

Special Eurobarometer 449

Summary

Gender-based Violence

Fieldwork

June 2016

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Survey requested by the European Commission,
Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
and co-ordinated by the Directorate-General for Communication

This document does not represent the point of view of the European Commission.
The interpretations and opinions contained in it are solely those of the authors.

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Survey conducted by TNS opinion & social at the request of the European Commission,
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(DG COMM "Strategy, Corporate Communication Actions and Eurobarometer" Unit)

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<http://ec.europa.eu/COMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion>

INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence encompasses both violence directed towards a person on the basis of their gender, and violence that disproportionately affects persons of a particular gender. Gender-based violence can be physical, sexual or psychological, or a combination of two or more of these forms. It includes domestic violence, sexual harassment and violence, harmful practices and cyber-harassment. Gender-based violence happens in every country, across the full spectrum of society, and in a myriad of locations.

Although both men and women are victims of gender-based violence, the majority of victims are women. One in three women in the EU have experienced physical and/or sexual violence since the age of 15, while one in ten has experienced sexual harassment or stalking via new technologies.¹

Gender-based violence is a violation of a person's fundamental rights, and is both a cause and consequence of gender inequality². There can be no real gender equality when there is wide-scale gender based violence against women. It hinders women's active participation in the labour market, and society in general. There are thus profound economic impacts of such violence, with gender-based violence against women estimated to cost EUR 226 billion each year, with the total cost of gender-based violence estimated at EUR 259 billion each year³.

Gender equality is a core value of the European Union, and the EU has a long history of working to protect citizens against gender-based violence, including measures to support and protect victims of such crimes, as well as ensuring they have access to justice wherever they are in the EU⁴.

Most recently, in March 2016 the Commission proposed the signature and conclusion of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), alongside Member States. This is the first European legally binding instrument to protect victims and punish perpetrators of violence against women, as well as implementing measures to prevent such violence in the first place⁵.

As part of its efforts to effectively combat gender-based violence, the European Commission works together with EU countries and other EU bodies to get more and better information, which will strengthen policy responses to the problem. In order to have a full picture of the issue, the EU has taken a three-pronged approach: collecting data recorded by the authorities (police, justice, health and support services), carrying out surveys on women's experiences of violence throughout their lifetimes⁶ and conducting research into attitudes towards the phenomenon. In 2015, the European Commission instructed two experts to map surveys on attitudes towards violence against women across the EU.⁷

¹ <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/vaw-survey-main-results>

² http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-violence/index_en.htm

³ <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/MH0414745EN2.pdf>

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-violence/protecting-victims-of-gender-violence/index_en.htm

⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/gender_based_violence/160308_factsheet_vaw_en.pdf

⁶ <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report>

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/151125_attitudes_enege_report_en.pdf

It is against this backdrop that the European Commission's Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers commissioned this survey to assess the perceptions of EU citizens about gender-based violence. The survey explores a number of areas:

- Perceptions of the prevalence of domestic violence;
- Personal knowledge of a victim of domestic violence, who people speak to, and the reasons people do not speak to anyone;
- Opinions about where violence against women is most likely to occur;
- Opinions about and attitudes towards gender-based violence, including whether any circumstances justify sexual intercourse without consent;
- Perceptions of the prevalence of sexual harassment;
- Whether a range of acts of gender-based violence are wrong and are, or should be, illegal.

Several of the questions in this survey were included in a 2010 Eurobarometer about violence against women⁸. Trend results from these questions will also be discussed in this report.

This survey was carried out by the TNS Opinion & Social network in the 28 Member States of the European Union between 4 and 13 June 2016. 27,818 EU citizens from different social and demographic categories were interviewed face-to-face at home and in their native language on behalf of the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers (DG-JUST).

The report is structured as follows:

- An initial Key Findings section serves to summarise the headline findings of the overall report.
- Chapter I looks at general perceptions of domestic violence, in terms of perceived prevalence against both men and women. It also examines views of how acceptable such violence is or can be as well as personal awareness of both domestic violence and available support services. Finally the chapter looks at whether domestic violence is perceived as a "private matter".
- Chapter II focuses on citizens' views on the appropriate legal response to various forms of gender-based violence and looks at how these different types of violence are viewed in terms of whether they are wrong and are or should be against the law.
- Chapter III looks at prevalence of sexual harassment more widely and where violence against women is most likely to take place. Finally it examines the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with a series of statements relating to perceptions of sexual violence against women. It also presents a series of different situations to respondents and examines whether any of these can ever justify sexual intercourse without consent.

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_344_en.pdf

The methodology used is that of Eurobarometer surveys as carried out by the Directorate-General for Communication (“Strategy, Corporate Communication Actions and Eurobarometer” Unit). A technical note on the manner in which the interviews were conducted by the institutes within the TNS Opinion & Social network is appended as an annex to this report. Also included are the interview methods and the confidence intervals.

Note: In this report, countries are referred to by their official abbreviation. The abbreviations used in this report correspond to:

Belgium	BE	Latvia	LV
Bulgaria	BG	Luxembourg	LU
Czech Republic	CZ	Hungary	HU
Denmark	DK	Malta	MT
Germany	DE	The Netherlands	NL
Estonia	EE	Austria	AT
Greece	EL	Poland	PL
Spain	ES	Portugal	PT
France	FR	Romania	RO
Croatia	HR	Slovenia	SI
Ireland	IE	Slovakia	SK
Italy	IT	Finland	FI
Republic of Cyprus	CY *	Sweden	SE
Lithuania	LT	United Kingdom	UK
European Union – weighted average for the 28 Member States			EU28

* Cyprus as a whole is one of the 28 European Union Member States. However, the ‘acquis communautaire’ has been suspended in the part of the country which is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. For practical reasons, only the interviews carried out in the part of the country controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus are included in the ‘CY’ category and in the EU28 average.

*We wish to thank the people throughout the European Union
who have given their time to take part in this survey.
Without their active participation, this study would not have been possible.*

KEY FINDINGS

Almost all respondents say domestic violence is unacceptable, while domestic violence is perceived to be more common against women than men

- Almost three quarters of respondents think domestic violence against women is common in their country (74%). At least half in every Member State think this way.
- Almost three in ten say domestic violence against men is common in their country (29%), but this masks a wide range of results across Member States, from 61% in the UK to 8% in Bulgaria.
- Women are more likely than men to say domestic violence against either gender is common.
- Almost all respondents (96%) say domestic violence against women is unacceptable, although 12% do not think it should always be punished by law.
- More than nine in ten (94%) also say domestic violence against men is unacceptable, with 14% of the opinion it should not always be punished by law.
- Around one in six (15%) respondents across the EU consider domestic violence to be a private matter that should be handled within the family. Respondents in Eastern areas of the EU are generally the most likely to agree with this view.

The majority of those who know a victim of domestic violence have spoken about it, but rarely to health or support services or the police

- Across the EU almost one quarter (24%) of respondents know of a friend or family member who has been a victim of domestic violence, while 18% know of someone in their immediate area or neighbourhood and 10% know of someone where they work or study. The victims are most likely to be women in all three cases and across all Member States.
- Just over seven out of ten (71%) respondents who know a victim have spoken with someone about it – most likely with friend or family member (39%) or with the people involved (33%), while 12% spoke to the police.
- Respondents are most likely to not have talked about a victim of domestic violence because it was none of their business (26%), followed by a lack of proof (18%), not wanting to create trouble, or the circumstances not being clear enough (both 16%).
- Almost three quarters (74%) are aware of support services available to women who are victims of domestic violence, with large variations between individual Member States. Respondents in Eastern areas of the EU are generally the least likely to have heard of them.

At least nine out of ten consider a range of psychological and physical forms of gender-based violence to be wrong, but opinions about whether they should be against the law are more varied.

- Respondents are most likely to say repeatedly criticising a partner to make them feel inferior should not be illegal (44%), while 41% say this about making sexually suggestive comments or “jokes” to a woman in the street.
- Meanwhile less than one in five (18%) say touching a colleague in an unwanted or inappropriate way, or overly controlling a partner should not be illegal, while 16% say this about sending unwanted sexually explicit emails or messages.
- One in ten respondents (11%) say forcing a partner to have sex should not be against the law and 49% say that this is already illegal.
- The majority of respondents in each country think each of these behaviours are wrong, and either are already against the law, or should be so.
- Women are more likely than men to say the psychological violence and sexual harassment scenarios should be against the law. There is no difference for the act of sexual violence.

Seven out of ten think sexual harassment of women is common in their country, and that violence against women is most likely to occur at home

- Although 70% think sexual harassment of women is common in their country, this masks a wide range of opinion across Member States – from 89% in Italy to 32% in Estonia.
- Women are more likely to say this is common, compared to men, and this pattern occurs across all demographic groups.
- More than eight in ten say violence against women is most likely to occur at home (86%) while 19% say in public places or online, and 17% mention the workplace.
- Almost one third (31%) agree women are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know, with respondents in Eastern areas of the EU the most likely to agree.

About one in five respondents hold victim-blaming views, agreeing that women make up or exaggerate claims and that violence against women is often provoked by the victim

- More than one in five (22%) agree women often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape, with proportions varying from 47% in Malta to 8% in Sweden.
- Almost one in five (17%) agree violence against women is often provoked by the victim, with respondents in Eastern areas of the EU the most likely to agree.

More than a quarter of respondents think sexual intercourse without consent can be justifiable

- Overall, 27% say sexual intercourse without consent may be justified in at least one of the situations proposed. Respondents are most likely to say this about being drunk or on drugs (12%), voluntarily going home with someone (11%), wearing revealing, provocative or sexy clothing or not clearly saying no or physically fighting back (both 10%).
- Respondents in Romania and Hungary are consistently amongst the most likely to say each situation may be a justification for sex without consent, while those in Sweden and Spain are consistently amongst the least likely to say so.

I. PERCEPTIONS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

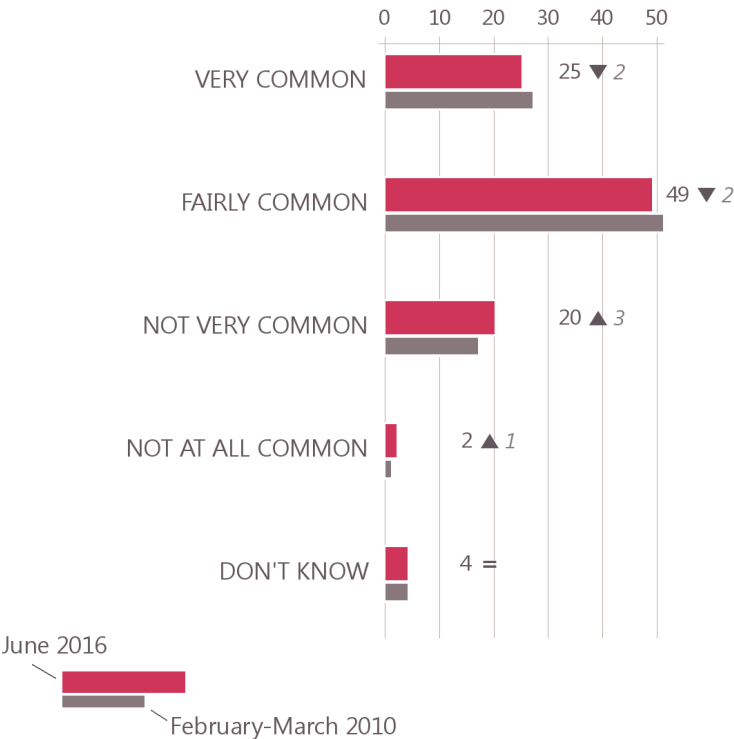
This first section of the report explores domestic violence. Perceptions about the prevalence of domestic violence against women and men are discussed, as well as whether domestic violence is considered acceptable. Agreement with the idea that domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled within the family will also be reviewed. The proportion of respondents who know victims of domestic violence will be considered, to whom they had spoken about it or why not if they had not. Respondents’ awareness of services for domestic violence victims will also be discussed.

1 Perceived prevalence of domestic violence

The majority of respondents think domestic violence against women is common in their country (74%)⁹. One quarter say it is very common (25%), with a further 49% saying it is fairly common. Overall 22% say it is not common: 20% are of the opinion it is not very common, while 2% say it is not common at all.

Compared to 2010, respondents are now slightly less likely to say domestic violence against women is common (-4 percentage points), and more likely to say it is uncommon (+4 pp).

QB1 In general, how common do you think that domestic violence against women is in (OUR COUNTRY)?
(% - EU)



Base: All respondents (n=27.818)

⁹ QB1 In general, how common do you think that domestic violence against women is in (OUR COUNTRY)? Very common; Fairly common; Not very common; Not at all common; Don't Know.

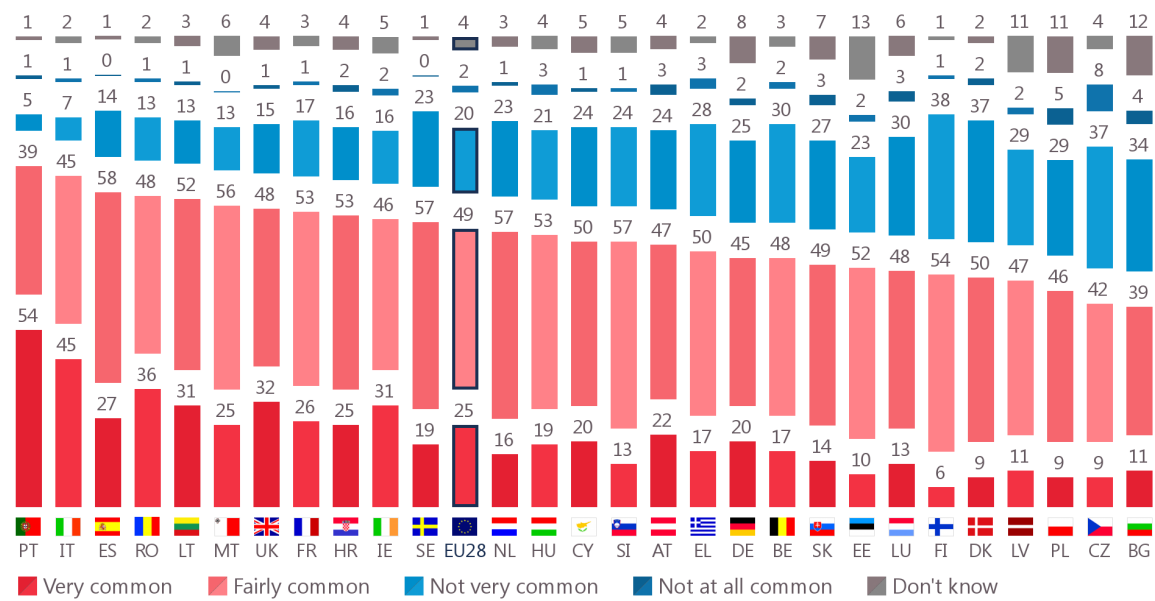
At least half of the respondents in each Member State say domestic violence against women is common in their country, with proportions ranging from 93% in Portugal and 90% in Italy to 50% in Bulgaria and 51% in the Czech Republic.

Looking at the results in more detail shows Portugal is the only country where at least half say domestic violence against women is very common (54%), followed by 45% of respondents in Italy and 36% of those in Romania. In contrast, just 6% of respondents in Finland and 9% in Denmark, Poland and the Czech Republic say the same.

In 14 Member States, at least half say domestic violence against women is fairly common – most notably respondents in Spain (58%), Sweden, the Netherlands and Slovenia (all 57%). This compares to 39% of respondents in Bulgaria who say the same.

Respondents in Finland (38%), Denmark and the Czech Republic (both 37%) are the most likely to say this kind of violence against women is not very common, while the Czech Republic is the only country where at least one in twenty say it is not common at all (8%).

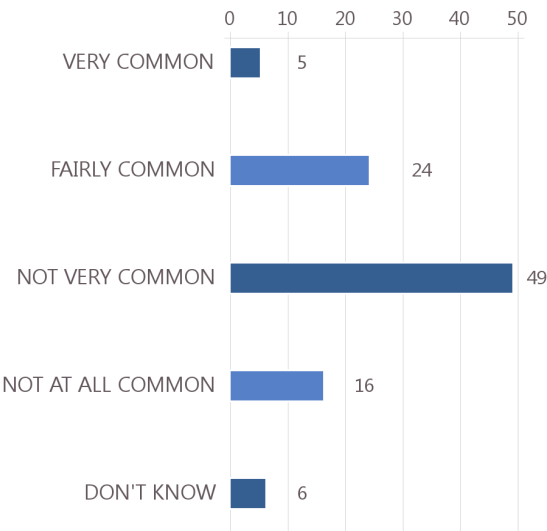
QB1 In general, how common do you think that domestic violence against women is in (OUR COUNTRY)? (%)



Base: All respondents (n=27.818)
Countries ranked in order of the combined proportion saying very or fairly common

Although the majority of respondents say domestic violence against women is common in their country, far fewer say this about domestic violence against men (29%)¹⁰. Just 5% say it is very common, while 24% say it is fairly common. The majority (65%) say domestic violence against men is not common: 49% say it is not very common, while 16% say it is not common at all.

QB2 In general, how common do you think domestic violence against men is in (OUR COUNTRY)?
(% - EU)



Base: All respondents (n=27.818)

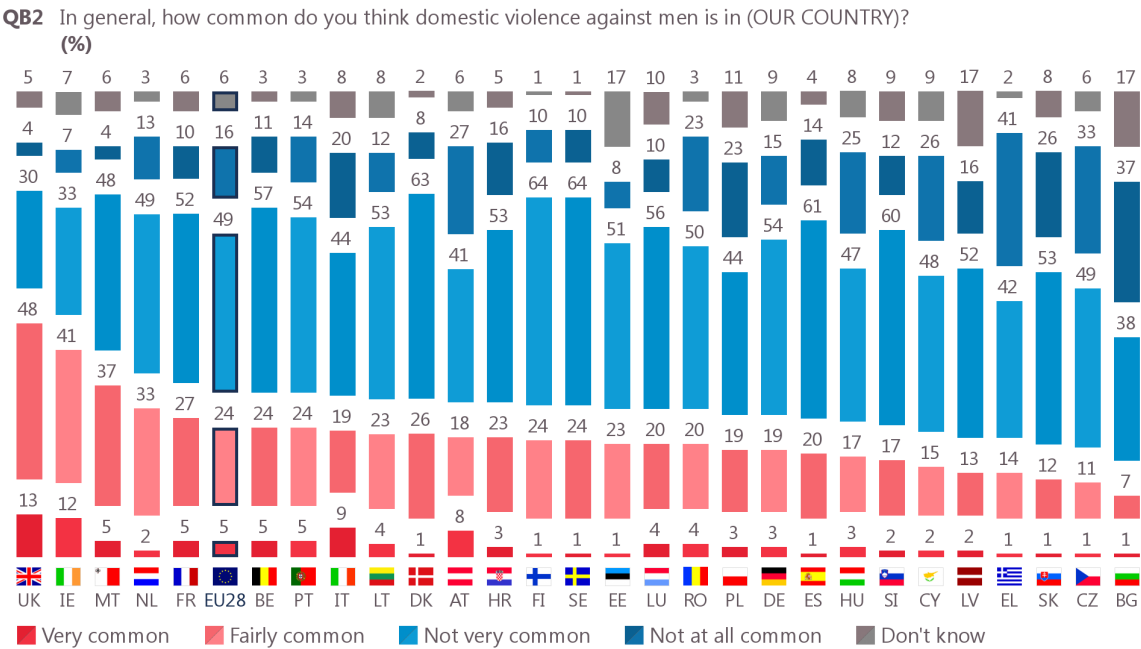
¹⁰ QB2 In general, how common do you think that domestic violence against men is in (OUR COUNTRY)? Very common; Fairly common; Not very common; Not at all common; Don't Know.

The UK and Ireland are the only countries where at least half say domestic violence against men is common in their country (61% and 53% respectively). This is a large contrast with the 8% of respondents in Bulgaria, 12% in the Czech Republic and 13% in Slovakia who say the same.

The UK (13%) and Ireland (12%) are the only countries where at one in ten say this kind of violence against men is very common, and they are also the only countries where at least four in ten say it is fairly common (48% and 41% respectively). At least one third of respondents in Malta (37%) and the Netherlands (33%) also say this kind of violence against men is fairly common. At the other end of the scale, just 7% in Bulgaria think domestic violence against men is fairly common.

Respondents in Finland, Sweden (both 64%), Denmark (63%), Spain (61%) and Slovenia (60%) are the most likely to say domestic violence against men is not very common in their country, while those in Greece (41%), Bulgaria (37%) and the Czech Republic (33%) are the most likely to say it is not at all common.

It is interesting to note that respondents in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Latvia are amongst the least likely to say domestic violence against either women or men is common in their country.



Base: All respondents (n=27,818)
Countries ranked in order of the combined proportion saying very or fairly common

2 Acceptability of domestic violence

Almost all respondents (96%) say domestic violence against women is unacceptable, with just 2% saying it is acceptable in certain circumstances¹¹. The large majority (84%) say it is unacceptable and should always be punished by law, while 12% say that it is unacceptable but should not always be punished by law.

The country table illustrates that in every EU country only a small proportion (7% or less) of the respondents think **domestic violence against women is acceptable**, with little or no changes since 2010. No more than one percent of respondents in any country say domestic violence against women is **acceptable in all circumstances**, while Poland (6%) and Slovakia (5%) are the only countries where at least one in twenty says it is **acceptable in certain circumstances**.

Respondents in Latvia (30%), Slovakia (23%) and the Netherlands (22%) are the most likely to say domestic violence against women is **unacceptable but should not always be punishable by law**. Since 2010, the proportion holding this opinion has increased amongst respondents in Lithuania (+10 pp), and decreased in Finland (-13 pp) and Luxembourg (-11 pp). In 19 EU countries there were little or no changes at all in the proportion of respondents who hold this opinion, while there is no trend data for Croatia.

More than six in ten respondents in each Member State say domestic violence against women is **unacceptable and should always be punishable by law**. More than nine in ten respondents in Portugal (96%), Sweden and Spain (both 94%) say this, as do 64% in Latvia and 67% in Slovakia, where the proportion of respondents with this opinion is the lowest.

Compared to 2010, respondents in Finland (+13 percentage points), Luxembourg (+11 pp) and Portugal (+8 pp) are now more likely to say domestic violence against women is **unacceptable and should always be punishable by law**. In contrast, those in Lithuania (-11 pp), Slovakia (-8 pp) and Germany (-6 pp) are now less likely to do so.

¹¹ QB3 In your opinion, domestic violence against women is...: Acceptable in all circumstances; Acceptable in certain circumstances; Unacceptable but should not always be punishable by law; Unacceptable and should always be punishable by law; Other; Don't Know.

QB3 In your opinion, domestic violence against women is...
(%)

		Acceptable in all circumstances	June 2016 - Feb.-Mar.2010	Acceptable in certain circumstances	June 2016 - Feb.-Mar.2010	Unacceptable but should not always be punishable by law	June 2016 - Feb.-Mar.2010	Unacceptable and should always be punishable by law	June 2016 - Feb.-Mar.2010	Other	June 2016 - Feb.-Mar.2010	Don't know
EU28		0	▼ 1	2	=	12	=	84	=	1	▲ 1	1
FI		0	=	1	=	19	▼ 13	80	▲ 13	0	=	0
LU		0	=	2	=	11	▼ 11	86	▲ 11	1	▲ 1	0
PT		0	▼ 2	2	▼ 1	2	▼ 5	96	▲ 8	0	=	0
DK		1	▲ 1	0	=	11	▼ 7	88	▲ 7	0	=	0
CZ		0	▼ 1	2	▼ 1	10	▼ 6	87	▲ 7	0	=	1
IE		0	▼ 1	1	=	8	▼ 2	89	▲ 6	1	▲ 1	1
RO		1	▼ 1	4	=	19	▼ 2	74	▲ 6	1	▲ 1	1
SE		0	▼ 1	0	=	6	▼ 4	94	▲ 5	0	=	0
EE		0	=	1	▼ 2	18	▼ 4	78	▲ 5	1	▲ 1	2
BE		1	=	2	▼ 3	20	▼ 2	77	▲ 5	0	=	0
FR		0	=	1	=	10	▼ 4	88	▲ 4	0	=	1
ES		0	▼ 1	1	▼ 1	4	▼ 2	94	▲ 3	0	=	1
SI		0	=	2	=	10	▼ 3	87	▲ 3	1	▲ 1	0
IT		1	▼ 2	3	▲ 1	7	=	88	▲ 1	0	=	1
CY		0	▼ 1	1	▲ 1	10	▲ 3	87	▼ 2	1	▲ 1	1
UK		0	=	2	▲ 1	13	▲ 1	83	▼ 2	1	▲ 1	1
MT		1	=	0	▼ 1	17	▲ 5	82	▼ 2	0	=	0
HU		0	=	3	=	15	▲ 1	81	▼ 2	0	=	1
LV		0	=	2	▼ 2	30	▲ 1	64	▼ 2	1	▲ 1	3
BG		0	▼ 1	2	▲ 1	13	▲ 5	80	▼ 3	1	▲ 1	4
EL		0	▼ 2	2	▲ 2	9	▲ 4	89	▼ 4	0	=	0
AT		1	=	3	=	19	▲ 3	75	▼ 4	1	▲ 1	1
NL		0	=	1	=	22	▲ 4	76	▼ 5	1	▲ 1	0
PL		1	=	6	▲ 3	16	▲ 1	75	▼ 5	0	=	2
DE		0	=	1	=	16	▲ 4	80	▼ 6	1	▲ 1	2
SK		0	▼ 2	5	▲ 2	23	▲ 3	67	▼ 8	1	▲ 1	4
LT		0	=	2	▼ 1	17	▲ 10	78	▼ 11	1	▲ 1	2
HR		1	NA*	3	NA*	13	NA*	82	NA*	1	NA*	0

Base: All respondents (n=27.818)

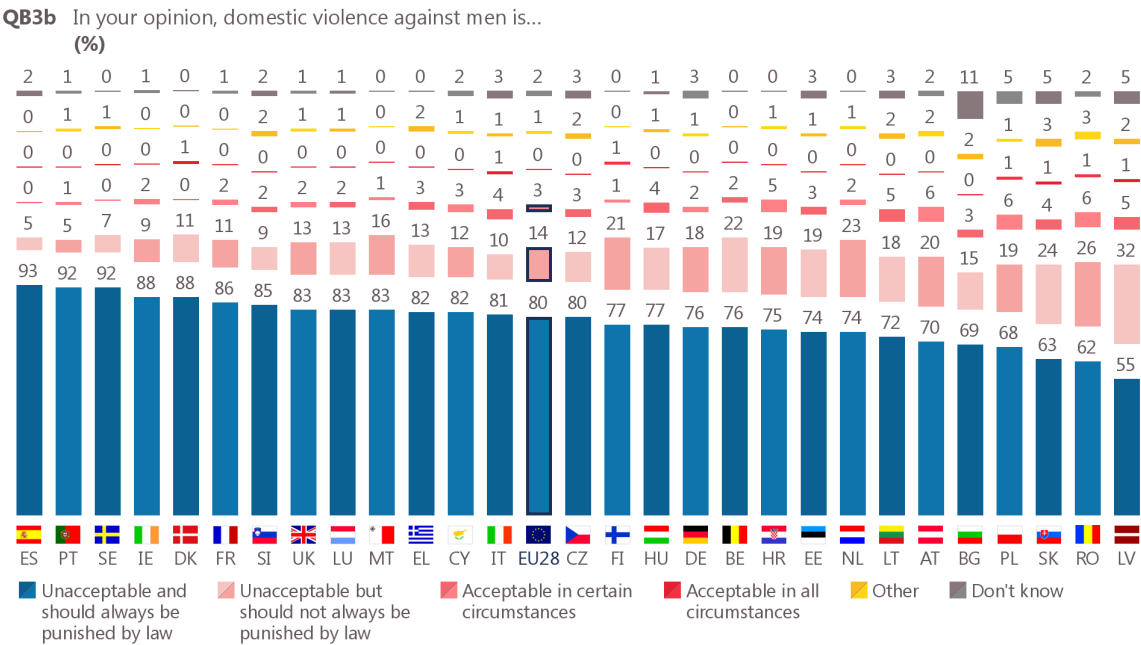
Countries ranked by change in "Unacceptable and should always be punishable by law"

*Croatia was not covered in 2010

Almost all respondents (94%) also say domestic violence against men is unacceptable, with just 3% saying it is acceptable in certain circumstances¹². As was the case for domestic violence against women, a large majority (80%) say it is unacceptable and should always be punished by law, while 14% say that it is unacceptable but should not always be punished by law.

The majority of respondents in all countries think domestic violence against men is unacceptable and should always be punished by law, ranging from 93% of those in Spain and 92% in Portugal and Sweden, to 55% of those in Latvia. Respondents in Latvia are the most likely to say it is unacceptable but should not always be punished by law (32%), followed by those in Romania (26%) and Slovakia (24%). This compares to the 5% of respondents in Spain and Portugal who hold this opinion.

Respondents in Austria, Poland and Romania (all 6%) are the most likely to say this kind of domestic violence is acceptable in certain circumstances, while no more than 1% in any country say it is acceptable in all circumstances.



Base: All respondents (n=27.818)
Countries ranked by proportion saying it is unacceptable and should always be punished by law

¹² QB3 In your opinion, domestic violence against men is... Acceptable in all circumstances; Acceptable in certain circumstances; Unacceptable but should not always be punishable by law; Unacceptable and should always be punishable by law; Other; Don't Know.

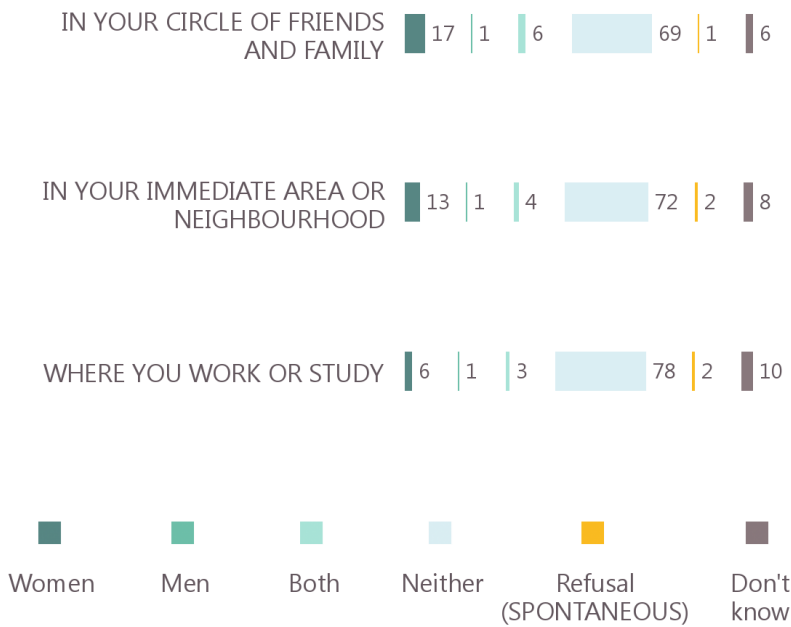
3 Personal awareness of domestic violence

Respondents asked whether they knew of any men or women who had been victims of domestic violence¹³. Almost one quarter know of a friend or family member who has been a victim (24%), while 18% know of someone in their immediate area or neighbourhood and 10% know of someone where they work or study.

In all cases, the victims are much more likely to be women than men. For example, 17% of respondents only know of female victims of domestic violence in their circle of family and friends, while 1% only know of male victims. Just over one in twenty (6%) know of victims of both genders.

The majority of respondents, however, do not know of any victims of domestic violence amongst friends or family members (69%), in their immediate area (72%) or at school or work (78%).

QB4 Do you know of any men or women who have been a victim of any form of domestic violence?
(% - EU)



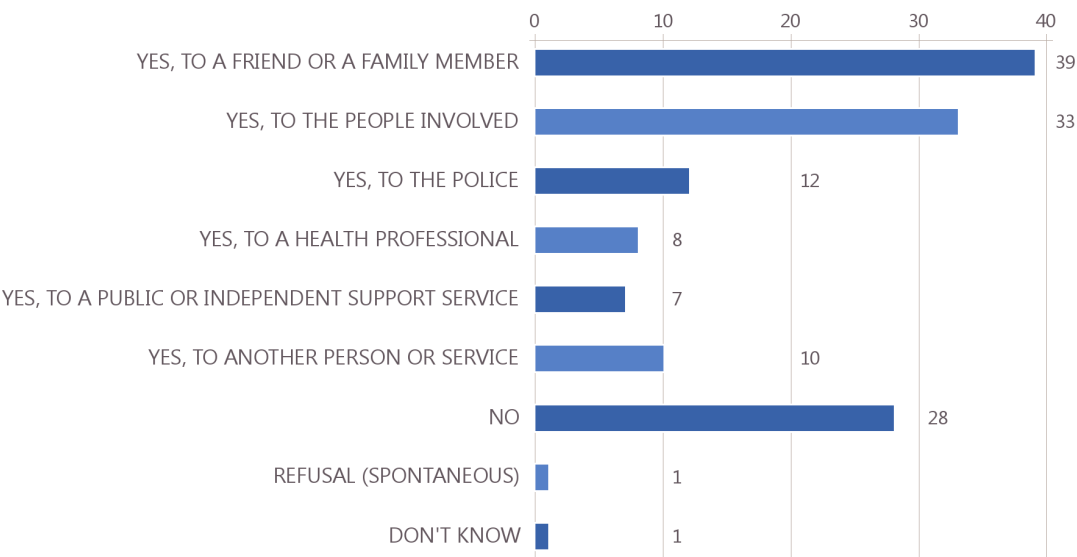
Base: All respondents (n=27.818)

¹³ QB4 Do you know of any men or women who have been a victim of any form of domestic violence? 4.1 In your circle of friends and family; 4.2 In your immediate area or neighbourhood; 4.3 Where you work or study. Men; Women; Both; Neither; Refusal (SPONTANEOUS); Don't Know.

a. Whether respondents spoke to someone about it

Respondents who knew of a victim of domestic violence were asked if they had spoken to anyone about it¹⁴. More than seven in ten (71%) had done so. These conversations were most likely to have been with a friend or family member (39%) or with the people involved (33%). Around one in ten spoke to the police (12%) or to another person or service (10%), while 8% spoke to a health professional and 7% to a public or independent support service. Almost three in ten (28%) did not speak to anyone.

QB4b Did you speak to anyone about this? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)
(% - EU)



Base: Respondents who know someone who has been a victim of domestic violence (n=9.595)

¹⁴ QB4b Did you speak to anyone about this? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE): Yes, to the people involved; Yes, to the police; Yes, to a public or independent support service; Yes, to a health professional; Yes, to a friend or a family member; Yes, to another person or service; No; Refusal (SPONTANEOUS); Don't Know.

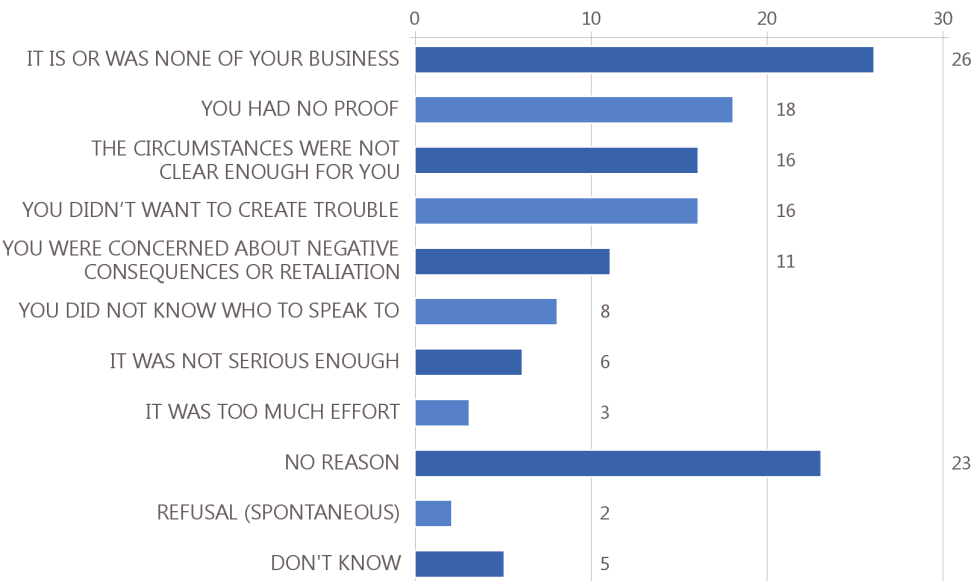
b. Reasons for not speaking to someone

Respondents who knew of a victim of domestic violence, but had not spoken to anyone about it, were asked their reasons for not speaking¹⁵. The opinion that it was none of their business is the most common reason (26%), followed by a lack of proof (18%). Almost as many (16%) say they did not want to create trouble, and the same proportion say the circumstances were not clear enough for them.

Just over one in ten were concerned about negative consequences or retaliation (11%) while 8% did not know who to speak to and 6% said it was not serious enough. Just 3% said it was too much effort to talk to someone.

Almost one quarter (23%) said there was no reason they did not speak to anyone.

QB4c Did you not speak to anyone for any of the following reasons? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)
(% - EU)



Base: Respondents who know someone victim of domestic violence but did not speak to anyone about it (n=2.675)

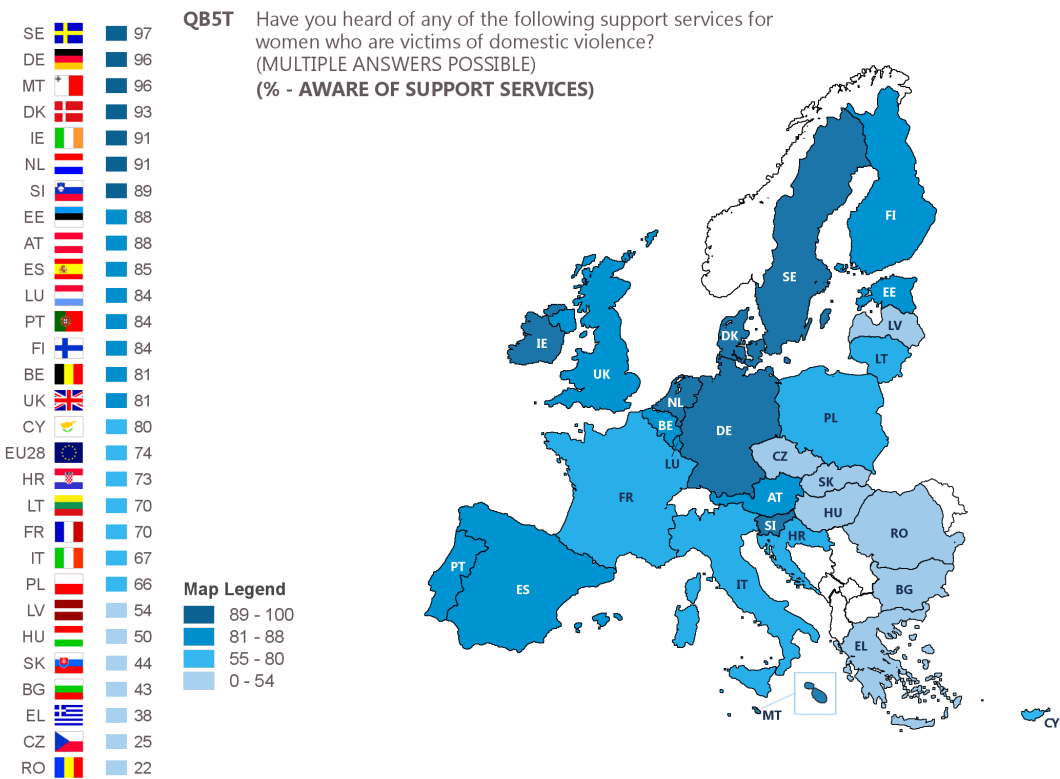
¹⁵ QB4c Did you not speak to anyone for any of the following reasons? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE): It is or was none of your business; You did not know who to speak to; You were concerned about negative consequences or retaliation; You didn't want to create trouble; It was not serious enough; It was too much effort; The circumstances were not clear enough for you; You had no proof; No reason; Refusal (SPONTANEOUS); Don't Know.

4 Awareness of support services for women

Respondents were asked about the support services available to women who are victims of domestic violence¹⁶. Across the EU, 74% are aware of such services, although there are large variations between individual countries.

In 23 Member States, at least half of all respondents have heard of support services for victims of domestic violence – in fact almost all respondents in Sweden (97%), Germany and Malta (96%) say this. In contrast, 22% in Romania and 25% in the Czech Republic have heard about these support services.

The map illustrates that those in Eastern areas of the EU are generally the least likely to have heard of support services for women who are victims of domestic violence.



Base: All respondents (N=27.818)

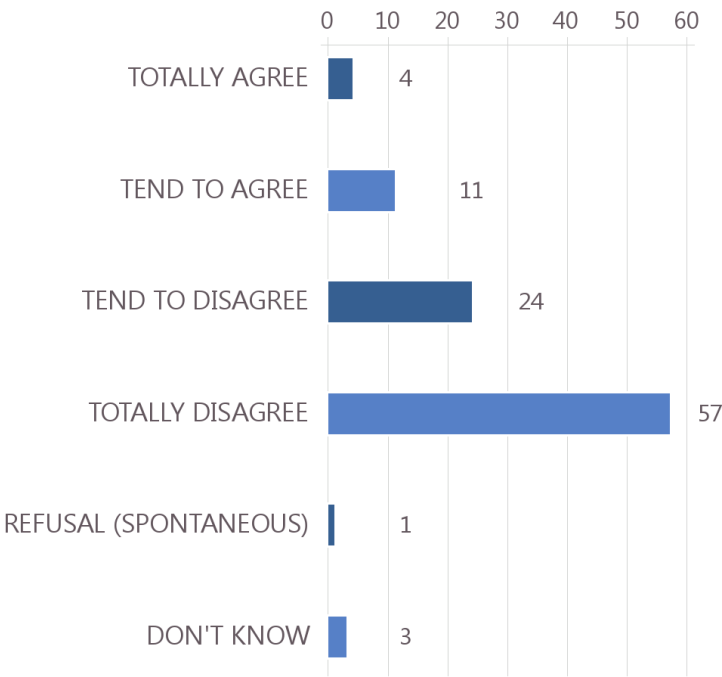
¹⁶ QB5T Have you heard of any of the following support services for women who are victims of domestic violence? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)

5 Perceptions of domestic violence as a private matter

Just 15% of respondents agree domestic violence is a private matter that should be handled within the family with 4% saying they totally agree and 11% tending to agree¹⁷. The majority of respondents disagree with this idea (81%), with 57% in total disagreement.

QB9.3 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family (% - EU)



Base: All respondents (N=27.818)

¹⁷ QB9.3 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements? Domestic violence is a private matter and should be handled within the family: Totally agree; Tend to agree; Tend to disagree; Totally disagree; Refusal (SPONTANEOUS); Don't Know.

II. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE APPROPRIATE LEGAL RESPONSE TO DIFFERENT FORMS OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

This section of the report considers six scenarios detailing different forms of gender-based violence. For each situation, respondents were asked their opinion about whether the behaviour described was right or wrong, and whether it is or should be illegal¹⁸.

The majority of respondents say the behaviours described in each scenario are wrong, and they are either already illegal or should be against the law. Respondents are most likely to say this about forcing a partner to have sex (86%), with almost half (49%) saying it is wrong and already against the law. Eight in ten (80%) say sending unwanted sexually explicit emails or messages is wrong and either is already against the law (32%), or should be illegal (48%).

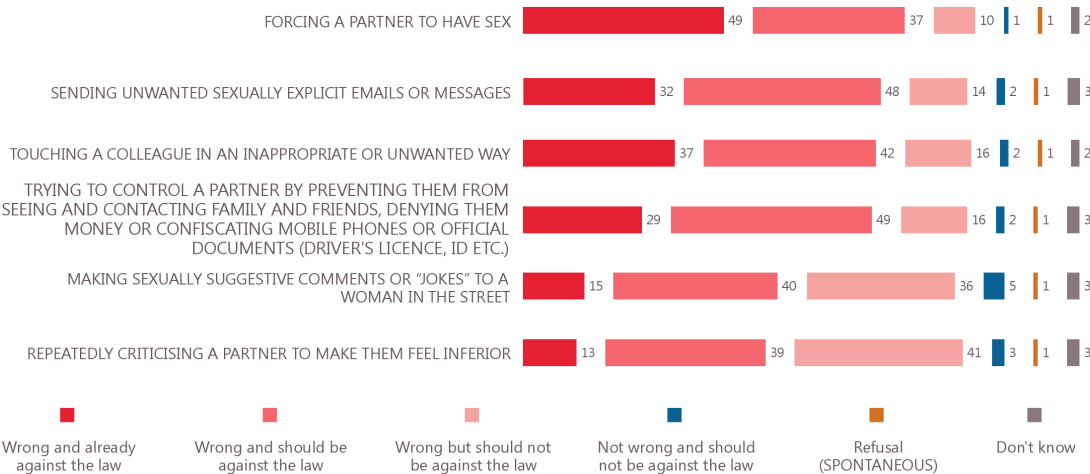
Almost as many (78%) say trying to control a partner by a variety of means is wrong and illegal (29%), or wrong and should be against the law (49%). More than one third (37%) say touching a colleague in an inappropriate or unwanted way is wrong and against the law, while a further 42% say it is wrong and should be illegal. For each of these four scenarios less than one in five say the behaviours described are wrong but should not be illegal.

This is not the case when it comes to making sexually suggestive comments or jokes to a woman in the street, or repeatedly criticising a partner to make them feel inferior. Although in both cases the majority think they are wrong and either are, or should be illegal, a considerable proportion say that although wrong, these behaviours should not be illegal. For instance, 41% say repeatedly criticising a partner to make them feel inferior is wrong, but should not be against the law.

For any scenario, no more than one in twenty think they are not wrong and should not be against the law. Each of these scenarios will be considered in more detail in the following sections.

QB8 For each of the following situations, please tell me whether you think it is against the law or not. For each please tell whether you think it is wrong and is already against the law, it is wrong and should be against the law, it is wrong but should not be against the law, it is not wrong and should not be against the law.

(% - EU)



Base: All respondents (N=27.818)

¹⁸ QB8 For each of the following situations, please tell me whether you think it is against the law or not. For each please tell whether you think it is wrong and is already against the law, it is wrong and should be against the law, it is wrong but should not be against the law, it is not wrong and should not be against the law.

1 Psychological violence against partners

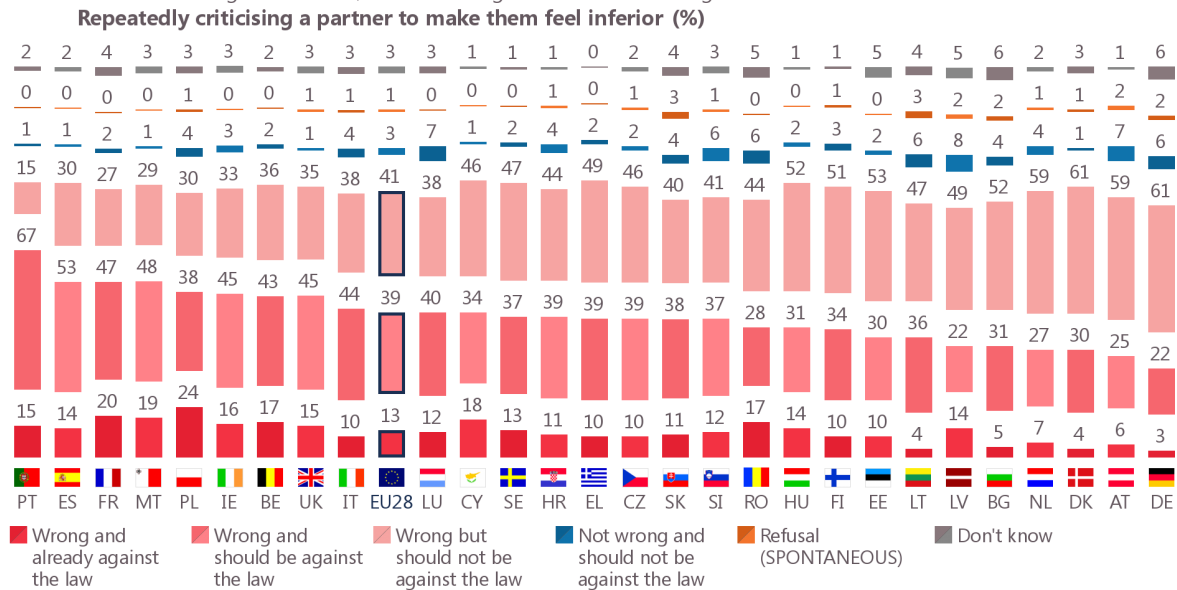
a. Repeated degrading remarks

The majority of respondents across the EU (93%) agree that **repeatedly criticising a partner to make them feel inferior** is wrong, but opinion is more divided as to whether it should be illegal. Overall 44% think that this behaviour should not be against the law, while 39% say it should be illegal and 13% say it already is.

In all countries the large majority of respondents think this behaviour is wrong. Opinions about its legality, however, are more varied. In 12 countries, at least half of all respondents think this behaviour should not be against the law, most notably amongst respondents in Germany (67%), Austria (66%), the Netherlands (63%) and Denmark (62%). At the other end of the scale, 16% of those in Portugal, 29% in France and 30% in Malta say the same.

Poland (24%) and France (20%) are the only countries where at least one in five says repeatedly criticising a partner to make them feel inferior is wrong, and already illegal.

QB8.1 For each of the following situations, please tell me whether you think it is against the law or not. For each please tell whether you think it is wrong and is already against the law, it is wrong and should be against the law, it is wrong but should not be against the law, it is not wrong and should not be against the law.



Base: All respondents (N=27.818)
Countries ranked by the combined proportion saying it is wrong and is already or should be against the law

b. Overly controlling partners

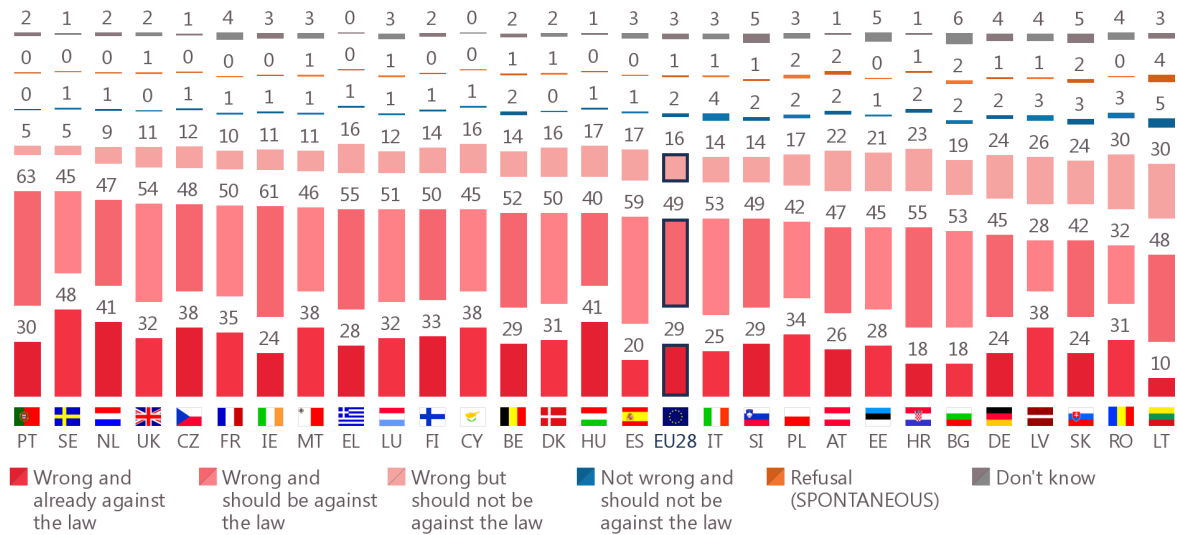
Once again, the majority of respondents across the EU think **trying to control a partner by preventing them from seeing and contacting family and friends, denying them money or confiscating mobile phones or official documents** is wrong (94%). Almost one in five (18%), however, say this should not be against the law.

Lithuania (35%) and Romania (33%) are the only countries where at least one third of respondents say this behaviour should not be against the law, followed by 29% in Latvia. This compares to just 5% of respondents in Portugal and 6% in Sweden. Lithuania is the only country where at least one in twenty says trying to control a partner in this way is not wrong and should not be illegal.

Respondents in Sweden are the most likely to say this behaviour is wrong, and already against the law (48%).

QB8.2 For each of the following situations, please tell me whether you think it is against the law or not. For each please tell whether you think it is wrong and is already against the law, it is wrong and should be against the law, it is wrong but should not be against the law, it is not wrong and should not be against the law.

Trying to control a partner by preventing them from seeing and contacting family and friends, denying them money or confiscating mobile phones or official documents (driver's licence, ID etc.) (%)



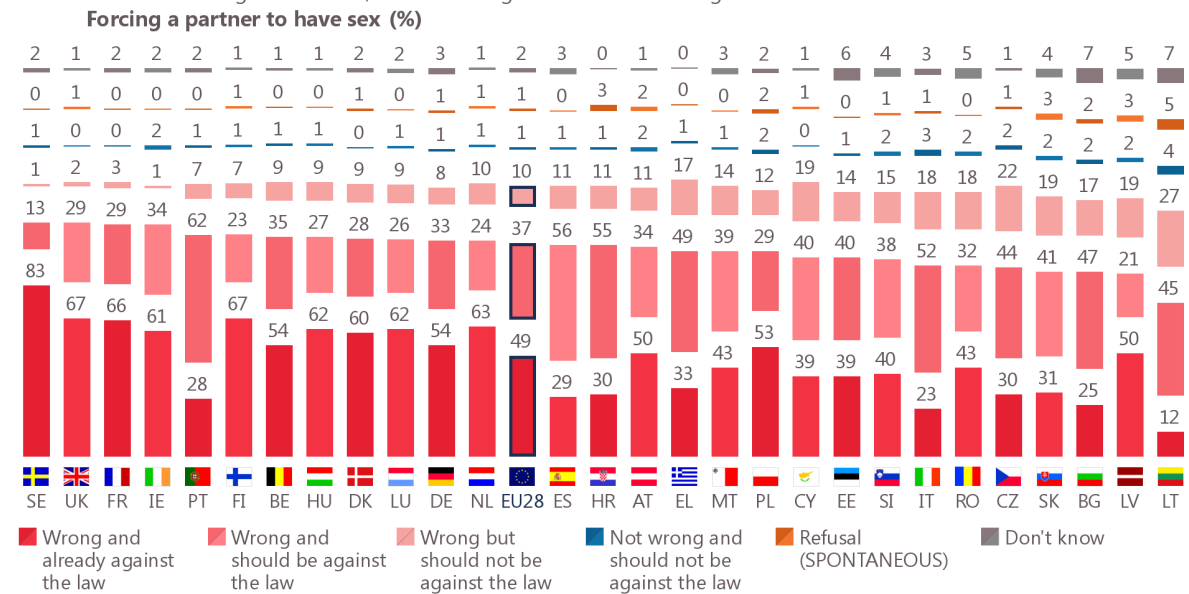
Base: All respondents (N=27.818)
Countries ranked by the combined proportion saying it is wrong and is already or should be against the law

2 Sexual violence against partners

Across the EU just over one in ten respondents think **forcing a partner to have sex** should not be illegal (11%), while 37% think it should be illegal and 49% say it is already against the law. At least four in five respondents in each country say this behaviour is wrong, ranging from 84% in Lithuania to 99% in Greece.

Lithuania (31%) is the only country where more than one quarter thinks forcing a partner to have sex should not be against the law, followed by 24% in the Czech Republic, 21% in Italy, Latvia and Slovakia, and 20% in Romania. Just 2% of respondents in the UK and Sweden and 3% in France and Ireland think the same way.

QB8.3 For each of the following situations, please tell me whether you think it is against the law or not. For each please tell whether you think it is wrong and is already against the law, it is wrong and should be against the law, it is wrong but should not be against the law, it is not wrong and should not be against the law.



Base: All respondents (N=27,818)
Countries ranked by the combined proportion saying it is wrong and is already or should be against the law

3 Sexual harassment

This section considers the three scenarios relating to sexual harassment.

a. Unwanted emails or messages

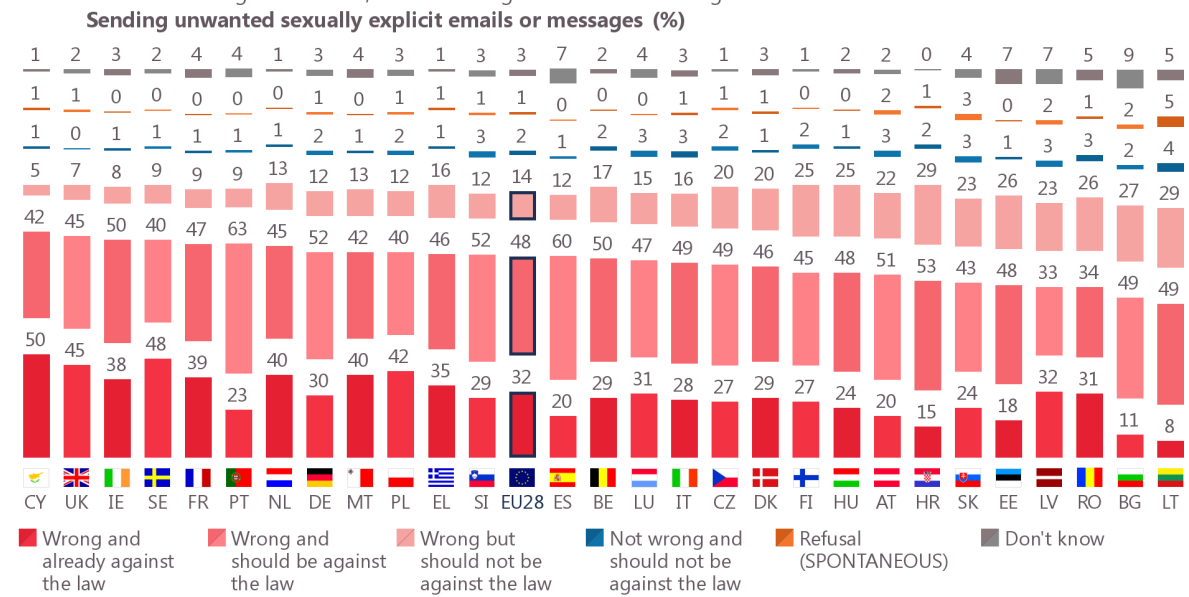
Across the EU, 16% of respondents think **sending unwanted sexually explicit emails or messages** should not be against the law, while 32% already think this is illegal.

Lithuania (33%) is the only country where at least one third thinks this behaviour should not be against the law, followed by 31% in Croatia. This compares to just 6% in Cyprus, 7% in the UK and 9% in Ireland.

Half of all respondents in Cyprus (50%) think this behaviour is already against the law, as do 48% in Sweden and 45% in the UK.

The majority of respondents in all countries think sending unwanted sexually explicit emails or messages is wrong.

QB8.4 For each of the following situations, please tell me whether you think it is against the law or not. For each please tell whether you think it is wrong and is already against the law, it is wrong and should be against the law, it is wrong but should not be against the law, it is not wrong and should not be against the law.



Base: All respondents (N=27.818)
Countries ranked by the combined proportion saying it is wrong and is already or should be against the law

b. Harassing women in the street

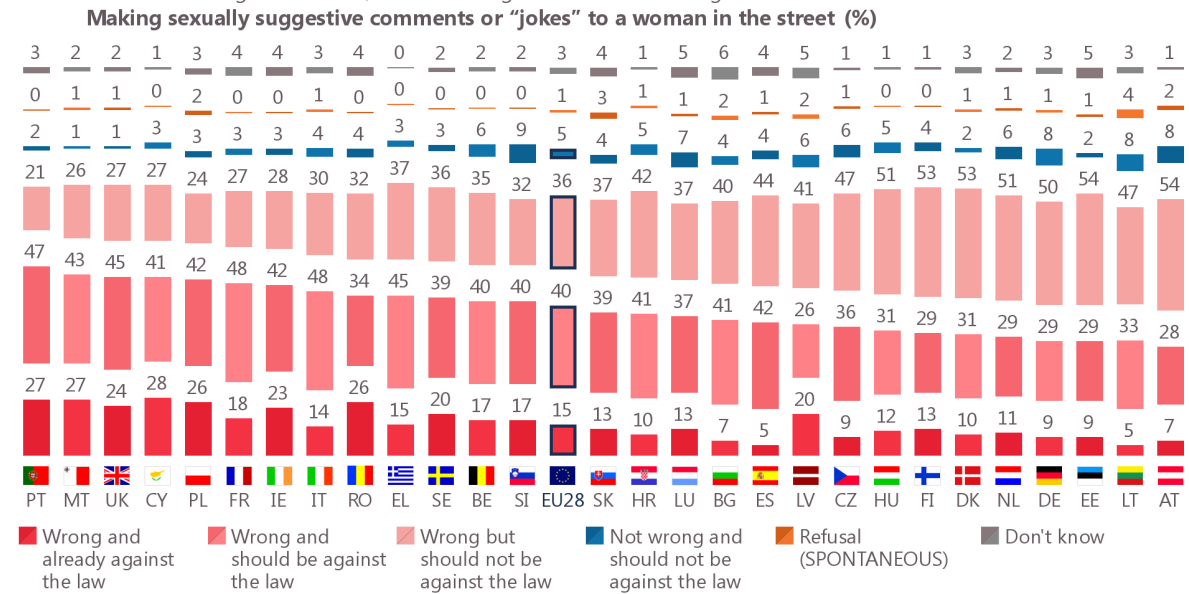
More than four in ten respondents across the EU say **making sexually suggestive comments or “jokes” to a woman in the street** should not be against the law (41%), while 40% say it should be illegal and 15% say it already is.

More than one in five respondents in each country think making these kinds of comments to women in the street should not be against the law, and in nine Member States more than half think this way. Respondents in Austria (62%), Germany (58%), the Netherlands and Finland (both 57%) are the most likely to think this should not be illegal, while those in Portugal (23%), Poland and Malta (both 27%) are the least likely to do so.

Nearly one in ten respondents in Slovenia (9%) say this behaviour is not wrong and should not be against the law, followed by Austria, Germany and Lithuania (all 8%).

The majority of respondents in all countries think making sexually suggestive comments or “jokes” to a woman in the street is wrong.

QB8.5 For each of the following situations, please tell me whether you think it is against the law or not. For each please tell whether you think it is wrong and is already against the law, it is wrong and should be against the law, it is wrong but should not be against the law, it is not wrong and should not be against the law.



Base: All respondents (N=27.818)
Countries ranked by the combined proportion saying it is wrong and is already or should be against the law

c. Sexual harassment between colleagues

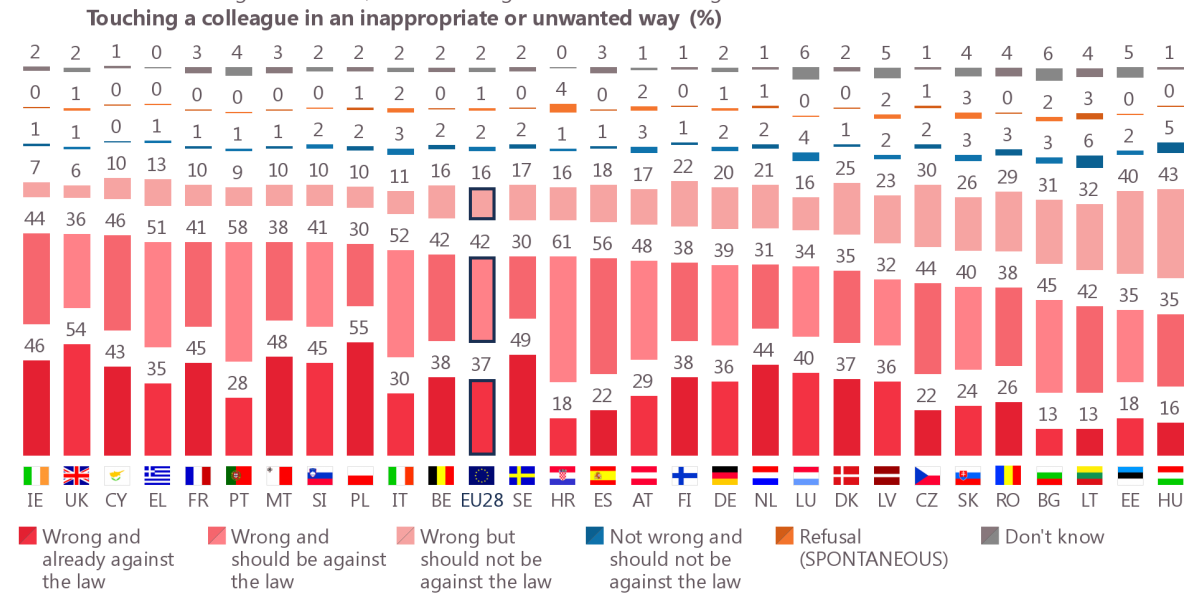
Almost one in five respondents across the EU thinks **touching a colleague in an inappropriate or unwanted way** should not be illegal (18%). More than four in ten (42%) think it should be illegal, while 37% say that it already is.

Respondents in Hungary (48%), Estonia (42%) and Lithuania (38%) are the most likely to say touching a colleague in an inappropriate or unwanted way should not be illegal, while those in the UK (7%) and Ireland (8%) are least likely to say this. Lithuania (6%) and Hungary (5%) are the only countries where at least one in twenty say this behaviour is not wrong and should not be against the law.

More than half of all respondents in Poland (55%) and the UK (54%) think this behaviour is already against the law.

A large majority in each country thinks this behaviour is wrong.

QB8.6 For each of the following situations, please tell me whether you think it is against the law or not. For each please tell whether you think it is wrong and is already against the law, it is wrong and should be against the law, it is wrong but should not be against the law, it is not wrong and should not be against the law.



Base: All respondents (N=27,818)
Countries ranked by the combined proportion saying it is wrong and is already or should be against the law

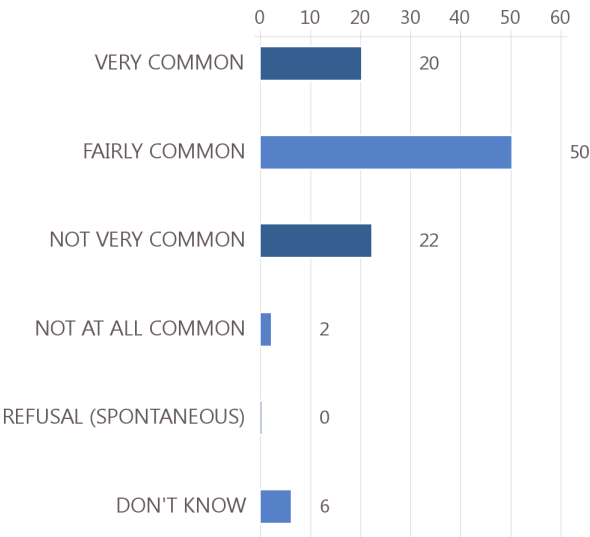
III. PERCEPTIONS ABOUT AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

This section of the report considers the perceived prevalence of sexual harassment, as well as the places where respondents think violence against women is most likely to occur. Attitudes to violence against women are also explored, including the belief that women provoke the violence against them, or that they make up or exaggerate claims of sexual violence. Finally, there is a discussion as to whether sexual intercourse without consent is justifiable in a range of situations.

1 Perceived prevalence of sexual harassment

One in five respondents say **sexual harassment against women** is very common in their country (20%), and a further 50% say it is fairly common¹⁹. Almost one quarter (24%) say it is uncommon: 22% say it is not very common and just 2% that it is not common at all.

QB7 In general, how common do you think sexual harassment against women is in (OUR COUNTRY)? (% - EU)



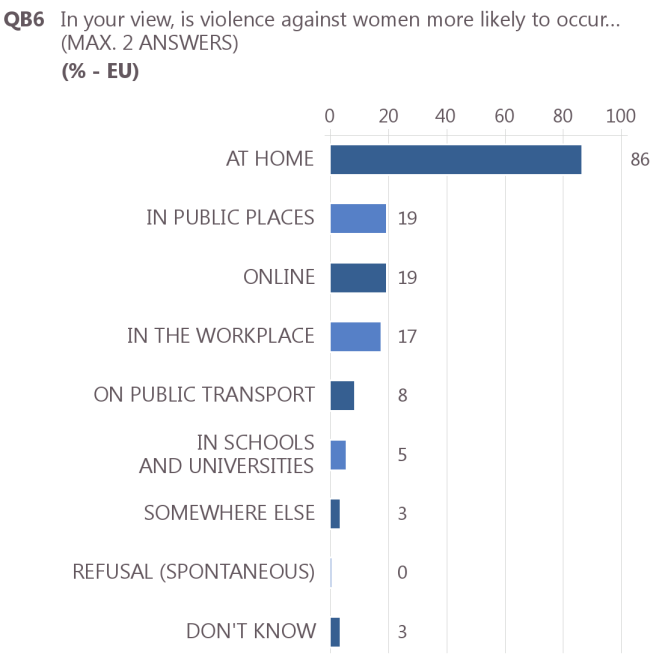
Base: All respondents (N=27.818)

¹⁹ QB7 In general, how common do you think sexual harassment against women is in (OUR COUNTRY)? Very common; Fairly common; Not very common; Not at all common; Refusal (SPONTANEOUS); Don't Know.

2 Where is violence against women more likely to occur

Respondents were asked **where they thought violence against women was more likely to occur**²⁰. At home is by far the most common answer (86%), and the only place mentioned by more than one in five respondents.

Almost one in five says violence against women is more likely to occur in public places, or online (both 19%), while almost as many mention the workplace (17%). Fewer than one in ten think this kind of violence is most likely to occur on public transport (8%), in schools and universities (5%) or somewhere else (3%).



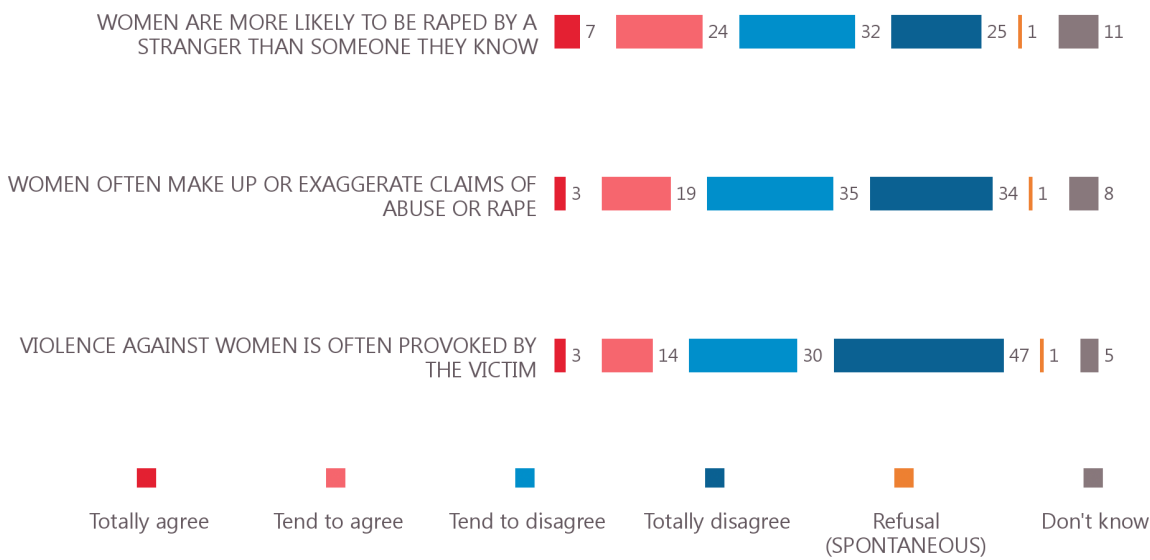
Base: All respondents (N=27.818)

²⁰ QB6 In your view, is violence against women more likely to occur... (MAX. 2 ANSWERS): At home; In public places; Online; In the workplace; On public transport; In schools and universities; Somewhere else; Refusal (SPONTANEOUS); Don't Know.

3 Attitudes towards violence against women

Respondents were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with three statements about violence towards women²¹. Almost one third (31%) agree **women are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know**, while 22% agree **women often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape**, and 17% agree **violence against women is often provoked by the victim**. For each statement, however, the majority of respondents disagree.

QB9 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements?
(% - EU)



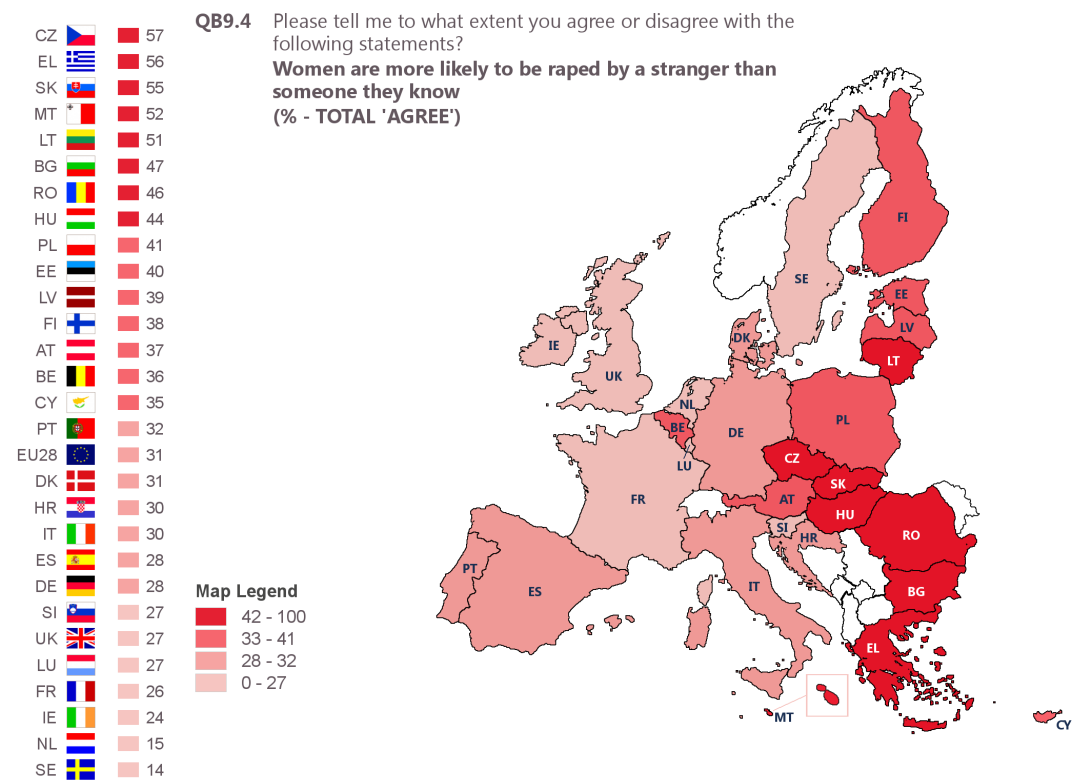
Base: All respondents (N=27.818)

²¹ QB9 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements? 9.1 Women often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape; 9.2 Violence against women is often provoked by the victim; 9.4 women are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know. Totally agree; Tend to agree; Tend to disagree; Totally disagree; Refusal (SPONTANEOUS); Don't Know.

a. Identity of sexual violence perpetrators

Across the EU almost one third of respondents (31%) agree **women are more likely to be raped by a stranger than someone they know**, but there is a wide variation between individual Member States. There are only five countries where the majority agrees: the Czech Republic (57%), Greece (56%), Slovakia (55%), Malta (52%) and Lithuania (51%). This compares to just 14% in Sweden and 15% of respondents in the Netherlands.

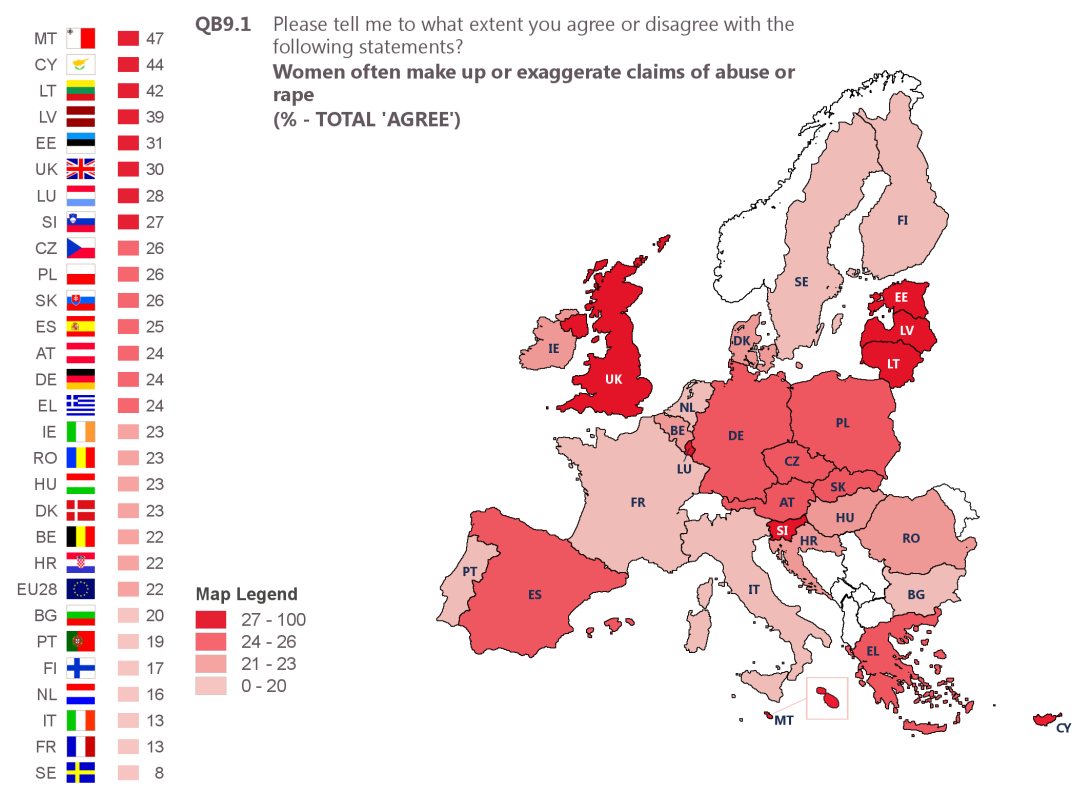
The map illustrates respondents in Eastern areas of the EU are the most likely to agree women are more likely to be raped by strangers than by someone they know.



Base: All respondents (N=27.818)

b. Abuse or rape claims

More than one in five respondents (22%) across the EU agree **women often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape**, although once again this figure masks a wide variation between countries. Respondents in Malta (47%), Cyprus (44%) and Lithuania (42%) are the most likely to agree this is the case, compared to just 8% in Sweden and 13% in France and Italy.

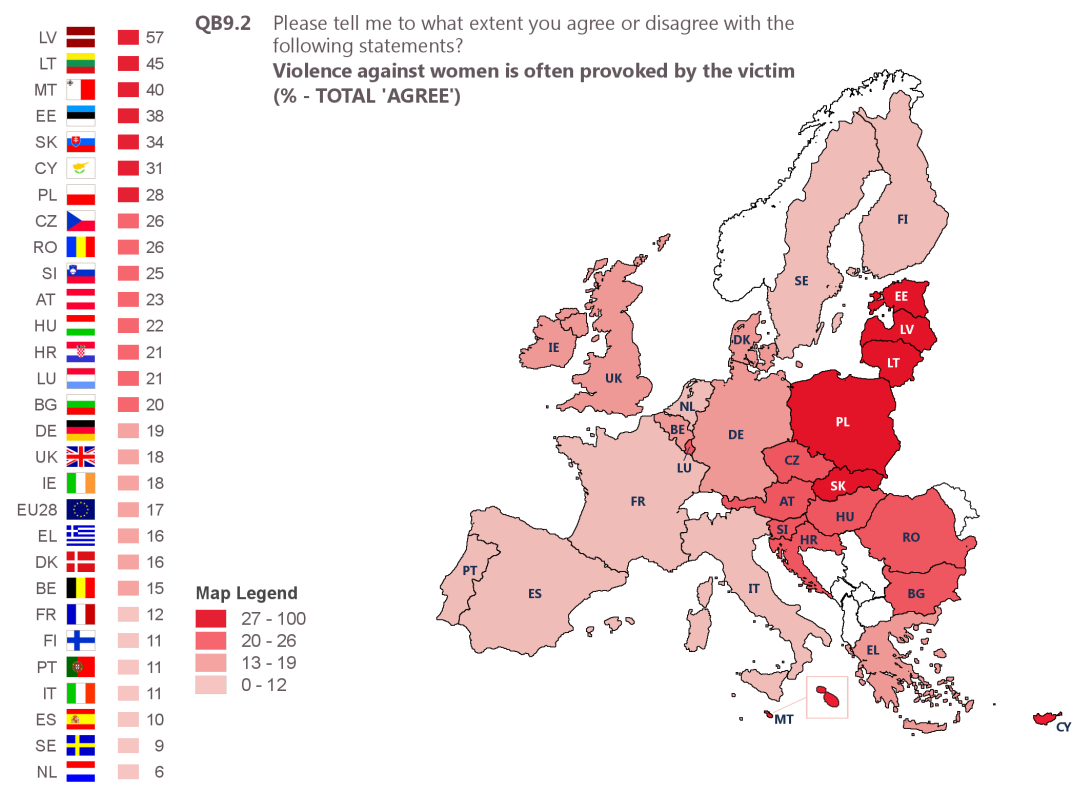


Base: All respondents (N=27.818)

c. Victims’ role

Almost one in five respondents in the EU (17%) agrees **violence against women is often provoked by the victim**, but once again there is a large variation across individual Member States. Latvia is the only country where more than half agrees (57%), followed by 45% in Lithuania and 40% in Malta. At the other end of the scale, just 6% of respondents in the Netherlands and 9% in Sweden also agrees violence against women is often provoked by the victim.

The map illustrates respondents in Eastern areas of the EU are the most likely to agree violence against women is often provoked by the victim.



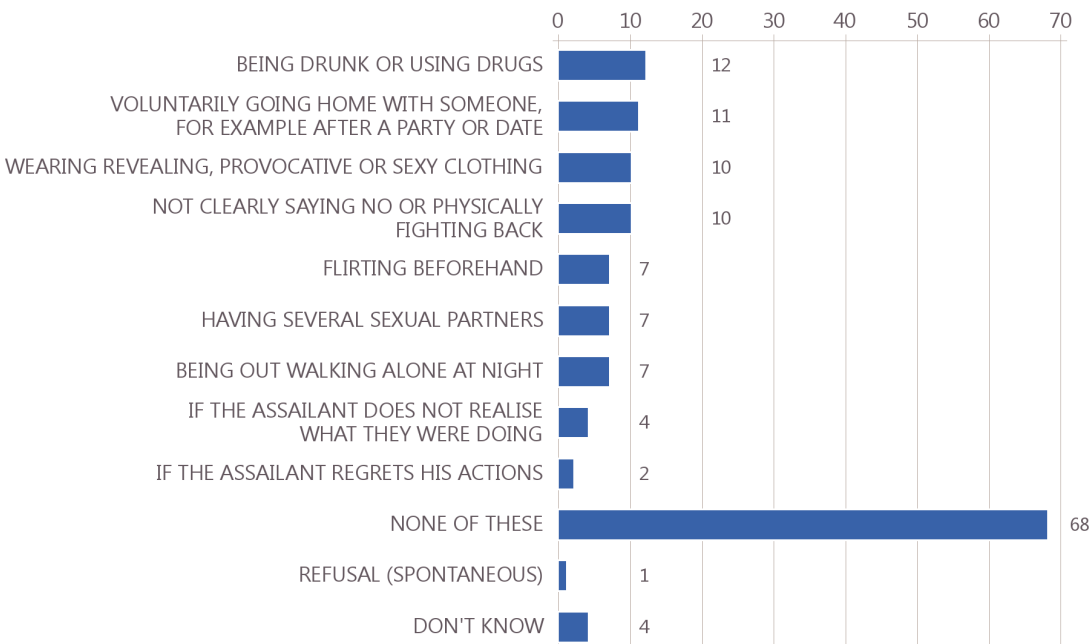
Base: All respondents (N=27.818)

4 Whether circumstances ever justify sexual intercourse without consent

Respondents were asked whether having **sexual intercourse without consent was justified** in nine different circumstances²². At least one in ten respondents think intercourse without consent **is justified if the person is drunk or using drugs** (12%), **voluntarily goes home with someone** (11%), **wears revealing, provocative or sexy clothing** or **doesn't clearly say no** or **physically fight back** (both 10%).

Fewer than one in ten mention each of the other possible scenarios, with respondents least likely to say intercourse without consent is justified if the assailant regrets his action (2%).

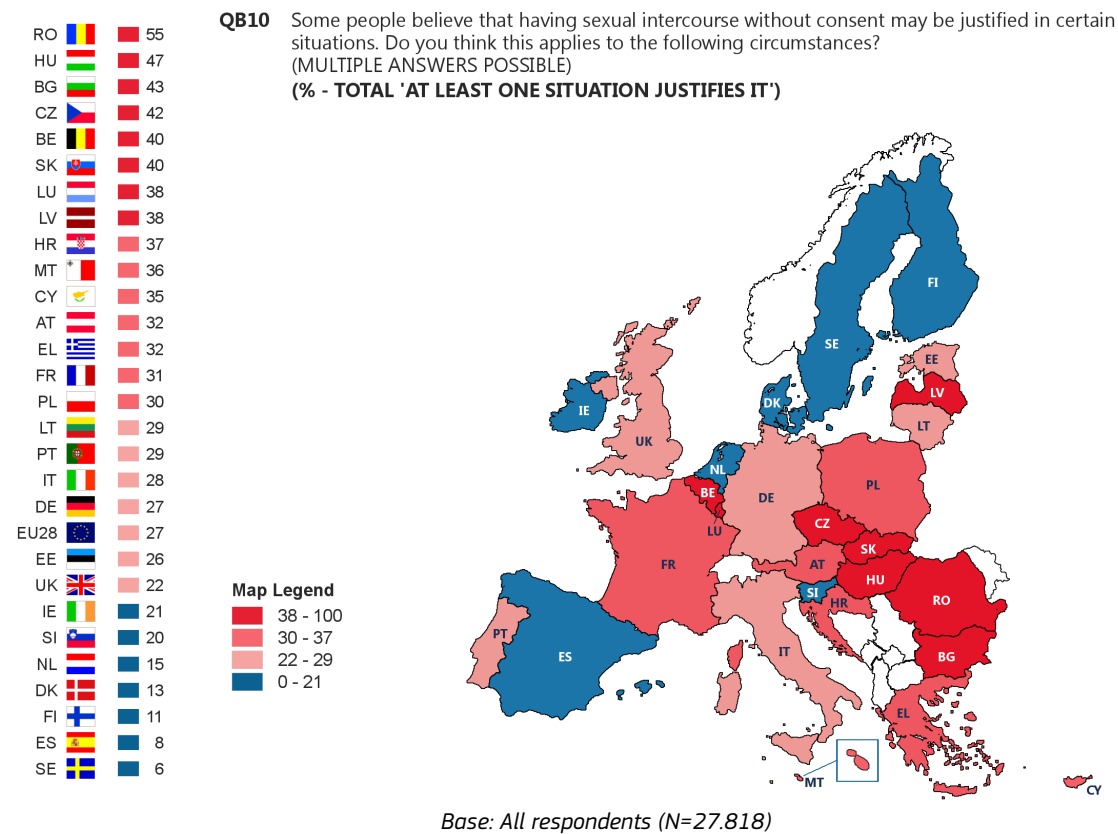
QB10 Some people believe that having sexual intercourse without consent may be justified in certain situations. Do you think this applies to the following circumstances? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE)
(% - EU)



Base: All respondents (N=27.818)

²² QB10 Some people believe that having sexual intercourse without consent may be justified in certain situations. Do you think this applies to the following circumstances? (MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE): Wearing revealing, provocative or sexy clothing; Being drunk or using drugs; Flirting beforehand; Not clearly saying no or physically fighting back; Being out walking alone at night; Having several sexual partners; Voluntarily going home with someone, for example after a party or date; If the assailant does not realise what they were doing; If the assailant regrets his actions; None of these; Refusal (SPONTANEOUS); Don't Know.

The map below characterises the Member States in terms of the **relative level of agreement that sexual intercourse without consent can be justified** for one or more of the reasons given. The countries are compared in terms of the percentage who say that it can be justified for at least one of the reasons.



The countries marked in blue are where respondents are **least likely to agree that sex without consent is justifiable** for any of the reasons given. The countries coloured dark red are those where respondents are **most likely to agree** (around 4 in 10 or more). These tend to be eastern European countries.

CONCLUSION

There are reasons for cautious optimism in the findings of this report. Across the EU there is **widespread agreement that domestic violence, sexual harassment and other acts of gender-based violence are unacceptable or wrong**. The view that domestic violence is a private matter is not widely held, and the majority of those who know of victims speak to someone about it rather than keep it to themselves. However, these conversations usually happen with friends, family or the people involved, rather than police or health or support services. 88% of those who know of a victim of domestic violence in their surroundings did not go to the police, and only 7% spoke to a support service in spite of widespread awareness about the support services available. Clearly there are still **other barriers in place that stop people reporting domestic violence** they are aware of or seeking legal or professional support for those in their surroundings who have been victimised.

One of these barriers may be respondents' views about **whether acts of gender-based violence should be against the law**. Although the results clearly show most respondents think these acts are wrong, in some cases there is greater ambivalence about whether these behaviours should be against the law. This is **particularly true in the case of psychological violence**, with 44% of respondents across the EU believing that repeatedly criticising a partner to make them feel inferior should not be illegal and 18% that controlling a partner should not be against the law. Opinions about whether a range of gender-based violent acts should be illegal also vary considerably across Member States. For example, when it comes to repeatedly criticising a partner to make them feel inferior, two thirds of respondents in Germany (67%) do not believe this should be against the law compared with only 16% in Portugal. When it comes to controlling a partner by preventing them from seeing and contacting family and friends among others, only around one in ten believe this should not be against the law in France (11%) and the Czech Republic (13%) compared with a third in Lithuania (35%) and Romania (33%). Similar country differences can be seen across the range of situations presented to respondents.

Although the majority think **gender-based violence is unacceptable**, the results also clearly show that it is still a significant problem in the EU. Almost a quarter (24%) know of a victim of domestic violence amongst family or friends, almost one in five (18%) know of someone in their neighbourhood and one in ten know of someone at work or where they study. In all cases, the **victims are much more likely to be women than men**. For example, 17% of respondents only know of female victims of domestic violence in their circle of family and friends, while 1% only know of male victims. Just over one in twenty (6%) know of victims of both genders.

At least seven out of ten say **domestic violence (74%) and sexual harassment (70%) against women is common in their country**. Meanwhile, almost one in three (29%) say domestic violence against men is common.

The findings reveal a number of **disparities between different Member States in attitudes towards and perceptions of gender-based violence**. There are still Member States where there is considerable work to do in addressing perceptions about gender-based violence, particularly **the idea that violence against women is often provoked by the victim or that women often make up or exaggerate claims of abuse or rape**. Respondents in Malta, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are most likely to hold such views, with respondents in Sweden, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Finland least likely. Knowledge of the fact that perpetrators of rape are often known to the victim also varies considerably across Member States, with this view most likely to be held in the Netherlands (15%) and Sweden (14%) compared with other Member States where the perception is that women are more likely to be raped by a stranger. This perception is particularly high in the Czech Republic (57%), Greece (56%) and Slovakia (55%). Issues surrounding consent also emerge as a clear target for awareness-raising and education campaigns and activities right across the EU, with **more than one quarter of respondents (27%) of the opinion that there are situations where sexual intercourse without consent is justified**.

This is not the only indication there is a need for wider education. Sociodemographic results also support it, with **women generally more aware of domestic violence** (81% vs. 68% of men) **and sexual harassment** (76% vs. 65% of men). Women are also more likely to speak to someone about domestic violence and to think acts of gender-based violence should be illegal, and this is often the case comparing women and men of the youngest age group. When looking at, for example, awareness of domestic violence against women, there are clear sociodemographic differences – housepersons and single parent households are **more likely to believe domestic violence against women is common** compared to other sociodemographic groups. Initiatives clearly should be tailored to different groups and issues related to gender-based violence.

The fact that the majority consider gender-based violence to be wrong is a solid foundation for further actions to address the high incidence of gender-based violence in the EU, particularly through **information and awareness campaigns**, and **the promotion of the use of legal and professional support services**. Implementation of the provisions set out in the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) will be an important step in continuing to address issues surrounding gender-based violence in the EU.