

## PRESS RELEASE

# Gender-based violence surveyed in 46 European universities and research organisations

*Since starting at their institution, nearly two in three staff and students responding to the UniSAFE survey have experienced at least one form of gender-based violence.*

From January to May 2022, staff and students from 46 research organisations and universities in Europe participated in the UniSAFE survey addressing gender-based violence in academia. It is the largest survey conducted so far in the European Research Area, with over 42,000 responses. The survey was led by GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, with close collaboration of Oxford Brookes university and Örebro university in the context of Project UniSAFE, a research collaboration between nine European partners.

## A COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

A unique feature of this survey is its holistic approach to investigating gender-based violence. The survey focused on capturing gendered experiences of violence, whether physical, sexual, psychological, or economic, - and online forms of gender-based violence. The survey also looked into intersections with respondents' individual situation, such as their sexual orientation, age, ethnic minority status, disability, and international mobility among others. The consequences of such experiences were investigated for respondents' well-being, career and studies.

*“Gender-based violence is a systemic problem that affects academic institutions no less than other parts of society. The data we gathered with the prevalence survey clearly shows that gender-based violence happens everywhere and to all genders. Our dataset helps to better understand the size and impact of the problem in academia. The projects' cooperating universities have taken an important step by showing openness to evidence-based development of countermeasures. I am very pleased that with the survey we can promote this development in a data-driven way.”* Dr Anke Lipinsky, GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, PI of the UniSAFE Survey

## NEARLY TWO IN THREE RESPONDENTS HAVE EXPERIENCED GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Overall, results show that 62% of the survey respondents have experienced at least one form of gender-based violence since they started working or studying at their institution. Women (66%) and non-binary people (74%) were more likely than men to experience all forms of gender-based violence, except for physical violence which more non-binary people and men indicated. Moreover, respondents who identify as LGBQ+ (68%), who reported a disability or chronic illness (72%), and those belonging to an ethnic minority group (69%) were more likely to have experienced at least one incident of gender-based violence, compared to those who do not identify with these characteristics.

*"I knew that there would be many people that experienced gender-based violence, but I was really taken aback by the scale of the problem with about two in three stating that they have experienced at least one form of gender-based violence. I was also expecting non-binary people and people from the LGBTQ+ communities to be disproportionately affected. With such a large number of responses to this survey, we are now able to provide data and evidence that can be used to tackle the issue."* Professor Anne Laure Humbert, Director of Centre for Diversity Policy Research and Practice at Oxford Brookes University

## ONE IN THREE RESPONDENTS HAVE EXPERIENCED SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Psychological violence is reported as the most prevalent form of violence (57%). Moreover, almost one in three students and staff say they have experienced sexual harassment within their institution (31%), whereas 6% of respondents have experienced physical violence, and 3% sexual violence. One in ten respondents reported that their work or studies have been harmed by economic violence.

## LOW REPORTING OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE INCIDENTS

Among respondents who had experienced gender-based violence, only 13% reported it. Almost half of the victims (47%) explained that they felt uncertain whether the behaviour was serious enough to be disclosed. Another frequent reason indicated by 31% of the victims is that at the time of the incident they did not identify the behaviour as an act of violence.

## PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

The UniSAFE online survey was administered to staff and students (18 years and older) at [46 universities and research organisations](#) in 15 countries in Europe: Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Serbia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, and United Kingdom, and among an international association of mobile researchers. These institutions are all involved in the UniSAFE project on a voluntary basis, in a joint effort to substantially reduce gender-based violence.

## UNISAFE

UniSAFE aims to support higher education, research organisations and policymakers in eradicating gender-based violence in the Europe research area. The project produces in-depth knowledge on gender-based violence in research organisations and universities by analysing its prevalence, social determinants, antecedents, and consequences on national, organisational, and individual levels. The anonymised data issued from the survey will be closely analysed alongside results from in-depth interviews of early-career researchers, a set of institutional case studies, as well as an assessment of policy and legal frameworks. This information feeds into the development of a multi-level analysis report, publicly available in December 2022. By Autumn 2023, the project will result in a set of policy recommendations and operational tools to be taken up by higher education and research institutions.

**Summary of survey results available at <https://unisafe-gbv.eu>**

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