

# Crime, safety and victims' rights

## FRA Fundamental Rights Survey

### Questions & Answers on the main report findings

Vienna, 19 February 2021

This is an overview of the main findings from the '[Crime, safety and victims' rights](#)' report drawn from FRA's [Fundamental Rights Survey](#). It is the first comprehensive, EU-wide survey of people's experiences and views on crime victimisation.

See our [methodology Q&A](#) for more information on how FRA carried out the survey.

#### Why was this survey needed?

Crime surveys consistently show that most victims do not report incidents of violence to the police. As a result, authorities have an incomplete picture of the situation based on statistics of police recorded incidents alone. In addition, as countries use different definitions of crime and different ways of counting crime, existing police statistics are not comparable between countries.

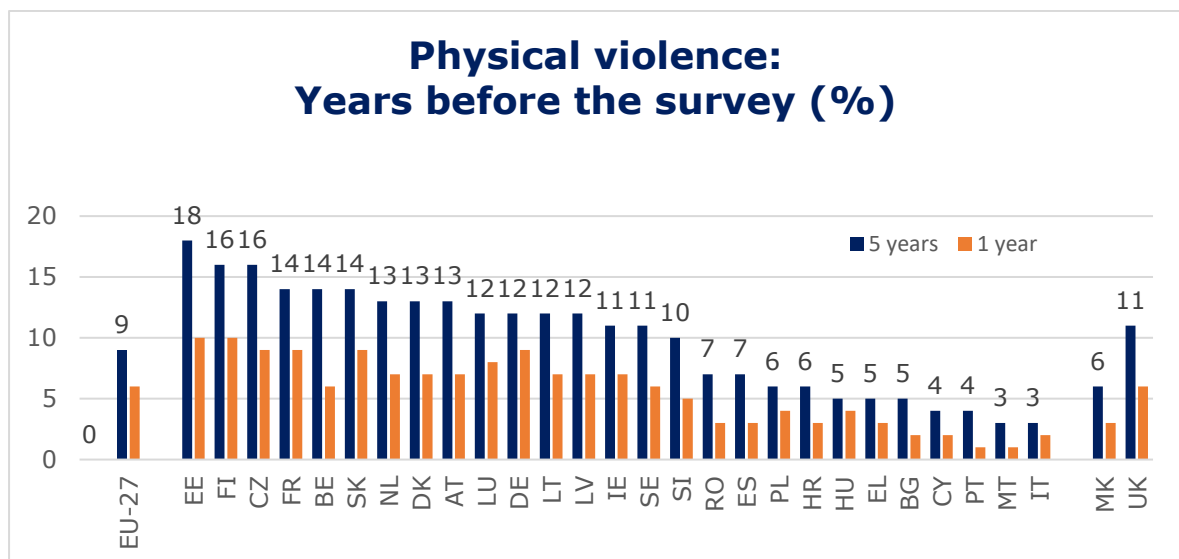
This is the first EU-wide survey to collect comparable data on people's experiences of crime and safety. It complements official statistics by capturing data on crime incidents, including those that people do not report to the police.

Authorities working with crime victims can draw on the survey findings to assess the effectiveness of existing measures, and to identify gaps, in protection and assistance provided to victims of crime. They can also evaluate steps taken to prevent victimisation.

FRA's survey captured the views of old and young, men and women and people from different backgrounds. This provides a rich source of data on how the general population – and particular more vulnerable groups in society – experience crime.

#### How prevalent is violence across Europe?

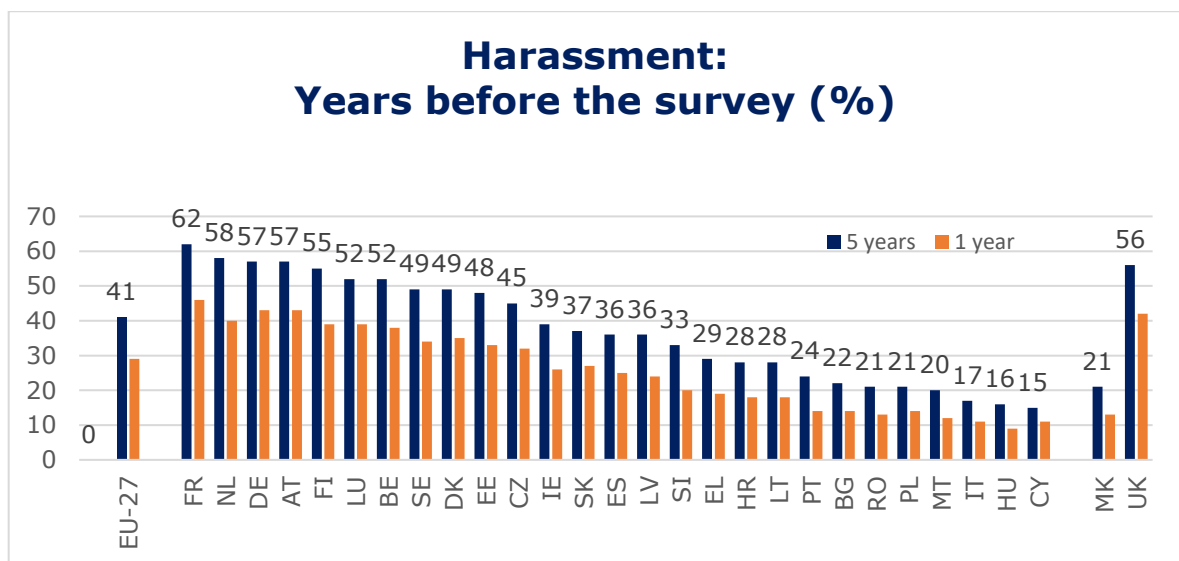
- Over one in 20 (6%) people in the EU experienced physical violence in the year before the survey. This corresponds to over 22 million people.
- The survey results reveal stark differences between countries and groups in society.



- Young people (16–29 years old) are at greater risk of violent crime. Close to one in four young people (23%) experienced physical violence in the five years before the survey. In other age groups, it is fewer than one in 10.
- Ethnic minorities (22%), LGBTI people who identify as other than heterosexual (19%), and people with disabilities or serious health problems (17%) all experience high rates of violence.

### How prevalent is harassment across Europe?

- Almost one in three (29%) people in the EU experienced harassment in the year before the survey. This corresponds to over 110 million people.
- The survey results reveal stark differences between countries and groups in society.



- Three in five young people aged 16-29 years (61%) experienced harassment in the five years before the survey and 27% faced cyberharassment (that is, harassment including emails or text messages that were offensive or threatening, or having offensive or threatening comments about you on the internet, for example on Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram).
- People who identify as other than heterosexual (57%), non-EU citizens (54%), and people with disabilities or serious health problems (50%) all experience high rates of harassment.

### How do experiences of physical violence and harassment differ between men and women?

- Male victims of non-sexual physical violence mostly (42%) do not know the perpetrator. But for women, it is most often a family member or relative (32%). For men, most incidents of non-sexual physical violence are in public places (39%), like streets or parks, whereas for women the incidents most often occur at home (37%).
- Across all age groups, women report higher rates of physical sexual violence, compared with men.
- One in two (51%) men say that physical (non-sexual) incidents did not have psychological consequences, compared with 30% of women.
- Overwhelmingly, men are perpetrators of physical violence.

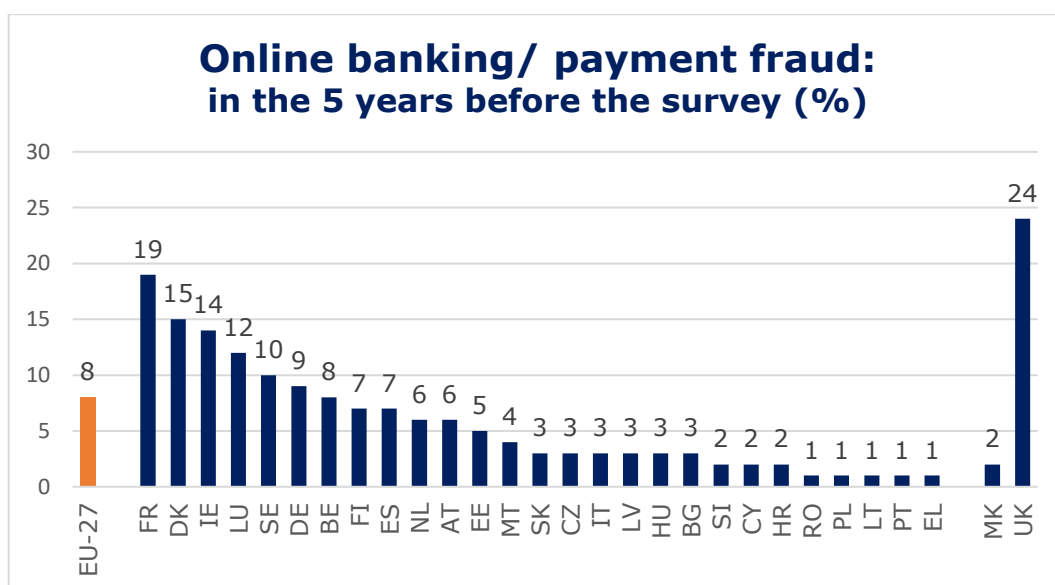
- One in five women victims of harassment (18%) described the incident as sexual compared with 6% of men. People they did not know were responsible for 72% of sexual harassment of women and 57% took place in public.

### How frequent is burglary?

- Nearly one in 10 (8%) people in the EU experienced a burglary in the five years before the survey.
- People with a disability or a serious health problem, or those who belong to an ethnic minority experience higher rates of burglary than others.

### How common is fraud?

- Nearly one in 10 (8%) people in the EU experienced online banking or payment card fraud in the five years before the survey. The variation between countries is likely to reflect national differences in online banking.



- One in four people (26%) in the EU were victims of consumer fraud online – being cheated or misled about goods, items or services purchased – in the five years before the survey.
- Young people and those with higher levels of education experienced greater rates of online fraud, possibly due to them using more online shopping.
- People with disabilities or serious health problems suffer higher rates of fraud. Some 14% were victims of online banking or payment fraud compared to 6% of people without disabilities, in the five years before the survey. This also applies to consumer fraud: 36% of people with disabilities or serious health problems were victimised, compared with 23% without.

### How often do victims report crime?

- Crime reporting remains low with only 30% of people in the EU reporting incidents of physical violence and 11% harassment incidents to the police.
- Groups that tend to experience more hate crime – minorities, LGBTI people and people with disabilities – more often report incidents of violence.

- Although more people (60%) report cases of physical violence when the incident was sexual, reporting is lower when the incident involves a family member or relative (22%).
- People also tend to report burglaries (72%) and online banking or payment card fraud (95%) more often, although they often report fraud to other authorities than police. High reporting rates for these crimes could be due to the prospect of financial compensation.
- Often victims did not consider incidents of violence and harassment serious enough to merit reporting. Among the reasons for not reporting crime, one in four (23%) of victims who were injured thought the police would do nothing and 14% do not trust the police.

### **How willing are people to tackle crime themselves?**

- More than one in two (54%) people in the EU would be willing to intervene when seeing someone hit their partner on the street.
- Nearly one in five (17%) people are unwilling to give evidence in court, even when asked, after witnessing someone hit their partner on the street. However, these results vary considerably between countries.
- People's willingness to engage with the criminal justice system, by calling the police or giving evidence in court, is lower among older people, those with lower levels of education, and people who struggle to make ends meet.

### **How does crime affect people?**

- Around six in 10 people worry about online banking or payment card fraud (63%) or theft of personal items such as a mobile phone, wallet or purse (62%). 54% worry about burglary and 47% worry about terrorism.
- Rates of worry about crime are higher among women, people with less education, the unemployed and those who struggle to make ends meet. This can be due to the increased impact crime has for people in these groups, who find it more difficult to recover from crime, financially and psychologically.
- Nearly two in three (64%) women avoid going to places where there are no other people around – and nobody to help if they were assaulted or harassed – compared with 36% of men. 41% of women avoid being alone with someone they know, for fear of assault or harassment, compared with 25% of men.

### **What should the EU and Member States do to support victims of crime?**

FRA calls on the EU and Member States to use the findings to guide their crime prevention and victim support strategies. In particular, it calls for Member States to:

1. **Ensure access to justice:** Countries should provide all victims, including the most vulnerable, with appropriate information, support and protection, and enable their participation in criminal proceedings. This also applies to online settings.
2. **Offer targeted support:** Countries should pay particular attention to the specific needs of various groups to better protect them from violence and inform them about their rights in ways that they understand.
3. **Support women better:** Countries should ensure a more gender-sensitive when it comes to legal sanctions, education and training, protection and support for victims' rights. This includes crime prevention through educating men, who are mostly the perpetrators.

4. **Facilitate crime reporting:** Countries need to do more to encourage and make it easier for people to report crimes. This includes using other avenues, like civil society or healthcare services to capture incidents of crime, to inform victims about their rights and refer them to other services that can help.