

Sexual Harassment in the Research and Higher Education Sector

National Policies and Measures in EU Member
States and Associated Countries

Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation

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Executive Summary

Gender-based violence (here including gender harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault) is prevalent at all levels of higher education and research and in all disciplines. It has destructive consequences for individuals and institutions as well as for the quality of research and education. Despite this, questions of gender-based violence in higher education have received very little attention both in terms of research and on the policy level in Europe. The ERAC Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation¹ calls on all stakeholders to take further concerted policy action to make the European Higher Education and Research Area a truly safe environment where all talents can thrive.

To map policy responses in the EU, the ERAC SWG GRI conducted a survey in Member States and Associated Countries that covered the policies, strategies, actions, and measures taken at the national and EU level to address gender-based violence in higher education and research. The survey's focus was on strategies, measures, and actions at the national level, not the university/institutional level. This is an important limitation that guides both the reading of the material, the analysis, and the recommendations in the report.

The analysis of the results reveal that even though the #MeToo movement has put the question of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in academia higher up on the agenda in several of the Member States and Associated Countries, knowledge and acknowledgment of these issues remain weak. To sum up:

- Gender-based violence in academia is, with a few exceptions, an unrecognised issue and an underdeveloped field of knowledge at the national level in the European Research Area.
- In general, a cohesive infrastructure for tackling gender-based violence in academia in the Member States and Associated Countries is missing. There is a prominent lack of relevant policies, legislation/regulations, responsible authorities, and up-to-date data.
- No country has done a sufficient¹ level of work to combat gender-based violence in higher education. Only a few countries have introduced cohesive measures and activities that may be able to achieve institutional change.

¹ For Member States or Associated Countries to have a sufficient level of work on a national level, they need to

- 1) produce and display relevant open data on gender-based violence in the research and higher education sector;
- 2) have a policy statement acknowledging gender-based violence in higher education as unacceptable and/or legislate gender-based violence in higher education;
- 3) monitor compliance to policy and/or legislation on gender-based violence;
- 4) achieve sustainable and relevant strategies and activities at a national level to support victims and prevent gender-based violence;
- 5) establish awareness-raising and information campaigns on a national level concerning gender-based violence in higher education.

- Whether and how the issue is addressed varies amongst the countries. The kinds of activities and measures in place, the allocation of financial incentives, and the existence of relevant infrastructures also differ significantly.
- The higher risk of victimisation for internationally mobile researchers is not recognised, not in the ongoing work against gender-based violence in academia or in the ongoing work on academic mobility at the national or EU level.

Gender-based violence is a persistent feature of work life in general and is increasingly recognised as a serious problem for academic institutions around the globe. The specific structuring of the research and higher education sectors, such as their asymmetrical power-relations, insecure employment conditions, and uninformed leadership justify the need for identifying sector-specific measures to tackle this issue. On average, and depending on context and conceptual framework, international studies show that 25 percent of female students have experienced gender-based violence during their time in the higher education sector. Employee harassment in higher education is often overlooked, but research indicates that workplace harassment is prevalent in higher education at all levels and among all disciplines. The negative effects and consequences of not handling gender-based violence are extensive:

- **On the individual level**, exposure leads to negative consequences on physical and psychological/mental health and work-related issues. Sick leave, depression, anxiety, loss of work- and study-motivation, Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), pain and absence from work and study, as well as the attrition from research careers are some of the recorded effects of exposure to gender-based violence.
- **On the institutional level**, gender-based violence has a negative impact on the effectiveness and proper functioning of research groups and teams, and thus on the overall quality of research and education.
- **On the level of the research and higher education sector**, gender-based violence jeopardises the sector's status as a core democratic institution in society that is supposed to produce and disseminate research and knowledge of importance and relevance for all, and puts it at risk of losing excellent students and researchers due to exposure to gender-based violence.
- **On the societal level**, the existence of gender-based violence in the research and higher education sector affects efforts to recruit and retain future generations. It also compromises efforts to achieve gender equality, including a less sex-segregated labour market and strategies to close the gender pay gap.

Despite the destructive consequence of gender-based violence for individuals, institutions, and society and on the quality of research and education itself, questions of gender-based violence in higher education have received very little attention both in research and on a policy level in Europe. The research and higher education sector must take responsibility for providing safe work and study environments, free from violence and harassment. There is a

need to prioritise and develop knowledge and policies, at a national and European level as well as through the European Commission, in a way that gives proper support to victims and prevents gender-based violence in the research and higher education sector.

International research, experience-based knowledge, and the result of this study point to the need for all actors to take responsibility for reducing and preventing gender-based violence, and specifically to: 1) acknowledge it as existing in the research and higher education sector across Europe, 2) develop research-based knowledge on the topic, 3) build effective support structures for victims, and 4) take bold measures to create diverse, inclusive, and respectful research and study environments. The higher education landscape includes different types of actors, with different mandates, functions, and responsibilities in relation to the sector. The following recommendations take these different functions and responsibilities into consideration, requiring each actor to do its part.

Recommendations

The recommendations aim to contribute to one of the objectives of the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, 'Ending Gender-based Violence', specifically in the research and higher education sector.

The first five recommendations are of a general nature and relate to all actors at the EU and national level. The report shows considerable variance between countries, hence these five recommendations might be of greatest significance for the many countries in which the question of gender-based violence in higher education is still an unrecognised issue. These five recommendations constitute a basis for continued work to eradicate gender-based violence in the European Research Area.

1. **Acknowledge gender-based violence² in research and higher education as an unacceptable problem.** For example, in strategic documents, charts, internal and external directives, and awareness-raising campaigns and through actors speaking out against gender-based violence.
2. **Step up the work for gender equality and diversity in every aspect of the research and higher education sector**, in line with the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention 2019. Gender-based violence is both a consequence of and contributes to gender inequality. Policy and institutional changes aimed at creating a research and higher education sector characterised by gender balance, secure working conditions, good family/work life, and equal pay help to develop an inclusive and diverse academic culture.

² Gender-based violence is used throughout the report as an umbrella concept including gender harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. For a more detailed description of terminology, see pages 8-9.

3. **Build alliances with key stakeholders, both nationally and transnationally.** Gender-based violence in the research and higher education sector can be a sensitive question. Encourage, support, and learn from the positive initiatives, actions, and measures taken by other actors, organisations, and researchers at the institutional, national, and European level.
4. **Attend to gender-based violence with at least the same level of attention and resources as devoted to research misconduct.** The existence of gender-based violence in the research and higher education sector entails great risks for the quality of research and education and for higher education as a democratic institution.
5. **Cultivate sensitivity to the issue and awareness of measures** through communication campaigns. Where relevant, these can be funded, for example, in synergy with the Structural Funds.

National authorities

6. Include actions to combat gender-based violence in the ERA National Action Plans and Strategies and other relevant strategic policy documents governing research and higher education sectors.
7. Set up protocols for regular collection of statistics on gender-based violence at the national and institutional level. Including the prevalence, frequency, consequences, preventative measures, case handling, support systems, and follow-up to developments on the national level over time.
8. Require that all research institutions and universities report annually on their activities/measures to eradicate gender-based violence.
9. Include measures against gender-based violence as a criterion for the evaluation of research institutions and universities, quality standards, and human resource management.

Umbrella organisations (the national and EU levels)

10. Organise a cross-stakeholders working group / platform for policy and knowledge exchange.
11. Develop joint policies and action plans for and with the research and higher education sector to promote institutional change.
12. Investigate the possibilities for research institutions and universities to impose 'academic sanctions' for perpetrators – for example, in regard to restrictions on universities' internal funding for research, supervising PhD students, and being an opponent/rapporteur in a PhD defence, to seat in a commission for promotion, or to transfer perpetrators from research projects/working groups/institutions
13. Offer leadership and bystander training on a regular basis dealing with how to handle gender-based violence.

National research funding organisations

14. Fund research on gender-based violence in higher education and research through specific calls at national and international levels.
15. Progressively introduce the requirement for policies against gender-based violence as a condition that higher education and research organisations must meet in order to apply for research funding.
16. Consider sexual harassment just as important as research misconduct in terms of its effect on the integrity of research.
17. In funding schemes that provide financial support for international research mobility, the receiving institution should be required to have policy and infrastructure in place to address gender-based violence connected to such international mobility (trans-EU mobility, international cooperation, third-country participation, etc.).

European Commission

The above recommendations targeting national research funding organisations also apply for the European Commission in its role as a European-level research funding organisation, but additional specific recommendations for the European Commission are provided below:

18. Formulate a European policy and plan of action against gender-based violence in education and research.
19. Revise the Charter and Code of Researchers to address gender-based violence and include measures at the institutional level to combat gender-based violence in the assessment for the HR Excellence in Research Award.
20. Urge that policies against gender-based violence are put in place in both the sending and receiving research performing organisations as a mandatory condition for participating in programmes involving the recruitment and mobility of researchers (such as Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), EURAXESS and Erasmus+).
 - Offer training on gender-based violence and mobility to all institutions participating in international programmes such as Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), EURAXESS and Erasmus+.
21. Include dimensions of mobility and gender-based violence in higher education and research in calls for research funding – for example, in the Horizon2020 topic SwafS-25-2020: *Gender-based violence including sexual harassment in research organisations and universities*.
22. Investigate the possibility of including systematic data collection and reporting on gender-based violence in academia in the future editions of She Figures.
23. Set up a pan-European taskforce/expert group to exchange information and knowledge on the broader situation regarding gender-based violence in the research and higher education sector at the European level.
24. Include provisions addressing protection against gender-based violence in grant agreements and in the rules of implementation in Horizon Europe.

Introduction

Gender-based violence is prevalent at all levels of higher education and research and in all disciplines. It has destructive consequences for individuals and institutions as well as for the quality of research and education. Despite this, questions of gender-based violence in higher education have received very little attention, both in terms of research and on the policy level in Europe. To map policy responses in the EU, the ERAC Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation (hereafter referred to as the Standing Working Group or SWG GRI) conducted a survey in Member States and Associated Countries that covered the policies, strategies, actions, and measures taken at a national and EU level to address gender-based violence in higher education and research. This report was prepared by the SWG GRI Sub-group on Gender Harassment in Academia and presents the results of the survey, together with policy recommendations for various stakeholders. With one of the main objectives in the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 being 'Ending gender-based violence', this report constitutes a contribution to the implementation of the strategy in the research and higher education sector.

The overall objective of the Standing Working Group is to advise the Council and the European Commission on policies and initiatives on gender equality in Research and Innovation, for the benefit of scientists, research institutions, universities, businesses, and society at large. The topic of sexual harassment and sexual assault in academia, with a particular focus on international mobility, was included in the 2018-2019 Work Programme of the SWG GRI, and the sub-group was established in January 2019 to carry out the work in line with the mandate presented below.

The sub-group consisted of representatives of BE, CZ, NL, NO, IS, and SE.³ The rapporteur worked in cooperation with external experts from the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, Maja Lundqvist and Fredrik Bondestam. The report is based on survey responses received from Member States and Associated Countries, umbrella organisations on the EU level, and research funding institutions at the EU level (European Commission) from June to December 2019 (see Appendix 1 for the complete time frame).

The mission of the Sub-group on Gender Harassment in Academia is to analyse how the issue of gender harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault in academia is addressed at the national level of Member States and Associated Countries.⁴ Special attention is to be devoted

³ Sub-Group: **Rapporteur:** Carl Jacobsson (SE). **Members:** Martin Degand (BE FWB), Veronika Fajmonova (CZ), Marissa Herder (NL), Heidi Holt Zachariassen (NO), Marcela Linkova (CZ), Jona Palsdottir (IS). **External experts:** Fredrik Bondestam (SE), Tamar Brosh (IL), Maja Lundqvist (SE).

⁴ The sub-group's mandate does not consider the institutional level, despite this level being included as a topical issue of the work programme cited above. However, the institutional level is addressed indirectly by way of the national umbrella organisations.

to international mobility as this poses a specific challenge to vulnerable groups, including refugee women, LGBT+, and early-stage women researchers travelling abroad without domestic support networks.

The mandate of the sub-group was adopted on 4 March 2019 and specifies the following tasks and activities aimed at assessing the progress made and identify gaps with a view to providing recommendations:

- a) Map the policy strategies, actions, and measures taken at the national level;
- b) Map the strategies, actions, and measures taken by umbrella organisations such as ENQA and ERA Stakeholder Platform members (LERU, EUA), etc.;
- c) Map the strategies, actions and measures taken at the level of research funding organisations;
- d) Map research carried out into sexual harassment and sexual assault at the national level of SWG GRI Members;
- e) Map whether and how the #MeToo campaign affected the academia in SWG GRI Members (the mobilisation of women researchers, new actions or measures introduced etc.);
- f) Analyse the current state of affairs in SWG GRI Members, with a view to identifying potential clusters of countries;
- g) Draft a report and policy brief with recommendations for national authorities in the MS and AC, relevant umbrella organisations, research funding organisations and the European Commission.

The sub-group's working method

In order to carry out the mission, the sub-group made a survey directed to Member States and Associated Countries. The external experts took the lead in developing a timeline for the study and methodology, which was first discussed among the sub-group members and then agreed upon by the SWG GRI. The sub-group had two virtual meetings and ongoing email circulations of drafts to discuss findings and recommendations. The rapporteur in cooperation with the external experts reported on the work progress at the fourth, fifth, and sixth meetings of the SWG GRI and discussed the recommendations. The report and the recommendations presented in the policy brief were adopted by the Standing Working Group on XXXX.

Limitations of the study

The focus of the sub-group is on strategies, measures, and actions at national level, not the university/institutional level. This is an important limitation that guides both the reading of the material, the analysis, and the recommendations in the report. The national level includes

national authorities, umbrella organisations, research funding organisations, and the research and higher education sector.⁵

Definitions and the conceptual understanding differ between countries and contexts, resulting in a broad interpretation of questions and answers.

Country specifics and the variance between smaller and larger countries have influenced the possibility to answer all the questions in the questionnaire – for example, with regard to whether a country has an umbrella organisation or not, or if there is only one university and it also functions as a national authority.

Mobility, internationalisation, and intersectional perspectives are relevant to the topic at hand. However, due to the timeframe, resources, and focus of the study, it is not possible to give a deep and full analysis of these issues.

Structure of the report

The report starts with a list of *Central concepts and definitions* followed by a short background to the topic of *Gender-based violence in academia* and a thorough description of *Methods and Materials*. This is followed by an analysis of the answers to the questionnaire at the national level, presented both country-by-country, question-by-question, and as clusters. The thematically divided chapters are *Infrastructure; Activities; #MeToo; Mobility; Research funding organisations and umbrella organisations at national level*. These chapters describe the material in greater depth and include quotes from the questionnaire and analytical strands relevant to each chapter. The answers from *Umbrella organisations and research funding institutions at the EU level* are then described and discussed, and finally, the *Conclusion and Recommendations* are presented.

Central concepts and definitions

Gender-based violence: The overarching concept of gender-based violence in this context includes gender harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. This is in line with research and an international understanding where the concept gender-based violence applies to includes a continuum of violent behaviours and attitudes on the bases of gender, also intersecting with other dimensions of inequality.⁶

⁵ The higher education sector is included as a joint national actor, and not according to individual university units. This means that there are questions in the questionnaire about whether the higher education sector has taken any joint measures to combat gender-based violence. Different isolated activities and measures taken at institutional/university level is not included as ‘activity at the national level’.

⁶ Gender-based violence has historically been used in other contexts, mainly to describe sexualised violence in war or domestic violence more specifically (see, e.g., WHO, UN). The use of the concept of gender-based violence has changed, and it is now used more frequently as a framework for understanding the complex web of potential exposure to different kinds of gender-based violence and harassment. See, for example, Horizon

Gender harassment: harassment on the grounds of sex, but without sexual connotations, such as diminishing or hateful comments, exclusion, silencing, or stereotypical prejudices.

Sexual harassment: unwanted verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as touching, comments on a person's looks or body, stalking, the sending of images with sexual content or sexual jokes.

Sexual assault: action of a sexual nature regulated in law, such as rape or attempted rape.

Academia is in this report understood as state-funded universities and university colleges and is used interchangeably with higher education, the higher education sector, or the research and higher education sector.

Gender-based violence in academia: a background

Gender-based violence is a persistent feature of work life in general and it is increasingly recognised as a serious problem for academic institutions around the globe. In the fall of 2017, the #MeToo movement erupted and spread quickly through social media. The visibility and effect of the movement differed in different countries and parts of the world, but the issue of sexual harassment was put higher up on the agenda worldwide. Sexual harassment is by no means a 'new issue', with Catharine MacKinnon's book *Sexual Harassment of Working Women: A Case of Sex Discrimination*, from 1979, often referred to as a pioneer work. Still, there is no clear-cut joint definition of sexual harassment to this day in the international research field. The smallest common denominator is an idea that it consists of unwelcome actions of a 'sexual nature' and includes verbal, non-verbal, and physical actions.⁷ A large survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental rights (FRA) estimates that 83 million to 102 million women (45%-55% of women) in the EU have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15. Among these women, 32% indicated someone in an employment context – such as a colleague, a boss, or a customer – as the perpetrator(s).⁸ On average, and depending on context and conceptual framework, international studies show that 25% of female students experienced gender-based violence during their time in the higher education sector.⁹ Employee harassment in higher education is often overlooked, with the focus being on student experiences of harassment; but research indicates that workplace

2020 SwafS call 25-2020; Latcheva, R. & Joanna, G., 2017; Anitha, S. & Lewis, R., 2018; ILO Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019; Istanbul Convention, 2011; 6 & 7 of June Council Conclusions, 2014.

⁷ Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M., 2018; McDonald, P., 2012.

⁸ FRA, 2015.

⁹ Vladutiu, C.J., Martin, S.L. & Macy, R.J., 2011; Voth Schrag, R.J., 2017; Benya, F., Johnson, P. & Widnall, S., 2018.

harassment is prevalent in higher education at all levels and among all disciplines.¹⁰ Some international studies even show that the academic workplace, (employees of academic institutions) has the second-highest rate of sexual harassment at 58%percent, compared to the military, the private sector, and government.¹¹ Evidence-based research on prevalence and reliable national statistics in European countries are lacking, making it difficult to give a reliable overall figure for the prevalence in higher education in the EU.

In EU law, the concept of sexual harassment is mainly related to the field of employment and occupation.¹² Workplace sexual harassment is also the area that has received the most attention in international research.¹³ Research on workplace sexual harassment is relevant also for the research and higher education sector, as it constitutes a work and study environment. Higher education institutions have a crucial responsibility as educational institutions to create safe environments for their students. Since gender-based violence is a diversified, heterogeneous, and complex issue, and the research and higher education sector has its own structure, history, and logic, work to prevent gender-based violence faces somewhat distinct challenges. Historically, women have been excluded from participating as students and employees in higher education, making it a traditionally 'male' sphere. This has consequences for gender equality and gendered ideas about who belongs in academia, and who does not.¹⁴ Workplace harassment is often driven by hierarchical power relations and the research and higher education sector is characterised by an inherent power imbalance both between students and teachers and between employees in different positions and of different genders.¹⁵ The competitive working culture that is typical in most higher education institutions – for example, in regard to attracting new students, applying for external research funding, and competing over scarce resources for full-time employment – needs to be taken into consideration when preventing gender-based violence in academia.¹⁶

In the EU as well as in other comparable regions and countries, academic mobility is considered crucial for the development of scientific excellence, through the production and exchange of new knowledge and the establishment of long-term-research collaborations, and for making students and researchers competitive on an increasingly globalised labour market.¹⁷ In the natural sciences in particular, mobility has become such an integral part of an academic career that researchers are expected to regularly travel across national and

¹⁰ Henning, M.A., Zhou, C., Adams, P., Moir, F., Hobson, J., Hallett, C. & Webster, C.S., 2017; Benya, F., Johnson, P. & Widnall, S., 2018; Bondestam, F., & Lundqvist, M., 2020; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018.

¹¹ Ilies, R., Hauserman, N., Schwochau, S., & Stibal, J., 2003.

¹² Latcheva, R. & Joanna, G., 2017; Directive 2006/54/EC of 5 July 2006.

¹³ McDonald, P., 2012; Timmerman, G. & Bajema, C., 1999.

¹⁴ Husu, L., 2000; see Muhs, G., Niemann, Y., González, C., & Harris, A., 2012 for discussion about who belongs in higher education in regard to class and race.

¹⁵ MacDonal, P. 2012; Henning, M.A., et al., 2017.

¹⁶ Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M., 2018.

¹⁷ Ackers, L., 2008.

institutional borders.¹⁸ At the same time, the conditions of mobility are structured by gender, sexual orientation, dis/ability, and race/ethnicity, and this includes exposure to gender-based violence.¹⁹ The mandate of the SWG GRI Sub-group on Gender Harassment in Academia takes this into consideration, stating that particular attention should be devoted to international mobility.

Gender-based violence (including gender harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual abuse) is a persistent feature of work life in general. It is also increasingly recognised as a serious problem for academic institutions around the globe. Compared to broader issues concerning gender equality and gender balance, gender-based violence in higher education has been treated as a taboo issue in universities and research organisations, rather than as an issue of importance for academic institutions.²⁰ The existence of and direct exposure to gender-based violence is not equally distributed amongst women and men, hence the negative effects also disproportionately affect women in higher education. Both vertical and horizontal inequality in the research and higher education sector is thus, in combination with gender inequality in society in large, affected and maintained through the existence of gender-based violence.²¹ Despite this, questions of gender-based violence in higher education have received very little attention, both in research and on a policy level in Europe.

The negative effects and consequences of not handling gender-based violence are considerable and well established in international research.²² On an individual level, exposure leads to negative consequences on physical and psychological health and work-related issues. Sick leave, depression, anxiety, loss of work- and study-motivation, PTSD, pain, absence from work and study, and the attrition from research careers are some of the recorded effects of exposure to gender-based violence. On an institutional level, the prevalence of gender-based violence has a negative impact on the effectiveness of research groups and other teams and thus on the quality of research and education. On a societal level, gender-based violence in the research and higher education sector affects efforts to recruit and retain future generations. It also impedes efforts to achieve a less sex-segregated labour market and strategies to close the gender pay gap.

Research-based knowledge on how to prevent gender-based violence in higher education is low, with very few examples of effective measures to decrease the prevalence. For example, research shows that just having a policy in place does not prevent gender-based violence as such. The policy needs to be combined with other incentives, with implementation work, and

¹⁸ European Commission, 2011.

¹⁹ Leeman, R. J., 2010; Jöns, H., 2011; Gedro, J. et al., 2013; Mählck, P., 2016; Du Toit, N., 2018.

²⁰ Lipinsky, A., Farnete, A. & Pantelmann, H., 2019.

²¹ Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M., 2018; Henning, M.A., et. al., 2017; Husu, L., 2000; ILO, 2019; Latcheva, 2017

²² See, for example, MacDonald, P., 2012, for an overview of costs and outcomes; Henning, M.A., et. al., 2017, for discussion about the impact on both the individual, organisation, and community level; and Benya, F., Johnson, P. & Widhall, S., 2018 for a specific focus on gender harassment in academic science, engineering, and medicine in the US.

with active measures and strategies.²³ However, in many cases, a policy might be a starting point and a way for organisations to show ambition and will and to put the question of students' and employees' well-being on the agenda. There is a need to prioritise and develop knowledge and policies on gender-based violence in higher education, both at the national and European level, and to take responsibility for providing safe work and study environments.²⁴

Methods and materials

Questionnaires

To gather information regarding the current state of affairs in the Member States and Associated Countries, three questionnaires aimed at different target groups were formulated:

1. Actors at the national level (the main questionnaire)

This target group included national authorities, national research funding organisations, and national umbrella organisations. The questionnaire contained 22 questions, organised in three sections. Section one, which targeted national authorities, contained five sub-sections: General information; Legislation and regulations; Monitoring and legal supervision; Actions and institutional changes; #MeToo movement. Section two was aimed at national research funding organisations, and section three was intended for national umbrella organisations. The questionnaire was sent out through the SWG GRI secretariat to all members of the SWG GRI group. SWG GRI representatives were responsible for collecting information and answering the questionnaire. Sections two and three were organised in such a way as to make it easy for SWG GRI representatives to separate and send the respective section to the relevant funding/umbrella organisation at the national level.

2. Umbrella organisations at the EU level

A shorter questionnaire was formulated that targeted umbrella organisations at the EU level. Nine relevant umbrella organisations at the EU level were selected using the expertise of the members of the SWG GRI group.²⁵

3. Research funding institutions at the EU level

A third questionnaire, targeting research funding organisation at the EU level, was formulated and sent to the European Commission. The aim of this questionnaire was to gather additional information about activities, incentives, and research funding at the EU level.

²³ Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M., 2019.

²⁴ See, for example, the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention 2019 (No. 190) and the EC Gender Equality Strategy 2020 for examples of steps to address gender-based violence in the workplace, including the research and higher education sector.

²⁵ ALLEA, ENQA, ESU, ETUCE, EUA, EWORA, LERU, Science Europe, TAFTIE.

Response rate

A total of 26 out of 29²⁶ of the SWG GRI members, including both Associated Countries and Member States, answered the questionnaire (a response rate of 90%). Four countries did not include answers from a national research funding organisation²⁷ and eight countries did not submit answers from national umbrella organisations.²⁸ Some countries submitted answers from several national research funding organisations²⁹ or several national umbrella organisations.³⁰

Five out of 9³¹ umbrella organisations at the EU level responded (a response rate of 56%). The European Commission answered the questionnaire targeting research funding institutions at the EU level.

Close reading

All questions in the questionnaires are on whether or not the country has specific measures in place, or whether specific activities have been introduced to address or combat gender-based violence in academia. The questions have four response options: Yes; *It's planned*; No; *Don't know*. The responses Yes or *It's planned* imply that the country is or has been active with regard to this issue.

A discrepancy between the given answers and the actual activities, policies, and measures described in the additional information became visible early on in the analysis of the material, resulting in the need for a close reading of the collected information.

The close reading served two purposes:

1. To provide a more accurate picture of the state of the art in the Member States and Associated Countries.
2. To present a fair picture of the differences and similarities between the countries. One country might interpret the question in a broader, more general sense and thus answer yes, while another country might interpret the same question in a more specific way and thus answer no. Since the mandate for this assignment is to analyse how the issue of gender-based violence in academia is addressed at the national level, there is a need to keep the focus on that topic.

The close reading resulted in adjusted answers in the case of just above 20% of the total amount of yes/*it's planned* answers. Except for Diagram 1 (a descriptive diagram showing

²⁶ The survey was conducted in 2019 when the UK was still a member of the European Union. There were 28 countries represented in the SWG GRI, but Belgium has two representatives, one from the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles (FWB) and one from Region Flanders (RF).

²⁷ Bulgaria, Iceland, Italy, Malta.

²⁸ Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Germany, Italy, Malta, Norway, Slovenia

²⁹ Belgium RF (two organisations), Denmark (three organisations), Czech Republic (two organisations)

³⁰ Austria (nine organisations), Poland (two organisations)

³¹ ALLEA, ESU, ETUCE, LERU, Science Europe

the unadjusted answers to the questionnaire), the adjusted answers will be used in diagrams throughout the report. The close reading was based on the specific questions; it did not introduce any new or additional criteria. The questionnaire and mandate focus on gender-based violence in academia at the national level; actions, policies, or strategies that address, for example, domestic violence or workplace legislation in general do not fit the criteria for enabling a yes answer, nor do the initiatives and activities taken at the institutional level. In cases of uncertainty, yes answers were not adjusted to no. When there are several organisations answering, only one needs to answer yes in order for the answer to be counted as a yes answer.

Two examples:

Question 1: Have national policies been adopted to address GBV in academia? (e.g., a declaration, strategy, action plan)

To answer yes to this question, the policy needs to be both national **and** to address gender-based violence **and** academia. *Yes* answers that, for example, relate to general policies on non-discrimination in the labour market have therefore been adjusted to a *No* in the analysis.

Question 18: Has your organisation funded any research regarding GBV in academia during the last five years?

To answer yes to this question, the research presented must relate to gender-based violence **and** academia **and** must have been funded during the last five years. *Yes* answers that, for example, describe research projects on unconscious bias, sexual harassment in schools, or domestic violence have thus been adjusted to a *No* in the analysis.

Survey results at the national level

Country by country

The questionnaire results are presented through a compilation of the given answers from the respective country in a diagram showing the proportion of *Yes/It's planned* versus *No* or *Don't know* answers. The diagrams aim to show if and how high the topic of gender-based violence in academia is on the agenda at the national level. In the following diagrams, *Yes* also includes *It's planned* answers, both because there are very few *It's planned* answers (25 out of 550 answers) and in order to make the diagram easier to read. The *It's planned* answers will be briefly discussed in a separate passage (see page 19). The questionnaire contained 22 questions in total. The first 13 questions were organised under five sub-headings: General information; Legislation and regulations; Monitoring and legal supervision; Actions and institutional changes; #MeToo movement. This was followed by five questions targeting

national research funding organisations and finally four questions targeting national umbrella organisations.

Diagram 1 is a descriptive diagram that presents the unadjusted answers to the questions in the questionnaire and shows the high response rate from the countries (26/29 or 90 per cent response rate) and considerable variance between countries in Europe.

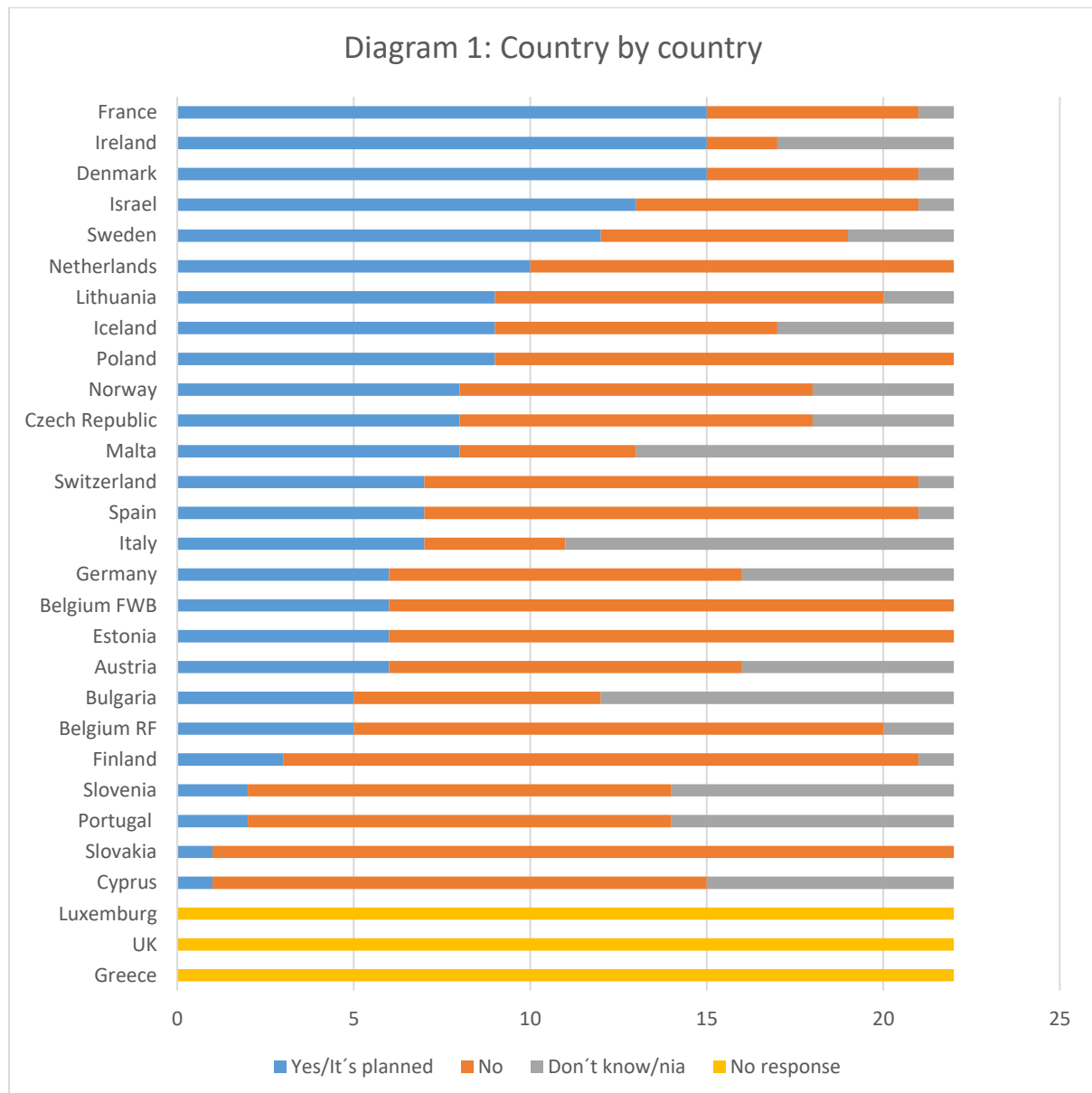


Diagram 1. Country by country. The X-axis shows the number of Yes/It's planned answers (blue), No answers (red), and Don't know/no information available (grey) given by respondents in response to the total number of questions in the questionnaire (22).

Diagram 2 shows the adjusted answers resulting from the close reading. The diagram still reflects the high response rate from the countries (26/29 or a 90% response rate) and shows the big variance between countries in Europe. It also shows that the **majority of the countries that answered the questionnaire (21/25 or 84%) answered yes to less than half of the questions.** This means that the existence of activities, policies, measures, legislation, statistics, research, and other aspects is low in most countries. The topic of gender-based violence in higher education is in general not prioritised at the national level in research and knowledge production or in policy work.

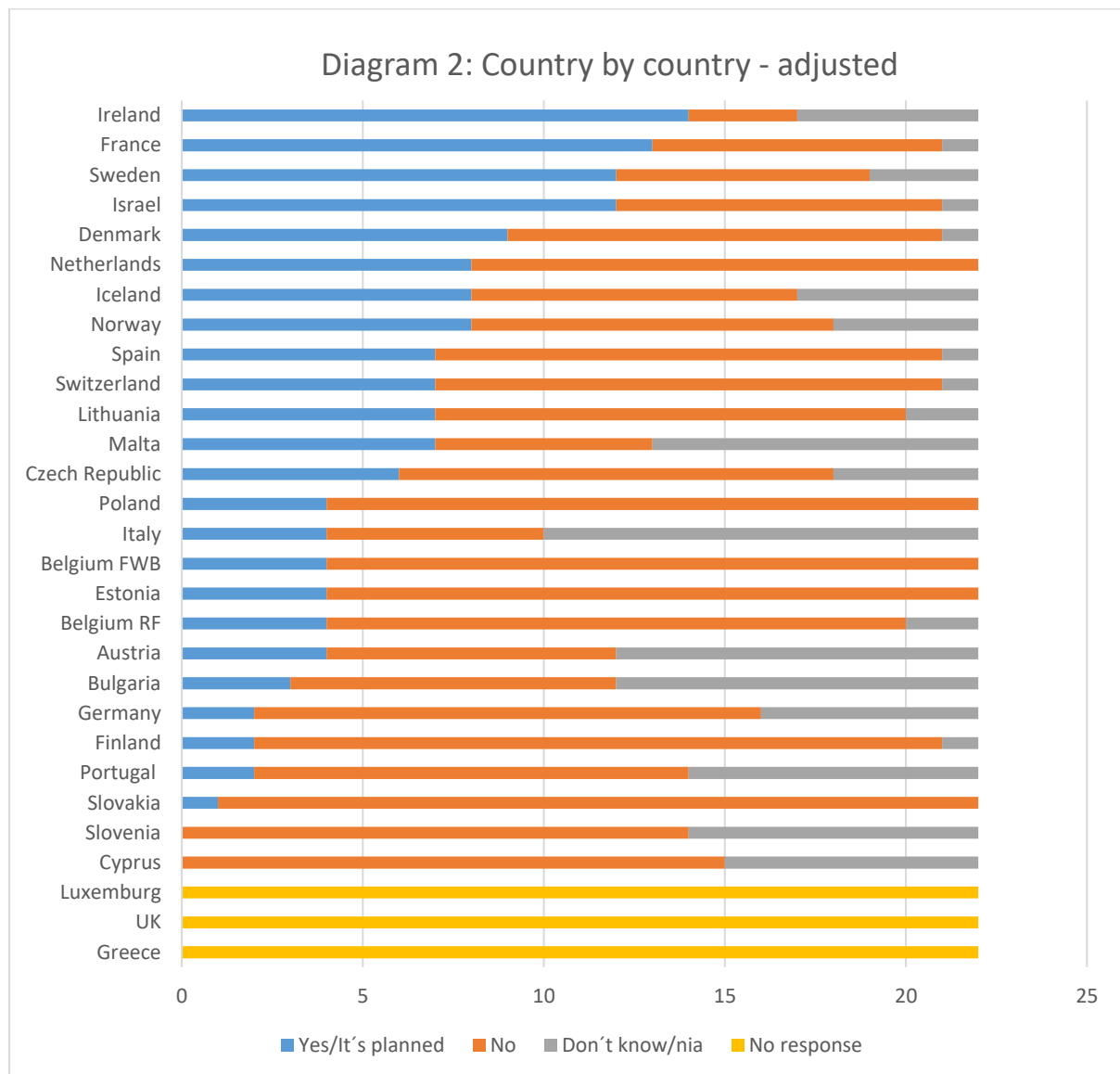
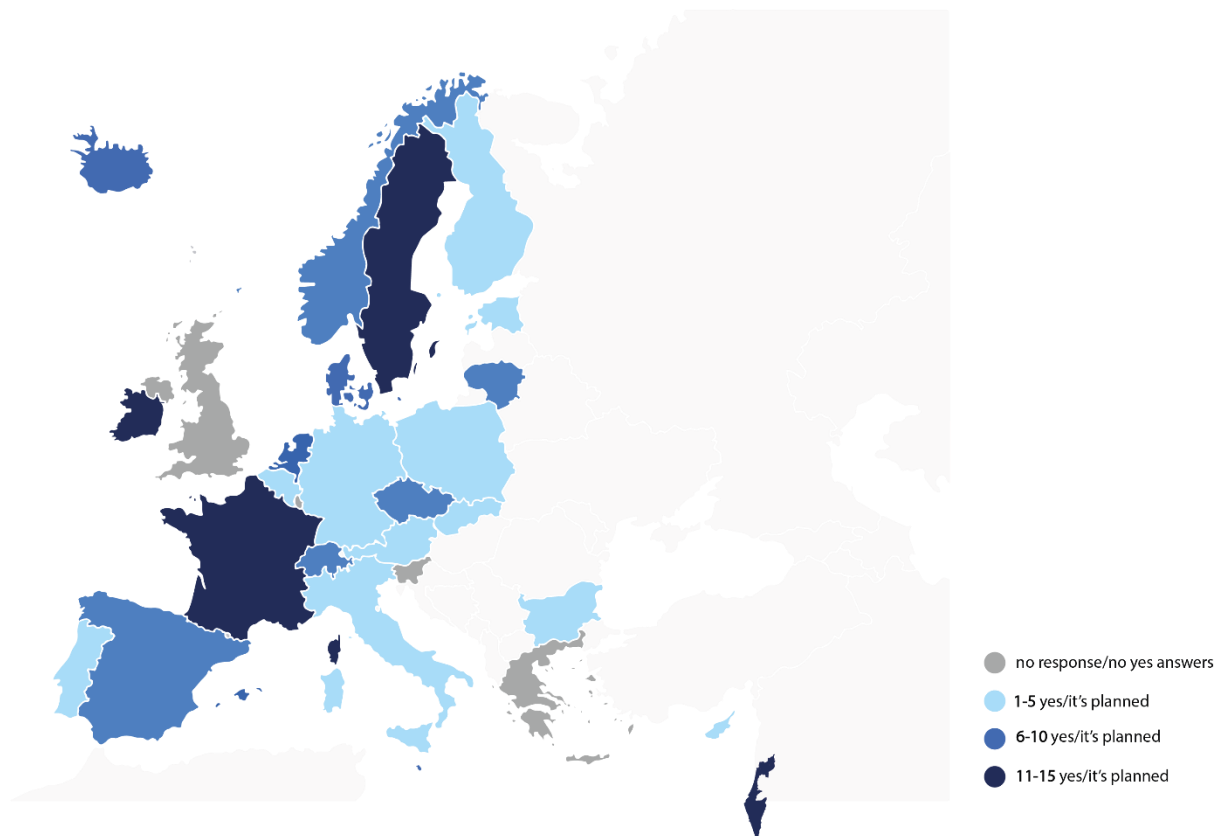


Diagram 2. Country by country – adjusted. The X-axis shows the adjusted number of Yes/It's planned answers (blue), No answers (red), and Don't know/no information available (grey) provided in response to the total number of questions in the questionnaire (22).

The obvious difficulty in answering the questions in accordance with the focus on gender-based violence in academia, and hence the need for a close reading of the answers, points to

several challenges in mapping and investigating the issue at the national level. Different definitions, interpretations, and languages is one of them, and the understanding of the concepts of gender, violence, and academia is another. It might also point to the level of ambition and knowledge in the different countries, and the methodological challenges that an assignment like this faces.

The results presented in Diagram 2 provide a possible comparison between countries and an opportunity to cluster the countries. Looking at the number of Yes/*It's planned* answers gives us the following clusters:



In general, the clusters do not follow any specific lines concerning, for example, new or old member states or the north/south or east/west divide in Europe, nor is there a clear connection to any other types of clusters regarding gender equality or indexes.³² Rather we can see a big increase in the level of activity across Europe.

Out of the eleven countries that have one to five Yes answers³³, eight answered yes to questions regarding the effect of the #MeToo movement. None of the eleven countries have adopted national policies to address gender-based violence in academia, and none have any up-to-date data on the prevalence. Germany stands out as a country where having an active

³² EIGE, Gender Equality Index, 2019; Henning, Zhou, Adams et al., 2017.

³³ Austria, Belgium FWB, Belgium RF, Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia. Both Belgium FWB and Belgium RF are in this cluster, and hence are treated on the map as one.

research funding organisation seems to make a big difference, since both of its yes answers are from that section of the questionnaire.

Some patterns can be seen when moving to the cluster of countries with six to ten yes answers.³⁴ Seven out of the nine countries in that cluster state that they have national policies addressing gender-based violence in academia, but the close reading of the material shows that three of them refer to general policies (Lithuania, Denmark, Iceland), and one to a planned policy (Netherlands). The result is that three countries in this cluster have a national policy (Czech Republic, Malta and Spain). The #MeToo movement has had an effect in seven of the nine countries (Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland). Both national authorities and the research and higher education sector in these countries seem to be active to a higher degree than in the previous cluster, taking actions and/or introducing measures at the national level to address gender-based violence in academia. Finally, six out of the nine countries in this cluster have national umbrella organisations that are active in addressing the issue (Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland).

The four countries in the last cluster,³⁵ with the most yes answers, stand out as having both active national authorities, an active research and higher education sector, and active research funding organisations and umbrella organisations. Three of these countries have national policies on gender-based violence in academia (France, Ireland, and Israel). France and Ireland have engaged in more cohesive work, which is described in more detail here.

Ireland has adopted the national policy 'Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive. Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions'. The Department of Education and Skills is responsible for the policy, and it, together with the umbrella organisation Higher Education Authority, is responsible for its implementation. The policy focuses on gender harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault and sets out a 'Framework for Promoting Consent and Preventing Sexual Violence in Irish Higher Education Institutions'. The framework aims to ensure the creation of an institutional campus culture, which is safe, respectful, and supportive and has students as its main target group, but which targets both students and staff in the Irish research and the higher education sector. It is clear throughout the questionnaire that the framework permeates ongoing and planned activities in Ireland's research and higher education sector. The framework includes actions in regard to statistics, since one focus is the 'Recording of Incidents' and in regard to legal supervision as the policy is implemented. For example, higher education institutions risk losing up to 10% of their core grant funding as part of the performance funding allocation. In 2019-2020, €400,000 in funding has been made available to higher education institutions to support the implementation of the framework. Ireland's work is the most cohesive in the material, including national authorities, umbrella organisations, research funding, and higher education institutions. The policy was adopted in April 2019, and the continuing work pursued

³⁴ Czech Republic, Denmark, Iceland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland.

³⁵ France, Ireland, Israel, Sweden.

according to the policy and the framework should be of interest to other countries and the European Commission.

France is another country that stands out as having undertaken active and cohesive work to combat gender-based violence in academia, against both students and staff.³⁶ The focus in France seems to differ in some aspects from the Irish case. Every institution in France, affiliated with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation must create a specific counselling service dedicated to the issue of gender-based violence. Its members receive specific training. As of July 2019, more than 95% of public universities have such services. The ministry monitors the implementation of this policy by conducting a national census that is available online. In a national scientific survey on gender-based violence in French society, a part was dedicated to examining the prevalence in universities. The survey was co-financed by the ministry and conducted by the National Institute of Demographic Studies (INED) and the results were made available at the end of 2019. In addition, the ministry asked the national observatory of student living conditions to include questions on gender-based violence in its next survey. The ministry in France appears active and has co-organised and co-financed an international academic congress in Paris in 2017 on gender-based violence in academia. Following this congress, four working groups were formed with various actors in higher education (researchers, associations, etc.). These groups focused on how to investigate, train, communicate, and run counselling services on the topic.

There are ongoing activities in some countries that give a good opportunity to learn from each other. Different actors, groups, or even individuals appear to be important for achieving better acknowledgement of gender-based-violence issues at the national level. There is variety in the ambition level of different countries, especially when it comes to the kinds of activities, measures, and infrastructure that are put in place and whether and how financial incentives are allocated.

One reoccurring question concerns the autonomy of universities in relation to the national authorities. Several countries commented that since universities are autonomous, it is up to each university to address the issue of gender-based violence in the way that best suits that specific university. This is a challenge that needs to be addressed in the research and higher education sector in Europe as a whole. The majority of universities in Europe use public funding/money; thus, it would be considered appropriate for national authorities to require universities to take responsibility for the study and work environment.

³⁶ Since the survey was conducted, France adopted a new Act on the Public Service, which imposes strong requirements on universities and other RPOs. They will be required to adopt a Gender Equality Plan, explicitly addressing gender-based violence and sexual harassment, by the end of 2020.

Question by question

This section looks at the material question by question to gain a picture of the different initiatives countries have taken. Diagram 3 shows the material in accordance with the question: what is being done, and not done, in the countries? Which questions, measures, and perspectives are given attention, and which are not? Are there any themes or actors that stand out?

Diagram 3: Question by question



Diagram 3. Question by question. The X-axis shows the adjusted number of yes/it's planned answers (blue) to each question in the questionnaire out of the total number of answers (26) after the close reading

The questions that received the most yes answers after the close reading are about the actions national authorities and umbrella organisations have taken to address gender-based violence in academia (questions 8 and 21) and questions concerning the #MeToo movement (questions 12 and 13). The #MeToo movement has affected academia and resulted in more attention to the issue of gender-based violence in the majority of countries.

One theme stands out among the questions that received the fewest yes answers, which is the safety of internationally mobile researchers (questions 10, 17, 20). After the close reading of the material, no country was found to answer yes to the question of whether the national authorities have taken any measures to address the safety of internationally mobile researchers in connection with gender-based violence in academia (Question 10). Mobility is a special focus in the mandate, and thus has a separate chapter in this report, where we elaborate on the meaning and understanding of these results.

Questions 15, 16, 17, and 18, which end up in the bottom section of the diagram, i.e. showing questions with the fewest yes answers, all refer to the work of research funding organisations. Very few research funding organisations seem to be actively encouraging research performing organisations to develop research on gender-based violence in academia (question 15) or to actively fund research on the topic (question 18). Nor do the funders have measures in place to make sure that internationally mobile researchers are safe (question 17) or take measures to prevent the allocation of research funding from enabling³⁷ gender-based violence in academia (question 16).

'It's planned'

Ireland and Sweden are the two countries with most activities or measures planned (they answered *It's planned* to four and three questions, respectively). Ireland has planned to collect data on a national level and to introduce systematic legal supervision specifically with regard to gender-based violence in academia. The national umbrella organisations in Ireland are waiting for the Consent Framework to be implemented to take concrete actions, and a competitive fund with gender-based violence in academia as its focus was introduced in 2019.³⁸ Sweden is also planning to collect national data on the topic, to introduce systematic legal supervision, and to further the work on how to prevent that the allocation of research funding enables gender-based violence.

³⁷ Question 16 in the questionnaire reads: *Has your organisation introduced any concrete measures, strategies, or actions to prevent that the allocation of research funding enable GBV in academia? (e.g. requiring actions plans, policies, revoking funding, etc.).* The question aims to capture the work that research funding organisations may have done to ensure that their funding of research is not part of creating a work or study environment where gender-based violence exists.

³⁸ A competitive fund with gender-based violence in academia as its focus was offered in Ireland in 2019, after the timeframe for the questionnaire, hence the answer *It's planned*.

Both Bulgaria and the Netherlands plan to adopt a national policy to address gender-based violence in academia, while Malta just launched its new strategic plan for 2020-2025 that stipulates the universities' commitment to promote the Sexual Harassment Policy further. France plans to introduce systematic legal supervision, and its research funding organisation plans to make a new listening and support device available in overseas French departments and in several foreign countries. Iceland has produced an examination report that shows various ways of strengthening the legal protection of sexual immunity in Icelandic law. One proposed approach is based on a twofold understanding of the conduct in question and involves changes to two sections of the Criminal Code and amendments to provisions in the Treatment Act on criminal cases.

Thematic results

The diagrams and clusters above do not say much about the actual content of the work and activities in different countries to combat gender-based violence in academia. In this chapter, we will present the material thematically, in accordance with the different sections in the questionnaires.

Infrastructure

The infrastructure lays the foundation and sets out the framework for how the work against gender-based violence in academia can operate and what it can achieve. Infrastructure at the national level includes policies, laws, monitoring, and statistics and is covered by questions 1-7 in the questionnaire.

- Question 1: Have national policies been adopted to address GBV in academia? (e.g., a declaration, strategy, action plan).
- Question 2: Has an existing national policy/strategy addressing GBV in academia been amended during the last 5 years?
- Question 3: Are there up-to-date data/statistics on a national level regarding the prevalence of GBV in academia?
- Question 4: Most countries have an anti-discrimination act. However, are there specific legislations or other regulations (apart from the general anti-discrimination legislation) on GBV concerning academia?
- Question 5: Has an existing piece of legislation or other regulation on GBV in the labour market been amended during the last five years?
- Question 6: Most countries have a regulatory authority responsible for the legal supervision of universities' compliance with laws and regulations. However, is there any systematic legal supervision on the national level specifically relating to universities' compliance with laws and regulations on GBV?

- Question 7: Are there other types of monitoring with significance for universities' compliance with laws and regulations on GBV? (e.g., self-evaluations, external peer review, quality assurance, programme evaluations, thematic evaluations)

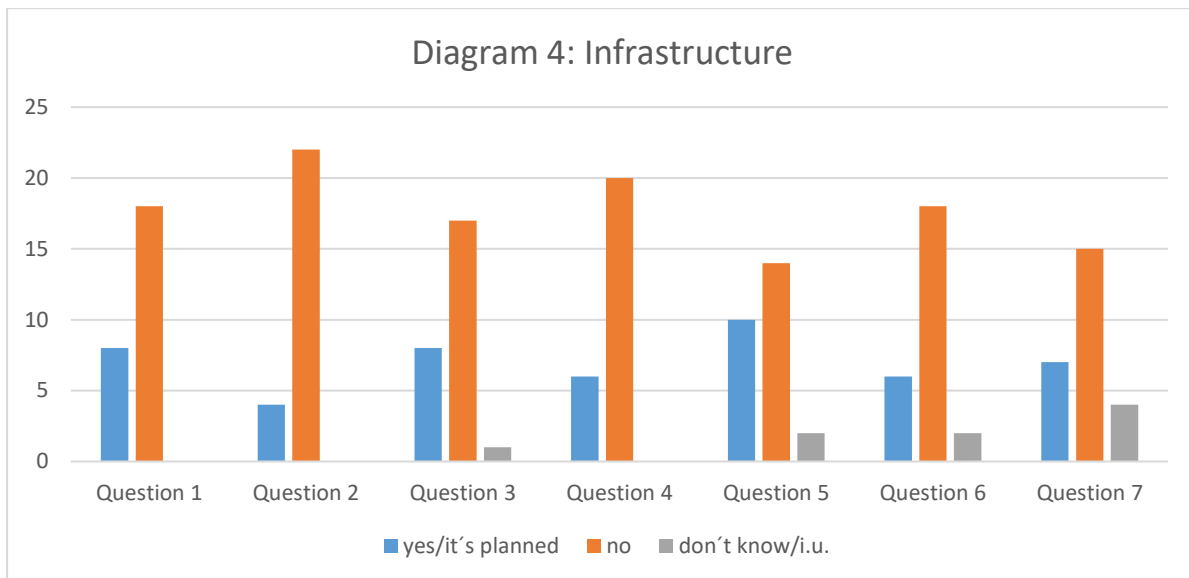


Diagram 4. Infrastructure. Answers to questions 1-7 in the questionnaire.

National policies

Half of the Member States and Associated Countries answered that they have adopted national policies to address gender-based violence in academia. The close reading of the additional information in the questionnaire shows that five of these Yes answers refer to general laws or policies concerning either domestic violence or the labour market in general, such as anti-discrimination legislation or workers' rights legislation (Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Italy, and Lithuania), rather than specific policies adopted to address gender-based violence in academia. Some countries also answered that this is a question for the academic institutions themselves, and thus not for the national level. Of the remaining eight countries, two answered that national policies are planned (Netherlands and Bulgaria). Six countries have adopted national policies that address gender-based violence in academia, either as specific policies on the topic or by identifying academia or higher education as a specific sector in more general policies. These six countries are described below:

The Czech Republic had an action plan for the prevention of domestic violence and gender-based violence for 2015-2018, which in part addressed sexual harassment in universities. The action plan was approved by the Czech government in 2015. Recommendations to deal with sexual harassment at universities were also stated in the action plan for 2019 in the strategic document for the research and higher education sector.

France: The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation is responsible for the implementation of the policy at the national level. Every higher education and research institutions can also develop its own policy. These policies are regulated by ministerial recommendations through three main circulars: the first one in 2012, the second one in 2015, and the last one in 2018, concerning each public administration. These circulars outline an approach to tackling sexist and sexual violence: developing a prevention policy and training plans, implementing disciplinary commissions. Every institution affiliated with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation must create a specific counselling service dedicated to the issue of gender-based violence. Its members receive specific training. The ministry monitors the implementation of this policy by conducting a national census that is available online. The ministry also created its own counselling service and informed all its employees in April 2019.

Ireland adopted a policy in April 2019 named 'Safe, Respectful, Supportive and Positive Ending Sexual Violence and Harassment in Irish Higher Education Institutions'. The policy sets out a 'Framework for Promoting Consent and Preventing Sexual Violence in Irish HEIs'. The Framework is designed to ensure the creation of an institutional campus culture that is safe, respectful, and supportive. The Department of Education and Skills (DES) is responsible for the policy, and together with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) through the annual Strategic Dialogue Process is responsible for the implementation of the policy.

Israel: The Act for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment is a national law established in 1998. The law defines sexual harassment and mandates that any organisation with more than 25 employees must have an officer/contact person for sexual harassment. That person is responsible for enforcing the law in the respective institution and for being a contact person for any instances of sexual harassment. The law relates to sexual harassment and sexual assault. This law supplements criminal legislation against sexual assault. The Council for Higher Education (CHE) is the organisation responsible for the policy's implementation in academia.

Malta: The National Commission for the Promotion of Equality (NCPE) is responsible for the national policy and its enforcement. The Commissioner of Equality for Men and Women may refer cases of sexual harassment investigated by the NCPE to the Police Commissioner. Sexual harassment at the workplace is essentially defined as 'unwelcome sexual conduct' and is unlawful under the Equality for Men and Women Act, 2003 (Cap 456) and under the Employment and Industrial Relations Act, 2002 (Cap 452). Since there is only one university in Malta, the University of Malta functions as a national authority and its policy broadly addresses all types of harassment in academia. The university's Gender Issues Committee (GIC) receives and monitors complaints from university staff and students regarding sex discriminatory practices and provides recommendations for appropriate action, and it liaises closely with Sexual Harassment Advisors and is in fact planning to launch a campaign against sexual harassment in the upcoming academic year.

The Gender Issues Committee also promotes teaching and research that reflects the knowledge, experience, and aspirations of both men and women.

Spain: In 2017, the State Pact against Gender-based Violence was adopted. It includes some provisions that address gender-based violence in academia, mainly sexual harassment and sexual assault. The Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities (Ministry of Universities since January 2020), the governments of 17 Spanish Autonomous Communities, and the Spanish Conference of Rectors (CRUE) are specifically responsible for measures that specifically address gender-based violence in academia within the State Pact. Also, in September 2019 the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities approved the Protocol's adaptation so that it addresses sexual harassment in the workplace. All public research - organisations under the umbrella of this ministry either have a specific protocol for addressing sexual harassment or they have signed up to be covered by this new protocol. In 2019 a 100-hour training was organised to certify counsellors on sexual harassment in ministries and dependent bodies. More than five counsellors for Public Research Institutions received certification. In 2020 a specific training for their SH counsellors in institutions will take place. The State Pact includes a specific measure to involve Gender Equality Units (GEUs) at universities and have them carry out studies on the impact of sexual harassment, aggressions, and abuse in academia, and to consider the opportunity to develop prevention campaigns on university campuses (particularly against 'date rape'). There is another measure that aims to involve the Spanish Conference of Rectors to promote and support training and prevention programmes against gender-based violence in academia.

Legislation and monitoring

Out of the six countries that answered that they have a specific legislation or other regulation on gender-based violence in academia, two describe legislation that only regulates students (Sweden, Norway). One country stated that the Federal Equal Treatment Act is to be applied to all members of a public university, including students, in accordance with § 44 University Act, and that, according to the University Act, 'working groups for equality issues' have been set up to advise and help members of public universities on issues relating to gender discrimination (Austria). One country stated that it has had an Act on Higher Education and Science in effect since 20 July 2018 that provides for the disciplinary liability of academic teachers in cases of harassment, sexual harassment, or sexual offences at higher education institutions. Similar provisions in the act refer also to students who violate the university's regulations and commit acts that do not respect a student's dignity (Poland). Two countries answered that new legislation is under consideration, which will focus on including the requirement that every public institution create a counselling service dedicated to gender-based violence (France) or will include provisions on gender harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault in the upcoming law for reforming universities (Spain). In Spain, the 2018 edition of the periodical report on 'Women & Science Data in Spain', *Científicas en Cifras*,

2017, for the first time incorporated an indicator to follow-up on examining to what extent universities and national level PROs have adopted protocols against sexual harassment and gender harassment. The results show that by the end of 2017, 98% of public universities and 83% of private universities had elaborated/reviewed internal protocols in place. Additionally, the recently created inter-ministerial Observatory for Women, Science and Innovation (OMCI) includes among its monitoring functions the task of following up on actions against sexual harassment and gender harassment in the Spanish STI system, including universities.

Three countries answered that there is systematic legal supervision on the national level that specifically focuses on universities' compliance with the laws and regulations on gender-based violence. In Slovakia, universities have to send an annual report on their adherence to the 'National Action Plan to Prevent and Eliminate Violence against Women' to the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family. Bulgaria and Denmark stated that there is general supervision of all aspects of universities as workplaces, but they gave no information about whether this includes specific supervision of universities' compliance with the laws and regulations on gender-based violence. Three countries answered that they planned to introduce a regulatory authority responsible for universities' compliance with laws and regulations (France, Ireland, Sweden).

No country seems to have in place both specific legislation AND a regulatory authority responsible for universities' compliance with laws and regulations on gender-based violence.

Statistics

Question 3 asks for up-to-date data or statistics regarding gender-based violence in academia at the national level. Out of the eight countries that answered yes or it's planned, five countries have collected data on the topic and three countries are planning to do so.

Norway conducted a survey on gender-based violence and bullying in academia. The data were collected by distributing questionnaires among scientific staff at 26 universities in Norway. The survey was initiated and administered by three Norwegian universities. This was the first time such a survey had been undertaken among scientific staff in Norway and there is no regular data collection on this topic in the country. **France** stated that one part of a national scientific survey conducted by a team of researchers on the prevalence of GBV in French society focused specifically on gender-based violence in universities. **Israel** answered that every sexual harassment officer is obligated to report annually on the number of complaints received relating to sexual harassment and sexual assault. The data must then be transferred to three bodies: The Council for Higher Education, the parliamentary (Knesset) Committee for the Advancement of the Status of Women, and the Ministry for Social Equality.

Italy answers that data on gender-based violence are collected for the entire sector of public administration, which includes academia. Whether this means that it is possible to single out from the rest of the material the data that pertain to academia specifically is not clear from their answer. In the **Netherlands**, the Dutch Network of Women Professors (LNVH)

conducted a qualitative study of harassment based on 53 cases and the labour union of scientists in the Netherlands carried out a survey among more than 1000 scientists to obtain quantitative insight.

Three countries (Ireland, Malta and Sweden) answered that there were plans to start collecting national data. In Ireland, one part of the Consent Framework includes recording incidents, which means institutions must record statistics on harassment, assault, and rape and report them in the context of their strategic dialogue with the HEA. In Malta, available information indicates that the university will be responsible for collecting the data. In Sweden, a seminar was held in March 2019 to mark the launch of a national prevalence study (three HEIs took the initiative to the study), while the study itself is to be carried out in 2020 and it will target both employees and students in the research and higher education sector in Sweden. Spain answered 'no' to the question about national data because no advanced planning was in place. The State Pact thus includes a specific measure to involve Gender Equality Units (GEUs) at universities to carry out studies on the impact of sexual harassment, aggressions, and abuse in academia, and to consider the opportunity to develop prevention campaigns on university campuses (particularly against 'date rape'). Data from public research organisations are collected as part of the follow-up to the implementation of the Equality between Women and Men Plan II in national government administration and also published in the annual report 'Memoria de Responsabilidad Social'.

Knowledge at the national level about gender-based violence and harassment in academia is seriously underdeveloped in most of the countries. Even in the countries that stated that they have up-to date data, no completed national surveys or studies have been completed that focus solely on gender-based violence in the research and higher education sector at the national level.³⁹ Both Israel and Ireland are, or will be, collecting data on the basis of incidents that are recorded and reported. Since only a minority of incidents of gender-based violence are normally reported, this method needs to be supplemented with other types of studies to be able to produce representative data.⁴⁰ No country seems to have regular data collection in place. Given that this field of knowledge is underdeveloped, it is difficult to describe specific situations and the prevalence of gender-based violence in the Member States and Associated Countries. Gender-based violence in academia has been an international research field for at least 50 years. Knowledge from international research, combined with research in European studies and research in related fields (such as gender equality research), along with experiences described, for example, in the #MeToo movement, show the need for the whole research and higher education sector on the national, European, and global levels to take responsibility for ensuring a work and study environment free from gender-based violence.

³⁹ The question asks for up-to date data, meaning it is fully possible that some countries carried out studies earlier, but did not consider the data up-to date, and thus did not mention these studies when answering the questionnaire.

⁴⁰ McDonald, P., 2012.

Activities – or ‘Who does what?’

This chapter tries to capture the different actors in the research policy landscape and the actions they have taken to address gender-based violence in higher education. It also takes a closer look at the different types of activities reported in the answers in order to analyse what is being done in the countries.

Actors

The work against gender-based violence in academia is a joint challenge that involves several actors. The mandate for this assignment includes four types of actors at a national level:

- National authorities (e.g. departments, ministers, ombudsman)
- The higher education sector, as one actor⁴¹
- Research funding organisations
- Umbrella organisations

The following chapter presents the answers given to the questions about activities in the Member States and Associated Countries. This question was presented to all four types of actors included in the mandate.

- Question 8: Have national authorities (the government, governmental bodies, national agencies, etc.) taken any actions and/or measures to address GBV in academia?
- Question 11: Has the higher education sector itself taken any joint concrete actions and/or measures at a national level to address GBV in academia?
- Question 14: Has your organisation taken any actions to acknowledge GBV in academia? (Research funding organisations at the national level)
- Question 21: Has your organisation taken any concrete actions and/or measures to address GBV in academia? (Umbrella organisations at the national level)

⁴¹ Question 11, which focuses on the higher education sector, attempts to capture whether the research and higher education institutions function as *a sector* in the SWG GRI Member States and Associated Countries, and take joint responsibility and engage in collective action to address the question of gender-based violence in academia.

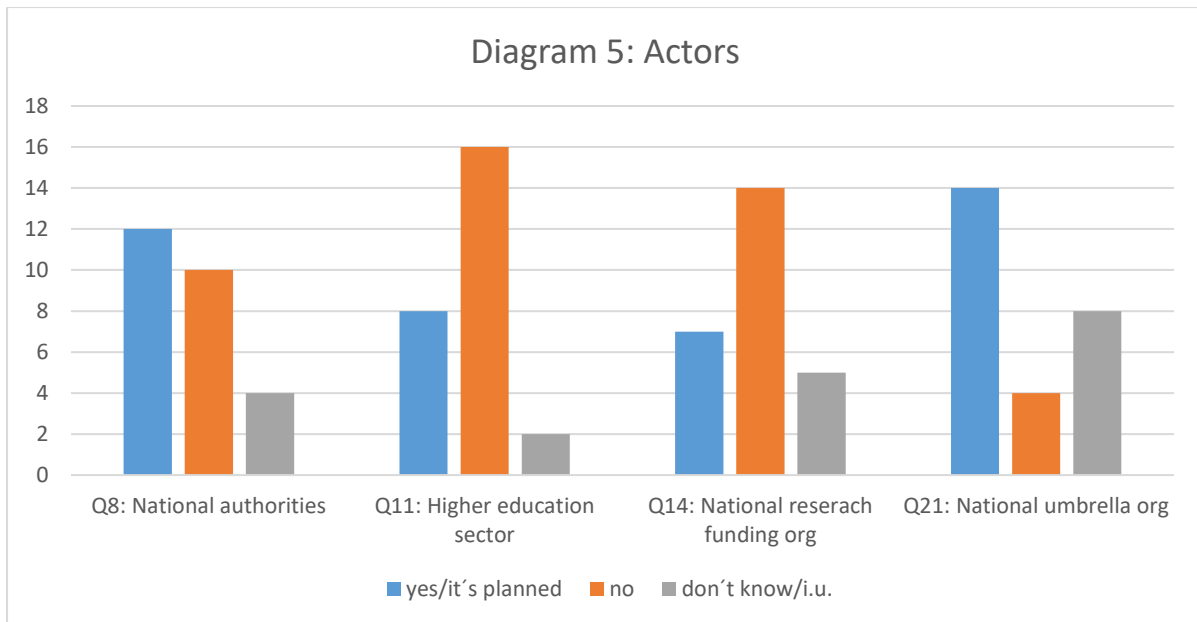


Diagram 5. Activities. Answers to questions 8, 11, 14, 21 in the questionnaire.

It is of interest to examine to what degree the actors have worked as a cohesive unit to combat gender-based violence in academia in the countries. Around one-third of the countries reported that three or four of the mentioned actors have engaged in activities to address the problem,⁴² while just over one-half of the countries reported that one or zero actors has engaged in any such activities.⁴³

The kinds of activities and measures taken by national authorities to address gender-based violence in academia vary widely:

- statements from ministers (e.g. Norway, Netherlands)
- reports and recommendations (e.g. Poland, Iceland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Israel)
- investigations in the national higher education sector (e.g. Sweden)
- initiating national surveys (e.g. France)
- drawing up national frameworks (e.g. Ireland)
- setting up rules for prevention and support (e.g. Malta, Lithuania).

There does not seem to be any general consensus on which activities are appropriate for implementing at the national level in the countries.

The research and higher education sector itself seems to work mostly with awareness-raising activities, such as organising seminars, public debates, workshops, and events. It generally does not work as a joint sector, but mainly reports activities and measures taken at the university or institutional level. This is interesting with regard to the role of higher education institutions in society, where measures to spread knowledge to the wider public seem to be undertaken more readily than measures pertaining to their function as a work- and study

⁴² France, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Netherlands, Norway, Lithuania, Sweden.

⁴³ Austria, Bulgaria, Belgium FWB, Belgium RF, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Switzerland.

environment or measures to investigate the sector itself. Several countries answered that there are procedures in place for handling cases of misconduct, including gender-based violence, at each university.

Eight research funding organisations at the national level answered that they had taken actions to acknowledge gender-based violence in academia. This is mainly done through different forms of written charters, policies, and statements (Switzerland, Germany and Ireland). Other activities that have been put in place are conducting an international research review on sexual harassment in academia (Sweden), writing a code of conduct for conferences (Netherlands), systematically training members of disciplinary commissions (France), and organising seminars (Norway).

Umbrella organisations are the most active actors with regard to activities that address gender-based violence in higher education. The main activities reported by national umbrella organisations are the organising of conferences, seminars, workshops, and meetings on the topic (Sweden, Iceland, Israel and Poland). These are events where a national umbrella organisation's function is clear, as it has the ability to gather rectors, students, politicians, and other stakeholders with a relevant role in connection with the research and higher education sector. Some umbrella organisations also report different kinds of more concrete activities, where the organisations seem to function more as expert organisations, analysing the situation in the research and higher education sector and formulating concrete strategies for the prevention, implementation, and management of activities concerning gender-based violence in academia (Belgium FWB, Belgium RF, Denmark and Netherlands). Yet others conduct campaigns aimed at attaining acknowledgement of the issue (Switzerland, France).

Activities

In this chapter, the aim is to look at the activities reported in more detail. Different measures used to combat sexual harassment are presented in the answers. The activities range from well-financed and complex work programmes to short-term ad hoc initiatives, such as seminars, debates, or statements. There is a great variety in the details the countries provided on their activities and initiatives. The answers are presented below through a compilation of the additional information given in the questionnaire, rather than presenting yes/no answers. It is not possible to give a detailed description of the activities, but they can be thematically divided into four different sub-groups: awareness raising; institutional change; knowledge; support and case handling.

Awareness raising

Activities for raising awareness about gender-based violence in higher education consists, for example, of campaigns, seminars, debates, and statements from ministers. These kinds of activities are commonly described in the material and may take the form of ad hoc and short-term initiatives or may be part of a more comprehensive work. Awareness-raising activities

are undertaken by national authorities, research funding organisations, umbrella organisations, and higher education institutions.

Institutional change

Activities focusing on institutional change include different types of charters, codes of conduct, or statements aiming at having an impact on the behaviour of both students and employees.

The DFG's answers usually stressed the point that the DFG has a zero-tolerance-policy on GH, SH, and/or SA and supports the protection of victims (Germany).

The Unifi issued a statement a few years ago condemning sexual harassment in academia, but that is all. (Finland)

Another activity described in the answers are the different ways of organising the work by forming new groups and committees or including questions of gender-based violence in the work of existing gender equality groups.

In recent years the annual meetings of the Spanish Network of Gender Equality Units for Excellence at Universities have included mutual learning exercises on the elaboration, adoption, and implementation of protocols against SH & GH. (Spain)

A committee on behalf of the Prime Minister has made reports, surveys, and mappings. Several workshops, seminars, and conferences have been organised on an ongoing basis and will take place this fall, 2019. (Iceland)

There are also examples of more cohesive work for institutional change described in the material. In the examples below the actual events (conferences, meetings, congress) are not the main point that make them 'examples of cohesive work', it is rather the different and connected actions resulting from the events that make them so:

In **France**, the Ministry of Higher education, Research and Innovation co-organised and co-financed an international academic congress in 2017 on GBV in academia. The congress resulted in four working groups being formed to focus on different but interconnected questions in regard to gender-based violence in academia:

- How to investigate GBV in an academic institution
- How to train public servants and students on the issue of GBV
- How to communicate in academia on GBV
- How to create and run a counselling service on GBV

In **Israel**, the Council for Higher Education (CHE) organised a conference on the issue of the prevention of sexual harassment. The conference was attended by the presidents of universities and colleges and other senior academic representatives. In addition to the conference, CHE undertook a number of actions relating to the issue in 2018, including:

- CHE nominated a staff member with responsibility for preventing sexual harassment in higher education institutions.
- CHE's website has been updated with relevant information.
- CHE convened a forum of representatives from higher education institutions, student associations, and the Ministry of Justice to discuss relevant issues and the difficulties encountered by institutions.
- Following the forum, a letter was sent to all higher education institutions in order to raise awareness of the issue and to encourage them to take concrete steps in order to prevent sexual harassment on campuses.

In **Ireland**, the Consent Framework outlines actions for HEIs aimed at ensuring that effective structures are in place, incidents are recorded, institutional policies are in place, and targeted initiatives are undertaken. To ensure the creation of an institutional campus culture that is safe, respectful, and supportive, €400,000 has been committed to a competitive fund for HEIs to support the implementation of the framework. Examples of actions stated in the framework are:

- A member of the HEI senior management team should be assigned as responsible for the implementation of the Consent Framework.
- Institutions should ensure effective liaison work and partnerships with external specialist agencies.
- Policies are explicitly linked to clear lines of responsibility, active responses, institutional reporting, and regular review.
- Institutional leadership and an annual report to the Governing Authority support policy implementation.
- Ongoing messaging to disseminate information consistent with the framework aims at cultural change and awareness raising.
- Accessible, trauma-informed services for supporting student disclosure, reporting, and complaints and for counselling and advocacy.

In **Sweden**, the umbrella organisation has organised six events/discussions on the topic.

- HEI rectors and the Minister of Higher Education and Research met in December 2017 to talk about the question whether the university leadership would need political support in order to forcefully work against GH, SH and SA.
- An #MeToo conference was organised in May 2018. HEIs from the whole country participated. It focused on sharing knowledge about GBV and experiences of the work at institutions.
- A rectors meeting was held in August 2018 where two new initiatives from the institutions were discussed.
- A conference took place in November 2018 with university leaders and HR-managers.
- A seminar on a national prevalence study was launched in March 2019 (three HEIs took the initiative to the study).

- A workshop in June 2019 took place that discussed the first phases of the national prevalence study and possible other studies.

-

Knowledge production

The most common type of activity that has or will be conducted in the Member States and Associated Countries within the 'knowledge' sub-group of actions is the implementing of surveys and/or writing of reports. These surveys may be 'national' in the sense that they are an assignment from a national authority, such as a ministry.

The Swedish Research Council has made an international research review (carried out by the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research) of research on sexual harassment in academia. The Swedish Council for Higher Education has conducted a survey on preventative work in the higher education sector in Sweden. (Sweden)

The Polish Commissioner for Human Rights presented a report titled 'The Experience of Harassment among Students. Analysis and Recommendations'. It was based on a survey among 4,000 participants (Poland)

A national scientific survey was conducted by a team of researchers on the prevalence of GBV in French society. Part of the survey was dedicated to GBV in universities. (France)

In Norway data are collected through surveys sent out to scientific staff at 26. The survey is initiated and administered by three Norwegian universities. (Norway)

In 2018 Universities Denmark and a student organisation together analysed the level of unwanted sexual attention on students at Danish universities. (Denmark)

Support and case handling

Different kinds of activities to support victims of gender-based violence or to strengthen case handling at universities are also noted in the responses. The German research funding organisation DFG has a zero-tolerance policy on gender-based violence and stated that they will take steps in their funding to emphasise the protection of victims, if the outcome of an official investigation conducted by either the employer/employing scientific institution or the state attorney (Staatsanwaltschaft) and the German courts make this necessary. The Lithuanian University Rectors Conference plans to issue guidelines for preventing and handling sexual harassment cases, and in France a specific procedure was implemented to treat the revealed cases, and the procedure was promoted widely in the organisation. The members of the disciplinary commissions also have been systematically trained on GBV in 2019. A new extended plan will be implemented shortly (and actively promoted), including an external device to signal and support the victims. In Malta, the University of Malta has stepped up its efforts in terms of actions and measures through its Gender Affairs Committee and the support provided by the Sexual Harassment Officers; as well as through the setting

up of the Health and Wellness Centre and the support services it provides to both local and international students.

#MeToo

The assignment included mapping whether and how the #MeToo campaign affected the research and higher education sector in SWG GRI Member States and Associated Countries. Overall, we can see in the material that #MeToo has affected higher education in more than half of the SWG GRI Member States and Associated Countries, and that the movement has given more attention to gender-based violence in academia. #MeToo has put the issue of sexual harassment on the agenda, mainly through different kinds of awareness-raising actions such as surveys, petitions, seminars, and debates.

'The subject is very prominently on the agenda in almost all universities and university medical centres. There are debates, seminars, the aforementioned play and bystander training, and many internal processes for dealing with GBV are being reviewed. There are student initiatives and women's marches.' (Netherlands)

'The 2018 Annual Conference of the Italian Association Donne&Scienza (Women&Science), co-organised with EPWS - European Platform of Women Scientists as a "#wetooinscience" initiative, focused on "Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions and Research Performing Organisations.' (Italy)

'In 2016 a specific case of six female PhD students at a university, who came forward to reveal that a professor had behaved in a sexually inappropriate way towards them. This case was spread by the press and made the general public and all universities aware it can happen anywhere and that the current policies should be adapted to tackle similar cases and that they need actions in prevention.' (Belgium RF)

Three countries state that the #MeToo movement has affected the political agenda and that actual assignments has been given to national authorities as a consequence of #MeToo. In Sweden, the Swedish Research Council commissioned an international research review on sexual harassment in academia. The Swedish Council for Higher Education was commissioned by the government to examine ongoing preventive work in higher education institutions, and as a part of this the council commissioned an international research review with a focus on preventative work. In Norway the ad hoc working group 'UHR MOT' against gender-based violence and harassment was established by Universities Norway (UHR). UHR MOT published a report and recommendations for higher education institutions in Norway. In Lithuania the Lithuanian University Rectors Conference together with the Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson and Academic Ethics and Procedure Ombudsperson agreed to prepare and issue Guidelines for the Prevention and Handling of Sexual Harassment Cases in higher education institutions. Several countries say that the movement has led to ministers speaking

out against gender-based violence in higher education and urging higher education institutions to take action. Some countries pointed out that the issue had already received attention before #MeToo, but that the attention has been increasing as a result of the movement:

'There is in general more awareness. Also, when there is a sexual harassment complaint that reaches a disciplinary hearing, the punishment is often harsher, and there is greater transparency in the reporting and proceedings. #MeToo boosted this trend, but the trend had already started before.' (Israel)

'Before the #MeToo movement, initiatives from civil society denouncing gender-based violence in academia already existed, such as the very popular tumblr "paye ta fac". Several investigation articles focused on gender-based violence in academia. Op-eds signed by academics, junior and senior researchers were published in different newspapers (Le Monde, Libération, Mediapart) and received wide coverage and sparked debates in society. All these initiatives have encouraged the ministry in developing and enhancing its policies against gender-based violence in academia.' (France)

Students and student organisations are reported to be more active regarding the issue, as, for example, in Iceland and Denmark:

'Initiatives among students are stronger and their organisations have made groups to change the gender-based-violence culture and gender equality in general.' (Iceland)

'Yes, in some respects – especially students.' (Denmark)

Only one Member State reported that #MeToo had had a negative effect as being:

'Negative for the atmosphere at the universities.' (Bulgaria)

A concluding statement is that the #MeToo movement has affected the research and higher education sector in more than half of the Member States and Associated Countries mainly by putting the issue of gender-based violence in academia on the agenda and inspiring students, employees, and politicians to act and demand change. Whether these actions will lead to actual cultural, structural, and/or legal change in the research and higher education sector in the Member States and Associated Countries is a question for the future.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ A comparison of the impact of the #MeToo movement at the national level in Europe could be made in relation to the national level in the US. In 2017-2018, the US National Academies created an ad hoc committee to carry out a study of the influence of sexual harassment in academia on the career advancement of women in the scientific, technical, and medical workforce (<https://sites.nationalacademies.org/SHSTUDY/index.htm>). The US National Science Foundation was the first US agency to react to the Academies' report by releasing, in September 2018, a new NSF policy that requires that funded institutions report sexual misconduct findings and notify the agency when an investigator is put on leave because of a harassment investigation (<https://www.nsf.gov/od/odi/harassment.jsp>). A report was released in June 2019 by the US Government Accountability Office (GAO) on 'SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN STEM RESEARCH – Preliminary Observations on Policies for University Grantees and Information Sharing among Selected Agencies'

Mobility

The focus on international mobility in this assignment was operationalised by including questions on the safety of internationally mobile researchers concerning gender-based violence in academia in all three questionnaires and in all three sections in the main questionnaire. The results from these questions are presented in Diagram 6.

- Question 10: National authorities: Have national authorities taken any measures for the safety of internationally mobile researchers in regard to GBV in academia?
- Question 17: National research funding organisations: Has your organisation put measures in place regarding GBV for the safety of internationally mobile researchers participating in your projects?
- Question 20: National umbrella organisations: Has your organisation adopted any policies addressing international mobility in academia and GBV?

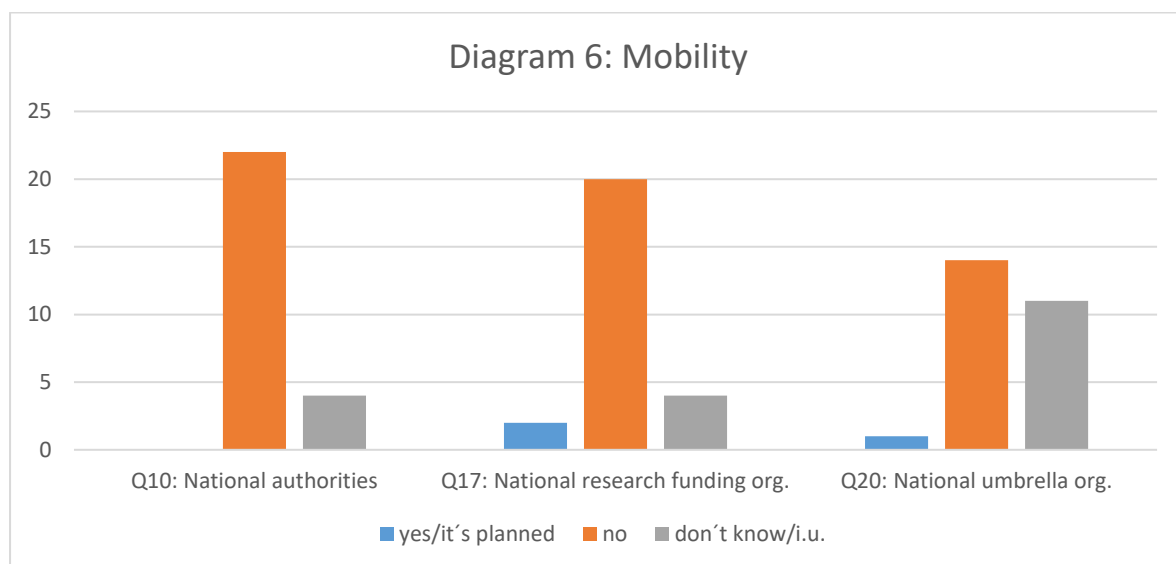


Diagram 6. Mobility. The diagram shows the number of actors that answered Yes to questions 10, 17, and 20.

No national authority has taken any measure for the safety of internationally mobile researchers in regard to gender-based violence in higher education. A few of the organisations that responded *Yes/It's planned* also elaborated on their answers. The German Science Foundation (DFG) stated that all their actions and measures on gender-based violence also protect internationally mobile researchers. In Belgium FWB, the activities of the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation at Académie de recherche et d'enseignement supérieur (ARES) 'naturally have an international dimension'. In Poland, the issue is seen as part of a general problem dealing with violence against international students

(<https://www.gao.gov/assets/700/699636.pdf>). In December 2019, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) released a report prepared by an ad hoc advisory group with recommendations for cracking down on sexual harassment in funded labs (<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/366/6472/1429>).

(mainly) and researchers. While there are no specific policies addressing academic mobility and gender-based violence, the umbrella organisation CRASP (The Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland) has launched the appeal 'Universities against Racism', in which they state that providing effective measures to better protect international students is the shared responsibility of public institutions and the academic community. This is, however, a call to action against expressions of racism and xenophobia generally and not gender-based violence in particular. In France, with respect to measures for the safety of internationally mobile researchers, top management teams at CNRS (Centre national de la recherche scientifique) 'were sensitised to this question and have been required to be particularly vigilant concerning the short and long term field missions in isolated locations (rainforest, desert) and observation ships'. And in Ireland, the Irish Research Council (IRC) is managing a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) COFUND Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme titled CAROLINE – 'Collaborative Research Fellowships for a Responsive and Innovative Europe', the terms and conditions of which state:

'Employment and working conditions for the CAROLINE fellows must be aligned with Irish employment conditions and with the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, including but not limited to working conditions, recognition of the profession and equal opportunities.'

It also states that if the terms and conditions are breached, the IRC may suspend or terminate the fellowship.

No EU umbrella organisations answered *Yes/It's planned* to the question concerning measures or policies relating to mobility. In fact, one of these organisations, the European Students' Union (ESU), specifically states that their policy paper on internationalisation and mobility does not address gender harassment, sexual harassment, or sexual assault.

Very few of the respondents have adopted policies or put concrete measures in place that specifically concern academic mobility and gender-based violence. This is an issue to be further addressed – considering, on the one hand, the emphasis on mobility in policies for developing the quality of research and higher education, and, on the other hand, the differing opportunities and challenges of mobile researchers and students. The conditions of mobility are structured by gender, sexual orientation, dis/ability and race/ethnicity, and this includes exposure to gender-based violence.⁴⁵ The responsibility weighs heavily on the institutions receiving students and researchers, as well as their home institutions. But mobility also raises questions about borders and boundaries and puts issues of joint responsibility on the agenda, not only at the national level, but also at the international one.

In the European Research Area (ERA) and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), programmes such as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA), EURAXESS and

⁴⁵ Leeman, R. J., 2010; Jöns, H., 2011; Gedro, J. et al., 2013; Mählck, P., 2016; Du Toit, N., 2018.

Erasmus+ promote the mobility of researchers and students, and Member States and Associated Countries are asked to remove obstacles to transnational mobility.⁴⁶

The EC answered that the question about international mobility is not to be considered separately from the general question on provisions to address sexual harassment, and researchers funded under Horizon 2020 are considered internationally mobile. Sexual harassment is addressed as part of the structural change approached fostered by the European Commission and implemented through gender equality plans; hence no specific actions or measures have been put in place for the safety of grantees, MSCA fellows, or projects participants more widely. This approach will be further strengthened under the next Horizon Europe, the next Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, and the European Research Area.

Since international mobility is seen as an important criterion for an upward career path, possible obstacles to mobility, such as the existence and exposure to gender-based violence, may hamper academic careers in a way that disproportionately affects women and minority groups in the research and higher education sector. Despite policymakers' growing interest in international academic mobility, research and policy attention to mobility and gender-based violence is limited. If policymakers are interested in taking the challenges and opportunities of mobility seriously, policies on mobility and internationalisation must take gender-based violence in higher education into account as an area in need of further research and policy attention.

Research funding organisations and umbrella organisations at the national level

Research funding organisations and umbrella organisations at the national level are part of and play crucial roles in the research-policy landscape. Of the 26 answers, seven countries obtained no answers from a national umbrella organisation and four obtained no answers from national research funding institutions. Some of the smaller countries (such as Malta) do not have umbrella organisations, while the reasons for other countries are not stated in the answers. At the same time, some countries submitted answers from more than one organisation (in the case of both research funding organisations and umbrella organisations). This was in accordance with the questionnaire instructions. Since the objective of this assignment is 'to analyse how the issue of gender harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault in academia is addressed at national level' all information collected through the questionnaire is of importance for the analysis. In instances where one out of two or more

⁴⁶ European Commission, 2011.

organisations answered yes and provided additional information, this information is included in the following chapter at the same level as other information.

Research funding organisations

Research funding organisations are one of the actors in the research-policy landscape that play a significant role in how research is carried out, both by announcing calls for research and through bottom-up applications. How much of the research in a country is funded by research funding organisations differs across Europe, but all countries have some kind of infrastructure that includes research funding organisations. The section of the questionnaire targeting research funding organisations at the national level consisted of five questions. Two of them are discussed in other parts of the report – Actions and Mobility. The three remaining questions from that section asked about research and funding and more specifically whether research performing organisations:

- have provided any incentives to encourage research performing organisations to develop research on gender-based violence in academia;
- have introduced any concrete measures or actions to prevent the allocation of research funding from enabling gender-based violence in academia;
- have funded any research regarding gender-based violence in academia during the last five years.

Three research funding organisations stated that they have provided incentives to encourage research performing organisations to develop research on gender-based violence in academia. These incentives are research calls, two of which relate to gender equality (Israel and Slovenia), while one directly relates to gender-based violence in academia (Ireland):

‘The IRC has funded a large number of projects relating to gender-based violence in higher education. Some of these have been bottom-up researcher-instigated projects (in response to “open” calls), and others have been thematic projects on calls that have been co-funded by government departments and agencies.’

Five research funding organisations answered yes or it’s planned to the question on preventing the allocation of research funding from enabling gender-based violence in academia. None of the answers offered any examples on concrete measures, but they showed a will and ambition to discuss the question. Two of the countries reported that more general discussions had been held (Sweden and Norway) or that a code of conduct had been introduced (Czech Republic). Three countries mentioned funding and the possibility to withdraw funding. The German Science Foundation stated that they have a zero-tolerance policy and are currently working on information on how to deal with questions relating to gender harassment, sexual harassment, and/or sexual assault related to its funding. They also wrote that they will *‘take steps in its funding with an emphasis on protection of victims, if the*

outcome of an official investigation conducted by either the employer/employing scientific institution or the state attorney (Staatsanwaltschaft) and the German courts make this necessary'. The Austrian Research Promotion Agency stated that 'The FFG funding contract explicitly refers to Gleichbehandlungsgesetz, BGBl. I Nr. 66/2004. In case of violation of these legal provisions, funding is claimed back.' The Irish Research Council has written a Statement on Dignity and 'reserves the right to withdraw funding from any institution which has been found to be in contravention of the same'.

Research funding organisations' withdrawal of funding is a strong and powerful tool and it is of great importance that this tool is not misused. Hence, it is understandable that research funding organisations, like the German Science Foundation and the Research Promotion Agency in Austria, are relying on legislation and regulation in order to withdraw their funding. At the same time, there is consistency in the research field on gender-based violence that only a minority of victims of gender-based violence report the incidents.⁴⁷ It is also clear in the international research field on the topic that the juridical framework for understanding and handling gender-based violence is seldom sufficient for victims.⁴⁸ With this knowledge, the need for other types of concrete measures and actions to prevent the allocation of research funding from enabling gender-based violence in higher education is clear. There is a need to take the specifics of an academic work and study environment seriously and organise responsible research funding procedures in accordance with that.

Research funding organisations fund research, and one of the activities stated in the mandate for this report was to 'map research carried out on sexual harassment and sexual assault at the national level of SWG GRI Members'. It is obvious in the answers that research on different forms of gender-based violence are being funded and carried out in several countries, thus very few relate specifically to academia. These quotes describe the situation well:

'In the last 5 years - and considering the universe of scholarships, projects, and areas of scientific employment funded by FCT - only 4 projects addressed gender violence across society, while again not focusing on academia.' (Portugal)

'There are 38 AEI funded projects on gender-based violence (some of them specifically addressing sexual harassment and/or sexual assault) through 2013-2017 calls for proposals for RDI projects, but none of these funded projects specifically addresses gender-based violence in academia.' (Spain)

'There are several projects funded concerning gender-based violence, though none specifically related to gender-based violence in academia during the last 5 years.' (Germany)

Seven research funding organisations answered yes to the question whether they had funded any research regarding gender-based violence in academia during the last five years, but very

⁴⁷ MacDonald, P., 2012.

⁴⁸ Bondestam, F. & Lundqvist, M., 2019.

few of the reported research projects fulfil the criteria about focusing gender-based violence AND academia. Three research projects/programmes on gender-based violence in academia funded during the last five years were identified in the material.

Ireland: The IRC has funded a number of projects relating to gender-based violence in higher education. Notable among these are the research projects led by Dr Padraig Mac Neela (National University of Ireland, Galway): *Sexy Consent?: Devising Workshops to Empower Young Adults to Negotiate Consent to Sexual Activity* (2014); *Smart Consent: Evaluating an Intervention to Promote Active Consent on the Part of Young Adults* (2015; co-funded by the Health Service Executive-Crisis Pregnancy Programme).

This research was developed in collaboration with the Rape Crisis Network Ireland. Dr Mac Neela's IRC-funded research – namely, the SMART Consent programme – was a key initiative for and a source of input into Ireland's Framework for Consent in Higher Education Institutions.

Sweden: Anette Agardh, Lund University, *Towards a greater understanding of sexual harassment in the academic workplace/student environment: a multi-faceted study of exposure, determinants, consequences, and handling strategies.*

Belgium: PhD student: Patricia Mélotte, Institution: Université Libre de Bruxelles (ULB). Topic: Women's reactions to sexist words. Other projects, including Patricia Mélotte (not funded by F.R.S.-FNRS): *Fight against sexism and harassment among students at ULB*

Since one of the defining points of this assignment is to focus on the national rather than the institutional level, the mapping of research was done by including a question on funded research in the section targeting national research funding organisations. This is not a comprehensive mapping of all funded research in the SWG GRI Member States and Associated Countries, since the questionnaire was sent to only one or sometimes two research funding organisations in each country. There may be other research projects funded that do not appear in this study. Related projects regarding gender equality in academia are not reported here; neither are other important research projects regarding gender-based violence in workplaces in general or gender-based violence in private life. With that said, the scarcity of funded research during the last five years gives a picture of a very small research field. Gender-based violence does not seem to be a prioritised issue for research funding organisations in general. This picture, that research on the topic is a minor field in European countries, is supported by international reviews.⁴⁹

'Gender-based violence in academia still receives too little attention, especially as a subject of research [...] The importance of research into this complex field is self-evident as both,

⁴⁹ Bondestam, F & Lundqvist, M., 2018; Bondestam, F & Lundqvist, M., 2019.

*practical engagement with gender equality interventions and research projects aim at finding new and effective strategies to make higher education a safe space for all genders.*⁵⁰

Research funding organisations' responsibility and possibility to act against gender-based violence in higher education has been internationally discussed to varying degrees.⁵¹ The relatively young discussion is reflected in the answers to the question in the questionnaire regarding concrete measures to prevent the allocation of research funding from enabling gender-based violence in academia. What research funding organisations can do and how they can act to ensure that their funding of research contributes to both research of high quality and to an academia free of violence and harassment are questions that are still in need of attention at both the national and European level. Research funding organisations need to investigate how their research funding may affect the prevalence of gender-based violence in a negative way, and if so, how they can take responsibility to counteract this.

Umbrella organisations

Of the 19 countries in which a national umbrella organisation answered, eight (Ireland, Belgium WBF, Belgium Flanders, Israel, Netherlands, Austria, Spain, Switzerland) said that they have adopted policies addressing gender-based violence and three that this is planned (France, Austria, Lithuania). Many of these organisations stated that individual universities have adopted or they may, should, or will adopt their own policies, or that there are national policies that the organisation 'agrees with'. In this section in the questionnaire we asked about whether the umbrella organisations themselves have policies that address gender-based violence in academia. This does not seem to be the case. Several umbrella organisations wrote about policies or charters concerning general non-discrimination, a respect-based working environment, an inclusive research culture, or gender equality. The responses did not however describe what this actually means and how the content of these statements could be translated into active and concrete work.

The majority of umbrella organisations have taken concrete actions and/or measures to address gender-based violence in higher education. Various activities are described in the material, such as:

- writing guidelines for the prevention and handling of sexual harassment cases in higher education institutions (Lithuania);
- organising conferences for rectors and other stakeholders at the national level (Sweden, Israel, Iceland);
- establishing a task force of stakeholders from its members institutions (Norway⁵²);

⁵⁰ Lipinski, A., Farneti, A. & Pantelmann, H., 2019, p. 31.

⁵¹ See, for example, <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-05071-7>.

⁵² No umbrella organisation from Norway answered. This was given as additional information through the Norwegian representative in the sub-group.

- conducting surveys (Denmark);
- the exchange of best practices and strengthening of policies (Belgium RF, Belgium FWB);
- supporting and promoting work against gender-based violence in the research and higher education sector by facilitating cooperation in the sector (Spain, Switzerland, Netherlands).

Umbrella organisations can play a central role in bringing together the research and higher education sector and national authorities to acknowledge challenging issues in academia. This role of umbrella organisations is reflected in the answers to the questionnaire, where several umbrella organisations mentioned that rectors, stakeholders, and ministers were brought together in most of the activities. Since gender-based violence does not function as an isolated issue, the work to combat gender-based violence must reflect this, and the cooperation and joint efforts from different actors are of utmost importance. The umbrella organisations can fill a crucial role in that work.

Umbrella organisations and research funding institutions at the EU level

The Member States and Associated Countries are directly and indirectly affected by what happens at the EU level. For some countries, activity at the EU level is very important for pushing development at the national level. The EU level also has the opportunity and responsibility to ensure that funds and resources are distributed in a way that counteracts gender-based violence and strengthens the quality of research and education in the EU.

Umbrella organisations

The questionnaire targeting umbrella organisations at EU level was sent to nine organisations,⁵³ five of them gave answers. The questionnaire contained the following four questions:

- Question 1: Has your organisation adopted any policies addressing GBV in academia?
- Question 2: Has your organisation adopted any policies addressing international mobility in academia and GBV?
- Question 3: Has your organisation taken any concrete actions and/or measures to address GBV in academia? (e.g. reports, surveys, mappings, workshop, debates, seminars, campaign)
- Question 4: Has your organisation provided any incentives to encourage research performing organisations, including universities, to address GBV in academia?

⁵³ ALLEA, ENQA, ESU, ETUCE, EUA, EWORA, LERU, Science Europe, TAFTIE.

Two out of the five umbrella organisations answered no to all four questions in the questionnaire (LERU and ALLEA). The remaining three, Science Europe, ESU and ETUCE, gave valuable information and insights into their work on gender-based violence in higher education. Between the three of them, they cover the perspectives of research funding organisations, students, and teachers.

ESU (European Student Union)

The ESU has an Anti-Discrimination Statement that was adopted in 2018. The document is used in their lobby work to illustrate their positions and priorities and as a basis for all their work in other spheres.

‘Sexism has consequences on how women experience higher education. Misogynistic attacks, both verbal and physical, generate a feeling of unsafety for women and gender minorities in the school environment. Sexual harassment and sexual violence are happening on a daily basis on campuses, often perpetrated by other students or staff members.’

ESU focuses on unfairness and inability in higher education institutions as a system:

‘A lack of proper procedures to deal with these incidents can be considered as the HEIs being complicit in these attacks. It is of high importance that HEIs implement effective procedures to make victims feel secure to report aggression aimed at themselves. However, if HEIs do have procedures in place, they need to make sure that victims are treated with respect and trust.’

‘The system itself is still not designed to reflect the diversity within society at large. ESU condemns the fact that many systems and processes are still designed to unfairly advantage students who fall within certain “norms”. This in itself is a clear sign of discrimination which lies at the basis of our higher education systems.’

The ESU statement stands out from other policies and statements that have been included in the answers to this questionnaire because it includes several different dimensions of gender/sex/sexuality issues in regard to gender-based violence in higher education – for example, as it pertains to LGBTQ+, gender-diverse, and transgender students.

Science Europe

‘Science Europe is part of the Gender Working Group of the Global Research Council (GRC). In 2019, the GRC Gender Working Group has furthermore started working on harassment and bullying. The focus will be on gender (GH) and sexual harassment (SH). Specifically, Science Europe Office representative, is contributing to the Gender Working Group’s work on GH and SH, which will address two different issues:

- How should research funding organisations tackle gender and sexual harassment in their own organisations.

- How should research funding organisations deal with gender and sexual harassment in the research centres and universities that they fund.

The objective is to develop concrete guidance and a set of actions that research funders should implement to address GBV in research organisations. The GRC Gender Working Group aims to finalize the document in early 2020.'

ETUCE (European Trade Union Committee for Education)

ETUCE addresses gender harassment, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence in all sectors of education, including higher education, in the main ETUCE policy documents such as the ETUCE Action Plan on Gender Equality within teacher unions' structures and in the teaching profession (adopted in 2010). ETUCE is planning to update the action plans on both gender equality and on equality, diversity, and inclusion. The updated action plans will address gender-based violence (including cyber-harassment) in all education sectors, including higher education and research.

ETUCE conducts research and publishes reports on the key challenges of gender equality, including gender-based violence in all education sectors. ETUCE also regularly addresses this topic in its views and statements, consults the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) on gender-based violence in education, and lobbies at the European Commission level to introduce a stronger European policy on gender equality, including GBV and cyber-harassment.

ETUCE supports the initiatives of its member organisations and provides a platform for sharing trade unions' good practices to combat gender-based violence in all education sectors, including academia. Issues of gender equality in higher education, including gender harassment in academia, have been discussed at the annual Working Group meetings of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE) focusing on Higher Education and Research. Through its work with ETUCE member organisations representing higher education and research in European countries, ETUCE has encouraged universities and other research performing organisations to address gender-based violence in academia.

All three organisations show examples of important issues and planned or ongoing work in regard to gender-based violence in academia. National and European research funding organisations and institutions should follow the work of the Gender Working Group of the Global Research Council closely.

Research funding institutions (The European Commission)

The questionnaire targeting the European Commission (EC) included the following five questions:

- Question 1: Has your organisation taken any actions aimed at GBV in academia?

- Question 2: Has your organisation provided any incentives to encourage research performing organisations, including universities, to develop research on GBV in academia?
- Question 3: Has your organisation introduced any concrete measures, strategies, or actions to prevent the allocation of research funding from enabling GBV in academia?
- Question 4: Has your organisation put measures in place regarding GBV for the safety of internationally mobile researchers participating in your projects?
- Question 5: Has your organisation funded any research regarding GBV in academia during the last five years?

The EC answered that they have taken actions aimed at gender-based violence in academia, both in the framework of programmes and actions designed to combat violence against women in general (promoting the Istanbul Convention; the DAPHNE strand of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020; the Non.No.Nein campaign) and more recently under Horizon 2020.

In the case of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme, the following two examples of funded projects directly addressing universities are provided by the European Commission. The first is the 'Universities Supporting Victims of Sexual Violence' (USVreact) project (2016-2017),⁵⁴ led by Brunel University London and involving seven partners across six European countries, which developed innovative trainings for university staff. The second is the 'Ending Sexual Harassment and Violence in Third Level Education' (ESHTE) project (2016-2019),⁵⁵ led by the National Women's Council of Ireland: it involved five partners from five European countries, which developed a toolkit offering a range of resources that cover such areas as policy development, training, and campaigning. The measures should be adapted to the needs of individual institutes and take into consideration the local or national contexts in order to 'prevent and combat sexual harassment and violence and build a culture of zero tolerance in third level institutions throughout Europe by building a feminist understanding and analysis of the causes and effects of sexual harassment and violence'.

The EC also reported that, under Horizon 2020, a dedicated call topic was introduced under the Science With and For Society (SwafS) 2018-2020 Work programme, topic SwafS-25-2020 – '*Gender-based violence including sexual harassment in research organisations and universities*', explicitly referring to the two projects above. The EC also stated that they are engaged in ongoing work with Member States and Associated Countries to identify strategies, actions, and measures at the national level to address gender-based violence, through the ERAC SWG GRI.

On the question about incentives to encourage research performing organisations to develop research on the topic, the EC answered:

⁵⁴ <http://usvreact.eu/>.

⁵⁵ <http://www.itstopsnow.org/>.

‘Addressing gender based violence in research performing organisations, including universities, as well as in research funders is part of our fully fledged gender equality plans (funded under the H2020 Science with and for society work programme) as key drivers for institutional change.’

The EC added that the online Gender Equality in Academia and Research (GEAR) tool co-developed by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) and DG Research & Innovation builds on the knowledge acquired, lessons learned, and the best practises from the Gender Equality Plan (GEP) projects funded under H2020 and FP7. Additionally, a specific chapter of its action toolbox is dedicated to combatting sexual and gender-based harassment.⁵⁶ The SwafS-25-2020 topic also refers explicitly to the knowledge and practices developed in the funded GEP projects and those featured in the GEAR Tool.

The EC also stated that they are currently discussing gender-based violence provisions in the context of the implementation strategy for the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, Horizon Europe. The European Commission intends to build on the recommendations stemming from the Horizon 2020 SwafS-25-2020 topic, as well as on the knowledge and experience generated through its GEP funded projects, to promote an EU baseline on gender-based violence and sexual harassment in R&I organisations.

With respect to the question on measures put in place for the safety of internationally mobile researchers participating in their projects, the EC replied that all researchers are considered to be internationally mobile for the European Commission. Consequently, this does not need to be turned into a specific case, and to now no specific actions or measures have yet been put in place for the safety of grantees, MSCA fellows, or project participants more widely. However, as reported under question 3, discussions on the establishment of an EU baseline scenario are ongoing.

The last question concerns funded research on the topic of gender-based violence in academia during the last five years. In addition to the two projects reported above funded through the Daphne strand of the Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme 2014-2020, focusing specifically on gender-based violence in academia, the EC provides references for several Horizon 2020 research projects. The examples include, on the one hand, projects funded under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and address gender-based violence in general, and, on the other hand, two recent GEP projects funded under the SwafS work programme, which address gender-based violence as one of their focus areas.

⁵⁶ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/toolkits/gear/action-toolbox>.

Conclusions

Survey results at the national level

- The topic of gender-based violence in academia is in general not prioritised at the national level – not in research or in policy work. Even though there are differences between the countries in regard to activity, 85% of the countries answered yes to less than half of the questions. Thus, the existence of activities, policies, measures, legislation, statistics, research, and other aspects is low in the majority of countries.
- The clusters of more or less active countries do not follow any specific lines concerning, for example, new or old Member States, geography in Europe, nor is there any clear connection to other types of clusters regarding gender equality work or indexes. Rather we can see large variations in the level of activity all over Europe.
- Two fields receive the most attention in the countries, and these are the actions taken by national authorities and umbrella organisations to address gender-based violence in academia and questions concerning the #MeToo movement.
- The safety of internationally mobile researchers is an ‘invisible issue’.
- Research funding organisations are in general inactive in the work against gender-based violence in academia.

Thematic analysis/results

Infrastructure

- In general, a cohesive infrastructure to combat gender-based violence in higher education is lacking in the Member States and Associated Countries.
- Six countries already have and two countries are planning to adopt national policies to specifically address gender-based violence in academia.
- Six countries have specific legislation or other regulations on gender-based violence in academia and six countries have a regulatory authority responsible for university compliance with laws and regulations. No country seems to have in place both specific legislation AND a regulatory authority responsible for universities compliance with laws and regulations on gender-based violence.
- Statistics about the specific situation in regard to gender-based violence in academia at the national level are severely underdeveloped. Five countries have data on gender-based violence in academia. No country has regular data collection in place.

Activities

- Measures to combat gender-based violence range from well financed and complex programmes to short-term ad hoc initiatives, including, for example, campaigns, seminars, debates, statements from ministers, charters, codes of conduct, the creation of working groups and committees and the writing of surveys and/or reports.

- The activities described in the material can be thematically divided into four different sub-groups: awareness raising; institutional change; knowledge; support and case handling.
- Four countries give examples of more cohesive work for institutional change, describing how a conference, meeting, or congress has resulted in related actions with possible long-term effects.

#MeToo

- The #MeToo movement has affected the research and higher education sector in more than half of the countries, mainly by putting the question of sexual harassment on the agenda.
- The #MeToo movement has foremost resulted in attention to the topic in the media, in awareness-raising campaigns at specific universities, and in student initiatives.
- Three countries stated that #MeToo has affected the political agenda in the form of concrete assignments being given to national authorities.

Mobility

- Very few of the respondents have adopted policies or put concrete measures in place that specifically concern academic mobility and gender-based violence.
- Research and policy attention to mobility and gender-based violence in higher education is limited.
- Internationally mobile researchers may be a group in higher education that is of higher risk of victimisation owing, for example, to the lack of networks, social support, and economic resources. This aspect has not been recognised in the ongoing work against gender-based violence in academia or in the ongoing work on academic mobility at the EU nor national level.

Research funding organisations at the national level

- Research funding organisations are in general inactive in the work against gender-based violence and do not provide incentives for research performing institutions to address gender-based violence in academia.
- Five research funding organisations answered yes or *it's planned* to the question on preventing the allocation of research funding from enabling gender-based violence in academia. None of the answers included any examples of concrete measures but they showed a will and ambition to discuss the question.
- There are three research projects on gender-based violence in academia that have received funding from the organisations that responded during the last five years.

Umbrella organisations at the national level

- National umbrella organisations do not have policies to address gender-based violence in academia.

- A majority of umbrella organisations have taken actions/measures to address gender-based violence in academia, such as writing guidelines, organising conferences, exchanging best practices, and supporting and promoting work against gender-based violence in the research and higher education sector

Umbrella organisations at the EU level

- The ESU statement stands out from other policies and statements that were included in the answers to this questionnaire because it includes several different dimensions of gender/sex/sexuality issues in regard to gender-based violence in higher education – for example, as it pertains to LGBTQ+, gender-diverse, and transgender students.
- Science Europe is part of the Gender Working Group of the Global Research Council. In 2019, the GRC Gender Working Group has also started working on harassment and bullying.
- ETUCE supports the initiatives of its member organisations and provides a platform for sharing trade unions' good practices to combat gender-based violence in all education sectors, including academia.

Research funding at the EU level

- The EC reported two examples of funded projects directly addressing universities and gender-based violence. The Horizon 2020 dedicated call topic was introduced under the Science With and For Society (SwafS) 2018-2020 Work programme, topic SwafS-25-2020 – 'Gender-based violence including sexual harassment in research organisations and universities'.
- Gender-based violence is a key element addressed in EC funded GEP projects – as highlighted in the DG RTD-EIGE GEAR Tool.
- The European Commission intends to build on the recommendations stemming from the Horizon 2020 SwafS-25-2020 topic, as well as on the knowledge and experience generated through its GEP funded projects, to promote an EU baseline on gender-based violence and sexual harassment in R&I organisations.
- No specific actions or measures have been put in place for the safety of grantees, MSCA fellows, or project participants more widely.

This study reveals that gender-based violence in higher education is, with a few exceptions, an unrecognised issue and an underdeveloped field of knowledge in the European Research Area. There is variance between the countries in terms of how and whether at all the topic is addressed at the national level. The level of ambition, the kinds of activities and measures in place, the allocation of financial incentives, and the infrastructures in place also differ significantly from one country to the next. In general, a cohesive infrastructure for combating gender-based violence in academia in the Member States and Associated Countries is weak. There is a lack of policies, legislation or other regulations, responsible authorities, and up-to-date data on the topic. A conclusion to be drawn from the material is that no country has a

sufficient level of work to combat gender-based violence in higher education. There is a great need to organise the work and study environment in a way that gives proper support to victims and prevents gender-based violence.

The activities, strategies, and measures described in the material point to an ambition and willingness in some countries to take the issue of gender-based violence in academia seriously. Few countries have introduced cohesive measures and activities that exhibit potential for achieving institutional change. The framework for this mandate does not include an investigation of the actual impact that activities and measures might have. To achieve institutional change, it is first necessary to identify and recognise the problem. What kinds of institutions and behaviours need to be changed and from what to what? What is the problem? In order to be able to implement effective and appropriate activities and measures, it is necessary to reflect on these kinds of questions, incorporate research-based knowledge, listen to the lived experiences of students and employees in the research and higher education sector, prioritise time and money, and work with the issue on several levels simultaneously. There is an opportunity for knowledge exchange and development in the field. Working against gender-based violence is not a competition between countries; it is an issue for all of us concerned with the well-being of our colleagues and students and with the quality of research and education in the European Union.

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Appendix 1

Timeline for the survey

When	What
29.05.19	Questionnaires sent out
01.06.19 - 15.07.19	Timeframe for answering
27.06.19	First reminder sent out to all delegates in SWG GRI
15.08.19	Second reminder sent out to remaining 16 countries that had not answered
23.08.19	New deadline
01.06.19 – 10.12.19	Actual timeframe for the survey. (11 answers received after the deadline, the last answer was received 10.12.19)

Mobilising to eradicate gender-based violence and sexual harassment:

A new impetus for gender equality in the European Research Area

Gender-based violence is prevalent at all levels of higher education and research and in all disciplines. It has destructive consequences for individuals and institutions as well as for the quality of research and education. Despite this, questions of gender-based violence in higher education and research have received little attention both in terms of research and on the policy level in Europe.¹ The ERAC Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation² calls on all stakeholders to take concerted action in order to make the European Higher Education and Research Area a truly safe environment where all talents can thrive.

Introduction

A persistent feature of work life in general, gender-based violence is increasingly recognised as a serious problem for academic institutions around the globe.³ In the fall 2017, the #MeToo movement erupted and spread quickly through social media. In some countries, the higher education sector was particularly affected owing to student mobilisation. Though the visibility and effect of the movement varied, it put the issue of sexual harassment higher up on the agenda in many countries.

The concept of gender-based violence⁴ (including gender harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault) describes a continuum of violent behaviours and attitudes on the basis of gender, intersecting with other dimensions of inequality.⁵

Research shows that gender-based violence is prevalent at all levels of higher education and research and in all disciplines.⁶ **The specific structure of the research and higher education sector, with its asymmetric power relations,**

insecure employment conditions, and high levels of international mobility, means that sector-specific measures need to be adopted to tackle the issue.⁷

International studies show that at least 25% of female students have experienced gender-based violence during their time in the higher education sector.⁸

While data on the prevalence of gender-based violence among research and teaching staff in the EU is lacking, a large survey conducted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental rights (FRA) estimates that 83 to 102 million women (45 to 55%) in the EU have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15. Among these women, 32% indicated someone from their employment context – such as a colleague, a boss, or a customer – was the perpetrator.⁹

To map policy responses in the EU, the ERAC SWG GRI conducted a survey in Member States and Associated Countries covering policies, strategies, actions and measures taken at the national and EU level to address gender-based violence in higher education and research. **The**

recommendations presented in this policy brief are intended to contribute to one of the objectives of the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, which is to end gender-based violence, specifically in the higher education and research sectors.

Main messages

The survey reveals that even though the #MeToo movement has put the question of gender-based violence and sexual harassment in academia on the agenda in several Member States and Associated Countries, gender-based violence is, with a few exceptions, **an unrecognised issue and an underdeveloped field of knowledge** at the national level. There is a marked lack of policies, legislation, and regulations, responsible authorities, and up-to-date data. Measures to combat gender-based violence range from a **few well-financed and complex programmes to several short-term ad hoc initiatives**, such as campaigns, seminars, debates, statements from ministers, charters, codes of conduct, working groups and committees, surveys and/or reports. The kinds of activities and measures in place, the allocation of financial incentives, and the existence of relevant infrastructures differ significantly across countries.

Given the importance of international mobility in building the European Research Area, it is alarming that **the higher risk of victimisation for internationally mobile students and researchers is not recognised** in ongoing work against gender-based violence in academia or in ongoing work on academic mobility at the national and EU levels.

In terms of building an evidence base, **only three nationally funded research projects** specifically addressing gender-based violence in academia, implemented in the last five years, were identified in the survey of Member States and Associate Countries. An important milestone is the current Horizon 2020 Science With and For Society call 25, which promises to produce research data, tools, and measures to combat gender-based violence in Europe.

Recommendations

The research and higher education sectors have the responsibility to provide safe work and study environments, free from violence and harassment. Priority must be given to **developing knowledge, policies, and actions, at the national and European level as well as through the European Commission**, in a way that gives proper support to victims, prevents gender-based violence, and thus ensures that the European Higher Education and Research Area remain an arena of high ethical standards.

The first five recommendations are general in nature and address all the stakeholders at the EU and national levels. The report reveals considerable variance among countries, and thus these five recommendations may be of the most importance specifically for the many countries where the question of gender-based violence in higher education is unrecognised. The five recommendations constitute a basis for continued work to eradicate gender-based violence in the European Research Area.

1. Acknowledge gender-based violence in research and higher education as an unacceptable problem.
2. Step up the work for gender equality and diversity through Gender Equality Plans, in line with the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 and the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention 2019.
3. Build alliances with key stakeholders, both nationally and transnationally.
4. Devote at the least the same level of attention and volume of resources to gender-based violence as research misconduct receives.
5. Cultivate sensitivity to the issue and awareness of measures through communication campaigns. Where relevant, these can be funded, for example, in synergy with the Structural Funds.

National authorities

6. Include actions to combat gender-based violence in the ERA National Action Plans and Strategies and other relevant strategic policy documents governing the research and higher education sector.
7. Set up protocols for the regular collection of statistics on gender-based violence at an institutional level.
8. Require that all research institutions and universities report annually on their activities/measures to eradicate gender-based violence.
9. Include measures against gender-based violence as a criterion for the evaluation of research institutions and universities, quality standards, and human resources management.

Umbrella organisations (the national and EU levels)

10. Organise a cross-stakeholder working group / platform for policy and knowledge exchange.
11. Develop joint policies and action plans for and with the research and higher education sector to promote institutional change.
12. Investigate the possibilities for research institutions and universities to impose 'academic sanctions' on perpetrators.

National Research Funding Organisations

13. Fund research on gender-based violence in higher education and research through specific calls at national and international levels.
14. Progressively introduce the requirement that policies against gender-based violence be in place as a condition for higher education and research organisations to apply for research funding.
15. Consider sexual harassment just as important as research misconduct in terms of its effect on the integrity of research.
16. In funding schemes where international research mobility is funded, the receiving institution should be required to have policy and infrastructure in place to address gender-based violence.

European Commission

The above recommendations targeting national research funding organisations also apply to the European Commission in its role as a European-level Research Funding Organisation, but additional specific recommendations for the European Commission are provided in its policy making role:

17. Formulate a European policy and plan of action against gender-based violence in higher education and research.
18. Revise the Charter and Code for Researchers so that it addresses gender-based violence and includes measures at the institutional level to combat gender-based violence in the assessment of the HR Excellence in Research Award.
19. Urge that policies against gender-based violence are put in place at both the sending and the receiving Research Performing Organisations as a mandatory condition in order to be

able to participate in programmes involving the recruitment and mobility of researchers.

20. Include dimensions of mobility and gender-based violence in higher education and research in calls for research funding – for example, in the SwafS calls.
21. Investigate the possibility to include systematic data collection and reporting on gender-based violence in academia in the future editions of She Figures.
22. Set up a pan-European taskforce/expert group to exchange information and knowledge on the broader situation regarding gender-based violence in the research and higher education sector at the European level.
23. Include provisions addressing protection against gender-based violence in grant agreements and in the rules of implementation in Horizon Europe.

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¹ See, for example, Lipinsky et al. 2019; Latcheva & Joanna 2017.

² The ERAC Standing Working Group on Gender in Research and Innovation is one of the ERA-related groups that is responsible for ERA Priority 4 gender equality and gender mainstreaming. The policy brief is based on the report *Sexual Harassment in the Higher Education Sector. National Policies and Measures in EU Member States and Associated Countries*, available at **TO BE SUPPLIED AFTER PUBLICATION IN THE PUBLIC REGISTER OF DOCUMENTS**. The report was prepared by the Sub-group on Gender Harassment in Academia, consisting of rapporteur Carl Jacobsson, SE, representatives from BE, CZ, NL, NO, and IS, and external experts Tamar Brosh, IL, and Maja Lundqvist and Fredrik Bondestam, the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research, SE.

³ Bondestam & Lundqvist 2018; McDonald 2012.

⁴ Gender harassment refers to harassment on the grounds of sex, but without sexual connotations, such as diminishing or hateful comments, exclusion, silencing, or stereotypical prejudices. Sexual harassment refers to unwanted verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature, such as touching, comments on a person's looks or body, stalking, the sending of images with sexual content, or sexual jokes. Sexual assault refers to actions of a sexual nature regulated by law, such as rape or attempted rape.

⁵ This definition is in line with research and international understanding as expressed in the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, the Istanbul Convention (2011), and the ILO convention 190 (2019).

⁶ Henning et al. 2017; Benya et al. 2018; Bondestam & Lundqvist 2020; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018; Clancy et al. 2014.

⁷ See, for example, Henning et al. 2017; Rubin & Borgers 1990.

⁸ Vladutiu et al. 2011; Voth Schrag 2017; Benya et al. 2018.

⁹ FRA 2015.