



EP Newshound

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Events & People

“One in every three women in the EU has been physically and/or sexually abused since the age of fifteen”

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“One in every three women in the EU has been physically and/or sexually abused since the age of fifteen”: of these, one in five has experienced this abuse at the hands of a partner, according to a survey requested by the EP and Council.

The survey into “violence against women” found that about half of all women in the EU have been sexually harassed: this corresponds to between 83 and 102 million women.

And if you are working in a professional occupation or have a university degree, this figure is even higher: three out of every four of the women in your workplace have been sexually harassed.

The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) released the results on 5 March in the EP, during an event to mark International Women’s Day.

This is the first survey to examine all 28 member states in exactly the same way and is the biggest-ever carried out into violence against women.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with over 42,000 randomly selected women aged between 18 and 74. You can find more details here: (<http://fra.europa.eu/en/survey/2012/survey-gender-based-violence-against-women>).

Rather than baldly asking women whether they were victims of violence, the interviewers asked questions about specific incidents, such as "Were you slapped?" "Was your hair pulled?" "Have you consented to sexual activity because you were afraid of what might happen if you refused?"

Three types of abuse were examined by the survey: physical, sexual and psychological. Examples of psychological abuse included being prevented from leaving the house or seeing friends or the threat of being separated from children.

Stalking, sexual harassment and childhood experiences of violence were also examined. An estimated 9 million women in the EU have experienced stalking in the last 12 months and one in every ten women has been stalked by a previous partner.

"We need to have a comprehensive response to this," said Blanca Tapia, spokesperson for the FRA. She said future efforts to prevent violence against women should also focus on the men that are or could potentially be involved.

"Campaigns should not just be directed to women. Men are part of the solution; we must also target the men. We need to send the message that if a woman looks sexy this is not an excuse to take advantage of her."

The FRA recommends that member states ratify the Council of Europe's Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention).

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