ones who declined to answer.*
b Based on all respondents for whom the situation was applicable – that is who had been at work, in school or in training, or who had a current or a previous partner – and excluding the respondents who declined to answer.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Figure 8.2: Women who have worried in the 12 months before the interview about being physically or sexually assaulted by any perpetrator, by EU Member State (%)



Note: Based on all respondents, excluding the ones who declined to answer (n = 41,933).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

8.2.1. Characteristics of respondents who worry about physical or sexual assault

Respondents who have worried at least sometimes about being physically or sexually assaulted in the past 12 months are more often:

- younger, which is reflected by the fact that they are also more likely to be in education;
- single mothers living in urban areas;
- citizens of their country of residence who, nevertheless, have lived less than 30 years in the country, as well as those from an immigrant or ethnic minority background;
- finding it very difficult to cope on their present income;
- not currently employed but formerly working in the past 12 months.

It would appear that two main factors relate to higher levels of worry. First, different personal characteristics and circumstances – often working together – can serve to enhance people's exposure to risk, which manifests itself as worry. For example, vulnerability can be compounded by the effect of living in an urban area, finding it difficult to cope with respect to one's income or being unemployed. Second, exposure to risk of victimisation increases worry. For example, single mothers are likely to be more exposed to risk of assault from previous partners (and may have already experienced violence by a previous partner), and those living in urban areas are more exposed to crime in general, as towns and cities tend to have higher crime rates.

8.3. Women's risk avoidance behaviour

8.3.1. Risk avoidance in the public and private domain

Half of all women avoid certain situations or places, at least sometimes, for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted. This includes avoiding certain streets or areas, or not opening the door when home alone (Table 8.2).

Most respondents who say that they avoid certain situations or places say that they do so 'sometimes', rather than 'often' or 'all the time'. However, it is most common for respondents to say that they 'often' or 'all the time' avoid doing the following: going to places where there are no other people (11 % of all respondents); opening their door when home on their own (10 %); taking certain streets or going to certain areas (8 %).

The number of respondents who avoid certain situations or places 'sometimes' varies by EU Member State, ranging from 17 % in Croatia to 39 % in Luxembourg. Those who avoid certain situations or places 'often' or 'all of the time' range from 7 % in Croatia, Romania and Slovenia to 32 % in Luxembourg and 31 % in Slovakia (see Figure 8.3).

Table 8.2: Women who have avoided, at least sometimes,[a] certain places or situations in the 12 months before the interview for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted

	%	*n* [b]
Public domain		
Avoided leaving your home on your own	14	41,812
Avoided taking certain streets or going to certain areas	37	41,818
Avoided going to places where there are no other people	40	41,751
Private domain		
Avoided opening your door when home alone	31	41,822
Avoided going home because of what might happen there	4	41,664
Avoided being alone with a colleague or boss at work	3	23,647
At least one of the above	53	

Notes: *a Includes respondents who say that they avoid the situations or places 'sometimes', 'often' or 'all the time'.*
b Based on all respondents, excluding those who declined to answer. For category 'Avoided being alone with a colleague or boss at work', the results are based on all respondents for whom the question was applicable (that is who had been working in the past 12 months in a job involving colleagues or a boss).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Box 8.3: What the survey asked – avoiding situations for fear of being assaulted

Women were asked:
At any time in the past 12 months, have you done any of the following for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted?

Public domain

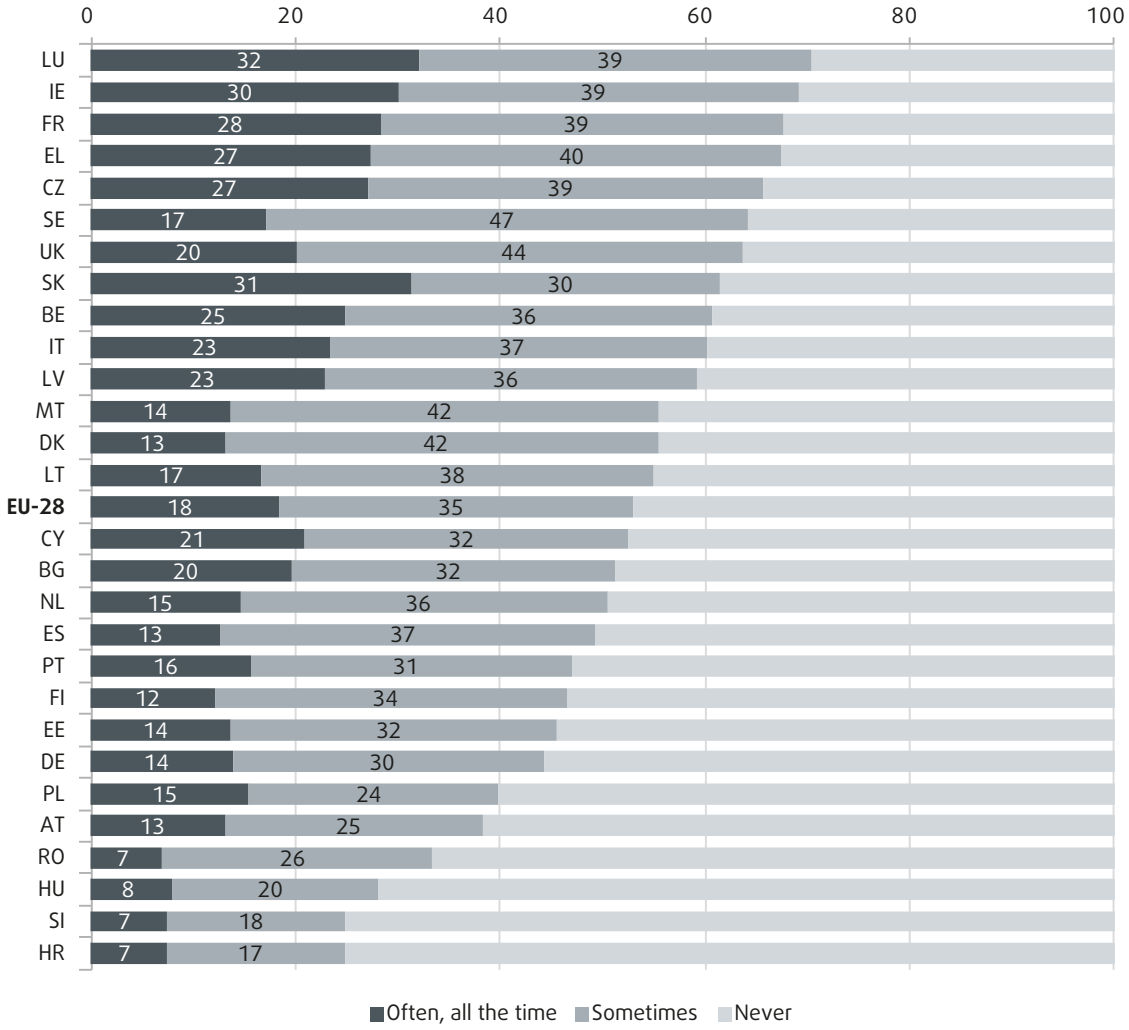
- Avoided leaving your home on your own.
- Avoided taking certain streets or going to certain areas.
- Avoided going to places where there are no other people around, for example some streets, car parks, etc.

Private domain

- Avoided opening your door when you are alone at home.
- Avoided going home because of what might happen there.
- Avoided being alone with a colleague or a boss at work.

The first three scenarios can be clustered as referring to the 'public domain' (public space), and the last three scenarios can be clustered as referring to the 'private domain' (the home or workplace, with respect to known others).
The response options were 'never', 'sometimes', 'often' and 'all the time'.

Figure 8.3: Women who have avoided certain situations or places (at least one of the six listed in the survey) in the 12 months before the interview for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted, by EU Member State (%)



Note: Based on all respondents, excluding the ones who declined to answer (n = 41,929).
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Comparison of women's risk avoidance behaviour with respect to the public and private domains shows that it is in the public domain that women are most likely to avoid doing certain things. However, women may have more choice and control about what they avoid doing in the public domain, whereas the private domain – such as being at home or in the presence of a colleague or boss – is more difficult to avoid.

In sum:

- four out of 10 women (40 %) avoid public places where there are no other people around, and a similar percentage (37 %) deliberately avoid taking certain streets or going to certain areas for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted;
- in addition, 14 % of women avoid leaving home alone for fear of physical or sexual assault.

Although women may stay at home rather than go out alone, they may not always feel safe doing so:

- three out of 10 women (31 %) avoid opening their front door when home alone;
- of all women surveyed, 4 % indicate that they avoid going home because of what might happen there, fearing physical and/or sexual assault;
- some 3 % of women avoid being alone with a colleague or boss for fear of physical or sexual assault, a result that is also revealing for what it says about certain women's experience of the workplace as an 'unsafe' environment.

8.3.2. Characteristics of respondents who have avoided certain places or situations in the 12 months before the interview for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted

There are some common traits among respondents who have avoided, at least sometimes in the 12 months before the interview, certain situations or places for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted. They tend to:

- be in education or have tertiary education, which reflects the fact that they also tend to be younger;
- be single mothers, slightly more often;
- live in non-rural areas;
- be non-citizens or have a mother or father who was born abroad;
- be not currently working but formerly employed in the past 12 months, slightly more often than being a homemaker.

Being young, which is also indicated by being in education, living in an urban area or being from an immigrant or minority background are background variables that can be looked at together to draw a picture of women who are more likely to restrict their movements by avoiding certain situations or places.

The particular relationship that is found between age, fear of crime and risk avoidance behaviour is referred to in Section 8.6 in this chapter.

8.4. Carrying something for self-defence

The survey also asked women if – during the past 12 months – they had ever carried something for self-defence as a precaution against threatening situations.

Across the 28 EU Member States, 8 % of women say that in the last 12 months they have at least sometimes carried something for self-defence. The percentage of women doing so ranged from 20 % in the Czech Republic, 15 % in Slovakia and 13 % in Germany to between 1 % and 3 % of women in Portugal, Spain, Croatia and Slovakia (depending on the country). While carrying something for self-defence can be culturally specific, it is notable that, across the EU as a whole, just under one in 10 women feel the need to carry something for self-defence purposes. There are few differences by socio-economic background in the percentage of respondents who have carried something for self-defence; however, respondents who are in education, and therefore are younger, are more likely to carry something to protect themselves from attack. This finding is reflected in the results above, which indicate that younger women tend more than older women to avoid certain situations or places for fear of physical or sexual assault.

8.5. The relationship between worry and risk avoidance behaviour

8.5.1. General observed patterns

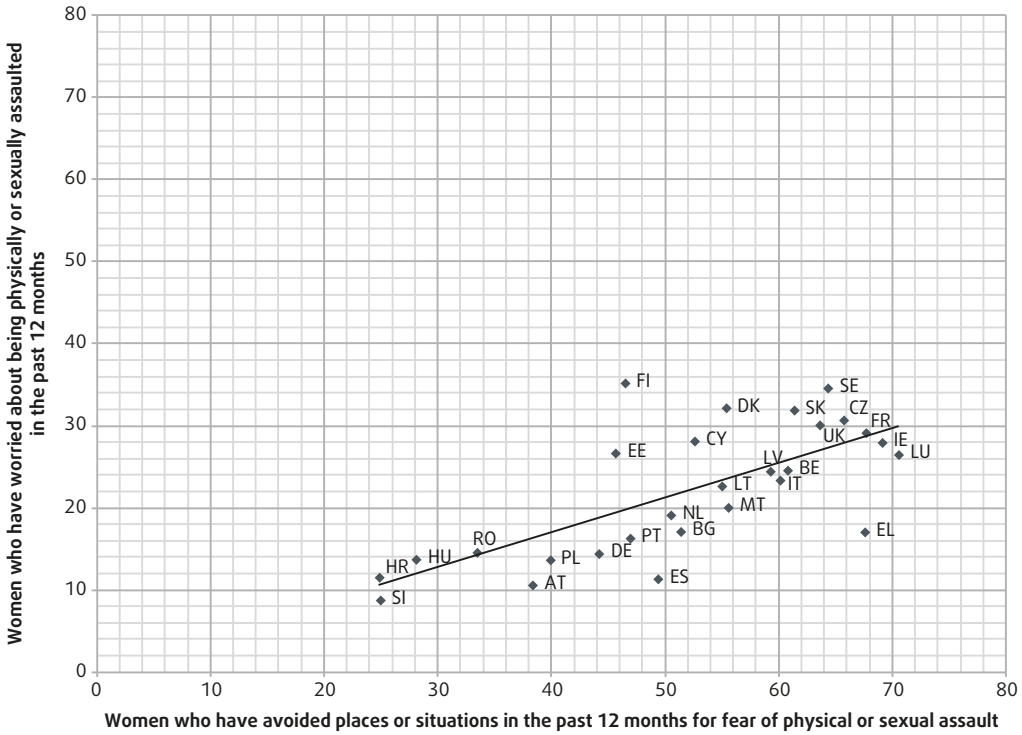
As Figure 8.4 shows, at the EU Member State level, worry about being victimised is positively correlated (+0.702) with the decision to avoid, at least sometimes, certain places or situations, with some exceptions.[4]

Therefore, in countries where women indicate higher levels of fear of physical or sexual assault at the hands of specific perpetrators, they are also more likely to display risk avoidance behaviour in certain situations and places. Looked at together, it is clear that certain women's quality of life, including their freedom of movement, is significantly curtailed because of worry about victimisation.

Table 8.3 shows results at the EU Member State level with respect to women's overall levels of worry concerning physical or sexual assault by someone they know or do not know, and avoidance of public and private places.

[4] In Finland, compared with the other EU Member States surveyed, relatively many women indicate that they worry for their safety, but this worry does not seem to translate into avoidance. On the other hand, in Greece only 17 % of women say that they worry for their safety with regard to selected categories of possible perpetrators, but more than two thirds of respondents (68 %) say that they avoid some places or situations out of concern for their safety.

Figure 8.4: Worry about being victimised and risk avoidance behaviour (%)



Note: $R^2 = 0.492$.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Table 8.3: Overall worry about violence and risk avoidance behaviour, by EU Member State (%) [a,b,c]

EU Member State	Worry about being physically or sexually assaulted by type of perpetrator		Avoidance of public and private situations or places for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted	
	Unknown person	Known person [d]	Public situations or places	Private situations or places
AT	6	7	35	21
BE	19	12	53	35
BG	9	12	48	27
CY	22	13	46	38
CZ	27	10	61	39
DE	10	7	40	19
DK	24	13	52	19
EE	18	14	40	24
EL	13	7	61	52
ES	7	7	41	31
FI	26	18	35	28
FR	19	17	56	45
HR	9	4	18	14
HU	8	9	22	16
IE	23	13	61	51

EU Member State	Worry about being physically or sexually assaulted by type of perpetrator		Avoidance of public and private situations or places for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted	
	Unknown person	Known person [d]	Public situations or places	Private situations or places
IT	17	11	53	43
LT	15	12	47	43
LU	18	12	63	42
LV	19	12	47	45
MT	12	12	47	32
NL	13	11	40	26
PL	10	8	32	31
PT	11	8	34	39
RO	9	10	30	19
SE	27	16	59	25
SI	6	4	18	16
SK	26	14	56	41
UK	23	14	54	38
EU-28	15	11	46	33

Notes: *a Includes respondents who say that they worry 'all the time', 'often' or 'sometimes' about being physically or sexually assaulted by one of the perpetrators listed in the survey.*
b Includes respondents who say that, in the past 12 months, they have feared 'all the time', 'often' or 'sometimes' that they will be physically or sexually assaulted in the places and situations listed in the survey.
c Based on all respondents (N = 42,002).
d Category 'known person' combines responses to survey questions on worry about being physically or sexually attacked by someone from work, school or training; another acquaintance or a friend; a relative or family member other than partner; the current partner; a previous partner.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

8.6. The impact of age

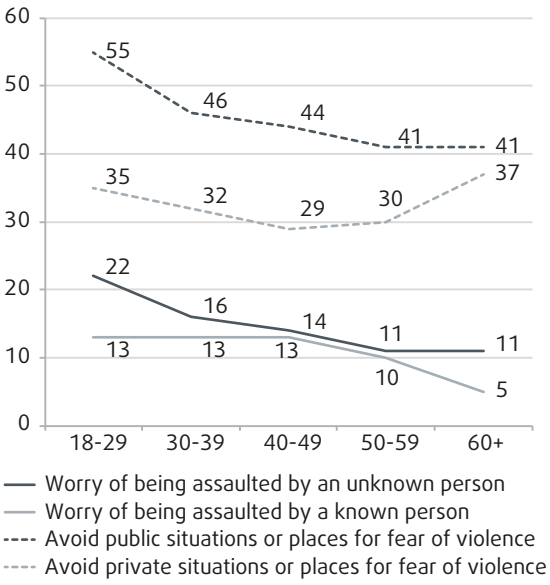
In the above findings on fear and risk avoidance behaviour, a woman's age emerges as a key factor in determining how she feels and acts.

Responses to questions – regarding fear of physical or sexual assault by strangers or by someone known to the respondent, and risk avoidance behaviour because of fear of physical or sexual assault in either the public or private domain – have been analysed according to the respondents' age. The following can be observed across the 28 EU Member States as a whole (see Figure 8.5):

- women worry more about the possibility of physical or sexual assault in the public domain than in the private domain. Younger women – particularly those under 30 years – worry more than older women about assault in the public domain. In comparison, older women – particularly from the age of 50 – are more worried about the possibility of physical or sexual assault in the private domain;
- women worry more about the possibility of physical or sexual assault by strangers than by people known to them. Younger women worry more about such violence by strangers; this is more prevalent among women under 40, and even more so among women under 30 years.

Figure 8.5 illustrates that younger women are generally more worried than older women about the threat of physical or sexual assault by both strangers and non-strangers, and take more risk avoidance measures by limiting their movements in the public domain. The exception is fear of violence in the private domain (which includes opening the front door when home alone). In part, this result could reflect younger women's lifestyles, in that they may tend to use public space more than older women, particularly in the evening, and therefore are more exposed to potentially threatening or violent situations. At the same time, the finding could indicate that young women feel more vulnerable to physical or sexual assault because they are, and are seen to be, the main targets of unwanted physical and sexual violence. This assumption is supported

Figure 8.5: Fear of being physically or sexually assaulted, by type of perpetrator, and fear manifested by avoidance of public and private situations or places, in the 12 months before the interview, by respondent age (%)



Note: *n = 41,895 (respondents who did not provide information about their age have been excluded).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

by the survey findings. For example, the results in Section 6.3.5 indicate that 38 % of women aged 18 to 29 years have experienced sexual harassment in the last 12 months, compared with 9 % of women aged 60 years and over.

FRA opinions

The following FRA opinions relate to the results reported in Chapter 8 on the extent and nature of women's fear of victimisation and its impact.

Fear of gender-based violence affects women's freedom of movement

Women's fear of crime – specifically their fear of gender-based violence – needs to be recognised and responded to by action at EU and Member State levels because of the negative impact it has on women's everyday freedom of movement.

- The survey indicates that half of all women avoid certain situations or places, at least sometimes, for fear of being physically or sexually assaulted. In comparison, as shown by existing general population surveys on crime and victimisation, men's fear of crime and its impact on their lives are generally lower than women's. This finding indicates that many women's freedom of movement is restricted by fear of physical or sexual assault. In this regard, women's restricted use of public space at certain times, and particularly when alone, can be looked at through a gender equality lens.

- Promising practices should be identified in the EU that serve to address women's fear of crime and its impact on their freedom of movement.

- As part of the European Crime Prevention Network's initiative to highlight good practices under the umbrella of 'feelings of insecurity', priority should be given to identifying initiatives addressing women's fear of physical and sexual assault in the public domain.

Heightened levels of fear can indicate abuse

Given that heightened levels of fear can reflect experiences of abuse, healthcare professionals and employers can be encouraged to ask about and collect information on fear of victimisation in an effort to identify possible abuse experienced by patients or employees.

- Many women who indicate heightened levels of fear of assault tend to have experienced more physical or sexual violence in their lives. Where women indicate heightened levels of fear of assault, this information needs to be looked at with respect to the possibility of past or current experiences of victimisation, many of which may have gone unreported.

- For example, women most frequently confide in doctors and other health professionals (as reported in Chapter 3). This group could be trained to address patients' or clients' disclosure of heightened fear with respect to the possibilities of hidden abuse, which could have occurred in adulthood or childhood.

- In the workplace, regular surveys on staff well-being could include questions about possible avoidance behaviour: such as not wanting to be alone with a work colleague or client, or avoiding going home, which could be because of worry about victimisation. The sensitive and anonymous collection of such data can alert employers to abuse that staff may be experiencing, and can serve to encourage staff to come forward to identify abuse both in the workplace and elsewhere.

9 Attitudes and awareness

MAIN FINDINGS

- Eight in 10 women (78 %) in the EU think that violence against women is very common or fairly common in their country.
- On average, 39 % of women in the EU indicate that they know of other women who are victims of 'domestic violence' in their circle of friends and family. More than one in five women (22 %) knows someone at her current or previous place of work or study who has been a victim of intimate partner violence.
- In societies in which intimate partner violence is considered largely a private matter, incidents of violence against women are unlikely to be shared with family and friends and are also rarely reported to the police.
- On average, every second woman in the EU is aware of existing legislation concerning protection and prevention with regard to domestic violence. Half of the women surveyed state either that there is no specific legislation about domestic violence in their country of residence or that they do not know if there is.
- On average, almost one in five women in the EU (19 %) is not aware of any of the support services for victims of violence against women that were listed in the questionnaire.
- Every second woman in the EU, on average, has recently seen or heard campaigns addressing violence against women.
- Close to nine in 10 women (87 %) would support the practice whereby doctors routinely ask about violence when they see women with certain injuries in their practice.

9.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the FRA survey results on women's attitudes about and awareness of violence against women in general, as well as their awareness of particular support services in their EU Member State for victims of gender-based violence.

The chapter gives an overview of how different attitudes regarding violence against women are distributed across EU Member States. It focuses, furthermore, on how far women's personal experiences of violence relate to their prevailing perceptions of the frequency of violence against women in their own country, and to their awareness of existing legal or policy measures aimed at prevention of domestic violence or at protection of victims. The results of the FRA survey are compared with the findings of a 2010 special Eurobarometer survey that provides further information on how domestic violence against women is perceived by the European public, both men and women.[1]

Attitudes express an individual's values and knowledge, and reflect prevailing beliefs, dominant values and social norms, i.e. aspects of culture, seen as

[1] European Commission (2010), *Domestic violence against women*, Special Eurobarometer 344, Brussels, TNS Opinion & Social.

Box 9.1: What the survey asked – attitudes and awareness

FRA survey questions on attitudes and awareness with regard to perceived levels of violence against women and the availability of victim support services:

- In general, how common do you think violence against women by partners, acquaintances or strangers is in [your country]?
- Have you recently seen or heard any advertising for campaigns against violence against women?
- Thinking about domestic violence against women – that is involving partners or people who are in a relationship – do you know of any women who have been a victim of any form of domestic violence?
  - In your circle of friends and family?
  - Where you (used to) work or study?
- As far as you are aware, are there any specific laws or political initiatives in [your country] for:
  - Preventing domestic violence against women?
  - Protecting women in cases of domestic violence?
- Would you find it acceptable if doctors routinely ask women who have certain injuries whether they have been caused by violence?
- Have you ever heard of the following organisations or services?
- (A list of three national organisations was presented to respondents in each EU Member State. See Annex 4 for the organisations named in each country.)

a macrostructure of subjective beliefs and perceptions.[2] Social and psychological research widely recognises that analysing attitudes helps to better understand observed variations between different societies or social groups. Accordingly, whenever possible, the results in this chapter are related to relevant findings from previous chapters.

Box 9.1 sets out the questions that were asked in the survey concerning women's attitudes to violence against women and domestic violence, and their awareness of services and organisations available for women victims in their country.

9.2. Perceptions on frequency of violence against women in the EU Member States

Respondents were asked how common violence against women by partners, acquaintances or strangers is in their country of residence. On average, 27 % of women consider violence against women to be very common and every second woman (52 %) thinks it fairly common (Figure 9.1).

- Only one in 100 women (1 %) indicates that violence against women is not at all common in her country of residence, whereas 5 % of women in the EU do not have an opinion in this regard.

The results generally corroborate the findings of the Special Eurobarometer 344 (2010) survey[3] on perceptions of domestic violence against women, according to which 32 % of women in the EU say that domestic violence is very common and 51 % of women see domestic violence as fairly common (Figure 9.1). Moreover, according to these Eurobarometer results, an overwhelming majority (84 %) of both men and women in the EU think that violence against women is unacceptable and should always be punishable by law.

Considering the FRA survey results at the EU Member State level, variation in the perceived level of gender-based violence throughout the EU becomes visible (Figure 9.2). Whereas in Portugal almost every woman surveyed (93 %) thinks that violence against women is either very common or fairly common in her country, 54 % of women in the Czech Republic think this is the case. Over 50 % of women in all EU Member States identify violence against women as a common problem.

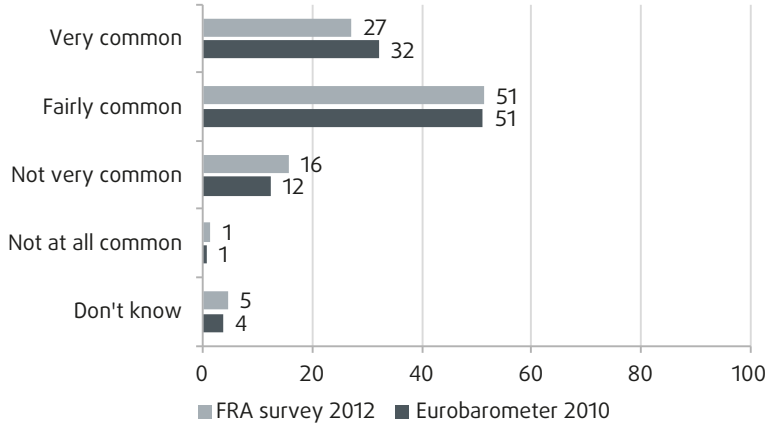
Similar variations between EU Member States regarding the way people perceive domestic violence can also be seen in the findings of the 2010 Special Eurobarometer 344. Italy, France, the United Kingdom and Portugal show the highest levels of perceived violence (91 %, 89 %, 87 % and 86 %, respectively) and the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Austria and Germany the lowest (50 %, 56 %, 63 %, and 64 %, respectively).[4]

[2] See, for example, Lück, D. (2005), 'Cross-national comparison of gender role attitudes and their impact on women's life courses', *Globallife*, Working Paper No. 67, available at: http://oldsite.soziologie-blossfeld.de/globalife/downloads/wp_zipped/wp067.pdf.

[3] European Commission (2010), *Domestic violence against women,* Special Eurobarometer 344, Brussels, TNS Opinion & Social, p. 43. The exact wording of the question in Eurobarometer 2010 is: "In general, how common do you think that domestic violence against women is in your country?"

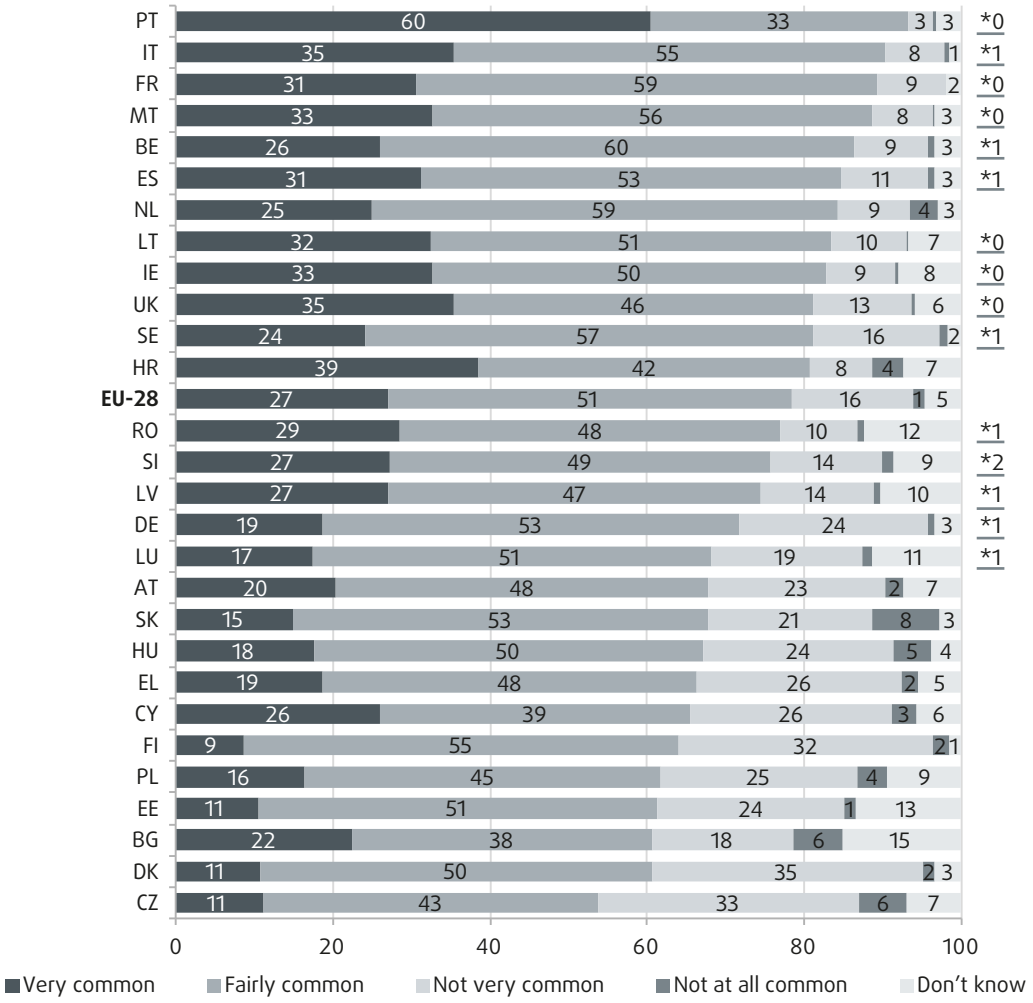
[4] European Commission (2010), *Domestic violence against women,* Special Eurobarometer 344, Brussels, TNS Opinion & Social, p. 43. Percentages are based on male and female respondents.

Figure 9.1: Women's overall perception on the frequency of violence against women in the EU (%) [a,b,c]



Notes: *a FRA survey: out of all respondents (N = 42,002).*
b Special Eurobarometer 344 (2010): out of all female respondents (n = 13,853).
c The question wording in the FRA survey referred to 'violence against women by partners, acquaintances or strangers', whereas the question in Special Eurobarometer 344 (2010) asked about 'domestic violence against women'.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012; Special EB Domestic Violence against Women dataset (2010).

Figure 9.2: Women's perception of the frequency of violence against women in EU Member States (%) [a]



Notes: *a Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).*
** followed by a number denotes responses to 'not at all common'.*
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

These variations between EU Member States with regard to respondents' perception of the extent of violence against women can also be related to the level of media coverage of violence against women during the time of the survey.

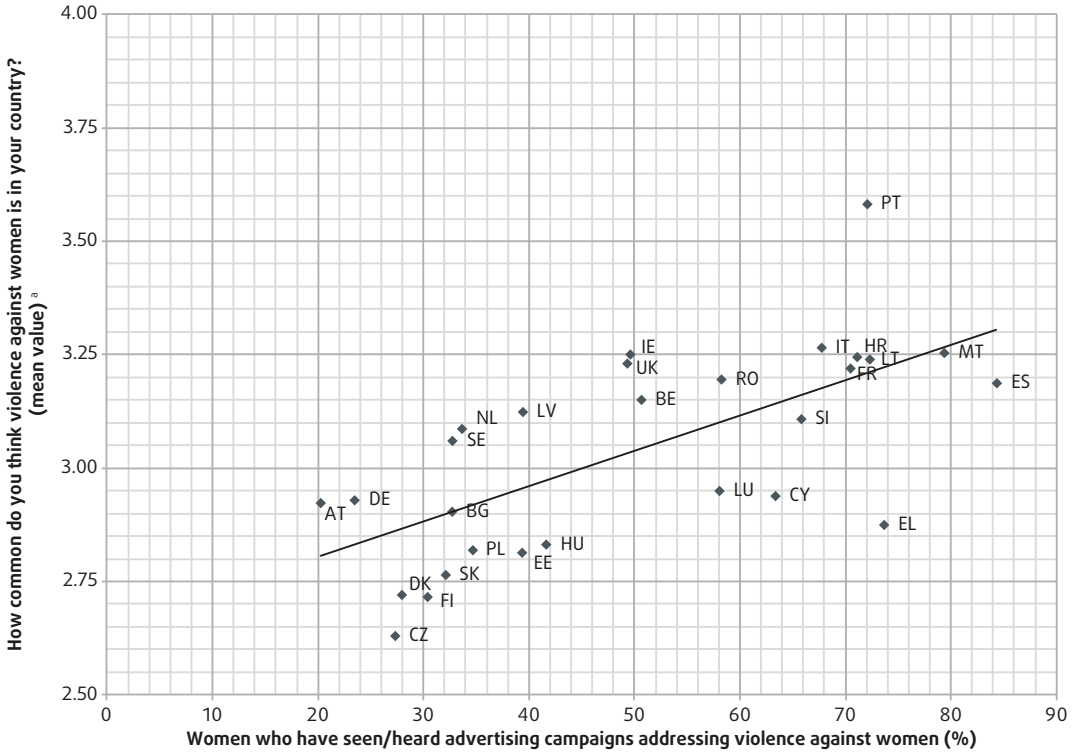
An analysis of media articles undertaken in relation to the survey showed that, in Member States where levels of violence against women are perceived to be high, the media more regularly covered issues of gender-based violence during the data collection period (for more information, see the survey's technical report).

Although there was moderate overall media coverage concerning violence against women in Portugal during the weeks of the FRA study, the murder of a heavily pregnant woman by her ex-boyfriend received widespread attention. The story gained further importance because the media implied that the police had failed to adequately protect the woman. The media monitoring in Italy produced a large number of front-page articles about fresh evidence in the disappearance of a young girl in 1983. In France, a number of important articles regarding violence against women surfaced during the fieldwork, which coincided with the presidential election. Both candidates vowed during campaigning to reinstate a definition of sexual harassment, after the French Constitutional Council declared unconstitutional the section of the French Penal Code defining sexual harassment, saying that it was too vague. The formulation of a new definition received a great deal of media coverage. In addition, a number of sexual harassment cases in France were dismissed during this period, including high-profile cases.

In comparison, there was no significant level of media coverage with regard to violence against women in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, for example, throughout the fieldwork period.

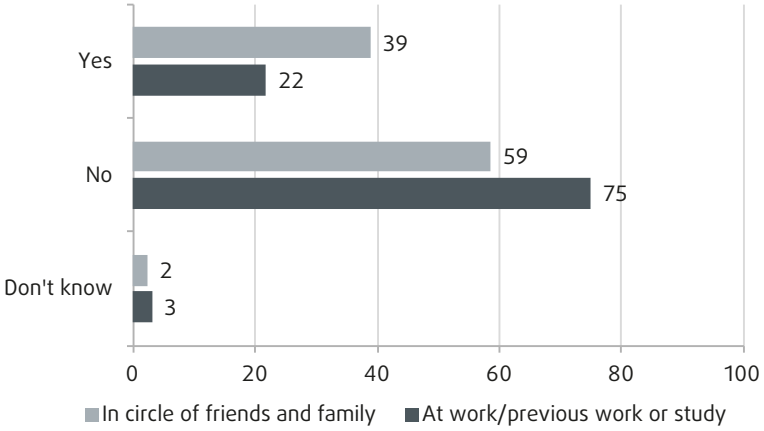
Figure 9.3 also shows the relevance of political and public discourse for the analysis of predominant attitudes in different societal contexts with regard to violence against women. It illustrates the association between the percentage of women who have recently seen or heard of information campaigns addressing violence against women and the average assessment of how common it is. EU Member States with high percentages of women who have recently seen or heard of campaigns addressing violence against women tend to score higher on perceived levels of violence.

Figure 9.3: Relationship between having recently seen or heard of campaigns addressing violence against women and the (average) assessment of the extent of violence against women, by EU Member State [b]



Notes: *a Answer categories: 1 = 'not at all common'; 2 = 'not very common'; 3 = 'fairly common'; 4 = 'very common'.*
b Adjusted R^2 = 0.460, correlation coefficient (aggregate level data) r = 0.68.
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Figure 9.4: Knowledge about victims of domestic violence in the circle of friends or family, or at the place of work or study in the EU (%) [a,b]



Notes: *a In the circle of friends: out of all respondents (n = 42,002).*
b At work/previous work or study: out of all respondents who are/were in work or studying (n = 40,054).
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

9.3. Women's knowledge about other women victims of intimate partner violence

An indirect way to assess the extent of partner violence against women in a population survey is to ask if the respondents know of any women victims of intimate partner violence among their relatives, friends, neighbours and colleagues. According to the FRA survey, 39 % of women in the EU know of other women in their circle of friends and family who are or have been victims of domestic violence. One out of five women (22 %) is aware of a woman in her place of work or study who has experienced violent behaviour by a current or a previous partner (Figure 9.4).

Compared with the findings of the Special Eurobarometer 344 (2010), which asked the same question, the FRA survey found more women, by a margin of 10 percentage points, who say that they are aware of women victims of domestic violence among their friends and family or among their co-workers. This may reflect the fact that the interviewers in the FRA survey were all women, whereas Eurobarometer uses both women and men; hence, higher disclosure rates may be expected in the FRA survey. Nevertheless, in both surveys the percentage of women who are aware of women victims of domestic violence in their circle of friends and family is higher than the percentage of women aware of women victims at their place of work or study.

According to the 2010 Special Eurobarometer 344, the proportion of women and men who say that they know of a victim of domestic violence has increased by six percentage points in 10 years, from 19 % in 1999 to 25 % in 2010. The highest growth is observed in Belgium, Luxembourg and Sweden. Furthermore, significant gender differences in the perceived extent of violence were observed in 2010: more women (29 %) than men (21 %) say they know of a female victim of domestic violence among their friends/family circle, 23 % of women state they know of a female victim in their immediate area or neighbourhood as opposed to 18 % of men, and 13 % of women say they know of a female victim where they work or study, compared with 9 % of men.[5]

- A correlation analysis showed that women's exposure to any form of partner and/or non-partner violence is positively related to their knowledge of other women victims of domestic violence. That is, women who have experienced some type of physical and/or sexual violence by a partner or by a non-partner are more likely to say that they also know of other women victims.[6]

Looking at the FRA survey results by country (Figure 9.5), considerable variations are observed between EU Member States. Women in Finland (56 %), France (52 %) and Lithuania (49 %) are most likely to be aware of women victims of intimate partner violence in their circle of friends or family. In contrast, only 16 % of women in the Czech Republic, 25 % of women in both Bulgaria and Hungary, and 27 % of women in Austria say

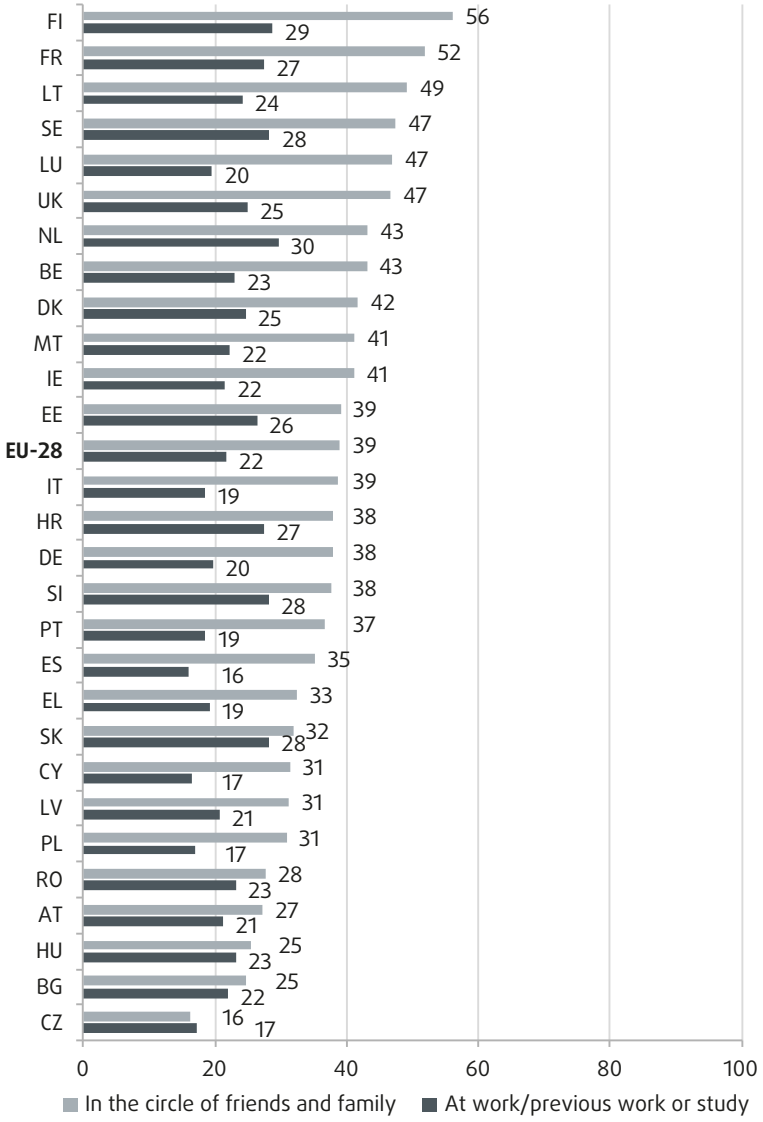
[5] See European Commission (2010), *Domestic violence against women,* Special Eurobarometer 344, Brussels, TNS Opinion & Social, pp. 27–30.

[6] The correlation (r = 0.23) between 'any physical or sexual violence by any partner during relationship' and 'knowledge of any women victim of domestic violence in respondent's circle of friends and family' is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). The average correlation between experienced non-partner physical or sexual violence and respondents' knowledge about other cases of domestic violence in their close work environment is also significant, yet smaller in size (r = 0.10, p < 0.01).

that they know of victims of domestic violence in their circle of friends and family. Overall, the FRA country-level analysis shows that it is more common to know victims of violence within the circle of friends and family than at the place of work or study. The Czech Republic is the only exception, where more respondents know victims of domestic violence in their place of work or studies than in their circle of friends and family.

The FRA results in this regard correspond roughly with the findings of the Special Eurobarometer 344 (2010) survey, according to which a relatively high proportion of male and female respondents in Lithuania (48 %), Latvia and Estonia (each 39 %), Sweden (39 %) and Finland and the United Kingdom (each 38 %) reveal that they know of female victims of domestic violence within their circle of family and friends. In contrast, only 11 % of all respondents in Bulgaria, 16 % of respondents in Italy and 17 % of all women and men surveyed in the Czech Republic and Slovakia report awareness of victims within their close circle of family and friends. With regard to place of work or study, more people (male and female) in Sweden (24 %), Finland (21 %) and the Netherlands (20 %) say they know of a victim where they work or study, as opposed to only 6 % in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, and 7 % in Spain and Portugal.[7]

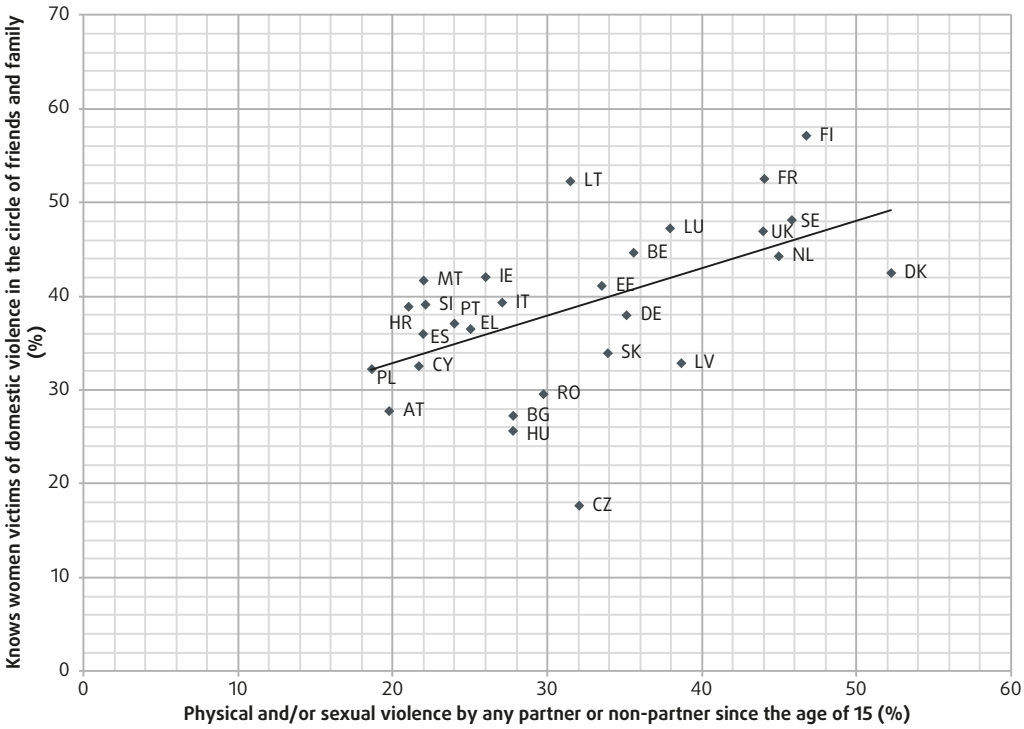
Figure 9.5: Knowledge of cases of domestic violence in the circle of friends or family, or in the work environment, by EU Member State (%) [a,b]



Notes: *a In the circle of friends: out of all respondents (N = 42,002).*
b At work/previous work or study: out of all respondents who are/were in work or study (n = 40,054).
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

[7] See European Commission (2010), *Domestic violence against women,* Special Eurobarometer 344, Brussels, TNS Opinion & Social, pp. 24 and 28.

Figure 9.6: Relationship between the prevalence of any physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 and the awareness of women victims of domestic violence in respondent's circle of friends or family (%)



Note: *Adjusted R^2 = 0.281.*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Figure 9.6 displays the relationship between, on the one hand, survey results on countries' average prevalence rates of any physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 and, on the other hand, women's awareness of women victims of domestic violence in their circle of friends. EU Member States in which the percentage of respondents who have experienced any form of physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 is high also show higher rates of women victims of domestic violence in respondents' circles of friends and family than Member States with a lower average prevalence of violence (Figure 9.6). This result would seem to support the assumption that women victims of physical and/or sexual violence are more attentive to the problem than non-victims across the EU. However, further analysis is needed.

Moreover, the relationship between the perceived level of intimate partner victimisation in respondent's close environments and the disclosed level of experienced violence is stronger in EU Member States with lower overall prevalence (such as Bulgaria, Hungary and Austria) than in those with higher rates (such as Finland, France, Lithuania and Sweden). This may mean that in those countries violence against women is more strongly perceived to be a private matter, and/or that levels of violence are in fact lower.

To exemplify these findings, selected EU Member States, which differ in their prevalence rates of violence against women and people's level of awareness about the issue, are discussed in more detail in the following illustration.

Explaining differences between EU Member States

In Bulgaria, for example, prevalence rates (22 %, in line with the EU average) and level of awareness about other women victims of domestic violence in a respondent's circle of friends and family (25 %, the second lowest rate in Figure 9.5) are almost the same with regard to physical and/or sexual violence by current or previous partners. This could indicate low levels of violence, or these findings may indicate that domestic violence against women is considered largely a private matter, which is not shared even with family or friends, and as a result is rarely reported to the police or to other relevant institutions. This assumption is supported by a recent representative study carried out by Alpha Research in 2011 on *Sexual violence against women in Bulgaria*. This study showed that between 100,000 and 250,000 Bulgarian women aged 18 years and over (that is 11 % of all Bulgarian women) have been sexually abused;[8] 4 % of women surveyed disclosed being a victim of rape; and 29 % of women knew of women victims of rape.[9] According to the findings by Alpha Research, women's understanding of what constitutes sexual violence help explain the observed difference in prevalence rates, given that 79 % of women indicated 'rape or attempted rape' in their answer to the question "To which of the following do you relate 'sexual violence'?", whereas only 56 % of women indicated 'domestic violence' as a form of sexual violence, and relatively few women related verbal or physical forms of harassment such as 'sexually suggestive remarks or jokes' (31 %), 'unwelcome touching' (20 %) or 'indecent exposure' (11 %) to sexual violence.[10] Moreover, 'only' 54 % of women surveyed see sexual abuse against women as a 'very severe problem', 35 % stating it is 'more or less severe'.[11] According to the study, this is a specific form of belittling the problem caused, on the one hand, by the fact that Bulgarian women are embarrassed to talk about sexual violence and, on the other hand, by the tendency of Bulgarian media reports to cover only the most severe forms of violence, such as rape. The authors of the study indicate the above to be factors influencing women's perceptions of sexual violence.[12] In sum, overall levels of awareness of different forms of violence against women and cultural readings of what 'violence' against women constitutes could be said to contribute to an underestimation of its actual and perceived prevalence. According to the Alpha Research study, victims of sexual violence in Bulgaria remain silent because in 76 % of the cases the assailant was known to the victim and in just 5 % of the cases the perpetrator was convicted.[13]

In comparison, in the FRA survey, Sweden is one of the EU Member States that show relatively high rates of physical and/or sexual violence by a current or previous partner based on the prevalence rate (28 %) and compared with, for example, Bulgaria (22 %) and those Member States which have the lowest rates: such as Hungary, Slovenia and Poland (13 %). However, when it comes to knowing about women victims of domestic violence in a respondent's circle of friends and family, the rates in Sweden shown in the FRA survey are high (47 %). Following the same line of argumentation as in the case of Bulgaria, these results imply that women in Sweden are more aware of the extent of the problem, and are more prone to talk about their experiences of violence with other people. According to the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention's 2010 report on *Men's violence against women, honour-related violence and repression, and violence in same-sex relationships*, since 1990 the proportion of women who state that they have been exposed to violence or threat has increased and, most importantly, the number of reported cases to the police has increased by an average of 400 per year. Reported cases of sexual crime have more than doubled from 1990 until 2006, probably because of women's increased propensity to report.[14] Another reason for the significant increase in reported rapes in recent years is that the definition in the Swedish Penal Code was broadened in 2005 to embrace other unwanted sexual acts as well.[15] Also, the number of reported cases related to the crime 'gross violation of a woman's integrity' have increased markedly since this specific offence was introduced in the Swedish Penal Code in 1998.[16] It consists of repeated acts

8 Alpha Research (2011), *Sexual violence against women in Bulgaria* (*Сексуалното насилие над жени в България*), p. 12.
9 European Women's Lobby (2013), *EWL barometer on rape in the EU 2013*, p. 19.
10 Alpha Research (2011), pp. 6–7.
11 Alpha Research (2011), p. 5. The exact question wording reads "How severe is the problem of sexual violence against women in Bulgaria?" with answer categories from 1 = it is a very severe problem to 4 = it is not a problem at all.
12 Alpha Research (2011), p. 7.
13 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
14 Government Offices of Sweden (2007), *Action plan for combating men's violence against women, honour-related violence and repression, and violence in same-sex relationships* (*Handlingsplan för att bekämpa mäns våld mot kvinnor, hedersrelaterat våld och förtryck samt våld i samkönade relationer*), Stockholm, p. 11, available at: www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/09/86/53/eeaccc54.pdf.
15 Government Offices of Sweden (2007), p. 12.
16 Ibid., p. 12.

such as assault, unlawful threat and certain types of sex-related crime where the victim and perpetrator are or were previously married or cohabiting. Nevertheless, in Sweden, as in other countries, the number of unreported cases is large and also it is the case that "the more serious the violence and the less close the relationship between perpetrator and the victim is, the more willing people are to report crimes."[17]

In societies in which intimate partner violence is considered largely a private matter and potentially 'embarrassing' or 'shameful', incidents of violence against women are unlikely to be shared with family and friends and are also rarely reported to the police. As a result, actual prevalence rates are systematically underestimated not only in official statistics but also in the perceptions of victims and non-victims. It can be assumed that victims are also unwilling to reveal incidents to a survey interviewer.

These assumptions can be strengthened by looking at the results of the Special Eurobarometer 344 (2010) concerning respondents' information sources with regard to domestic violence.[18] Only 3 % of male and female respondents in Bulgaria have heard of domestic violence through their family circle (compared with 32 % in Sweden); 6 % of the Bulgarian respondents have heard about domestic violence at their workplace (compared with 43 % in Sweden); and 33 % of respondents in Bulgaria state that they have heard about it through friends (compared with 47 % in Sweden). Either rates of violence against women in Sweden are far in excess of those in Bulgaria, or other factors – such as a social ability to address violence against women – need to be taken into consideration, too.

These findings underline, furthermore, the interdependence of legal context, prevailing social norms and values, and individuals' own actions and thoughts with respect to the subject of violence against women. Researchers can look at these factors together at the level of each EU Member State. This can help to explain the differences between Member States in the level of violence experienced against women and respondents' level of awareness of other women as victims of domestic violence in their close environments.

9.4. Awareness of laws and political initiatives addressing violence against women

The following sections describe women's awareness of legislation concerning prevention of and protection from domestic violence, and their awareness of campaigns addressing violence against women.

The findings of the Special Eurobarometer 344 (2010) survey point to a significant rise since 1999 in the general level of awareness across the EU of existing legislation concerning domestic violence against women For a decade, the proportion of the (then) EU-15's population that knew about specific laws or initiatives with regard to prevention increased from 34 % to 59 %, with no significant differences between women and men. With regard to laws or initiatives aimed at punishment of perpetrators the awareness increased from 58 % in 1999 to 78 % in 2010. Data are available only for the EU-15, so it is not possible to comment on the changes in awareness in all EU Member States.[19] The Eurobarometer results show that the European public is more aware of laws or initiatives that deal with *protection* of victims than those dealing with *prevention* of domestic violence.

This trend can also be observed in the FRA survey, as illustrated in Figure 9.7.

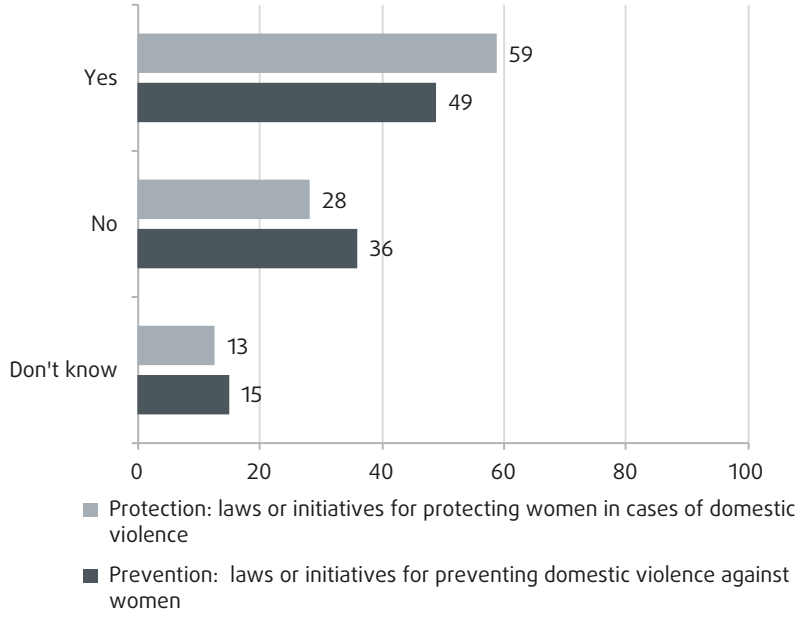
Although, on average, every second woman in the EU is aware of existing legislation concerning protection from and prevention of domestic violence, a considerable number of women state that there is no specific legislation in their country of residence concerning domestic violence or that they do not know whether there is or not.

[17] Government Offices of Sweden (2007), p. 13.

[18] The original wording of the Eurobarometer question reads as follows: "Have you ever heard of domestic violence against women? (IF YES), Where did you hear about it?" The survey presented the respondents with the following answer categories: "No, you have never heard about it", "Yes, on television", "Yes, in magazines, newspapers", "Yes, on the radio", "Yes, in books", "Yes, at the cinema", "Yes, through your friends", "Yes, through your family circle", "Yes, at school", "Yes, at your workplace", "Yes, on the Internet", "Yes, elsewhere/in another way", "Don't know".

[19] European Commission (2010), *Domestic violence against women,* Special Eurobarometer 344, Brussels, TNS Opinion & Social, p. 88.

Figure 9.7: Level of awareness of specific laws or political initiatives (%)



Note: *Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

However, the analysis at the country level shows that there are significant variations across the EU as regards women's perception of laws and initiatives aimed at preventing domestic violence and protection of victims. Whereas a clear majority of women in Luxembourg (78 %), France and Croatia (both 74 %) and Slovenia (72 %) think that specific laws or political initiatives to *protect* women in cases of domestic violence exist, only a third of women in Estonia (33 %) and Bulgaria (35 %) are aware of such specific legislation. Also, in Italy, every second woman (52 %) is not aware of any laws aimed at protecting women from domestic violence.

As regards women's perception of laws or political initiatives aimed at *prevention* of domestic violence against women, the distribution of answers across countries is only slightly different from those on protection. A majority of women in Croatia (70 %), Lithuania (66 %), Slovenia (62 %), Sweden and France (both 61 %), but a minority of women in Estonia (27 %), Bulgaria (28 %) and Italy (34 %) are aware of specific laws and political initiatives that focus on prevention. The majority of women surveyed in Italy (58 %) state that they are not aware of any legal or political measures that target prevention of domestic violence.

When asked about the existence of specific legislation, 28 % of women in Estonia, Malta and Finland, and almost every fourth woman in Greece (24 %), Latvia (23 %), the United Kingdom (23 %) and Bulgaria, Spain and the Netherlands (each 22 %) indicate that they do not know if there are any specific laws or political initiatives for protecting women in cases of domestic violence in their country of residence.[20]

Women's overall low awareness of the specific legislation and initiatives aimed at prevention and protection in cases of domestic violence, for example in Estonia and Bulgaria, reflect to a large extent the current situation and recent policy developments at the time of the interview. According to both European Women's Lobby barometers on national action plans on violence against women from 2011[21] and on rape in the EU from 2013,[22] a national action plan on violence against women was not on the Bulgarian government's agenda,[23] the government does not produce data on female victims of rape and, despite the frequent and often severe cases

[20] The FRA survey results concerning measures and legislation with regard to prevention of domestic violence are comparable to the findings of the 2010 Special Eurobarometer survey, according to which 68 % of respondents (male and female) in France, Slovenia and Sweden said that their country has legislation aimed at preventing domestic violence. In contrast, only 28 % of people in Estonia stated this, as did 34 % of respondents in Bulgaria. Furthermore, based on the Eurobarometer results, several EU Member States witnessed a significant rise within a decade in the average level of awareness about laws in place that aim to prevent domestic violence against women. Some Member States experienced a rise of over 40 percentage points, such as Portugal (from 20 % in 1999 to 65 % in 2010), or over 30 percentage points, such as Sweden or Italy (from 30 % in 1999 to 68 % in 2010 and from 24 % in 1999 to 58 % in 2010, respectively). There is no marked difference in awareness between women and men. The positive change in awareness of the legal situation is seen to be related to continuing implementation of government initiatives and improved legislation in these Member States. See European Commission (2010), pp. 91–96.

[21] European Women's Lobby (2011), *National action plans on violence against women in the EU*, EWL Barometer, EWL Centre on Violence against Women.

[22] European Women's Lobby (2013), *EWL barometer on rape in the EU 2013*.

[23] European Women's Lobby (2011), pp. 15–16.

of sexual harassment, there is no specific state policy on this issue and no mechanism for helping women gain access to counselling and to justice.[24] The European Women's Lobby report expresses similar criticism of inadequate policies to address violence against women in other Member States, such as Estonia.[25]

In comparison, in 2007 Portugal introduced a law providing free healthcare for victims of domestic violence and also changed the criminal code by making domestic violence punishable by up to five years in prison. Towards the end of 2007, the Swedish government adopted its broad-based *Action plan for combating men's violence against women, honour-related violence and repression, and violence in same-sex relationships.*[26]

9.5. Women's awareness of campaigns addressing violence against women

Respondents to the Special Eurobarometer 344 (2010) considered campaigns to raise public awareness a useful method to combat domestic violence against women; 61 % of respondents considered the campaigns 'very useful' and a further 31 % considered them 'fairly useful'.[27]

In order to assess the effect of state or other efforts made to raise women's awareness, the FRA survey asked if respondents have recently seen or heard any campaigns addressing violence against women.

On average, every second woman in the EU (50 %) has recently seen or heard a campaign. Examining the results by country (Figure 9.8), the majority of women in Spain (83 %), Malta (78 %), Portugal, France and Greece (all three 70 %) indicate that they have recently seen or heard awareness-raising campaigns. In contrast, only one in five women in Austria (20 %) and Germany (23 %), and about one in four women in the Czech Republic and in Denmark (both 26 %), have recently seen or heard any campaigns addressing violence against women.

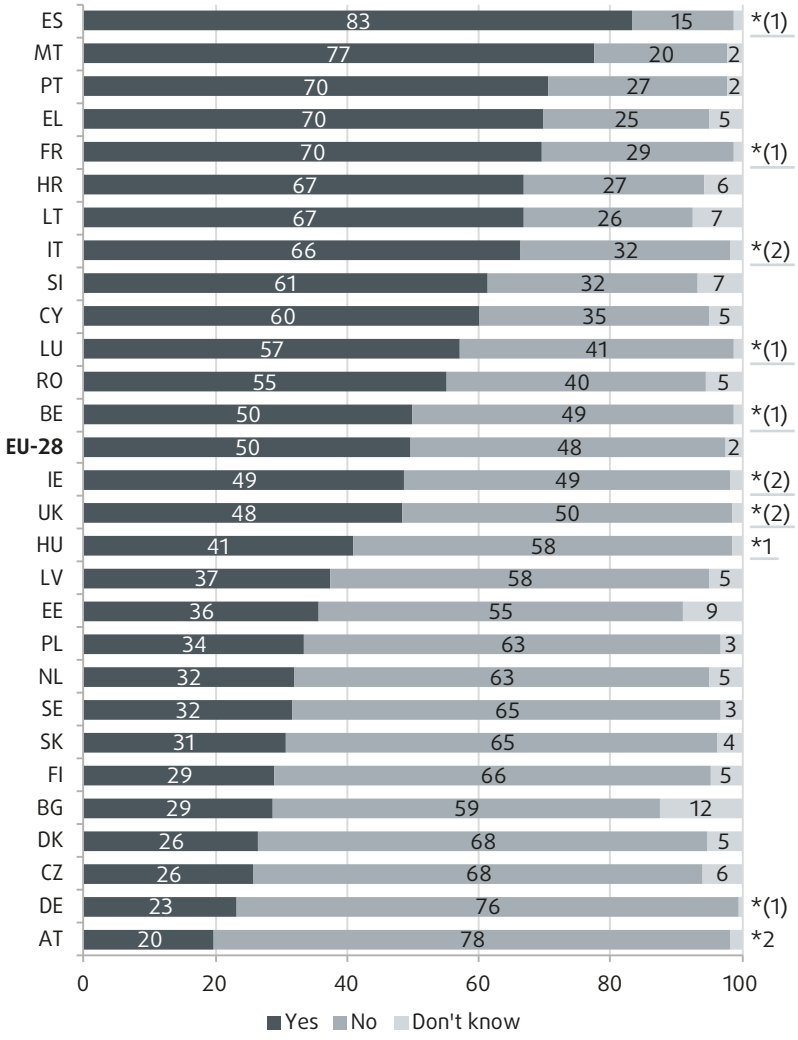
9.6. Women's awareness of organisations and specialised support services for women survivors of violence

According to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) report on victim support services in the EU (2013)[28] and the European Commission *Report on Progress on equality between women and men in 2012*,[29] the level of provision of specialised support services for women who are victims of violence varies considerably in the EU. Safe shelters and 24/7 telephone helplines are the most common support for women victims of domestic violence. However, they are either not in place in every EU Member State or not consistent with the basic standards:[30]

> *"Seventeen Member States have (national) women's helplines that provide assistance at least in the areas of intimate partner violence and/or domestic violence. […] Only half of the identified women's helplines operate on a 24/7 basis [Austria, Denmark, Greece, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom]. In 12 Member States, the national helplines are free."*[31]

24 European Women's Lobby (2013), p. 19.
25 *Ibid.*, pp. 24–29.
26 Government Offices of Sweden (2007) *Action plan for combating men's violence against women, violence and oppression in the name of honour and violence in same-sex relationships*. Stockholm.
27 The question asked in Special Eurobarometer 344 (2010) was "I am going to read out a list of ways that can be used to combat domestic violence against women. For each of them, please tell me to what extent you think it is useful or not?" The respondents were asked to consider the following (the percentage of respondents who considered a particular action 'very useful' or 'fairly useful' is indicated in parenthesis): "Provide a free-phone number for women seeking help and advice" (96 %), "Publish information on the internet for women seeking help and advice (87 %), "Distribute information leaflets for women seeking help and advice" (87 %), "Tougher laws" (89 %), "Proper enforcement of existing laws" (97 %), "Laws to prevent sexual discrimination" (91 %), "Teaching police officers about women's rights" (91 %), "Campaigns to raise public awareness" (93 %), "Punishing perpetrators" (97 %), "Rehabilitating perpetrators" (81 %) and "Teaching young people about mutual respect" (98 %). For more information, see European Commission (2010), *Domestic violence against women,* Special Eurobarometer 344, Brussels, TNS Opinion & Social, pp. 117–132.
28 EIGE (2013), *Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: Violence against women – victim support. Report*, Luxembourg, Publications Office.
29 European Commission (2013), Commission Staff Working Document. Report on Progress on equality between women and men in 2012, accompanying the document 2012 Report on the Application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, Brussels, COM(2013) 271 final, 8 May 2013.
30 For an overview of the basic standards of support services, see EIGE (2013), *Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for action in the EU Member States: Violence against women – Victim support. Main findings*, Luxembourg, Publications Office, p. 31.
31 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Figure 9.8: Having seen or heard campaigns against violence against women, by EU Member State (%) [a,b]



Notes: *a Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
** followed by a number denotes responses to 'don't know'.*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Where such services are in place, women's awareness of these support facilities varies considerably across EU Member States. Table 9.1 shows the distribution of women's answers to the FRA survey question "Have you ever heard of the following organisations or services?"[32] Respondents were given the possibility to consider three preselected organisations or support services available at the time of the interview (a list of the organisations named in the survey is available in Annex 4).[33] On average, one in five women in the EU (19 %) is not aware of any of the national-level organisations or victim support services listed in the questionnaire, 25 % are aware of at least one institution or service, 27 % are aware of two institutions or services and 29 % are aware of all three.

However, the majority of women in Romania (74 %), the Czech Republic (75 %), Bulgaria (56 %) and Greece (53 %) have not heard of any of the institutions or services asked about in the questionnaire. In contrast, 79 % of women surveyed in Malta, 71 % of women in Cyprus and 58 % of women in Portugal are aware of all three national support services, and only 2 % of women in Denmark, 5 % of women in Sweden and 4 % of women in the Netherlands are not aware of any of

[32] FRA selected these organisations and services based on consultations with its National Liaison Officers (NLOs) and experts from the Women against Violence Europe (WAVE) network. Priority was given to organisations or services that have a nationwide scope and offer specialised support to female victims of violence. The list is certainly not complete and does not cover the full range of available institutions and services across the EU; for example, there are many more organisations providing services for women victims at the regional and local levels. For the purposes of the survey, FRA limited the list to three possible examples of such services in each EU Member State.

[33] In Greece, only two services were listed.

the three organisations or support services referred to in the survey (Table 9.1).

Table 9.1: Awareness of institutions or services that offer services to victims of violence against women, by EU Member State (%) [a,b,c]

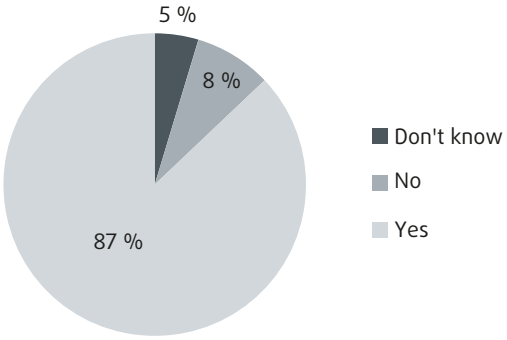
EU Member State	Not aware of any of the three organisations	Aware of one organisation	Aware of two organisations	Aware of all three organisations
AT	3	44	30	23
BE	11	18	46	26
BG	56	25	9	10
CY	9	8	12	71
CZ	75	17	5	3
DE	(1)	12	27	60
DK	2	21	47	30
EE	15	16	38	32
EL	53	20	26	n/a
ES	15	38	18	29
FI	6	31	36	27
FR	16	24	31	29
HR	9	16	38	37
HU	36	34	23	7
IE	4	16	60	20
IT	19	42	22	17
LT	26	21	19	35
LU	19	24	26	32
LV	49	21	15	15
MT	2	3	16	79
NL	4	18	62	16
PL	26	31	31	12
PT	15	15	13	58
RO	74	12	8	6
SE	5	16	43	36
SI	7	26	26	41
SK	41	27	19	13
UK	15	26	29	30
EU-28	**19**	**25**	**27**	**29**

Notes: *a Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).*
b In Greece only two organisations were listed.
c Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Generally, the FRA survey results show that women's awareness of the availability of specialised services and institutions for victims of domestic violence varies considerably between EU Member States. Annex 4 gives a

more detailed overview of women's awareness of each of the three specific institutions or support services within each Member State. The list covers national helplines, women's shelters and emergency or counselling centres. Like the results summarised in Table 9.1, the findings in Annex 4 show the significant variations in women's awareness of specialised services and organisations within and across Member States.

Figure 9.9: Acceptable if doctors routinely ask women who have certain injuries whether they have been caused by violence? (%)[a]



Note: *a Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

9.7. Women's attitude towards doctors' role in identifying victims of violence

Finally, research – including the results from this FRA survey – has shown that abused women are more likely to consult or be in contact with health services than with any other professional organisation or agency.[34] Despite the fact that healthcare professionals potentially have a key role to play in identifying and documenting female victims of domestic violence or in providing information on legal procedures and victim support services, most doctors and other clinical professionals are rarely trained for an effective response to domestic violence.[35]

The FRA survey findings show that, among different service providers asked about, women are most likely to contact doctors or other healthcare workers in cases of the most serious incident of violence they have experienced (see also Section 3.5 of this report). To assess women's perception of doctors' role in identifying victims of violence, respondents were asked to say if it would be acceptable for doctors to routinely ask women who have certain injuries if they have been caused by violence.

According to the FRA survey results, an overwhelming majority of women in the EU (87 %) think it would be acceptable if doctors routinely asked women who have certain injuries if they have been caused by violence. Only 8 % cent of women surveyed did not want doctors to ask such questions and 5 % per cent did not know how to answer the question (Figure 9.9).

FRA opinions

The following FRA opinions relate to the results reported in Chapter 9 on attitudes towards and awareness about violence against women.

Enhancing awareness of violence against women

Targeted campaigns at EU Member State level are essential to enhance women's (and men's) knowledge about gender-based violence, to encourage reporting, to protect victims and to work towards prevention.

- As the survey indicates, women's perception of whether or not violence against women is common in their country is significantly influenced by their personal experiences of partner and/or non-partner violence, their awareness of other women who are victims of violence and their awareness of campaigns addressing violence against women. The interplay between these factors needs to be taken into account when devising policies to raise awareness of violence against

[34] Yeung, H., Chowdhury, N., Malpass, A. and Feder, G. S. (2012), 'Responding to domestic violence in general practice: A qualitative study on perceptions and experiences', *International Journal of Family Medicine*, Vol. 2012, p. 1.
[35] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

women in different settings and amongst different groups of women.

- The FRA survey results indicate the relevance of political and public discourse at the EU Member State level for the analysis of prevailing attitudes concerning violence against women in different societal contexts. Far-reaching political and media campaigns that address violence against women have the potential to raise women's average level of awareness regarding the subject of gender-based violence. This can help women to break the silence surrounding incidents of violence.

- Awareness-raising campaigns can enhance women's (and men's) knowledge about legislative measures and other policy initiatives that aim to protect and support women who are victims of gender-based violence. They can also work towards prevention of gender-based violence (for example, in line with Article 13 of the Istanbul Convention). EU Member States should consider promoting or conducting, on a regular basis and at all levels, multilingual and multi-format awareness-raising campaigns or programmes to increase knowledge and understanding among the general public of the different manifestations of all forms of violence against women, including its impact on victims and society as a whole. In the absence of data at the Member State level, the results of this survey can form the starting point for these surveys at the national level.

- These campaigns could be organised in cooperation with national human rights institutions and equality bodies, as well as with civil society organisations where appropriate.

- The Council of Europe ran a campaign from 2006 to 2008 to combat violence against women, including domestic violence. This is a 'good practice' example of a multi-level campaign across different countries.

Ensuring that expectations of service provision can be met in practice

Campaigns that set out to raise awareness about, and respond to, violence against women require, in turn, that specialist services are in place and adequately resourced to be able to meet the needs of victims.

- The FRA survey shows, corresponding to the conclusions made in EIGE's report[36] mapping victim support services for women, that women's levels of awareness of victim support services depend on different factors, such as nationwide awareness-raising and education campaigns, systematic media coverage and legislative provisions. As recommended in the EIGE report on victim support services (EIGE, 2013), sustainable funding – particularly for specialised services aimed at women and their children – is essential to ensure services are widely accessible: free of charge, geographically distributed, multilingual and disability friendly.

- According to the Special Eurobarometer 344 (2010) survey findings, a clear majority of EU citizens (95 %) believe that providing a free phone number for women seeking help and advice is very or fairly useful in combating violence against women. The significant variation in the FRA results across EU Member States with respect to women's levels of awareness of specific support services underlines the importance of national information campaigns and coordinated inter-agency or inter-service co-cooperation, including the availability of helplines, which need to be widely publicised and adequately resourced. In turn, the usefulness of helplines and other targeted services needs to be independently assessed with respect to their impact on victims in practice.

Ensuring that campaigns are based on existing evidence about violence against women

In the absence of data at EU Member State level, results from the FRA survey can be used to enhance action by Member States on violence against women.

- The EU (Commission) will support national information campaigns on violence against women in 2014–2015. In the absence of relevant data at the EU Member State level, national awareness-raising campaigns should be informed by the FRA survey results, which provide the first baseline data on violence against women for many Member States. For example, Member States where reporting of violence to the police or other service providers is low should consider targeted dissemination of specific information about these services to encourage women to receive help, and at the same time should promote change within these services to encourage women to come forward and report abuse.

[36] EIGE (2013), *Review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for action in the EU Member States: Violence against women – victim support. Report*, Luxembourg, Publications Office.

Conclusions

The survey results show the impact of various forms of violence on women across the EU. Violence against women undermines women's core fundamental rights such as dignity, access to justice and gender equality. For example, one in three women (33 %) has experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15. One in five women (18 %) has experienced stalking; every second woman (55 %) has been confronted with one or more forms of sexual harassment. Given this, violence against women cannot be seen as a marginal issue that touches only on some women's lives.

Yet the scale of violence against women is not reflected by official data. Women generally do not report to the police, and they also do not report to a number of other services that could support them, including victim support organisations. In this regard, it is clear that the needs and the rights of women – for example under the Victims Directive, which explicitly refers to victims of gender-based violence – are currently not being met in practice. In response, significant efforts need to be made at the EU and Member State levels to create a climate where women can report incidents of abuse, and where these reports will be taken seriously and followed up so that women receive the support they need and, where appropriate, can get justice. Currently, the fact that so many incidents are not reported means that many offenders can act with impunity.

This is the first survey of its kind on violence against women across the EU's 28 Member States. Based on the detailed findings, FRA has drafted a number of opinions that suggest courses of action in different areas that are touched by violence against women. These opinions go beyond the narrow confines of the criminal law, ranging from employment and health to the medium of new technologies. They build on earlier calls by bodies such as the UN and the Council of Europe to take action to combat violence against women, but are primarily based on evidence gathered from face-to-face interviews with 42,000 women across the EU.

What is unique with respect to FRA's findings is that they are based on EU-wide data. In this regard, the online data explorer tool that accompanies this report allows everybody to use and produce information from the survey dataset in ways that are most useful to them. What this means is that anyone – from a government employee to a victim support staff member – can produce the data for their own country, can compare them selectively with other countries and can look at the findings in detail in connection with their particular area of interest. In this way, it is hoped that the dataset can be effectively used at the Member State level, and can encourage further action at the level of the EU.

To sum up, for years intergovernmental organisations and civil society have called for robust and comparative data on violence against women, on which to base policy and courses of action to address this fundamental rights abuse. With the publication of the FRA survey results on violence against women, these data are now available for the 28 EU Member States. If action is to be taken to address violence against women, as reported in the survey, the time is now.

General considerations for action can be summarised as follows. They give possible 'ways forward' for responding to violence against women and can be taken into account when looking at the survey results.

- Future EU strategies on equality between women and men could build on the survey's findings to address key areas of concern with respect to women's experiences of violence. Examples could include new or newly recognised forms of violence against women, such as stalking or abuse through the medium of new technologies, as well as aspects of violence that are under-reported by women to the police and victim support organisations.

- Given the scale of violence against women reported in the survey, the EU's post-Stockholm Programme landscape in the field of justice and home affairs should ensure that violence against women is acknowledged and addressed as a fundamental rights abuse within the framework of the EU's responses to crime and criminal victimisation.

- The EU Victims' Directive applies to all crime victims and makes reference specifically to victims of gender-based violence alongside other vulnerable victims. It provides a solid base on which to build targeted responses, at the Member State level, to meet the needs of women as victims of violence with respect to victim support and criminal justice interventions. As part of the review of the implementation of the directive undertaken by the European Commission, a component could assess whether the directive meets – in practice – the needs and rights of women who are victims of violence.

- The EU should explore the possibility of accession to the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). At present, it is the most comprehensive regional instrument

addressing violence against women. The FRA survey results can also support EU Member States in ratifying the convention.

- EU Member States are encouraged to develop specific national action plans on violence against women, which should use the results of the survey in the absence of data at the national level. Civil society actors working with women who are victims of violence can usefully be involved in the development of action plans to help ensure that these can deliver practical results for victims and are sustainable.

- EU policy in the fields of employment, education, health, and information and communication technology should address the impact of violence against women in their respective fields. This should be reflected at the Member State level in specific policy interventions and national action plans that address these different fields.

- The EU should ensure that funding mechanisms that continue the work of DAPHNE and other programmes, which variously contribute to the protection of children, young people and women against all forms of violence, can be used to further support research and work by civil society organisations addressing violence against women. In particular, funding is needed for the work of targeted victim support services in the field of violence against women.

- A victim-centred and rights-centred approach to women as victims of violence needs to be reinforced at the EU and Member State level. Positive examples have emerged in recent years in a number of Member States that recognise 'domestic' or 'intimate partner' violence as a matter for state intervention rather than a private matter.

- The EU and Member States could signify their commitment to the collection of data, on a regular basis, on different forms of violence against women. This can provide evidence for the development of policy responses and action on the ground. This process could be supported by Eurostat and its relevant expert groups, and could be used to feed data to the specific monitoring bodies of the UN and the Council of Europe, as well as the European Institute for Gender Equality.

- EU and Member State policies and national action plans to combat violence against women must be developed on the basis of evidence that draws directly from women's experiences of violence. Data on women's experiences of violence should be collected in addition to administrative and criminal justice data, which do not capture the majority of unreported victimisation. The EU and Member States should promote and fund surveys in a concerted effort to uncover information on the extent and nature of violence experienced by women. These surveys can be repeated every few years to measure developments over time.

Annex 1: National surveys on violence against women

This annex provides an overview of the national surveys on violence against women carried out in the EU Member States. The details are based on a similar overview produced by UN Women,[1] updating the information and providing further references, where relevant. Tables A1.1 and A1.2 list surveys in which women have been asked about their personal experiences of violence. In addition to these, in some Member States where no survey research has been carried out on women's experiences there are surveys which have explored women's (and men's) perceptions of violence; for example, questions about how common violence against women is in the country, or if the respondents know any victims of violence against women. The information in Tables A1.1 and A1.2 is based primarily on existing UN sources, and therefore the information contained in the tables may need updating.

It needs to be noted that the figures in Table A1.2 are not directly comparable with FRA survey results. For this purpose, comparisons should be limited to specific results where the survey questions used in national surveys closely 'match' FRA survey questions.

Table A1.1: Sample details of previous surveys which have specialised in measuring violence against women, by EU Member State

EU Member State	Survey [a]	Data collection year	Sample size	Target population
AT	National VAW	2011	1,292	16–60
BE	National VAW	2010	987	18–75
BG	–	–	–	–
CY	Other national	2007	401	18–60
CZ	IVAWS	2003	1,980	18–69
DE	Other national	2003	10,264	16–85
DK	IVAWS	2003	3,589	18–69
EE	Other national	2008–2009	3,788	15–74
EL	Other national	2002–2003	1,200 [b]	18–60
ES	National VAW	2010–2011	7,898	> 18
FI	National VAW	2005	4,464	18–74
FR	National VAW	2000	5,908	> 18
HR	National VAW	2003	976	18–65
HU	–	–	–	–
IE	National VAW	2003	3,077 [c]	> 18
IT	National VAW	2006	25,000	18–69
LT	Other national	2000	1,010	18–74
LU	–	–	–	–
LV	–	–	–	–
MT	National VAW	2010	1,200	18–59

[1] See www.endvawnow.org/uploads/browser/files/vawprevalence_matrix_june2013.pdf.

EU Member State	Survey [a]	Data collection year	Sample size	Target population
NL	Other national	1986	989	20–60
PL	IVAWS	2004	2,009	18–69
PT	National VAW	2007	–	> 18
RO	Other national	2004	4,441	15–44
SE	National VAW	2001	6,926	18–64
SI	–	–	–	–
SK	National VAW	2008	827	18–65
UK	Other national	Continuous since 2004–05	25,000–46,000 depending on the year (self-completion component; women and men)	16–59

Notes: *a 'National VAW', dedicated survey of violence against women with a national coverage; 'Other national', questions on violence against women included in another survey; 'IVAWS', country covered in the International Violence Against Women Survey project.*
b Gross sample
c Includes both women and men.

Sources: The UN Secretary-General's (2006) database on violence against women, UN Women's (2011) compilation of violence against women prevalence data, the International Violence Against Women survey (IVAWS) (Johnson, Ollus and Nevala, 2008) and corresponding national violence against women surveys, as well as national surveys that have incorporated some questions on violence against women
AT: Kapella, O., Baierl, A., Rille-Pfeiffer, C., Geserick, C. and Schmidt, E.-M. with Schröttle, M. (Konsulentin, Universität Bielefeld) (2011), Gewalt in der Familie und im nahen sozialen Umfeld. Österreichische Prävalenzstudie zur Gewalt an Frauen und Männern, Vienna, Österreichisches Institut für Familienforschung (ÖIF). Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend
BE: Pieters, J., Italiano, P., Offermans, A.-M. and Hellemans, S. (2010), Emotional, physical and sexual abuse: The experiences of women and men, Brussels, Institute for the Equality of Women and Men
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Table A1.2: Prevalence of violence against women in the EU Member States based on data from previous surveys (%)

EU Member State	Intimate partner violence						Intimate partner and/or non-partner violence					
	Physical		Sexual		Physical and/or sexual		Physical		Sexual		Physical and/or sexual	
	Last 12 months	Lifetime	Last 12 months	Lifetime	Last 12 months	Lifetime	Last 12 months	Lifetime	Last 12 months	Lifetime	Last 12 months	Lifetime
AT	–	29.1	–	–	–	–	–	56.8	–	29.5	–	–
BE	1.9 [a]	–	0.9 [a]	–	14.9 [a]	–	–	–	–	5.6	–	28.9
BG	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
CY	2.5	–	–	–	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
CZ	8	35	2	11	9	37	12	51	5	35	–	58
DE	2.5	23 [b]	–	7	–	25	–	37	–	13	–	40
DK	1	20	0	6	1	22	4	38	2	28	–	50
EE	–	37	–	6–7 [g]	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
EL	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
ES	–	–	–	–	3.0 [h]	10.9 [h]	–	–	–	–	3.6	9.6
FI	6.3	17.6	2	4.3	7.9	–	–	–	–	–	12.9	46.7
FR	2.5	–	0.9	–	10	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
HR	–	–	–	24	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
HU	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
IE	1.4	13	0.7	8	3.2	14.5	–	–	–	–	–	–
IT	1.7	12.0	1.0	6.1	2.4	14.3	2.7	18.8	3.5	23.7	5.4	31.9
LT	–	32.7	–	7.5	–	37.6	–	–	–	–	–	–
LU	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
LV	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
MT	–	12	–	9	–	16	–	6.5	–	4.1	–	–

EU Member State	Intimate partner violence						Intimate partner and/or non-partner violence					
	Physical		Sexual		Physical and/or sexual		Physical		Sexual		Physical and/or sexual	
	Last 12 months	Lifetime	Last 12 months	Lifetime	Last 12 months	Lifetime	Last 12 months	Lifetime	Last 12 months	Lifetime	Last 12 months	Lifetime
NL	–	21 [c]	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
PL	3	15	0	5	3	16	5	30	2	17	–	35
PT	–	–	–	–	6.5	–	–	22.6	–	19.1	12.8	38
RO	–	15.1	–	3.1	–	28.5	–	–	–	–	–	–
SE	3 [f]	7 [f]	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
SI	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
SK	–	15	–	9	12.2	27.9	–	14	–	2 [d]/10 [e]	–	67.8
UK	2.7	18.9	0.2	3.8	5.9	28.4	–	–	–	–	–	–

Notes: *a Including ex-partner violence.*
b Although sample included all women, rate of abuse is shown for ever married/partnered women (number not given) (UN Secretary-General, 2006).
c Sample group included women who had never been in a relationship and therefore were not in exposed group (UN Secretary-General, 2006).
d Rape.
e Attempted rape.
f During current relationship (Lundgren et al., 2001).
g The survey differentiates between women who are ethnically Estonian (7 % of whom have experienced sexual violence by a partner during lifetime) and ethnically Russian (6 %).
h Physical, sexual and psychological violence.
Sources: As for Table A1.1.

Annex 2: Survey fieldwork outcomes, weighting, confidence intervals and characteristics of the respondents

This annex presents an overview of the response rates achieved in each of the 28 EU Member States. It provides further information about how the survey data have been weighted to improve the representativeness of the survey results with regard to statistical benchmarks (based on data from Eurostat on women aged 18–74 years in the EU). The characteristics of the respondents are described based on key socio-demographic variables, which have also been used for the analysis of the survey results. Finally, the annex provides examples on confidence intervals; that is the expected accuracy of the survey results. More details on the fieldwork methods and outcomes are available in the Technical Report.[2]

Response rates

The response rates have been calculated using the RR3 definition of response rates by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR)[3]. The response rates are calculated as a ratio of completed interviews out of the total number of respondents who were eligible to take part in the survey. The survey population was defined as women aged 18 to 74, resident in the country where the interview took place, who speak at least one official language of that country. Households without any eligible respondents are not included in the response rate calculations.

However, in a number of situations it is not possible to determine directly whether any eligible persons live in the sampled address. The most common reason for inability to determine this is non-contact after the minimum number of visits/calls, but it also includes situations where the information about the household was refused by the first contact, the interviewer was not able to locate the issued address and other situations. This presents a known challenge to calculating the response rate. In Table A2.1 column 'known eligibility' shows the number of respondents who were contacted and confirmed to be eligible, irrespective of whether they decided to participate in the survey or not – the number of respondents who completed the interview is shown in column 'complete interviews'. In addition to the addresses with known eligibility, there are a number of cases where it was not possible for the interviews to establish whether eligible women were living at the address in question. Therefore the column 'estimated eligibility' presents an estimation on the number of addresses with eligible (but not contacted) respondents. This estimate has been calculated based on information from addresses which were successfully contacted – that is, taking the ratio of eligible addresses out of all those addresses where the interviewers were able to contact somebody and confirm whether any eligible persons live at that address, and applying this ratio to those cases where it was not possible to confirm the eligibility.

Table A2.1 presents separately countries where respondents were selected using a random-route approach, and countries where the first contact was done by telephone. Contacting respondents by telephone took place in some of the countries where it was possible to draw a sample of respondents directly from the population register. In most countries, respondents were selected using a random-route approach in representative sample areas in the countries. Telephone recruitment of randomly selected respondents was used in countries where a sufficiently inclusive frame of telephone numbers for individuals was available: Finland, Sweden and Denmark. Telephone prerecruitment for face-to-face surveys can be expected to have lowered the overall response rate, as it is easier for respondents to decline to participate on the phone than if the interviewer visits in person. However, it is difficult to state this conclusively, given that face-to-face surveys with face-to-face recruitment are very rarely done in these countries for various reasons, for example the long distances between addresses and low population density.

[2] For the details on the survey methodology, see the report *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Technical report,* Luxembourg, Publications Office.

[3] See p. 46 in The American Association for Public Opinion Research (2011) *Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys*, 7th edition, AAPOR.

Table A2.1: Response rates

EU Member State	Complete interviews (*n*)	Known eligibility (*n*)	Estimated eligibility (*n*)	Response rate (%)
1. Countries where the first contact with respondents was made in person				
AT	1,505	1,856	769	57.3
BE	1,537	3,721	836	33.7
BG	1,507	2,044	529	58.6
CY	1,505	1,506	567	72.6
CZ	1,620	2,852	597	47.0
DE	1,534	2,279	598	53.3
EE	1,500	1,696	634	64.4
EL	1,500	1,621	509	70.4
ES	1,520	3,243	1,638	31.1
FR	1,528	4,674	971	27.1
HR	1,505	2,491	655	47.8
HU	1,512	1,552	248	84.0
IE	1,567	2,790	476	48.0
IT	1,531	1,676	949	58.4
LT	1,552	2,052	1,155	48.4
LU	908	4,903	886	18.5
LV	1,513	1,828	314	70.6
MT	1,501	2,471	581	49.2
NL	1,510	3,222	2,467	26.5
PL	1,513	2,272	1,483	40.3
PT	1,515	1,794	499	66.1
RO	1,579	2,103	765	55.1
SI	1,501	3,329	110	43.6
SK	1,512	2,807	684	43.3
UK	1,510	3,405	683	36.9
2. Countries where the first contact with respondents was made over the telephone				
DK	1,514	2,833	1,701	33.4
FI	1,520	3,946	0	38.5
SE	1,504	6,143	1,503	19.7
TOTAL unweighted	**42,023**[a]	**77,109**	**22,807**	**42.1**

Note: a *The FRA survey results presented in this report are based on 42,002 responses. While in total 42,023 interviews were completed, 21 interviews were removed from the data set at the data cleaning stage, and excluded from analysis.*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

The overall response rate across the EU-28 (42.1 %) is similar to the response rates achieved for example in the European Quality of Life Survey (response rate: 41.3 %), which was carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) – an EU Agency – in September 2011–February 2012 in 27 EU Member States,[4] or the European Working Conditions Survey (response rate:

[4] Eurofound (2012) 3rd European Quality of Life Survey. Technical Report. Available at: http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/surveys/eqls/2011/methodology.htm.

44.2%), which Eurofound carried out in 2010 in 27 EU Member States and seven non-EU countries.

It is difficult to compare the response rates across countries, because the cultural settings, general acceptability of unsolicited approaches, saturation with other survey research activities and other country-specific factors have a dominant effect on the resulting response rates. Within countries, various survey aspects are likely to have an impact on the response rates, among them the general level of interest in the topic, the survey's perceived relevance to respondents, the experience of the interviewers and fieldwork coordinators, the number of attempts at contacting, whether or not approaches are reissued after soft refusals[5] and the method of establishing the first contact.

Weighting

In the FRA survey on gender-based violence against women, as in most surveys, the results have been weighted based on data from other sources and on key characteristics of women aged 18–74 years, living in the EU-28. These population data can stem, for example, from census statistics or population registers, and they are used as a benchmark in the weighting process. The weights help to correct for any imbalances that may have occurred during sample selection – such as concerning the age of respondents – so that the weighted results are representative of the total population (in this case, 18- to 74-year-old women living in the EU) on the weighting variables. More information on the sample selection and weight is available in the Technical Report of the survey: http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/vaw-survey-technical-report.

The weights for the dataset were calculated in three stages: (a) sampling design weights, (b) demographic profile weights and (c) country population weights (the last only for the EU-wide estimates).

a) Design weights were calculated to compensate for the uneven probability of selection of respondents. The primary sampling units (PSUs) were selected with probability proportional to their size, so by definition they had an unequal chance of selection. The following probabilities of each stage of selection were calculated:

   A1, probability of selecting the PSU, is the ratio of the PSU size to the population size (in the same units which were used for the initial sampling).

   A2, probability of selecting an address, is the the ratio of the number of issued addresses to the total number of addresses in the PSU. This stage is optional only for those countries which did not have individual-based frames.

   A3, selection of a woman inside the household, is 1 divided by the number of eligible women inside the household.

Design weights were calculated as the inverted product of the three probabilities described above:

$$Wt_{design} = \frac{1}{A1 \times A2 \times A3}$$

   A4, capping. The weights were calibrated to the average of 1 within each country and the design weights were calibrated to allow the maximum value of 4. This was done to avoid the distorting effect of a small number of very high weights on the effective sample size, and the unreasonably large effect which responses with very high weights could have on individual results.

b) Following stage A and using the dataset weighted by design weights, the demographic profile (non-response) weights were calculated by rim weighting.

   B1, age. Weighting was done by the age bands used in the questionnaire (18–24, 25–34, 35–39, 40–49, 50–59, 60–69, 70–74).

   B2, rural/urban. The weighting was done by the location of the interview. The data on this was linked to the PSU, and provided by national fieldwork agencies. The scales of rural/urban used differed depending on the country.

The resulting in-country weights were calibrated to the average of 1 within each country dataset.

c) Country population and the proportion of conducted interviews.

   This step took into account the variation in the size of the target population in different countries, and involved the ratio of the number of women aged 18–74 in each country with respect to the EU-28 total, in relation to the ratio of the number of interviews conducted in the country to the number of interviews conducted in total.

$$Wt_{overall} = Wt_{in\text{-}country} \frac{n_{country}}{n_{overall}} \times \frac{N_{country}}{N_{overall}}$$

[5] Reissuing is when an address is reallocated to another interviewer to visit to try and get a completed interview. A soft refusal refers to when a selected respondent or someone else in the household has refused to take part at a particular time, but has not said they will not take part.

The weights which result from this three-step procedure have been used to produce the results presented in this report.

To examine the effect of the weighting on the age distribution of the respondents, Table A2.2 presents respondents' age before and after weighting. The unweighted data show that the original sampling was slightly skewed towards the oldest age group, with fewer respondents in the two youngest age groups. Particularly high shares of the oldest age group were found in Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Portugal and Sweden. The sample in Cyprus, on the other hand, was skewed towards the youngest age group. The weighting adjusts the age distribution to correspond with the population distribution.

Table A2.2: Age of respondents in the EU Member States (unweighted %, weighted %, unweighted *n*)

	18–29			30–39			40–49			50–59			60+			No answer		
	U %	W %	n	U %	W %	n	U %	W %	n	U %	W %	n	U %	W %	n	U %	W %	n
AT	23	19	344	20	20	302	19	22	293	14	18	212	24	21	354	0	0	0
BE	20	21	309	16	19	248	22	21	333	21	19	318	21	21	329	0	0	0
BG	12	20	181	16	20	238	15	18	227	20	19	306	37	24	554	0	0	1
CY	38	29	565	20	18	303	18	19	264	16	16	237	8	17	126	1	1	10
CZ	17	20	274	21	22	346	19	17	307	17	18	280	25	22	403	1	1	10
DE	12	18	187	17	17	254	24	22	373	21	19	327	26	24	393	0	0	0
DK	25	23	380	14	15	206	19	20	293	19	18	289	23	23	343	0	0	3
EE	15	24	232	15	17	227	15	18	224	20	19	303	34	23	512	0	0	2
EL	18	20	266	18	19	265	22	20	333	17	18	262	25	23	372	0	0	2
ES	14	21	212	19	22	288	22	21	341	19	17	282	26	19	397	0	0	0
FI	14	19	207	15	18	235	17	19	253	20	20	303	34	24	519	0	0	3
FR	13	20	198	18	20	278	23	20	339	21	19	312	24	21	366	1	1	12
HR	15	20	221	17	19	259	18	19	266	23	20	351	27	23	408	0	0	0
HU	15	20	220	20	21	299	16	17	237	20	20	304	30	23	452	0	0	0
IE	16	22	244	23	27	362	19	19	295	18	16	278	25	16	390	0	0	0
IT	11	18	174	18	20	279	27	22	418	23	18	349	20	23	310	0	0	1
LT	16	23	247	14	18	224	19	20	301	21	18	329	28	21	439	1	1	12
LU	12	20	108	20	22	182	28	22	257	20	18	186	19	18	175	0	0	0
LV	18	23	278	16	18	244	17	18	261	19	18	288	29	23	441	0	0	1
MT	12	21	176	16	20	242	18	17	269	22	19	336	32	22	477	0	0	1
NL	10	19	153	17	19	250	24	22	367	24	19	364	25	21	376	0	0	0
PL	22	23	332	24	20	368	14	16	219	18	20	279	19	19	292	2	1	23
PT	11	20	164	15	20	233	17	20	263	20	18	299	37	22	555	0	0	1
RO	19	23	301	20	20	319	19	18	302	17	19	275	24	20	382	0	0	0
SE	8	20	115	14	20	204	22	19	331	24	18	354	33	23	500	0	0	0
SI	18	21	271	14	18	213	20	20	294	20	20	303	28	21	414	0	0	6
SK	16	24	246	22	21	335	21	18	312	19	19	289	21	18	313	1	1	17
UK	15	22	222	19	19	280	20	21	297	19	17	284	28	21	425	0	0	2
EU-28	16	20	6,827	18	19	7,483	20	20	8,269	20	18	8,299	26	22	11,017	0	0	107

Note: *U % = Unweighted percentage, W % = Weighted percentage, n = unweighted number of respondents.*
Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Sensitivity analysis based on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

FRA has examined the composition of the sample to see whether the respondents – in terms of their core socio-demographic characteristics – correspond to the population at large, based on the socio-demographic data published by Eurostat. As is the normal case with surveys, the sample may over- or under-represent certain groups of respondents compared with the total population, and such differences are often addressed through weighting. As described earlier in this annex, the data of the FRA survey has been weighted to adjust for respondents' age and type of area where they live (urban/rural). Other respondent characteristics which could be interesting to consider include variables such as education, citizenship, employment, household size. However, due to the absence of such additional information in the sampling frames used, these variables have not been used when weighting the results. At the same time, it is possible to compare the sample characteristics in the FRA survey with those obtained in other EU-wide surveys, such as the European Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), which is coordinated by Eurostat.

Sensitivity analysis examines whether changes in the data – such as small differences between the socio-demographic composition of the sample and the total population – can have an effect on the survey results. Taking socio-demographic data from EU-SILC as a benchmark, a number of core survey estimates were recalculated with several provisional weights which adjusted (in addition to age and type of area) for education (International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) in three categories), employment (employed/not employed) household size (single/not single) and citizenship (citizen/non-citizen). Because data from EU-SILC is only available for women aged 18–64 (compared with respondents' age range in the FRA survey, which was 18–74), the sensitivity analysis is based on data from 18–64-year-old respondents also from the FRA survey. A separate adjustment weight was calculated for each of the control variables (education, employment, household size and citizenship) to reproduce the weighted distribution of the external data source within each country.

As an example, Table A2.3 shows the re-weighted results when data on women's education is taken into account[6]. On average, accounting for education results in a difference of 0.5% or less in the overall prevalence rate of physical and sexual violence by a partner, violence in childhood (before the age of 15) and stalking in the 28 EU Member States. The prevalence of sexual harassment is 1% higher if adjusted for education. Considering the level of accuracy of the estimates none of these differences are significant, and they have no or very little impact on the ranking of the countries. Also for the other variables (employment, household size and citizenship) no significant differences were observed. Given that data that was used for the sensitivity analysis are not fully comparable with data from the FRA survey due to differences in definitions used to collect the socio-demographic characteristics, they were not included in the weights used for the analysis.

Confidence intervals

The FRA survey is based on a random probability sample of about 1,500 women per country. This allows us to develop estimates which are representative for all women aged 18–74, both at the EU level and in each EU Member State. Survey estimates are never exact, as they contain a certain degree of error, which can be assessed based on the sampling parameters. Confidence intervals present a range within which there is a given probability that the true value lies. In this case, the 95 % probability level has been selected, meaning that 95% of all possible random samples would produce an estimate within that range. Therefore it can be assumed that the true value of an indicator can be found with a 95 % probability between the lower and upper bounds of the confidence interval.

As an example, the results of the FRA survey show that 21.6 % of women throughout the European Union have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner since the age of 15. When sampling design is taken into account, the confidence intervals indicate that the precision range of this estimate is from 20.4 % to 22.8 %. Because the degree of accuracy of a survey estimate depends on, for example, the sample size, for individual countries a somewhat lower degree of precision can be achieved. As an example, in the case of Austria, the survey estimate for the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence by a partner since the age of 15 is 12.7 %, within a range of 9.8 % to 15.7 % (at 95 % confidence level). Further details on the confidence intervals for selected survey indicators have been provided in Table A2.4.

[6] Eurostat EU-SILC: Distribution of population aged 18–64, by education level (ISCED 1997) [ilc_lvps04].

Table A2.3: Comparison of results using standard FRA survey weights and weights which additionally adjust for education, women aged 18-64 years (%)

EU Member State	Physical and/or sexual violence by a partner since the age of 15		Stalking since the age of 15		Sexual harassment since the age of 15 (based on a full set of 11 items)		Physical and/or sexual violence before the age of 15	
	% using standard weights	% using weights adjusted for education	% using standard weights	% using weights adjusted for education	% using standard weights	% using weights adjusted for education	% using standard weights	% using weights adjusted for education
AT	12.3	12.3	14.5	14.4	35.7	36.0	26.6	27.3
BE	23.7	23.0	25.1	26.0	63.9	67.6	26.5	30.5
BG	23.6	23.3	10.4	10.6	26.6	27.1	29.5	28.7
CY	13.1	13.1	12.2	12.4	38.7	38.4	12.6	13.0
CZ	21.0	20.3	9.1	8.7	52.0	52.1	31.5	31.0
DE	22.3	21.7	24.3	24.8	61.1	63.5	40.1	40.8
DK	32.3	33.6	24.7	24.0	82.1	78.6	42.3	43.2
EE	20.7	19.8	14.5	14.5	56.5	58.8	48.6	50.8
EL	18.8	18.5	13.8	14.3	46.0	45.1	23.1	23.0
ES	12.4	12.1	11.6	12.1	53.1	53.9	29.0	29.8
FI	29.9	28.8	25.6	24.4	72.9	73.0	51.8	52.6
FR	25.7	25.7	29.5	29.9	77.8	79.5	45.2	45.5
HR	12.9	12.5	13.3	13.1	44.1	44.0	30.1	29.3
HU	22.3	22.0	12.2	11.9	45.5	45.2	23.6	23.4
IE	14.1	14.2	12.8	12.6	49.3	51.8	24.8	24.9
IT	17.0	15.5	17.5	16.6	53.3	54.3	29.1	29.2
LT	21.5	21.8	8.2	7.8	37.4	37.4	17.9	17.6
LU	23.2	23.5	31.3	31.1	68.7	68.0	43.2	43.4
LV	30.8	30.5	14.7	14.9	50.6	50.7	34.1	33.6
MT	14.7	13.5	27.4	26.4	53.2	41.6	22.4	20.9
NL	24.8	25.3	26.3	26.2	73.8	72.7	30.2	30.2
PL	12.3	12.1	9.6	9.8	33.3	33.4	16.9	16.7
PT	17.8	17.4	10.0	10.3	34.8	35.5	25.3	24.4
RO	22.2	20.7	8.4	8.7	34.2	36.5	23.4	23.5
SE	27.9	30.9	33.6	34.4	82.2	81.8	39.1	40.0
SI	12.3	11.8	14.2	15.5	46.7	50.4	12.4	13.1
SK	21.7	21.2	15.8	16.0	51.2	51.3	35.1	34.9
UK	29.6	28.7	19.7	19.6	70.0	71.1	35.2	35.8
EU-28	21.1	20.6	18.8	18.9	57.2	58.3	32.5	32.9

Note: *The prevalence results in this table may differ from the results presented elsewhere in this report. In order to be able to use data from EU-SILC to assess the effect of education for the weighting of the results, the analysis had to be limited to data from respondents who are 18–64 years of age, while elsewhere in this report the results have been calculated based on all FRA survey respondents, who were 18–74 years of age.*

Source: *FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012*

Table A2.4: Confidence intervals for selected survey results, by EU Member State

EU Member State	Physical and/or sexual violence by a partner since the age of 15			Stalking since the age of 15			Sexual harassment since the age of 15 (based on a full set of 11 items)			Physical and/or sexual violence before the age of 15		
	Survey estimate	95% confidence interval		Survey estimate	95% confidence interval		Survey estimate	95% confidence interval		Survey estimate	95% confidence interval	
	in %	lower	upper	in %	lower	upper	in %	lower	upper	in %	lower	upper
AT	12.7	9.8	15.7	14.9	10.0	19.7	34.7	27.2	42.1	29.6	23.7	35.6
BE	23.7	19.5	27.9	24.0	20.5	27.5	60.4	55.4	65.4	25.1	21.2	29.1
BG	23.4	17.2	29.6	9.8	6.0	13.7	24.2	17.3	31.1	28.8	21.7	36.0
CY	14.5	11.6	17.4	11.5	9.4	13.5	35.6	31.5	39.8	12.4	9.9	14.9
CZ	20.6	16.5	24.7	8.7	5.6	11.7	51.1	43.9	58.4	31.9	25.5	38.4
DE	22.2	18.5	25.8	23.5	18.5	28.6	60.0	52.6	67.4	41.6	36.3	46.9
DK	32.4	29.2	35.6	24.0	21.1	26.9	80.2	77.3	83.0	42.4	39.8	45.1
EE	20.2	17.4	22.9	13.0	10.7	15.2	52.7	47.8	57.5	47.8	42.8	52.8
EL	19.1	15.7	22.5	12.4	8.2	16.5	42.9	35.4	50.3	23.4	18.4	28.5
ES	12.7	10.4	15.0	11.4	8.6	14.3	49.7	44.2	55.3	28.1	23.4	32.7
FI	30.0	26.8	33.1	24.5	21.1	27.9	70.7	67.2	74.2	51.4	47.4	55.4
FR	26.3	23.9	28.8	28.6	25.9	31.2	74.9	72.4	77.5	44.3	41.0	47.6
HR	13.0	10.1	15.8	12.9	9.4	16.3	41.4	35.1	47.8	29.5	21.9	37.1
HU	21.2	17.6	24.9	11.6	8.8	14.3	42.4	35.0	49.8	23.7	18.2	29.3
IE	14.9	12.2	17.6	12.5	9.9	15.0	47.5	41.4	53.7	25.6	21.1	30.0
IT	18.5	13.0	24.1	18.3	11.9	24.6	51.5	44.1	58.9	30.7	23.0	38.3
LT	23.9	19.5	28.4	7.9	5.5	10.3	35.1	27.7	42.5	17.7	12.6	22.7
LU	22.3	19.3	25.4	30.2	26.3	34.2	67.0	62.9	71.1	42.6	38.3	46.8
LV	31.9	26.3	37.5	13.5	10.1	17.0	47.4	41.3	53.6	32.7	25.9	39.6
MT	14.5	11.3	17.7	26.2	22.2	30.2	49.6	43.9	55.4	21.3	17.3	25.3
NL	25.2	22.0	28.3	26.0	22.2	29.8	72.8	69.4	76.1	30.2	27.4	33.0
PL	13.2	10.7	15.8	8.8	6.4	11.2	32.0	27.2	36.7	16.6	13.8	19.5

EU Member State	Physical and/or sexual violence by a partner since the age of 15			Stalking since the age of 15			Sexual harassment since the age of 15 (based on a full set of 11 items)			Physical and/or sexual violence before the age of 15		
	Survey estimate	95% confidence interval		Survey estimate	95% confidence interval		Survey estimate	95% confidence interval		Survey estimate	95% confidence interval	
	in %	lower	upper	in %	lower	upper	in %	lower	upper	in %	lower	upper
PT	19.2	15.9	22.4	9.4	6.2	12.6	32.5	25.9	39.1	25.3	18.9	31.8
RO	23.5	19.6	27.5	7.9	4.7	11.1	31.5	26.1	37.0	23.2	17.2	29.1
SE	28.3	24.3	32.3	32.5	27.7	37.3	81.3	75.5	87.1	40.7	36.2	45.2
SI	13.3	11.2	15.4	13.7	11.4	16.0	44.1	40.4	47.7	12.5	10.5	14.5
SK	23.3	18.0	28.6	15.6	10.7	20.5	49.4	40.3	58.5	34.3	27.4	41.2
UK	29.3	24.7	33.8	19.0	15.9	22.2	68.3	64.6	72.0	36.3	31.9	40.7
EU-28	21.6	20.4	22.8	18.6	17.2	19.9	55.5	53.7	57.4	33.4	31.8	35.1

Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Overview of respondent characteristics

The composition of the sample and respondent characteristics are important to consider when assessing the survey results. This section presents the characteristics of the respondents with regard to their education and current main activity, while respondents' age distribution was presented in Table A2.2.

According to the survey and women's own perception of their situation, the majority (51.5 %) of the respondents are in paid work, almost one fifth (18.0 %) are retired or unable to work and 13.1 % are home makers or in unpaid or voluntary work (Table A2.5). Overall, 8.6 % are unemployed and 7.2 % are students. The lowest shares of women in paid work are in Croatia (36.6 %), Romania (39.1 %) and Spain (39.1 %), and the highest are in Sweden (65.6 %), Finland (59.5 %) and the Netherlands (58.7 %). Malta has the highest share of home makers (41.2 % of women). Croatia has the highest share of women who self-declare as unemployed (19.5 %). Denmark has the most students (18.3 %) and Hungary (27.5 %) the highest share of retired women or women who say they are unable to work.

According to the survey, the highest level of education that 42.9 % of respondents have achieved is secondary education, 20.3 % have completed tertiary education and 36.3 % have not completed more than primary education (Table A2.6). The highest share of primary-level education among women is in Portugal (64.3 %) and the lowest in Sweden (9.2 %). The highest shares of women with tertiary education are in Denmark (45.1 %) and Sweden (43.6 %) and the lowest in Belgium (10.1 %) and the Czech Republic (10.2 %).

Table A2.5: Main activity of respondents in the EU Member States (weighted %, unweighted *n*)

EU Member State	Full-time employed		Part-time employed		Self-employed		Homemaker		Unemployed		In education		Retired		Other		No answer		Total	
	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*
AT	36	539	14	200	4	34	13	193	4	49	7	115	22	359	1	14	0	2	100	1,505
BE	31	466	17	259	4	74	7	118	9	136	9	139	15	235	7	107	0	3	100	1,537
BG	46	618	2	29	1	9	7	85	16	201	4	30	23	516	1	16	0	3	100	1,507
CY	45	706	8	127	4	51	16	208	10	162	8	169	7	59	1	15	1	8	100	1,505
CZ	44	696	2	38	4	63	13	192	6	91	8	111	22	394	2	34	0	1	100	1,620
DE	33	507	21	325	3	53	11	173	6	99	8	66	17	288	1	22	0	1	100	1,534
DK	36	525	14	208	3	44	3	35	5	69	18	302	18	268	4	60	0	3	100	1,514
EE	46	658	6	75	2	26	10	129	8	97	6	59	19	405	3	50	0	1	100	1,500
EL	28	403	6	76	8	135	23	387	12	162	6	81	15	231	1	21	0	4	100	1,500
ES	26	386	9	122	5	75	20	333	17	261	9	77	9	175	4	53	2	38	100	1,520
FI	48	676	8	115	3	52	5	60	5	70	8	93	20	426	2	28	0	0	100	1,520
FR	38	566	16	244	2	30	7	107	8	112	7	62	18	326	3	47	1	11	100	1,505
HR	33	491	2	19	2	18	10	165	20	293	9	84	23	418	1	15	0	2	100	1,505
HU	36	536	4	55	1	25	13	177	9	112	8	90	26	485	2	32	0	0	100	1,512
IE	21	298	17	272	2	39	32	526	11	148	7	72	7	166	2	39	0	9	100	1,569
IT	36	577	14	206	2	43	19	330	8	116	7	55	13	187	1	17	0	0	100	1,531
LT	42	619	6	91	2	21	8	106	12	166	8	92	18	361	5	92	0	4	100	1,552
LU	31	275	24	231	3	32	13	132	5	41	9	37	13	139	2	21	0	0	100	908
LV	46	694	7	78	2	32	7	96	11	146	8	90	18	350	2	26	0	1	100	1,513
MT	28	360	11	155	1	20	40	656	5	85	6	43	6	142	2	30	0	10	100	1,501
NL	18	276	35	537	5	81	11	180	4	71	8	55	10	172	8	138	0	0	100	1,510
PL	41	615	3	57	2	33	9	143	11	175	8	93	21	326	5	64	0	7	100	1,513

EU Member State	Full-time employed		Part-time employed		Self-employed		Homemaker		Unemployed		In education		Retired		Other		No answer		Total	
	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*
PT	43	551	4	60	3	41	7	107	18	218	6	48	17	437	3	51	0	2	100	1,515
RO	34	485	2	30	2	34	27	446	2	37	5	58	24	445	2	32	1	12	100	1,579
SE	48	725	15	214	2	48	2	26	5	59	8	58	17	330	2	41	0	3	100	1,504
SI	44	596	3	31	2	23	4	69	9	120	11	155	25	479	2	26	0	2	100	1,501
SK	48	747	2	26	4	66	7	108	8	118	9	81	19	325	3	38	0	3	100	1,512
UK	32	453	22	335	3	52	11	160	6	76	5	44	16	338	4	51	0	1	100	1,510
EU-28	35	15,044	14	4,215	3	1,254	13	5,447	9	3,490	7	2,459	17	8,782	3	1,180	0	131	100	42,002

Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Table A2.6: Education level of respondents in the EU Member States (weighted %, unweighted *n*)

EU Member State	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary		No answer		Total	
	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*
AT	21	313	67	1,012	12	178	0	2	100	1,505
BE	22	343	67	1,019	10	161	1	14	100	1,537
BG	27	430	57	818	16	251	1	8	100	1,507
CY	23	242	50	813	26	435	1	15	100	1,505
CZ	11	184	78	1,276	10	158	0	2	100	1,620
DE	29	466	59	866	12	201	0	1	100	1,534
DK	8	120	47	718	45	672	0	4	100	1,514
EE	15	240	62	910	22	334	1	16	100	1,500
EL	34	573	48	694	18	233	0	0	100	1,500
ES	50	795	31	443	19	281	0	1	100	1,520

EU Member State	Primary		Secondary		Tertiary		No answer		Total	
	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*
FI	15	247	58	869	27	403	0	1	100	1,520
FR	40	641	33	477	26	376	1	11	100	1,505
HR	34	555	43	611	22	336	0	3	100	1,505
HU	20	288	67	998	14	226	0	0	100	1,512
IE	26	467	48	722	26	376	0	4	100	1,569
IT	72	1,092	11	172	17	258	1	9	100	1,531
LT	13	207	54	851	32	485	1	9	100	1,552
LU	27	262	38	338	34	304	0	4	100	908
LV	16	256	56	825	28	430	0	2	100	1,513
MT	21	387	62	886	17	225	0	3	100	1,501
NL	25	400	41	590	34	520	0	0	100	1,510
PL	14	177	63	998	22	319	1	19	100	1,513
PT	64	1,065	25	299	11	149	0	2	100	1,515
RO	49	813	34	527	15	229	1	10	100	1,579
SE	4	70	52	726	44	704	0	4	100	1,504
SI	29	500	54	790	16	201	1	10	100	1,501
SK	9	121	75	1,152	15	238	0	1	100	1,512
UK	36	564	36	524	27	406	1	16	100	1,510
EU-28	36	11,818	43	20,924	20	9,089	0	171	100	42,002

Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Annex 3: Key results for selected respondent groups

In addition to collecting information from the respondents about standard socio-economic characteristics, the survey questions included further topics such as women's health situation and their own perceptions about their disability or sexual orientation, and a number of questions aimed to uncover women's possible migrant background. The experiences of women from these respondent groups are considered in this annex with respect to six key victimisation indicators, as measured in the survey – since the age of 15, personal experience of:

- physical or sexual violence by any partner
- psychological partner violence
- physical or sexual violence by non-partner
- stalking
- sexual harassment
- physical, sexual or psychological violence

Prevalence of violence by women's self-declared sexual orientation

In the survey, women were asked to describe their sexual orientation under one of the following four categories: heterosexual/straight, lesbian, bisexual or other. Additionally, women could refuse to answer the question. In total, 98 % of the 42,002 respondents were able to use the four categories to provide an answer, and 2 % chose not to answer this question. This suggests that a clear majority of respondents did not object to being asked this question, which can be interpreted to support future attempts to integrate questions concerning sexual orientation in social surveys. On the other hand, it is not possible to estimate how many lesbian or bisexual respondents, or respondents with other non-heterosexual orientation, chose not to disclose this in an interview and instead identified themselves as heterosexual in the survey.

What the survey asked – sexual orientation

Which of the options on this card best describes how you think of yourself?

- Heterosexual/straight
- Lesbian
- Bisexual
- Other

Based on the information about women's self-declared sexual orientation, it is possible to examine the survey results differentiating between experiences of women who indicated that they are heterosexual/straight and women who selected a non-heterosexual answer category (lesbian, bisexual or other). However, only 526 respondents out of the survey's 42,002 respondents indicated being lesbian, bisexual or other; therefore, given the small number of cases, it is not possible to analyse these results at the Member State level, but they will be considered at the EU level.

EU LGBT survey

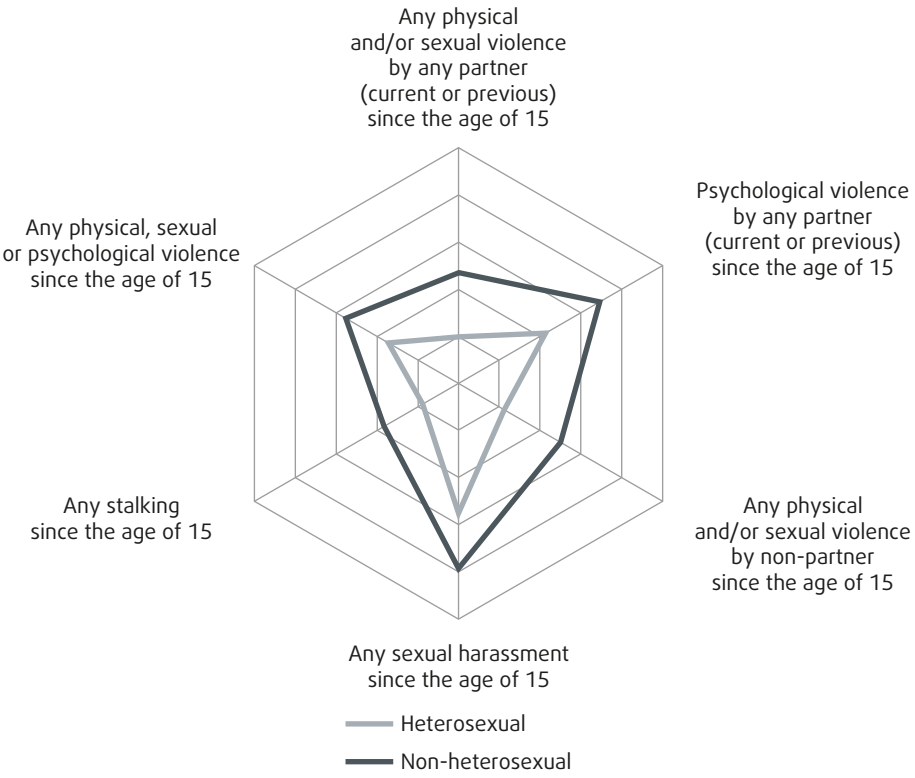
In 2012, FRA carried out an online survey on hate crime and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons. In total, 93,079 LGBT respondents completed the questionnaire, which included questions on their own experiences and perceptions of discrimination, hate crime and life as an LGBT person in Europe. Examining the experiences of lesbian respondents, 5 % indicated that they had been attacked or threatened with violence in the 12 months before the survey because they were perceived to be lesbian (overall, 6 % of all LGBT respondents had experienced an attack as a result of being perceived to be LGBT). Furthermore, 23 % of lesbian respondents noted that they had been harassed because the harassers perceived them to be lesbian, compared with an overall rate of 19 % of all EU LGBT survey respondents being harassed for being LGBT.

For more information on the results of the EU LGBT survey see FRA (2013), *EU-LGBT survey: European Union lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender survey – results at a glance*, available at http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2013/eu-lgbt-survey-european-union-lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-survey-results.

Figure A3.1 illustrates the differences between the experiences of heterosexual and non-heterosexual respondents on six survey indicators. The results suggest notable differences in the levels of experienced violence among heterosexual and non-heterosexual women – the latter being women who identify their sexual orientation as lesbian, bisexual or other in the survey. The differences between the two categories of

respondents are biggest in terms of experienced physical or sexual non-partner violence, physical or sexual partner violence, and psychological partner violence. The results show a higher rate of experienced violence since the age of 15 among non-heterosexual respondents irrespective of the gender of the perpetrator. The difference between the victimisation rates varies. For example, 16 % of non-heterosexual women say that they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a male non-partner since the age of 15, compared with 12 % of heterosexual women, whereas 11 % of non-heterosexual women have experienced this type of violence by female perpetrators, compared with 4 % of heterosexual women. However, the biggest difference is between non-heterosexual and heterosexual women who say they have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by both male and female perpetrators: 23 % of non-heterosexual women indicate having experienced non-partner violence by both male and female perpetrators, compared with 5 % of heterosexual women. This could involve a single incident with multiple perpetrators – women and men – or separate incidents of which some involve male perpetrators, whereas in other incidents female perpetrators are responsible for the violent acts. This may be interpreted as a form of multiple discrimination: non-heterosexual women (women who indicate their sexual orientation as 'lesbian', 'bisexual' or 'other' in the survey) are doubly exposed to violence, as a result of their gender as well as their sexual orientation.

Figure A3.1: Prevalence of various forms of violence by women's self-declared sexual orientation



Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Table A3.1: Prevalence of various forms of violence by women's self-declared sexual orientation (%)

	Heterosexual	Non-heterosexual
Any physical or sexual violence by any partner (current or previous) since the age of 15 [a]	21	48
Psychological violence by any partner (current or previous) since the age of 15 [a]	43	70
Any physical or sexual violence by non-partner since the age of 15 [b]	21	50
Any sexual harassment since the age of 15 [b]	55	78
Any stalking since the age of 15 [b]	18	36
Any physical, sexual or psychological violence before the age of 15 [b]	35	57

Notes: *a Heterosexual with current or previous partner n = 38,787; non-heterosexual (lesbian, bisexual or other) with current or previous partner n = 482.*
b Heterosexual n = 40,457, non-heterosexual (lesbian, bisexual or other) n = 526.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Prevalence of violence among women with disabilities or health problems

According to a Eurostat estimate based on the ad hoc module of the 2002 Labour Force Survey in 25 countries (24 of the current 28 EU Member States, plus Norway), 15.6 % of women aged between 16 and 64 years – that is one in six – have a long-standing health problem or disability.[7] In the FRA survey on gender-based violence against women, respondents were asked to assess (1) their health in general, followed by a question concerning (2) complaints, injuries or diseases that limit their everyday activities, and (3) their view of whether they are disabled or not. At the end of the survey, women could also indicate if they consider they consider themselves part of any particular minority in their country; being a part of a minority in terms of disability was one of the answer categories. Considering all these items together, 16 % of women indicate in the FRA survey that their health is bad or very bad, that their everyday activities are limited by their health or that they consider themselves as disabled or belonging to a minority in their country in terms of disability. Across the EU-28, this corresponds to some 31 million women. The prevalence of health problems, limitations in everyday activities and self-perceived disability increases with age, from 6 % of 18- to 29-year-old women saying that they are in bad health, disabled or limited in their everyday activities, to 28 % of women who are 60–74 years of age saying the same.

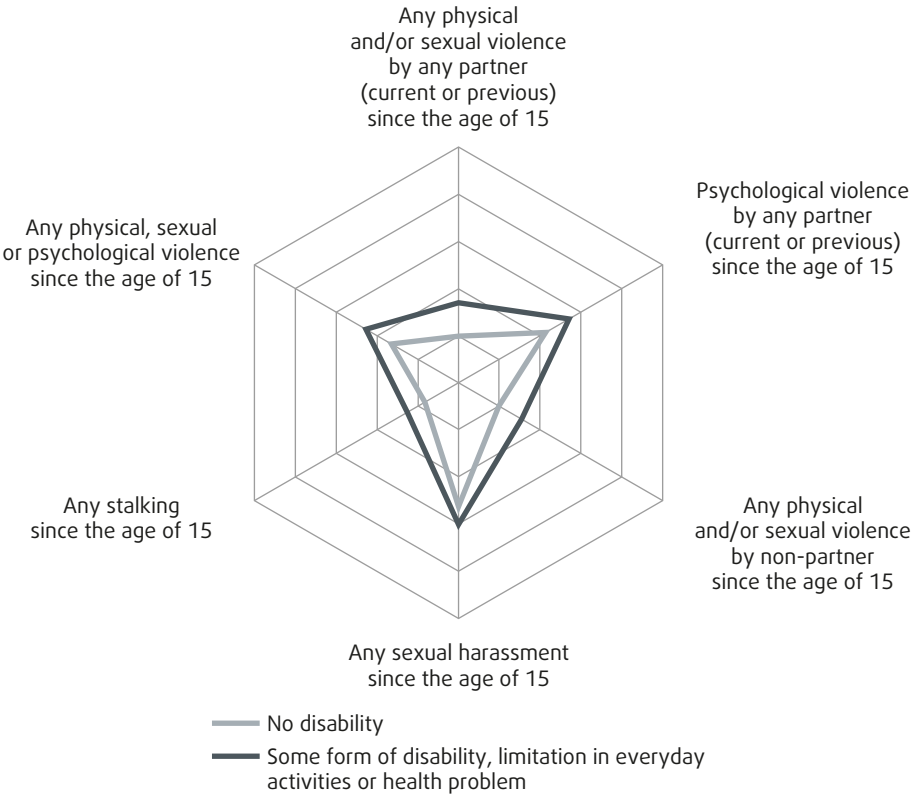
What the survey asked – health and disability

- I would now like to ask you about your health. How is your health in general: is it very good, good, bad or very bad?
- Do you have any complaints, injuries or diseases that limit your everyday activities, keeping you from doing such things as working, shopping, managing your life or keeping in contact with other people?
- Do you consider yourself to be disabled?
- Thinking about where you live, do you consider yourself to be part of any of the following? A minority in terms of disability.

The survey results show that women who have health problems or a disability indicate a higher prevalence of various forms of violence than women who do not have similar health problems or a disability. Figure A3.2 and Table A3.2 illustrate the differences in experiences of violence according to women's health or disability. The biggest differences are found in terms of physical or sexual partner violence: 34 % of women with a health problem or disability have experienced this during a relationship, compared with 19 % of women who do not have a health problem or disability. Differences between these two categories of respondents exceed 10 percentage points also in terms of psychological violence and threats of violence by a partner, violence in childhood and non-partner violence.

[7] Eurostat (2003), *Employment of disabled people in Europe in 2002*, Statistics in Focus, 26/2003, available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/product_details/publication?p_product_code=KS-NK-03-026.

Figure A3.2: Prevalence of various forms of violence by women's assessment of their health and disability



Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

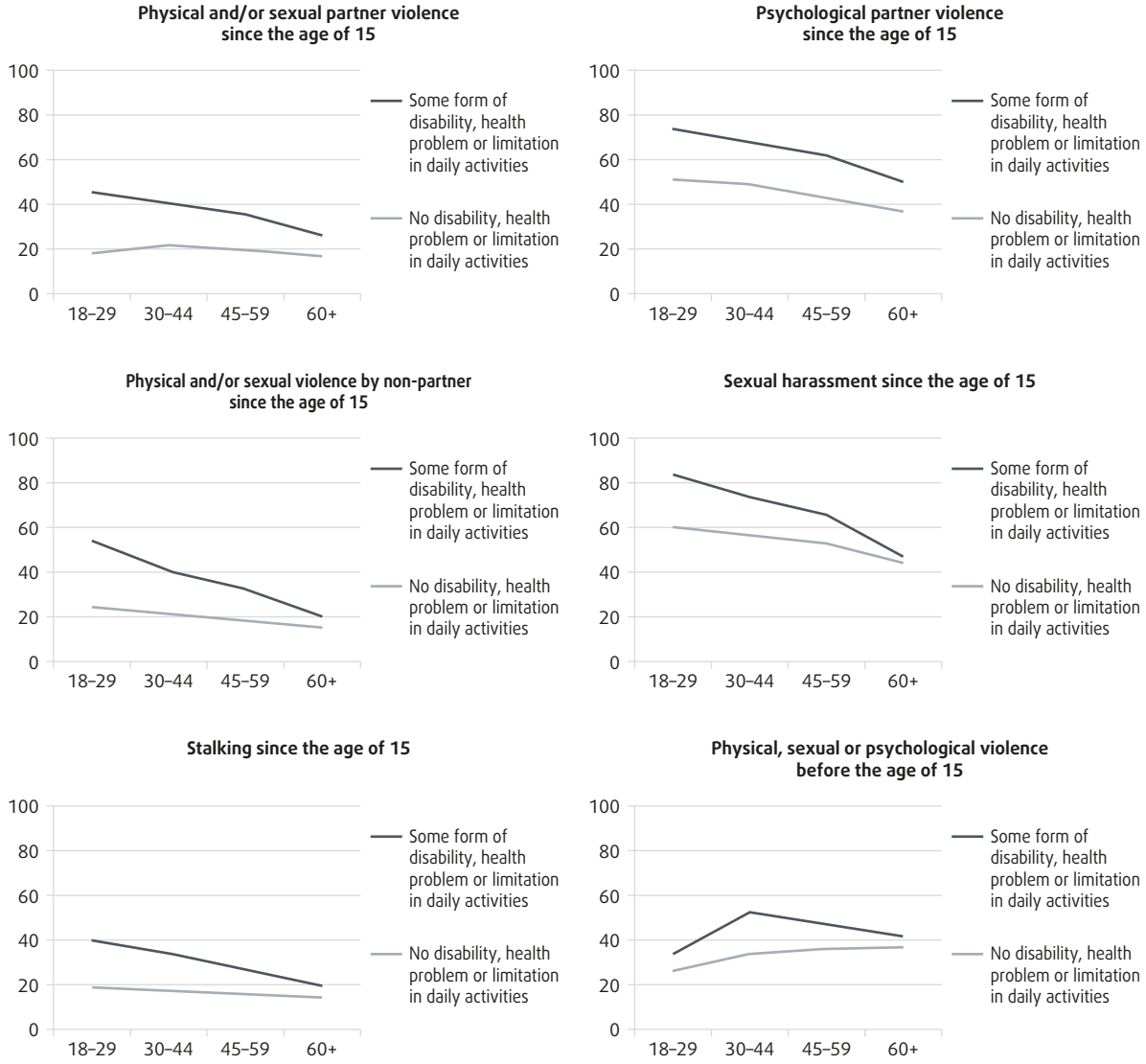
Table A3.2: Prevalence of various forms of violence by women's assessment of their health and disability (%)

	No disability, health problem, or limitation in everyday activities	Some form of disability, health problem, or limitation in everyday activities
Any physical or sexual violence by any partner (current or previous) since the age of 15 [a]	19	34
Psychological violence by any partner (current or previous) since the age of 15 [a]	41	54
Any physical or sexual violence by non-partner since the age of 15 [b]	20	31
Any sexual harassment since the age of 15 [b]	54	61
Any stalking since the age of 15 [b]	17	26
Any physical, sexual or psychological violence before the age of 15 [b]	33	46

Notes: *a Women who have a current or previous partner, and no disability, limitation in everyday activities or health problem n = 32,864; women who have a current or previous partner, and some form of disability, limitation in everyday activities or health problem n = 2,247.*
b Women who do not have a disability, functional limitation or health problem n = 34,509; women who have some form of disability, limitation in everyday activities or health problem n = 7,493.
Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Health problems and disability are linked to some extent to women's age; as described above, older women are more likely to say that they have health problems, are disabled or are limited in their everyday activities. Nonetheless, women who say that they have a disability or health problem or are limited in some

Figure A3.3: Prevalence of various forms of violence by women's assessment of their health and disability, by age group (%)



Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

way in their everyday activities have higher rates of victimisation across different age groups and types of violence. In the cases of physical and/or sexual partner and non-partner violence, sexual harassment and stalking, the differences are the biggest in the youngest age group (18- to 29-year-olds); older women tend to indicate more similar levels of experiences of violence, independent of any issues regarding their health or disability.

Prevalence of violence by migrant background

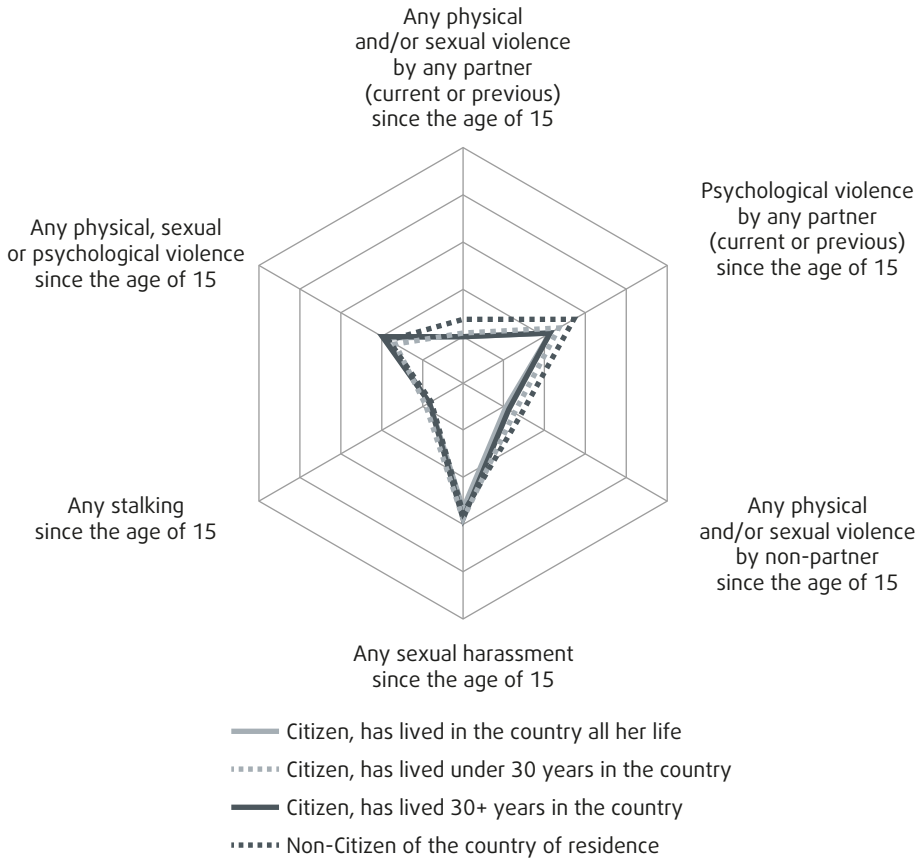
The survey asked several questions which can be used as a proxy indicator for respondents' migrant background. These include questions on citizenship, number of years lived in the country, parents' country of birth and respondents' assessment of belonging to an ethnic or immigrant minority in the EU Member State where they live. In the following, the survey respondents are examined in four categories:

- citizens of the country of residence, and who have lived in the country all their lives;
- citizens of the country of residence, and who have lived in the country for 30 years or more (but not all their lives);
- citizens of the country of residence, having lived in the country for less than 30 years;
- non-citizens of the country of residence.

The results indicate relatively small differences between the respondents based on the four categories as listed above and their experiences of various forms of violence. Women who are not citizens of their

current country of residence have somewhat higher rates of physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15 by partners and non-partners, but there are no notable differences with regard to other forms of violence examined (stalking and sexual harassment since the age of 15; and physical, sexual or psychological violence before the age of 15). See Figure A3.4 and Table A3.3.

Figure A3.4: Prevalence of various forms of violence by women's assessment of their migrant background



Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Table A3.3: Prevalence of various forms of violence by women's assessment of their migrant background (%)

	Citizen, never lived outside the country of residence	Citizen, lived in the country of residence 30 years or longer	Citizen, lived in the country of residence less than 30 years	Non-citizen of the country of residence
Any physical or sexual violence by any partner (current or previous) since the age of 15 [a]	22	20	21	27
Psychological violence by any partner (current or previous) since the age of 15 [a]	43	41	47	54
Any physical or sexual violence by non-partner since the age of 15 [b]	21	22	25	27
Any sexual harassment since the age of 15 [b]	54	58	59	56

	Citizen, never lived outside the country of residence	Citizen, lived in the country of residence 30 years or longer	Citizen, lived in the country of residence less than 30 years	Non-citizen of the country of residence
Any stalking since the age of 15 [b]	18	18	19	16
Any physical, sexual or psychological violence before the age of 15 [b]	34	39	34	37

Notes: *a Women who have a current or previous partner and who are (1) citizens, never having lived outside the country of residence n = 25,785; (2) citizens, having lived in the country of residence 30 years or longer n = 9,326; (3) citizens, having lived in the country of residence less than 30 years n = 2,932; (4) non-citizens of the country of residence n = 1,665.*

b Women who are (1) citizens, never having lived outside the country of residence n = 27,045; (2) citizens, having lived in the country of residence 30 years or longer n = 9,573; (3) citizens, having lived in the country of residence less than 30 years n = 3,234; (4) non-citizens of the country of residence n = 1,744.

Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

Annex 4: Awareness of selected organisations and specialised services that assist women victims of crime in each EU Member State

Table A4.1: Awareness of specialised organisations and services that assist women victims of crime (%) [a,b,c]

EU Member State	"Have you ever heard of the following organisations or services?"		Yes	No	Don't know
AT	1	*Frauenhelpline (0800 222 555)*	35	65	(0)
	2	*Frauenhäuser*	96	4	–
	3	*Regionale Gewaltschutzzentren oder Interventionsstellen*	42	57	(1)
BE	1	*Ecoute violences conjugales*	67	32	(1)
	2	*Collectif contre les violences*	34	65	(2)
	3	*SOS Viol*	68	31	–
	1	*CAW Federatie*	28	72	–
	2	*Vluchthuis*	90	10	–
	3	*Tele-Onthaal*	82	18	–
BG	1	*Фондация "Асоциация Анимус" (Nationalna goreschta linia za domaschno nasilie)*	17	80	3
	2	*Фондация "Надя Център" (Nadja Centre Foundation)*	18	79	3
	3	*Регионални приюти за жени, пострадали от насилие, или центрове за спешна помощ (Zastita na zheni – regional women's shelters or emergency centres)*	38	58	4
CY	1	*Σύνδεσμος για την πρόληψη και αντιμετώπιση της βίας στην οικογένεια (1440) (Sindesmos gia tin prolipsi kai antimetopisi tis vias stin ikogeneia (1440)/Association for preventing and addressing domestic violence (1440))*	78	19	3
	2	*Γραμμή του πολίτη (1460) (Grammi tou politi (1460)/ Citizen's Line (1460))*	84	14	(2)
	3	*Γραμμή έκτακτης ανάγκης (199)/Grammi ektaktis anagkis (199)/ Emergency Helpline (199)*	84	14	(2)
CZ	1	*ROSA*	22	73	5
	2	*proFEM o.p.s.*	7	88	5
	3	*Magdalenium o.s.*	6	89	5
DE	1	*Frauenhäuser*	98	(2)	–
	2	*Frauenberatungsstellen*	87	12	(1)
	3	*Frauennotruf*	61	38	(1)

EU Member State	"Have you ever heard of the following organisations or services?"		Yes	No	Don't know
DK	1	*Kvindekrisecentre*	97	3	–
	2	*Danner*	67	33	(1)
	3	*Offerrådgivningen*	43	54	3
EE	1	*Ohvriabi*	67	32	(2)
	2	*Naiste varjupaigad*	82	17	(1)
	3	*Tugitelefon* 1492	38	58	4
EL	1	*Γραμμή Βοήθειας SOS* 15900 *(Helpline SOS* 15900*)*	42	56	2
	2	*Γραμμή Άμεσης Κοινωνικής Βοήθειας* 197 *του Εθνικού Κέντρου Κοινωνικής Αλληλεγγύης (National Emergency Helpline* 197 *of the Centre for Social Solidarity)*	31	66	3
ES	1	*Teléfono* 016*/Telèfon* 016	78	21	(1)
	2	*Asociación/Centro de Asistencia a Victimas de Agresiones Sexuales (CAVAS)/Centre d'Assistència a Víctimes d'Agressions Sexuals (CAVAS)*	42	56	(2)
	3	*Comisión para la investigación de malos tratos a mujeres (CIMTM)/ Comissió per a la Investigació de Maltractaments contra les Dones*	40	57	2
FI	1	*Ensi- ja turvakotien liitto*	90	10	–
	2	*Naisten Linja*	39	60	(1)
	3	*Raiskauskriisikeskus Tukinainen*	56	43	(1)
FR	1	3919 *Violences Femmes Info*	59	40	(1)
	2	*SOS Viols Femmes Informations du Collectif Féministe Contre de Viol*	39	60	(1)
	3	*Centres d'hébergement, tels que SOS Femmes, Femmes Accueil ou la Maison des Femmes*	76	24	(0)
HR	1	*Autonomna ženska kuća – linija za pomoć* 0800 55 44	76	23	(2)
	2	*Udruga za zaštitu obitelji – Rijeka (U.Z.O.R.)*	45	52	(3)
	3	*B.a.B.e (Budi aktivna, Budi emancipirana)*	82	17	(0)
HU	1	*NANE Egyesület telefonos lelkisegélyszolgálatáról*	59	41	(0)
	2	*PATENT Jogvédő Egyesület telefonos jogsegélyszolgálatáról*	12	87	(1)
	3	*OKIT – Országos Kríziskezelő és Információs Telefonszolgálatról*	30	69	(1)
IE	1	Rape Crisis Centre	94	6	–
	2	Women's Aid	80	20	(0)
	3	Safe Ireland	22	77	(1)
IT	1	*Telefono Rosa*	77	22	–
	2	*Casa delle donne*	28	71	(1)
	3	*Rete Nazionale Antiviolenza e Servizio* 1522	32	67	(1)
LT	1	*Vilniaus Moterų Namai*	56	42	2
	2	*Klaipėdos Socialinės ir Psichologinės Pagalbos Centras*	42	56	3
	3	*Regioniniai moterų krizių ir*	65	34	(1)

EU Member State	"Have you ever heard of the following organisations or services?"		Yes	No	Don't know
LU	1	*Fraenhaus Lëtzebuerg*	62	37	(1)
	2	*Fraentelefon* 123 44	43	57	–
	3	*Service d'assistance aux victimes de violence domestique*	66	34	–
LV	1	*Resursu centrs sievietēm "Marta"*	34	64	(2)
	2	*Krīzes centrs "Skalbes"*	38	60	(2)
	3	*Talsu novada krīžu centrs*	24	74	(2)
MT	1	*Aġenzija Appoġġ (179 helpline nazzjonali għal-vittmi ta' vjolenza)*	97	3	–
	2	*Djar ta' wenz wens għan-nisa bħal Dar Tereża Spinelli,Dar Qalb ta' Ġesu jew Dar Merħba Bik*	92	8	–
	3	*Il-Kummissjoni dwar il-Vjolenza Domestika*	83	15	(2)
NL	1	*Steunpunt huiselijk geweld*	86	14	–
	2	*Vrouwenopvang*	87	13	–
	3	*Hulplijn Tegen Haar Wil*	17	83	–
PL	1	*Ogólnopolskie Pogotowie dla Ofiar Przemocy w Rodzinie "Niebieska Linia"*	69	30	(1)
	2	*Fundacja Centrum Praw Kobiet*	46	53	(1)
	3	*Feminoteka*	15	84	(1)
PT	1	*Serviço de informação a vítimas de violência doméstica (*800 202 148*)*	68	31	(1)
	2	*Associação de mulheres contra a violência (*213 802 160*)*	62	37	(1)
	3	*Associação portuguesa de apoio à vítima (*707 20 00 77*)*	83	16	(0)
RO	1	*Casa Blu – Linie telefonica de ajutor pentru femei*	21	78	2
	2	*A. L. E. G. – Asociatia pentru Libertate si Egalitate de Gen*	13	85	2
	3	*Centrul Artemis*	13	85	2
SE	1	*Kvinnofridslinjen*	48	50	3
	2	*Riksorganisation för kvinnojourer och tjejjourer i Sverige (ROKS)*	75	24	(1)
	3	*Brottsofferjouren (BOJ)*	87	13	–
SI	1	*SOS telefon – za ženske in otroke – žrtve nasilja (*080 11 55*)*	92	8	(1)
	2	*Društvo za nenasilno komunikacijo*	54	41	5
	3	*Združenje proti spolnemu zlorabljanju (*080 2880*)*	56	39	5
SK	1	*Aliancia žien*	48	50	(2)
	2	*Fenestra*	18	79	3
	3	*Inštitút pre výskum práce a rodiny*	38	60	2
UK	1	Women's Aid	67	31	(1)
	2	Refuge	56	43	(1)
	3	A national or regional helpline	52	48	(0)

Notes: *a Out of all respondents (N = 42,002).*
b Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable, so observations based on fewer than 30 responses are put in brackets and observations based on fewer than five responses are suppressed (denoted with '–').
c Taken individually, the sum of categories 'Yes', 'No' and 'Don't know' can differ from the total indicated in the table by +/- one percentage point. This difference is due to rounding.

Source: FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012

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FRA
EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

HELPING TO MAKE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS A REALITY FOR EVERYONE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Violence against women undermines women's core fundamental rights such as dignity, access to justice and gender equality. For example, one in three women has experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15; one in five women has experienced stalking; every second woman has been confronted with one or more forms of sexual harassment. What emerges is a picture of extensive abuse that affects many women's lives but is systematically under-reported to the authorities. The scale of violence against women is therefore not reflected by official data. This FRA survey is the first of its kind on violence against women across the 28 Member States of the European Union (EU). It is based on interviews with 42,000 women across the EU, who were asked about their experiences of physical, sexual and psychological violence, including incidents of intimate partner violence ('domestic violence'). The survey also included questions on stalking, sexual harassment, and the role played by new technologies in women's experiences of abuse. In addition, it asked about their experiences of violence in childhood. Based on the detailed findings, FRA suggests courses of action in different areas that are touched by violence against women and go beyond the narrow confines of criminal law, ranging from employment and health to the medium of new technologies.

Publications Office

FRA – EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS
Schwarzenbergplatz 11 – 1040 Vienna – Austria
Tel.: +43 158030-0 – Fax: +43 158030-699
fra.europa.eu – info@fra.europa.eu
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