

LABOUR AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

# NATIONAL REPORT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE GREECE

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1 in 3 workers have been sexually harassed at work (31.4%)



3 out of 4 victims are female workers (75.3%)



Only 1.6% of victims reported the incident to the competent authorities



Only 3.1% have a collective agreement with provisions covering sexual harassment



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ELINYAE	Hellenic Institute for Occupational Health and Safety
ELSTAT	Hellenic Statistical Authority
ESEE	Hellenic Confederation of commerce and entrepreneurship
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung
FG	Focus group
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GNCHR	Greek National Commission for Human Rights
GSEE	Greek General Confederation of Labour
GSEVEE	Hellenic Confederation of Professionals Craftsmen and Merchants
HLI	Hellenic Labour Inspectorate Independent Authority
IDI	Individual interview
ILO	International Labour Organization
KETHI	Research Centre for Gender Equality
NHRI	National Human Rights Institution
NTA	National Transparency Authority
SETE	Greek Tourism Confederation
SEV	Hellenic Federation of Enterprises
SHWS	Sexual harassment in the workplace survey
SVE	Federation of Industries of Greece

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Violence and harassment in the world of work are a widespread phenomenon in all countries, including Greece. They affect or can affect everyone, regardless of gender, although some groups, certain occupations or work arrangements are more at risk. A range of factors can lead to or increase the risk of violence and harassment, such as gender and/or sexual orientation, discrimination on one or multiple grounds forbidden by law, stigma, poor working conditions, informal employment, stress and exhaustion related to work. Globally, more than one in five people in employment (22.8 per cent or 743 million) have experienced violence and harassment at work, whether physical, psychological or sexual, over their working life. One in 15 (6.3 per cent or 205 million) people in employment have experienced sexual violence and harassment at work during their working life, as reported at the global first survey on the topic by the ILO under the title *Experiences of violence and harassment at work* (ILO, 2022), according to which women are particularly exposed to sexual violence and harassment at work, and men to physical violence and harassment at work. At international level the ILO adopted the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), along with its accompanying Recommendation (No. 206) recognising the right of everyone to a world free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. Greece ratified ILO Convention No. 190 in 2021 through the adoption in June 2021 of L. 4808/2021 (Art. 1-23).

Within the framework of the current project, carried out in April 2024, by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Athens in collaboration with the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE), and after Greece's ratification of ILO Convention No. 190, a European survey was conducted in English and Greek on sexual harassment in the workplace from 9 July to 9 September 2024. Out of the 876 respondents who participated in the survey 31.4% (275 cases) declared that they had been victims of sexual harassment in the workplace. While recognising that this can affect anyone in the world of work, the research carried out in Greece showed that the vast majority of victims are women, at 75.3%, while 21.1% are men (1.5% of respondents did not declare a gender identity). The research shows the prevalence of the phenomenon in the private sector (77.1%) in comparison with the public sector (17.8%). The majority of respondents have an employment contract of indefinite duration (76.7%) and most are

employed at enterprises with more than 200 employees (49.8%) or with 51–200 employees (17.8%). Some 43.5% of the general sample stated that the phenomenon is common in the workplace and 31.3% that is very common.

Most victims who had experienced unwanted behaviour in their current employment were subject to staring or leering that made them feel uncomfortable (65.5%); 46.2% were subjected to indecent sexual jokes or offensive remarks about their body or private life; 32.4% suffered unsolicited physical contact, such as close proximity, touching body parts, kisses/hugs or something else; 20.7% were subjected to behaviour at work with a sexual connotation which made them feel offended, humiliated or intimidated; 17.5% had inappropriate suggestions made to them to go out on a date; 12% suffered inappropriate proposals concerning sexual activity; and 6.9% were subjected to inappropriate advances on social networking websites (see Figure 2). The perpetrator in 49.4% of cases was a male colleague or co-worker, and in 40.4% of cases a male boss or supervisor/managerial employee. Some 27.1% of instances involved a male client or customer, patient or passenger. Around 62.5% felt that the motivation was sexual in nature and 41.1% that it was related to age. The consequences of the harassment could be severe for the victims: 67.3% were left feeling deeply uncomfortable in the workplace; 31.9% avoided socialising with people at work; 29.5% faced difficulty concentrating or performing tasks; 24.7% considered leaving their job; and 21.9% came to experience depression or other adverse psychological consequences.

A particularly interesting finding of the research concerns the response of the victims of sexual harassment: 38.2% replied that they didn't respond in any way or do anything, and **only 1.6% reported the incident to the relevant institutions, such as the ombudsman or labour inspectorate**. Thus, most cases of sexual harassment in the workplace are not reported to the authorities and so are not officially recorded.

Furthermore, only 3.6% submitted a formal complaint to a specific unit in the workplace and only 5.2% reported it to a trade union. These victims justified their response by saying **that they have no trust in the competent institutions (27.2%)**, believing that 'nothing could be achieved there' (51.1%) and fearing that it could negatively impact their job,

position or future career prospects (37%). As regards the **results** of cases in which respondents had confronted the perpetrator or informed the responsible persons or institutions 45.7% responded that nothing happened as a result; 27.5% that the harassment had ceased; 8.7% that the claim had been investigated; and 6.5% that the perpetrator had been transferred to another department. Out of the cases in which a formal complaint had been submitted only 7.1% responded that their complaint had improved the situation, 10% responded that nothing had changed, and 6.4% that it had made the situation worse. Most respondents believe that their employers didn't do enough to educate employees about sexual harassment (58.3%), either to prevent it (58.8%), or monitor it (60.4%), or to punish sexual harassment (52.5%). The respondents would like professional and legal support in reporting violence and harassment (43.8%), information on how to proceed in cases of sexual harassment perpetrated by the responsible institutions or persons themselves (48.1%), protection against further sexual harassment and retaliation (41.3%) and professional help in understanding their rights (33.2%). Some 44.7% of victims replied that they were trade union members (or members of some other employee representative body) when the sexual harassment happened, and 46.2% that they were not. Around 78.9% said that trade unions should demand the adoption of regulations related to sexual harassment in the workplace, 79.3% that they should support the affected workers, 75.6% that they should provide information on the existing regulations, 74.2% that they should report non-compliance with regulations to the Labour Inspectorate, 70.9% that they should bargain and conclude a collective agreement addressing sexual harassment, 67.1% that they should monitor compliance with the regulations, and 64.3% that the trade unions should provide regular training.

**To provide victims with robust protection and to prevent sexual harassment, it is crucial for Greece** to assess the current legal framework and its implementation. This requires **institutional tripartite social dialogue** in order to adopt without delay the restorative measures needed to establish legal and procedural certainty and transparency. This must be complemented by awareness-raising policies throughout the country. The recent L. 4808/2021 ratifying ILO Convention No. 190 (Art. 1) and the basic implementation measures (Arts 2–23) furnish the obligatory framework to be implemented by employers and enterprises in order to prevent harassment and violence at work and to make available a complaints procedure in the private and public sectors, already covered to a certain degree by the legislation imple-

menting the relevant EU Directives (2006/54/EC, 2000/43/EC, 2000/78/EC). Unfortunately, the above framework, as the survey revealed, is still fragmented and poorly implemented. As victims noted, there is confusion about the mandate and the authorities' multiple related competences regarding protection. The three independent authorities are the Hellenic Labour Inspectorate (HLI), the Greek Ombudsman and the National Transparency Authority (NTA). This underlines the need for a clear delineation of the competences of these bodies (in both the private and the public sector) and compliance. Among other things there is the danger of overlaps in competencies between authorities. Additionally, the strikingly low number of 1.6% of victims who reported an incident to the relevant institutions, such as the ombudsman or the labour inspectorate, and the 3.6% who submitted a formal complaint to the relevant unit in the workplace show that crucial work lies ahead when it comes to strengthening trust. Indeed, 26.9% of respondents said that they don't trust them.

The required coherent, adequate and transparent legal and procedural framework primarily concerns adequate protection of victims and prevention. Furthermore, the creation of a culture based on mutual respect and dignity in workplaces, and of course in society as a whole, is of great importance for a change of mindset on this issue. Trade unions can and should play a crucial role in the information and protection of victims, as well as in the creation of the requisite institutional and societal culture. Employers' organisations can serve as knowledge-sharing hubs to exchange best practices in implementing workplace policies against sexual harassment, as well as coping with the deficiencies, from their view, in the implementation of the legal framework. Thus, bipartite social dialogue (workers' and employers' organisations) and institutional tripartite social dialogue (State, workers' and employers' organisations) are important, as pointed out by ILO Convention No. 190. An inclusive, integrated, holistic and gender-responsive approach in different areas of law is required to cover not only employee–employer relations strictly speaking, but also independent contractors, trainees, volunteers, job applicants and others. There is also a need for guidance and continuous training to boost awareness of sexual harassment, identify, recognise and report incidents, provide essential support to victims, advocate for change and serve as catalysts for cultural transformation. All actors need to work together to effect comprehensive change at all levels of skill development and towards effective respect, promotion and realisation of the right to a world of work free from violence and harassment (ILO Convention No. 190, Art. 4 para 1).

# INTRODUCTION

The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Athens in collaboration with the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE) and its Secretariat of gender equality, individual and social rights agreed to collaborate in the implementation of the project »Sexual Harassment in the Workplace«, coordinated by FES and the Centre for European Labour Studies (CELSI). The aims of the activity series are to obtain better information on sexual harassment in the workplace across six European countries, including Greece, and to propose policy recommendations for improvement. The project considers the real-life experiences of people who have been subjected to workplace sexual harassment, as well as their input and suggestions for improving the situation. The activity series is being implemented in Bulgaria, Czechia, Croatia, Hungary, Slovakia and Greece, based on desk research, online survey data, interviews and focus groups. It is noted that from the above countries only Greece has already ratified the International Labour Convention on violence and harassment convention, 2019 (No. 190). The research questions addressed in desk research, online survey data and interviews contributed to furnish a deeper understanding of sexual harassment victims' experiences, their responses to incidents, and their assessment of how the situation was handled. The victim's perspective on the role of the trade union organisations is crucial, as are their recommendations on the design of policy

interventions and training programmes. This was the first field research conducted after the ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 by Greece. It has added value as regards its timeframe, being carried out during the peak of the summer season, which is characterised by work intensification, especially seasonal work. Also significant was the launch on 1 July 2024 of the six-day work legislation in several sectors/enterprises. Because of the lack of consistent official data, the survey represents a special contribution to better understanding and assessing the state of play with regard to sexual harassment and violence at work in Greece and the adequacy of the legal and procedural framework for its prevention and the protection of victims. The current Report, drafted by Dr Athina Malagardi, offers an overview of the legal framework at national, European and international level with regard to sexual harassment and violence at work, analysing the relevant information and knowledge, as well as trade unions' and victims' experiences, including barriers to implementation and vulnerability factors. It formulates policy recommendations for all stakeholders. This could also provide a basis on which trade unions can raise awareness and insist on the adoption of effective, coherent and consistent measures for the protection of victims and an overall response to sexual harassment in the workplace in Greece.

# METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The current Report uses a mixed three-step methodology, analysing the findings of (i) the survey, (ii) interviews with victims, and (iii) the in-depth examination of the survey results by two focus groups (see relevant Annexes).

The sample survey, entitled »Sexual Harassment in the Workplace«, targeted employees in both the public and private sectors across the country, aged 18 and above. Given the sensitive nature of the research topic, no established sampling frames were available. As a result, the project team opted to employ convenience sampling. Data collection was conducted through the computer-assisted web interview (CAWI) method. An electronic questionnaire was disseminated via an online link published on the platform SurveyMonkey. The questionnaire featured an introductory note that clearly outlined the purpose and context of the research. It also emphasised the anonymous, confidential and voluntary nature of participation, in full compliance with European legislation on personal data protection (EU Regulation 2016/679). Respondents were given the option to select the language in which they preferred to complete the questionnaire, with translations available in the languages of the six participating countries. Initial dissemination of the questionnaire was conducted via email to the Greek General Confederation of Labour's second level member organisations (federations, labour centres) and through them to their members' first level trade unions. Subsequently, it was shared on the official social media accounts of GSEE and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), accompanied by a press release issued by the GSEE press secretariat. Additionally, an announcement was published on the FES and GSEE websites, informing potential respondents of the survey's purpose and guaranteeing anonymity and data confidentiality. The originally proposed data collection period spanned from 9 July 2024 to 31 August 2024, with weekly monitoring of participation. However, to boost response rates and due to the inherent difficulties of conducting a survey during the summer months, the data collection period was extended until 9 September 2024. In total, the survey was open for two months. A total of 876 questionnaires were completed, with most respondents (64.8%) identifying as female. Both univariate and bivariate analyses were performed. For the enrichment analysis, responses were cross tabulated with the variable »Victim of sexual harassment (yes or no) « to identify potential differences between victims and non-victims of sexual

harassment. The survey instrument, designed to capture opinions, perceptions and attitudes, consisted of 36 questions, generating a total of 183 variables. The quantitative collection and compilation of data of the survey and the statistical note with the tables and figures of the poll were prepared by the statistician Kostas Boukouvalas, (see Annex 1).

Furthermore, **four interviews** were conducted by the author Dr Athina Malagardi with victims of sexual harassment in the workplace in search of a deeper understanding of the phenomenon and for the qualitative collection of data in addition to the quantitative. Two of the interviewees were women and two were men, from the financial sector, engineering, telecommunications and research centres (see ANNEX2), all of whom have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. The main questions concerned how and why the victims reacted as they did, suggestions for improving intervention by the victims of sexual harassment in the workplace, and whether it makes a difference whether the victims are unionised at the time of the incident or not. The interviews were held under strict confidentiality and based on the GDPR.

The survey shows that the most **common sectors** of sexual harassment are financial and insurance activities (31.6%), other activities (6.9%), education (6.9%), human health and social work activities (6.2%), administrative and support service activities (5.1%, the information and communication (4.7%), the arts, entertainment and recreation (3.3%).

Based on the abovementioned findings of the survey as regards the sectors most affected by sexual harassment in the workplace **two focus groups were conducted on 30 September 2024, with the participation of the author.** They were convened to discuss the main findings of the survey and the recommendations of the Report (see ANNEX 3).

Both focus groups were coordinated by the author of the current Report and the Head of GSEE's secretariat of gender equality, individual and social rights Ms. Dora Goula, with the assistance of GSEE's competent legal advisor Ms. Ellie Varchalama and FES Athens' project manager Mr Stefanos Spiliotopoulos. Special thanks are expressed to GSEE's President Mr. Giannis Panagopoulos for the hospitality of the two focus groups at GSEE's premises. The focus groups included



representatives appointed by the **Greek General Confederation of Labour**, as well as by its second level member organisations such as: **six sectoral trade union organisations** (the Greek Federation of Bank Employees, the Hellenic Federation of Insurance Company Employees' Associations, the Panhellenic Federation of Workers in Food in the Tourism Sector, the Hellenic Federation of Unions of Hospital Institutions, the Hellenic Federation of Spectacles and Audio, and the Journalists' Union of Athens Daily Newspapers) **and nine regional Labour Centres** across Greece (Athens, Thessaloniki, Herakleion, Rhodos, Korinthos, Fthiotida, Katerini, Veroia and Florina).

The **first** was a trade union focus group with the participation of 22 trade unionists (women and men) representing 16 trade union organisations. The selection of participants was based on the main findings of the survey with regard to the sectors most affected, also taking into account the need to invite trade union representatives from regional level in order to obtain an understanding of the geographical distribution of the problem.

The **second focus group**, besides the abovementioned trade union representatives, included representatives of the

**competent authorities and institutions in this area.**

There were 12 participants from eight **competent authorities/institutions**, including three **ministries** (the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Social Cohesion and the Family and the Ministry of the Interior), and five **independent authorities and institutions**: the Hellenic Labour Inspectorate, the Greek Ombudsman, the National Transparency Authority, the Greek National Commission for Human Rights, and the European network of legal experts in gender equality (see ANNEX 3).

A **common agenda** was used for discussion, including the main issues that emerged from the survey questionnaire and interviews with the victims. Among other things they discussed the characteristics of the problem (forms of sexual harassment at work, profile of the victims and perpetrators), policies and regulations on sexual harassment and internal reporting (compliance, effectiveness), reporting of the incidents in the workplace and the role of the trade unions, access to the authorities and the effectiveness of victim protection in relation to sexual harassment and/or violence, and the overall response to the phenomenon in terms of awareness-raising, prevention and protection (positions, proposals).

## 1

# THE STATE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

## 1.1 CURRENT KNOWLEDGE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE IN GREECE FROM PREVIOUS STUDIES

The recent EU survey on gender-based violence against women (2022), based on the EU GBV survey (2021), shows that the proportion of working women (or former working women) who have experienced unwanted behaviour with a sexual connotation in the workplace varies between 11% in Latvia and 41% in France. Most perpetrators are male in the majority of countries (usually a male colleague or male boss). The percentage of women officially reporting such an experience during their lifetime is between 1.4% in Bulgaria and 12% in France (Eurostat, EU survey on gender-based violence against women, 2022, p. 10). Eurostat data on gender-based violence shows that in Greece 17.4% of working women have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace in the past five years. This puts Greece in fifth position out of 22 countries in the EU on this issue. Furthermore, at the European level, the FRA Report (2014a: 95–96) based on a sample of 42,000 women across the EU28 showed that half of all women have experienced some form of sexual harassment since the age of 15, and that for 32% the perpetrator was in their workplace (boss, colleague or customer). Also, the FRA's third LGBTIQ survey shows that LGBTIQ people still experience hate-motivated violence and discrimination and trans and intersex people even more so (FRA (2024), LGBTIQ at a crossroads: progress and challenges).

In Greece there have been several national studies and research projects on sexual harassment in the workplace. Furthermore, the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace is scarcely a recent one. It has, however, gained new and more intense interest since the advent of the international #MeToo movement and Greek# MeToo. Research conducted in 2020 by **Action Aid** (Papagianopoulou, Kasdagli and Mourtzaki, 2020) with 1,001 women across Greece and 376 employees in catering and food services and tourism shows that 85% of women in Greece have experienced sexual harassment at work, one in ten declared they have been the victim of sexual harassment and 18% (one in five) felt obliged to quit their job for that reason. On the other hand, a mere 6% of victims reported the incident to the competent authorities and only 37% reported the incident to HR or at enterprise level.

In 2020, research was organised by the **Social Action and Innovation Centre** (Alexopoulou and Doufexi-Kaplani, 2020) with interviews with trade unionists, employers' organisations, NGOs and the Greek Ombudsman on sexual harassment in the workplace. Some 91.27% declared that women are more vulnerable to sexual harassment. The research shows that 52.38% have faced sexual harassment in their professional lives, but 40% didn't know the relevant procedures for reporting an incident. Concerning enterprises, only 11.11% stated that they have a specific protocol on prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace.

In 2022 the **Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI)** published the educational manual *Violence and harassment in the world of work*, analysing sexual harassment in the workplace in Greece after ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 (Moschovacou and Papagiannopoulou 2022). Also, research throughout Greece carried out in January 2021 by **PRORATA** on sexual harassment shows that 58% of women have been subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace and 87% stated that is far from easy for victims to prove their case.

In February 2023 a **guide to good practice** and prevention, focusing on consent, was published for professionals by the **Centre for Research on Women's Issues 'Diotima'**. It contains valuable information and can function as a learning tool for those who want to focus on building sexual harassment prevention, including good practices and approaches to facilitate prevention and support. In 2023, **GSEE published a guide for trade unions**, with guidance on the help and support they can provide to victims of violence and harassment, based on the relevant trade union rights under EU law.

In March 2024, the **Greek National Commission for Human Rights (GNCHR)**, which is the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) in Greece (art. 1L. 2667/1998, art. 10 L. 4780/2021), in its Report on the Situation of Women in Greece, states that it has repeatedly pointed out that the phenomena of violence and harassment at work remain invisible in their true dimension, mainly due to the fear or reluctance of victims to resort to the Authorities (GNCHR, 2024) and that the legislator's purpose should always be to encourage and facilitate the complaint and not to navigate the victim through a labyrinth-like protection system.

Concerning the **public sector**, recent research on sexual harassment in the workplace (Stratigaki M., Mavromati-Lagani A., Papakonstantinou Ch., Michalopoulou A., 2022) analyses the legal gaps and relevant recommendations concerning the legal framework. It also presents good European practices on the topic. Furthermore, in 2024 the **Greek Ombudsman** published a **special Report on Harassment and sexual harassment** (2024: 25) with 2011–2022 as reference period. This Report noted that between 2011 and 2022 the Greek Ombudsman investigated 253 cases, 196 involving allegations of sexual harassment. Looking in more detail at the various forms of harassment, 56 cases involved verbal sexual harassment, written and/or verbal, and 134 cases involved physical contact (touching, gestures). Acts of sexual violence such as rape and attempted rape constitute an extremely limited number of complaints (four and two, respectively), which were usually dealt with by the judiciary. In the remaining 57 cases, gender-based harassment involving sexist behaviour is reported. This included insults (15 cases), moral harassment (11 cases), and violent behaviour (five cases of assault), while in 26 cases the alleged harassment concerned behaviour that the person concerned perceived as generally offensive and degrading because of their gender.

It may also be noted that the forms of harassment differ quantitatively in the private and public sectors. Specifically, in the public sector 57% of complaints concern sexual harassment and 43% other forms of harassment, while in the private sector, 80.5% of complaints concern sexual harassment and only 19.5% other forms of harassment. According to the Greek Ombudsman the usual outcome of an employee's response to harassment on the part of an employer in the private sector is that they lose their job. In the public sector, it is common for the complainant to be transferred to a different job, sometimes even to a subordinate position, but in any case, to be subjected to actions that are often punitive in nature. Additionally, in the private sector there are important differences between small enterprises/single employers and large enterprises, above all that workers in small businesses are more vulnerable to sexual harassment. In Greece, out of the 195 complaints against private employers made to the Greek Ombudsman, 148 concern small business or sole employers; the number of complaints made against large businesses is significantly lower, at 46 cases. In one case the employer was a foreign entity (Whitson, 2021). Sexual harassment of women in small businesses is widespread, but reporting is rare. Large companies are more likely to adopt codes of conduct and regulations to control the behaviour of employees. They also have HR departments and pay attention to their reputation. Small businesses, by contrast, often don't have internal control mechanisms and the only option for employees is to report incidents to the authorities. Furthermore, according to the **Hellenic Labour Inspectorate's Annual Report 2023** (Annual Report of the Labour Inspectorate Independent Authority, 2023), in that year the authority received 230 complaints on violence and harassment at work from 300 employees. Of these, 60% concerned women and 40% men; 46% of cases were perpetrated by the employer or a member of company management and 54% by a colleague or other person. Among these complaints in

**Greece only 12 cases** concerned sexual harassment in the workplace, **which represents 5% of total complaints**. The other 95% concerned other forms of harassment, suggesting that sexual harassment in the workplace is underreported in Greece.

As regards the most affected sectors, according to the Labour Inspectorate, one might mention the retail trade, hotels, catering and restaurants, followed by the wholesale trade, the food industry, health care and education. The Annual Report notes that six cases out of 12 (50%) were resolved positively.

## 1.2 LAWS, POLICIES AND ACTORS RELATED TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

In recent years, harassment and violence in the world of work have come to be recognised as a dangerous and harmful problem throughout the globe. They undermine equality by infringing workers' integrity, dignity and wellbeing. **At international level** important international conventions include provisions on the promotion of equality and non-discrimination, including at work, and some contain provisions on sexual harassment. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly, was ratified by Greece in L. 1342/1982, which provides for equality in employment between men and women. The Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence was adopted by the Council of Europe in 2011, and sexual harassment is among the forms of conduct it prohibits. This was ratified by Greece in L. 4531/2018. The International Labour Organization (ILO), in order to address violence and harassment in the world of work, adopted the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190), along with its accompanying Recommendation (No. 206) which gives further detailed guidance on how measures should be implemented at national level, and includes provisions on remedies and assistance, and on training and awareness-raising, among other things.

In 2021, Greece was one of the first countries to ratify the ILO Convention on violence and harassment at work (No. 190) through the provisions of Law 4808/2021 (Art. 1-23). Greece thereby assumed responsibility for providing tools to protect the rights of workers and establish a legal framework to prevent and eliminate violence and harassment in the world of work, including gender-based violence and sexual harassment (Malagardi, 2021: 355–376; Petroglou, 2020).

ILO Convention No. 190 is the first international treaty to recognise the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. Convention No. 190 defines **violence and harassment** as «a range of unacceptable behaviours and practices, or threats thereof, whether a single occurrence or repeated, that aim at, result in or are likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, and includes gender-based violence and harassment. « Violence and ha-

harassment constitute a human rights violation and abuse and a threat to equal opportunities and treatment. It is also unacceptable and incompatible with decent work and could cover bullying, cyberbullying, stalking, cyberstalking and sexual harassment. It protects all employees, offering broad protection, not only in the workplace but in the world of work more generally (Art. 2, 3 Convention No. 190), including all employees as defined by national law and practice, as well as persons working irrespective of their contractual status, persons in training, including interns and apprentices, workers whose employment has been terminated, volunteers, job-seekers and job applicants, and individuals exercising the authority, duties or responsibilities of an employer. Also, it applies to all sectors, whether private or public, both in the formal and informal economy, and whether in urban or rural areas. The world of work under the Convention goes beyond the workplace *stricto sensu* and includes work (a) in the workplace, including public and private spaces where they are a place of work; (b) places where a worker is paid, takes a rest break or a meal, or uses sanitary, washing and changing facilities; (c) during work-related trips, travel, training, events or social activities; (d) through work-related communications, including those enabled by information and communication technologies; (e) in employer-provided accommodation; and (f) when commuting to and from work.

**Gender-based violence and harassment** are defined in Convention No. 190 as »violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender or affecting persons of a particular sex or gender disproportionately and includes sexual harassment« (Art. 1(1)). In Greece the definition laid down in Law 4808/2021 covers only »sex« without mentioning »gender« (Law 4808/2021, Art. 4 par. 2). **Sexual harassment**, within the broader framework of the ILO Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) ratified by Greece, is one of the most regulated and serious form of discrimination-based harassment in the world of work. According to the ILO, it is a widespread phenomenon that undermines equality at work. The pillars of the inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach of the Convention No. 190 are based on prevention and protection, on enforcement and remedies and on training, guidance and awareness-raising.

**At European level**, European law, primary and secondary, treats gender-based harassment and sexual harassment as undermining equality. It should be noted that aspects of ILO Convention No. 190 are also covered by EU legislation. Directive 2006/54/EC implements the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment for men and women in matters of employment and occupation; Directive 2000/78/EC established the framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation; and Directive 2000/43/EC implements the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin. Additionally, in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000/C364/01), harassment at work is treated as a matter of respect for health, equality and dignity (combination of Articles 21, 23 and 31). Also, the framework Directive on Occupational Safety and Health (89/391/EEC) establishes an equal level of safety and

health for the benefit of all workers and obliges employers to take appropriate preventive measures to make work safer and healthier. The framework Agreement of 2007 on harassment and violence at work between ETUC/CES, BUSINESS-EUROPE, UEAPME and CEEP is also noted as a milestone in terms of the roles and commitments through collective agreement of the European social partners and the outcomes of social dialogue to address and combat these phenomena.

With regard to Greece specifically, **at national level** gender-based harassment and sexual harassment have been legislated on in compliance with European Union legislation in the Directives on equal treatment in employment and occupation. Sexual harassment is introduced by L. 3488/2006 which transposes Directive 2002/73/EC. Furthermore L. 3896/2010 incorporates EU (recast) Directive 2006/54/EU, which provides in its preamble that »harassment and sexual harassment are contrary to the principle of equal treatment between men and women«. It also provides a definition of sexual harassment and establishes reversal of the burden of proof. L. 4443/2016 replaced L. 3304/2004, which incorporated Directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC and made harassment a prohibited form of discrimination. Furthermore, Greece, by L. 4604/2019 on Substantive Gender Equality, Preventing and Combating Gender-Based Violence, defines harassment as »*any unacceptable behaviour connected to gender, sexual orientation and gender identity of a person, for the purpose of or resulting in the violation of his dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive situation*«. This covers only purpose or effect, in contrast to Convention No. 190, whose definition is broader, which in addition to purpose or results, also covers possible results. It should also be noted that Article 337 of the Greek Penal Code recognises sexual harassment as a criminal offence.

In 2021, **Greece's ratification through L. 4808/2021 of ILO Convention No. 190** signalled a strong commitment to tackling sexual harassment in the workplace and to creating an environment free of violence and harassment for employees (Art. 2 L. 4808/2021) by introducing a legal framework with extended scope of protection for the private sector (Ministerial Decision 82063/2021/OJ B'5059) and the public sector (Ministerial Decision DIDAD/F.64/946/ok.858/19-01-2023/OJ B' 343). The Greek state recognised by law the prohibition of any form of harassment and violence, including gender-based violence and sexual harassment (Art. 4 L. 4808/2021), the scope of protection against harassment is broadened and the scope of application covers all workers, regardless of their contractual status. The new framework includes any form of violence and harassment, regardless of whether it constitutes a form of discrimination under Laws 3896/2010 and 4443/2016 and the scope of protection against violence and harassment in employment and work is broadened.

In particular (Art. 4 par. 2 L. 4808/2021): (i) **«violence and harassment»** mean any form of conduct, acts, practices or threats thereof intended to cause, result in or likely to result in physical, psychological, sexual or economic harm, whether

occurring in isolation or repeatedly; (ii) **«harassment»** means any form of conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, demeaning or offensive environment, whether it constitutes a form of discrimination, and includes harassment based on sex or other grounds of discrimination; (iii) **«gender-based harassment»** means any form of conduct related to sex but without mentioning gender, even though Convention No. 190 includes both the »sex or gender« of a person which has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of that person and of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating, demeaning or offensive environment within the meaning of Article 2 of Law 3896/2010 (A' 107) and par. 2 of Article 2 of Law 4443/2016 (A' 232). These forms of conduct include sexual harassment under Law 3896/2010, as well as forms of conduct related to the sexual orientation, expression, identity or gender characteristics of the person.

L. 4808/2021 establishes **obligations** for employers and enterprises to prevent and tackle sexual harassment in the workplace (Art. 5, 6, 7) in terms of the investigation and resolution of any complaint in the workplace, facilitating victims' access to the relevant authorities, providing information to employees on potential risks in the workplace, and complaints procedures at enterprise level. Furthermore, L. 4808/2021 detaches the Labour Inspectorate from the Ministry of Labour and transforms it into an independent authority, establishing a specific department on harassment and violence at work with a mandate to coordinate policy on this issue. At the same time, it preserves the Labour Inspectorate's obligation to communicate complaints to the Ombudsman for intervention when they concern gender-based harassment and violence, or any other form of discrimination prohibited by law.

Regarding the public sector, the designation of bodies competent to examine complaints is a source of confusion. According to the relevant provision the Ombudsman is competent for any case of harassment and intimidation in the public sector despite the different provision of L. 4808/2021 and the competence provided for in L. 3094/2003 (only on the grounds of discrimination provided in L. 3896/2010 and L. 4443/2016), leaving gaps in consistency, coordination and compatibility with other relevant provisions. *Enterprise policies and procedures for reporting and investigating* incidents should be implemented at all enterprises, regardless of the number of staff employed, with specific obligations for en-

terprises with up to 20 employees (Art. 9 and 10 L. 4808/2021 and Ministerial Decision 82063/2021) regarding the complaints procedure in the enterprise, the assessment of risks, measures for the prevention, control and elimination of risks, information and awareness policy, information regarding workers' rights and obligations, and appointment of a specific person in the enterprise as contact person for workers' information. Enterprises with more than 70 employees, based on the legal obligation to adopt internal regulations, are subject to specific obligations under L. 4808/2021 regarding policies on harassment and violence (Art. 9 and 10). They can be met either by collective agreement at enterprise level with the competent trade union or by agreements with the works council, or if they don't exist by informing the employees about policy in the workplace. A deadline was given to enterprises for adaptation, namely three months after the entry into force of L. 4808/2021 on 16 June 2021.

Regarding the rights of victims every person employed in the private sector, regardless of employment status, including redundant and atypical employees, can, in principle, invoke the application of the Law and the protection foreseen both at company level and in case of appeal to the competent authorities (Art. 3 para. 1). Importantly, if the complainant asserts that there has been violence and/or harassment at work and invokes facts or evidence from which it is probable that an incident of violence and/or harassment has occurred, the defendant shall bear the burden of proving in court or before a competent administrative authority that matters were otherwise, under the special procedural rule of the reversal of **burden of proof** (Art. 15, with reference to Art. 24 para. 1 of Law 3896/2010) (Petroglou, 2022: 735–769). Also, provision has been made for the right of workers to leave their workplace for a reasonable period, without loss of pay, if they believe that their life, health or safety are at risk (Art. 12). The Labor Inspectorate may **impose fines** on enterprises that fail to meet their obligation to adopt and put in effect the relevant policies on harassment and violence (Art. 5-11, 19).

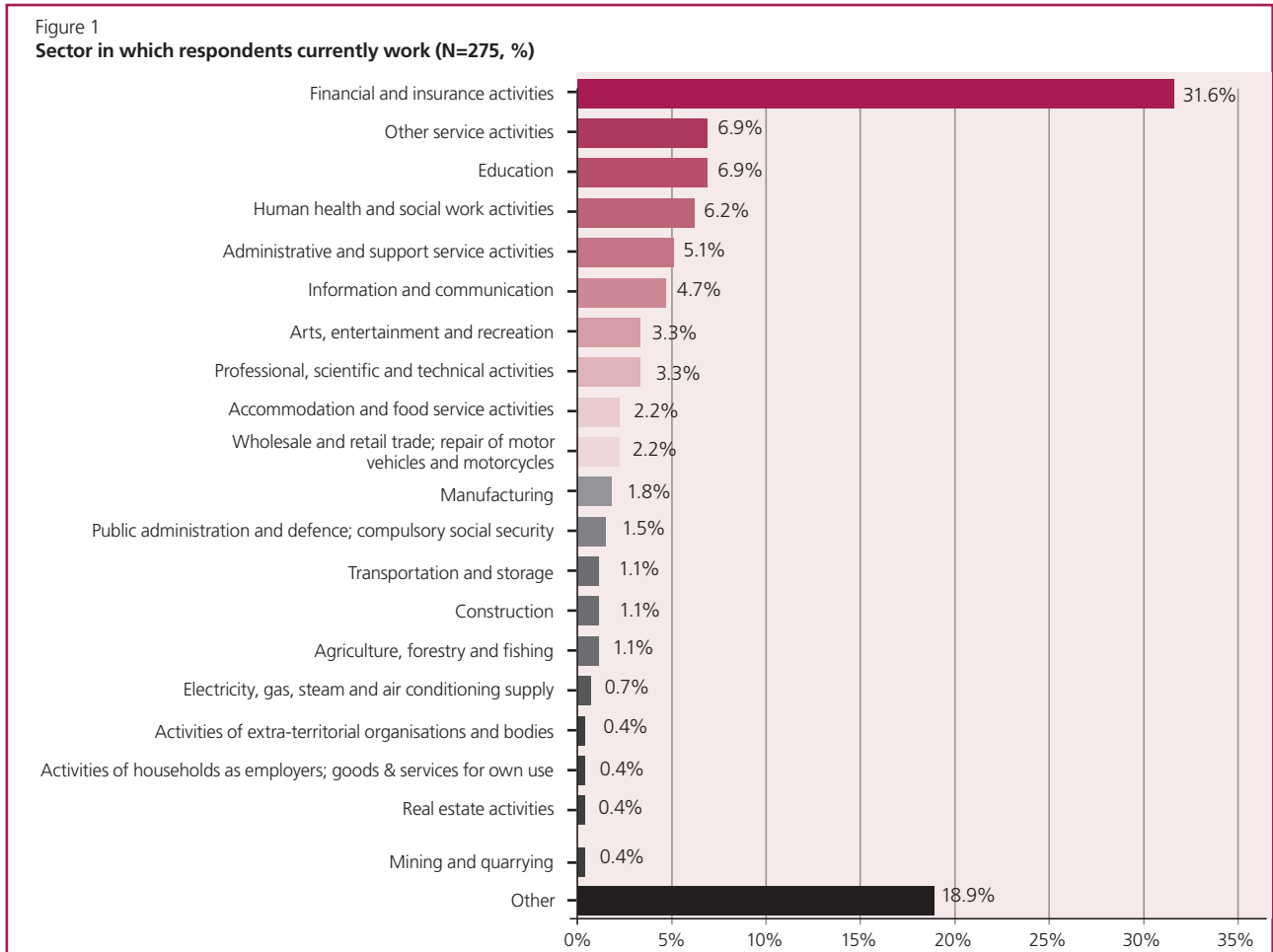
It should be noted that violence and harassment at work were covered by a special provision included in the **National General Collective Agreement** signed in June 2021 by the national social partners, who declared their support for ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 and agreed to establish common working groups for the creation of a guide on information and awareness for employees and employers on discrimination, violence and sexual harassment in the workplace.

## 2 LIVED EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

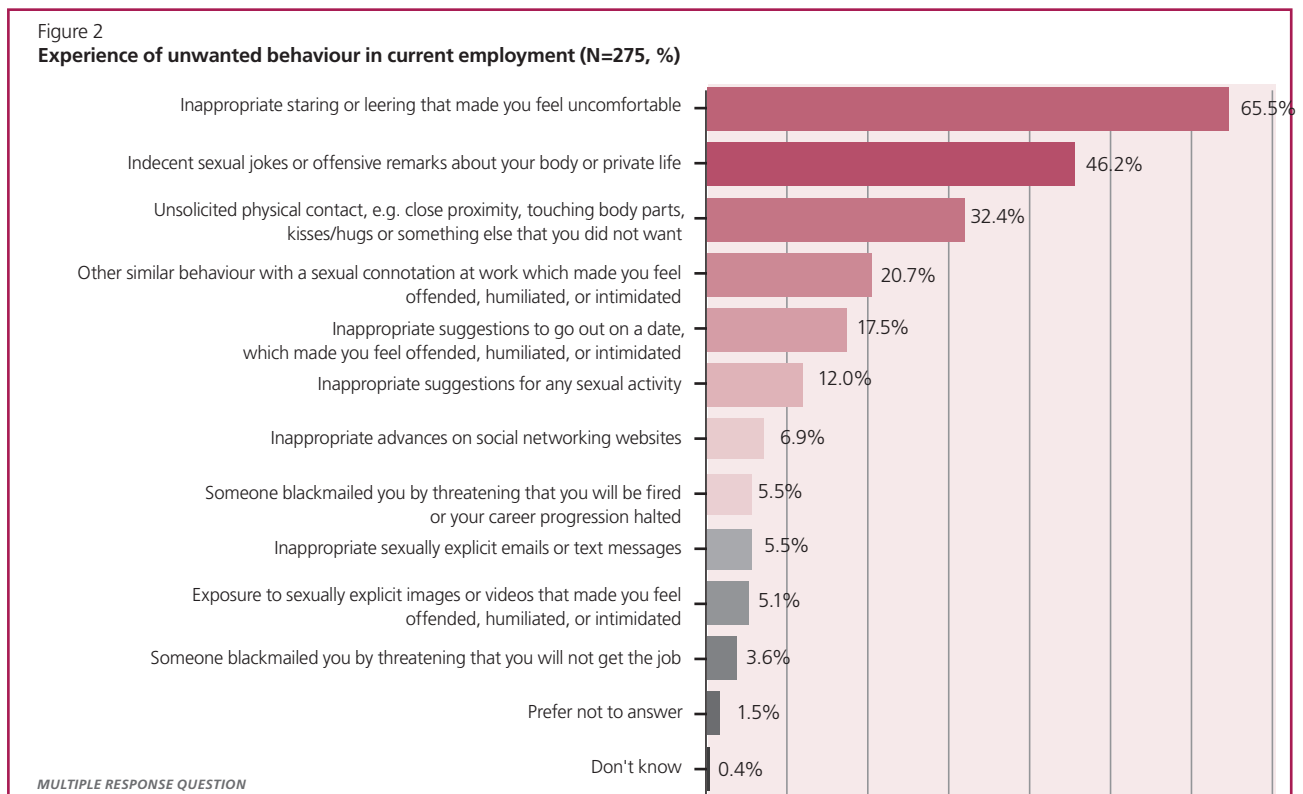
### 2.1 OCCURRENCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

In the European survey on sexual harassment at work carried out within the framework of the current project, 876 respondents from Greece participated, **31.4% of whom (275 cases) declared that they had been victims** of sexual harassment in the workplace. The following analysis pertains primarily to these 275 victims. Some 75.3% of them are women and 21.1% are men (with 1.5% reporting a different gender). With regard to education 71.3% have a tertiary education (BA, MA, PhD) and 26.2% have a secondary education. In terms of age, 44.4% are 40–49 years of age, 23.3% 50 years of age or above, 19.6% are 30–39 years of age and 12.7% are 18–29 years of age.

The survey shows that sexual harassment in the workplace is **common (43.5%) or very common (31.4%)** and affects both the private (77.1%) and the public sector (17.8%). It affects mainly employees with indefinite employment contracts (76.7%) and also those with fixed-term employment contracts (13.5%), as well as the self-employed (4.7%). Most are employed at the large and medium-sized enterprises. Anyone in the world of work in Greece can be affected, but the research shows that the **vast majority of victims are women (75.3%, 207 women out of 275 victims)**. The women who are most vulnerable to sexual harassment are financially dependent, single (18.4%), married (53.1%) or divorced (13.5%), with migrant status (2.4%), women with disabilities (4.3%), or ethnic minorities (5.3%), most of them going through financial difficulties (32%). Risks can increase because of abuses of power and the intersection, or combination, of different factors. Of the 275 victims those most affected have a medium or low level of management authority and tasks (47.3%) or have no managerial powers and tasks (35.6). Employees with a high level of management authority and tasks are also affected at 17.1%. Also particularly likely to be affected are women in daily face to face contact with customers, clients or patients (38.9%). Figure 1 presents the most **common sectors** in which sexual harassment was found in the survey:



Unwanted behaviour may take non-verbal, physical, verbal and digital forms, as follows:

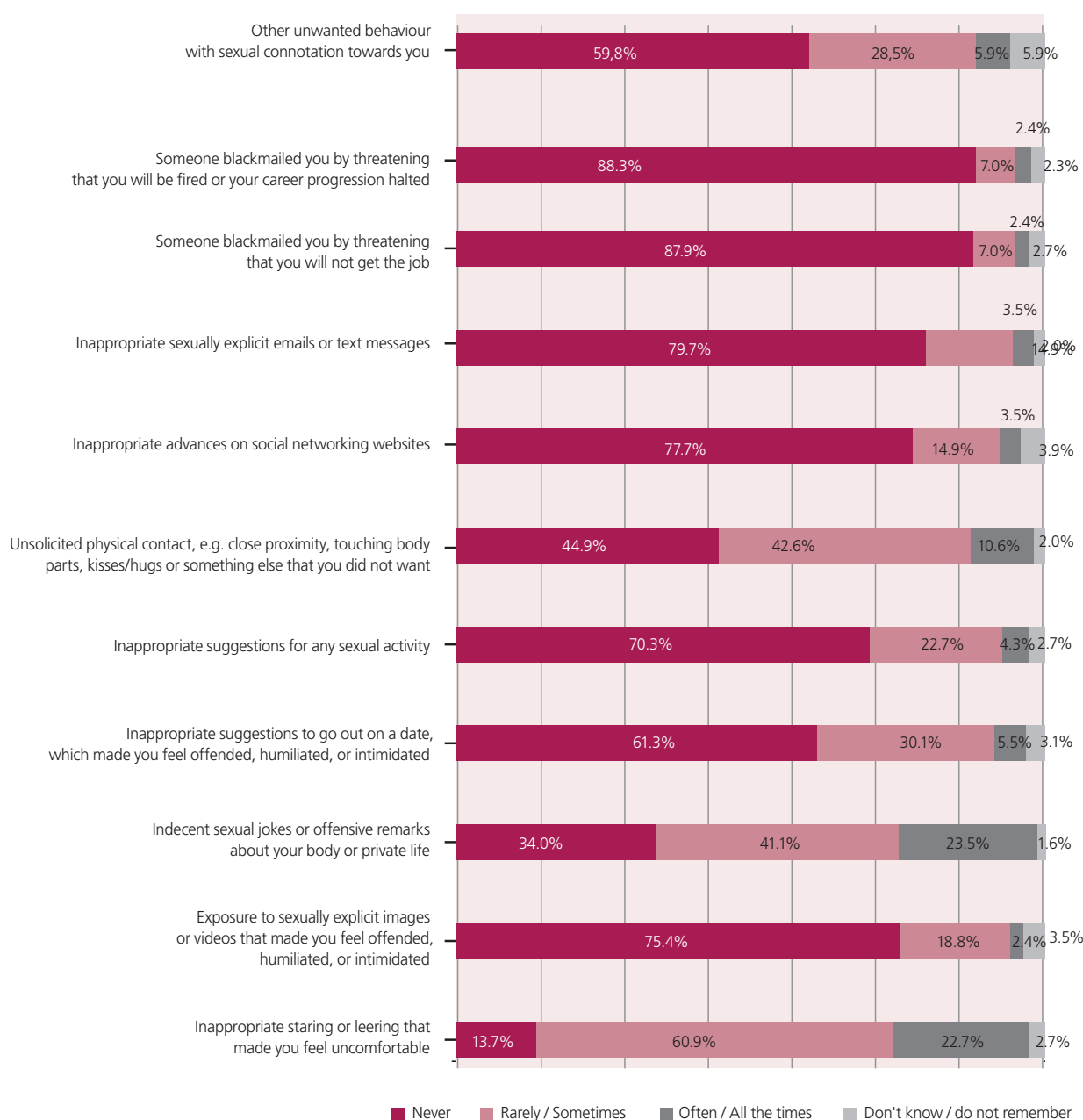


It may be noted that some of the behaviours presented in Figure 2 happen in the workplace, such as inappropriate staring or leering (22.7%), indecent sexual jokes (23.5%), and unsolicited physical contact (10.6%). Furthermore, in the vast majority of cases the perpetrator is a male colleague or co-worker (49.4%) or a male boss or supervisor (40.4%). The basic motivations seemed to be sex (62.5%) and age (41.1%), but also financial status (9.1%), nationality (3.2%), sexual orientation (10.7%) and gender identity (9.9%).

Important input on lived experience of sexual harassment in the workplace was also provided by interviewees who have faced different types of unwanted behaviour, such as inappropriate sexually explicit emails and text messages, inappro-

priate sexual comments, and unsolicited physical contact. Further input on unwanted behaviour and sexual harassment in the workplace was provided by the two focus groups held on 30 September 2024 in Athens. In the first focus group the trade unionists confirmed that sexual harassment at work in the above sectors has multiple characteristics (verbal, non-verbal, physical, digital), and what's more is very much underreported, especially among women and the most vulnerable (migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, women with disabilities, and so on – age is also a factor). The survey showed that a mere 1.6% of victims report the incident to the authorities, but the interviewees also pointed out during the presentation of their experiences, with specific cases, that almost none of the victims were willing to report sexual

Figure 3  
**Frequency of unwanted behaviour in current job (N=256, %)**





harassment and/or violence to the authorities, mainly because they do not trust the handling or likely outcome of the case, and also noting several legal and procedural obstacles, along with the social fear faced by the victims, which make the situation even worse. Trade union representatives stated that they provide information, guidance and support to the victims, but that this is unofficial and unfortunately cannot be shared with the authorities, given that there is no institutional tripartite social dialogue structure on gender equality and sexual harassment at work in Greece.

This should be also taken into consideration as it concerns the assessment of the particularly low percentage of victims of sexual harassment or violence at work who have recourse to the authorities or the justice system. The same finding emerged from interviews with the victims, two out of four of whom stated that they were members of a trade union, had reported the event to their union and had been supported and given guidance on how to proceed with the case. Another two interviewees stated that they were not members of a trade union but that if they were, they would feel safer and more confident in reporting the event. Furthermore, trade union participants said that the regulations on harassment and violence at work are either limited, or not communicated effectively to workers, and that the implementation of L. 4808/2021 is weak in practice. The structure of the Greek economy, in which small and medium-sized enterprises predominate, is a factor in this.

Trade union representatives noted that the sectoral level should have been prioritised, instead of the larger enterprises, which appear more likely to comply with their legal obligations. They also noted with emphasis that there is no official and coherent data on business compliance with L. 4808/2021, and that the competent authorities' mandate on gender equality is fragmented between three ministries, the Labour Inspectorate and the National Transparent Authority for the public sector. The representatives of the tourism sector in particular underlined that, due to seasonality and the intensity of their work, colleagues in hotels, restaurants and tourism were much less likely to be able to participate in the poll because it was conducted in July and August. The proportion of sexual harassment in the workplace reported in the survey for those sectors seems very low (2.2%). In reality it is much higher (recent research in the food sector in Crete (2024) and by Action Aid (2020).

Most of them noted that joint training courses on rules of procedure for cases of sexual harassment or violence should be addressed to workers, employers and Labour Inspectorate inspectors, with the participation also of the competent ministries, because in some cases the authorities (labour inspectors, state officials) are giving contradictory instructions. In that connection, trade union members recalled the good practice of joint tripartite actions, jointly agreed and included in a roadmap under the aegis of ILO technical assistance on undeclared work in October 2016. It was confirmed that trade unions throughout Greece, not only in Athens, are more than willing to participate substantially in training courses, to share experience and knowledge and to enhance their

capacity to support victims without discrimination. Employees also will acquire knowledge and empathy, gain awareness of forms of sexual harassment in the workplace and be enabled to identify, recognise and respond adequately and effectively to potential incidents. Extensive discussion has been held on the survey results (as shown in Figure 10) with regard to the important role of the trade unions in preventing and tackling sexual harassment in the workplace, supporting victims in reporting it, negotiating collective agreements addressing sexual harassment, providing regular training courses, and demanding the adoption of relevant regulations.

## 2.2 FORMS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT OBSERVED

According to the ILO Convention concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation, 1958 (No. 111 – one of the eight fundamental conventions) and the 2002 General Observation of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (ILO CEACR), definitions of sexual harassment contain the following key elements and forms: (i) quid pro quo, when a job benefit – such as a pay rise, a promotion, or even continued employment – is made conditional on the victim acceding to demands to engage in some form of sexual behaviour, or (ii) hostile working environment in which the conduct creates conditions that are intimidating or humiliating for the victim. Behaviour that qualifies as sexual harassment includes the following: (a) physical (touching, physical violence, unnecessary close proximity), (b) verbal (comments and questions about appearance, lifestyle, sexual orientation, offensive phone calls), (c) non-verbal (whistling, sexually suggestive gestures, display of sexual materials), but also (d) digital, which came to the fore especially during the Covid-19 pandemic because of the increase in teleworking (sexually explicit e-mails or SMS messages, inappropriate advances on social media). The cost, whether moral physical, mental, communicational or financial, is enormous. Additionally, as already mentioned, the survey held in Greece within the framework of the current project showcases all the unwanted behaviours characteristic of sexual harassment in the workplace, as reported by victims, including non-verbal (inappropriate staring or leering – 65.5%), verbal (indecent sexual jokes or offensive remarks about the body – 46.2%), physical (unsolicited physical contact – 32.4%), and digital (inappropriate sexually explicit emails or text messages – 5.5%) (Manesi and Kanaouti, 2022).

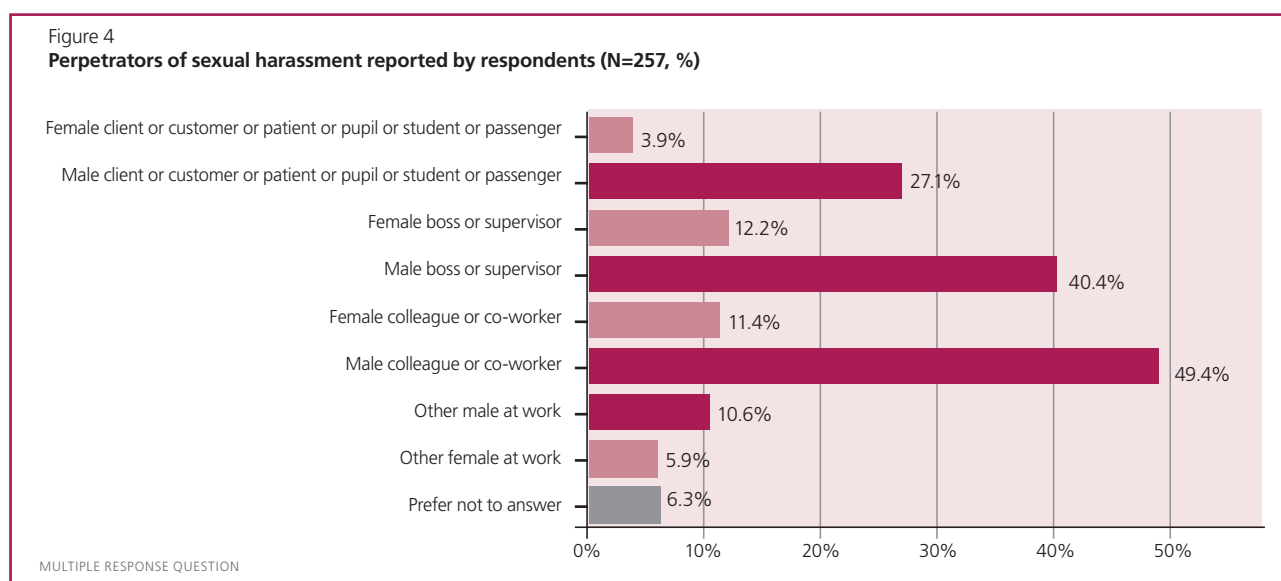
## 2.3 VICTIMS AND PERPETRATORS

The recent research in the frame of the current project in Greece on the **victims** of sexual harassment shows that anyone can be affected in the world of work. However, the vast majority of victims are women, especially the most vulnerable, such as the financially dependent, third country nationals (migrants, asylum seekers, refugees), women with disabilities, and women in financial difficulties. Sexual harassment in the workplace is thus often due to abuses of power and the intersection, or combination, of factors that can increase the risk. Regarding the perpetrators it can occur vertically (perpetrated by or against those with the powers, tasks or obligations of an

employer) or horizontally (directed towards peers). It can be perpetrated by employees against managers, directors or employers (to obtain benefits, promotion and so on) or involve third parties (such as external collaborators). Another recent survey conducted in Greece by PRORATA (2021) showed that most Greek women (65%) have been subjected to some form of sexual harassment, and the predominant location was the workplace (58%). Furthermore, in most of the complaints to the Greek Ombudsman (198 cases) the perpetrator of the harassment is hierarchically superior; significantly fewer such incidents were carried out by a peer or colleague (53 cases); and there were only two instances involving a lower-level worker. The current survey shows that most perpetrators in Greece are either a male colleague or co-worker (49.4%) or a male boss or supervisor (40.4%), as shown in Figure 4.

harassment creates an offensive, intimidating, hostile or humiliating working environment for the victims. As victims stated in the interviews, which complemented the survey, it creates anger and annoyance, fear and anxiety, shame and embarrassment, vulnerability, loss of self-confidence and is linked to physical and mental ill health, reduced job satisfaction, lower organisational commitment and job withdrawal. Based on the current survey the victims identified the consequences presented in Figure 5.

Both In the interviews and the survey women frequently reported that being sexually harassed made them embarrassed, caused them to avoid certain work situations and made them less confident at work with a negative impact on their mental health, depression or adverse psychological consequences



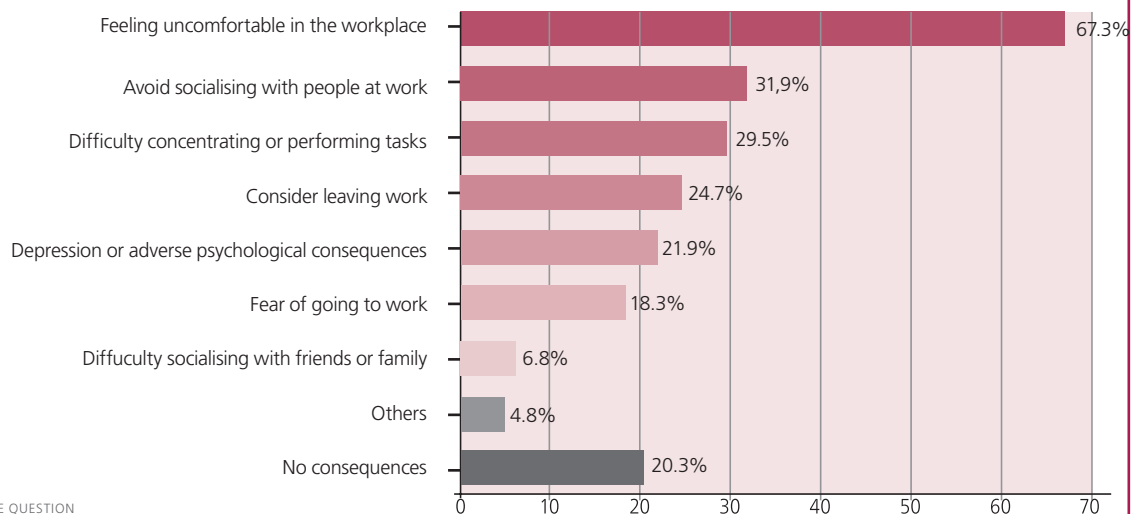
The domination of high positions by men is a characteristic feature of the European Gender Index. It should be noted that Greece ranked **73rd out of 146 countries** in the Gender Gap Index issued by the World Economic Forum in 2024, from **93rd in 2023** (World Economic Forum, 2024; Global Gender Gap, 2024). According to the Greek Ombudsman, 47% of complaints made by public sector employees are against colleagues or peers, while in the private sector most perpetrators are employers or persons hierarchically above the complainant (86%). The main causes underlying sexual harassment in the workplace given in the majority of responses to the survey and research done in the field are: sexism (discrimination against persons in the workplace), gender stereotypes (perceptions and prejudices), a lack of ethics in interpersonal relationships (selfishness and lack of empathy), abuse of powers (abuse of position), a lack of labour regulations in companies (no implementation of code of conduct), and job insecurity (vulnerability).

## 2.4 CONSEQUENCES OF EXPOSURE TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

This dangerous phenomenon threatens the stability and security of female and male workers, and limits progress and development within enterprises. Among employees, sexual

(21.9%), leaving them feeling stressed, anxious and depressed. Most of them face PTSD symptoms, associated with the most severe incidents and harmful experiences. Many of them faced difficulties concentrating or performing tasks (29.5%) and they felt uncomfortable in the workplace. Furthermore, in a significant number of cases (24.7%) victims considered leaving work or feared going to work (18.3%). For employers, sexual harassment affects work relations, organisational structure, worker commitment, and the reputation and sustainability of enterprises and organisations. It also reduces enterprise productivity due to impaired judgment or high absenteeism, compromised teamwork and demotivation. Also, applicants will not seek employment at workplaces where they fear sexual harassment and thus there is a loss of human capital. Preventing and eliminating violence and harassment increases employee safety and can positively impact workers in decreasing absenteeism, staff turnover, and the resources that have to be devoted to investigations and mitigating measures. Sexual harassment in the workplace also has financial costs for the State, including medical care, counselling, loss of productivity, legal and criminal justice expenses and settlements, long-term rehabilitation costs for victims, unemployment benefits, and undermining of women’s access to high-status and well-paid jobs, which traditionally are male dominated.

Figure 5  
Consequences of sexual harassment reported by respondents (N=252, %)



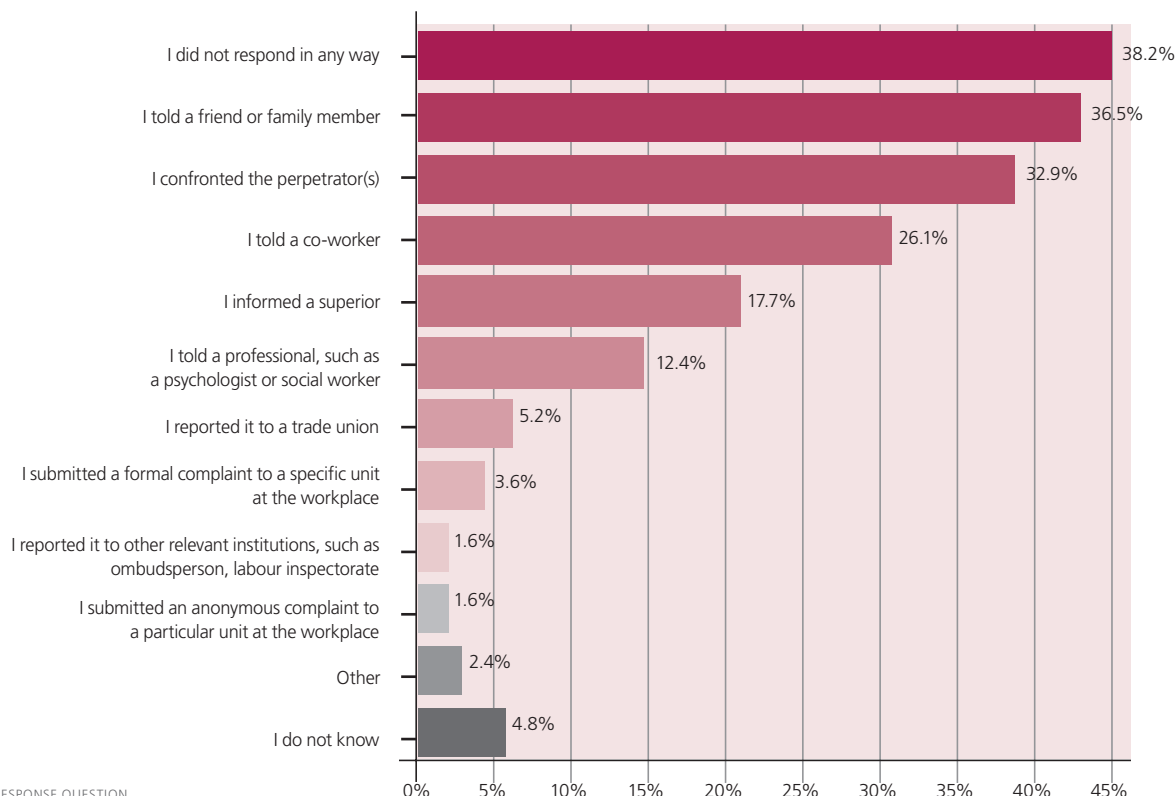
MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION

## 2.5 VICTIMS' RESPONSES TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT

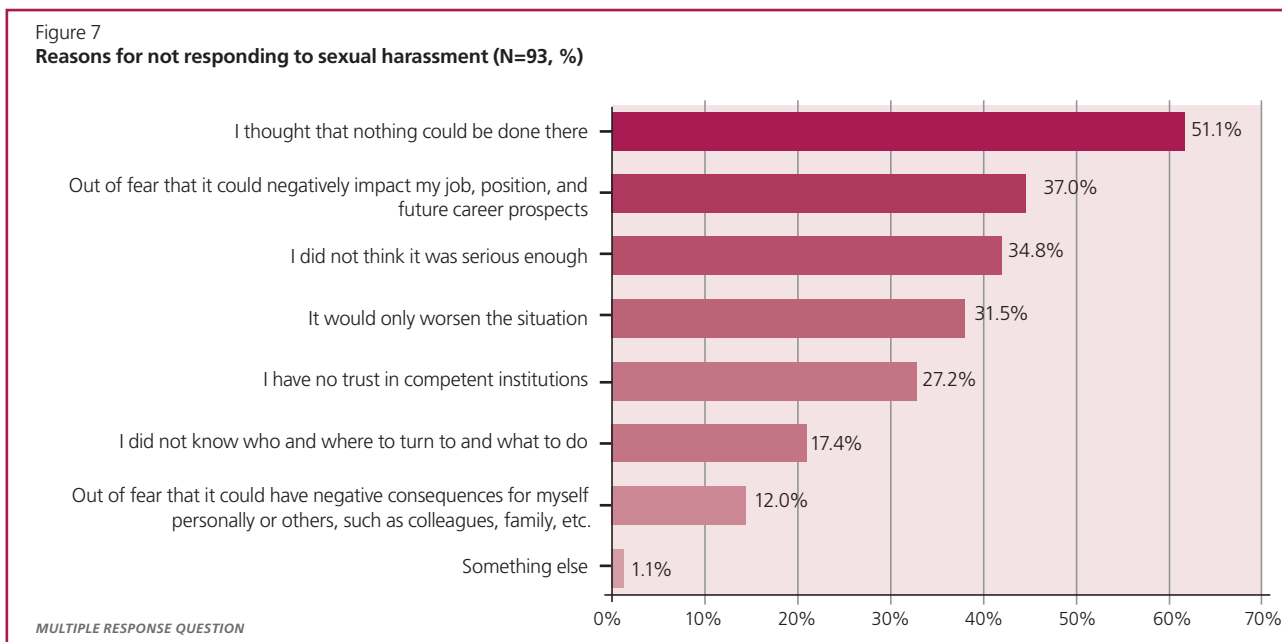
The victims of sexual harassment declared in the survey that it caused stress-related physical and mental illness, as well as behavioural changes, including isolation and deterioration of relationships, and psychological suffering, including humiliation and loss of self-esteem. It can also have a negative impact on victims' pay, career progression and working conditions, and potentially drive people out of the world of work. While it can affect anyone, sexual harassment particularly af-

fects women and reinforces stereotypes about their abilities and aspirations. It also contributes to fewer women entering or remaining in the labour market (adding to the labour force participation gap) and to women being paid less than men (exacerbating the gender pay gap). A very important finding in the current survey is that the sexual harassment in Greece is underreported. The vast majority of victims didn't do anything and **a mere 1.6% stated that they had reported the case** to the relevant institutions, such as the Ombudsperson or the Labour Inspectorate. Furthermore, only 3.6% submitted a formal complaint to the relevant unit in the workplace and 5.2% reported it to the trade union (see Figure 6).

Figure 6  
Respondents' reactions to sexual harassment (N=250, %)



MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION



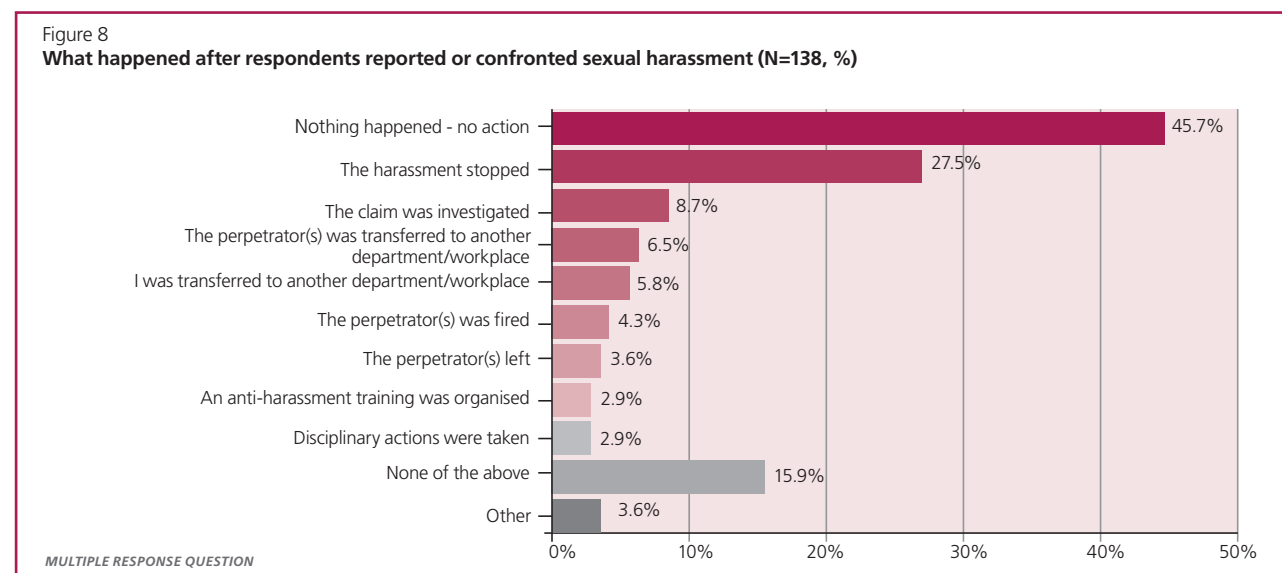
The survey asked the victims «why», in other words, what was the main reason for their negative reaction or non-action. **The lack of trust in the competent institutions (27.2%) is notable**, the thought that «nothing could be done», the fear that reporting would only worsen the situation and negatively impact the complainants’ job, position and future career prospects.

Comparing the very low percentage of victims reporting incidents (1.6%) to the relevant institutions and the 27.2% of victims who stated that they don’t trust the competent institutions we can see that there is clearly underreporting in Greece and thus that progress is needed in the creation of trust by means of an inclusive, integrated, holistic and gender-responsive approach in various areas of the law and institutions. Victims also stated that, as one put it, «if I did re-

port the case, I would proceed straight to the courts instead of reporting it to the relevant authorities, whose role I don’t exactly understand.»

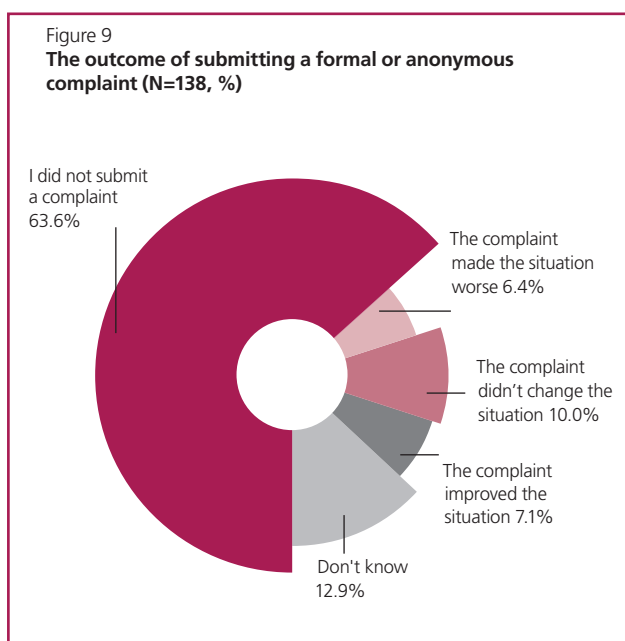
## 2.6 VICTIMS’ SATISFACTION WITH CASE OUTCOMES AND THEIR NEEDS

According to the survey, after a victim had confronted the perpetrator or informed the responsible persons or institutions, in 45.7% of cases »nothing happened – no action« was taken, and only in 27.5% of cases did the harassment stop. Furthermore, in only 8.7% of cases was the complaint investigated. In 4.3% of cases the perpetrator was fired and in 2.9% of cases anti-harassment training was organised (Figure 8).



Furthermore, regarding complaints procedures the Greek Ombudsman remarked that the »procedures for the examination of complaints are extremely lengthy and as a result, complainants are left with the impression of a cover-up, which acts as a deterrent to the lodging of complaints« (Greek Ombudsman Special Report, 2024: 10).

In 21 (9 public and 12 private sector) cases out of 100 the alleged conduct was not proven and/or the respondent refuted the allegations of the alleged victim with sufficient evidence, while 46 complaints were fully proven. Regarding complaints procedures, the victims pointed out that was extremely important for them to ensure the credibility of the procedure, based on confidentiality and professionalism as regards the incidents reported and the persons involved. Furthermore, the current survey shows that the situation was improved only in only 7.1% of cases, the complaint didn't change the situation in 10% of cases, and in 6.4% of cases the complaint made the situation worse:



## 2.7 AWARENESS AND ATTITUDES TO EXISTING PROTECTION AGAINST SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

The Greek Labour Inspectorate (Labour Inspectorate, 2024), the Greek Ombudsman (Greek Ombudsman Special Report 2024), the GSEE trade union confederation and the employers' organisation SEV and NGOs such as Women on Top, Action Aid and #Metoo, have published guides and manuals to raise awareness about existing protection against sexual harassment in the workplace and protect victims, but also enterprises in Greece. Additionally, in the National General Collective Agreement of 2021 the national social partners (GSEE, SEV, SETE, ESEE, GSEVEE, SVE), agreed to establish common working groups for the creation of a guide to provide information and raise the awareness of employees and employers with regard to discrimination, violence and sexual harassment in the workplace. According to the current survey 33.2% of respondents replied that they don't know

whether any regulations to prevent, address and penalise sexual harassment in the workplace existed in the country. Thus, the phenomenon needs a holistic approach and coordination with all the stakeholders to raise awareness and inform both employees and employers on the relevant policies, consequences, rights, prevention and protection.

## 2.8 ROLE OF THE TRADE UNIONS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS IN POLICIES ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

The role of the trade unions in sexual harassment in the workplace policies is crucial. Some **53.8%** of the victims declared in both the survey and the interviews that they **are members** of a trade union, while 63.6% have trade unions or employees' representatives operating at their current workplace. At the time the relevant sexual harassment incidents happened, **44.7%** were members of a trade union and 50.6% were not. It was noted that after the incident of sexual harassment in the workplace many victims (53.8% after the incident compared with 44.7% before it) became members of a trade union, a 9.1% increase. This indicates that victims feel more protected as part of a collective in the workplace rather than alone. Also, victims not only in the survey (see Figure 4), but also in the interviews stressed the crucial role that trade unions should play to prevent and protect victims, first of all by supporting the affected workers, reporting non-compliance with regulations to the Labor Inspectorate, providing information on the existence of or enterprise conformity with existing regulations, demanding the adoption of regulations, bargaining and concluding collective agreements, and providing regular training courses on sexual harassment in the workplace.

In the interviews with victims of sexual harassment in the workplace, it was underlined that victims who were trade union members were »supported and guided on how to proceed with the case« and felt »safe and confident«. The interviewees in the current project who were victims of sexual harassment in the workplace resolved the problem themselves face to face with the perpetrator, or after reporting the case at the workplace and/or to a trade union. **None of the interviewees reported the case to the authorities** because they considered that such action »could have a negative impact on their future«, or either because they don't trust the authorities to remedy the situation. However, it should also be noted that only 5.2% of victims reported the incident to a trade union (see Figure 6), which ought to be an alarm bell to the unions to act. Furthermore, as regards collective bargaining and collective agreements, trade unions can ensure that anti sexual harassment measures are addressed in collective agreements, negotiate workplace policies, provide gender-responsive training to trade union representatives and disseminate relevant information to workers. But to date, as noted in the survey, only 3.1% of respondents at the survey were covered by a collective agreement with provisions related to sexual harassment in the workplace (see Figure 11). Additionally, trade unions are taking **action to raise awareness** of sexual harassment and violence at all

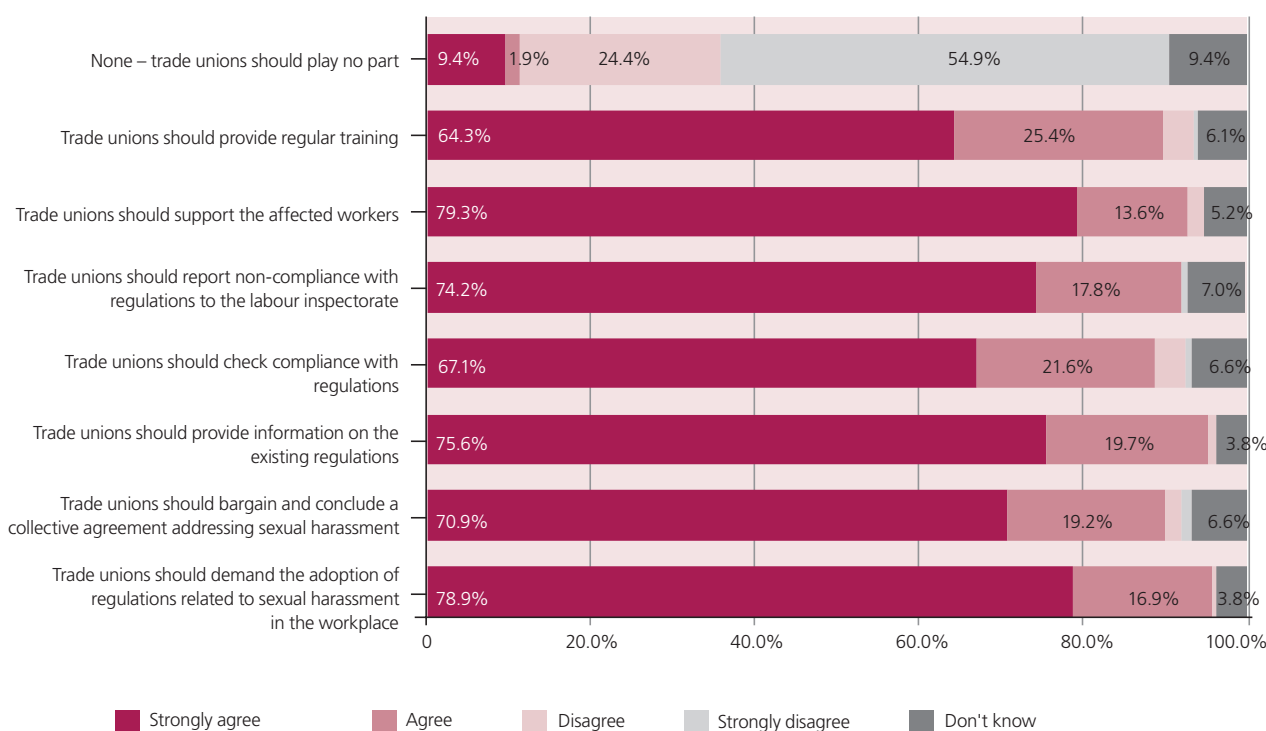
levels of workers’ representation (national, regional, sectoral, professional, enterprise), but no tripartite joint awareness campaigns took place after Greek ratification of ILO Convention No. 190 (L. 4808/2021) due to the lack of tripartite social dialogue on the topic (GSEE Guide, 2022). Furthermore, they highlighted that the Tripartite Body of the Ministry of Labour (Supreme Labour Council on the Gender Equality) has many years to operate, despite this has been requested many times by GSEE and the employers’ organizations which signed the National General Collective Agreement.

Within the framework of the current project, in the second focus group involving the competent authorities held on 30 September 2024 the relevant representatives participated in an exchange of views on the issue of underreporting, the pitfalls of the legal framework in some instances, the weakness of enterprise compliance, the lack of resources for gathering statistics on the issue, the need for institutional tripartite social dialogue on gender equality that includes sexual violence and harassment, the need for further awareness raising campaigns, training courses, and cooperation between stakeholders. Trade union representatives stated that overlapping mandates among institutions result in an environment of legal and procedural confusion, to the detriment of victim protection, which contributes both to increasing underreporting and preservation of a widespread feeling of impunity among perpetrators. Trade union representatives also proposed joint training courses to the authorities with adequate training materials. They have also emphasised how important it is that inspectors, workers and employers identify, recognise and respond effectively to (potential) incidents,

but also enhance confidence and rebuild trust in the authorities. Trade union representatives expressed strong concerns about important barriers that hinder victims’ access to the authorities, such as the lack of a procedural framework for public sector workers with fixed private law contracts, the lack of services in peripheral regions and islands, legal, procedural and infrastructural barriers, such as requirement that complaints be written only in Greek and the lack of translation services, the separation of the investigation of the sexual harassment/violence complaint from the investigation of work-related consequences for the victims, the failure to examine the health and safety dimension of complaints, and the neglect of the issue of atypical workers. At the end of the second focus group all stakeholders expressed a willingness to continue the dialogue and cooperation in the future, while trade union representatives noted that this process should be institutional, regular, data based and transparent.

Despite the new legal framework in Greece introduced by L. 4808/2021, which we have already analysed, it should be noted that the victims faced a confusing situation with regard to the multiple roles and mandates of the competent authorities responsible for protection, such as the Labour Inspectorate, the Greek Ombudsman, and the National Transparency Authority. This underlines the need for a clear delineation of competences and highlights the dangers of overlaps between authorities, with special emphasis on the public sector. The survey shows that only 1.6% of victims (see Figure 6) reported their incident to the relevant authorities because 27.2% stated that they »have no trust in the competent institutions« (see Figure 7). The situation revealed by the

Figure 10  
**Role trade unions should play in combating sexual harassment in the workplace (N=213, %)**



survey and confirmed by the interviews with the victims and the discussions during the focus groups shows that the lack of permanent tripartite social dialogue on the topic, the lack of codification in compliance with EU and international law, the lack of systematic and regular maintenance of statistics, the problems affecting victims' access due to geographical barriers, the overlapping of the mandates of the competent inspection and public authorities, the lack of joint awareness campaigns with national social partners and the lack of tripartite cooperation, should alarm the competent authorities in Greece. Clear procedures for reporting can instil confidence, assuring victims that they will be treated seriously and with privacy, confidentiality and no delay. Capacity-building and training for professionals and relevant stakeholders, and training activities involving national, regional and local authorities seem vital if services are to be improved. Finally, tripartite social dialogue, tripartite cooperation and targeted actions on the topic would be effective and productive and a deeper societal change is needed to cultivate a culture based on mutual respect and dignity.

## 2.9 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CURRENT REGULATIONS AND STEPS FORWARD

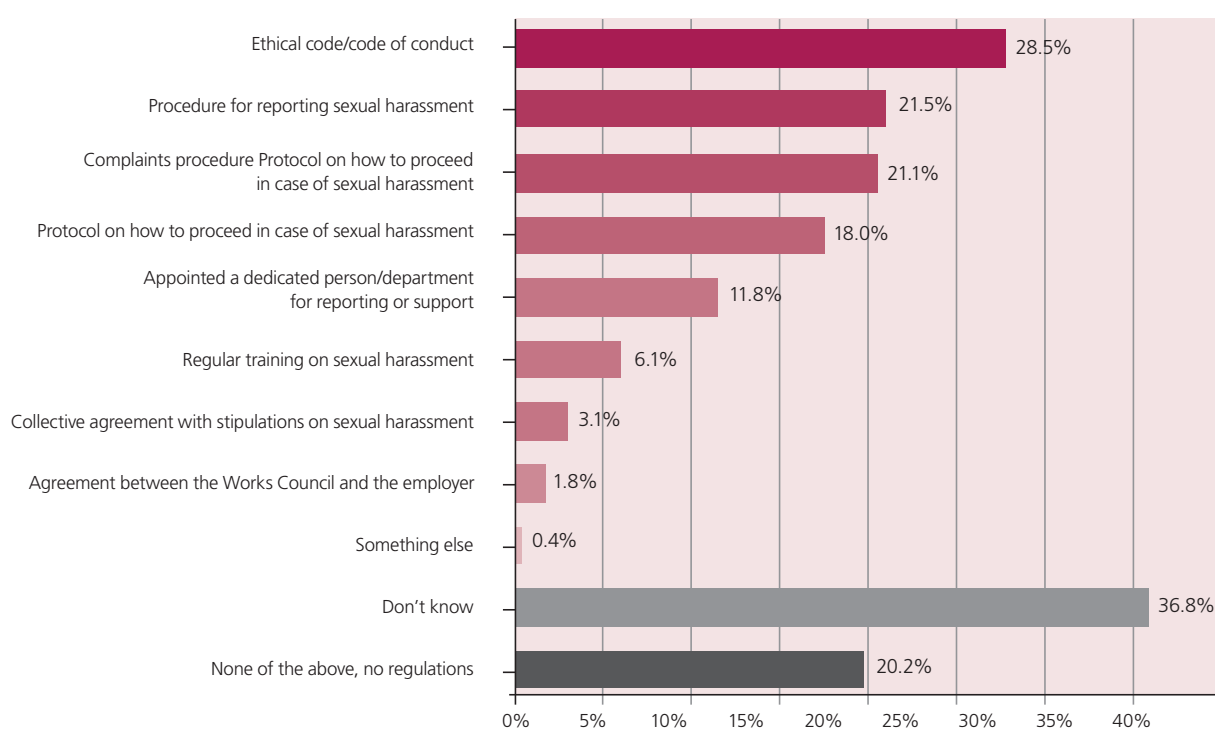
Based on the current survey relatively few enterprises have implemented the obligations of the new L.4808/2021 on policies concerning sexual harassment in the workplace and further actions should be taken on this issue by both employers' organisations and trade unions. Only 28.5% of current employers in Greece have ethical codes or codes of conduct, only 21.5% have procedures for reporting sexual harass-

ment, only 21.1% have complaints procedures, a mere 6.1% have regular training on sexual harassment and as few as 3.1% have a collective agreement with stipulations related to sexual harassment. Because there are so few ethical codes, collective agreements, protocols or regular training courses the effectiveness of the new legislation (L. 4808/2021) depends closely on adequate implementation of employers' obligations.

Furthermore, the current research shows that victims seek information on how to proceed in cases of sexual harassment in the workplace from responsible persons/ institutions (48.1%), professional (legal) support in reporting violence and harassment (43.8%), protection against further sexual harassment in the workplace (41.3%), moral support (34.9%), and professional help in understanding their rights (33.2%) (see Figure 12).

Figure 11

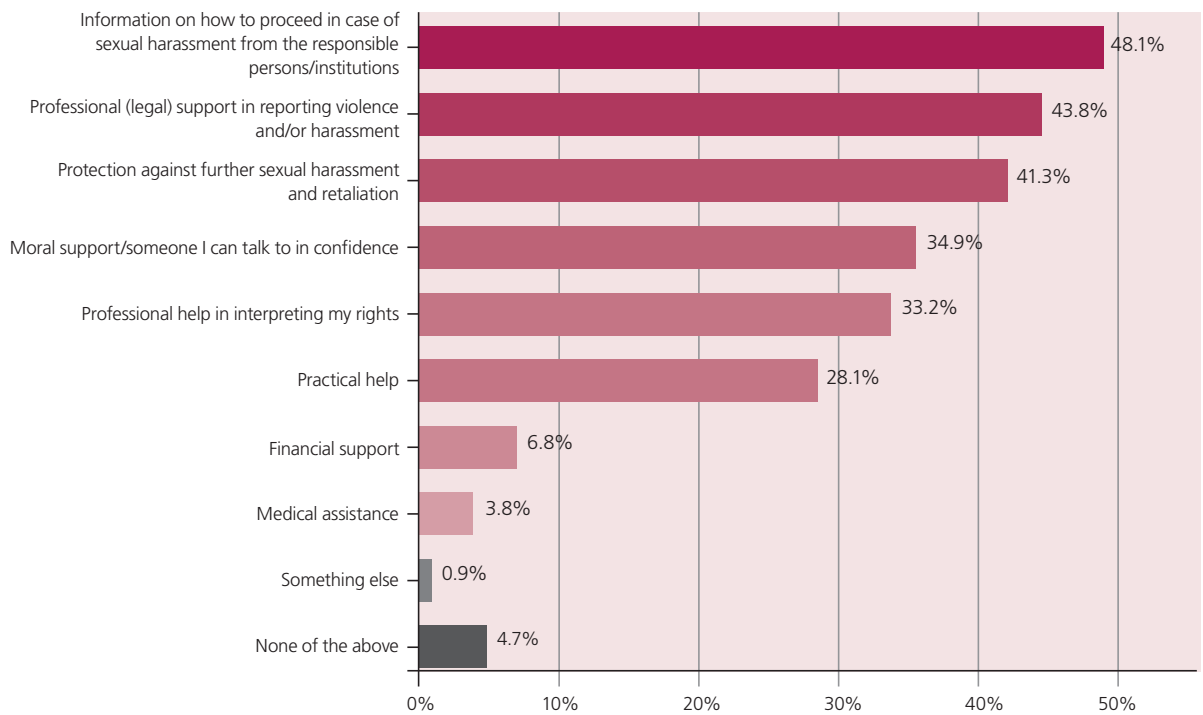
**Existence of policies at respondents' current employment aimed at preventing, addressing and penalising incidents of sexual harassment in the workplace (N=228, %)**



MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION

Figure 12

**Types of information and support respondents would find useful after experiencing sexual harassment (N=235, %)**



MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION



## 3

## CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Greece ratified ILO Convention No. 190 on violence and harassment at work in 2021 (L. 4808/2021). Its scope is broader than previously with regard to the world of work and includes gender-based violence and harassment. Through this ratification Greece has sent a strong message concerning the state's commitment to tackling violence and harassment in the workplace and creating an environment that is accessible and adequate for the protection of victims of violence and harassment. This commitment is related to the creation, monitoring and assessment of a coherent, adequate and transparent legal and procedural framework in both private and public sectors, but also wherever work is performed, including agriculture and the maritime sector.

The project survey shows that out of the 876 respondents who participated in the poll **31.4% (275 cases) declared that they had been victims** of sexual harassment in the workplace. Anyone can be affected by sexual harassment, but the research indicates that the **vast majority of victims are women (75.3%) and 21.1% are men (1.5% reported another gender)**.

The perpetrator is often a colleague (49.4%) or a boss or supervisor (40.4%). As already noted, most of the **victims are women (75.3%)** and the women who are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment include the financially dependent, single (18.4%), or divorced (13.5%), with migrant status (2.4%), the disabled (4.3%), ethnic minorities (5.3%), or women experiencing financial difficulties (32%). Risks are increased by abuses of power and the intersection, or combination, of factors. Sexual harassment in Greece is often based on unequal gender power relations, and it may push victims to try to reduce their working hours or to leave their jobs or even the workforce. For victims who remain in their job, sexual harassment may deter them from applying for higher-level positions and may affect their mental health. In the interviews we conducted women frequently reported that being sexually harassed made them feel embarrassed, causing them to avoid certain work situations and making them less confident at work, with a negative impact on their mental health, such as depression, anxiety or other adverse psychological consequences (21.9%). Thus, **the moral, physical, mental, communicational and financial cost is enormous**. Sexual harassment is a persistent problem in Greece, **affecting both the private (77.1%) and public (17.8%) sectors**, and

all occupations. However, it is underreported (a mere 1.6% reported sexual harassment in the workplace to the relevant authorities), due to a lack of trust in the effectiveness of reporting mechanisms, and also due to stereotypes, which tend to blame the victim instead of the perpetrator. Effective action against sexual harassment in the workplace requires a combination of legal framework, greater enforcement, adequately funded institutions and greater awareness of the issues. Sexual harassment in the workplace **affects workers, employers and the State** because it undermines workers' integrity, equality and well-being and also weakens enterprise productivity by weakening the bases upon which work relationships are built. It leads to significant reputational costs.

The full range of **unwanted behaviours under the aegis of sexual harassment were reported by the survey in Greece**, including non-verbal (inappropriate staring or leering, 65.5%), verbal (indecent sexual jokes or offensive remarks about the body, 46.2%), physical (unsolicited physical contact, 32.4%), and digital (inappropriate sexually explicit emails or text messages, 5.5%). **These unwanted behaviours** often happen in the workplace, such as inappropriate staring or leering (17.2%), indecent sexual jokes (17.6%), and unsolicited physical contact (8.6%). In most cases the perpetrator is a male colleague or co-worker (49.4%) or a male boss or supervisor (40.4%). The basic motivations seem to be sex (62.5%), age (41.1%), but also financial status (9.1%) and nationality (3.2%).

To prevent sexual harassment Greece needs to promote inclusive and supportive workplaces with clear policies and with trust in the competent authorities and relevant institutions. The current survey shows that victims don't proceed with reporting of cases of sexual harassment to the relevant institutions (**only 1.6% reported incidents to the competent institutions**) due to a lack of trust (27.2%) and the perception that »nothing could be done« (51.1%). Also, only 3.6% submitted a formal complaint to a particular unit in the workplace and 5.2% reported it to a trade union. Thus, in Greece generally speaking sexual harassment is not reported to the competent authorities, so most cases are not officially recorded.

The recent Law 4808/2021 introduces measures to be implemented by employers for prevention and protection, in the

private and public sectors, but implementation is still weak and only a limited number of enterprises comply. **The current survey of 876 respondents shows that only 31.4% of enterprises have ethical codes or codes of conduct, 21.9% have complaints procedures,** and only 4% are covered by a collective agreement with stipulations related to sexual harassment. Furthermore, some 23.4% have procedures for reporting, 21.9% provide a protocol on how to proceed in cases of sexual harassment, 12.5 % have a dedicated person or department for reporting or support, 7.3% have regular training courses on sexual harassment in the workplace and 17.3% have no regulations at all.

Furthermore, victims noted a confusion concerning the multiple roles and mandates of the protection authorities, such as the Labour Inspectorate, the Greek Ombudsman and the National Transparency Authority, stressing the need for a clear delineation of the competences of these bodies (especially in the public sector) and compliance, pointing out the dangers of overlaps.

As we have seen, the low numbers of ethical codes, collective agreements, protocols and regular training courses reveal that the effectiveness of the new legislation depends closely on the adequate implementation of employers' obligations. The latter is thus crucial to preventing and tackling sexual harassment in the workplace.

The phenomenon needs a holistic approach and coordination with all stakeholders to raise awareness and inform both employees and employers concerning sexual harassment in the workplace—related policies, consequences, rights, prevention and protection.

It is interesting that 9.1% of victims, as was revealed in both the survey and the interviews, became trade union members after an incident, indicating that the victims felt more protected as part of a collectivity in the workplace rather than being alone.

The survey and the interviews also show the need for guidance and continuous training courses to raise awareness of sexual harassment; identify, recognise and report incidents; provide essential support to victims; advocate for change; and serve as catalysts for cultural transformation.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

**A culture based on mutual respect and dignity** needs to be created in workplaces. Trade unions can play a crucial role on the **development of social culture**, also taking into consideration the fact that the exercise of collective labour rights is intrinsically related to the exercise of key human values, such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. Additionally, **deeper societal change** is needed. Employers' organisations can serve as knowledge-sharing hubs to exchange best practices in implementing workplace policies against sexual harassment. Furthermore, interministerial cooperation is important between the Ministry of Labour and other ministries with responsibility for the prevention and detection of sexual harassment in the workplace, such as the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Migration and also the **independent authorities and institutions**, such as the Hellenic Labour Inspectorate, the Greek Ombudsman and the National Transparency Authority. The Ministry of Education can also play a crucial role in societal change, raising awareness in schools regarding sexual harassment in the workplace and training the next generation of workers and employers.

- **An inclusive, integrated, holistic and gender-responsive approach in different areas of law** is required to cover, in law and practice, not only employee-employer relations, but also independent contractors, trainees, volunteers, job applicants and others, as well as platform workers. All actors need to work together to bring about the necessary comprehensive change to the whole system of individual and collective labour relations. Tripartite social dialogue could be the basic tool on this issue through the revitalisation of the relevant tripartite bodies on gender equality in the Ministry of Labour or other related tripartite bodies which don't operate at present. Also, deeper coordination is needed among the ministries and independent authorities with the national social partners of workers and employers. It is essential to join up the strategies, operations and knowledge of all state agencies in a coordinated approach if the fight against sexual harassment in the workplace is to be effective in the future.
- **Awareness-raising campaigns:** Many workers do not fully understand the various characteristics, forms and consequences of sexual harassment in the workplace and many enterprises have not yet introduced relevant policies. However, if the norms, values and beliefs of many in the population are to become better aligned with the applicable laws and regulations citizens, employees and employers must be better educated in this area. One way forward is to provide more information to citizens, employees and employers. At present, only a few initiatives have been pursued in Greece. The second and most important type of education is to teach both sides,

employees and employers, about the benefits and value of compliance with labour regulations. For this reason, tailored awareness-raising campaigns could be planned and organised in coordination with all the relevant stakeholders, including government, ministries, independent authorities and national social partners in specific sectors of the economy via the media, including newspapers and social media.

- **Protection of victims of violence with an effective institutional framework and coherent and stable national policies.** The mandate on gender equality is fragmented, especially in relation to work. There is also a lack of permanent social dialogue processes, which affects transparency, social liability and social control. There has been an increase in incidents of violence and abuse of women, which usually come to light from indirect sources. Such incidents tend to occur at times and in places when there is no possibility of timely intervention to protect the victim. This leads to low rates of complaint to the competent control authorities (1.6%), and thus to low rates of prosecution. The operation of shelters and counselling centres for victims of gender-based violence depend on European funds. The absence of stable and effective measures to protect victims demonstrates the lack of consistent vigilance on the part of the state with regard to violence against women. Another crucial factor in the effectiveness of national policies is the **quality and coherence of legislation**, providing due legal and procedural certainty. Greece should thus reexamine the content and coherence of all current legislation that regulates sexual harassment and violence at work and proceed without delay to its codification in compliance with EU and international law.
- **Systematic and regular maintenance of statistics.** This includes the effective, timely and adequate monitoring of gender-based violence, including at work. Strengthening the framework for the protection of victims and strict punishment of perpetrators is directly linked to the systematic and regular collection and processing of statistical data, which should be made directly and easily accessible to the general public. There should be detailed data by gender, age and other critical characteristics, also concerning the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. It has been pointed out that the maintenance of reliable and interoperational statistics by the HLI or the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family and the Ministry of Migration is essential in order to cope with illegal discrimination in general. Despite the development of databases across the ministries and relevant authorities a fully coordinated approach to data gathering and data sharing on sexual harassment in the workplace is lacking.
- **Accessible, transparent and effective complaints and reporting mechanisms** should provide victims with support, services and remedies without delay. Confusion and overlaps with regard to the mandates of competent inspection and other public authorities, along with procedural barriers and infrastructural deficiencies, adversely impact victims. As a result, the level of underreporting remains high, and perpetrators continue

to have a sense of impunity. Sexual harassment and violence incidents may thus increase in frequency. There is also clear evidence that counselling and information services, 24-hour hotlines, emergency services, medical care and treatment, crisis centres including shelters, specialised police units and specially trained officers are needed and should be part of a stable policy in terms of both commitment and financing.

- **Risk factors** should be eliminated, including stereotypes and unequal gender-based power relations. Abuse of power relations makes employees more vulnerable. OSH risks and factors should be prioritised and analysed through the collection of adequate data, to be regularly assessed through institutional tripartite social dialogue. The analysis and assessment of risk factors should be public and easily accessible to all, with special emphasis on official information gathering by the Labour Inspectorate and judicial authorities.
- **Specialised training** should also be provided **to public services and bodies** for the coherent implementation of national legislation, especially with regard to the sensitive examination of complaints, taking into consideration the personality of complainants, confidentiality and secrecy. Capacity-building among inspectors is important to improve their efficiency and effectiveness in tackling sexual harassment in the workplace on the basis of respect, trust and dignity.

### 3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRADE UNIONS

- **Trade unions should be a particular focus of awareness raising** with regard to sexual harassment and violence at all levels of workers' representation (national, regional, sectoral, professional, enterprise). The promotion of a working environment free of discrimination, harassment and violence should be a priority for trade union collective action, especially with regard to respect for workers' dignity, health and safety. **Special training** is needed on the legislative and procedural framework for the protection of victims of sexual harassment and violence at work, with a focus **on the role and resources of trade unions** in supporting victims.
- **Restoration of collective bargaining and collective agreements**, given their acknowledged important role in the development of binding provisions on harassment and violence at work. **Collective agreements** can introduce measures aimed at breaking down the climate of impunity and sexism, and foster policies for prevention and protection with regard to sexual harassment in the workplace and awareness-raising. The restrictive measures imposed on the collective bargaining system in Greece have also had an important impact on efforts to tackle sexual harassment through collective agreements. Collective negotiations and collective agreements, due to their participatory character and collective nature, are effective instruments for the promotion – through binding provisions – (also) of a working environment free from harassment and violence and for the adoption of measures

on prevention, protection, workplace policies, gender-responsive training and awareness raising.

- **The regular and effective functioning of institutional tripartite social dialogue** has been presented last so that it can be seen in the context of all the above-mentioned recommendations. Tripartism, which involves workers, employers and the Government in social dialogue, particularly in the context of **monitoring progress on the implementation** of ILO Conventions, should be implemented more effectively in Greece. Unfortunately, there is a lacuna, also with regard to gender equality, in institutional dialogue procedures, resulting in a crucial information and monitoring deficit. This also adversely affects implementation of ratified ILO Conventions. Tripartite engagement (employers, workers and the Greek Government) through social dialogue can play an essential role in building respectful gender-responsive workplace cultures, while joint campaigns could mobilise Greek society. Tripartite constituents must therefore be involved and have a voice, contributing a range of approaches and solutions from parties directly concerned.

### 3.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE TRAINING COURSES

One of the pillars of an inclusive, integrated and gender-responsive approach is guidance and training (Art. 11 Convention No. 190 and Recommendation No. 206). **Technical and vocational education and training programmes (TVET) and skills development** on risks of sexual harassment must be organised by both workers' and employers' organisations. This must include **both synchronous and asynchronous distance learning**. Legal and procedural stability and certainty are crucial for effective training courses. All workers need unhindered access to safe, healthy and inclusive learning and training environments without discrimination. Positive action should be taken, also with regard to training courses, to help people more vulnerable to harassment and violence (women, LGBTQIA+ persons, migrants/refugees, persons with disabilities). Actionable strategies, policies, checklists and campaign materials should be provided to ensure information on how to protect learners, trainers and staff from sexual harassment in the workplace (ILO 2024). Within the framework of the current project the interviewees underlined the need for such training courses in workplaces, emphasising the importance of continuity and consistency. Continuity of training courses could help in particular victims and potential victims to learn more about sexual harassment in the workplace and its reporting to the competent authorities. It could also help perpetrators or potential perpetrators to identify the different forms of sexual harassment in the workplace and to avoid it in the future. The Greek social partners have significant experience in the promotion of equality and non-discrimination, as acknowledged with regard to their commitment through the National General Collective Agreement in 2014 (Art. 1) to engage in joint awareness-raising and training actions to combat illegal discrimination at work, which indeed took place throughout Greece in 2015.

**Main goal and objectives:** Training should explain in simple terms: (i) what sexual harassment is, by providing information on how to identify sexual harassment, providing definitions of the concepts of discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as diversity; (ii) the issues covered by the law; (iii) complaints procedures; (iv) complaints procedures in enterprises; (v) the forms and types of sexual harassment in the workplace; and (vi) the consequences for worker victims, other workers, employers and the State, as well as how to develop protection in order to build an inclusive culture.

**Where:** Training could be organised in **13 Regions (Periferias)** around Greece in collaboration with the regional trade unions and employers' organisations, the Labour Inspectorate, the Greek Ombudsman, and NGOs. As it concerns the health and safety dimension of sexual harassment and violence at work, training could be coordinated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, along with the Hellenic Institute for Occupational Health and Safety (ELINYAE), which is the national institution supported by national social partners' organisations (GSEE on behalf of workers and SEV, GSEVEE, ESEE, SETE and SVE of behalf of employers). ELINYAE has been recognised by law as the official state institutional advisor. Face to face training courses could take place but also e-learning training courses with the possibility to study in the workplace or else via a developed e-learning platform. The training could be interactive, flexible and easily accessible to all employees.

**Who: Trainers** could be high level specialists, occupational doctors, psychologists, social workers and mental health professionals.

**For whom:** The seminars could be addressed to:

- **trade union representatives** at regional, sectoral, professional and enterprise level;
- **representatives of employers' organisations**, also HR executives and managers, supervisors, members of business and organisation management, executives in departments dealing with the cultivation of a culture of safety and respect in the world of work;
- **professional organisations**, such as bar associations, medical associations and police representatives.

**What:** A combination of theory and practical exercises is needed. The learning materials have been prepared by the abovementioned stakeholders, but they need to be updated, especially as concerns the procedural framework and the competencies of the state authorities. They can then be disseminated in workplaces by trade union and employer representatives. ELINYAE (ELINYAE 2020) could help to present the OSH risks and other factors in the workplace. Case studies could help people to recognise the influence of gendered power relations, organisational structures and culture on sexual harassment in the workplace. Stakeholders could develop a joint awareness programme to prevent and combat sexual harassment in the workplace. Codes of conduct and guides of good practice, such as the one published by the ILO in 2024, could be among the tools to be discussed and present-

ed. The ILO could participate in these training courses to present the main goals of Convention No. 190 and its implementation and support Greece through awareness-raising initiatives, promotional materials, research and technical assistance. By the end of the course, trainees will acquire empowerment and empathy. They will gain awareness of forms of sexual harassment in the workplace, enabling them to identify, recognise and respond effectively to potential incidents. Trainees can become confident in reporting and providing support to victims, ensuring prompt and adequate assistance. Training should provide certification of participants' acquisition of knowledge.

As a follow-up of the current project, focusing on the implementation part, a training programme or awareness-raising campaign (or both) could take place starting next year, 2025. Implementation should have a clear pilot character, being realistic about the available financial and human resources. A prerequisite for this is the cooperation of all stakeholders, employees, employers and independent authorities. An agreement should first be reached between these parties or at least between the parties that are willing to participate in this initiative. GSEE with labour centres all over Greece, but also the employer organisations could play a crucial role in the design and implementation of the abovementioned pilot programme. These parties will agree on the content and implementation of the project and be involved in all phases. Its pilot character lies in the fact that a particular region or sector will be chosen for implementation of this project. It should be noted that national social partners already have experience of joint actions to promote social dialogue to combat discrimination at work, as agreed in the General National Collective Agreement of 2016, which ended with jointly agreed declarations.

One example of a possible training programme would include an asynchronous series of short videos containing useful information arising from the relevant legal framework. All training courses or campaign materials should be available in both Greek and English. With the support of employers, these videos would be made available to all employees in the region or branch. The extent and precise characteristics of this implementation phase will depend on the availability of stakeholders.

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## ANNEXES

## 1. STRUCTURE OF THE SURVEY SAMPLE

Category	Number (N)	Percentage
Respondents	876	100%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	557	64.8%
Male	282	32.8%
Other	9	1.0%
Prefer not to answer	12	1.4%
<b>Age categories</b>		
18–29	77	8.8%
30–39	143	16.4%
40–49	383	43.8%
50 or more	271	31.0%
<b>Trade union membership</b>		
Member of a trade union	408	52.7%
Member of a trade union at the time they fell victim to sexual harassment in the workplace	113	44.7%

## 2. STRUCTURE OF THE SURVEY SAMPLE OF 275 VICTIMS

Category	Number (N)	Percentage
Respondents	275	100%
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	207	75.3%
Male	58	21.1%
Other	4	1.5%
Prefer not to answer	6	2.2%
<b>Age categories</b>		
18–29	35	12.7%
30–39	54	19.6%
40–49	122	44.4%
50 or more	64	23.3%
<b>Trade union membership</b>		
Member of a trade union	148	53.8%
Member of a trade union at the time they fell victim to sexual harassment in the workplace	113	44.7%



### 3. FIGURES – SURVEY SAMPLE

Figure 1  
How old are you? (N=874)

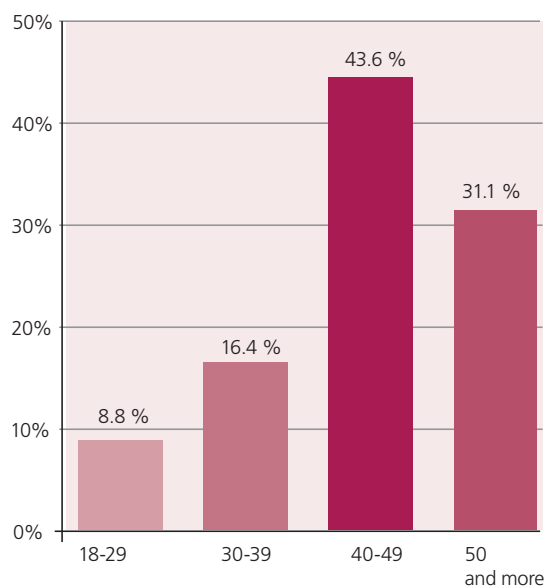


Figure 2  
What is your highest completed educational qualification? (N=865)

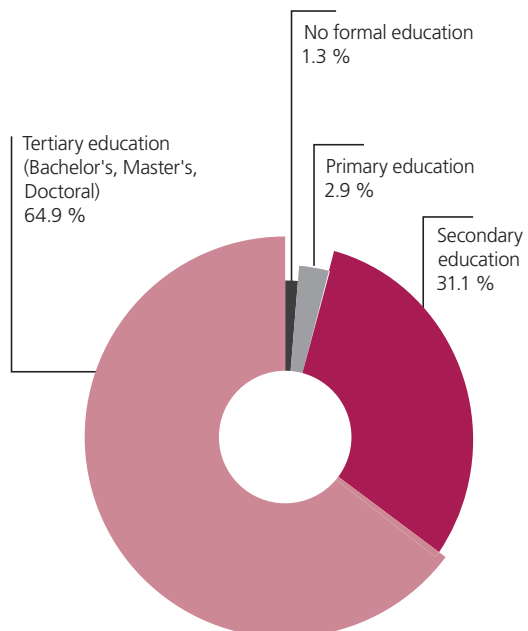


Figure 3  
What is your sex? (N=860)

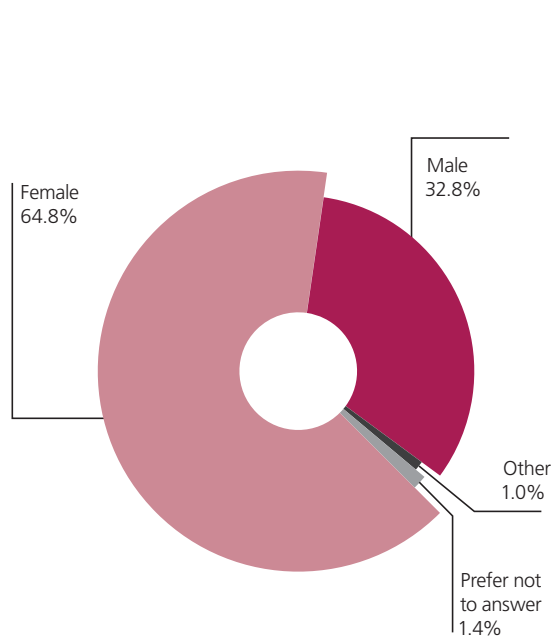


Figure 4  
What is your current legal marital status? (N=855)

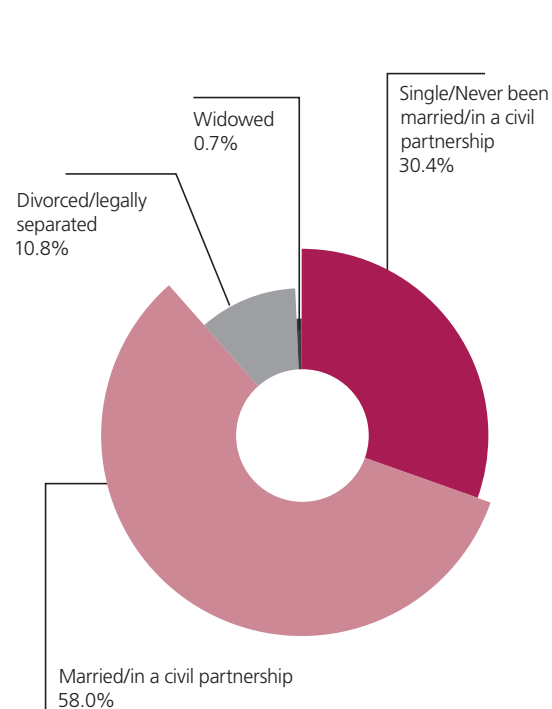
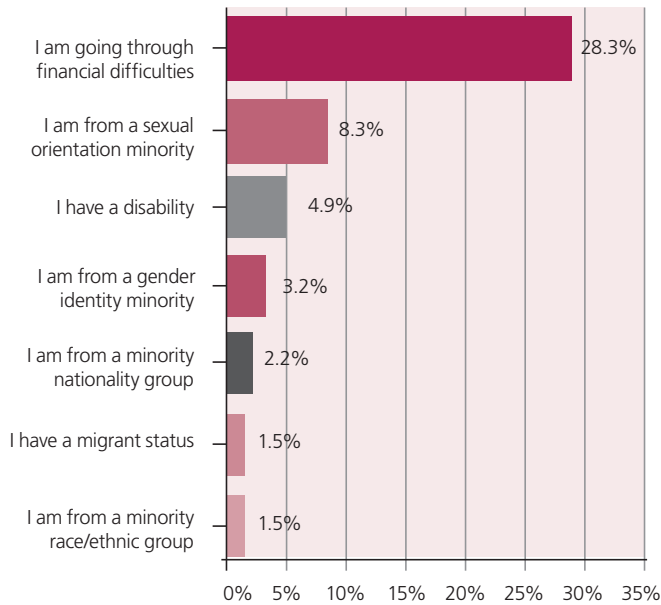


Figure 5  
Do you present any of the following characteristics? (N=815)



MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION

Figure 6  
Which kind of company do you currently work for? (N=810)

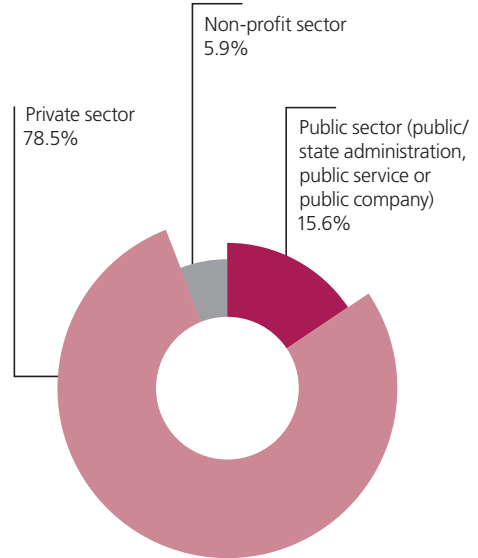


Figure 7  
Sector in which respondents currently work (N=796)

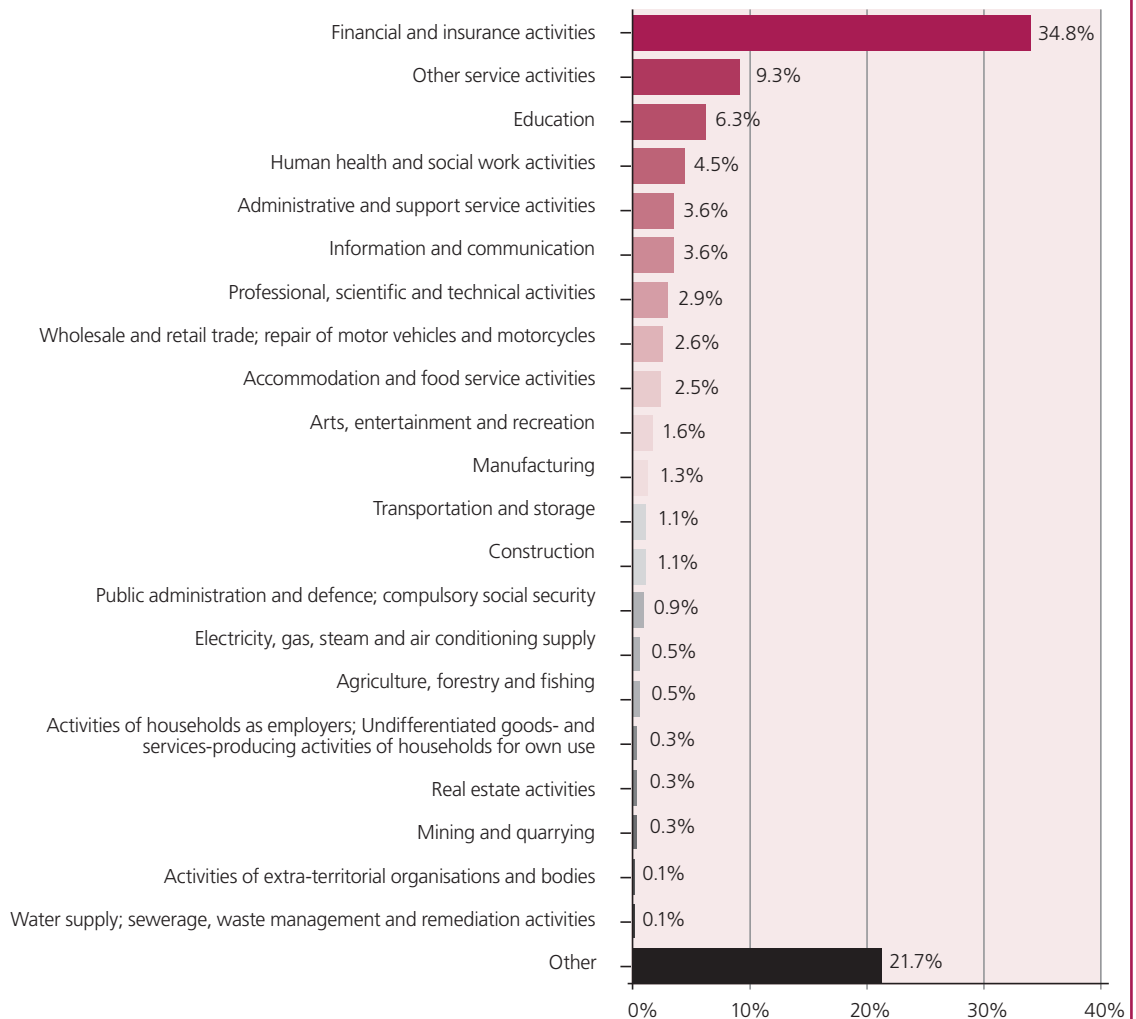
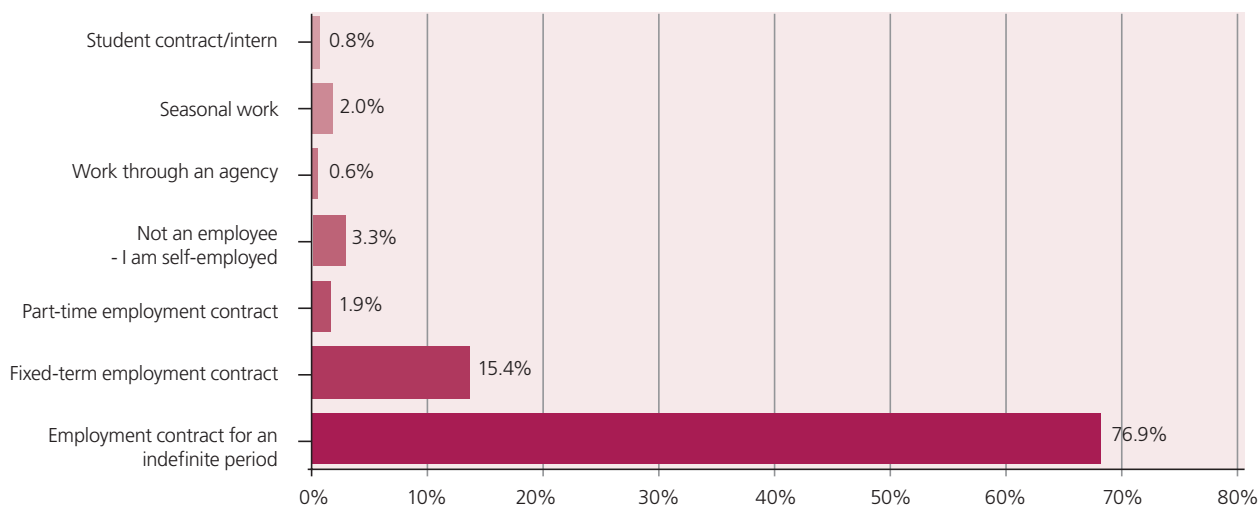


Figure 8  
**What contract do you have in your current job? (N=794)**



MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION

Figure 9  
**How many employees does your current employer or you as self-employed employ? (N=785)**

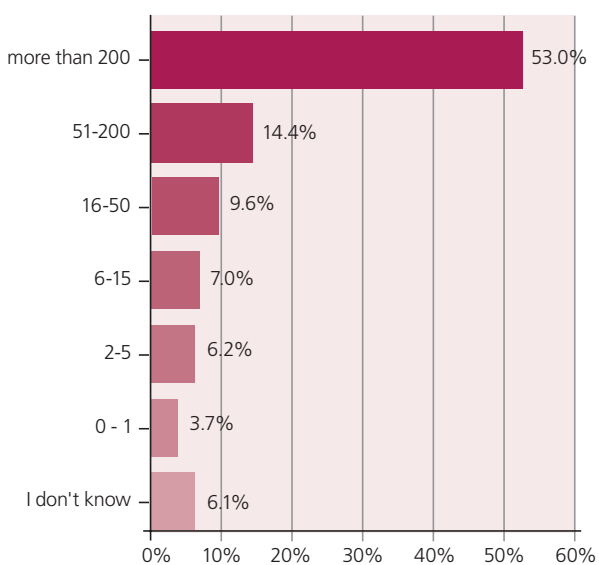


Figure 10  
**What is the employee structure like in your current job? (N=777)**

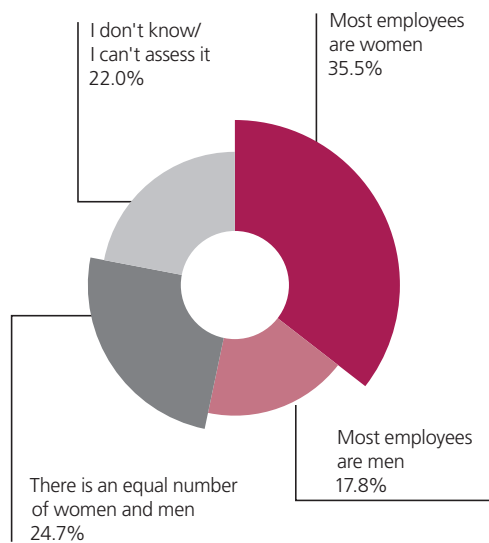


Figure 11  
**How many years have you worked at your current job? (N=776)**

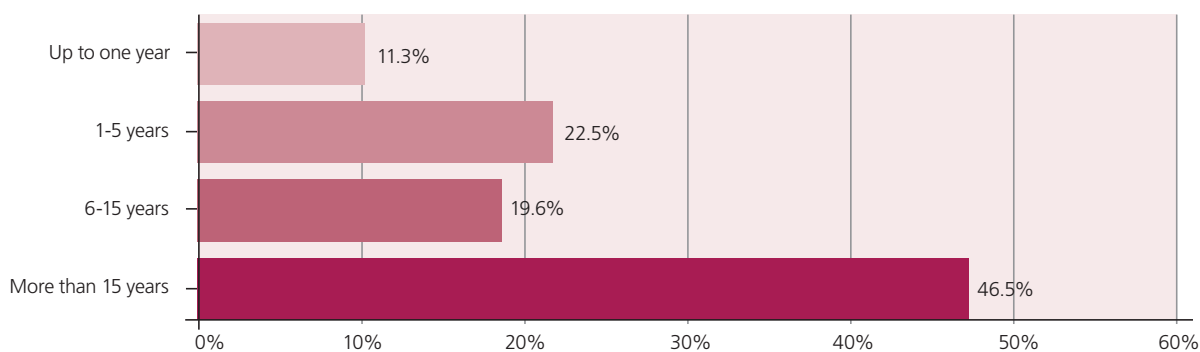


Figure 12

**Are any trade union or employee representatives operating at your current workplace?  
Are you a member of a trade union or any employee representative body? (N=774)**

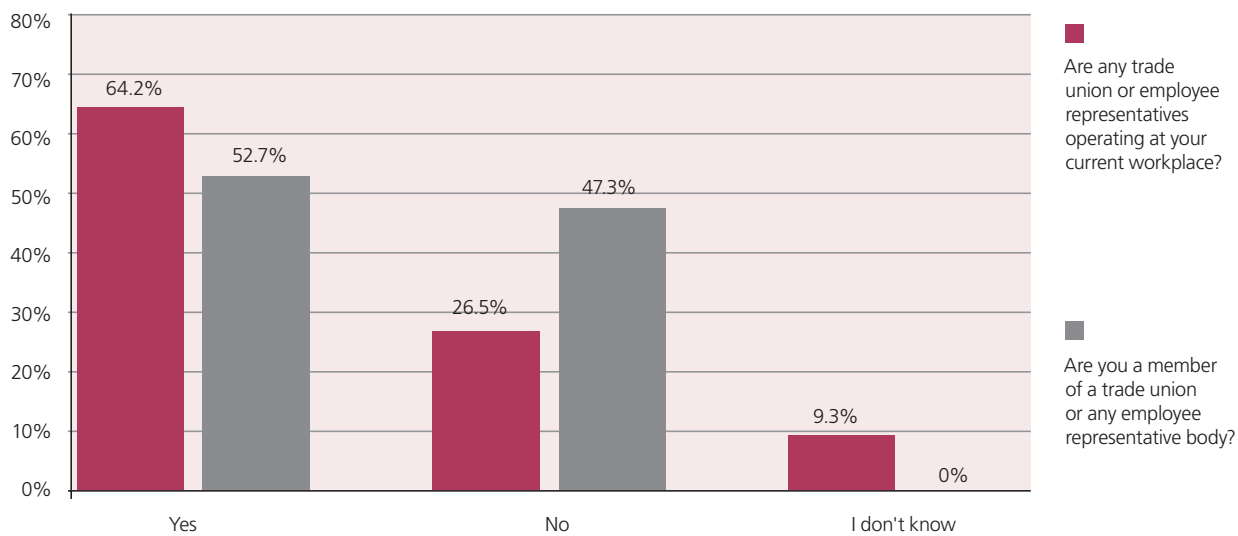


Figure 13

**What position do you have in the management hierarchy of your current employer? (N=765)**

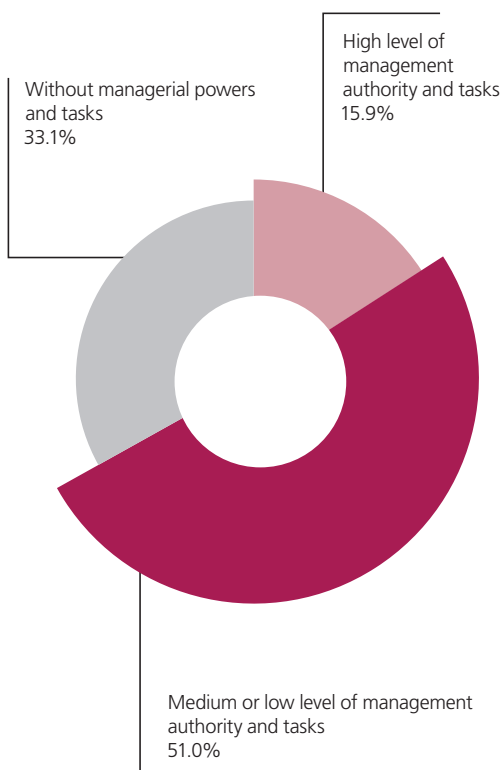


Figure 14

**What type of contact with the customer/client/patient you have in your current job? (N=753)**

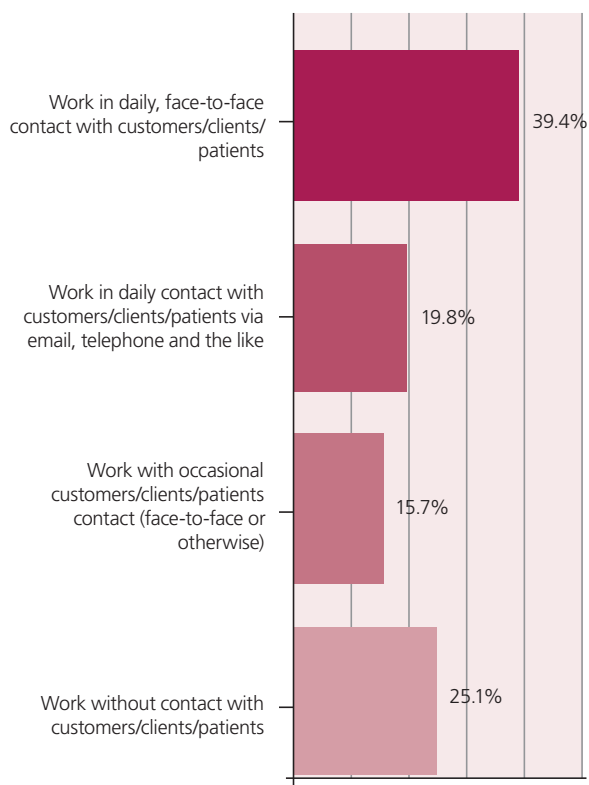
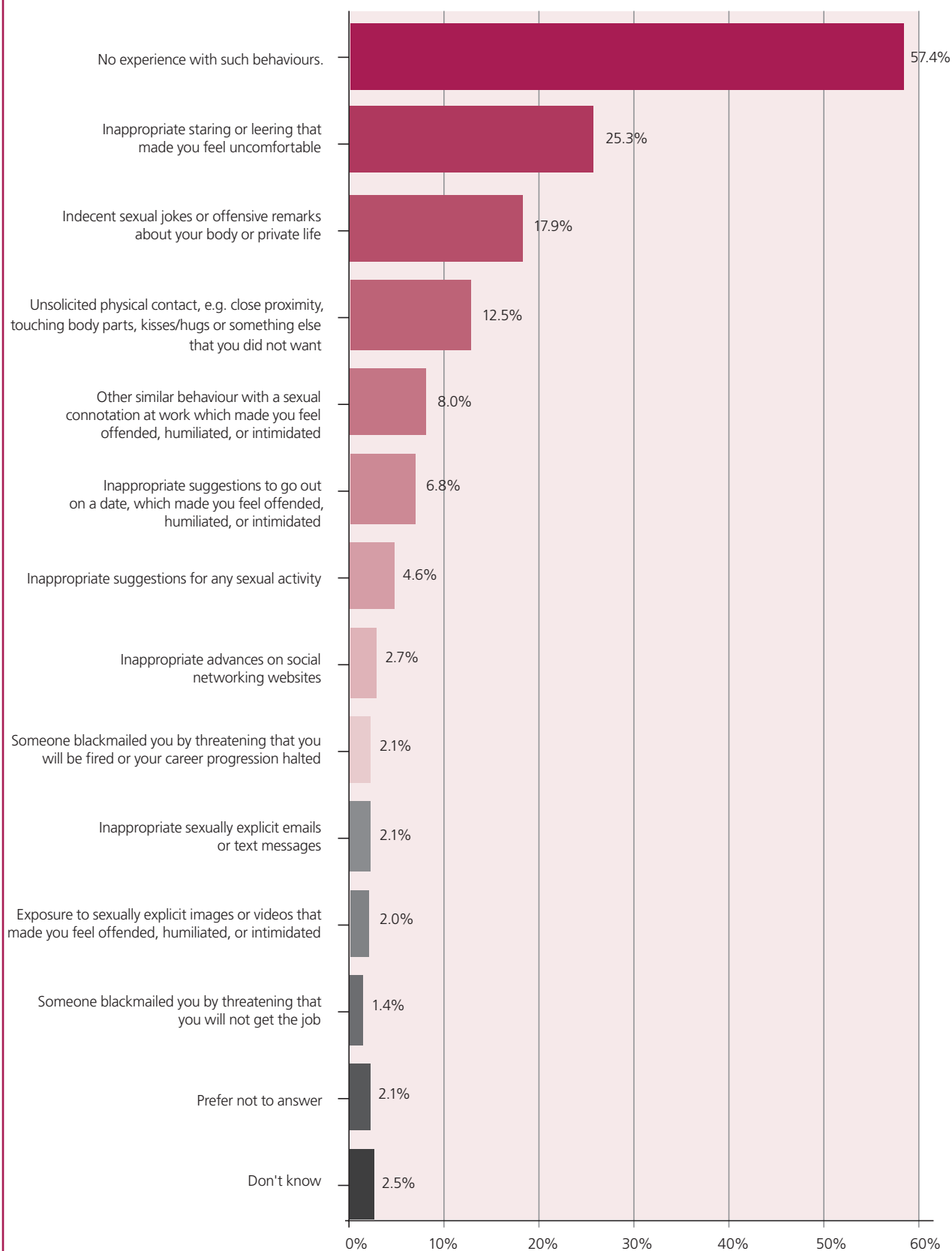


Figure 15  
Experience of unwanted behaviour in current employment (N=711)



MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION

Figure 16  
**Frequency of unwanted behaviour in current job (N=275)**

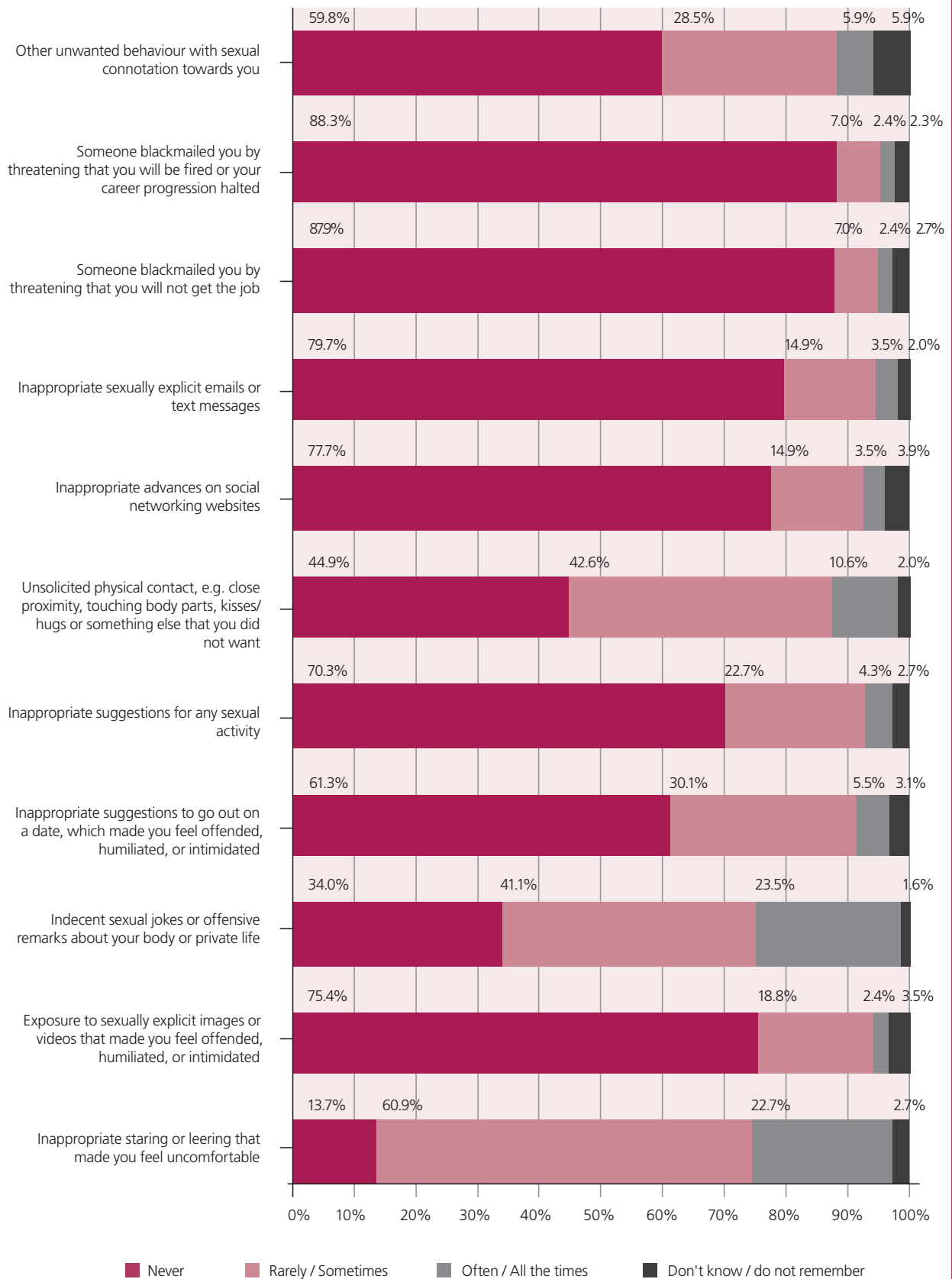
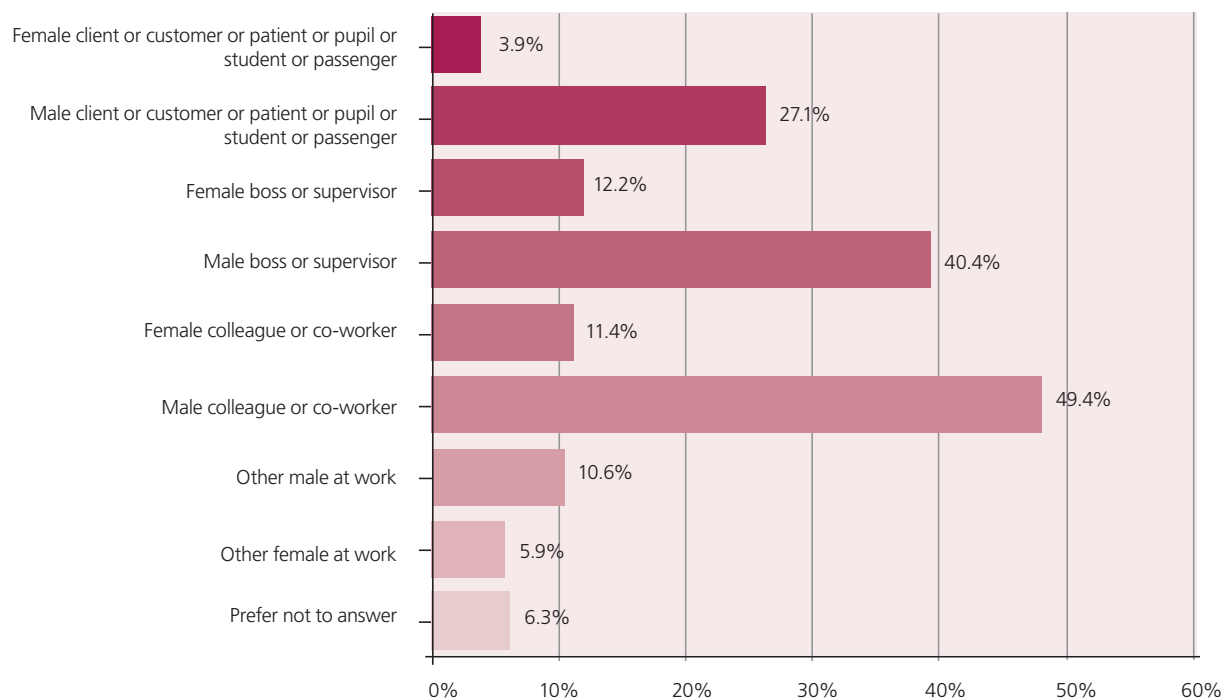
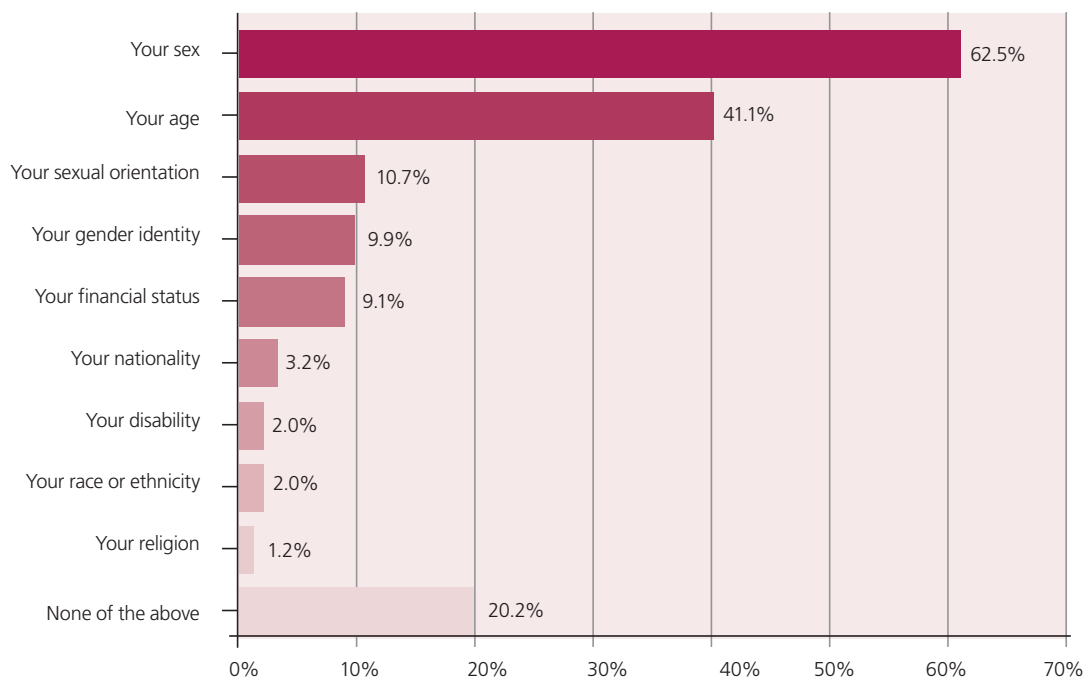


Figure 17

**Perpetrators of sexual harassment reported by respondents (N=257)**

MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION

Figure 18

**Thinking about all the incidents of sexual harassment you experienced, do you perceive that they might be motivated by any of the following characteristics? (N=257)**

MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION

Figure 19  
**Were you a trade union member at the time when the sexual harassment incidents happened? (N=253)**

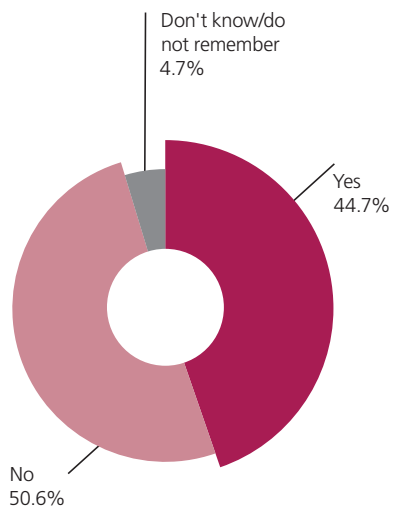


Figure 20  
**Consequences of sexual harassment reported by respondents (N=252)**

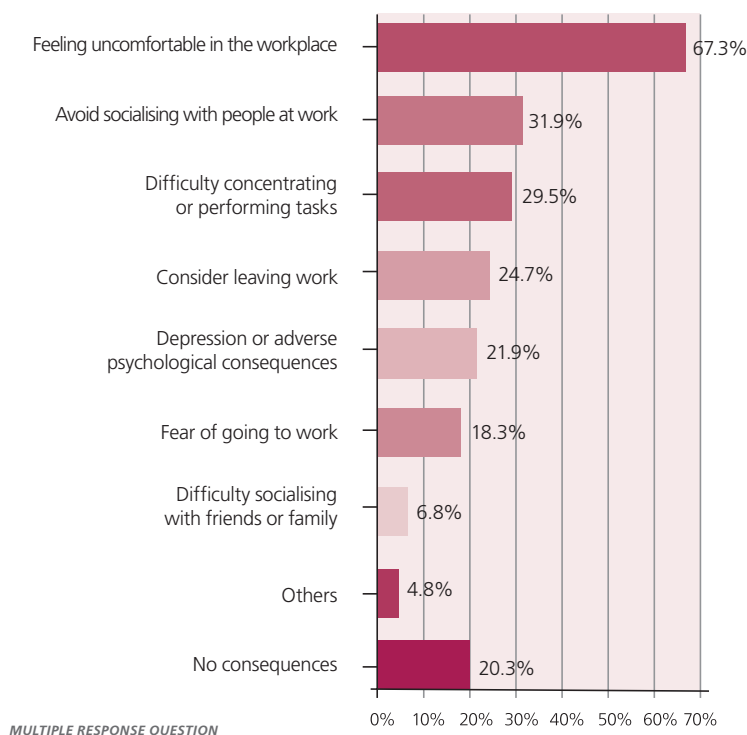


Figure 21  
**Respondents' reactions to sexual harassment (N=250)**

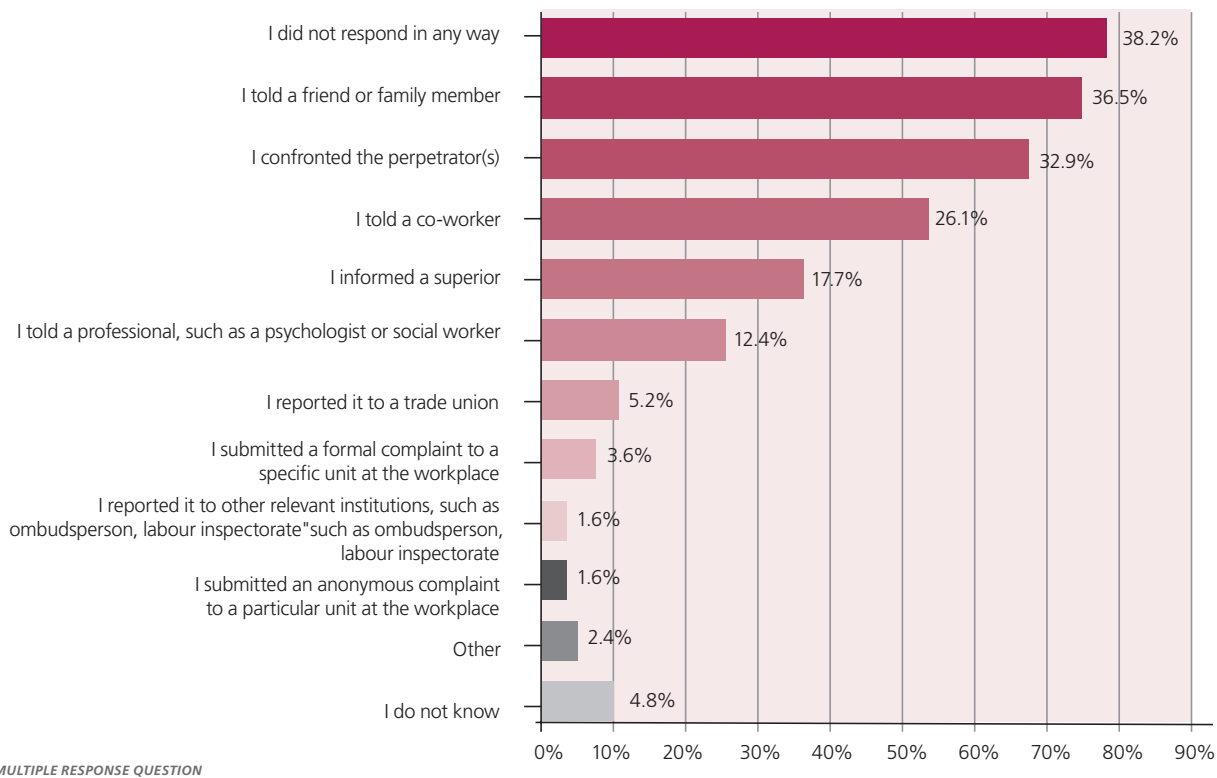
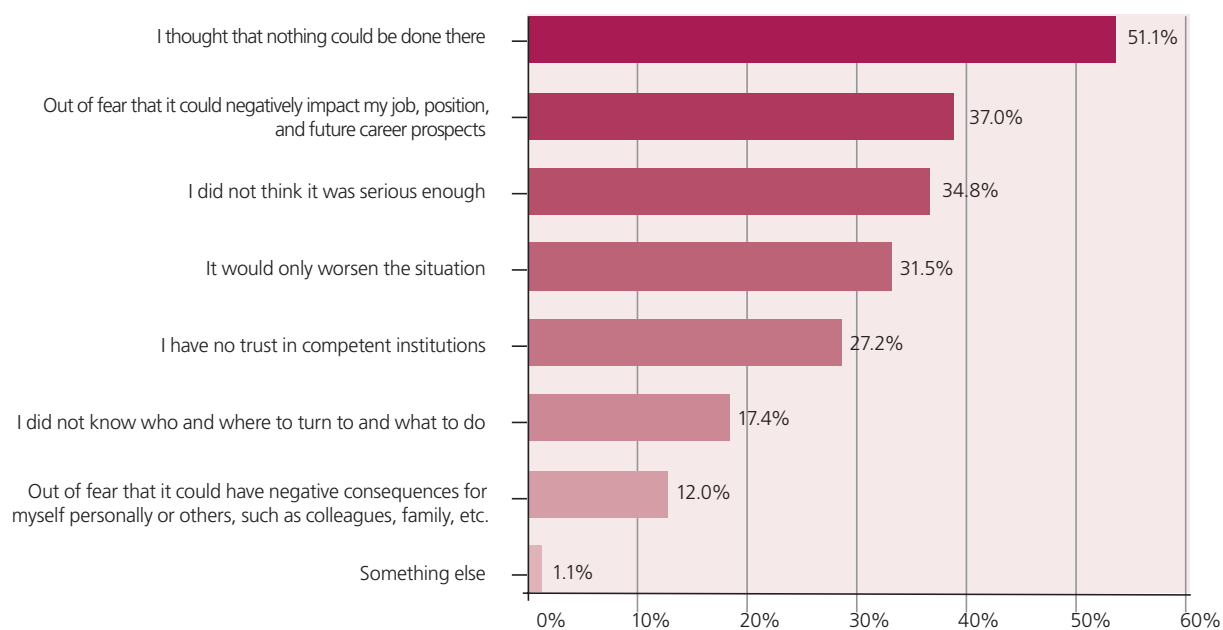


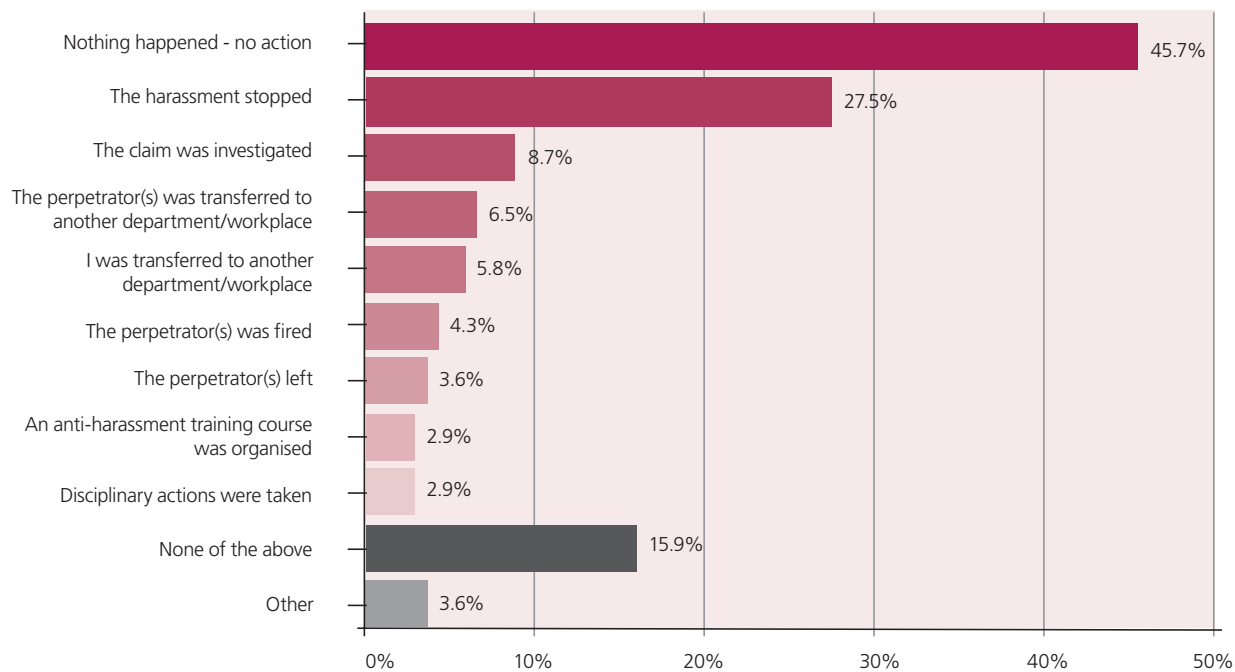


Figure 22

**Reasons for not responding to sexual harassment (N=93)**

MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION

Figure 23

**What happened after respondents reported or confronted sexual harassment (N=138)**

MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION

Figure 24  
**The outcome of submitting a formal or anonymous complaint (N=138)**

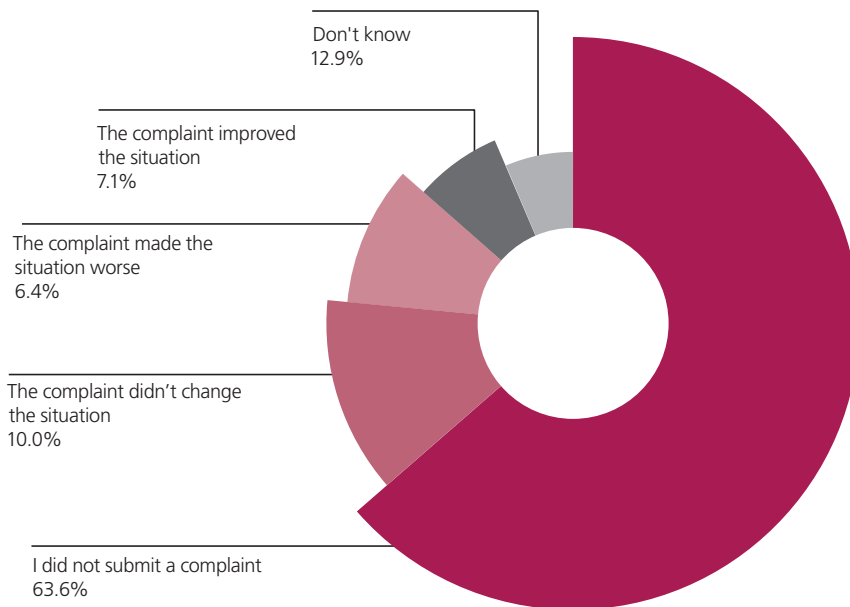


Figure 25  
**Do you think that your current employer is doing enough to: (N=666)**

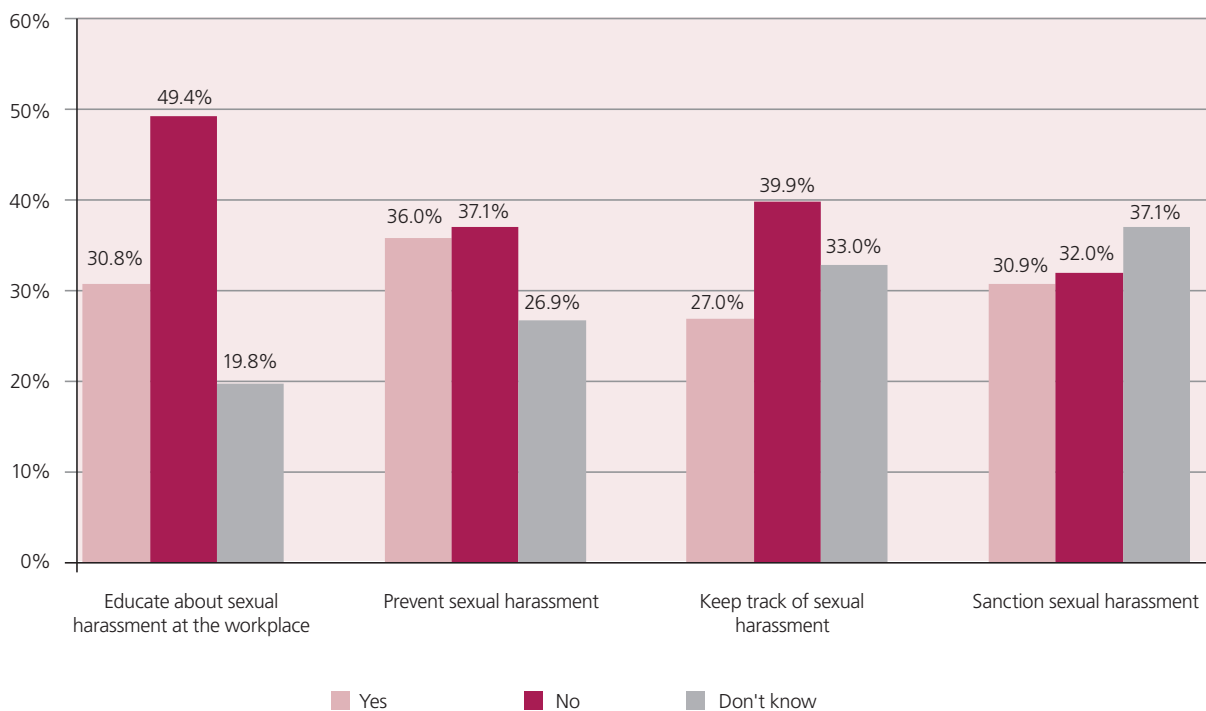
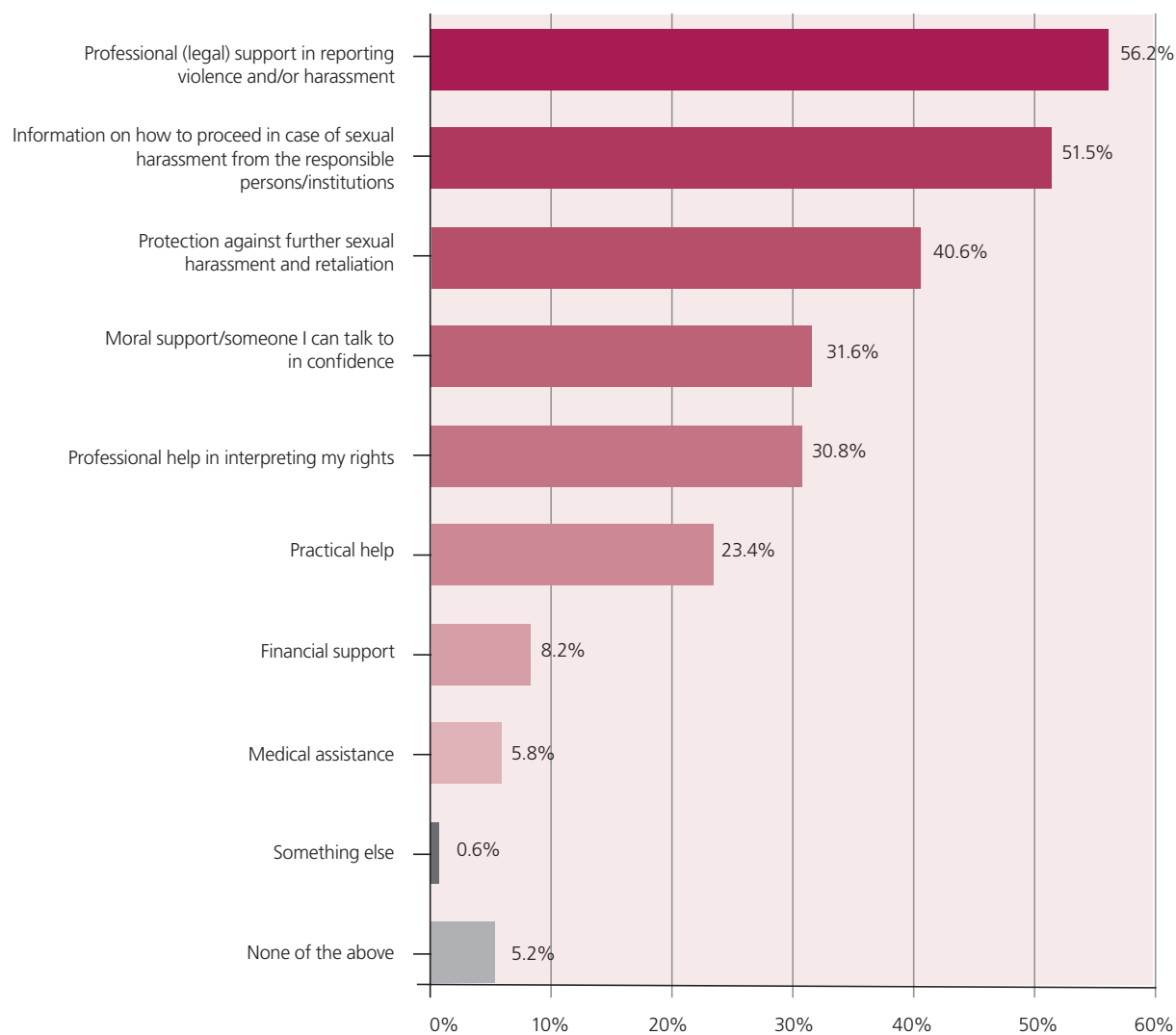


Figure 26

**Types of information and support respondents would find useful after experiencing sexual harassment (N=632)**

MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION

Figure 27

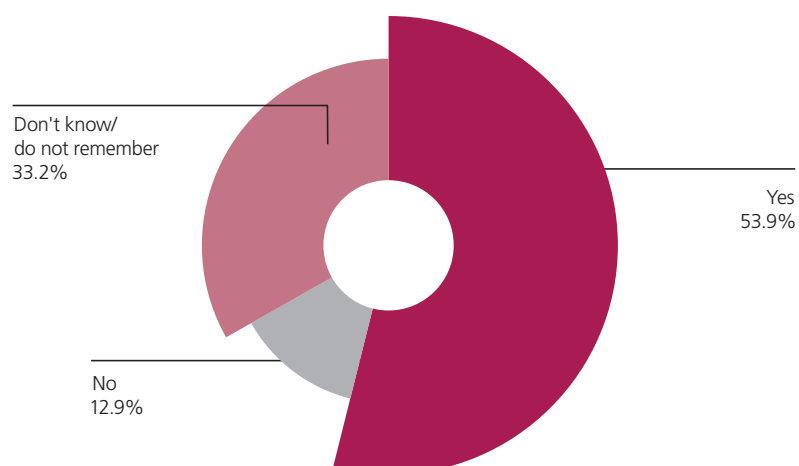
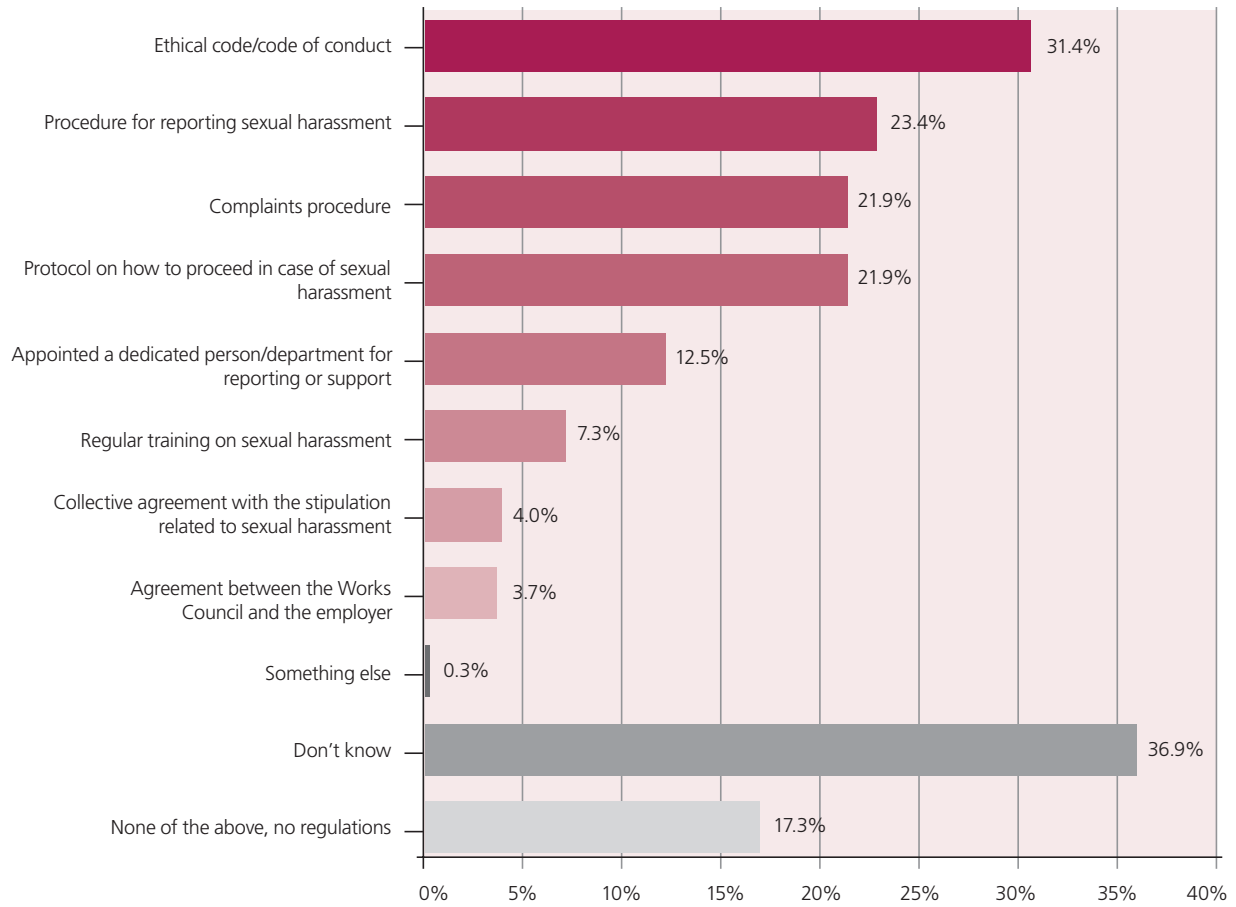
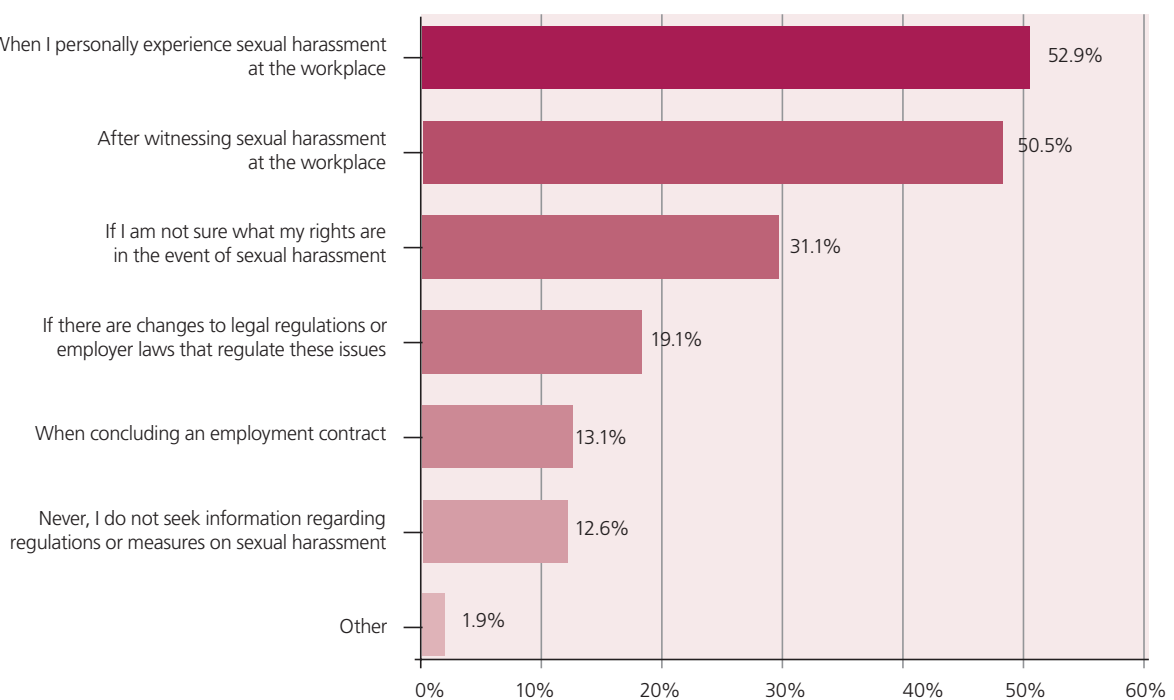
**Are there any regulations to prevent, address, and penalise workplace sexual harassment in your country? (N=621)**

Figure 28  
**Existence of policies at respondents' current employment aimed at preventing, addressing and penalising incidents of sexual harassment in the workplace (N=621)**



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Figure 29  
**When would you seek information about regulations, procedures and measures related to workplace sexual harassment? (N=602)**



MULTIPLE RESPONSE QUESTION

Figure 30

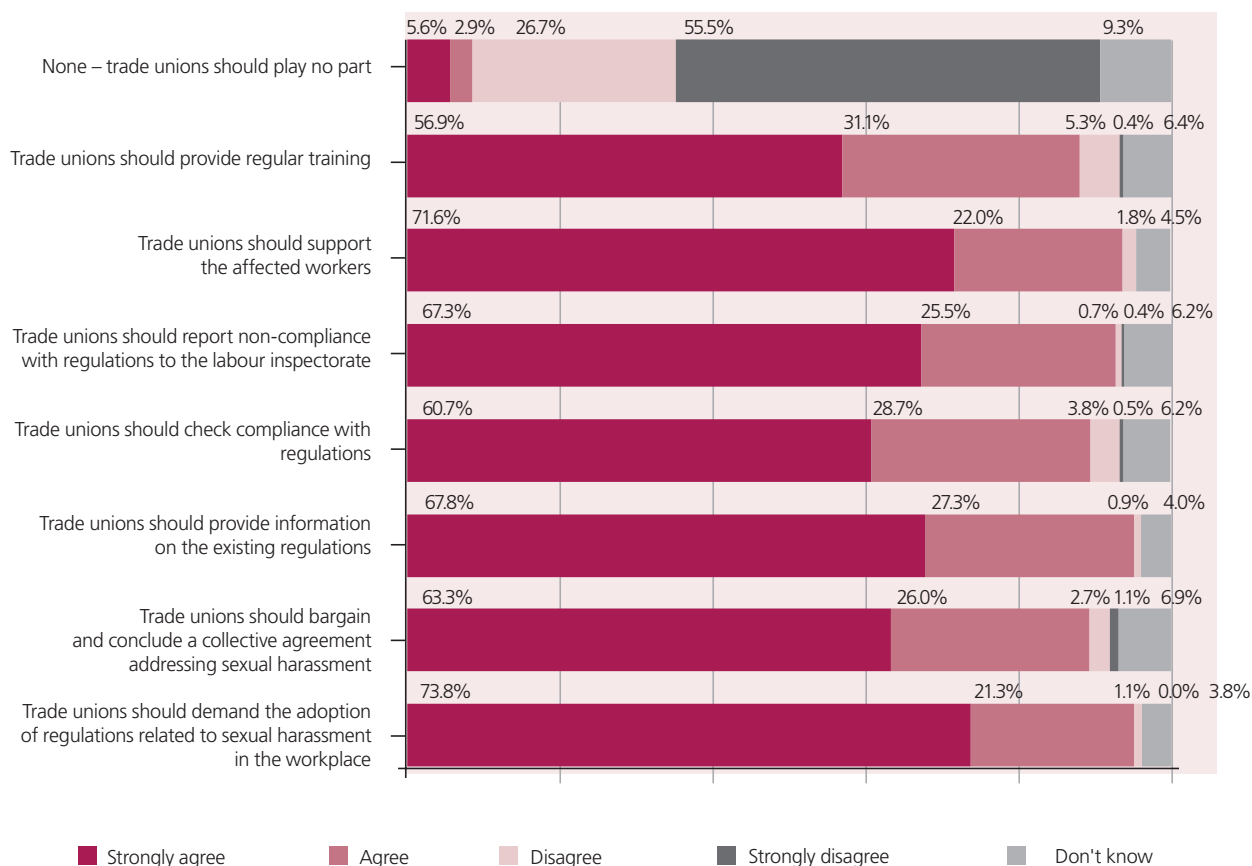
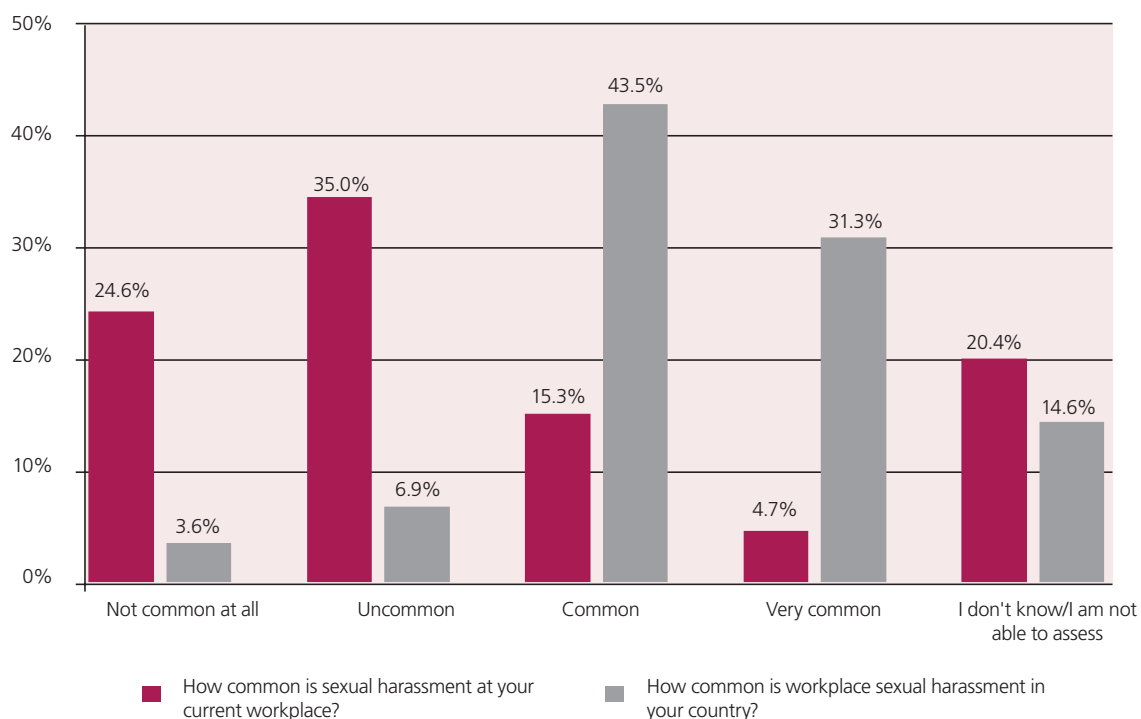
**Role trade unions should play in combating sexual harassment in the workplace (N=550)**

Figure 31

**How common is sexual harassment at your current workplace? (N=549)****How common is workplace sexual harassment in your country?**

## 4. LIST OF INTERVIEWS

IDI code	Date of the IDI	Description of communication partners			
		Gender (F/M/Other)	Age (if not known, estimate)	Sector	Member of trade union (Y/N)
IDI1	17.09.2024	Male	40–49	Financial sector, banking	Yes
IDI2	18.09.2024	Female	30–39	Engineering	Yes
IDI3	25.09.2024	Male	35–40	Research centre	No
IDI4	01.10.2024	Female	30–35	Telecommunications	No

## 5. DESCRIPTION OF FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Date of focus group: 30 September 2024

A.		Female	Male
<b>I.</b>	<b>Confederation (third level)</b>		
1.	Greek General Confederation of Labour GSEE's Secretariat of gender equality, individual and social rights	3	2
<b>II.</b>	<b>Sectoral federations (second level)</b>		
2.	Greek Federation of Bank Employee Unions	1	
3.	Hellenic Federation of Insurance Company Employee Associations	1	
4.	Panhellenic Federation of Workers in Food in Tourism Sector	1	
5.	Hellenic Federation of Unions of Hospital Institutions	1 + 1	
6.	Hellenic Federation of Spectacles and Audio	1	+1
7.	Journalists' Union of Athens Daily Newspapers	1	
<b>III.</b>	<b>Labour centres (regional) (second level)</b>		
8.	Labour Center of Athens	1	
9.	Labour Center of Thessaloniki	1	
10.	Labour Center of Herakleion		1
11.	Labour Centre of Rhodes	1	
12.	Labour Centre of Korinthos	1	
13.	Labour Centre of Fthiotida	1	
14.	Labour Centre of Katerini	1	
15.	Labour Centre of Veroia	1	
16.	Labour Centre of Florina		1
	<b>Total: 22 (16 organisations)</b>		

Date of the focus group: 30 September 2024

B.		Female	Male
<b>I.</b>	<b>Ministries</b>		
1.	Ministry of Labour and Social Security	2	
2.	Ministry of Social Cohesion and Family	1	
3.	Ministry of the Interior	2	
<b>II.</b>	<b>Independent Authorities</b>		
4.	Ombudsman	2	
5.	Hellenic Labour Inspectorate	1	1
6.	National Transparency Authority	1	
7.	Greek National Commission for Human Rights	1	
8.	Greek Member of the European network of legal experts in gender equality		
	<b>Total: 12 (8 authorities/institutions)</b>		

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Dr Athina Malagardi** is a Supreme Court lawyer in Greece (2000–2025), with expertise in individual and collective labour law. She is also a mediator/conciliator of collective labour law disputes at the Organization of Mediation and Arbitration (2011–2025). From 2016 to 2023 she was the ILO's National Project Coordinator in multiple ILO technical cooperation projects in Greece, funded by the EU, such as: (i) the ILO technical support project «Support for the operational modernization of the Labour Inspectorate and the Mediation and Arbitration Service (OMED) in Greece» (2022–2023); (ii) the ILO project »Supporting the implementation of the roadmap on tackling undeclared work in Greece« (2019–2020); and (iii) the ILO projects »Supporting the transition from informal to formal economy« and »Strengthening the labour administration system and its delivery capacity in Greece« (2016–2018). For two years (2009–2011) she served as legal advisor to the Greek Minister of Culture and Tourism and for four years (2003–2007) as an expert consultant to the Greek Parliament. Dr Athina Malagardi holds a PhD and an LLM in Labour and Employment Law from the Faculty of Law of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, where she was also awarded her law degree. She speaks fluent English, French, Italian, Spanish and German, in addition to her mother tongue, Greek. She participates as a speaker in many national and international conferences and congresses. She has collaborated with the ILO's International Training Centre in Turin (ITC-ILO) and has many publications in labour and employment law in English and Greek.

## ABOUT THE STATISTICIAN

**Konstantinos Boukouvalas** is a statistician and data analyst, who graduated from the Department of Mathematics at the University of Patras with a specialisation in Statistics. He went on to complete postgraduate studies, graduating with an International MSc in Statistics from the Athens University of Economics and Business. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Department of Social and Educational Policies of the University of Peloponnese. Since 2002, Mr Boukouvalas has been employed as a statistical analyst at the Labour Institute of the General Confederation of Greek Trade Unions (INE GSEE). His areas of expertise include statistical processing, data analysis and sampling for surveys and studies in the fields of development and economic policy, social policy and employment, education and training of workers and the unemployed.

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# NATIONAL REPORT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

Violence and harassment in the world of work are widespread in all countries, including Greece. They affect or can affect everyone, regardless of gender, although certain groups may be more vulnerable. Various factors can cause or increase the risk of violence and harassment, such as gender and/or sexual orientation, discrimination on one or more grounds prohibit-

ed by law, stigma, poor working conditions, informal employment, stress and work-related exhaustion. The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) in Athens, in cooperation with the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) and the Secretariat for Equality and Individual Social Rights of the Confederation, agreed to cooperate in the implementation of the project

"Sexual Harassment in the Workplace", coordinated by the FES and the Central European Labour Studies Foundation (CELSI). The result of this cooperation is the present report, authored by Ms Athina Malagardi, Doctor of Labour Law, and statistically analysed by Mr Konstantinos Boukouvalas, Statistical Analyst at INE GSEE.