



SLOVAK NATIONAL
CENTRE FOR
HUMAN RIGHTS



Sexual harassment at workplace

Toolkit for legal
and empirical research



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Editors: Michaela Ujházyová, Anna Máriássyová

Graphic design: Kamila Černáková, Jakub Kováč

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Project partners:



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List of abbreviations

ADT - asking different questions method

AL - Albania

ASQT - asking the same questions and translating method

CERV - Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Values Programme

CITE - Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment

CSH - cyber sexual harassment

CZ - Czech Republic

EB - Equality Body

EU - European Union

GBV - gender-based violence

HR - human resources

6 HRBA - human rights-based approach

ILO - International Labour Organisation

JDI - Job Description Index

LT - Lithuania

MK - Republic of North Macedonia

OHCHR - Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

PT - Portugal

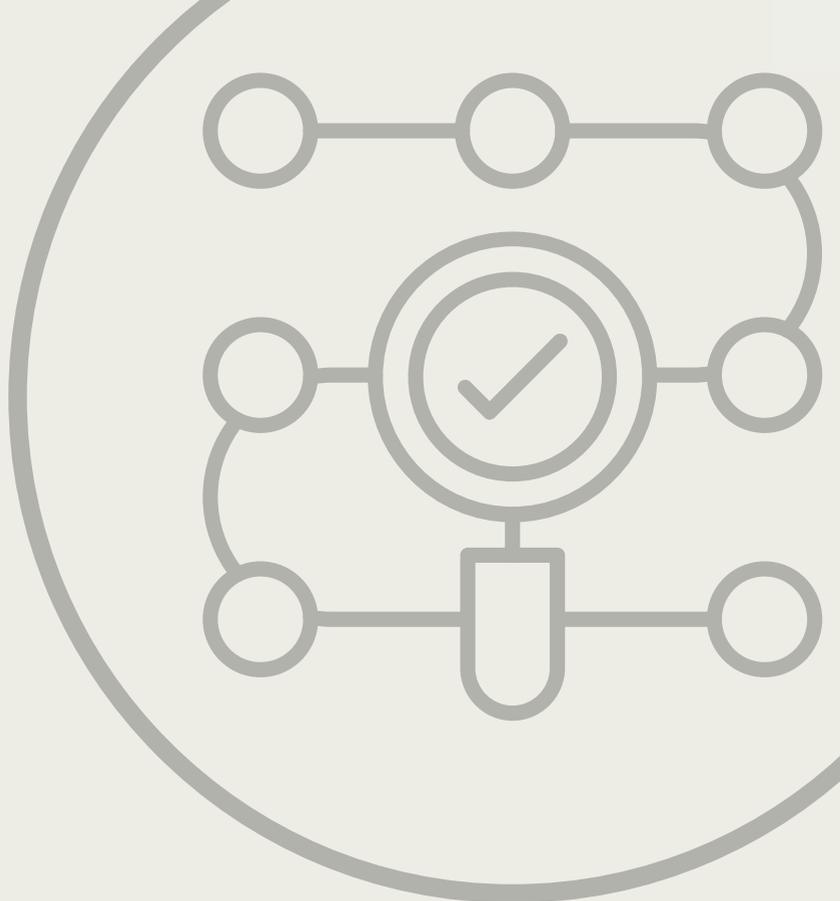
RQ - research question

SEQ - The Sexual Experience Questionnaire

SH - sexual harassment

SK - Slovakia

WHO - World Health Organisation



Introduction

This publication is an output of the VIOLET project funded by CERV programme, which focuses on prevention of sexual harassment at the workplace in project countries: Albania, Czech Republic, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Portugal and Slovakia. The project is led by national equality bodies, EQUINET, civil society organizations and universities and its aim is to contribute to creating a safe working environment free from sexual harassment and violence. It is based on four pillars:

1. providing comprehensive data about sector-specific prevalence of sexual harassment and analyse legal gaps and judicial practices;
2. tailored prevention programmes developed for specific workplaces and trainings for employees;
3. building of platforms for collaboration among stakeholders and strengthening the institutional framework for prevention of sexual harassment and victim protection;
4. building of public awareness by campaigns focused on recognition of sexual harassment, encouragement of bystander intervention and promotion of support systems for victims.

The toolkit is a part of the first pillar, and its primary goal is to provide a unified methodological approach to research of sexual harassment for partner countries. However, its design also allows the use outside the scope of the project – by other equality bodies, research institutions or public bodies. It was written in close cooperation with experts from project countries. Two expert groups were created – with a legal and sociological research background – and during regular meetings they discussed the methodological aspects of the research to achieve a unified methodological approach of all research teams. Each part of the toolkit was drafted by different experts, and the members of the expert groups had an opportunity to discuss the draft and the methodological issues.

The toolkit is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1, Legal research, provides a comparison of national legal frameworks of project countries and defines methodological approach to legal research. Chapter 2 provides an overview of sociological understanding of sexual harassment and methodological approach to empirical research. In Chapter 3 you can find comparison of legal and sociological understanding of sexual harassment and implications for empirical research. Chapter 4 consists of questionnaire for research of prevalence of sexual harassment, its impact, reporting, awareness and sensitivity and guidance for national adaptations and translation. Chapter 5 focuses on recommendations for management of data quality and Chapter 6 provides guidance on a human rights-based approach in research, protection of respondents and interviewers.



Chapter 1

Legal research

One of the challenges of international research are differences in understanding the main concepts. This chapter provides an overview of definitions of sexual harassment (SH) in project countries and outlines the joint methodology of legal research.

1.1 Legal framework

Countries participating in the research have a relatively varied approach to how they set up their SH legislation and are influenced by different international law sources. Four different aspects were compared in order to monitor the differences and common understanding of SH among the project countries: EU membership and therefore compliance with EU legislation, ratification of the CoE Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 (Violence and Harassment Convention) and prohibition of sexual harassment within the Criminal Code.

Definitions used in the national law of EU Member States (CZ, LT, PT, SK) are influenced by the definition of **SH at the workplace in the EU “equality” Directives** 2006/54/EC¹ and 2010/41/EC,² hence they should mostly be similar. Both directives stipulate in their Preamble that sexual harassment is a form of discrimination on the grounds of sex and Directive 2006/54/EC also suggests responsibilities of employers: *“In this context, employers and those responsible for vocational training should be encouraged to take measures to combat all forms of discrimination on grounds of sex and, in particular, to take preventive measures against harassment and sexual harassment in the workplace and in access to employment, vocational training and promotion, in accordance with national law and practice”* (2006/54/EC, Preamble (7)). Both directives use the same definition of the term sexual harassment: *“sexual harassment”: where any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment;”* (2006/54/EC, Article 2(d); 2010/41/EC, Article 3 (d)). Apart from the above-mentioned equality directives, relevant definitions and legal frameworks are

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).

2 Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC.

provided in Directive 2024/1385 on combating violence against women and domestic violence. The directive has not been transposed yet, with new or amended legislation expected by June 2027. The influence of EU directives on antidiscrimination legislation in Albania and North Macedonia can be assumed as well.

There are three countries which ratified the **Istanbul Convention and ILO Convention No. 190**³ (AL, MK, PT) and three countries which have not ratified any of them (CZ, SK, LT). Hence, there is one country (Portugal), where the legislation on sexual harassment is influenced by 3 different international law sources, whereas other national legal frameworks reflect a smaller number of international law norms (see Table 1).

The Istanbul Convention recognises sexual harassment as a form of gender-based violence and encourages states to *“take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, is **subject to criminal or other legal sanction**”* (Istanbul Convention, Art. 40).

ILO Convention No. 190 does not explicitly define harassment as a form of violence, rather uses the term „along with“ violence (gender-based violence and harassment).

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„a) the term “violence and harassment” in the world of work refers to a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in, or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment;

b) the term “gender-based violence and harassment” means violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender, or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately, and includes sexual harassment.” (ILO 190, Art 1.1)

Since the ILO Convention was ratified by some of the project countries only recently (2022, 2023 and 2024), it has not yet been fully transposed into national legislation.

With regard to the project countries, there is also no common approach towards considering sexual harassment as a criminal offence. Several countries have SH included in their Criminal Codes (AL, LT, MK) while others do not (CZ, PT, SK). This is a crucial link between the legal and sociological aspects of the analysis within the VIOLET project, as one

3 International Labour Organisation (ILO) Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)

of the key research questions is whether and how the inclusion of sexual harassment in the Criminal Code as a criminal offence influences the prevalence of SH and protection against SH (see more in Phase 3).

Table 1 Comparison of national legal frameworks of VIOLET project countries

Country	EU Membership	Ratified Istanbul Convention	Ratified ILO Convention No. 190	SH in the Criminal Code
Albania	Candidate for membership	Yes (2013; into force 2014)	Yes (2022)	Yes
Czech Republic	Yes	No	No	No
Lithuania	Yes	No	No	Yes
North Macedonia	Candidate for membership	Yes (2018; into force 2018)	Yes (2023)	Yes
Portugal	Yes	Yes (2013; into force 2014)	Yes (2024)	No
Slovakia	Yes	No	No	No

Despite the above-mentioned differences, the common aspects of SH definitions are:

- sexual harassment as unwanted behaviour, although it is not explicitly stated in the Slovak definition;
- various forms of sexual harassment mentioned in the definitions (such as verbal, non-verbal and physical; the written form is explicitly mentioned in one of the Lithuanian definitions), although not all definitions specifically state the possible forms of sexual harassment, such as the Czech definition;
- in all countries, the prohibition of sexual harassment is included either in Labour Codes or specific (anti)discrimination laws which are applicable also in employment relations;
- the majority of the definitions explicitly mention the connection between sexual harassment and human dignity (AL, CZ, LT, MK, SK). One of the Lithuanian definitions also refers to the influence of SH on sexual self-determination and integrity;
- the majority of the definitions (AL, CZ, LT, MK, SK) also include a reference to the impact or consequences of sexual harassment, such as the creation of an intimidating, degrading, disrespectful, humiliating, hostile or offensive environment. Moreover, one of the

Lithuanian definitions refers to physical, psychological, sexual, or economic impact of sexual harassment as well;

- several countries have specific laws on gender equality / equal opportunities between women and men including norms on sexual harassment (AL, LT, MK); in North Macedonia, there is even a specific law on workplace harassment.
- in 3 countries, there is only one definition of sexual harassment (CZ, PT, SK), in the other 3 (AL, LT, MK), there are several definitions although they are similar (except for the definitions in criminal law).

Another interesting aspect of the norms on the prevention, resolution and protection against sexual harassment at the workplace are the available remedies and enforceability methods of this protection. In most of the countries, crucial institutions with regard to sexual harassment at the workplace are the labour inspectorates, equality bodies and courts. Labour inspectorates have the authority to decide on and impose fines when they establish that the employer violated their obligations in relation to sexual harassment. The courts can award financial compensation to the victim of sexual harassment. In several countries, an apology is also one of the remedies, as well as rectification of the situation, if possible, including refraining from such behaviour by the perpetrator. Criminal courts and penalties under criminal law are also relevant in countries where sexual harassment constitutes a criminal offence.

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The role of equality bodies varies among the countries. In some countries, the equality bodies have the authority to decide on complaints they receive, in others they provide legal advice, representation at court or third opinions as an expert advisory body. These differences are important for national adaptations of the questionnaire as well as for possible follow-up activities.

The Equality Body in Albania (Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination) is legally mandated to examine complaints submitted by individuals or groups of individuals who claim to have been subjected to discrimination, including sexual harassment in the workplace. In this capacity, the Commissioner is empowered to:

- (a) conduct administrative investigations into the cases brought before them;
- (b) impose administrative sanctions in accordance with applicable legal provisions;

- (c) promote the principle of equality and non-discrimination, in particular through awareness-raising and information activities on these issues, including the provision of written information, inter alia, on this law, in the Albanian language, minority languages, and in accessible formats for persons with disabilities;
- (d) issue recommendations to the competent authorities, especially by proposing the adoption of new legislation or the amendment or reform of existing legislation;
- (e) publish reports and issue recommendations on any matter related to discrimination, including sexual harassment, etc.

The Equality Body in the Czech Republic (Office of the Public Defender of Rights and Defender of Children’s Rights) issues methodological assistance to victims of discrimination, including sexual harassment in the area of employment. Apart from providing legal advice, it can address the employer and assess whether discrimination occurred. However, as of 2/2026, the employers do not have the obligation to comply - which could change during 2026 with the implementation of European Directives on Standards for Equality Bodies. As of 2/2026, the Czech Equality Body doesn’t have the possibility to represent victims in court.

The Equality Body in Lithuania (Office of the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson of Lithuania) has the authority to investigate complaints on sexual harassment, also to provide legal advices to private persons and legal entities on SH, to submit impartial conclusions to the trials only on the request of the trial.

One of the fundamental competencies of **The Equality Body in North Macedonia (Commission for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination - CPPD)** is to adjudicate on discrimination complaints. The institutional framework for non-judicial protection against discrimination in North Macedonia operates mainly through the the Commission for Prevention and Protection against Discrimination, the Ombudsman, and the Legal Representative competent to adjudicate cases of unequal treatment based on gender. CPPD has the status of the main equality body in the effort to prevent and protect against all forms and types of discrimination (including workplace sexual harassment). It is derived from broad range of competencies, functioning as an advisory, preventive, informational, statistical, educational, and research-oriented body, as regulated by the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination. One of the Commission’s key competences in the context of the realisation

and protection of the rights of potential victims of discrimination (including sexual harassment) in the field of work and employment relationships is to act upon complaints of discrimination. In the procedure following a submitted complaint, the Commission issues an opinion on whether a violation of a provision of the Law on Prevention and Protection against Discrimination has occurred and provides a recommendation on how to remedy the violation of the right.

The Equality Body in Portugal (Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment - CITE) is a national entity dedicated to promoting equality between women and men in the labour market. It is a tripartite body with representatives from public administration, unions, and employers' associations, operating under the responsibility of the Minister of Labour, Solidarity, and Social Security, in conjunction with the Minister of Youth and Modernisation. Its competencies include receiving and assessing complaints or situations indicative of violations of legal provisions on equality and non-discrimination, providing legal information and support, issuing opinions, and requesting inspections of workplaces to verify potential discriminatory practices. CITE acts as a national mechanism for equality, collaborating with other entities such as the Labour Conditions Authority and the General Inspectorate of Finance, and participates in the implementation of the National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination. The Commission promotes awareness campaigns, training, and educational publications on sexual and moral harassment, including guidelines for codes of conduct and manuals on harassment prevention.

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The Equality Body in Slovakia (Slovak National Centre for Human Rights) serves as both an Equality Body and National Human Rights Institution. In cases of discrimination which include sexual harassment, it provides legal aid in the areas of employment, education, provision of goods and services or healthcare. The centre may represent victims in court, initiate strategic litigation or public interest lawsuits, as well as aid with out-of-court settlement. It further provides expert non-binding opinions on issues concerning discrimination, as well as conducts research and training in the area, including on sexual harassment prevention and resolution.

<p>ALBANIA</p>	
<p>Definition</p>	<p>a) “The employer is prohibited from engaging in any act that constitutes sexual harassment of employees and shall not permit such acts by other employees. Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted behavior, expressed through words, physical acts, or symbolic gestures of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating personal dignity, particularly when it creates a threatening, hostile, humiliating, degrading, or offensive environment, committed by the employer against an employee, a job applicant, or among employees.” (Section 32, para. 2, The Labour Code)</p> <p>b) “Gender-based harassment” is any form of unwanted conduct related to a person’s gender that has the purpose or effect of violating their personal dignity or creating a threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. “Sexual harassment” is any form of unwanted conduct, expressed through words, physical actions, or symbolic behavior of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity, particularly when it creates a threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment. (Section 2, Law on Gender Equality, currently in force)</p> <p>b/1) “Sexual harassment is harassing behaviour of a sexual nature, expressed through words or actions, directed at a person with whom one is in employment, business, or other dependency relations.” (Section 4, Law on Gender Equality, broad sense, this law is under a review process as of January 2026)</p> <p>c) “Engaging in behavior of a sexual nature that violates the dignity of a person, by any means or form, creating a threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment, constitutes a criminal offence and is punishable by imprisonment from one to five years. When this offence is committed in collaboration, against several persons, more than once, or against children, it is punishable by imprisonment from three to seven years.” (Section 108/a, Criminal Code, as of January 2026, there is a draft of new Criminal Code with a new definition of SH)</p> <p>d) “Sexual harassment is that form of discrimination which occurs in the case of unwanted conduct, whether verbal or non-verbal, of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and creating an intimidating, hostile, contemptuous, humiliating, or offensive environment for him/her.” (Section 3, para. 14, Law on Protection from Discrimination)</p>
<p>Areas</p>	<p>a) employment relations</p> <p>b) among other fields, it is also applicable to employment relations</p> <p>b/1) all areas of social life in the public and private sector</p> <p>c) all areas of social life in the public and private sector</p> <p>d) employment relations, social security, healthcare, education, access to goods and services</p>

Remedies	<p>a) Under the Labour Code, the victim may turn to the Labour Inspectorate, which can issue a fine to the employer. The victim may seek financial compensation by submitting a claim in court.</p> <p>b) A complaint submitted to the Labour Inspectorate, which has the authority to impose fines, or a complaint submitted to the direct supervisor, who may take disciplinary measures and impose fines, as well as the right to file a lawsuit in court for compensation for damages.</p> <p>b/1) The same remedies as those provided under the law currently in force.</p> <p>c) Criminal offence, damage compensation according to civil law articles based on the fault of the defendant.</p> <p>d) The victim may claim to the Commissioner for Protection against Discrimination. The Commissioner takes a decision based on the facts and can impose a fine. Also, the victim has the right to seek damage compensation in the civil court. The victim may seek a public apology from the defendant.</p>
Comments	<p>A comprehensive analysis of all national legal acts concerning the meaning attributed to sexual harassment leads to the conclusion that there is no unified definition. In some cases, sexual harassment is addressed in a narrow sense, in others in a broader sense, and in some instances, it is not clearly identified what constitutes harassment in the workplace.</p>
	<p>In the narrow sense (stricto sensu) of workplace sexual harassment, we understand the classical definition provided by the primary legal act that specifically regulates employment relations.</p> <p>In the broad sense (lato sensu), reference is made to those national legal acts which do not directly address sexual harassment in the workplace, but rather sexual harassment in general. In this regard, this does not mean that the objective aspect manifested through acts of sexual harassment does not occur in the workplace; however, it appears that there is a legal gap within the specific labour legislation. That being said, there are several legal acts which provide definitions of the term “sexual harassment” or similar related terms.</p> <p>Within the subsection on sexual crimes, the Criminal Code broadens the punishable forms of harm to physical or moral integrity by also considering as sexual crimes other conducts not specifically defined under the offence of sexual harassment. Nevertheless, these criminal offences are punishable even when they occur in the workplace. Consequently, the provisions of these articles may also be regarded as part of an approximate definition of sexual harassment.</p>

CZECH REPUBLIC

Definition	<p>“(1) Harassment shall mean any unwanted conduct associated with the grounds specified in Section 2 (3), a) taking place with the purpose or effect of diminishing the dignity of a person and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, or b) which could be legitimately be perceived as a precondition for a decision affecting the exercise of rights and obligations following from legal</p>
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	relationships. (2) Sexual harassment shall mean any conduct of a sexual nature under paragraph 1 above.” (Section 4, Anti-Discrimination Act)
Areas	employment , social security, healthcare, education, access to goods and services
Remedies	<p>The victim may seek an apology, a reprieve from sexual harassment, and financial compensation by submitting an anti-discrimination claim in court.</p> <p>Under the Labour Code, the victim may turn to the Labour Inspectorate, which can issue a fine to the employer.</p> <p>* <i>note</i> - However, the Labour Inspectorate is not permitted to investigate service offices, leaving civil servants behind its protection. A civil servant would need to complain within the structure of the specific office, where investigation falls under the scope of a disciplinary committee. The victim may turn to administrative courts.</p>
Comments	<p>The specific word „<i>nežádoucí</i>“ can mean both unacceptable and unwanted in the original language. For this reason, the ombudsman considers both the subjective (how the victim views it) and the objective (how other people would view it) unacceptability of such conduct. That being said, the unofficial translation of The Anti-Discrimination Act to English uses the term “unwanted”.</p> <p>According to the Labour Code, all discrimination, including sexual harassment, is prohibited in employment relationships (Section 16). Every employer is obliged to ensure equal treatment as well as safe working conditions for the employees (Section 102). According to the Czech Equality Body, this includes a work environment free of sexual harassment. The employer would therefore be liable for sexual harassment that occurred in the employment under these conditions:</p> <p>(a) a person authorized to act on behalf of the employer (such as the victim’s superior, an HR representative etc.) has learned about the presence of possible harassment, and</p> <p>(b) the employer has failed to properly investigate and resolve the situation.</p>

LITHUANIA	
Definition	<p>a) sexual harassment is defined as “unwanted offensive behaviour of a sexual nature, expressed verbally, in writing, or through physical actions, when such behaviour is motivated by the intention or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular by creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment.” (Section 2, para. 6, Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men)</p> <p>b) “violence and harassment, including psychological violence, violence and harassment based on gender (violence and harassment directed against persons because of their gender or disproportionately affecting persons of a particular gender, including sexual harassment affecting persons of a particular gender, including sexual harassment)</p>

	<p>– any form of unacceptable conduct by an employer (a natural person or the head of a legal entity) or other employees, or the threat of such conduct, whether a single or repeated conduct, which has or may have the purpose or effect of causing physical, psychological, sexual, or economic impact, or whether the unacceptable behaviour has or may have such an impact, or whether such behaviour offends a person’s dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, or offensive environment, and/or whether physical, material, and/or non-material damage has occurred or may occur.” (Section 30, para. 2, Labour Code)</p> <p>c) “Anyone who seeks sexual intercourse or gratification through vulgar or similar acts, proposals, or insinuations and harasses a person who is subordinate to them in their official capacity or otherwise dependent on them commits a criminal offense and shall be punished by community service, a fine, restriction of liberty, or arrest.” (Section 152, Criminal Code)</p> <p>d) “sexual harassment, which is defined as: verbal, written, or physical harassment directed against another person’s sexual self-determination and integrity, if this does not entail criminal liability, a reprimand or additional service duties shall be imposed on the conscript soldier, or prohibition from leaving the place of service, or demotion of the soldier’s rank; a reprimand or reduction in salary, or demotion of the soldier’s rank shall be imposed on a professional soldier.” (Section 88, Law on the Approval of the Disciplinary Statute of the Lithuanian Armed Forces)</p>
<p>Areas</p>	<p>a) employment relations b) employment relations c) those areas where relationships of dependence and subordination arise, but the areas are not specifically specified d) armed forces</p>
<p>Remedies</p>	<p>a) The victim of SH can claim compensation for moral and material damage according to the Civil code. Violation of equal rights for women and men (including SH) shall result in a fine of between forty and five hundred and sixty euros for the heads of legal entities, employers, or other responsible persons.</p> <p>b) According to the provisions of the Labor Code, sexual harassment is understood as a gross violation of work duties, for which the employer may impose a severe penalty on the employee—dismissal from work at the employer’s initiative. The Code of Administrative Offences provides for administrative liability for violations of the Labor Code, i.e., “if the necessary measures to prevent violence and harassment were not implemented or active steps were not taken to assist persons who have experienced violence or harassment, or if a violation of the prohibition of violence or harassment by the employer, a natural person or the head of a legal entity, is established, a fine shall be imposed on employers who are natural persons, managers of employers who are legal persons or other responsible persons.”</p>

	<p>c) Under the provisions of the Criminal Code, sexual harassment is punishable by community service, a fine, restriction of liberty, or arrest.</p> <p>d) For sexual harassment, a soldier in compulsory military service shall be given a reprimand or additional service duties, or shall be prohibited from leaving his place of service, or shall be demoted; a professional soldier shall be given a reprimand or have his or her salary reduced, or be demoted; a cadet shall be given a reprimand or additional service duties, or be prohibited from leaving his or her place of service, or have his or her scholarship reduced, or be dismissed from service. For the same act committed under aggravating circumstances, a professional military serviceman shall be dismissed from service, and a cadet shall be expelled from the military training institution.</p>
Comments	Law on Equal Treatment of the Republic of Lithuania refers to the definition in Law on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (areas - consumer's rights, including health services, in access to goods and services).

NORTH MACEDONIA

Definition	<p>a) “Sexual harassment based on sex is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when it creates an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive atmosphere.” (Art. 4, para. 1, 7, Law on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women)</p> <p>b) “Sexual harassment is any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment, approach, or practice.” (Art. 10, para. 2, Law on Prevention and Protection Against Discrimination)</p> <p>c) “Sex harassment is any verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which aims to or results in a violation of the dignity of a job applicant or an employee, and which causes fear or creates a hostile, humiliating, or offensive environment.” (Art. 9, para. 4, Labour Relations Law (LRL))</p> <p>d) “Sex harassment is any verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which aims to or results in a violation of the dignity of a job applicant or an employee, and which causes fear or creates a hostile, humiliating, or offensive environment.” (Art. 5, para. 2, Law on Protection Against Workplace Harassment (LPWH))</p> <p>e) Whoever, through verbal, non-verbal, or physical action, as well as through the use of electronic means of communication, performs an act which has a direct or indirect, real or symbolic meaning of inducement, indecent proposal, solicitation, expression of sexual passion, or any other action that clearly suggests a sexual act or other actions equated with it, and thereby violates the dignity of another person, causing a feeling of discomfort, offense, humiliation, or fear, shall be punished by a fine or imprisonment for up to one year (Art. 190-a, Criminal Code)</p>
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	<p>f) it creates a threatening, hostile, degrading, humiliating, or offensive environment.” (Art. 3, para. 1, 19, Law on Prevention and Protection from Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence)</p>
Areas	<p>a) all areas of social life in the public and private sector</p> <p>b) work and employment relations; education, science, and sports; social security, including the areas of social protection, pension and disability insurance, health insurance, and healthcare; judiciary and administration; housing; public information and media; access to goods and services; membership and activities in political parties, associations, foundations, trade unions, or other membership-based organizations; culture; and all other areas</p> <p>c) employment relations</p> <p>d) employment relations and work more general (including candidates for employment and people engaged by civil law contracts, who participate in the work for an employer)</p> <p>e) committed against people in a position of subordination or in a relation of dependency, persons at work, or vulnerable due to age, illness, disability, drug dependency, pregnancy, or severe physical or mental impairments all areas of social life</p>
Remedies	<p>a) The victim may contact the Legal Representative for unequal treatment of women and men (a civil servant responsible for conducting procedures to establish unequal treatment of women and men). He/she acts upon submissions filed by natural and legal persons but may also initiate proceedings ex officio. After establishing the factual situation, the Legal Representative may prepare a written opinion with recommendations for remedying the situation related to the unequal treatment of women and men.</p> <p>b) If the Commission for Prevention and Protection from Discrimination establishes that discrimination has occurred, the Commission also recommends a method for remedying the violation of rights. If the perpetrator of discrimination fails to act upon the recommendation, the Commission submits a request to initiate misdemeanour proceedings before the competent misdemeanour court.</p> <p>c) The legal regime governing the procedures for reporting and resolving disputes concerning protection from sexual harassment is not unified and depends on the “legal channel” of protection (through LRL and subsidiarily the regulations on equal treatment and non-discrimination, or through the Law on Protection against Workplace Harassment). The LRL, inter alia, provides rules for: the shifting of the burden of proof to the employer; protection against victimization; the right of the employee to terminate employment without notice, with compensation from the employer of at least the amount of lost wages (as if they had worked during the notice period) and severance pay (as if they had been dismissed for business reasons) - this legal remedy can be invoked if the employer has failed to take action to prevent the employee from becoming a victim of sexual harassment.</p>

	<p>d) The LPWH (as a <i>lex specialis</i>) establishes a more comprehensive system for reporting, resolving, and providing legal remedies in workplace harassment disputes, compared to the Labor Relations Law. The procedure for protection against harassment, including sexual harassment, comprises two instances: a procedure with the employer and a procedure before the competent court. The procedure with the employer generally consists of two phases: a preliminary procedure (which entails a written warning from the victim to the alleged harasser), and an inter-mediation procedure.</p> <p>Judicial protection is initiated by filing a lawsuit with the competent court, which adjudicates in the first instance on civil disputes, and the ensuing case is considered a labour dispute. An interim protection measure that an employer may order until the conclusion of the workplace harassment procedure is the temporary relocation to another work premises or environment. Interim protection measures to prevent violent behaviour or to prevent irreparable harm, such as a prohibition on approaching the employee's workplace and a ban on telephoning or communicating, may also be imposed by the competent court. Other legal remedies that can be sought in court proceedings include: a declaration that workplace harassment has been suffered; a prohibition against engaging in behaviour that constitutes workplace harassment, or a ban on the repetition of workplace harassment; the taking of actions to eliminate the consequences of the workplace harassment; and compensation for material and non-material damage caused by the workplace harassment.</p>
<p>Comments</p>	<p>a) A general comment applicable to the entire legal framework governing the issue of gender-based harassment in the workplace is that a distinction should be made between: harassment related to sex/gender and sexual harassment. While both forms of harassment constitute discrimination on the basis of sex, the difference between them is that only the latter form (sexual harassment) presupposes the existence of behaviour that has a sexual connotation or is of a sexual nature. Another difference is that the definition of the term "sexual harassment" principally avoids establishing a causal link between the unwelcome behaviour of a sexual nature and the sex of the victim.</p> <p>c) Macedonian labour legislation defines only the so-called "hostile work environment", but not the equally important "quid pro quo" form.</p> <p>The need for regulating the "quid pro quo" form of harassment, ie sexual harassment in the context of employment and work, is continuously indicated by the ILO supervisory bodies. Compared to Directive 2006/54/EC (Article 2, paragraph 1, d) and ILO Convention No. 190 (Article 1), the omission of the qualification of sexual harassment as "unwanted/unacceptable" behaviour, is also evident. A criticism regarding the LRL's approach is that instead of the term "sexual," the law uses the less appropriate term "sex" harassment. It is also important to note that the LRL does not determine "gender" as a separate ground of discrimination, in addition to "sex".</p>

	<p>d) Given the same definition, the same remarks made about the definition of “sex” (sexual) harassment used in the Labor Relations Law can also be applied to the Law on Protection against Workplace Harassment. In any case, the fact that this Law excludes discrimination from the range of behaviours or activities considered workplace harassment should be taken into account. Starting from the premise that sexual harassment is per definitionem a distinct form of discrimination based on sex, its legal treatment within the Law on Protection from Harassment in the Workplace remains unclear.</p> <p>f) This law implements the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, which was ratified by North Macedonia in 2018.</p>
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PORTUGAL

<p>Definition</p>	<p>“Sexual harassment represents unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature, in a verbal, non-verbal or physical form, with the purpose or effect referred to in the preceding paragraph.” (Art. 29, para. 3, Labour Code)</p> <p>* note preceding paragraph – “Unintentional conduct, including discrimination based on access to employment or employment, work or professional training, is defined as harassment with the purpose or effect of disrupting or dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or destabilizing environment.” (Art. 29, para. 2, Labour Code)</p>
<p>Areas</p>	<p>employment relations</p>
<p>Remedies</p>	<p>Right to compensation for pecuniary and non-property damages, under the general terms of law.</p> <p>* note - The practice of harassment, in addition to entitling the victim to compensation for pecuniary and non-pecuniary damage, constitutes a very serious administrative offence, without prejudice to any criminal liability provided for by law.</p>
<p>Comments</p>	<p>The concept of harassment, in any form, whether moral or sexual, is prohibited.</p> <p>Moral harassment consists of unwanted behaviour, particularly that based on discrimination, practised when accessing employment or in the workplace itself, at work or in professional training, with the aim or effect of disturbing or embarrassing the person, affecting their dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or destabilising environment, while sexual harassment consists of unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature, whether verbal, non-verbal or physical.</p> <p>Moral Harassment is considered moral when it consists of verbal attacks of an offensive or humiliating nature, physical attacks, or more subtle acts, which may include physical and psychological violence, aimed at diminishing the victim’s self-esteem and, ultimately, their connection to the workplace.</p> <p>To prevent harassment, employers are responsible for adopting codes of conduct to prevent and combat harassment at work, whenever the company has seven or more employees, and for initiating</p>

	<p>disciplinary proceedings whenever they become aware of alleged situations of harassment at work, and the employer is responsible for compensating for damages arising from occupational illnesses resulting from harassment.</p> <p>Portuguese Criminal Code criminalizes certain forms of sexual harassment, including coercion and unwanted sexual advances.</p> <p>Dismissal or other sanctions allegedly imposed to punish an infringement are presumed to be abusive when they occur up to one year after the complaint or other form of exercising rights relating to harassment, and the practice of harassment by the employer or their representative, reported to the labour inspection service, constitutes just cause for termination of the contract by the employee.</p>
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SLOVAKIA	
Definition	<p>“Sexual harassment shall mean verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature whose intention or consequence is or may be a violation of a person’s dignity and which creates an intimidating, degrading, disrespectful, hostile or offensive environment.” (Section 2a, para. 5, Anti-Discrimination Act)</p>
Areas	<p>employment, social security, healthcare, education, access to goods and services</p>
Remedies	<p>Every person may pursue their claims in judicial proceedings. They may, in particular, seek that the person violating the principle of equal treatment be made to refrain from such conduct and, where possible, rectify the illegal situation or provide adequate satisfaction.</p> <p>Should adequate satisfaction prove to be not sufficient, especially where the violation of the principle of equal treatment has considerably impaired the dignity, social status and social functioning of the victim, the victim may also seek non-pecuniary damages in cash. The amount of non-pecuniary damages in cash shall be determined by the court, taking into account the extent of non-pecuniary damage and all underlying circumstances.</p> <p>Under the Labour Code the victim may turn to the Labour Inspectorate, which can impose a fine on the employer.</p>
Comments	<p>The Slovak definition does not define SH as unwanted behaviour. Nevertheless, due to Euro-conform interpretation, SH is considered an unwanted act in Slovakia as well.</p> <p>Although there is no specific mention of sexual harassment in the Labour Code, the employer is obliged to adhere to the equal treatment principle in the employment relations set out in the Anti-Discrimination Act. Employees have the right to file a complaint with the employer if this principle is violated or file a claim with the court. (Section 13, Labour Code)</p>

1.2 Legal research methodology

Legal research will focus on two main topics – analysis of national legal frameworks and of judicial practice. Since there are differences between project countries regarding the legislation, accessibility of the data or reporting mechanisms, it is not always possible to assess litigation and judicial statistics. If this is the case, it is possible to use additional methods, for example interviews / roundtables / questionnaires with experts and stakeholders. The methodology of this type of research is not covered in the toolkit.

Table 2 Legal research methodology

Aim of the research	Assess the effectiveness of the legal system of protection and prevention from sexual harassment at the workplace and compare legal framework of project countries.
Subject of the research	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. national legal frameworks relevant for situations of sexual harassment in employment 2. litigation statistics and judicial practice 3. administrative data where relevant (including decisions of administrative bodies where relevant)
Research questions	<p>RQ1: How existing legal frameworks reflect experience with sexual harassment (e.g. in terms of covering types of employment, definition of responsibilities/obligations of employer and its limitations, data on prevalence vs. challenges to reporting, effective institutions)?</p> <p>RQ2: How does the inclusion of SH in criminal codes translate into judicial practice (relevant only for countries which included sexual harassment in their criminal code). Implementation of the national legal norms in judicial practice:</p> <p>RQ3: Is the motivation of the alleged abuser/harasser relevant for legal argumentation and court cases?</p>
	<p>RQ4: How is the impact of SH on victims represented in court cases, legal argumentation (e.g. concept of severity) and court decisions?</p> <p>RQ5: What type of sanctions is used in practice (remuneration of victims, moral satisfaction or apology, obligation to implement preventive measures at the workplace). Are they based on principles of proportionality, effectiveness and dissuasiveness?</p>
Time scope	Data from years 2015-2024 will be collected. The period can be shorter if the transposition of supranational legal norms had been implemented later than 2015.

Methodology	<p>Quantitative analysis of administrative data: such as number of cases of SH handled by administrative bodies, cases of Equality bodies; can include length of proceedings if relevant.</p> <p>Qualitative analysis of legal norms: content analysis of legal norms and other relevant documents, narrative analysis of selected legal cases legal protection from SH in a country with particular focus on employment, particular focus should be given to forms of redress/effectiveness of sanctions).</p> <p>Qualitative analysis of court decisions: narrative analysis of legal reasoning used by courts or other bodies with the power to decide cases of SH, assessment of forms of redress/compensation used where relevant, effectiveness of sanctions, assessment of lack of such decisions where relevant.</p> <p>Qualitative methods can differ and may include interviews, focus groups, case studies, questionnaires with open-ended questions especially in countries where there are no administrative data or court decisions to be analysed.</p>
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General methodological framework

The methodology of this study is grounded in a combination of analytical, comparative, and empirical approaches, enabling a comprehensive examination of how national legislation addresses sexual harassment in the workplace and how it is implemented in practice. This multifaceted approach reflects international best practices in legal research, ensuring a robust and verifiable research structure. The study is conceived in three interrelated phases, each responding to a specific research question and progressively building the analytical framework.

Phase I: Normative analysis of the legal framework

The first phase aims to evaluate how the existing national legal framework reflects the phenomenon of sexual harassment in the workplace, by analysing both the regulation of employment relationships and the obligations of the actors involved. The objective is to understand the extent to which the legal system is complete and coherent in providing protection and preventing unwanted sexual behaviour in the work environment.

This phase employs dogmatic legal analysis, which systematically examines legal norms according to their hierarchical order: from the Con-

stitution and ratified international conventions, to codes, special laws, and by-laws. The analysis focuses on the definition of sexual harassment, the legal protection afforded to employees, and the institutional responsibilities for the prevention of SH.

Within this analysis, two important dimensions are distinguished. First, the vertical obligations of the employer, which include drafting and implementing internal policies, establishing reporting mechanisms, and ensuring a safe working environment. Second, the horizontal obligations of employees, which relate to refraining from engaging in sexual harassment and contributing to the maintenance of respect and professionalism in the workplace.

An essential component of the first phase is a comparative assessment against international standards. This includes examining ratified international conventions, verifying the compliance of national laws and by-laws with these instruments, and analysing recommendations and reports from international institutions such as the Council of Europe and the European Commission, as well as the obligations of states aspiring to join the European Union under the *Acquis Communautaire*. These sources serve to assess the degree of alignment of the national legal system with modern standards of labour rights protection in the public sector.

Phase 2: Practical implementation of legal norms

The second phase aims to analyse how legal norms are applied in administrative and judicial practice. This phase addresses the question of how administrative bodies and courts handle real cases of sexual harassment in the workplace and how effective the legal framework is in practice.

Data are collected through civil and criminal court decisions issued in years 2015-2024, whether published or obtained through official requests, as well as by other monitoring decisions by other relevant authorities. Information requests are drafted in a standardised manner, seeking copies of relevant decisions issued by judicial and administrative bodies.

It is suggested that a set of formal information requests is addressed to the relevant national institutions involved in handling cases of sexual harassment and violence at the workplace. These institutions might be, depending on the national context, the Ombudsman, Labour inspec-

torate, Prosecutor's office or Equality body. They should be asked to provide data on any cases recorded during the last ten years, as well as copies of related acts or recommendations. This will enable the research team to gather concrete evidence, analyse trends over time, and develop informed legal and institutional recommendations.

The collected decisions are analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. The qualitative analysis focuses on the interpretation of the law by administrative and judicial bodies, the treatment of evidence, and the standards of victim protection. The quantitative analysis aims to identify case trends, frequency, procedural outcomes, and the types of employment relationships involved. This dual methodological approach ensures a comprehensive overview of the actual implementation of the legislation.

Phase 3: The role of criminal legislation in protecting victims

The third phase seeks to assess whether the inclusion of forms of sexual harassment in the Criminal Code contributes to more effective protection for victims in the workplace. The analysis focuses on the functionality of criminal mechanisms and the effects these mechanisms have in practice.

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Experts conduct a systematic analysis of the relevant criminal provisions, evaluating definitions, elements of the criminal offence, procedures, and sanctions. The criminal decisions collected through monitoring are used to identify interpretative gaps, procedural challenges, and obstacles to victim protection.

Comparing the domestic framework with international standards contributes to understanding the role of criminal legislation as a protective tool. The analysis aims to assess whether the interplay between administrative, civil, and criminal mechanisms creates a comprehensive and accessible protection system for victims.

Research limitations

The study may encounter limitations related to incomplete access to court decisions, the absence of centralised statistical data, or variation in institutional practices. Nevertheless, these limitations are addressed by using multiple sources, triangulated analysis, and critical evaluation of available information.

This chapter focuses on the sociological part of the research. It provides a theoretical overview of social concepts of sexual harassment and broader contexts linked to the phenomenon, such as effects of SH, awareness or reporting. Theoretical framework is followed by a research methodology of the study within the project VIOLET.

2.1 Social concepts used in empirical research

The concept of sexual harassment has been articulated differently in law, policy, and social science. Legal definitions emerge primarily within statutory frameworks and international standards, serving as tools of regulation and redress. They are embedded in feminist understandings of gendered harm and codified in instruments such as those of the International Labour Organization, Istanbul Convention or international courts. While these definitions are indispensable for establishing obligations and protections, they necessarily focus on delineating behaviours that fall within legal categories.

By contrast, social and sociological definitions are less concerned with formal categorization and more oriented towards understanding the conditions, prevalence, and lived experiences of harassment in everyday contexts. Sociological approaches embed SH within broader theories of the functioning of the social world - highlighting its links to power, gender, and workplace culture. In this sense, they move beyond describing what harassment is to explaining why it occurs, how widespread it is and why it persists.

McDonald (2012) provides an overview of theoretical models in sociological research on workplace harassment. These models reflect shifting understandings of gender, power, and organisational life, as well as the epistemological frameworks within which sexual harassment is situated.

Early scholarship frequently drew on naturalistic or biological accounts, framing harassment as an inevitable extension of sexual attraction (see also Donohue et al., 1998). Within this paradigm, gendered hierarchies were treated as social facts grounded in biology, and sexual behaviour at work was viewed as “natural”. Such accounts efface the discriminatory nature of harassment and render invisible its structural and cultural dimensions. Their epistemological weakness lies in reducing complex organizational dynamics to individual instincts, thus depoliticizing harassment. Consequently, these models have been shown contradictory to evidence (see Berdahl, 2007).

The second theory, the sex-role spillover model posits that harassment arises when gender roles intrude into occupational settings (Gutek & Morasch, 1982). It assumes that men are constructed as sexual actors and women as sexual objects, so that in male-dominated environments, women are seen less as colleagues and more as gendered “others”. This theory highlights the salience of gender when women enter traditionally male fields, where their femininity rather than their work role becomes their distinguishing characteristic (see McDonald, 2012).

Although this model illuminates how masculinity-dominated cultures sexualize women, its explanatory scope is limited. It implies that sexual harassment is primarily a function of numerical sex ratios, overlooking the persistence of harassment even in gender-balanced contexts. It also reduces harassment to heterosexual dynamics, ignoring harassment of men, same-sex harassment, and the intersectional vulnerabilities of minorities. Its reliance on static gender-role assumptions ultimately curtails its capacity to capture the complexity of harassment in diverse organizational contexts (see McDonald, 2012).

The third and most influential framework is the power model, which explains sexual harassment as an exercise of domination rooted in hierarchical asymmetries as a form of aggression and abuse of organizational power (see Cleveland & Kerst; 1993 Popovich & Warren, 2010; Samuels, 2003). Here, harassment can be interpreted as a coercive practice by which superiors exploit their positions to subordinate others. This model emphasizes the structural relationship between authority and vulnerability. However, there is a risk in reducing harassment to a mere by-product of organizational hierarchy, underplaying cultural and symbolic dimensions (see Cleveland & Kerst, 1993). More recent work has expanded the notion of power to include not only formal authority but also broader societal inequalities and differences in individual characteristics (Popovich & Warren, 2010). From this perspective, harassment targets are made vulnerable not only by their rank but also by their social position: as women, as minorities, or as historically excluded groups whose access to authority is precarious (derived from societal power base (Popovich & Warren, 2010)).

The limitations of biological, role-based, and power-based models point to the need for alternative conceptualization. We reject frameworks that naturalize harassment, presume fixed gender binaries of male perpetrators and female victims, or narrow down harassment to

differences in power base. Instead, we centre the experiences of those subjected to harassment, irrespective of gender, race, or organizational status.

In this sense, we align with Fitzgerald et al. (1997: 15; found in McDonald; 2012, Donohue et al., 1998), who conceptualize *sexual harassment as a psychological construct designating unwanted sex-related behaviour at work that is appraised by the recipient as offensive, exceeding their resources, or threatening their well-being*. This definition foregrounds the subjective appraisal of the recipient, recognizing that harassment is not reducible to observable behaviours alone but is constituted through lived experience and interpretation.

Understanding harassment as a psychological construct does not mean abandoning the sociological theory. On the contrary, it requires that theory explains how organizational and cultural environments shape the conditions within which SH occurs, as well as recipients' interpretations. Theory must therefore render harassment intelligible as a social process: why some behaviours are perceived as threatening, why reporting varies across contexts, and how harassment is sustained or resisted.

Building on this, we conceptualize sexual harassment as closely related to gender-based harassment (GBH). Both can be situated within the broader phenomenon of heterosexism, whereby individuals are socialized into normative heterosexual gender roles (see Galdi, Maas & Cadinu, 2014). Through these lenses, harassment is not merely interpersonal misconduct but a mechanism through which specific norms of masculinity and femininity are enforced (Samuels, 2003, Berdahl, 2007). It functions as a disciplinary practice that polices gender boundaries and maintains gender hierarchies in the workplace (Tam, Jewell & Brown, 2019).

From the standpoint of organisational theory, three interrelated antecedents shape the prevalence of harassment (MacDonald, 2012):

- **Workplace culture and organisational climate.** The implicit norms and tolerance levels of organisations towards sexual harassment play a decisive role in whether harassment is normalised or sanctioned (Fitzgerald, Hulin & Drasgow, 1994; Fitzgerald, Swan & Fischer, 1995).

- **Gender context of the job.** The gender composition of the workforce and the salience of gender in occupational roles condition both the risk and interpretation of harassment (Fitzgerald, Swan & Fischer, 1995).
- **Differential power.** Power must be understood in a multidimensional sense: not only formal hierarchies but also societal inequalities related to gender, race, and minority status. These intersecting power differentials render some individuals disproportionately vulnerable (Popovich & Warren, 2010).

The way we conceptualise sexual harassment has direct consequences for how we measure it. As argued earlier, antecedents of harassment — workplace culture, gendered job context, and differential power — interact simultaneously to create an organisational and cultural ecology in which harassment occurs. Capturing this ecology requires tools that go beyond simple self-identification (“Have you experienced sexual harassment?”) towards approaches that reflect both the behavioural realities and subjective experiences of those exposed to harassment (Fitzgerald et al., 1999; Stark et al., 2002).

34 We therefore adopt the perspective of Fitzgerald et al. (1999), who developed a theory-driven survey instrument specifically designed to measure the frequency and prevalence of SH. The Sexual Experiences Questionnaire (SEQ) and its variations (e.g. SEQ–DoD: Fitzgerald et al. 1999; SEQ–DoDs: Stark et al. 2002; SEQ–SE: Mazzeo et al. 2001) operationalise SH not as an abstract label but as a set of behaviours of varying severity. This behavioural orientation makes it possible to distinguish between harassment that is experienced and harassment that is reported.

This distinction is crucial. Legal consciousness theory (Blackstone et al., 2009) demonstrates that reporting harassment is a complex social process comprising at least three stages: naming (recognising behaviour as harassment), blaming (attributing responsibility to a perpetrator), and claiming (framing the experience as injustice and seeking remedy). Each stage is shaped by cultural norms and socialisation. For example, women may not “name” behaviours as harassment because they have been socialised to normalise sexist or sexualised conduct, or because they lack a sense of agency in challenging it. Thus, relying on self-reported “sexual harassment” is insufficient.

By contrast, **the SEQ approach defines incidents behaviourally, asking respondents whether they have experienced specific acts without requiring them to categorise those acts as “harassment.”** This enables the identification of both overt and subtle forms of harassment and reduces underreporting. By decoupling behavioural incidence from subjective labelling, SEQ-based research can examine the cultural and organisational conditions under which experiences are, or are not, named as harassment. A further advantage is that it sheds light on permitting organisational cultures — illuminating not only how harassment is distributed but also which groups are disproportionately affected.

Since its development and validation (Fitzgerald et al. 1988), there have been several variants of SEQ tested with longer or shorter lists of questions selected from the original pool of 28 items. The most recent iterations of the SEQ distinguish four analytically separate but empirically related dimensions of workplace harassment (Fitzgerald et al. 1995, 1999):

- **Sexist Hostility** – discriminatory behaviours directed at individuals because of their sex (e.g., condescending treatment or dismissal of competence).
- **Sexual Hostility** – hostile behaviours that are explicitly sexual in nature (e.g., offensive jokes, sexualised comments).
- **Unwanted Sexual Attention** – unreciprocated and unwanted advances or behaviours (e.g., persistent requests for dates, touching).
- **Sexual Coercion** – attempts to extort sexual cooperation in exchange for job-related benefits or protection, often overlapping with the most severe forms such as sexual assault.

The first two categories are typically classified as gender harassment, which targets individuals because of gender without necessarily involving sexual intent. In the early variations of SEQ and some of their adaptations, items of the first two categories are interpreted as one dimension of gender based harassment. The latter two categories represent escalating forms of sexual harassment, with sexual coercion as the most severe and institutionally consequential form.

Fitzgerald et al. (1999) developed the questionnaire items along the four identified dimensions of harassment, creating an instrument with several advantages. It provides a more detailed mapping of behaviours and their severity, and — through scaling of frequency — it allows researchers to distinguish between isolated and repeated incidents. In practice, this yields a comprehensive battery of questions able to capture both breadth and depth of harassment experiences. Nevertheless, several methodological considerations should be kept in mind:

First, the SEQ was designed to **measure experiences by categories to which individuals belong, and results are often aggregated at the group level**. For example, the SEQ–DoD, developed for the U.S. Department of Defense reported aggregated data across four axes: gender, race, service branch, and rank (Fitzgerald et al., 1999). The results are thus typically presented both as percentages for each behavioural item and as aggregate outcomes for particular social groups. Such an approach enables intersectional comparisons — for instance, examining whether and how dimensions of harassment vary across categories — but it also requires careful systematisation in the design of data analysis.

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Second, the SEQ enables **the distinction between incidence** (whether a behaviour occurred) **and prevalence** (how frequently it occurred). Respondents may indicate if a behaviour happened once, several times, or repeatedly. This distinction is critical for mapping harassment as both a singular and ongoing experience. Each item is scaled on a five-point Likert-type measure, ranging from “never” (1 point) to “very often” (5 points) (Fitzgerald et al. 1999; Stark et al. 2002; SEQ–SE: Mazzeo et al. 2001). This scaling allows the computation of mean incidence scores for each dimension, thereby producing a more fine-grained picture of harassment patterns than binary indicators.

For the research, we decided to update the SEQ survey by adding **Cyber-Specific Behaviours**, encompassing forms of SH that happen specifically online. New items are incorporated into three clusters – sexual hostility, unwanted sexual attention, sexual coercion. Apart from the separate behaviours, use of electronic devices and online communication will be measured in relation to standard SEQ items. This approach aligns with the EU-GBV statistical manual (European Commission, 2021). Cyber sexual harassment (CSH) constitutes an emerging challenge within workplaces and includes a spectrum of unwanted sexual behaviours conducted/delivered via digital technologies including emails, workplace

messaging platforms, social media, and video conferencing instruments. It manifests in varied forms: sexually explicit messages or images, coerced sharing of intimate material, sexist jokes circulated on workplace platforms, harassment during online meetings, and cyberstalking (Finn, 2004; Megan, Henry & Powell, 2016). The problem has been further exacerbated by hybrid and remote work models, further blurring professional and private boundaries. The EU has harmonised definitions for key cyber-offences (non-consensual sharing of intimate or manipulated material, cyberstalking, cyber-harassment, cyber-flashing, cyber-incitement). CSH is highly underreported and hidden, therefore it needs to be addressed in the research.

Effects of sexual harassment

Examining effects of sexual harassment on victim's life is one of the key areas of policy-oriented research. Not only the severity of impacts might be used as an argument at courts and increase motivation of employers to invest into preventive measures; understanding how various forms of sexual harassment affect a person might be also crucial for putting well targeted measures in place. The scholarship focuses on various aspects in relation to the effects:

1. **strong statistical evidence that sexual harassment has negative impact on the victim's quality of life** – some research papers study specific health-related effects (e.g. trauma responses, depression, suicidality (Dansky & Kickpatrick, 1997)), work-related impacts and some encompass broader inventory of potential effects. Focus on statistical evidence of negative effects is motivated by discussion about bias and methodological limitations. Analyses might also aim to compare intensity of effects among areas of personal/work life or health-related symptoms;
2. identification of **factors which increase negative impact of SH**, such as severeness of form of SH (e.g. comparison between domains of SEQ); frequency of SH incidents, general organisational climate (included also as antecedents of SH (Fitzgerald, Hulin & Drasgow, 1994)); exploratory research of other relevant factors such as reporting and coping strategies of victims;
3. **comparison of the effects among subgroups of respondents** (e.g. by gender of the victim (Magley et al., 1999), gender of the perpetrator, age of the victim, vulnerabilities);
4. in-depth understanding of the effects in relation to antecedents (such as organisational climate, accessibility of reporting).

In developing the inventories of potential effects of sexual harassment, authors distinguish between affected areas of life based on personal life vs. work life dichotomy (Liang, 2024) or individual vs. organisation level (Magley et al., 1999) (Table 3).

Table 3: Impact of sexual harassment on personal and professional life

		Personal level	Professional level
individual level	Psychological impact	PTSD, anxiety and distress, suicidality, general life satisfaction, lowered self-esteem	—
	Somatic-physical effects	Health-related outcomes with physical symptoms: headaches, stomachaches, sleep deprivation/disturbances	—
organisational level	Work-related effects	Communication and relationships with colleagues	Performance, withdrawal, quitting

There are several challenges in research of effects. First, studies which rely on self-evaluated correlation between incidence of SH and negative effects on health or work by the respondents might be distorted by bias and low ability to identify relationships between these phenomena. To meet this obstacle, some authors assess the effects based on scales independent from the responses to questions on incidence, ideally based on standardized questionnaires or indexes⁴ (Fitzgerald et al., 1997) which are statistically analysed and might be compared with questions based on respondents' self-evaluation of the impact.

Another challenge is the ability to isolate other relevant factors influencing either health conditions or work-related effects. Although there are several studies providing evidence that sexual harassment might lead to increased symptoms of anxiety (Anderson, 2023), depression or other trauma-related responses (Anderson, 2023; Bowling, 2006)

⁴ Examples of standardized scales: Satisfaction With Work, Co-Workers, and Supervision scales of the Job Descriptive Index (Smith, Kendall, & Hulin, 1969); Mental Health Index (Veit, Ware, 1983); Crime-Related Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Scale (CR-PTSD; Saunders, Arata, & Kilpatrick, 1990); Van den Broeck A. et al., 2010).

meta-analytical studies show that based on statistical analyses, the impact of the SH on mental well-being is not unambiguous and there are other factors in place. In the area of work-related effects *“the intention to resign shows a lesser effect, while job performance reflects one of the most significant impacts, with moderate effects on job satisfaction and organizational commitment. These findings suggest that the impact of SH on job outcomes is indirect and influenced by additional factors. Employees might experience a decline in performance due to SH, even if they do not consider leaving their job. Furthermore, this perceived decrease in performance could also indicate the influence of intergroup dynamics affected by a hostile work environment stemming from SH. In conclusion, when examining all variables, patterns shift, highlighting that SH primarily affects satisfaction with supervisors and colleagues on a personal level, and job satisfaction and organizational commitment on a professional level.”* (Liang, 2023)

Considering the findings of empirical research, general health effects won't be the focus of our research. To measure effects on mental well-being a standardized WHO-5 index which provides a validated scale while respecting the limited length of the questionnaire to avoid survey fatigue. Work-related effects will be covered on two levels - psychological and behavioural. Work-related psychological needs - need of relatedness with other colleagues, need of competence and need of autonomy will be measured according to the Work-related needs satisfaction scale developed by Anja Van den Broeck (2010) based on self-determination theory. The need for autonomy represents individuals' inherent desire to exercise their free will. At work it reflects in the ability to have reasonable control over the task fulfilment, ability to contribute to decision-making or influence the work related processes. The need for competence is defined as individuals' inherent desire to feel effective in interacting with the environment, to adapt to changed conditions, and achieve the set out goals. Within the working environment it projects the perception of competency in executing the tasks. The need for relatedness is defined as individuals' desire to feel connected to others, and to be a member of a group, to love and care and be cared for. Satisfaction of relatedness has a key role in functional collegial relationships and identification as a member of the team or organisation (Van den Broeck et al., 2010). On a behavioral level, research will focus on work withdrawal and job withdrawal as a set of behaviours which might negatively affect performance and indicate employee turnout (Hanisch & Hulin, 1990).

Awareness of sexual harassment, internal and external intervention mechanisms and prevention measures

To predict the behaviour of individuals, who have experienced sexual harassment at work, in seeking help through internal and (or) external reporting mechanisms, it is important to consider the findings of previous research. For this purpose, an analysis of academic sources was conducted to examine how the characteristics of workplace organizational culture influence the decision of individuals, who have experienced sexual harassment, to report it via internal workplace mechanisms and (or) externally.

Employee awareness of sexual harassment behaviours

Academic literature suggests that the decision to report sexual harassment depends on whether the behaviour in question is perceived as sexual harassment (Sebestyén 2024; Reese, Lindenberg 1997). Research indicates that employees often lack knowledge about which forms of behaviour fall under the definition of sexual harassment (not only in the legal sense, though including it).

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Two aspects are important here. Firstly, certain forms of sexual harassment (for example, sexual jokes, innuendos or nonverbal behaviour such as persistent staring, amongst others) are often not recognized as violence but rather perceived as jokes, as part of masculine identity or as a personality trait, and are therefore normalized. This is closely linked not only to the workplace environment but also to the broader cultural context in which some forms of inappropriate sexualized behaviour are considered as a part of social interaction. Secondly, some forms of sexual harassment may be perceived merely as general harassment and bullying, not as sexual harassment. Both aspects contribute to the fact that, according to various studies, the number of formal complaints of sexual harassment through internal grievance procedures remains very low (Reese & Lindenberg, 1997; Vijayasiri 2008; Foster & Fullagar, 2018).

Moreover, in the absence of a shared understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment, employees tend to downplay certain forms of such behaviour. They may recognize the behaviours as sexual harassment but choose not to report them, believing that their experiences do not meet the normative threshold of severity (Sebestyén 2024; Vijayasiri 2008).

At the organizational level, there should be a shared understanding that all forms of sexual harassment are equally unacceptable. Multiple pathways should be established to address and report different forms of sexual harassment: a formal procedure for reporting incidents of sexual harassment and an informal procedure for addressing initial or less explicit forms, such as sexist or degrading jokes (Blumell & Mulupi 2023).

Taking the above into account, when designing a survey on the prevalence of sexual harassment, it is important to include questions that assess whether respondents recognize various forms of inappropriate sexualized behaviour as sexual harassment. Research shows that identifying certain behaviours as sexual harassment can have a positive effect on encouraging individuals to speak up about their experiences (Sebestyén 2024).

Employee awareness of internal policies, intervention mechanisms and preventive measures

On the one hand, strand international recommendations emphasize that efforts to combat workplace sexual harassment and other forms of inappropriate behaviour should begin with the adoption of a formal internal policy (Vengalé-Dits 2012). Such a policy should define the behaviours that are considered sexual harassment, designate responsible bodies to whom affected individuals can report and establish internal investigation procedures. On the other hand, academic research does not confirm that a policy adoption in the organisation leads to increased sexual harassment reporting rates (Blumell & Mulupi 2023; Vijayasiri 2008). Employees should be regularly trained on and reminded of the existing policy and procedures for it to be effective (Blumell & Mulupi 2023). Various other reasons contribute to the fact that even when people experience sexual harassment at work and are aware of the existing policy and reporting procedures, they still choose not to report (Vijayasiri 2008). This phenomenon is referred to as the “policy conundrum” (Reese & Lindenberg 1997, 41-42).

It is agreed that it is important to consider not only the existence of internal policies and intervention mechanisms, but also employees’ perceptions of these measures (Vijayasiri 2008). Anti-sexual harassment policies are often viewed by employees as ineffective or merely formal; therefore, it is crucial to examine how employees perceive the internal documents of a given workplace and whether they consider them effective, fair and timely (ibid.). Attention is also drawn to the fact that employees may

perceive sexual harassment investigation procedures as biased (unfair) and lacking confidentiality, which may result in information leaks and, consequently, expose individuals to risks of negative repercussions or retaliation from perpetrators (Sebestyén 2024; Blumell & Mulupi 2023). In some cases, employees may perceive the reporting mechanisms as producing no tangible outcomes and, thus, not worth their time and effort (McDonald, Charlesworth & Graham 2015; Nguyen & Le 2024; Blumell & Mulupi 2023). Research studies show that, in many cases of sexual harassment, the most severe consequence imposed on perpetrators is only a warning (Blumell & Mulupi 2023; Salin 2007).

Policy documents often fail to clearly specify disciplinary measures for perpetrators or protective measures for individuals who have experienced sexual harassment (Sebestyén 2024; McDonald, Charlesworth & Graham 2015). Considering that sexual harassment can have long-term consequences for victims, workplaces fail to provide lasting restorative measures, such as psychological counselling or similar assistance (McDonald, Charlesworth & Graham 2015).

All of this contributes to employees' perceived sense of injustice and helplessness, which in turn translates into the low numbers of sexual harassment reports observed across various national and regional contexts (Vijayasiri 2008). It is also important to note that employers' efforts in implementing sexual harassment prevention measures vary significantly. In some cases, prevention is limited to isolated and disconnected actions – such as a single training session on sexual harassment per year – while failing to implement a comprehensive, multi-tier prevention system, as recommended (McDonald, Charlesworth & Graham 2015; Blumell & Mulupi 2024; Nguyen & Le 2024). In other cases, prevention efforts are framed in general terms, for instance, through “safe work environment” promoting initiatives, without addressing sexual harassment in a detailed and explicit manner. This reflects a widely held, but false assumption that the absence of sexual harassment complaints indicates that such behaviour does not occur in the workplace.

Taking the above into account, when designing a survey on the prevalence of sexual harassment, it is important to include questions not only on employee awareness of the existing policy, procedures and prevention, but also subjective perception of these measures and their effectiveness, their fairness, their timeliness as well as a sense of safety and trust in these measures, as these significantly influence whether individuals will be willing to report sexual harassment or not.

Employee awareness of external support mechanisms

The employer is not the only entity responsible for responding to cases of workplace sexual harassment. Employees can also turn to other institutions and bodies (depending on the national context), including trade unions, Ombuds institutions, labour inspection authorities or pursue legal action to defend their dignity through courts.

However, research indicates that employees' knowledge of these external sources of support can be limited, and they may not know exactly where to turn when experiencing sexual harassment. A lack of awareness about the institutional landscape and insufficient knowledge of one's rights as a victim of sexual harassment constitutes a significant barrier, preventing individuals from defending their dignity through further channels. Coupled with the confusion around what constitutes sexual harassment, as noted in previous section, this barrier can be particularly high and difficult to overcome.

Taking the above into account, when designing a survey on the prevalence of sexual harassment, it is important to include questions that assess which external bodies are perceived as sources of support in cases of sexual harassment, and to implement comprehensive education and awareness-raising strategies that clarify employees' rights, including their right to seek legal assistance outside of workplace (Sebestyén 2024).

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Reporting Procedures for Cases of Sexual Harassment: Analytical Overview

As described in the previous chapter, research shows that individuals who experience harassment often face numerous barriers to reporting it. The process of disclosure and complaint submission remains embedded within institutional hierarchies, social stigma, and psychological pressures that discourage victims from coming forward.

An effective reporting procedure should not be merely a bureaucratic mechanism, rather a fundamental component of workplace justice and organizational integrity. Establishing a clear, confidential, and fair process ensures that victims receive protection, that perpetrators are held accountable, and that organizational culture evolves toward transparency and respect.

Understanding the Context of Reporting

The decision to report sexual harassment is influenced by multiple social and institutional factors. Victims often weigh their personal and professional safety, the likelihood of being believed, and the potential for retaliation before making any formal complaint. It is reported that in many workplaces, the absence of trust in management or human resources structures serves as a major deterrent to reporting. Moreover, the normalization of inappropriate behaviour, coupled with the fear of reputational harm, further silences victims.

Workplace power dynamics also play a decisive role. Harassment often involves an imbalance of authority, where the perpetrator occupies a senior position or holds influence over the victim's employment status. Reporting thus becomes an act of personal risk. Empirical evidence across sectors shows that the more hierarchical and male-dominated an environment is, the less likely victims are to use internal complaint procedures. Consequently, the development of reporting mechanisms must consider not only formal rules but also the broader cultural climate within which those rules operate.

Core Stages of the Reporting Procedure

The reporting process for sexual harassment typically unfolds in several interrelated stages. It begins with the recognition of an incident as harassment, followed by the decision to disclose it. Awareness and training are essential preconditions for this stage; employees must be able to identify inappropriate conduct and know their rights. Organizations that provide clear definitions and communicate zero tolerance policies help to empower potential victims and bystanders.

The initial stage of reporting may take a formal or informal route. **Informal reporting** allows the complainant to seek advice, mediation, or confidential support before making an official complaint. This type of reporting can work on its own as well in some cases of sexual harassment – it should ideally lead to stopping the harassing behaviour without the need for official investigation. However, this type of procedure often does not lead to formal sanctions for the perpetrator (due to absence of investigation and necessity to secure the “fair trial” principle). Hence it is not suitable for more invasive cases of sexual harassment, repeated harassment from the same perpetrator, when there is fear of victimization, etc. Nevertheless, it can be often performed more quickly than the formal procedure and bring relief to the harassed person more

promptly. **Formal reporting**, on the other hand, involves submitting a written or verbal complaint to an authorized person or body within the organization. Larger organizations tend to have case management teams assigned for such complaints or ethics/disciplinary committees. Each complaint should be investigated based on the available documents, materials, evidence, testimonies, etc. using a victim-centred and respectful approach and effective sanctions should be imposed. Moreover, if systemic issues are discovered during the management of the case, the organization should update its policies and mechanism based on such findings. Effective systems ensure that multiple channels are available for both approaches: direct supervisors, human resources officers, ombudspersons, or anonymous digital platforms.

Key observations from the surveys reveal significant trends in how victims responded to workplace sexual harassment. Low reporting to formal channels suggests a lack of trust in formal systems, fear of retaliation, or inadequate reporting mechanisms. More victims confided in informal contacts than formal authorities, highlighting a gap in workplace trust where victims may feel safer discussing issues with colleagues rather than reporting them through formal channels. Despite reporting a confrontation with the perpetrator, this strategy may relate to fear of retaliation or further consequences for the victim. A significant percentage of victims took no action, likely due to fear of consequences, workplace culture, or a lack of faith in existing support structures.

Once a complaint is submitted, the next stage involves its registration and preliminary assessment. Organizations are expected to acknowledge receipt of the complaint and to take immediate steps to protect the complainant from further harm or retaliation. Protective measures may include temporary reassignment, leave of absence, or restricted contact between the parties. At this stage, confidentiality is paramount. Breaches of privacy can cause secondary trauma and undermine the credibility of the process.

The investigation phase follows, where evidence is collected through interviews, documentation, and witness statements. Investigations must be impartial, timely, and guided by procedural fairness. Both parties should be informed of their rights and responsibilities throughout. The findings then form the basis for a decision or disciplinary action, which may range from verbal warnings and mandatory training to suspension or termination of the offender.

Finally, the process concludes with feedback and follow-up. The complainant must be informed of the outcome, and the organization should monitor the aftermath to ensure that no retaliation occurs. Post-incident evaluation also allows institutions to identify systemic weaknesses and improve their preventive frameworks.

Institutional and Cultural Challenges

Despite the formal existence of reporting systems, their effectiveness often remains limited in practice. One of the most common challenges reported is the lack of trust in institutional neutrality. Victims frequently perceive human resources departments as prioritizing the organization's reputation over individual wellbeing. This perception discourages internal reporting and may drive individuals toward external mechanisms such as labour inspectors, equality commissions, or the judiciary — processes that are often reported as lengthy and retraumatizing.

Confidentiality is another critical challenge. In smaller workplaces or closely connected professional environments, anonymity is difficult to preserve, and rumours can quickly spread. The psychological cost of public exposure can outweigh the potential benefits of justice, leading many to withdraw their complaints. Additionally, limited awareness among managers and staff about what constitutes sexual harassment results in inconsistent or inappropriate responses. **Sensitivity towards various forms of sexual harassment, including verbal forms which are considered as less intrusive, is crucial not only for preventing harassing behaviour but it might be also a key factor in the reporting rate.**

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As in the case of the broader issue of gender-based violence, sexual harassment stems from an imbalance of power, it is deeply rooted in the social and cultural norms and values that govern society, and is often perpetuated by a culture of denial and silence. In societies where gender stereotypes remain entrenched, victims — particularly women — risk being blamed or discredited. The comparative analysis of reporting procedures reveals that the most successful systems are those embedded in broader strategies of gender equality, leadership commitment, and continuous education.

Another aspect is intersectionality and accessibility of the reporting system. To improve existing systems and available measures it is meaningful to focus on the languages the reporting system is available in

and available forms of institutional support (psychological, legal, managerial). Transparency is also very important to be assessed. While confidentiality must be maintained for individuals, organizations should regularly publish aggregated data on harassment reports and outcomes. This demonstrates institutional commitment and helps to destigmatize the act of reporting. However, to understand these aspects other than quantitative methods of research should be used (e.g. case studies, analyses of ethical codes, collective agreements, interviews or focus groups).

The questions in the survey might have various approaches. A soft or broad approach is oriented towards a broad variety of strategies taken by the victim, asking questions such as "who did you tell", including options that are not limited to institutions, such as family members, religious leaders or labor unions. The narrow approach is oriented to the institutional reporting within the workplace and in-depth assessment of functionality, fairness, confidentiality and other principles of reporting mechanisms put in place.

2.2 Empirical research methodology

Empirical research of SH at the workplace within project VIOLET has an ambition to map not only prevalence but also reporting rate and challenges, awareness of legal measures, effect of SH on health and work of harassed person, sensitivity towards SH or ability to recognize certain behaviour as form of SH. Data will be collected by online questionnaire in national and minority languages, preferably directly at respective workplaces to ensure randomization of samples. Questionnaire items are organised into five modules and will be unified across participating countries to the highest possible level, anticipating some variants reflecting sectoral, language and cultural differences.

Table 4 Methodology of empirical research

<p>Aim of the research</p>	<p>Provide reliable data on nature of sexual harassment and violence at the workplace to support preventive policies.</p>
<p>Subject of the research</p>	<p>Situations falling under the term of sexual harassment in employment according to selected definition. Work-related sexual harassment is defined by at least on of these:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - by relationship with perpetrator (the broadest criterion), - by space (workplace), - by working-hours/working related activity. <p>There might be some situations at the borderline or out of scope of national legal frameworks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - unwanted behaviour by co-workers outside workplace or on-line, - unwanted behaviour by clients, - unwanted behaviour experienced by trainees. <p>Risk factors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - place of unwanted behaviour, - hierarchical position and power of the harasser within the organisation, - precursors of unwanted behaviour (such as gender-based discrimination, gender unbalanced workplace), - vulnerabilities - age, nationality, ethnicity, health disability, type of contract. <p>Reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reporting accessible within organisation, - reporting accessible outside organisation, - formal/non-formal, direct/non-direct, - support system after reporting, - reasons for underreporting, - institutional support during / after investigation. <p>Effects of sexual harassment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mental health / well-being of people who experienced harassment, - work performance and satisfaction of people who experienced harassment. <p>Awareness of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - different forms of behaviours that constitute sexual harassment, - access to prevention measures - training, awareness campaigns, - legal framework on national level.

<p>Research questions</p>	<p>Module 2 – Prevalence: RQ1: What is the prevalence of specific forms of unwanted behaviour among employees in a selected sector of employment within a monitored period of time? (last 12 months/overall career) RQ2: How and where did SH occur? RQ3: Who behaves in a harassing manner? Is there a higher tendency to harass among men than women, among higher management than other co-workers? RQ4: How does the power relationship / status / vulnerability relate to prevalence of SH?</p> <p>Module 3 - Reporting: RQ5: What is the reporting rate in a specific sector? RQ6: What are the reasons for (under)reporting? RQ7: What are the strategies/coping mechanisms? RQ8: What experience do respondents have with employing available measures? RQ9: Did reporting resulted in improved working conditions?</p> <p>Module 4 - Awareness (some items optional): RQ10: Are employees aware of behaviours that constitute sexual harassment at the workplace? RQ11: Are employees familiar with national legislation on protection from sexual harassment in the workplace and institutions competent to act on SH? RQ12: Are trainings and awareness raising accessible at workplaces?</p> <p>Module 1 – Antecedents and effects of SH (some items optional): RQ13: How does gender representation at the workplace relate to prevalence of sexual harassment? RQ14: Does sexual harassment negatively affect mental health? RQ15: Does sexual harassment negatively affect job satisfaction and performance?</p>
<p>Time scope</p>	<p>Information will be collected about the overall period of respondents' work career (including previous employers) in the specific sector. Subquestions will ask about: - last 12 months - the overall period of the respondent's working in the life sector</p>
<p>Methodology</p>	<p>Quantitative analysis based on descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, Bayesian methods and/or factor analysis or other inferential statistical methods. Data collection of representative sample for selected industry, calculations of research sample based on administrative data about employees in respective sectors (regional distribution, gender parity, distribution of professions).</p>



Chapter 3

Comparison of legal and sociological understanding of sexual harassment

Although sexual harassment as a term is widely used, it might denote great variety of situations or acts depending on whether we refer to a specific legal context, sociological or psychological theory, an approach in personnel management or in other contexts. For the comparability of findings, it is necessary to clarify the differences. There are several areas where sociological and legal understanding of SH are not in line because sociological understanding is broader and does not exclude specific situations not covered by law.

- **Definition of workplace/working hours** – from a sociological point of view, it is important whether SH was work-related in terms of perpetrator. It therefore does not distinguish if it happened out of the workplace or after working hours. For example, if an employee is harassed by their colleague on a way home from work, it can be considered as SH because of the relationship between victim and perpetrator. However, from a legal point of view this might fall outside the scope of SH.
- **Employment status** – in all project countries the prohibition of sexual harassment is included either in labour codes or specific laws on (anti)discrimination which are applicable also in labour relations. This can exclude people employed illegally, various types of precarious work or volunteers.
- **Definition of perpetrator** – according to some legal definitions, SH does not occur when unwanted behaviour comes from a client. This is relevant for all sectors where the research will be conducted (education – students, healthcare – patients, public administration – clients, sport – fans). However, these cases will be covered by the questionnaire, as it is an integral part of a wellbeing at the workplace and constitutes a violation of the dignity of the victim.
- **Online harassment** – it is related to the definition of workplace. If online harassment occurs via private communication channels, such as social networks or private phones, legally it is not necessarily work-related. In sociological understanding the means of behaviour are irrelevant if the conduct is sexually harassing.



Chapter 4

Questionnaire items with guidance for national and contextual adaptations

Development of the questionnaire reflected the scope of the research defined in Chapter 2.2, keeping accessibility of the tool (e.g. the time necessary to fill it in, repetitiveness, logical and thematic flow, clarity) in mind. Items were initially formulated in English, and the first draft was piloted within employees of partner organisations who speak English as a second language. The tested version included open-ended questions to collect input for cognitive pilot administration. Collected responses (N=50) were analysed and resulted in several adjustments of formulations, survey logic and replacement of standardized scales of Module 1. The English variant of the questionnaire will be afterwards translated into national and minority languages of project countries, some items will be adapted to national and sectoral context and re-piloted on a sample representing target audience. Questionnaire consists of four modules on sexual harassment and a set of demographic questions about respondents: Module 1 on antecedents and effects of sexual harassment, Module 2 on prevalence, Module 3 on reporting and Module 4 on awareness and sensitivity.

A short introductory text will inform participants about the purpose of the survey, anonymity, confidentiality and estimated completion time. The questionnaire includes a combination of question types:

- Binary questions (yes/no) – to obtain clear, straightforward information about specific experiences, necessary especially to sort responses into excluding subgroups (e.g. reported vs. not reported).
- Multiple-choice questions – to explore a range of situational contexts, types of harassment encountered, reporting behaviours, and awareness of organizational policies; to allow respondents to provide responses outside predefined options and to add contextual details, some questions include options with open-ended answers.
- Likert-scale questions – to assess the intensity of perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs regarding harassment and workplace culture.

Both the survey invitation and the questionnaire will be designed to encourage participation from men and women of all ages, levels of work experience, and positions within the organizational hierarchy. The study adopts an approach that sexual harassment in the workplace is a societal issue that can affect individuals of any gender or professional level. This inclusive approach will help to ensure a balanced and representative dataset, capturing the complex and multifaceted nature of the phenomenon.

4.1 Questionnaire modules overview

Module 1 is further divided into three subsections. Module 1a on effects of sexual harassment contains initial evaluation based on items subjectively assessing mental well-being, satisfaction of needs at the workplace and work and job withdrawal. Module 1b on antecedents of sexual harassments focuses on subjective evaluation of gender equality at the workplace and gender distribution. Modules 1a and 1b are at the beginning of the whole questionnaire, therefore respondents fill them in before they are introduced into the issue of sexual harassment. Module 1c on effects of sexual harassment contains items mapping whether respondents identify causal links between SH and negative impact on mental well-being, physical health, relationships at work or job performance by respondents who experienced SH.

Module 1 has three main goals. First of all, it aims to assess to what extent gender representation and equality contribute to higher prevalence of sexual harassment: one question consisting of six statements to which respondents reply on a 5-item scale and one question focusing on subjective perception of gender balance at the workplace (Module 1b). As the relevance of gender representation is sensitive to social context and conditions of studied sectors of industry, decision to include the question on perception of gender balance or not is left to project partners' discretion. Secondly, module includes questions that can evaluate effect of sexual harassment on mental well-being (Module 1a). **WHO well-being index** (WHO-5) is integrated into questionnaire (Module 1a) to map subjective psychological well-being based on 5 non-invasive items. Its construct validity (Blom et. al, 2012; Lucas-Carrasco et. al, 2012), predictive validity (Birket-Smith et al., 2009), sensitivity (Topp et al., 2015) and other research properties have been repeatedly evaluated over fifteen years of being used in practice in medical clinical research (Topp et al., 2015). Raw score is calculated as a total sum of the scores of each item and ranges from 0 to 25. It is recommended to multiply raw score by 4 to be able to calculate the percentage out of 100. The mean score of the European population is 70, the cut off score for indication of poor mental well-being is 50. Effect of sexual harassment on mental (or even physical) health will be assessed also by evaluation of responses on two questions requesting to link the incident of sexual harassment to any negative impact and necessity to seek for medical help. (Module 1d). Third aim of the module is to assess the effect of sexual harassment on working life (Module 1a). Similarly as in the case of mental health, there

are standardized indexes incorporated into the questionnaire. Decision to include the Module 1a should be based on the ability to statistically analyse the data and, therefore, is left to project partners' discretion. Job satisfaction is measured by 9 items out of 18-item **Work-related Basic Needs Satisfaction Scale** (Broeck et. al., 2010) covering three components: need to relate with others (relatedness), need for competence and need for autonomy. Level of organisational withdrawal is measured by **The Organizational Withdrawal Measure** (Hanisch & Hulin, 1990) developed to assess indicators of psychological and behavioral organizational withdrawal. Hanish and Hulin identified two factors covered by the tool: work withdrawal (forms of behaviour signaling lower engagement, depersonalization etc.) and job withdrawal (behaviour which strongly predicts quitting the job itself). One item is included to monitor evaluation of overall work-related stress and another to monitor any relevant health issues experienced by respondents.

Module 2 is the core part of the questionnaire consisting of a set of items describing harassing behaviour (based on SEQ variants) and, in case of endorsement of individual items, subquestions focusing on period of time, place and working context, relationship to perpetrator, gender of the perpetrator and their job position. There is also an optional question asking whether SH occurred in front of other people or in private. The module includes items covering three out of four components of SEQ – sexual hostility, unwanted sexual behavior and sexual coercion. The component of sexist hostility is not included as it represents wider phenomena of discrimination.

Module 3 on reporting aims to collect data on reporting rate but also challenges and effectiveness of existing reporting mechanisms. It includes items focusing on general coping strategies, experience with reporting within organisation and to other institutions (such as equality bodies or labour inspectorates). Questions are aimed at results, follow-up and subjective evaluation of fairness.

Module 4 on awareness consists of two parts: Module 4a focusing on ability to recognize certain behaviour as a form of sexual harassment and Module 4b with items mapping awareness of national legal framework. As the national legal framework varies across project partner states, administration of the module will require adaptation to national content according to consideration of national research teams.

4.2 Language variations and adaptation to national and social contexts

One of the challenges of international research is to collect comparative data across varied legal normative systems and diverse language and cultural settings. Although the differences should be considered from the early stages of a questionnaire development, translation of the measuring tool from the source language (the language in which the source questionnaire has been developed) into target languages is a crucial step. Translated text has to be reliable and accurate, therefore convey the intended meaning of the source questionnaire without omitting or inserting additional information. It has to reflect cultural and normative differences between source and target languages. The intended meaning should be conveyed while using native speakers' terms. Consideration of a social context sometimes requires using formulations or terms not respecting linguistic rules of a target language (Pan et al., 2005).

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Depending on the questionnaire items and target context, one of three methods can be applied: asking the same questions and translating (ASQT), adapt to new needs and asking different questions (ADT), or a mixed method within one measuring tool (Mohler et al., 2016). Recommended approach for the questionnaire of the VIOLET project is to use ASQT for question items (including the exact list of the answer options) of modules which do not need adaptation to legal or sectoral context, and mixed method for the modules which are context sensitive (see below).

The translation process based on TRAPD (Translation, Review, Adjudication, Pretesting, and Documentation) methodology will be applied to the extent possible within the project:

- **Translation:** it is recommended to engage a team of translators with different expertise background to confront and compare various perspectives (e.g. expertise in the researched area, cultural and language expertise, scientific or analytic expertise) (Walde et al., 2023; Harkness et al., 2004). A parallel translation method of independent translations which are compared and reviewed will be used. To increase accuracy and overall quality of final translation, method of back translation (source - target - source) is recommended. (Harkness et al., 2004).

- **Review:** parallel translations, reviews of translations or spotted differences between source text and back translation into source language (in case of source - target source translation process) might be subject of a team review. In wider projects or research conducted at culturally sensitive settings, interviews or focus groups with a target group outside of expertise could enrich the review of translations.
- **Adjudication:** agreement on the final version may be a part of the review process or an independent phase. Adjudicator(s) should not be members of the translators team, although it is recommended that the person responsible takes part in review meetings and discussions.
- **Pretesting:** final version of translated questionnaire should be tested on a sample representing the target group of respondents. Testing might be administered by the same technique as the real research, or methods including follow-up interviews to collect feedback can be used.
- **Documentation:** all steps of the translating process should be documented. In order to be able to decide on final versions, reviewers and adjudicators need notes on options discarded or problems noted. Documentation of problems, including testing, might inform repeated administrations of the questionnaires or development of the questionnaires in similar areas. Notes documenting necessary adaptations or mistakes identified after administration should inform the analyses and interpretation of the results.

Questionnaire includes question items which are context sensitive and it is necessary to adapt them according to national legislation (e.g. antidiscrimination law, institutions) or conditions of the industrial sector (e.g. forms of employment, categories of professions):

- **Sorting question** to confirm whether respondent has any form of employment contract has to reflect all legal options and reflect practice of the studied sector (e.g. agency work)
- **Module 2:** items mapping work relationship between victim and harasser and options defining where harassment occurred might be adapted in translation but it should be transferable to categories in the source questionnaire.
- **Module 3:** an item mapping which authorities were approached to report the incidents of sexual harassment includes options listing

specific institutions such as equality body or inspectorates. Exact names of the relevant institutions should be used.

- **Module 4:** items mapping awareness of public institutions providing services to persons experiencing sexual harassment (Q4.1) and national legal acts defining framework to protect from sexual harassment (Q4.2) have to reflect existing institutional and legal framework.
- **Module 5:** item mapping professional category of respondents will be adapted to industrial sector, items mapping gender and sexual orientation may be adapted by using ADT method in translation as long as the broad category “other” is preserved allowing non-heteronormative disaggregation of data.

4.3 Questionnaire

Some modules contain items which are optional. These are marked in the table as  . Requirement to adapt items or options to national context is indicated by //....//.

Module	Research Question(s)	Survey item	Answer
	Sorting question: Person in employment or comparable relationship to a workplace included in the research	Under what type of formal relationship do you work in //sector// → If g) – questionnaire closed	a) standard full-time employment contract b) part-time employment contract c) temporary work agreements d) self-employment e) traineeship f) other type of contract g) none of the above
Module 1a Effects of SH – initial evaluation			
	1 Mental Health / Well-being RQ14: Does sexual harassment negatively affect mental health?	Q1.1 Please indicate for each of the five statements which is closest to how you have been feeling over the last two weeks. Notice that higher numbers mean better well-being. 1. I have felt cheerful and in good spirits. 2. I have felt calm and relaxed. 3. I have felt active and vigorous. 4. I woke up feeling fresh and rested. 5. My daily life has been filled with things that interest me.	0 - never 1 - some of the time 2 - less than half of the time 3 - more than half of the time 4 - most of the time 5 - all of the time
	2 Work-related Basic Needs Satisfaction scale RQ15: Does sexual harassment negatively affect job satisfaction and performance?	Q1.2 Please, indicate for each of the following statements how they reflect your personal experience at work. 1. I don't really feel connected with other people at my job. (Rv) 2. At work, I feel as part of a group. 3. At work, I can talk with people about things that really matter to me 4. I don't really feel competent in my job. (Rv) 5. I don't really feel competent in my job. (Rv) 6. I doubt whether I am able to execute my job properly. (Rv) 7. I feel free to do my job the way I think it could best be done.	a) very true b) rather true c) somewhat in between d) rather untrue e) very untrue

		<p>8. At work, I often feel like I have to follow other people's commands. (Rv)</p> <p>9. The tasks I have to do at work are in line with what I really want to do.</p>	
3 OPT	Work-related stress	Q1.3 How would you rate the overall stress level at your current workplace?	<p>1 - very high</p> <p>2 - rather high</p> <p>3 - neither high nor low (normal)</p> <p>4 - rather low</p> <p>5 - very low</p>
4 OPT	Health factors	Q1.4 How would you characterize your health in the past 12 months?	<p>1 - very good</p> <p>2 - rather good</p> <p>3 - neither good nor bad</p> <p>4 - rather bad</p> <p>5 - very bad</p>
5 OPT	Work and Job withdrawal	<p>Q1.5 Please, indicate how many times you have done the following things in the past 12 months.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Letting others do your work for you. 2. Taking frequent or long coffee or lunch breaks. 3. Making excuses to go somewhere to get out of work. 4. Being late for work. 5. Intentionally doing poor work. 6. Using equipment (such as a phone) for personal use without permission. 7. Looking at your watch or clock a lot. 8. Ignoring those tasks that will not help your performance review or pay raise. 9. Thinking about quitting your job because of work-related issues. 10. Looked for a different job. 11. Asked people you know about jobs in other places or looked at job advertisements. 	<p>0 - never</p> <p>1 - once or twice a year</p> <p>2 - every other month</p> <p>3 - once or twice per month</p> <p>4 - once per week</p> <p>5 - more than once per week</p>
6 OPT	Job withdrawal	Q1.6 How likely is it that you will QUIT your job in the next 6 months?	<p>1 - very likely</p> <p>2 - likely</p> <p>3 - neither likely nor unlikely</p> <p>4 - unlikely</p> <p>5 - very unlikely</p>

Module 1b Risk factors/antecedents of SH

7	<p>Risk factor – gender equality/discrimination</p> <p>RQ12: How does gender inequality at the workplace relates to prevalence of sexual harassment?</p>	<p>Q1.7 Do you agree that the below statements are true about your workplace?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Women's contribution at work is equally valued as men's. 2. Most senior management positions are held by men. 3. Women receive the same pay and bonuses as men at comparable positions. 4. Men have better career growth opportunities than women. 5. It is easier to assert your opinion if you are a man than a woman. 6. It is common to tell disrespecting jokes about women. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - strongly agree 2 - rather agree 3 - neither agree, nor disagree 4 - rather disagree 5 - strongly disagree 0 - I don't know
8	<p>Risk factor – unbalanced gender representation</p> <p>RQ13: How does perceived gender representation at the workplace relates to prevalence of sexual harassment?</p>	<p>Q1.7 What do you perceive is the gender representation at your workplace? (within your team of colleagues you meet on regular basis and share the workspace with)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) predominantly women b) more women than men c) somewhat in between d) more men than women e) predominantly men f) I don't know

Module 2 Prevalence of SH

RQ1. What is the prevalence of specific forms of unwanted behaviour among employees in a selected sector of employment?	<p>Q2.1 Throughout your work career in //the sector// have you experienced any of the situations below <i>in relation to your job?</i></p> <p>Somebody at/from work...</p> <p>→ if the answer to 2.1.1 - 2.1.14 = 1 - 4, for each item respondents will answer</p> <p>Q2.2</p> <p>Q2.3</p> <p>Q2.4</p> <p>Q2.5 - optional</p> <p>Q2.6</p> <p>Q2.7</p>		
9	sexist hostility	1. ...repeatedly told sexual stories or jokes that were offensive to you.	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often

10	sexual hostility	2. ...made unwelcome attempts to draw you into a discussion of sexual matters.	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often
11	sexual hostility (cyber sexual harassment)	3. ...posted repeated offensive reactions (e.g., emojis, GIFs) with sexual meaning in professional communication.	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often
12	sexual hostility	4. ...displayed, used, or distributed sexist or suggestive materials (for example, pictures or pornography which you found offensive).	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often
13	sexual hostility	5. ...made uncomfortable remarks about your appearance, body, or sexual activities.	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often
14	unwanted sexual attention	6. ...stared at you with a sexual desire and it made you uncomfortable.	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often
15	unwanted sexual attention	7. ...made unwanted attempts to establish a romantic sexual relationship with you despite your efforts to discourage it (for example, invitation to dates).	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often
16	unwanted sexual attention	8. ...touched you in a way that made you feel uncomfortable.	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often
17	unwanted sexual attention	9. ...stroked, fondled, or kissed you without your consent.	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often
18	unwanted sexual attention (cyber sexual harassment)	10. ...sent you unwanted photos of naked genitals or other body parts.	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often
19	sexual coercion	11. ...threatened you with some sort of retaliation for not being sexually cooperative.	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often
20	sexual coercion	12. ...implied faster promotions or better treatment in exchange for sexual activity or favours.	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often

21	sexual coercion (SEQ) sexual violence	13. ...sexually assaulted you or had sex with you without your consent or against your will.	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often
22	sexual coercion (cyber sexual harassment)	14. ...distributed real or fake photo or visual materials depicting you in intimate situations to you or to your colleagues.	0 - never/ 1 - rarely (once or twice) / 2 - occasionally / 3 - often / 4 - very often
RQ4. Who behaved in a harassing manner?			
23	→ if the answer to Q2.1.1 - Q2.1.14 = 1 - 4, for each item respondents will answer Q2.2	Q2.2 Person(s) who behaved in the manner described was/were (Please, select all that apply.)	a) woman b) man c) a group of women d) a group of men e) a group of men and women f) not possible to say g) other h) I don't know
24	→ if the answer to Q2.1.1 - Q2.1.14 = 1 - 4, for each item respondents will answer Q2.3	Q2.3 In what professional position was the person(s)? If it was a group of people, select an option according to the person with the highest position. Single choice	a) colleague on equal position b) direct superior (e.g. head of unit / team leader) c) higher-level management (e.g. head of department / director) d) colleague on subordinate position e) client, patient or external partner f) don't know

RQ3. How and where did SH occur?			
25	→ if the answer to Q2.1.1 - Q2.1.14 = 1 - 4, for each item respondents will answer Q2.4	<p>Q2.4 Where did you experience the situation?</p> <p>(Please select all that apply to you.)</p> <p>1.1 a) – h) 1.11 a) – h)</p> <p>1.2 a) – h) 1.12 a) – h)</p> <p>1.3 f) – h) 1.13 a) – h)</p> <p>1.4 a) – h) 1.14 a) – h)</p> <p>1.5 a) – h)</p> <p>1.6 a) – e), h)</p> <p>1.7 a) – h)</p> <p>1.8 a) – e), h)</p> <p>1.9 a) – e), h)</p> <p>1.10 f) – h)</p>	<p>a) directly at workplace (e.g. office, classroom, surgery, laboratory)</p> <p>b) at the technical and surrounding spaces (e.g. parking lot, lift, staircase)</p> <p>c) at places for rest or personal hygiene (e.g. kitchen area, toilet, showers, changing rooms)</p> <p>d) during work-related trips</p> <p>e) at informal events organised by employer (e.g. Christmas party, team building)</p> <p>f) via my work email, work phone, online meetings software or other communication tools</p> <p>g) via my private email, phone or social network accounts (LinkedIn, Instagram, FB)</p> <p>h) other (please specify)</p>
26	 → if the answer to Q2.1.1 - Q2.1.14 = 1 - 4, for each item respondents will answer Q2.5	<p>Q2.5 Has it happened</p> <p>(Please select all that apply to you.)</p>	<p>a) when you were alone</p> <p>b) in front of other colleagues</p> <p>c) in front of clients or external partners</p> <p>d) in a mixed group (colleagues and clients)</p> <p>e) online</p>
RQ1.2. When did SH occur?			
27	→ if the answer to Q2.1.1 - Q2.1.14 = 1 - 4, for each item respondents will answer Q2.6	<p>Q2.6 Has it happened at your current workplace?</p>	<p>a) yes</p> <p>b) no</p>
28	→ if the answer to Q2.1.1 - Q2.1.14 = 1 - 4, for each item respondents will answer Q2.7	<p>Q2.7 When was the last time this situation happened?</p>	<p>a) in last 12 months / b) more than 12 months ago</p>

Module 3a Reporting

29	<p>RQ7: What are the strategies/coping mechanisms?</p>	<p>Q3.1 Thinking about <u>all the experiences you had</u> from the list above, how did you cope with it?</p> <p>(Please select at maximum 3 that best apply to you.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ignored the behaviour b) avoided the harasser c) confronted the harasser directly d) sought support from management e) sought support from family or friends f) sought support from colleagues g) changed work routines or responsibilities h) quit the job i) requested transfer to another department j) other k) I don't remember l) doesn't apply <p><i>//National context - in case of technical/software limitations to make the option visible only to those who confirm experience with 1.1 . 1.x//</i></p>
30	<p>RQ5: What is the reporting rate in a specific sector?</p>	<p>Q3.2 Now, if you think <u>about the experience which you perceive as the most serious</u>, have you reported it?</p> <p>→ If Q3.2 – b) – goes to Q3.11 → If Q3.2 – c) – goes to Q3.12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) yes b) no c) doesn't apply (I haven't experienced any of the situations)
31	<p>RQ8: What experience do respondents have with employing available measures?</p>	<p>Q3.3 To whom did you report it?</p> <p>(Please select all that apply to you.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) direct supervisor / manager b) designated responsible person (e.g., HR officer, ethics officer) c) trade union representative d) workplace harassment hotline / online reporting tool e) ombudsperson <p><i>//National context//</i></p>

			f) equality body <i>//National context//</i> g) labour Inspectorate <i>//National context//</i> h) the police <i>//National context//</i> i) civil society organisation <i>//National context//</i> j) lawyer k) other (please specify)
32	RQ8: What experience do respondents have with employing available measures?	Q3.4 How important were the following reasons for you to decide to report your experience? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To stop the behaviour 2. To protect myself 3. To protect others 4. To ensure accountability 5. To seek justice 6. To receive support 7. Because I felt safe to report 8. Because reporting is mandatory in my organisation 	1 - very important 2 - somehow important 3 - neither important, nor irrelevant 4 - somehow irrelevant 5 - very irrelevant 0 - I don't know
33	RQ9: Did reporting resulted in improved working conditions?		a) investigation (internal or external) launched and concluded b) investigation (internal or external) launched but not concluded c) complaint processed but dismissed d) recommended to contact other institution e) informal resolution f) court case against employer g) court case against harasser h) disciplinary procedure against harasser i) mediation j) nothing happened

			k) I don't know l) other (please specify)
34	RQ9: Did reporting resulted in improved working conditions?	Q3.6 How would you evaluate the fairness of the actions taken in response to your report?	1 - very fair 2 - rather fair 3 - neither fair, nor unfair 4 - rather unfair 5 - very unfair 0 - don't know
35	RQ8: What experience do respondents have with employing available measures?	Q3.7 After your report, did you experience any form of retaliation or negative consequences? → If Q3.7a = goes to Q3.8 → If Q3.7b = goes to Q3.9	a) yes b) no
36	RQ8: What experience do respondents have with employing available measures? → If Q3.7a = goes to Q3.8	Q3.8 What type of retaliation did you experience? (Please select all that apply to you.)	a) negative comments or hostility from management b) negative comments or hostility from coworkers c) exclusion from tasks or meetings d) worsened working conditions e) threats or intimidation from harasser f) threats or intimidation from management g) negative performance evaluation h) transfer to another team or department i) reduction of opportunities or responsibilities j) court case against me k) other (please specify)
37	RQ9: Did reporting resulted in improved working conditions?	Q3.9 What changes, if any, were introduced at your workplace after your report? (Please select all that apply to you.)	a) new or updated sexual harassment policy b) training or awareness-raising activities c) clearer reporting procedure

		<p>Q3.9 What changes, if any, were introduced at your workplace after your report?</p> <p>(Please select all that apply to you.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) appointment of persons responsible for SH cases e) stronger sanctions and enforcement f) improved confidentiality measures g) I don't know h) there were no changes introduced i) other (please specify) j) there were no changes introduced k) other (please specify)
38	<p>RQ8: What experience do respondents have with employing available measures?</p>	<p>Q3.10 Based on your experience, would you report similar harassing behaviour again if it occurred in the future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 - strongly agree 2 - rather agree 3 - neither agree, nor disagree 4 - rather disagree 5 - strongly disagree 0 - I don't know
39	<p>RQ6: What are the reasons for (under) reporting?</p> <p>→ If Q3.2 a) – skip Q3.11</p> <p>→ If Q3.2 b) – goes to Q3.11</p>	<p>Q3.11 If you didn't report the incident, what were the reasons?</p> <p>(Please select all that apply to you.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) I was afraid of reaction of my colleagues b) I feared negative consequences for my career c) I feared not being believed d) I feared the complaint would not remain confidential e) I thought nothing would be done f) I did not know where or how to report g) I felt ashamed or embarrassed h) I wanted to avoid conflict or escalation i) I did not want to harm the reputation of the organisation j) I did not consider it a serious issue

			k) it did not happen again l) other (please specify)
Module 1c Effects - subjective evaluation			
40	RQ15: Does sexual harassment negatively affect job satisfaction and performance?	Q1.12 To what extent do you agree with following statements on impact of sexual harassment that you experienced? 1. My anxiety or fear increased. 2. My mistrust of people increased. 3. I experienced worse quality of sleep 4. (insomnia, nightmares). 5. I experienced stress-related physical symptoms (e.g. headaches, problems with stomach). 6. I changed my appearance (e.g. clothes or makeup). 7. My collegial relationships got worse. 8. My job satisfaction lowered. 9. I lost my job or career. 10. My concentration 11. or productivity was reduced. 12. My self-esteem decreased.	1 - strongly agree 2 - rather agree 3 - neither agree, nor disagree 4 - rather disagree 5 - strongly disagree 0 - I don't know
41	RQ14: Does sexual harassment negatively affect mental health?	Q1.13 Did you seek medical care as a consequence of sexual harassment? (e.g. general practitioner, psychologist, neurologist, other specialists)	a) yes b) no c) prefer not to say
Module 3b Reporting			
42	RQ8: What experience do respondents have with employing available measures? → If Q3.2 c) - goes to Q3.12	Q3.12 Have you ever witnessed sexual harassment at your work? → If Q3.12 b) - c) - to Q3.14	a) yes b) no c) don't know
43	RQ8: What experience do respondents have with employing available measures?	Q3.13 Have you reported it?	a) yes b) no c) prefer not to say

44	<p>RQ8: What experience do respondents have with employing available measures?</p>	<p>Q3.14 To what extent would following measures improve reporting for women?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) anonymous reporting b) stronger protection from negative impact on career c) female focal points for cases of sexual harassment d) reducing stigmatization of victims of sexual harassment (e.g. blaming them) e) gender-sensitive training for all employees f) transparent procedures after reporting and follow-up g) training for supervisors on how to handle cases of sexual harassment h) more serious consequences for perpetrators i) accessible legal support j) accessible psychological support k) other (please specify)
45		<p>Q3.14 To what extent would following measures improve reporting for women?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) anonymous reporting b) stronger protection from negative impact on career c) female focal points for cases of sexual harassment d) reducing stigmatization of victims of sexual harassment (e.g. making fun of them) e) gender-sensitive training for all employees f) transparent procedures after reporting and follow-up g) training for supervisors on how to handle cases of sexual harassment h) more serious consequences for perpetrators

			i) accessible legal support j) accessible psychological support k) other (please specify)
Module 4a Awareness			
46	RQ11: Are employees familiar with national legislation on protection from sexual harassment in the workplace and institutions competent to act on SH?	Q4.1 Which of the following institutions do you think are responsible for addressing cases of sexual harassment? (Please select one or more options.)	<i>//National Context//</i> a) The Police b) Labour Inspectorate c) Trade union d) Equality body <i>//National Context//</i> e) <i>Public Defender of Rights</i> <i>//National Context//</i> f) <i>Ombudsperson for ethical issues in the sector</i> <i>//National Context//</i> g) other (please specify) h) I don't know
47	RQ11: Are employees familiar with national legislation on protection from sexual harassment in the workplace and institutions competent to act on SH?	Q4.2 What legal act(s) do you think regulate prohibition of sexual harassment? (Please select one or more options.)	<i>//National Context//</i> a) Civil Code b) Labour Code c) Antidiscrimination Act d) Criminal Code e) no legal norms f) I don't know
48	OPT RQ11: Are employees familiar with national legislation on protection from sexual harassment in the workplace and institutions competent to act on SH?	Q4.3 In your opinion, what are the employers obliged to do regarding sexual harassment?	<i>//National Context//</i> a) to refrain from harassing behaviour (provided the employer is a natural person) b) to inspect reported cases of sexual harassment c) to implement measures which prevent repeated incidence of harassment d) to create safe and respectful environment

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> e) to report cases to Labour Inspectorate f) to report cases to Police g) to take preventive measures such as organise trainings, adopt ethical codes h) there are no legal obligations i) none of the above j) I don't know
49 	RQ11: Are employees familiar with national legislation on protection from sexual harassment in the workplace and institutions competent to act on SH?	Q4.4 What remedies can you demand in case you are sexually harassed according to current legislation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) financial compensation from the employer b) court ordered apology c) court order to put in place specific measures (e.g. trainings, complaints mechanism, ethical commission) d) harasser's dismissal from work e) order for a harasser to refrain from harassing behaviour f) no remedies/nothing g) other (please specify) h) I don't know
50	RQ12: Are trainings and awareness raising accessible at the workplace?	Q4.5 Over the past 12 months, what information campaign or training against sexual harassment did you notice/take part at your workplace, if any? (Please, select all that apply to you.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Information about in-person or online training b) participation at in-person or online training c) informational posters or leaflets at the premises of the employer d) agenda item at the work-meeting/team meeting e) social (video) campaigns f) no information or trainings g) other (please specify)

Module 4b Awareness – ability to recognize forms of SH

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RQ10: Are employees aware of behaviours that constitute sexual harassment at the workplace?

Q4.6 Would you consider the situations below as a form of sexual harassment?

1. During a break, a colleague is flipping through a porn magazine, showing you pictures and asking about your opinion.
2. A colleague repeatedly tells sex jokes during lunch although some of the colleagues clearly feel embarrassed.
3. Colleague sends GIFs with sexual content as a response to your work emails.
4. During a chat about the past weekend in the kitchen with a group of colleagues, one of them asks you whether you had good sex with your partner?
5. At the meeting, a colleague says out loud that he/she likes looking at you because you are the most beautiful person in the team.
6. The team leader stared at you with a sexual desire and slid with a gaze down your body.
7. A colleague of yours repeatedly tells you about his/her romantic feelings for you although he/she knows you do not feel the same.
8. At the job interview, the HR manager holds your hand longer than usual and stares into your eyes.
9. The client grabs you around your waist while talking about a work issue.
10. You receive photos of naked genitals from your colleague on a regular basis.
11. After you refuse to go for dinner with your boss, he/she threatens to complain about the quality of your work to the HR department.
- 12.
13. Your boss implied he/she would send you to an important conference/ event if you let him kiss you.
14. Your colleague pressed himself against you in the elevator.
15. Somebody from work sent a fake photo depicting you naked to your colleagues.

- 1 - strongly agree
- 2 - rather agree
- 3 - neither agree, nor disagree
- 4 - rather disagree
- 5 - strongly disagree
- 0 - I don't know

Module 5 Questions about respondents / sorting questions

52	How does the status relate to the prevalence of SH?	Q5.1 What is the highest level of education you have achieved?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) lower secondary b) upper secondary vocational c) upper secondary general d) bachelor's degree e) master's degree f) doctoral degree g) prefer not to say
53	Are there any professional groups which are more exposed to sexual harassment?	Q5.2 What is your job position?	<i>//National context - recommendation to have four to five categories of professionals//</i>
54	How does the vulnerability relate to the prevalence of SH?	Q5.3 Do you identify yourself as a member of a national or ethnic minority?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) yes b) no c) prefer not to say
55	Are there any age categories which more exposed to sexual harassment?	Q5.4 What is your age?	Enter a number
56	Are women more exposed to sexual harassment?	Q5.5 You are a...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) woman b) man c) other d) prefer not to say
57	How does the vulnerability relate to the prevalence of SH? 	Q5.6 Are you a transgender* or non-binary person** ? * Transgender people are people whose gender identity does not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth. ** Non-binary people are people who do not identify exclusively as male or female, or who identify with more than one gender.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) yes b) no c) prefer not to say
58	How does the vulnerability relate to the prevalence of SH?	Q5.7 Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) heterosexual (attracted to people of the opposite sex) b) gay c) lesbian d) bisexual e) other f) prefer not to say

59	How does the vulnerability relate to the prevalence of SH?	Q5.8 Do you have any physical and/or mental health disabilities?	a) yes b) no c) prefer not to say
60		Q5.9 In what region do you work?	//National context - options of regions//



Chapter 5

Recommendations for management of data quality

The study adopts a quantitative approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of sexual harassment in the world of work across six countries, each focusing on pre-identified employment sector. Additional qualitative methods might enrich data collected via questionnaire and is described in the last subchapter.

5.1 Ensuring a representative sample for selected employment sector and managing bias of respondents

The quantitative component aims to ensure representative results by including employees of various positions within the selected sectors who are bound by an employment or equivalent contractual relationship and fall within the nationally defined legal working age in each country.

Data collection will be conducted through an anonymous survey. The survey will be carried out both online and offline (paper-based). Respondents can work both directly at the workplace setting and at home (remote work, telecommutation, work-from-home).

To ensure reliability, relevance and ethical integrity of the data collected, eligibility criteria will be applied for the research sample. **To be included in the research, person must be currently employed, either full-time, part-time or under any equivalent contractual relationship, in the specific sector defined for this study in the selected country. Employment may include fixed-term contracts, service contracts or other legally recognized working arrangements in the respective country. In order to include precarious situations, student traineeships or contracted volunteers might be included if it is common practice.** Participants who do not meet eligibility criteria will be automatically excluded from the online survey.

The data collection period is expected to last no longer than four months, ensuring optimal distribution of the sample and careful monitoring of the process.

Prior to data collection, official data will be analysed to define the sample structure, including employment rates by gender, age and (or) any other characteristic within the selected sector. Existing analyses and available administrative data, such as national labour force statistics and the Survey on the Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) among individuals in legal working age will also be used to estimate online accessibility and digital literacy levels.

Based on these data, the sample size will be determined to ensure nationally representative results for each target sector, maintaining a margin of error not exceeding 3% and a confidence level of 95%. It is suggested that the sample size should not be less than 1 000 responses.

To ensure balanced representation, the response rates and sample composition will be monitored regularly. Soft quotas/real-time adjustments will be used during survey monitoring. Incomplete or invalid responses (e.g. overly fast completion, patterned answering) will be excluded. To further strengthen representativeness, weighting procedures will be applied according to the relative distribution of gender, age, job position/hierarchy, region etc. based on official data from the national statistics institutes.

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Self-administered online surveys often attract respondents who are more aware of or sensitive to the topic of sexual harassment, as well as those from urban areas or with higher levels of digital literacy and education. Consequently, employees with lower education levels, limited internet access or whose participation may be constrained by their employment type or work specifics may have reduced opportunities to participate, resulting in their underrepresentation.

To mitigate these limitations, the study will implement the following measures:

- Conducting data collection on-site, supplemented by the online methods, especially with groups whose work is carried out on-site or those with lower digital accessibility. On-site presence of the research team is important for organized data collection and to ensure that employees from diverse departments will be reached. It is also important to actively reach out to respondents and not wait for them in the dedicated area.

- Invitations to participate may also be shared directly with organizations, companies, or institutions representing the relevant employment sectors. It is recommended to first establish contact with each entity and request the appointment of a designated contact person responsible for regular communication with the research team (e.g., VIOLET project partner organisation). It is important that this gatekeeper remains impartial, independent from organizational management, and committed to cooperating with the research team.

5.2 Ensuring response validity

Before conducting the study, the quantitative questionnaire will be tested with individuals to ensure that all questions and their formulations are clear and comprehensible. The pilot test will be used to verify flow, timing and technical functionality. These research instruments will be tested with people who are not involved in social research or familiar with the issue of sexual harassment, to verify that all questions are translated clearly into the national languages and that respondents can immediately understand what is being asked.

After the data collection, the validity of the responses will be tested. During the testing phase of the quantitative questionnaire, optimal time ranges required to complete the survey will be defined. To safeguard data quality, a series of internal consistency and reliability checks will be conducted. These include identifying duplicate entries, detecting unusually short completion times, and verifying response consistency across redundant or logically related questions. Cases that fail reliability criteria may be excluded from the final analysis to avoid bias or distortions in the findings.

The analysis of the collected data will follow a structured, multi-step approach to ensure accuracy, reliability, and meaningful interpretation of the results. Quantitative data will be processed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, will provide an overview of the main patterns and characteristics of the sample. Inferential statistics will then be used to explore relationships, differences, and potential predictors within the data. In the study, the collected data will also be used to provide a clearer overview of the situation and extent of the phenomenon of sexual harassment in a certain sector.

5.3 Qualitative research

To provide a comprehensive understanding of sexual harassment in the workplace, a qualitative component of the research can be used. In addition to the online survey, it is possible to conduct in-person qualitative interviews with selected employees. These interviews can provide a deeper understanding of personal experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace and allow exploration of its emotional, professional, and organizational impacts from the perspective of those who have directly experienced it.

While surveys can capture prevalence and trends, they may not fully reflect the complexity, context, and nuances of individual experiences. In-person interviews allow respondents to elaborate on situations, provide contextual details and express emotions or perceptions that structured survey questions may not capture. This approach enriches the dataset, helps validate survey findings and ensures that the analysis reflects both statistical trends and lived experiences. It also facilitates a better understanding of the organizational culture and systemic factors that contribute to harassment, which is crucial for designing effective interventions and policies.



Chapter 6

Human Rights Based Approach guidance

6.1 HRBA theory

Human rights-based approach is based on applying key human rights principles defined in international documents and treaties into various areas of life such as policymaking, monitoring, research or providing services. It applies to both rights-holders (so that they can exercise their rights) and duty bearers (regarding the obligation to respect and fulfil human rights) and creates accountability, so people can seek for remedies if they think their rights were violated. In the context of research, respondents are rights-holders and research organizations are duty bearers. Thus, a respondent

- is entitled to rights;
- is entitled to claim rights;
- is entitled to hold the duty-bearer accountable (Kirkemann Boesen & Martin 2007).

There are five general principles of HRBA called PANEL (ENNHRI 2025):

- Participation
- Accountability
- Non-discrimination and equality
- Empowerment
- Legality

Participation

Everyone is entitled to active participation in decision-making processes which affect the enjoyment of their rights. In terms of research, marginalised groups and relevant stakeholders should have an opportunity to participate actively and meaningfully on data collection. Specific groups that should participate in research are for example LGBTI+ people, older persons, people with minority ethnic or national background or migrant status. Data collection methods should be adapted in a way that everybody is able to participate, for example by providing multiple ways how to fill in a questionnaire (online, offline) or by translating it into minority languages. The questionnaire should also be translated with attention to local cultural terminology.

Accountability

States and other duty-bearers must be held accountable to people affected by their actions. In the context of research, it refers to data collection for accountability as well as accountability in research. Data collectors are accountable for the impact of their data collection activities and the publication of data and should be aware of the impacts of increasing the visibility or accessibility of certain information.

The accountability also means that the collected data are reliable and can be used as a tool for improved enjoyment of human rights. It can be strengthened by quality data visualization tools, communication and reference to human rights standards and recommendations from relevant stakeholders (OHCHR 2018).

There should also be accessible complaint mechanisms for all persons involved (respondents, research staff) in case of violation of their rights. The process should be transparent and easy to follow. An important element of complaint mechanisms is that rights-holders are aware of the goals of the research and intended outcomes (Kirkemann Boesen & Martin 2007).

Non-discrimination and equality

All individuals are entitled to their rights without discrimination of any kind. Non-discrimination is not only a human rights principle, but a legal obligation. In the context of sexual harassment defined as a gender-based violence there is a strong link to gender mainstreaming. Understanding the scope, causes and impact of sexual harassment is a key to effectively combat gender discrimination.

Empowerment

Actions should contribute to claiming and exercising rights of persons involved in the research. The research should help people to understand their rights and provide data that can enhance their enjoyment of human rights. It is vital that collected data are used for follow-up actions and are available for other stakeholders and decision-makers to build their capacity and help them better fulfil their duties in line with international commitments and human rights principles (SIDA 2022). This can be achieved by proper communication of results and mainstreaming activities and is directly linked to participation.

Legality

Actions should be in line with the legal rights set out in domestic and international laws. Specifically for research of sexual harassment, it is crucial to comply with General Data Protection Regulation (Reg. EU 2016/679). Data should not be published in any way that enables direct or indirect identification of individual data subjects. If data are shared between organisations with different data protection regulations, the practices of the organisation with stricter data protection should be upheld (OHCHR 2018).

OHCHR developed additional HRBA principles designed for measurement of implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They are specifically focused on data collection and research.

Data disaggregation

For identifying and understanding inequalities related to sexual harassment, data disaggregation is a key factor. It also enables us to identify intersectional aspects of SH. It is recommended to gather the information from all individuals within the dataset (with respect to self-identification), which will improve data quality and reduce bias. If the number of respondents in a certain category is too small for meaningful analysis (for example transgender persons), this should be mentioned in the report to explain why certain categories were not included in the analysis. This increases visibility and prevents overly simplistic interpretations (European Commission 2023).

Self-identification

To disaggregate the data, respondents should have the right to disclose or withhold information about their personal characteristics. For example, if one identifies as a member of a national majority, another ethnicity should not be attributed to them based on their looks. All questions on personal identity should allow multiple identities and they should be voluntary. The key principle is do no harm so the collected data should be used only for the benefit of the specific groups and should not create or reproduce existing stereotypes about population groups. If a survey includes questions on personal identity, persons conducting interviews should receive appropriate training (in case of sexual harassment trauma informed approach training is recommended).

6.2 Protection of research participants

Research of sensitive and potential retraumatizing issues such as sexual harassment requires strong preventive measures to protect people participating at the research not only as respondents but also those who collaborate on data collection.

Ethical principles in engaging participation at the survey

Ethical considerations are a central component of this survey methodology to ensure that all procedures align with internationally recognized research standards. The survey, being administered online or on-site at the workplace, will be anonymous. No personal data defined by GDPR directive will be collected. Nevertheless, there are several principles to be followed to ensure ethical administration of the survey.

Participants have to be informed about the following:

- **anonymity** of their responses - participants will not be asked to fill in any information that would allow other people to identify them. It is helpful to explain that information about their age, ethnicity or other demographic questions will help researchers to find out more about specific experiences but it won't lead to loss of their anonymity.
- **protection** of their responses - collected data will not be shared with any third parties, nor with their employer. Responses will not be analysed on the workplace level and shared with employers because that could expose respondents or put them at risk of being blamed in case of unfavourable results.
- **context** of the research - participants should be informed about the organisation conducting the research, aim of the research, who will process their responses and how the results will be used.
- **voluntary** participation - it should be clearly communicated that participation is voluntary and participants can withdraw at any time without any consequences (e.g. if the questions are uncomfortable).
- **trigger warning** - to avoid negative impact and retraumatization of victims, trigger warnings should be used in the introduction to the survey.

- available **helplines** or services - either at the end of the questionnaire or as a part of introductory information, contact information on helplines or services which can provide legal (e.g. equality body contact information) or socio-psychological assistance should be included. Helplines might include also issues related to sexual violence.

If an equality body administers the questionnaire, it should be clearly communicated to participants that it is not possible to process their experience with sexual harassment through the survey as a complaint. Also, it might be useful to share information about available services the equality body can provide to complainants. This additional information should be shared after administration of the questionnaire to avoid bias of the responses.

Confidentiality of the responses can be ensured by encouraging privacy during the administration. The role of administrators is also to manage any attempts to fill the questionnaire under supervision of any other persons at the workplace.

Unless national legislation doesn't say otherwise, it is not required to collect informed consent in a standard form with a signature. Duty to fully inform the participants should be fulfilled through introductory text and supported by trained administrators. In an online form, an active confirmation that respondents were informed and agree to participate in the questionnaire might be included.

Training and protection of questionnaire administrators and interviewers

Administration of the questionnaire will be conducted by mixed methods to increase its accessibility. A face-to-face computer assisted method will be used as the main approach. Administrators will collect responses on electronic devices. To preserve privacy of the respondents, administrators will inform them about the research (see above), provide electronic devices with an online questionnaire to be filled in and be available if any question arises. Administrators may offer self-completion via online link or QR code to participants who prefer to do it after working hours or at some other time. For participants who do not want to fill in the questionnaire online, project partners may offer to fill in a paper-pencil design of the questionnaire.

Collection of data at the workplace requires administrators to be trained not only in step-by step administration process (such as full and correct information, provision of additional information about available help) but also in proper communication and strategies in the following situations:

- respondents feel overwhelmed or triggered by questions about sexual harassment because of their previous experience - administrators need to know that respondents' well-being is a priority, unlike completion of the questionnaire, and be equipped with useful contacts and tips how to calm down person in distress.
- respondents start to confide with their individual cases of sexual harassment - it is important to clearly communicate that administrators do not represent equality body and cannot process any complaint, therefore respondents should be referred to contact equality body, help-line or other institutions,
- administrators might face negative feedback in various forms from jokes on the issue of sexual harassment, ridiculing or swearing on administrators, equality body or employer, therefore they should be equipped with simple strategies how to avoid conflict and increase resilience towards hostile behaviour,
- administrators might face sexually harassing behaviour from respondents, therefore it is crucial they are aware of different forms of sexual harassment, strategies of verbal self defence and the priority of their safety and well-being over completion of the questionnaire. A set of safety rules should be put in place, such as always being in pairs during field work, keeping online updates and communication with coordinators who might assist in critical situations.

Field work might be a challenging experience for administrators and the equality body should put in place an effective system of supervision, including regular check-ins to monitor how they cope with feedback as well as their observations which might be crucial for technical aspects of data collection. In situations when administrators feel overwhelmed or face sexual harassment, equality body should be ready to offer psychological assistance if needed. In case that data collection is provided by external contractors, the equality body is obliged to ensure that necessary measures to protect administrators have been taken.

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