

From Insight to Impact

New Directions in Sexual Harassment Research

Expert seminar, Bratislava, 16. – 17. September 2025

Agenda

Day 1: 16th September 2025

8:30 - 9:00 Registration

9:00 – 9:30 Welcome of participants and opening of the seminar

Silvia Porubánová (executive director, SNCHR): Policy changes in prevention and protection from sexual harassment and the use of research findings

9:30 – 10:30 Session 1: Updates from research and data collection on European level

The aim of Session 1 is to share the results of latest EU research and data collections about GBV and SH. During discussion, participants are welcome to address

- how to best complement available data by sector-based research on prevalence,
- how to measure accessibility and effectiveness of protective and preventive measures (including the mandate of equality bodies),
- what should be our priority in monitoring the impact of sexual harassment.

Eva-Esther Sobotka (FRA): Main results from EU gender-based violence survey

The EU gender-based violence survey was carried out jointly by Eurostat, FRA, and EIGE—the three organisations which are responsible respectively for official statistics, human rights, and gender equality within the EU. The data collection took place between September 2020 and March 2024.

Alexandrina Satnoianu (EIGE): Reinforcing zero-tolerance: Using EU GBV Survey insights and communication tools to address sexual harassment at work (online)

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30 Session 2: Developments in advocacy, legal protection and litigation in EU

This session will explore recent legal developments, litigation trends, and evolving interpretations of sexual harassment laws. It will highlight the impact of legislation, landmark cases, and institutional responses, as well as ongoing challenges in enforcing rights and securing justice for survivors. The session aims to bridge the gap between legal theory, research findings, and practical implementation in courts and institutions.

Marta Pompili: Equality Bodies' Role in Tackling Workplace Sexual Harassment: Progress and Challenges

Equinet, the European Network of Equality Bodies, has long been committed to combating harassment and sexual harassment through research and capacity-building activities, continuously enhancing the expertise of National Equality Bodies. In 2014, Equinet conducted research on *Harassment on the Basis of Gender and Sexual Harassment*. This was followed in 2019 by its landmark report *Tackling Violence against Women and Gender-based Violence*. Most recently, in 2023, Equinet organised training for *Equality Bodies on Exploring Online and Offline Harassment*. In this session, the speaker will reflect on progress to date, outline the current landscape, and discuss the remaining challenges to strengthening Equality Bodies' ability to effectively address workplace sexual harassment.

Margarita S. Ilieva: Developments in the legal protection and litigation practice

Analysis of future-relevant, paradigm-shifting legal practice on work-related sexual harassment. In-depth discussion of key supranational legislative and case law developments and recent GREVIO monitoring reports on project countries, as well as CEDAW insights. Overview of diverse forms and patterns covered by the concept of sexual harassment (SH), the requisite contextual analysis to acknowledge SH continua and intersectionalities, victimisation (reprisals) against complainants and their supporters, revictimisation, (retraumatisation) by insensitive or biased adjudicators and other practitioners, including legal representatives, and due trauma-informed delivery, including by legal representatives.

Group photo before lunch break

12:30 – 13:45 Lunch

13:45 – 15:00 Session 3: Research of sexual harassment and disparities of legal definitions

This session will examine how differing legal definitions of sexual harassment in Europe shape the scope, methods, and interpretations of research. Participants will consider how legal disparities affect cross-national comparability, survivor reporting, policy development, and the broader understanding of harassment in the workplace. Within the session, participants will discuss how the project research team might overcome these disparities to provide comparable data.

Margarita S. Ilieva, Marián Filčík (SNCHR), Michaela Ujházyová (SNCHR), Anna Máriássyová (SNCHR): workshop and facilitated discussion

15:00 – 15:30 Coffee break

15:30 – 17:30 Session 4: Methods and data collection for international empirical research

The final session of Day 1 of the seminar will be focused on a collection of recommendations on how to tackle challenges related to the methods of empirical research such as the comparability of findings across various sectors, intersectionality, inclusive and human rights-based research.

Daniel Gerbery (Faculty of Arts, Comenius University Bratislava; Institute for Research of Family and Employment): facilitated discussion with panelists on methodological challenges of research on GBV and SH.

Vilana Pilinkaite Sotirovic (Lithuanian Social Science Centre): Conducting a survey on gender-based violence in academia: Lessons learned from the H2020 UniSAFE project

In this presentation, I will share my experience of working in the multinational team of researchers of the H2020 UniSAFE European project and conducting multi-level research on GBV in higher education. The research was conducted in 15 countries and 46 universities. In the seminar, I will share knowledge on how we mapped national policies and legal frameworks, including the definitions of GBV, targeted groups, indicators of implementation and the context of developed legislation and policy. This was necessary to gain knowledge about the context of GBV prevalence in universities. I will discuss the definition of sexual harassment that we used in the large-scale quantitative survey, the measurements that we applied to learn about victim-perpetrator relations and the indicators that we used to learn about the perception of institutional attitudes and culture.

Nuno Rebelo dos Santos (University of Evora) & Leonor Pais (University of Coimbra): Decent Work and Gender-Based Violence and Harassment: Development of questionnaires for international research.

After framing the decent work concept within the International Labour Organization mission, the authors present the method used to develop the Decent Work Questionnaire into several languages. Then, they explore the development of a new measure of GBVH at work in the healthcare sector, discussing its limitations and potential.

Kristina Gotthardová (CELSI): Methodological challenges for comparative international research of sexual harassment in the workplace

Reflections on methodological and analytical challenges of international research project Sexual harassment in the workplace with a focus on the role of trade unions implemented in six EU member states with common methodology, including survey, interviews with survivors of SHW and stakeholder focus group in each country. This presentation will reflect on the challenges related to establishing and implementing common research methodology in different legal and social contexts and challenges related to the interpretation of results. The research project was coordinated and implemented by CELSI in cooperation and with financial support from Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

19:00 **Social Dinner** Dunajský pivovar, Tyršovo nábrežie, Bratislava - Petržalka
www.dunajskypivovar.sk

Day 2: 17th September 2025**9:00 – 9:45 Session 5: Perspectives of national research reports on sexual harassment at workplace**

The session will be devoted to presenting findings from national-level research conducted by equality bodies and partners of the VIOLET project consortium.

Dace Cālīte (Public Defender of Rights Latvia): Sexual Harassment in Latvian Universities 2024/2025 – Main Findings

At the beginning of 2024, information published in the mass media about incidents of sexual harassment at Latvian universities sparked widespread public interest. In order to assess the situation from the perspective of university students and staff, a survey was conducted with the main objective of investigating the situation related to cases of sexual harassment in Latvian higher education institutions.

Alma Lahe (Together for Life): Ensuring Inclusiveness and Reliability in Researching Workplace Sexual Harassment: The Albanian Case

The presentation will focus on the methodological approaches applied in conducting the national study "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace" in Albania. It will explore the tools and processes used to ensure inclusiveness, data quality, and the reliability of findings, while also reflecting on the challenges of researching such a sensitive issue. In addition to presenting the key findings and recommendations of the study, the session will highlight the strategy for disseminating results and fostering institutional collaboration aimed at addressing sexual harassment and strengthening the protection of employees' rights.

Maria do Rosário Fidalgo (CITE): CITE's intervention in preventing and combating harassment at work in Portugal

Presentation will introduce findings of the most recent research on sexual and moral harassment in Portugal - "Sexual and Moral Harassment in the Workplace" project funded by the European Economic Area (EEA) Grants. The study developed by the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment - CITE and conducted by the Interdisciplinary Centre for Gender Studies - CIEG, provides a comprehensive diagnosis of these phenomena and their manifestations in the workplace.

Michaela Ujházyová (SNCHR): Sexual harassment in the sector of healthcare

In 2023, SNCHR conducted research of prevalence of sexual harassment at workplaces in public health care sector in the Slovak Republic. Research aimed at examining occurrence of sexual harassment in employment relationships including personnel working under all types of employment relationships such as part time work, self-

employment, and student practice. Presentation will highlight main findings, introduce research design and identify challenges in data collection.

9:45 - 11:00 Session 6: Summary of Day 1 and recommendations for the work of expert group (facilitated discussion)

This session will summarize the main conclusions from the Day 1 and within the facilitated discussion, **support the expert group** of the project to address the following questions:

How to incorporate various national legal frameworks without undermining comparability of the findings?

How to bridge the legal analyses and findings of empirical research in the project?

Collect the feedback to the draft proposal of the research design.

11:00 – 11:15 Coffee break

Follow-up programme for the Expert Group of the VIOLET consortium

11:15 – 13:30 Session 7: Launch of the research project activities

The aim of the session is to launch the development of the research toolkit which should ensure higher comparability of data from national research studies and enable equality bodies outside project consortium to implement similar research in their national contexts in the future.

Toolkit will include:

1. Theoretical concept – definition and classification of forms of sexual harassment within conceptual framework developed based on national legal contexts and social concept of sexual harassment.
2. Operationalization – modules and questionnaire items with guidance for national and contextual adaptations.
3. Recommendations for management of quality of data.
4. HRBA guidelines such as inclusive approach towards vulnerable groups.

Anna Máriássyová (SNCHR): Development of the toolkit (facilitated discussion; for the expert group)

Speakers and facilitators of the seminar



Dace Cālīte

Profile

Dace Cālīte is a sociologist with more than 20 years of experience in leading sociological research and implementing interdisciplinary projects. For the past two years, she has been working at the Office of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Latvia in the Department for the Prevention of Discrimination, where she has led and carried out studies on various aspects of discrimination, with a particular focus on public attitudes, institutional practices, and mechanisms for building an inclusive society. Her work combines academic rigor with practical contributions in the field of human rights, ensuring that research results serve as a foundation for policy planning, public awareness, and strengthening human rights protection.



Alexandrina Satnoianu

Profile

Alexandrina Satnoianu coordinates communication campaigns at the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), where she has worked for the last fifteen years. Her core tasks involve translating the Institute's technical work into engaging content and practical communication material that inspires various target audiences to support gender equality. Previously, she worked with the Romanian Ministry of European Integration, where she coordinated a national awareness-raising campaign to inform women about the equal rights and non-discrimination framework developed during Romania's accession to the EU. She holds a Master's degree in Gender Studies and a second Master's in Marketing and Communications.



Maria do Rosário Fidalgo

Profile

Project, training, and international coordinator at CITE, holds a degree in Development Cooperation at International Relations and Specializes in gender equality and non-discrimination in the labour market (ISCSP). Senior civil servant for 42 years and CITE representative at EQUINET,

European Commission, World Family Organization (UN) and national bodies.



Marian Filčík

Profile

Marian Filčík is the Head of International relations, Monitoring and reporting at the Slovak National Centre for Human Rights. Before joining the Centre, Marian worked as the Director of Human Rights Department at the Slovak Ministry of Justice and expert on non-discrimination, LGBTIQ rights and violence against women, representing Slovak government in various expert working groups, fora and delegations at the UN, COE and EU.

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Kristína Gotthardová

Profile

Kristína Gotthardová is a researcher with a background in public policy with a master's degree from Central European University, with a focus on gender-based violence and gender equality. She is affiliated with Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI), specializing in areas of gender-equality, workplace safety, industrial relations and social dialogue. Currently, she is undergoing a research traineeship in gender-based violence at the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Her research interests include gender-based violence, violence against women in politics, cyber violence against women and girls and sexual harassment.

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Margarita S. Ilieva

Profile

Margarita S. Ilieva has 20+ years of experience as an international strategic equality and human rights litigator and researcher/ author. Her landmark cases before the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) include *Behar and Gutman v. Bulgaria* and *Budinova and Chaprazov v. Bulgaria* (hate speech), *Yordanova and Others v. Bulgaria* (forced eviction of Roma), and *Oganezova v. Armenia* (homophobic campaign). She developed the Equinet Handbook on Using Equality Data in Legal Casework, conducted a FRA study on EBs work on hate crime, and developed ODIHR policy papers on hate crime victims

support and interagency cooperation on hate crime. She is a Council of Europe international human rights expert in various areas and

countries. Margarita was a member of the UN OHCHR Advisory Committee for the [A Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation](#). For 20+ years, she was a member of the European Equality Law Network, the expert for Bulgaria (2001-2022, [latest report](#)). Margarita regularly provides capacity building for judges and practicing lawyers on strategic discrimination litigation, including hate speech and harassment cases, and trauma-informed delivery, for ERA-Trier, Equinet, OSCE (various countries), and other institutions. Margarita was strategic litigation advisor for TGEU and ILGA Europe in 2021-22. Margarita regularly publishes legal commentary on the jurisprudence of the ECtHR in (intersectional) discrimination and gender-based violence cases in authoritative blogs and journals.



Alma Lahe

Profile

Alma Lahe is a social and gender issues expert with a solid educational background in law and engineering from the University of Tirana. She has built a multifaceted career that combines technical expertise with a strong commitment to promoting human rights and advancing women's rights. Her professional journey began in journalism, where she honed her communication skills, providing a strong foundation for later roles in public relations and advisory capacities within the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, and Equal Opportunities. In 2007, Alma contributed as a member of the drafting group for Albania's first National Strategy on Gender Equality and Domestic Violence, specifically within the working group "Women and Media," playing an important role in shaping this milestone document. As part of her work with Together for Life, Alma led the team of experts that conducted the national study "Sexual Harassment at Work", further contributing to the advancement of gender equality and workplace rights in Albania. Contact: alahe@togetherforlife.org.al



Anna Máriássyová

Profile

Anna Máriássyová is an analyst and researcher at Slovak National Centre for Human Rights. She mainly focuses on media representation of human rights-related topics including violence against women, on right to education, right to housing and rule of law. Within VIOLET project she participates at setting up the processes against sexual harassment in the workplace and editing the toolkit on the research of sexual harassment.

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Leonor Pais, PhD.

Profile

Leonor Pais, PhD. is an associate Professor at the University of Coimbra, Portugal, Portuguese Coordinator of the European WOP-P Master Course and scientific supervisor of several PhD and Master's students Theses. Her research interests mainly focused on knowledge management, human resources management, and decent work. Leonor is also a principal investigator and team member in Portuguese nationally funded projects and European funded projects. Evaluator of proposals for scientific projects (Funding Agency for Science, Research and Technology). She has published books, book chapters, and articles in international journals.

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Marta Pompili

Profile

Marta Pompili is a Policy Officer at Equinet, the European Network of Equality Bodies, responsible for coordinating the network's work on gender equality. She holds a master's degree in international relations and European Studies from the University of Florence, Italy, and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Interdisciplinary Studies from Smith College, USA, with a focus on Women and Gender Studies. Before joining Equinet, Marta worked at the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), where she contributed to projects exploring the interconnection between violent extremism and gender-based discrimination. She also previously supported Equinet's Policy and Legal Team, working on a range of topics, including gender equality and the equality implications of climate change and climate policy.



Silvia Porubánová

Profile

Silvia Porubánová is a sociologist specializing on equal opportunities for men and women, human rights aspects of anti-discrimination, and social inclusion. Before taking up the role of executive director of SNCHR in 2020, she served as a director of the Institute for Labor and Family Research. Silvia is a recipient of the International Year of the Family Gold Medal and the UN Honorary Award, significantly involved in initiatives aimed at increasing the social and political participation of women and marginalized groups. She is the author, co-author, and editor of many books on human rights. She is also known to the public for raising awareness of socially sensitive issues such as abortion, migration, and the rights of LGBTIQ+ communities.

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Nuno Rebelo Dos Santos, PhD

Profile

Nuno Rebelo Dos Santos, PhD works as an associate professor at the University of Évora, Portugal where he fulfils the role of scientific supervisor at PhD and Master's levels on organizational psychology and research methods. His research interests primarily focus on global, inter-organizational, and intra-organizational cooperation, decent work, performance development, leadership, and organizational intervention. Nuno has experience as an evaluator of scientific projects in scientific funding institutions at the international level. He is author and co-author of many book chapters and articles published in academic journals.

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Eva-Esther Sobotka

Profile

Eva-Esther Sobotka works at the EU Agency of Fundamental Rights on topics of countering antisemitism, Holocaust education, human rights education, countering violence against women, strengthening civic space, National Human Rights Institutions, human rights structures, Equality and the rule of law. She holds a PhD in Politics, International Relations, and Law from Lancaster University, UK. She publishes regularly in peer-reviewed publications on various topics concerning human rights.

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Vilana Pilinkaite Sotirovic

Profile

Vilana Pilinkaite Sotirovic completed her PhD at the Central European University in Budapest and has worked as a senior research fellow at the Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences for over ten years. She has conducted number of research on quality of gender+ equality policies (QUING Project), gender mainstreaming in parliaments, domestic violence, and gender-based violence in sport and academia. She has contributed to numerous research initiatives and data collection projects on various fundamental rights issues for the European Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), as well as on gender equality policy issues for the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Recently, as a member of the international research team on gender-based violence in universities, she coordinated a quantitative survey and conducted qualitative interviews with victims of GBV under the H2020 UNISAFE project (<https://unisafe-gbv.eu>). Many of her research findings have been published in reports and scientific journals.



Michaela Ujházyová

Profile

Michaela Ujházyová is a researcher in the field of equality and human rights. After her doctorate in systematic philosophy on responsibility and accountability in medical research, she worked in organizations of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport. As human rights education trainer and author of educational materials, she has contributed on national and international programmes for young leaders, youth workers and teachers. She has been working as a head of research team at the Slovak National Center for Human Rights since 2019.

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