

FRA Press Release

Vienna/Brussels, 5 March 2014

## **Violence against Women: every day and everywhere**

**A new report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) presents results from the world's biggest-ever survey on violence against women, revealing the extent of abuse suffered by women at home, work, in public and online. As well as demonstrating the wide prevalence of violence against adult women, the report also details incidents of physical and sexual violence experienced by women in childhood. The survey shows that policy makers need to recognise the extent of violence against women, and ensure that responses meet the needs and rights of all victims of violence against women in practice and not just on paper.**

*"These survey figures simply cannot and should not be ignored. FRA's survey shows that physical, sexual and psychological violence against women is an extensive human rights abuse in all EU Member States," said FRA Director [Morten Kjaerum](#). "The enormity of the problem is proof that violence against women does not just impact a few women only – it impacts on society every day. Therefore, policy makers, civil society and frontline workers need to review measures to tackle all forms of violence against women no matter where it takes place. Measures tackling violence against women need to be taken to a new level now."*

The survey asked women about their experiences of physical, sexual and psychological violence, including domestic violence. Questions were also asked about incidents of stalking, sexual harassment, and the role played by new technologies in women's experiences of abuse. In addition, the survey asked about respondents' experiences of violence in childhood.

Drawing on the survey responses, some of the key findings show that:

- 33% of women have experienced **physical and/or sexual violence** since the age of 15. That corresponds to 62 million women.
- 22% have experienced **physical and/or sexual violence by a partner**.
- 5% of all women have been **raped**. Almost one in 10 women who have experienced sexual violence by a non-partner, indicate that more than one perpetrator was involved in the most serious incident.
- 43% have experienced some form of **psychological violence** by either a current or a previous partner, such as public humiliation; forbidding a woman to leave the house or locking her up; forcing her to watch pornography; and threats of violence.
- 33% have **childhood experiences of physical or sexual violence** at the hands of an adult. 12% had childhood experiences of sexual violence, **of which half were from men they did not know**. These forms of abuse typically involve an adult exposing their genitals or touching the child's genitals or breasts.
- 18% of women have experienced **stalking** since the age of 15 and 5% in the 12 months prior to the interview. This corresponds to 9 million women. 21% of women who have experienced stalking said that it lasted for over 2 years.



- 11% of women have experienced inappropriate advances on social websites or have been subjected to sexually explicit emails or text (SMS) messages. 20% of young women (18-29) have been victims of such **cyberharassment**.
- 55% of women have experienced some form of **sexual harassment**. 32% of all victims of sexual harassment said the perpetrator was a boss, colleague or customer.
- 67% **did not report** the most serious incident of partner violence to the police or any other organisation.

The survey on which the report is based makes clear that a wide variety of groups need to take action to combat violence against women, including employers, health professionals and internet service providers. FRA makes a number of proposals to improve the situation and to support EU and national policy makers to introduce and implement comprehensive measures to prevent and respond to violence against women:

- EU Member States should ratify the Council of Europe's *Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence* (the Istanbul Convention).
- EU Member States must regard intimate partner violence as a public and not a private issue. The law in all EU Member States should therefore treat rape within marriage the same as other incidents of rape, and should respond to domestic violence as a matter of serious public concern.
- EU Member States need to review the existing scope of legislative and policy responses to sexual harassment, recognising that it can occur in various settings and can use different mediums, such as the internet or mobile phones.
- Police, healthcare professionals, employers and specialist victim support services need to be trained, properly resourced and given the necessary powers to reach out to victims.
- The police and other relevant services should be trained to recognise and understand the impact of psychological abuse on victims to ensure all forms of violence against women (and girls) in varied settings are recognised, recorded and acted on.
- The police should be encouraged to routinely recognise and investigate cases where cyberstalking and cyberharassment plays a role.
- Internet and social media platforms should proactively assist victims of cyberharassment to report abuse and be encouraged to limit unwanted behaviour.
- Specialist support services are required to address the needs of victims who suffer from negative feelings in the aftermath of victimisation, which can include self-blame and a sense of shame.
- Campaigns on and responses to violence against women must be directed at men as well as women. Men need to be positively engaged in initiatives that confront how some men use violence against women.
- There is a clear need to improve and harmonise data collection on violence against women, both in and between EU Member States.

For more information, please see the [press pack](#) which contains the main results report with full survey findings, 'at a glance' report summarising the key findings

and opinions and the online data visualisation tool which allows users to explore the full survey findings by Member State and subject area.

Note to editors:

- Over 42,000 women were interviewed for the survey. The net sample size was 1,500 respondents per country (except in Luxembourg, where the net sample size was 900 respondents). Respondents were 18-74 years of age at the time of interviewing.
- All respondents were selected randomly and the survey results are representative both at EU and national level.
- Questions were asked about experiences and incidents since the age of 15 and over the 12 months preceding the interview.
- The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) provides evidence-based advice to EU and national decision makers, thereby contributing to more informed and better targeted debates and policies on fundamental rights.

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