

**VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN AT
THE
WORKPLAC
E ... LET'S
TALK
ABOUT IT!**

The effects on women's
mental health cause of
their harassment in the
workplace

This is an informative guide for female employees on recognizing and confronting violence and harassment in the workplace. It's also a useful resource with good practices, for employers on the women's prevention of violence and harassment at the workplace.

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The information included in this guide does not necessarily reflect the attitude or the European Commission's opinion.

Mental Health Europe

The Mental Health Europe is a European NGO which is a dedicated network to promote mental health and well-being services, the prevention of mental disorders, the improvement of care in the defense of social inclusion and the protection of human rights and especially people with mental health problems, as well as their families and carers.

The Mental Health Europe (European Agency for Mental Health) is recognized by Belgian law as an international non-profit organization. The members of Mental Health State Europe include NGOs, individuals, professionals, volunteers and others, including people with mental health problems; all these are active in mental health issues at local, national, regional or European level. They try to share and support the Mental Health Europe vision. The Mental Health Europe represents and supports the common interests of these organizations; of individuals and pressure groups who try to influence the decision making (lobbies) at a European level.

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On this occasion we would like to thank our partners in this program and all the women who participated in it, for their dedication and enthusiasm to achieve our goals. We look forward to future collaborations, joint activities and programs that will refer to gender inequalities issues and to mental health in Europe.

*Mary Van Dievel - Director
Mental Health Europe*

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*Women make up more than half of the world population,
but only fifth of them are the leaders of the world's
decision makers. Women are underrepresented in formal*

politics, and often the voice is not heard in decision-making into important political areas, such as in domestic and professional life. Lack of access in education and resources place them in highly disadvantaged position in the economy. Every day, women around the world face discrimination, poverty, violence and abuse. This is especially true for women who are already marginalized: disabled, indigenous, HIV positive, unofficial workers and immigrants.

British journal The Guardian newspaper

**** Introduction**

The Mental Health Agency Europe has a long experience in the field of women's mental health.

In order to prepare the idea of this project, the MHAEE advisors on Women's issues and Mental Health, met each other several times to discuss the Daphne Programme and Call for Proposal- to develop a proposal that will contribute to the protection of women against all forms of violence at their workplace -and promote the mental health and wellbeing of women. Some of the partners are involved in these preparations and shared their experiences from their work with

women's mental health problems who have suffered by violence abused.

The organisations that cooperate were selected by 8 different countries, and represent different realities and varying rates of recorded violence against women:

- 3 organisations from countries where rates are above average rates of violence and harassment against women at work (Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia);
- 2 organisations from countries with recorded rates of violence and harassment against women at work approaching the average (Austria, Greece);
- 3 organisations from countries recorded lower than average rates of violence and harassment against women at work (Cyprus, Latvia and Spain).

This booklet is targeted to women workers, workers' representatives and employers. Its aims are to provide guidance, to identify and struggle the psychosocial risks into the workplace.

It will outline with a very coherent way the concepts of specific psychosocial risks cause of the workplace violence and why this concealed problem must be tackled.

It will describe how sexual harassment is recognized, where someone can address for help and how somebody can be protected against psychological consequences. In addition it will describe the measures should be taken by an employer to ensure that all his/her staff is well-educated about bullying (bullying), harassment, violence and also to ensure that staff are aware of the consequences of violence in the workplace (physical and / or psychological) and to provide information about the development of effective policies against bullying.

About women-victims, it provides an indicative list of bodies you can contact with, if you are a victim of these behaviors in the workplace.

It is estimated that one in three women worldwide will experience some form of discrimination based on her gender, in her lifetime. Despite efforts by the international community and the commitment of the majority of states to fight discrimination against women, including through the validation of the Pact to Combat All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), women remain victims of violence and discrimination in all regions of the world.

The violence against women takes many forms and includes - among others -the domestic violence, rape, trafficking of women and girls and forced prostitution.

The violence against women is multilateral and linked to inequalities among the gender roles and to socio-economic policy structures, both in the public as well as in the private life. Violence strengthens and perpetuates gender inequality. Thus, violence against women is a key issue in the study of gender inequality and discrimination as well as to other social issues such as health and poverty.

The persistent press of women's lobbies and organizations for human rights worldwide has achieved to place the Violence against Women in the human rights agenda.

“The promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment is clearly a vital part of the UN mandate. The improvement on gender equality strengthens the respect towards human rights. It reduces also the poverty and stimulates the economic development and health and is proven as essential for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. This December is 30th Anniversary of

the Covenant on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW, an event that will motivate us to do a report of what has been achieved and how much work will have on gender equality”.

Statement by Mr. Johan RutgerSSon, Second Secretary of the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the United Nations, on behalf of the European Union

"Progress of Women" (Article 14 (a) July 28, 2009, Geneva)



Violence against women at their workplace...

Let's talk about it!

The last few years, studies on international working conditions indicate that **an increasing number of health problems**

associated with work created due to psychological rather than physical causes¹. Psychological violence can include different forms of violence such as sexual harassment, bullying (bullying) or moral harassment (mobbing).

Many studies refer that women are at high risk of accepting violence in the workplace. Particularly, a study by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions² present, among the 31 European countries which are under investigation, including the 27 EU Member States, that **female workers are, in an extensive degree, more exposed to bullying (bullying) at work than their male colleagues**. The difference is even greater in the case of sexual harassment (three times more) that women workers report having suffered from sexual harassment the last 12 months, compared with their male colleagues. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, women are over-represented in many “ high-risk” professions such as teaching, social work, nursing and other health professions, work in banks, shops, hotels, restaurants and factories. The continued separation of women in low-paid and low prestigious jobs (while men prevail in jobs with higher pay, prestige and supervisory positions) contribute also to the problem. Finally, there are several factors associated with work-related violence and harassment. These include the difficult working conditions (overload work, fast work pace, etc.), various aspects of the working framework (wage cuts, lack of support from employers, etc.) and some elements which are connected with the organization of work ((administrative methods that favor competition of workers, etc.)³.

¹ *European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. 2007. Women and Violence at Work.*
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/pubdocs/2007/110/en/1/ef07110en.pdf> (consulted on 31 Mar. 08).

² *Ibid.*

³ *Canadian Women's Health Network. 2007. A Call to Action: Women's Health at Work & Violence in the Workplace.* <http://www.cwhn.ca/resources/workplace/violence.htm>

Hidden Problem

In today's global and competitive markets, the factors associated with violence in the workplace are becoming more common. International studies have shown that **40 to 90 percent of women, who were questioned about the violence, have suffered from some kind of violence or harassment during their working life**⁴. Nevertheless, violence and harassment are problematic concepts. According to the World Health Organization, efforts to collect data to measure the scope and extent of violence and harassment against women are hampered by a number of factors, including a) the influence of social and cultural norms in determining what constitutes violence, impeding universal consensus on a definition of violence against women, b) changes in rates of abuse complaints according to the definition of violence was used, c.) The way questions are asked, d.) the type of target-population, and e.) the environment into which the interview was held (secluded place, home, etc.)⁵. Violence and harassment are **"Hidden effects"**⁶, which are difficult to understand. As a result, many serious incidents of violence and harassment may not be reported or not recognized.

In an individual level, the pain and humiliation resulting from violence and harassment-often leads to lack of motivation, loss of confidence, reduction of self-esteem, anger, depression, anxiety and irritability. As with stress, these symptoms are likely to evolve into physical illness, mental disorders, tobacco abuse, alcohol and drugs. They can culminate with the appearance of working accidents, incapacity for work, and even suicide.

Violence and harassment at work have a direct impact on women, but also affects employers and their enterprises as well as to the wider community.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ World Health Organization. 2000. *Violence against Women*.

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/index.html> (consulted on 31 Mar. 08).

⁶ European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. 2007.

Violence, Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace.

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/reports/TN0406TR01/TN0406TR01.pdf>

In the workplace, violence causes instant and often long-term disruption not only to interpersonal relationships, but also to the organization of work and the overall working environment. The employers are pressed by the direct result; such as, cost of lost work and the improved security measures that they have to imposed. It may also cause indirect costs of reduced efficiency and productivity; reducing product quality, loss of company image and a reduction in the number of customers. At the level of society, the costs of violence include the health sector -mental health-, and long-term rehabilitation costs for the integration of women victims, costs associated with unemployment and retraining of women who lose their job as a result of this violence, and costs for the disabled victims⁷.

Women at the workplace

In many countries, women represent a growing part of the workforce. Nevertheless, an extensive number of women employed in insecure jobs, often with little job security, low wages and harsh conditions. This is not limited to the developed world. For many women in developing countries work experience is unpleasant, the mistreatment and sexual harassment constitute common phenomenon which often is nourished by cultural and religious beliefs. While an increasing number of women acquire management positions, are still facing problems related to exclusionary practices or degradation of women by male colleagues trying to threaten them. Sexual harassment is frequently used as a general screening

method for women and not only as men's sake to "keep women in their place."

⁷ International Labour Organization. *Introduction to Violence at Work*. 1996-2008.
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/violence/intro.htm#wmnrisk>
(consulted on 31 Mar. 08).

***The undesired sexual harassment or behavior based on
gender affecting the dignity of women at work.***

Rubenstein, 1988



The extent of sexual harassment, bullying and mobbing

Despite the interest in recent years for sexual harassment issues, few precise empirical studies have been carried out. Such studies are often based on self-selected samples⁸. Generally; there is a lack of empirical studies on sexual harassment, which is expanding in the area of gender harassment. It seems that women are reluctant to report sexual harassment; thus, the perpetrator is empowered and keeps the victim silent and slave. This abuse and silence seems to be the reasons behind the lack of empirical data.

In a study in the U.S.⁹, a sample of 447 women in the private sector and of 300 female workers at universities 40.9% and 15% respectively considered their experience during the last 24 months as a sexual harassment. A much larger number referred personal harassment, on a repetitive basis.

Studies in the UK indicate that between 16% and 75% have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace with higher percentages in students' population¹⁰.

An extensive German study undertaken by the Federal Institute for Occupational Health and Safety concluded that more than nine out of ten women have suffered from sexual harassment at the workplace during their working life.

In a study in Bulgaria, 10% of women workers said they received sexual connotation questions during the interview for recruitment.

⁸ Einarsen, S. (1996) *Bullying and Harassment at Work: Epidemiological and Psychological Aspects*. PhD thesis, Department of Psychological Science, University of Bergen

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Hoel, H. & Cooper, C.L. (2000a) *Destructive Conflict and Bullying at Work*. November 2000, Unpublished Report, UMIST, UK.

A percentage of 15% had also received unwelcome contact from colleagues or supervisors. As a result of their refusal to these proposals, 33% said they suffered by negative consequences¹¹. The workers under 33 years old were at the greatest risk. In the age group 18 to 25, almost 50% received comments with sexual connotation.

The **moral harassment (mobbing)** and the submission of an employee to psychological harassment includes actions such as: continuous negative comments or criticism, isolation, spreading gossip or ridiculing the person to whom they refer¹². Mobbing occurs in environments that contribute to its development. This usually involves workplaces with unqualified administration, without skills to resolve differences and lack of understanding about bullying and its consequences. Even worse are the workplaces where management

deliberately uses mobbing methods to remove staff, despite the devastating consequences it causes. This phenomenon prevails particularly in times of economic crisis; the employer bullies an employee to quit, rather than to fire him.

Bullying in the workplace constitutes offensive behavior through vindictive, resentful, malicious or humiliating attempts to go down a person or a group of workers. Such persistent negative attacks on personal or professional performance are typically unpredictable, irrational and unfair. People intimidate systematically to reduce the target-person in order to erode any later support.

These people slander this target-person to others: colleagues, administration, representatives of trade unions, the human resources department etc. Mobbing consists part of the bullying group involvement. Management and others withdraw support and eventually participate in attacking the target-person, with the same enthusiasm as the original bully. Colleagues who are afraid of themselves, look from the other side or actively participate. The group is set against the person.

11 Gutek, B.A. & Koss, M.P. (1993) *Changed women and changed organisations: Consequences of and coping with sexual harassment. Journal of Vocational Behaviour, 28-48*

12 *International Labour Organization. Introduction to Violence at Work. 1996-2008.*
<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/violence/>

Violence

Verbal abuse: insults, curses, or use of degrading language.

Threatening behavior - this includes hits in furniture or walls, shaking fists, throw away objects or property damage.

Physical attacks include: pushing, blows, kicks.

Violence at the workplace does not need necessarily happen at the workplace. It can happen in any event the work that can be done outside the workplace, such as conferences, social events and fairs, or completely out of business, as in the case of threatening phone calls.

There are many elements of a workplace - such as the procedures applied and interaction styles - that put workers at greater risk of the workplace violence.

These items may include:

- Working directly with the public.
- Performing inspections or enforcement duties.
- The management of money or valuables and drugs' prescription.
- Providing services, advice, education or health care.
- Direct collaboration with unstable people.
- Working in places where alcohol is sold or served.
- The direct work with communities.
- The solitary work or work in very small groups or in isolated areas.
- The work during the night.
- The work in times of organizational or political change or instability.

While accidents and attacks injure and kill people quickly and spectacularly, bullying and consequent extended negative stress traumatizes and kills people slowly and secretly. The result, however, is the same.¹³

¹³ International Labour Organization. *Introduction to Violence at Work*. 1996-2008.

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/safework/violence/intro.htm#wmnrjs>

The effects of bullying and harassment in mental health

It has been found that exposure to workplace bullying and / or sexual

harassment is linked to the following:

- Anxiety.
- Depression.
- Aggressiveness.
- Insomnia.
- Melancholy and apathy.
- Cognitive effects such as concentration problems.
- Insecurity and lack of initiative.
- Lack of satisfaction at work and lack of commitment to the organization.
- Risky behavior and increased propensity for accidents.
- Harmful habits e.g. increased smoking and alcohol consumption.
- Bad nutrition.
- Poor concentration and diminishing self-confidence.
- Personal withdrawal, often leading to social isolation.
- Negative effects on family and private life.
- Intolerable strain on relationships.

Post- Traumatic Stress Disorder

Often, mobbing causes the end of person's career, of marriage, health and victim's energy. In the most severe cases of bullying, victims have been diagnosed with PTSD /post- traumatic neurosis. In a Norwegian study which compared victims of severe bullying cases and people who had undergone dramatic disasters¹⁴, a large percentage of bullying victims were found to suffer from symptoms of PTSD to a greater extent than those who had experienced different kind of disasters. According to the authors of this study, large levels of stress are experienced by many of the bullying victims and it can be explained by their own breakdown of their previous assumptions that they have done about the world and themselves. Sexual harassment has recently been linked to post-traumatic stress disorder / traumatic neurosis¹⁵, the same it happens with the bullying.

¹⁴ Einarsen, S. (1996) *Bullying and Harassment at Work: Epidemiological and Psychological Aspects*. PhD thesis, Department of Psychological Science, University of Bergen.

¹⁵ Hoel, H. & Cooper, C.L. (2000a) *Destructive Conflict and Bullying at Work*. November 2000, Unpublished Report, UMIST, UK.

Some claims that a considerable number of suicides have their roots in workplace bullying. There is no strong evidence for these allegations and people rarely commit suicide for only one reason. The fact that in a large Norwegian study, up to 40%¹⁶ of bullied states that have considered suicide, illustrates the severity of the impact on victims of bullying.

People who may decide to leave or are get fired by their employment cause of their bullying trial, may not be able or not willing to find new employment¹⁷. There are a number of the most severely affected individuals who never return to work after a long absence. In some cases their return is prevented by their state of health. In other cases the increasing severity of their collisions, the sharp contrast with the management of their work decide to end the cooperation¹⁸. Another fact is the lengthy periods of legal dispute that appears to be a growing trend in bullying cases. In a significant number of cases, target-individuals whose contracts were terminated due to the dispute with their managers are unable to find new jobs. In any case, violence against women at the workplace is likely to have long-term negative effects on their mental health leading to possible long-term unemployment and ultimately poverty and social exclusion. This result has very serious consequences not only on women but also on the society generally. For this reason, we should focus on early intervention.

Six cases presented in British courts stressed that the responsibility for the psychological trauma that is caused by the working stress does not differ from the responsibility for the physical trauma.

¹⁶ Einarsen, S. (1996) *The Bullying and Harassment at Work: Epidemiological and Psychological Dimensions*. PhD, Department of Psychology, University of Bergen. Einarsen, S. (1996) *Bullying and Harassment at Work: Epidemiological*

¹⁷ Gutek, B.A. & Koss, M.P. (1993) *Changed women and changed organisations: Consequences of sexual harassment and its confront*. *Occupational Behaviour journal*, 42, 28-48. Gutek, B.A. & Koss, M.P. (1993) *Changed women and changed organisations: Consequences of and coping with sexual harassment*. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 42, 28-48.

¹⁸ Leymann, H. (1990) *The Moral harassment and psychological terror at work*. *Violence and Victims*, 5, 119-125.

Leymann, H. (1990) Mobbing and psychological terror at workplaces. *Violence and Victims*, 5, 119-125.

****A reference guide for women**



"I cannot understand how women today say they are not feminists after what women - feminists have made feasible for us and our way of life today."

Axelle Red, JUMP, 23 April 2009

Fighting the Behaviors

The way to counteract the patriarchal attitudes will be long and hard. Very often women frown at the thought that others view them as feminists; but because of feminist activists women enjoy their freedoms today. Nevertheless, inequality prevails in all social aspects and is particularly evident in the workplace. Women are underrepresented in better jobs, the pay gap remains and opportunities for women in the ever-changing workplace are limited, since women assume the largest part of care. The equal voting rights are not converted into gender equality. In the workplace, women remain clustered in the lower side of wages and continue to suffer from discrimination.

The multiple social roles that women represent nowadays render her at greater, to suffer from mental diseases. Women associated with being mothers, wives and carers of others, without receiving financial compensation for this job. More and more women are the main part of the workforce and women are the main source of income, at a rate of between one quarter and one third of households (WHO, 1995). Apart from the many pressures on women, they face significant discrimination based on gender and as a consequence they have to face poverty, hunger, poor nutrition and excessive overwork.

This reflects their gender roles in society and it worsens by the lack of opportunities in education and training, leading them to receive lower wages in the employment and face higher levels of poverty in retirement.

We should give emphasis on educating women about finding safe workplace. At the same time we should encourage men through

certain benefits - such as the creation of a sufficient number of services for childcare and promotion opportunities for flexible hours work or work at home- in order to share responsibility for raising children. This will make the life of men and women easier and it will reconcile the work-balance life with the family life. This will be a positive step to achieve gender equality.

This can be achieved through education in schools and communities, emphasizing the social consciousness and community. Particularly emphasis should be given to social training courses designed to prepare boys and girls for their roles as caregivers and supporters of family members as well as of the disabled and of patients, and to inform children about inequalities between the genders from the early years of education.

Do you recognize the sexual harassment?

Most women cannot recognize even themselves the sexual harassment or even they treat it as an unimportant routine. This subconsciously works an internal defense mechanism. Ignoring offensive behavior or denying its existence, is the most common way that women deal with sexual harassment.

In the book «Back off! How to Confront and Stop Sexual Harassment and Harassers" writer Martha Langelan¹⁹ proposes the following measures:

Ask yourself the following:

- I agree with this behavior.
- This behavior makes me feel uncomfortable.
- This behavior violates my dignity as a person.
- Violate my right to work with dignity in a safe workplace.

Face your harasser directly²⁰.

- Do the unexpected: Name the behavior. Tell everything he did and become specific.

- Make your harasser responsible for his actions. Do not find excuses for it and not pretend that did not happen anything. Take action for the incident and tell others what he did.

¹⁹ Langerland, M.(1993), «Make Back! How to troubleshoot and to end sexual harassment and the harasser', *Social Science*, p. 380. Langerland, M. (1993), "Back Off! How to confront and stop sexual harassment and harassers ", *Social Science*, p.380

²⁰ Neeta Raymond *Combat Law*, Vol.2, Issue 3. Neeta Raymond *Combat Law*, Volume2, Issue3 <http://www.indiatogether.org/combatlaw/vol2/issue3/harass.htm>

REMEMBER - The isolation protects those who harass you while they are weakened by your exposure of their actions (visibility)

- Make direct and honest statements.
- Be serious, direct and speak bluntly.
- Demand to stop the harassment.
- Clarify that all women have the right to be free from sexual harassment.
- Follow your plan. Do not respond to what excuses the harasser say to you or to his misleading tactics.
- His behavior is all about. Say what you have to say and repeat it if he persists.
- Empower your arguments with strong body language that exudes self-esteem: eye contact, head up, shoulders back with a loud and serious attitude.
- Respond to the appropriate level. Use a combination of verbal and physical reactions against physical harassment.

OTHER IMPORTANT MEASURES

→Keep Data:

Keeping information of the harassment is important for future use as evidence in case of a trial or a complaint. You should take pictures or copies of offensive material in the workplace. Keep a diary with detailed information on cases of sexual harassment. Note the dates, dialogues, frequency of offensive disputes, etc. Get copies of your

work record (including evaluations of your progress) and keep copies at home.

Other documents you need: It is important to get company's rules and procedures guide. The recorded corporate policies on harassment, discrimination, the performance appraisals, termination of cooperation, positive action plans can be very important to be seen whether consistent formal policies with their actions. Company's newspapers, annual reports, photos of top management, posters, company's recognitions and company's studies are important to indicate whether the workplace is hostile for women. Collect all the letters of commendation, awards, thanks and everything that indicate your positive performance in your work. Pay attention to documents where your superiors praise you for your work.

→**Set your own limits**

Say **No** clearly and emphatically when they ask you to go to places, do things, respond to questions and engage in situations that make you feel uncomfortable. Do not worry about offending the other person or if you insult himself. Protect yourself first.

→**Find a witness**

Tell it to a trusted colleague and try to ensure that he/she is an eye or ear witnesses of some situation where you have sexually harassed. This will be useful if you later decide to file a formal protest. Send a copy of policies / rules about sexual harassment to the person harassed you. If your workplace has already policies against sexual harassment or your organization conduct prohibit sexual harassment, send a copy of the policy or code of conduct to the person harassed you highlighting the relevant passages.

→**Get medical report**

If you have been raped or physically assaulted, go for a medical check and get a medical report. This is important if you decide to pursue legal action.

In a study of members of the largest British trade union, 26.4% of those who had been bullied said that they left their job



²¹ UNISON, 1997.

Make the START to stop violence against women at work

TALK and SPEAK out: Talking about sexual harassment is an effective way to counteract it. When you speak, the problem becomes apparent, its existence is recognized and this leads to take effective measures to tackle with it. Talking about sexual harassment is an opportunity to clarify the meaning and to change attitudes people towards this issue.

Tell it to someone: By being silent or "brave" (lifting the weight on your own), allow sexual harassment to be continued. Talk to your colleagues. You may not be the only victim that the harasser harassed. Do not blame yourself and do not delay.

Have AWARENESS of situations and people who may harm you and trust your instincts about possible risks. Do not ignore the warnings of others for specific people or social situations. Acknowledge their concern for yourself and themselves.

REPORT sexual harassment to the appropriate person in an organization and RECORD events: Explore the different outlets you have, and if necessary make an official report. If not already exist, ensure that the employer implement policies against discrimination and do whatever is necessary in the context of these policies. Watch what happened and record it in a journal, keeping letters or notes or other documents. Record dates, times, places, and a report of what happened. Write the names of witnesses.

Such as the coping strategies for sexual harassment, the same goes to bullying and harassment. To repeat the strategies follow these Guidelines issued by the Andrea Adams Foundation²².

²² <http://www.andreaadamstrust.org/live/adviseguidelines.html>

CONSULT to some association: If you are a member of an association for employee, talk to your association representative.

1. Find out if your employer has policies and procedures on harassment and bullying and obtain a copy.
2. Keep calm and stability and not allow yourself to become a target.
3. Do not isolate yourself. Look for direct support and advice.
4. Keep a record of all incidents that torment you or degrade you - record your dates and feelings after each event along with your answers.
5. Try to get witnesses to bullying incidents by avoiding situations where you are alone with the bully.
6. DO not take action yourself. Make an appointment with the harassment counselor of your company and look for guidance and support.

7. Talk to colleagues and see if they have the same treatment as you.
8. Follow the company's procedure about complaints with the support of the Director of Abuse, members of the HR department and the Trade Unions (if such services exist).
9. Try to keep your report as objective as possible. So, you will not be accused that you made a complaint because of malice or ambition.
10. Make an appointment with your doctor and tell him what happened to you at work. Follow medical advice and if it is necessary get a report.
11. If there is an advisory support service available, close in time an appointment to talk about your experience.
12. Talk to friends and family in order to get emotional support.

Working groups at greatest risk of violence from other job:

- Employees at the Housekeeping area and cleaning garages, servant.
- Foreign workers
- Employees in the health sector and in social services.
- Employees with fixed-term contracts
- Employees in the retail sector or small businesses.
- Educators

Take immediate action against Sexual Harassment, Bullying and Mobbing!

Make **START and take action now!!!**

→ **Speak openly, speak loudly.**

→ **Speak to someone.**

→ **Be aware of your situation.**

→ **Report the incident and record the events.**

→ **Talk to labor union you belong.**

"Whatever does a worker to the workplace should be treated as if he did and his employer did too, whether whatever happens the employer is aware of or approve or disapprove it."²³



²³ UK Harassment Act 1997.

**** A reference guide for employers**

What must the employer do?

First of all, he/she must acknowledge that it is his/her responsibility to offer a safe working place for women, free from all kinds of violence and that he/she can be considered responsible for this.

The employer must know that violence can have destructive consequences on health, self- confidence, courage and performance of those affected by it. The agony and stress produced from all types of harassment, often lead violence victims to take an absence leave, be less effective during work or quit their job in order to find a new one.

The employer must understand the reasons why women remain silent as far as sexual harassment is considered. Absence of complaints for harassment does not necessarily mean that harassment does not exist. It may mean that the receivers of the harassment (sexual in particular) think that it is meaningless to denounce the harassment because:

- Nothing will be done about it.
- It will be vulgarized.
- The victim will undergo humiliation.
- Fear of retaliation

The employer must acknowledge the consequences of ignoring violence and women's harassment in the workplace:

- Costly researches and litigation.
- Negative exposure and publicity.
- Increased absences.
- Employees with low level courage.
- Low efficiency.
- Low effectiveness.
- Increase of staff's turnover.

The best way of preventing all kinds of harassment is by adopting analytical policies for harassment. The aim is to assure that harassment will not take place and when it takes place to assure that there are directly available, adequate procedures to react to the problem and to prevent its reappearance.

Policies for sexual harassment

What must the policies for sexual harassment include?

The basic policies must include the following components:

- A bold commitment to the elimination and discouragement of sexual harassment and a bold prohibition of the sexual harassment.
- A definition of the sexual harassment.
- An explanation of the penalties (including dismissal) that the employer will apply for the confirmed incidents of harassment.
- An analytical description of the procedure of submitting complaints from employees half.
- A declaration that anyone who is proven guilty for harassment will be subject to dire and suitable disciplinary penalties.
- A declaration concerning harassment from thirds, like customers etc
- Additional sources or available people for support and advisory service.
- A bold commitment that all complaints and procedures for the harassment will remain confidential.
- Corporate teaching on all levels.
- Policies against retaliation on those who denounce sexual harassment and on witnesses.
- The policies and procedures must be adopted after negotiation and in consultation with the employees' representatives.

How to communicate about your company's policy?

Issue a strong policy against sexual harassment coming from senior management taking an attitude of "zero tolerance". Ensure that will be taken by all personnel, either through the intranet or via a special manual. Put s employees to sign to acknowledge having received and read the policy. The policy can also be posted in the

workplace. If there are employees whose primary language is not Greek, translate the policy on sexual harassment or talk to them about this in their own language. Discuss the policy with all new employees and ensure that third parties, such as suppliers and customers know about corporate policy against sexual harassment. Please review this policy with employees and retrain them on a regular basis.

Enforce policies

Accept complaints about sexual harassment and investigate all complaints in detail, professionalism and speed. Keep an accurate record of the investigation and the findings and ensure that employees do not suffer from retaliation complaints. Take steps to ensure confidentiality and complaint handling. Take immediate action when you discover or suspect sexual harassment and apply disciplinary measures when an employee is involved in an incident of sexual harassment.

Give the opportunity for action through a process of complaints, providing different alternatives for workers to file complaints, i.e. Contact with the competent authority for sexual harassment, a manager, a telephone hotline, complaints via email etc. Organizations need to focus on what the average worker requests. A policy is useless if it is not used and more researches indicate that only a small percentage of workers say or do something about sexual harassment.

Education

Educate them about the issue and promote a healthy debate about policies ... The discussion and consultation is crucial to combat deep-rooted patriarchal attitudes.

Education on Recognition of Harassment

Setting a committee of complaints and a policy against

sexual harassment, you set the foundation for a working environment free from sexual harassment. Nevertheless, effective education programs are essential to sensitize / train all staff, men and women, to recognize sexual harassment, to deal with it when it happens. The training program is the best method to ensure the correct understanding and application of the policy against sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment for all employees should address perceptions on sexual harassment, impact of sexual harassment on workers and workplace, understanding the policy and complaints mechanisms. The Complaints Commission training should also assess the research processes, appropriate skills for conducting and recording procedures.

**Take these steps to protect yourself and your staff!
This is the way for progress!!!**



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- «Development Methodology design, implementation and monitoring of Equality Plans in enterprises (public and private)."

- «Guide to the implementation of measures to promote work-life balance."

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The conditions related to gender discrimination:

Gender equality after Rome Convention

The principle of equality between men and women adopted by the European Community with Article 141 (formerly Article 119) of the Treaty of Rome, as the right of "equal pay for equal work." This provision, although limited, was developed in number of Community documents which have stated and developed this basic principle of Community law.

Gender equality after Amsterdam Convention

The Amsterdam Convention coming into force on 1 May 1999, the European commitment to gender equality was strengthened. The Amsterdam Treaty were significantly important than promoting equality between men and women in the EU and was a major step in the implementation of equality in the workplace.

Gender equality after Lisbon Convention

The European Member States have obligations under the Lisbon Treaty, which has now been ratified and will enter into force in December. The changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty in women's

rights and gender equality related to two issues: The confirmation of the principle of gender equality and the EU policies on gender equality.

For more information on conditions please follow the link:

<http://www.europal.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/200907/20090728ATT59207/20090728ATT59207EN.pdf>

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was adopted in 1979 and by March 2009, 185 countries have ratified the Convention on the rights of women. Directive 2006/54 / EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006.

For all of the European Union Directives and the Greek Law regarding Gender Equality refer you to the website of the General Secretariat for Gender Equality: www.isotita.gr
Also you can find more bibliography and documentation refer to KETHI and library functions. More on the website: www.kethi.gr

**** Best Practices
and Services /
organizations
dealing with
gender equality
issues in Greece**



Note from Greek partner program:

Social Psychiatry and Mental Health Company

Below we list some indicative authorities, services (non-governmental) women's organizations, which provide information services or legal and / or psychological in women who experience discrimination or violence at work. Due to limited space in this guide, we cannot mention all the State services, all trade unions and all the women's organizations worked together as part of this European program. We thank everyone for their cooperation. For more information, visit our website: www.ekpse.gr

1. Principles and the State Services

→ Consultation Centers on Violence against Women, General Secretariat for Equality , MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, TRANSPARENCY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Address: Athens: Nikis 11 Syntagma, 105 57, Athens

Phone: Athens: 210-3317305-6

Address: Center of Piraeus: Alkiviadou 76, 185 32, Piraeus

Phone: Piraeus Center: 210-4112091, 4129386.

Fax: 210-4129101

Website: www.isotita.gr

Email: Athens: isotita4@otenet.gr,

Centre Piraeus: isal76pi@otenet.gr

Contact Person: P. Katsargyri

→ Independent Authority / Department of Gender Equality

Address: Chatzigianni Mexi 5, 11528, Athens

Phone: 210-7289600 Central Secretariat Ombudsman

Secretariat Circle Gender Equality: 210-7289794

Fax: 210-7292129

Website: www.synigoros.gr

Email Address: diakriseis@synigoros.gr

Deputy Ombudsman Circle Gender Equality: k.St. Giannakourou

→ Ministry of Labour and Social Security / Department of

**Gender Equality /
Labour Inspectorate (SEPE)**

Address: Pireos 40, 10182 Athens

Phone: 210-5295141, 5295182

Website: www.ypakp.gr

→Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI)

Address: Ch. Trikoupi 51 & Valtetsiou, 106 81, Athens

Phone: 210-3898000

Website: www.kethi.gr

Email: kethi@kethi.gr

Contact Person: Irene Mari

2. Some Trades Unions

→ General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE)

Address: Patission 69 & Aenian 2-4 10434, Athens

Phone: 210-8202284, 210-8202198

Website: www.gsee.gr

Sections: 1. GSEE Women's Secretariat

2. Legal GSEE Service

Contact person: Varchalama Elli, Lawyer - Legal Advisor GSEE

→Federation of Bank Employee Unions (OTOE).

Department: Secretariat for Equality

Address: Sina and Vissarion 9 10672, Athens

Phone: 210-3647712, 3647668,

Fax: 210-3640429

Website: www.otoe.gr/isotita

Email: kanta@otoe.gr

Contact person: President Secretariat Gender: Kanta

**→ Attiki's Union of Cleaners and Domestic Workers, Member.
EKA and O.I.Y.E.**

Address: G.Septemvriou 48b, 10433, Athens

Telephone and Fax: 210-8221083

Website: www.pekop.wordpress.com

Email: pekop1999@gmail.com

Contact person: Vlassia Papathanasi

→Executive Civil Servants Associations (A.D.E.D.Y)

Department: Women's Secretariat

Address: Filellinon 2, 10557, Athens

Phone: 213-1616900,

Fax: 210-3246165

Website: www.adedy.gr

Email: adedy@adedy.gr, adedy1@adedy.gr

Contact person: President Women's Secretariat: Mrs. Spanos

3. NGO Women's Organizations

→ Association for Women's Rights (S.D.G.)

Address: Skoufa 60, 10680, Athens

Phone: 210-3626460

Website: www.leaguewomenrights.gr

Email: L.women-rights@otenet.gr

→ Women Studies And Research Center (KE.G.M.E)

Address: Victory 24, 105 57, Athens

Phone: 210-3244380,

Fax: 210-3227706

Website: www.genderissues.org.gr

Email: diotima@otenet.gr

Contact Person: Georgia Karachaliou

It is important to mention that the KE.G.M.E. It supports:

→ Migrant Assistance and Support Network (D.E.S.Me.)

More information on the network's website KE.G.M.E:

www.genderissues.org.gr

Phone: 210-3244380

Contact person: Hermione Mitsi

Email: diotima@otenet.gr

→ Young Women Christian Association of Greece (Ch.E.N. Hellas)

Departments: 1.Social Service and, 2. Employment Center for Women

Address: US 11, 106 72, Athens

Phone: 210-3624291,

Fax: 210-3622400

Email: xene1@xen.gr

Social Service Greece IDUS:

Email: xene4@xen.gr

Website: www.xen.gr

Contact person: Natasha Pantazi - Head of Development and Programs / Sylvia Ioannou - Social Worker and Employment Consultant / Despina Panagopoulos - Administrative Support

provided printed and electronic information material for work, education and training.

→ Greek European Women Network

Address: Amaliados 15, 115 23, Athens

Phone: 210-6411449, 210-9700814

Website: www.enow.gr

Contact Person: Niki Roumpani

→ Women's Union of Greece (GSG)

Address: Epirus 53 104 39 Athens

Telephone: 210-8225354,

Fax: 210-8234954

Website: www.ege.gr

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This is a reference guide for employees to recognize and deal with violence and harassment in the workplace and a useful guide for employers on the good practices for the prevention of violence and harassment against women at work.

