

# National Report

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## Contents

1. INTRODUCTION .....	3
2. DESK RESEARCH	
2.1 LEGISLATION ON SH IN THE WORKPLACE. IN PARTICULAR : EU LEGISLATION AND ITS TRANSPOSITION IN THE NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK	4
2.2 RESEARCHES, PUBLICATIONS AND PROJECTS .....	8
2.3 RESPONSES TO THE PHENOMENON AND SUCCESSFUL STORIES .....	13
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	15
4. EMPIRICAL SURVEY	
4.1 EVALUATIONS ON THE ONLINE SURVEY OF EMPLOYEES.....	16
4.2 EVALUATIONS ON THE ONLINE SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS/HR PROFESSIONALS	24
4.3 EVALUATIONS ON THE IN DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS.....	30
5. CONCLUSIONS .....	39
6. RECOMMENDATIONS – FUTURE ACTIONS AT NATIONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL .....	40
7. REFERENCES.....	41

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Workplace sexual harassment is internationally condemned as sex discrimination and a violation of human rights, and more than 75 countries have enacted legislation prohibiting it. Sexual harassment in the workplace increases absenteeism and turnover and lowers workplace productivity and job satisfaction. Yet it remains pervasive and underreported, and neither legislation nor market incentives have been able to eliminate it. Strong workplace policies prohibiting sexual harassment, workplace training, and a complaints process that protects workers from retaliation seem to offer the most promise in reducing sexual harassment<sup>1</sup>.

Sexual Harassment refers to any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment<sup>2</sup>. Sexual Harassment in the workplace includes inappropriate touching, hugging or kissing; unwanted sexual hints, suggestions; sexual hints or jokes that make the person feel offended; offensive emails or sms that make the person feel offended; sharing sexual images that offend; suggestions for watching and commenting of porn movies and magazines; offensive remarks of someone's appearance, gender; harassment, stalking, threats; offer for career promotion / salary increase to engage in sexual behavior; inclining/coercion to prostitution and sexual exploitation, sexual assault<sup>3</sup>.

The overall aim of the TEAMWORK project (combaT sExuAl harassMent in the WORkplace) is to strengthen the combat against sexual harassment in the workplace (SH) in Greece, Bulgaria, Spain and Italy through developing research-based guidelines, on-line tools and capacity-building programs for Human Resources professionals, enabling them to revise staff policies; to take action to prevent and deal with sexual harassment, as well as to introduce measures to protect the victims, regardless their gender and job level.

Through online surveys, desk research and in-depth interviews, the partners' aim is to assess the existing level of preparedness of the private and public sectors in cases of sexual harassment in the workplace, identify the challenges and obstacles victims of all genders have to cope with and collect

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<sup>1</sup> Joni Hersch, Sexual harassment in the workplace, Retrieved 30/09/2020 from : <https://wol.iza.org/articles/sexual-harassment-in-workplace/long>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1376>

<sup>3</sup> Workplace fairness, Sexual Harassment Application of the Law: Is This Sexual Harassment? Retrieved 30/9/2020 from : <https://www.workplacefairness.org/sexual-harassment-application>

relevant data in order to reveal the main areas of capacity improvement and to highlight gaps that need to be filled.

## 2. DESK RESEARCH

### 2.1 LEGISLATION ON SH IN THE WORKPLACE. IN PARTICULAR: EU LEGISLATION AND ITS TRANSPOSITION IN THE GREEK LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Sexual harassment in the workplace (SH in the following) constitutes a blatant contempt for gender equality and therefore a contradiction to one of the European Union's fundamental values. In this section, we will present the legal aspects of sexual harassment by mentioning the international, European and Greek national law in order to point out the legal protection of the victims and the procedures that should be followed while reporting SH incidents.

To begin with the international legal framework, we should mention first the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which was adopted in 1979 by the United Nations General Assembly and ratified by the Greek state in 1983. Equality in employment (article 11 of the Convention) can be seriously impaired when women are subjected to sexual harassment in the workplace. Sexual harassment can be humiliating and may constitute a health and safety problem; it is discriminatory when the woman has reasonable ground to believe that her objection would disadvantage her in connection with her employment, including recruitment or promotion, or when it creates a hostile working environment<sup>4</sup>.

In June 2019 in Geneva the first international convention against violence and harassment at work was voted in the framework of the International Labor Organization (ILO). The Convention includes an extensive definition of workers and of the workplace (articles 2 and 3 of the Convention), updating the protection in accordance to the present working circumstances<sup>5</sup>. The representatives of Greece were among those who voted for it, while what is now expected

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<sup>4</sup> General recommendation No. 19 : Violence against women. Retrieved 29/09/2020 from : <https://www.globalhealthrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/CEDAW-General-Recommendation-No.-19-Violence-against-Women.pdf>

<sup>5</sup>No. 190 Convention of ILO. Retrieved 29/9/2020 from :

[https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100\\_ILO\\_CODE:C190](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C190)



is its ratification, so that it becomes part of its national legislation<sup>6</sup>. There has also been a proposal by the European Council to authorize the Member States to ratify, in the interest of the European Union, the abovementioned Convention<sup>7</sup>.

Regarding the European conventions, we should mention the Convention of the Council of Europe for the Prevention and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence, the Convention of Istanbul which was adopted in 2011. Sexual harassment is among the behaviors prohibited by the Convention and the States undertake the responsibility of taking all necessary legislative or other measures so that sexual harassment is prohibited and leads to criminal sanctions and other legal consequences. The abovementioned convention was ratified by the Greek government with the Law No. 4531/2018<sup>8</sup>.

According to articles 153 (par. 1 a) and 157 (par. 3) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the European Union shall support and complement the activities of the Member States in improving the working environment for the protection of security of workers and equality between men and women with regard to opportunities in the labor market and treatment at work, and the adoption of measures to ensure the application of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation.

Along the years, the European Union has introduced important legislation and guidelines to support respectable working conditions and equal treatment, such as Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation<sup>9</sup>, Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation<sup>10</sup>, as well as the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety at Work 2014-2020 which aims to improve the implementation of existing health and safety rules<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup>Matta Samiou talks in APE-MPE, Violence and Harassment in the workplace. Retrieved 31/07/2020 from : <https://www.actionaid.gr/enhmerwsou/h-drasi-mas-sta-media/via-kai-parenohlisi-stin-ergasia-i-m-samiou-mila-sto-ape-mpe-gia-tin-ekstrateia-pote-kai-pouthena/>

<sup>7</sup> European Union' s Council Decision authorising Member States to ratify, in the interest of the European Union, the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 of the International Labor Organization. Retrieved 30.07.2020 from: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5442-2020-INIT/en/pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Law No. 4531/2018. Retrieved 29/09/2020 from : <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/oikogeneia/nomos-4531-2018-phek-62a-5-4-2018.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32000L0078>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32006L0054>

<sup>11</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=151>.

Furthermore, the European Parliament has initiated a resolution in September 2018 on measures to prevent and combat mobbing and sexual harassment at workplace, in public spaces, and political life in the European Union. The resolution calls on the Commission to submit a legislative proposal to combat mobbing and sexual harassment in the workplace and to include it in an updated and comprehensive definition of harassment. The resolution stresses the urgent need for Member States, local and regional authorities, employers' organizations and trade unions to understand the barriers individuals face in reporting cases of sexual harassment, and therefore, to offer full support and encouragement to persons reporting cases of sexual harassment. It is crucial that the Member States invest in the training of labor inspectors, in collaboration with specialized psychologists, and ensure that companies and organizations provide skilled professional and psychosocial support for victims<sup>12</sup>.

As far as the Greek legal framework about sexual harassment is concerned, we should mention the Law No. 3896/2010<sup>13</sup>, which adapted national legislation to the European Directive 2006/54/EU on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation<sup>14</sup>. The abovementioned Law replaced Law No. 3488/ 2006<sup>15</sup>, which was the first Greek law on sexual harassment.

By Law No. 3896/2010 (article 2 D), sexual harassment is defined as “*any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment*”. Furthermore, sexual harassment, as well as any less favorable treatment based on a person's rejection of or submission to such conduct constitutes an act of discrimination on sexual grounds and is therefore prohibited (article 3 par. 2). Sexual harassment may take place in the workplace by the employer or a fellow employee against another employee. The violation of the Law provides to the victim the right to claim for full compensation, which will cover every kind of damage suffered, as well as the moral damage, while the employer is also subject to a fine for violation of labor law (art. 23, par. 1 and 2).

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<sup>12</sup> European Parliament resolution of 11 September 2018 on measures to prevent and combat mobbing and sexual harassment at workplace, in public spaces, and political life in the EU [2018/2055(INI)]. Retrieved 30.07.2020 from: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0331\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2018-0331_EN.html)

<sup>13</sup> Law No. 3896/2010. Retrieved 30/07/2020 from : <https://www.taxheaven.gr/law/3896/2010>

<sup>14</sup> Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006. Retrieved 30/07/2020 from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32006L0054>

<sup>15</sup> Aiming at the adaptation of Greek legislation with European Directive 2002/73/EC.

An employee who has been sexually harassed by the employer has the right to consider that the employer's conduct constitutes an adverse change in their working conditions leading to the direct termination of the employment contract (with all the legal consequences deriving from the above termination). They are also entitled to compensation. On the other hand, the dismissal of an employee because of their refusal to give in to the sexual harassment of the employer is invalid, which means that the dismissed employee maintains their rights from the work relationship<sup>16</sup>.

In addition, article 24 of the abovementioned Law shifts the "burden of proof" to the presumed offender when there is a prima facie case of discrimination. In other words, it shall be for the accused to prove before court or other competent authority that there has been no breach of the principle of equal treatment.

Moreover, in accordance with art. 25, par. 1 and 10 of the abovementioned Law, the victim has the right to report the incident to the Labor Inspectorate ("Soma Epitheorisis Ergasias" – "S.E.P.E." <sup>17</sup>) and the Greek Ombudsman ("Sinigoros tou Politi"<sup>18</sup>). The Ombudsman is the responsible authority for safeguarding the implementation of the Law.

In addition, according to art. 22, par. 2 of the abovementioned Law, associations, organizations or other legal entities which have, in accordance with the criteria laid down by national law, a legitimate interest in ensuring that the provisions of this Directive are complied with, may engage, either on behalf or in support of the complainant, with his/her approval, in any judicial and/or administrative procedure provided for the enforcement of obligations under the Law.

Regarding criminal procedures, the victim of sexual harassment in the workplace can file a complaint stating that the crime of violation of sexual dignity has been committed against them (article 337 of the Greek Penal Code). According to paragraph 4 of the abovementioned article, a more severe punishment is applied when the crime is committed against a person who depends on the offender for work or by taking advantage of a person's need to work.

Recently Law No. 4604/2019 was introduced which aims to promote substantial gender equality, prevention and fight against gender violence. The new Law mainly adopts the definitions of violence as in the Convention of Istanbul, and acknowledges violence at work as "*any aggressive behavior, physical, psychological or verbal violence due to gender, sexual*

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<sup>16</sup>Rozou Athanasios, Sexual Harassment in the workplace. 2017. Retrieved 30/07/2020 from : <https://www.nomikosodigos.info/guide/simple-legal/893-sexual-harassment-at-work>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.sepenet.gr/liferayportal/odegies-gia-katangelia>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.synigoros.gr/?i=equality.el>



orientation and gender identity, in the workplace, during and on the occasion of work” and defines the central, regional and local mechanisms and bodies for the realization of substantial gender equality. In the central level in Greece, the mechanisms entail the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality, the Research Centre for Gender Equality, the competent services of ministries on equality matters and the Greek Ombudsman<sup>19</sup>.

As mentioned above, the victim of sexual harassment in the workplace may report the incident to the labor inspectorate or the Greek Ombudsman, as well as the police, given that the crime of violation of sexual dignity is committed. In addition, the victim can report the incident to his/her trade union or seek advice and support from the help line 15900 of the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality (former General Secretariat for Equality) or the Research Centre for Gender Equality, as well as to numerous NGOs who offer support on the matter. The victim can in any case appeal to the court and claim compensation for the moral or any other damage he/she suffered (article 57, 59, 914 and 932 of the Greek Civil Code).

## 2.2 RESEARCHES, PUBLICATIONS AND PROJECTS

Greece constitutes a country that has conducted few and outdated research on sexual harassment in the workplace. The only extensive research ever conducted on the phenomenon in Greece took place in 2004 under the supervision of the Research Centre for Gender Equality<sup>20</sup>. More precisely, the surveyed population was exclusively feminine, as it comprised 1200 women over 18 years old. The sample was taken from the larger and the smaller urban centers as well as from the island of Crete. The results were the following:

10% of women that participated mentioned that they had had a personal experience of sexual harassment in their workplace. This was more common for women aged from 16 to 25 (57.5%) in comparison to older women. The harassment comprises of unwanted touches, provocative gestures, pressure for going out, pressure for having a relationship and jokes with sexual content. Most harassers are men (97%) and in most cases, they detain a position of power. They are mainly directors (45%), supervisors (18.3%), colleagues (15.8%) and clients (14.2%). 36.7% of victims mentioned that it happened only once and in most cases no one else was present during the incident. In most cases, the management had not understood that the

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<sup>19</sup> Law No. 4604/2019. Retrieved 30/07/2020 from : <https://www.e-nomothesia.gr/autodioikese-demoi/nomos-4604-2019-phek-50a-26-3-2019.html>

<sup>20</sup> Research Centre for Gender Equality (KETHI). Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. 2004. Retrieved 30/07/2020 from: <https://www.kethi.gr/ereunes-meletes/i-sexoyaliki-parenohlisi-kata-ton-gynaikon-stoys-horoys-ergasias>.

incident had taken place (67.5%) but even in cases where the managers noticed the incident, they did not adopt any preventive measures (56.7%). However, what should be also pointed out is that even in cases where the management adopted measures, these measures had a negative effect especially on the victim and not on the abuser (in 30.8% of cases they were dismissed). In 44.2% of cases, the colleagues were aware of the event but they did not act in any way (92.5%). Most women that had faced sexual harassment in the workplace stopped working in this environment by resigning (86.2%) or by being dismissed (8.5%). Concerning the victims' reaction, in most cases, they talked directly to the harasser by asking to stop (42.5%) and 37.5% preferred to resign. In most cases when the victim asked the harasser to stop, the latter did stop (75.7%) and in 14.9% of cases, the harasser insisted. Furthermore, women that had a bad experience trust it to their friends (48.3%) and to the members of their family (45%). 20% talked about the harassment with their colleagues and 11.7% asks for help from the management of the business. 32.5% of victims of sexual harassment in the workplace know another employee who has suffered it from the same harasser.

In addition, as it was stated in the legal framework section of our report, the authorities that are competent for dealing with cases of sexual harassment in the workplace is the Ombudsman and the Labor Inspectorate. Therefore, it is necessary to point out the report of the Labor Inspectorate of 2017<sup>21</sup> according to which only three cases of sexual harassment in the workplace were reported. From the three, only one was judged by the competent courts, the second was resolved extra judiciary and for the third, a fine was imposed to the harasser.

In the annual report of the Greek Ombudsman of 2018<sup>22</sup>, an incident of sexual harassment in the workplace was described in order to promote the way the Ombudsman works. More precisely, it concerned a woman that asked for help from the Labor Inspectorate because 10 days after her recruitment, the employer did an obscene gesture towards her. During the hearing before the Labor Inspectorate, the Ombudsman was present, and the employer admitted having conducted the gesture but stated that he did not want to harass her sexually but to encourage her for her new beginning. The Ombudsman decided that it was clearly a sexual harassment incident and imposed a fine to the employer.

In addition, according to a research conducted by students of the Technological Institution of Crete on the subject of sexual harassment against migrant women working as help in private

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<sup>21</sup> Labor Inspectorate. Report of the Labor Inspectorate. 2017. Retrieved 30/07/2020 from: <https://www.ypakp.gr/uploads/docs/11919.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> THE GREEK OMBUDSMAN. The national report. 2018. Retrieved 30/07/2020 from: <https://www.synigoros.gr/?i=stp.el.annreports.559223>.

houses, to which 116 women participated (mostly from Albania, Russia and Romania), 9,6 % claimed that their employers exerted psychological pressure or coercion to engage in sexual behavior. In the survey, it is also highlighted that women of younger age and lower education and self-esteem are more often victims of sexual harassment. The survey concludes that an important countermeasure is the effective handling of the illegal status of the migrants and of undeclared work, as in many cases it makes the migrant women reluctant to protect themselves from abusive behavior and to report the incidents to the authorities<sup>23</sup>.

Moreover, according to Human Rights Watch investigation, women and girls described incidents of sexual harassment and a persistent sense of insecurity that authorities are unresponsive to their complaints and do not take adequate action to ensure their safety<sup>24</sup>.

In regards to gender-based violence, research reports reveal that violence against women is high in various forms. For example, according to the European Institute of Gender Equality, a research on sexual assault reveals that 83.4% of women & men reports that fighting sexual violence against women should be prioritized by the EU. According to survey data, 20.2% of Greek women and 11.5% of Greek men report that sexual harassment against women is popular in Greece<sup>25</sup>.

Furthermore, according to a survey held by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) in 2014 based on interviews with 42.000 women across the 28 Member States of the European Union (EU), it was evident that an estimated percent between 45 % to 55 % of women in the EU-28 have experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15. Of those women, 32 % indicated a colleague, a boss or a customer as the perpetrator(s). In the survey, the role of employers' organizations and trade unions is emphasized as crucial in promoting awareness and encouraging women to report sexual harassment<sup>26</sup>.

In the 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, the U.S. Department referred to the new legislation Greece introduced in March 2019, which aimed to promote gender equality in

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<sup>23</sup> KEFALAKI M., MANOLARAKI V., BRAUDAKI AIK., Thesis on Sexual Harassment of Migrant Women working in house, Technological Institution of Crete Greece, 2014. Retrieved 25/09/2020 from: [http://nefeli.lib.teicrete.gr/browse/seyp/ker/2014/KefalakiMaria.ManolarakiVasiliki.BraoudakiAikaterini/attached-document-1456994870-6791-15592/KefalakiMaria\\_ManolarakiVasiliki\\_BraoudakiAikaterini2014.pdf](http://nefeli.lib.teicrete.gr/browse/seyp/ker/2014/KefalakiMaria.ManolarakiVasiliki.BraoudakiAikaterini/attached-document-1456994870-6791-15592/KefalakiMaria_ManolarakiVasiliki_BraoudakiAikaterini2014.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Gender-based violence in Greece report. SAFER – REC project. Retrieved 31/07 from: [http://gendrsafer.eu/sites/default/files/2019-11/Greece.National\\_Report\\_0.pdf](http://gendrsafer.eu/sites/default/files/2019-11/Greece.National_Report_0.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> Gender-based violence in Greece report. SAFER – REC project. Retrieved 31/07 from: [http://gendrsafer.eu/sites/default/files/2019-11/Greece.National\\_Report\\_0.pdf](http://gendrsafer.eu/sites/default/files/2019-11/Greece.National_Report_0.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), Violence against women: an EU-wide survey Results at a glance.2014. Retrieved 25/09 from: [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-at-a-glance-oct14\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra-2014-vaw-survey-at-a-glance-oct14_en.pdf).

politics and businesses and to standardize the services provided in government shelters to victims of gender-based violence, as well as to the fact that under the new penal code, penalties may be as high as three years in prison for sexual harassment, with longer terms applied to perpetrators who take advantage of their position of authority or the victim's need for employment. The previous penalty ranged from two months to five years<sup>27</sup>.

In the light of the above, the fact that there are no supplementary researches on sexual harassment proves the gap that exists concerning the phenomenon in the country.

However, there is an important number of analysis conducted concerning gender equality in the Greek labor market reviewing the existing gaps and inequalities that, as the authors of one report states, "have been marginalized in public discourse and official policymaking processes since the financial debt crisis in 2009". According to the author, Nelli Kambouri, despite the steps that have been implemented regarding the legal protection of women against discrimination in the workplace, women representation continues to be limited in political processes, shadowing the demands concerning their rights<sup>28</sup>.

Recently, Vodafone (a communication and digital technologies company), the Alba Graduate Business School and the NGO Women on Top, published the results of the research "Breaking the Glass Ceiling" on the position of women and the extent of gender discrimination in business. Among many interesting results, the survey indicated that there is limited knowledge on defining sexual harassment in the workplace and that only 30% of businesses offer training programs on the matter to inform the employees<sup>29</sup>.

Another research concerned the phenomenon of moral harassment (mobbing) in the workplace of the health sector as a significant inhibitory factor for the mental and emotional balance of employees and the proper implementation of the operations. In the abovementioned research, researchers Aristotelis Koinis and Maria Saridi stated the importance of the training of the management, for them to know how to deal with any problems of work harassment, as well as

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<sup>27</sup> US Department of State, 2019 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. Retrieved 31/07/2020 from: <https://www.state.gov/reports/2019-country-reports-on-human-rights-practices/greece/>

<sup>28</sup> KAMBOURI N. Gender Equality in the Greek labour market – The gaps narrow, inequalities persist. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. 2013. Retrieved 30/07/2020 from: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id/09822.pdf> .

<sup>29</sup> Breaking the glass ceiling, 2020. Retrieved 25/09/2020 from: <https://www.vodafone.gr/vodafone-ellados/digital-press-office/deltia-typou/20200619-breaking-the-glass-ceiling-i-ereuna-tis-vodafone-xekina-ti-syzitisi-gia-ti-thesi-ton-gynaikon-stis-epicheiriseis-kai-tis-prooptikes-veltiosis-tis/>

to organize awareness and information seminars for employees and self-help groups to support reintegration for people who have been morally harassed<sup>30</sup>.

Regarding research and guidelines dealing with sexual harassment, the General Secretariat for Equality (now renamed as General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality) published a guide in 2011, entailing research on the factors of gender violence, as well as information on how to counsel abused women. It is proposed to advise women to react calmly but vigorously, to keep evidence, talk to someone they trust as soon as possible and not to blame themselves or try to find excuses to the abusive behavior. In addition, they should be advised to contact the trade union, the labor inspectorate, the counseling centers for women or a lawyer to get legal advice if the offender persists showing abusive behavior<sup>31</sup>.

Furthermore, the abovementioned institution published a counseling manual aiming to strengthen the knowledge and the handling capacity of women employees, employers and authorities/unions/organizations on the matter of sexual harassment in the workplace. The guide entails information on the term “sexual harassment”, the competent authorities, practical advice for the employees, the employers and the stakeholders on how to better address the problem, as well as templates for reporting such incidents<sup>32</sup>. To be more specific, in the counseling manual, it is suggested that handling sexual harassment should be included as a term in contracts between the employees and the employers. In addition, the women are advised to share what happened with institutions and authorities that can offer help and trade unions and organizations are advised on how to speak to the victim, encourage her to report the incident and deal with the problem with respect to the intimate nature of the matter.

Moreover, an interesting initiative was the “USVReact” Training Program. This program introduced the topic of sexual violence and harassment to university (it was applied to Panteion University of Athens, Greece) in order to identify institutional gaps, as well as general attitudes of the university staff and students about the problem. The participants mentioned that the

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<sup>30</sup> Hellenic Journal of Nursing Science. 2013. Retrieved 31/7 from: [http://journal-ene.gr/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/mobbing\\_ergosiako\\_xoro.pdf](http://journal-ene.gr/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/mobbing_ergosiako_xoro.pdf).

<sup>31</sup> General Secretariat for Equality, Counseling Guide on Violence. 2011. Retrieved 31/07 from: <http://www.isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/%CE%9F%CE%B4%CE%B7%CE%B3%CF%8C%CF%82-%CE%A3%CF%85%CE%BC%CE%B2%CE%BF%CF%85%CE%BB%CE%B5%CF%85%CF%84%CE%B9%CE%BA%CE%AE%CF%82-%CE%B3%CE%B9%CE%B1-%CF%84%CE%B7-%CE%92%CE%99%CE%91.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> General Secretariat for Equality, Counseling manual. 2011. Retrieved 30/07/2020 from: <http://www.isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/EGXEIRIDIO-SYMBOULEYTIKIS.pdf>



silence around the problem of sexual and gender-based violence reflects wider cultural attitudes against revelation of such cases, either in the workplace or in the family<sup>33</sup>.

Undoubtedly, Greece has taken steps forward in the prevention and handling of sexual harassment in the workplace in comparison to the past. This is evident if contemporary legislative and operational systems are compared to the one described in official reports in the early 2000's. For instance, according to the national report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1999, General Secretariat for Equality mentioned that women are not adequately protected in cases of sexual harassment in the workplace, particularly in the private sector and for this reason a specific legislative regulation for SH was necessary<sup>34</sup>. A few years later, in 2004, the same conclusion was introduced at the report the Irish Presidency of the European Union published on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace in EU Member States. At the time, Greece had no legislation that dealt with sexual harassment in the workplace or particular measures to protect the employees from victimization<sup>35</sup>. However, there is more to be done to strengthen prevention and tackling the issue.

### 2.3 RESPONSES TO THE PHENOMENON AND SUCCESSFUL STORIES

The table below presents some good practices to deal with SH in the workplace:

Good practice	Description	Implementing organization and source
'We don't tolerate sexual harassment in the workplace': counselling manual for female employees, employers and social organizations	The manual includes information about the phenomenon, guidelines to respond to the phenomenon, including public authorities one can address, information on the legal framework and guidelines for employers.	Issued by the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality, 2011 <a href="http://www.isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/EGXEIRIDIO-SYMBΟΥLEYTIKIS.pdf">http://www.isotita.gr/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/EGXEIRIDIO-SYMBΟΥLEYTIKIS.pdf</a>

<sup>33</sup>Report of USVReact project. Retrieved 31/07 from [http://usvreact.eu/wp-content/resources/panteion\\_pte\\_gr.pdf](http://usvreact.eu/wp-content/resources/panteion_pte_gr.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> General Secretariat for Equality, GREECE NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION. 1999. Retrieved 31/07/2020 from: <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/followup/responses/greece.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> REPORT ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE IN EU MEMBER STATES.2004. Retrieved in 31/07/2020 from: <http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/SexualHrrsmtRpt.pdf/Files/SexualHrrsmtRpt.pdf>

Monitoring of reports for sexual harassment in the workplace	The Ombudsman is the responsible authority for examining reports, amongst others, in the working environment in the public and private sector and implementing mediation. In their newsletters and annual reports, the Ombudsman publishes data and cases on which they intervened.	The Greek Ombudsman Report for 'The experience of the Ombudsman in the issue of sexual harassment (2006-2010)' <a href="https://www.synigoros.gr/resources/8894_1_sexualharassment.pdf">https://www.synigoros.gr/resources/8894_1_sexualharassment.pdf</a> Annual report on equal treatment: <a href="https://www.synigoros.gr/resources/docs/e_e_im_2019_el.pdf">https://www.synigoros.gr/resources/docs/e_e_im_2019_el.pdf</a>
Anonymous reporting	Employees can report any incident relating to security and health in employment and work relations. The person who reports can also request for the inspection to take place during specific hours, by stating the reason.	Greek Labour Inspectorate Anonymous reporting: <a href="https://apps.sepenet.gr/portal/anonymous">https://apps.sepenet.gr/portal/anonymous</a>
'Elimination of cases of harassment and oppression in the workplace': Guidelines for shipping companies	Guidelines explaining what is harassment and oppression, the different aspects of such phenomena, training and communication and case studies.	European Community Shipowners' Association & European Transport Workers' Federation Source: <a href="https://www.etf-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Guidelines-to-shipping-companies-GR.pdf">https://www.etf-europe.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Guidelines-to-shipping-companies-GR.pdf</a>
Initiatives undertaken by the social partners for restoring trust and strengthening their effective participation in the social dialogue	Thematic studies, policy papers, study visits and workshops on the matter of discrimination in the workplace between key stakeholders in Greece.	Trade union GSEE and employer unions SETE, GSEVEE, SEV, ESEE. 2014-2015. <a href="https://imegsevee.gr/en/projects/initiatives-undertaken-by-the-social-partners-for-restoring-trust-and-strengthening-their-effective-participation-in-the-social-dialogue/">https://imegsevee.gr/en/projects/initiatives-undertaken-by-the-social-partners-for-restoring-trust-and-strengthening-their-effective-participation-in-the-social-dialogue/</a> .
"Together in Knowledge"	Trainings of creative leadership	Hellenic Federation of Industries" ("Sindesmos Epixiriseon kai Viomixanion" - S.E.V.) and Alba Graduate Business School: <a href="https://www.sev.org.gr/tomeis-draseon/ergasia-anthropino-kefalaio/koini-ekpaideftiki-protovoulia-sev-kai-alba-2/">https://www.sev.org.gr/tomeis-draseon/ergasia-anthropino-kefalaio/koini-ekpaideftiki-protovoulia-sev-kai-alba-2/</a>

<p>“EMBRACIVE- Embracing diversity and fostering inclusion in the workplace”.</p>	<p>The program aims to promote diversity in businesses both in Greece and in Cyprus, focusing on the need to create anti-discrimination practices and including the issue of SH. In the framework of this project, a “toolkit” will be developed as well as a guide for employers, managers etc. which will be piloted in 13 businesses.</p>	<p>Hellenic Federation of Industries” (“Sindesmos Epixiriseon kai Viomixanion” - S.E.V.”) and other stakeholders.2020. <a href="https://embracive.eu/">https://embracive.eu/</a></p>
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### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Qualitative and quantitative research was conducted in order to identify existing strategies, perceptions and gaps in preventing and combating sexual harassment in the workplace. Desk research, interviews and an online survey aimed to provide a more holistic image of the current state of affairs in Greece.

Literature review aimed to explore the relevant legal framework and provisions, the existing reporting system(s), the involvement of organizations in the issue, as well as good practices on the prevention and tackling of the phenomenon.

In-depth interviews were conducted with representatives of two Trades Unions, representatives of two Employers’ Associations, representatives of an NGO and one representative of Anti-discrimination Commission to assess the forms and prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace, its consequences on the victims, the measures taken by companies in order to prevent and combat the phenomenon, as well as the existing reporting procedures.

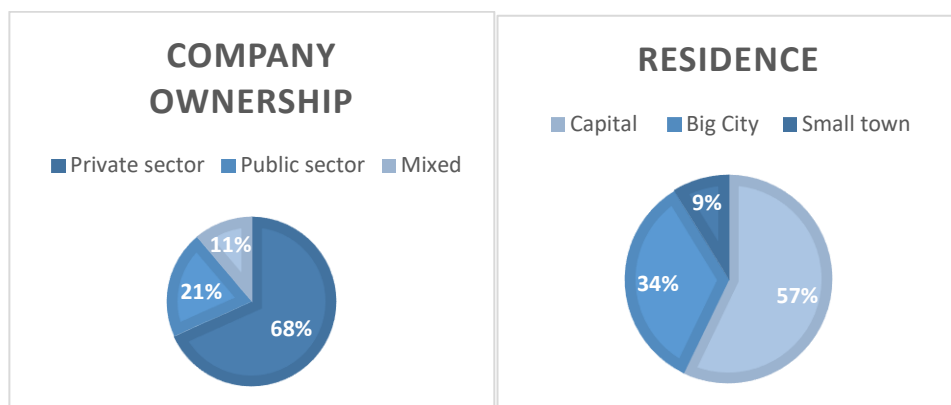
On the other hand, an online survey ran from 10.06.2020 until 10.09.2020, and gathered data on the level of preparedness of the private and public sector in dealing with sexual harassment in terms of awareness-raising, measures to prevent and combat the phenomenon and the provision of trainings. Out of the 203 total answers gathered, 50 were incomplete, and therefore discarded, and 153 complete surveys were taken into account: 126 respondents were employees and 27 employers.

## 4. EMPIRICAL SURVEY

### 4.1 EVALUATIONS ON THE ONLINE SURVEY OF EMPLOYEES.

#### A. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Out of the total 126 Greek participants that filled in the online questionnaire for employees/workers, 84.13% were female, 14.29% were male and 0.79% were non-binary; one person did not wish to answer the relevant question. Most of the participants (43.65%) were young adults (aged 21-30 years old), 30.95% were 31-40 years old and 19.05% were 41-50 years old. Some (5.56%) were above 50 and one participant was up to 20 years old. The vast majority (84.92%) selected 'worker/employee' as their professional status and 15.08% reported to be managers. As presented in the following graphs, the majority of the sample works in the private sector and are located in the capital of the country.



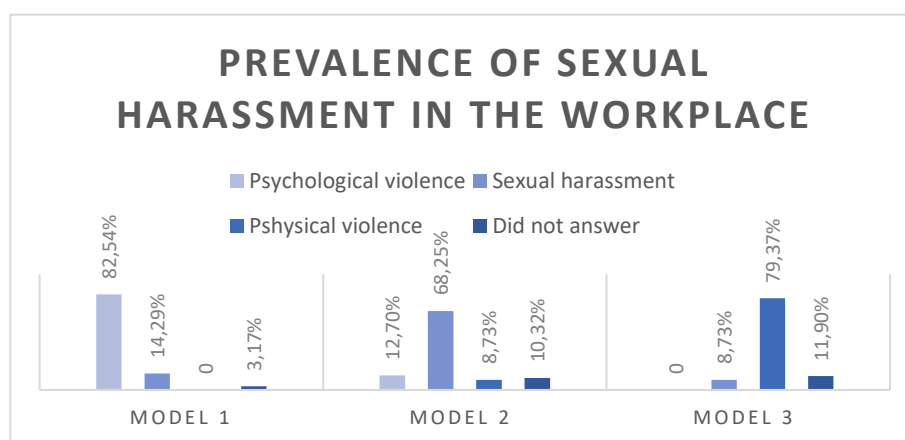
As depicted in the table hereunder, most participants did not identify the economic activity of their company/organisation in the options provided in the relevant question, selecting 'other activities'. Some stated that they work in education, less that they are occupied in professional activities and research and few in administrative and support activities.

<i>Economic activity of participants' organisation/company</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>Other activities</i>	24,60%
<i>Education</i>	23,81%
<i>Professional activities and research</i>	9,52%
<i>Administrative and support activities</i>	7,94%
<i>Human health and social work</i>	7,94%

<i>Culture, sports and entertainment</i>	6,35%
<i>Transport, storage and mailing</i>	3,97%
<i>Accommodation and Catering</i>	2,38%
<i>Creating and disseminating information and creative products; telecommunications</i>	2,38%
<i>Financial and insurance activities</i>	2,38%
<i>Construction</i>	2,38%
<i>Public administration and defence</i>	1,59%
<i>Production and distribution of electricity, heat and gaseous fuels</i>	1,59%
<i>Manufacturing</i>	1,59%
<i>Trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles</i>	0,79%
<i>Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries</i>	0,79%

## B. SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT PHENOMENON IN THE WORKPLACE

In terms of the prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace, three ranking models emerged from the respondents' answers, as depicted in the following chart.

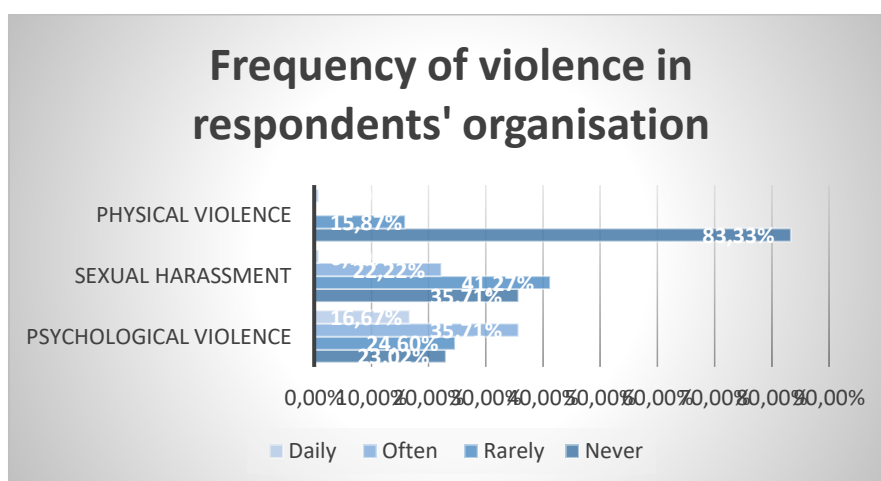


More than half of the total sample reported that the forms of sexual harassment that are most often practiced in their workplace are sexual suggestions or jokes that make them feel offended (70.63%), unwanted sexual hints/suggestions (65.08%), discussions about colleague's sex life (59.52%) and sexual comments about someone's appearance, body parts or clothes (59.52%). Less than half listed offensive comments about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity (36,51%), lustful and amorous looks, whistles and insulting gestures (34,92%) and spreading sexual rumours (31.75%) as the most often practiced forms of sexual harassment in their



workplace. Proposals for promotion in the hierarchy / salary for sexual services (15,87%), persecution, surveillance, threats (9,52%), showing sexual photos, suggestions for watching pornographic movies (5,56%) and indecent emails or anonymous letters (4.76%) were reported as frequently practiced by less respondents. It should be noted that 2,38% of the sample reported that temptation / coercion into prostitution or sexual exploitation are prevalent, while 1.59% stated that sexual assault (rape) is often practiced in their workplace. 3.97% reported that all the aforementioned forms of sexual harassment are prevalent in their workplace, whereas 10.32% reported that none of the listed forms are frequent; 2.38% did not answer the relevant question.

According to most respondents and as illustrated in the bar hereunder, psychological violence is often practiced in their workplace, sexual harassment rarely takes place and physical violence never does.



With regards to the commitment of the employers/managers of their organisation to the prevention and response to sexual harassment, most respondents find they are not committed at all (37.30%), less believe that they are rather not committed (28.57%), fewer that they are somewhat committed (21.43%) and 12.7% that they are completely committed.

The most common factors that influence perpetrators to practice sexual harassment are lack of reaction of people around (69.05%), lack of prosecution and measures for perpetrators' punishment (64.29%), low level of gender equality at the workplace (54.76%) and lack of tailored company's policies and procedures (49.21%). Lack of security and control measures

(41.27%), subordinate management style - lack of bottom up feedback channels (41.27%), family history of the perpetrator (39.68%) and office relationships - strong corporate hierarchical structure and subordination (30.95%) were identified as less common factors.

### C. SPREAD, SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS, REACTION AND IMPACT OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

More than half of the sample (52.38%) reported to have experienced sexual harassment during their working life, whereas 45.24% reported the opposite; 2.38% did not want to answer the relevant question. In terms of the feelings people had after the incident, 17.46% reported to have calmly discussed it and think they have overcome it. 15.87% reported to come back to the incident from time to time and having troubling memories, 10.32% stated they have anger and aggression attacks, 9.52% stated that they became "over sensitive", suppressed and cautious and 7.14% that they work under stress and pressure. 6.35% avoid thinking and talking about it, while 3.97% quit their jobs. 3.17% reported to hardly concentrate in the work process, feeling powerless and guilty, having a sense of shame/misunderstood their colleagues or take it as normal behaviour; 0.79% reported to suffer from headaches, insomnia, anxiety, etc. 2.38% did not want to answer. Out of the total 66 respondents that reported to have been sexually harassed in their workplace, 63 identified the perpetrator to be male, two stated that the perpetrator was female and one identified them as non-binary.

Most respondents (55.56%) have never witnessed any form of sexual harassment against their colleagues in their workplace and 42.86% reported to have been witnesses of such incidents; 1.59% did not want to answer. Senior employees were reported to be frequent perpetrators of sexual harassment (76.19%), followed by colleagues (51.59%), senior representatives/representatives of external institutions (20.63%) and clients/patients/suppliers (18.25%); 4.76% did not want to answer and 2.38% reported that there are no such cases.

The vast majority of the sample (91.27%) found that women are more exposed to sexual harassment, whilst 7.14% believe that females and males are equally exposed to such phenomena; 1.59% did not know or could not answer. As presented below, the fear for victim's work position and the sense of shame or belief that they have misunderstood their colleagues are the factors that respondents believe influence the victim's reaction the most.

**Respondents perceptions on factors influencing the reaction of the victim**

Fear for the work position	76.19%
Sense of shame/ misunderstanding by colleagues	65.87%
Lack of knowledge of protection procedures	57.14%
Victim-blaming	55.56%
Fear of retaliation	53.17%
Lack of effective protection procedures	47.62%
Sexual Harassment is not considered as a problem	36.51%
Expectations for salary increasing and other benefits	19.05%
Unaware	2.38%

Respondents stated that in case a victim of sexual harassment resisted such behaviour, they would face consequences like creation of a hostile environment (43.65%), psychological violence/mobbing (27.78%), risk of forthcoming dismissal (24.6%), assignment of more complicated/difficult tasks (15.87%), refusal of career promotion (15.08%) and replacement to other undesired job position (11.11%). 30.16% found that there would not be any consequences and 17.46% did not know.

**D. AWARENESS OF PROCEDURES FOR PREVENTION AND PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE - KNOWLEDGE, APPLICATION, TRAINING**

Out of the total sample, 39.68% reported not to be aware of the procedures a victim must take to seek protection in their company, 35.71% stated that they think they are aware but were not exactly sure and 24.6% that they are familiar with such procedures. Most respondents (42.06%) indicated that their company/organisation does not have any document that includes clauses prohibiting sexual harassment and some (35.71%) were unaware. Out of the total sample that stated that their company/organisation has relevant documents, some indicated that relevant clauses are included in the Code of Ethics (16.67%), internal company regulations (14.29%), the Collective Bargaining Agreement (2.38%), in another document (2.38%) or in the provisions of the committees on health and safety at work (0.79%).

In case sexual harassment is reported in their organisation/company, most indicated that there is no internal safeguarding procedure, including investigation and an impartial hearing (40.48%), or a designated person/department who takes responsibility to run the procedure (53.97%); some suggested the opposite (20.63%, 12.7% respectively) and some were

unaware (38.89%, 33.33% respectively). The majority did not know whether the company they work at offers transfers to other working locations/departments (49.21%) or temporary leave (50.79%) upon the employees' request. Some stated that their company does not offer such transfers (35.71%) or leaves (32.54%) and that it does (15.08% and 16.67% respectively). Most companies do not direct the victim to specialised services (51.59%) or provide financial support (61.9%); only a few do (11.11% and 0.79% respectively). Nonetheless, it should be noted that a great portion of the sample was not aware on the provision of psychological (37.3%) or financial support (37.3%). The same applied to the establishment of partnerships with external bodies, like the police, social services and NGOs, as most participants clarified that no such partnership is established (45.24%) or did not know (44.44%). Only a few (10.32%) indicated the existence of such partnerships. 19.05% were confident about the confidentiality for the person who reports, but 29.37% did not find that it would be ensured and 51.59% did not know. The vast majority of respondents (73.81%) stated that no training actions are provided to the staff on ways to counteract sexual harassment, while 19.05% did not know. A small proportion of the sample (7.14%) clarified that such trainings take place. Similarly, 65.08% supported that information on existing state support measures are not provided by their organisation and 29.37% were unaware. 5.56% indicated that employees are provided such information.

Mailboxes for anonymous alerts are not an active practice for 73.02% of participants' organisations, whereas 10.32% have such practices. 15.87% of respondents were unaware and 0.79% could not answer to the question.

In case of sexual harassment, respondents would turn or advice the victim to seek help from their manager (46.83%), a lawyer (42.06%), the police (34.13%), the Human Resources department (29.37%), the Labour Inspectorate (28.57%), a friend who is not a staff member (23.02%), their colleagues (21.43%) or a trade union represented in the company (17.46%). Others would turn or suggest victims to seek help from a family member or relative (14.29%), an NGO (12.7%) or a doctor or other medical specialist (7.14%). 3.97% indicated that survivors are afraid to report a case, 2.38% stated that they would not seek or they would not advise a victim to seek help and 0.79% did not want to answer.

Most (39.68%) reported that their organisation has no preventive measures for sexual harassment and some (36.51%) were unaware. In cases such measures are applicable, they can be found in the company policy, internal regulations, or the Collective Bargaining

Agreement (CBA) (15.08%); through brochures, flyers, posters, that promote sexual harassment policy (12.7%); in raising awareness activities on the mechanisms and procedures, implemented by a designated person or department, who also monitors their compliance (6.35%); through internal surveys for the regular monitoring of the current situation (4.76%) or other preventive measures (3.97%).

The most common ways that respondents receive information on sexual harassment are through the internet (65.87%), workshops on gender equality (38.1%) or they rely on their personal knowledge (31.75%). Others ways of receiving information are the media and brochures, leaflets or other information materials (30.16%), as well as training on protection/safeguarding (21.43%), online training (19.84%), friend circles (15.08%), from trade unions or employees' representatives (11.11%) and from the employer, manager or HR (7.14%). 4.76% did not want to answer. The vast majority (82.54%) reported the lack of trainings provided in their organisation for the prevention and combating of sexual harassment, but some (10.32%) indicated that such trainings are available; 7.14% were unaware. Most respondents (71.43%) declared their interest in attending relevant trainings, although 15.08% were not and 13.49% remained unsure.

Trainings on the prevention and tackling of sexual harassment should include awareness-raising activities on the issue and the impact it has (66.67%), information on the legislative framework (65.08%), measures to ensure confidentiality (58.73%) and specific support to people who have experienced it (57.14%). Furthermore, such trainings should comprise of penalties for the perpetrators (53.97%), protection clauses in the Collective Bargaining Agreement (53.17%), information on organisations offering support (50%) and statistics and analysis of such cases (36.51%).

Respondents found that companies should have clear and strong policies (70.63%) and implement more awareness raising campaigns (68.25%). In addition, more trainings should be implemented (61.9%), along with participatory workshops (56.35%) and the establishment of partnerships with the police, social services and the civil sector (46.83%). More prevention and protection activities should be initiated by trade unions represented in the companies (27.78%), while more active committees on occupational health should be established (26.19%) and peer to peer conversations should be taking place (16.67%).

## E. CONCLUSIONS



It remains evident that sexual harassment is prevalent in the workplace and is often practiced in the form of sexual suggestions, jokes, hints, comments about someone's appearance and discussions about colleagues' sex life. Worth noting is the fact that almost half of the employees that responded to the questionnaire reported that psychological violence takes place often or daily in their workplace, while one fourth of the sample stated that sexual harassment often happens. Employers are not entirely committed to the prevention and response to sexual harassment, while the most common factors that influence perpetrators are the lack of reaction of people, lack of prosecution and measures, lack of gender equality in the workplace and lack of company's policies and procedures. It is quite clear that employees perceive the lack of measures and commitment of the managers as some determining factors contributing to the perpetuation of the phenomenon.

Worth mentioning is the fact that more than half of the sample reported to have been sexually harassed in their workplace, while 63 out of the 66 respondents that stated the above, identified the perpetrator as male. Although most employees that filled in the questionnaire have not witnessed relevant incidents, more than one third of the sample reported so, while senior employees were identified as frequent perpetrators. On the other hand, females were identified as being more exposed to sexual harassment. In such cases, victimisation seems to be ongoing, as victims' reaction can be influenced by fear for their work position and sense of shame/misunderstanding of their colleagues, which can also influence the self-identification of the victims as such. In cases the victims resisted such behaviours, they would face a hostile environment, psychological violence or risk of forthcoming dismissal.

Only a few employees stated that their company has documents that include clauses prohibiting sexual harassment or procedures for reporting/seeking help. However, it remains evident that even when measures for the prevention and tackling of sexual harassment are active and available, they are not widely disseminated in companies/organisations and employees remain unaware and unable to exercise their rights. In most cases, organisations and companies do not have clear and structured guidelines for the prevention and tackling of such incidents, nor do they provide trainings, information or support to employees who have relevant experiences.

Furthermore, respondents questioned the insurance of confidentiality for the victim. The aforementioned findings reveal the lack of preparedness of companies and organisation in preventing and combating sexual harassment in the workplace. The presented 'tolerance' and passivity can be perceived as a factor leading to the perpetuation of the phenomenon, affecting

not only the working environment, but also everyday life. Organisations/companies and other public and private bodies, as well as the society, should be more prepared to contribute to the prevention and tackling of the phenomenon, with more concrete guidelines, procedures, involvement of stakeholders, creation of partnerships and synergies and enhancement of individuals' personal and collective responsibility.

Considering that the most common way employees stated to receive information is the internet, awareness raising campaigns should be developed and disseminated through the internet. The media that could be used would be social media, promoted advertisements in blogs, search engines, YouTube and online newspapers, as well as direct emails to managers and HR departments. Simple and direct messages should be included, in order to enhance personal responsibility and collective efficacy, including ways one could contribute to the assistance of victims and ways to report such incidents.

Respondents declared their interest in participating in relevant trainings, which should include awareness raising activities on the different aspects of the issue, such as the factors influencing the perpetrator and the impact it has on the victims and the workplace, the legislative framework, the measures that can be taken to ensure the confidentiality of the victims and ways to provide specific support.

## 4.2 EVALUATIONS ON THE ONLINE SURVEY OF EMPLOYERS/HR PROFESSIONALS

### A. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

In total 27 employers/senior managers/HR managers filled in the online questionnaire in Greece. 70.37% were female, 25.93% were male and 3.7% were non-binary.

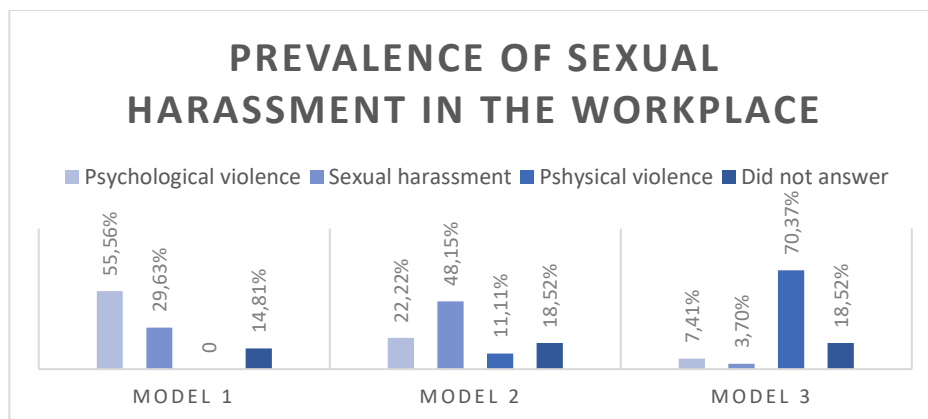
They were occupied in administrative and support activities (14.81%), financial and insurance activities (14.81%), in creating and disseminating information and creative products - telecommunications (11.11%), education (11.11%), professional activities and research (7.41%), public administration and defence (7.41%) or other activities (7.41%). Less employers reported to be working in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, production and distribution of electricity, heat and gaseous fuels, trade - repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles, accommodation and catering, real estate, human health and social work and in activities of

extraterritorial organisations and bodies (3.7% for each category). In their respective companies, the number of employees who have labour contracts are 0-9 (37.04%), 10-49 (33.33%), 50-249 (14.91%) or above 250 (14.91%). The mean percentage of female employees occupied in respondents' organisations is 55.84% and the mean percentage for male employees is 40.83%.

Most participants' organisations/companies are of the private sector (81.48%), less are of the public sector (11.11%) and few are of mixed ownership (7.41%). More than half of the sample (55.56%) reported to be a manager in an organisation of higher level, less (40.74%) were managers in intermediate level organisations, and one (3.7%) in a lower level organisation.

## B. AWARENESS AND PERCEPTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

As illustrated in the chart below, three models emerged when respondents were asked to rank the most prevalent form of sexual harassment in the workplace.



According to the employers that filled in the online questionnaire, initiatives to raise awareness on sexual harassment should be taken by the Government (48.15%), the companies (33.33%), the media (33.33%), NGOs (18.52%) and trade unions (14.81%). Nonetheless, more than half of the sample (59.26%) believes that all of the aforementioned actors should work on awareness raising of the phenomenon.

The vast majority of the sample (77.78%) assessed the problem of sexual harassment as very serious. Some (18.52%) find it to be somewhat serious and less (3.7%) rather not serious.

Nonetheless, 33.33% stated that sexual harassment never takes place in their company, 29.83% stated that it is not very common and 22.22% that it is somewhat common. 14.81% remained unsure. Most respondents (44.44%) find that sufficient measures are somewhat taken in their company to prevent and respond to such phenomena and 18.52% perceive such measures completely sufficient, while 25.93% believe that rather not and 11.11% stated that relevant measures are not enough.

### C. DISSEMINATION AND EVALUATION OF THE PHENOMENON

Most of the respondents (66.67%) believe that the corporate management style cannot tolerate discrimination and in particular sexual harassment, but some find it quite possible (18.52%) or somewhat possible (14.81%). The majority of the sample stated that, in case an employee reports sexual harassment, it is a management task as a part of safety and healthy requirements to take appropriate measures (96.3%) and that the problem must be addressed by following the appropriate internal procedure (85.19%). Some found that it is a task for governmental institutions (i.e. police, court) (62.96%). All respondents did not find the problem to be insignificant/ not deserving special attention, and the majority did not perceive it to be a personal issue that needs to be solved between the two parties (88.89%), a matter for NGOs (77.78%) or a task for the trade unions (62.96%).

More than half of the sample (51.85%) stated that their company management has never received reports from witnesses or survivors of sexual harassment. 14.81% reported that the management has received relevant reports and 33.33% were unaware.

### D. COMBATING SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE PROCEDURES

Out of the total sample, 37.04% stated that their company has predefined prevention/combating corporate policy against sexual harassment included in the Code of Conduct and Internal Procedures against abuse and violence; 33.33% reported that their company has developed measures in their Company's Internal Rules, 29.63% that their anti-discrimination corporate policy includes gender equality approach and 7.41% stated that the Collective Bargaining Agreement has special protection clauses. 29.63% reported that their company does not include such policies/regulations and in case of need, they refer to national legislation; 11.11% were unaware.

Many employers stated that in case of sexual harassment, signal is given to the supervisor (44.44%), complaints are addressed to the Human Resources Department (29.63%), the general procedure for reporting violations of internal labour rights and discipline is followed (22.22%) or they follow an anonymous reporting system via a mail box (11.11%). Some companies have a specific protocol to prevent and act against sexual harassment (11.11%). However, 29.63% of the employers reported that no specific reporting procedures are available in their organisation and 11.11% did not know. More than half of the sample (55.56%) also reported that there is no specific system for tracking cases of sexual harassment. 33.33% stated that there is an internal information system and 7.41% reports and analysis are regularly provided.

With regards to problem solving in case of sexual harassment, sometimes there is an internal safeguarding procedure, including investigation and an impartial hearing (44.44%), a designated person or department who takes the responsibility to run the procedure (51.85%), or temporary leave, upon the request of the employee (44.44%). Confidentiality for the person who signals is ensured (70.37%), while the employee receives information about the existing state support measures (40.74%) and partnerships with external bodies like the police, social services and NGOs are established (40.47%). Most companies do not offer transfers to other working locations or departments (44.44%), nor psychological (40.74%) or financial support (55.56%). More than half of the employers also clarified that training actions on ways to counteract sexual harassment are not provided to employees (59.26%).

## E. PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE PROCEDURES

Almost half of the sample (48.15%) reported that no prevention measures are in place in their company and 11.11% were unaware. Some stated that their company offers trainings to employees (22.22%), conducts internal surveys to monitor the situation (22.22%), promotes their policy of prevention of sexual harassment through brochures, flyers, posters, etc. (18.52%) or assigns awareness raising on the mechanisms and procedures to a specific person or department (18.52%).

In terms of seeking assistance and support from Trade Unions and Employee Representative Bodies presented in the company/organization, only one employer (3.7%) stated that they work together in all the directions. 37.04% reported that they do not work with Trade Unions and



22.22% clarified that no such organisations are presented in their company; 14.81% did not know and 3.7% did not want to answer.

Most organisations (66.67%) have not participated in initiatives organized by external actors for combating sexual harassment. Some (22.22%) have, whilst 11.11% of the participants were not aware.

## F. TRAINING

In terms of awareness raising trainings for the prevention and tackling of sexual harassment, 33.33% employers stated that such trainings are not provided by their organisation, as it is not necessary. Another 33.33% reported that such trainings are provided rarely (not annually), while 11.11% of the respondents' companies implement such actions annually and 3.7% more than once per year. 14.81% remained unsure and 3.7% did not want to answer. According to participants, these trainings should be attended by employees/staff (81.48%), the HR department (74.07%), managers (59.26%) and employee representatives (48.15%); 7.41% remained unsure.

Such trainings should include awareness raising towards the issue of violence and sexual harassment and the impact it has (92.59%), information about the legislation framework (88.89%), the rights and obligations of the employer (88.89%) and the employee (92.59%), as well as the company signal and complaint reporting procedures (92.59%). Moreover, they should include information on gender equality, diversity, inclusion and management of power relations (85.19%), reporting files, internal and external investigations (81.48%), specialised support to the survivors – legal, medical, or other (81.48%). Participants found that companies should also prepare action plans (77.78%), have periodical surveys to determine if lack of signals really means no harassment (77.78%), keep archive and statistics, regular report and graphics (74.07%), have social partnership between employer and employees against violence and sexual harassment in context of gender equality policies at workplace and organise and conduct awareness raising and no tolerance to violence/sexual harassment campaigns as part of corporate culture (74.07%).

The vast majority of the respondents (70.37%) were positive in their company being involved in activities for raising awareness of employees towards sexual harassment. 11.11% declared not to be interested and 18.52% remains unsure.

## G. CONCLUSIONS

Psychological violence, sexual harassment and physical violence are prevalent in the workplace, according to the employers. Initiatives to combat the phenomenon should be taken by the Government, the companies, media, NGOs and trade unions, as sexual harassment remains a serious problem that should be dealt with. In contrast to the majority of the employees, employers stated that sexual harassment is not very common or is not common at all in their workplace. Although this could be based on the sampling procedure, it could also mean that senior managers and/or employers do not have a clear, holistic picture of the status and aspects of sexual harassment in their company/organisation due to the lack of clear guidelines, monitoring and established procedures, or due to the victims' fear of the consequences they might face in their working environment in case they report. It should be noted that more than half of the employers stated that their company management has never received reports from witnesses or survivors of sexual harassment.

Nonetheless, almost half of the employers stated that the measures taken by their company are somewhat sufficient. In addition, according to the majority of employers, the corporate management style cannot tolerate discrimination and in particular sexual harassment, while it is a management task as a part of safety and healthy requirements to take appropriate measures when such incidents are reported, as the problem must be addressed by following the appropriate internal procedure. However, it should be noted that more than half found that this is a matter of governmental institutions, like the police and the court.

Many of the participants reported that measures and policies to prevent and combat sexual harassment are taken by their company and are included in the Code of Conduct, Internal Procedures against abuse and violence, the Company's Internal Rules or the Collective Bargaining Agreement. In case a relevant incident occurs, signal is given to the supervisor, complaints are addressed to the Human Resources Department or/and the general procedure for reporting violations of internal labour rights and discipline is followed. However, the lack of reporting and the prevalence of sexual harassment presented by employees and employers reveal that the existing reporting systems are not adequate for victims to address the issue and follow the relevant procedures. Further research should be conducted on the needs of the victims and the most appropriate ways to report an incident and the measure/procedure that should be implemented. Respective tools and guidelines should be tested and implemented in order to fit the needs of the people who experience such behaviours and the respective company's regulations.

The reported lack of a specific system for tracking cases of sexual harassment also contributes to the lack of relevant data that could feed the development of tools and procedures, as well as the depiction of a clearer image on the several aspects of the phenomenon. Although some employers stated that their company offers trainings and conducts surveys to monitor the situation, this seems to be insufficient. Some of the respondents stated that relevant trainings are not provided, as it is not considered to be necessary.

Similarly to employees, employers were positive for their company to participate in relevant trainings, which should include awareness raising on violence and sexual harassment and the impact it has, information about the legislation framework, the rights and obligations of the employer and the employee, as well as the company signal and complaint reporting procedures. It is considered to be necessary for such trainings to be organised regularly, in order for updates and propositions to be addressed, as well as for new employees to be informed. Nonetheless, new employees should be immediately informed about existing policies and measures and ways they can contribute to the prevention and tackling of the phenomenon.

#### 4.3 EVALUATIONS ON THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

##### A. GENERAL INFORMATION

In the framework of the qualitative survey, in-depth interviews from representatives of stakeholders in Greece were conducted. Their views and opinions on sexual harassment in the workplace are summarized in the following paragraphs.

The following stakeholders participated:

1. A representative of the Greek Ombudsman (“Sinigoros tou Politi”). As already mentioned, the Ombudsman is the competent administrative entity for the prohibition of discrimination and the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in relation to employment and occupation, both in private and public sectors.
2. A representative of the employers’ union “Panhellenic Federation of Private and Public School Canteens” (“Panellinia Omospondia Kilikion Dimosion kai Idiotikon Sxoleion- P.O.K.D.I.S.”), which participates in the social dialogue in sectoral level and gathers around 8,500 companies – members (1,500 employees).
3. A representative of the employers’ union “Hellenic Federation of Industries” (“Sindesmos Epixiriseon kai Viomixanion” - S.E.V.”) which as a third-grade

federation takes part in the social dialogue at national level. It consists of around 400 companies – members, totalling 216,000 employees.

4. A representative of the trade union “General Federation of Workers in Greece” (“Geniki Synomospondia Ergaton Ellados” - G.S.E.E.), which as a third-grade federation takes part in the social dialogue representing the rights and interests of workers and employees in the private sector. The union consists of around 400,000 members.
5. A representative of the trade union “Fighting Front for all Workers” (“Panergatiko Agonistiko Metopo P.A.ME.”), a trade union that takes parts in the social dialogue representing the rights and interests of employees and workers in public and private sector.
6. Two representatives of the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) “Action Aid Hellas”, the local entity of the global NGO “Action Aid” which, among other actions, focuses on fighting violence against women. The organization created “women friendly spaces” in refugee and migrant camps on Lesbos island and other places, as well as establishing a center for people at need in Kolonos, Athens (“Epikentro”), in which abused women and their children receive support and guidance.

## B. ASSESSMENT OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

The representative of the Greek Ombudsman assessed the problem of SH in the workplace as very serious in extent (rated 7 in 10- point scale) but mentioned that there is limited data about it, which indicates that many cases are never reported. She explained that while the Ombudsman receives around 2,000 reports about discrimination cases every year, only 1- 2% involve SH. Most of the survivors do not report it because they fear the “social stigma”, losing their job or potential acts of retaliation from the offender. In addition, she claimed that SH seems to be equally serious in private and public sector. However, the financial dependency in the private sector could be an additional obstacle in reporting the incident. Concerning the sector where SH is more probable to occur, the representative mentioned that there is no relevant data, but it has been noticed that a lot of SH cases occur in the third sector and in particular in services related with entertainment (female workers in restaurants, cafes, etc.).

The opinion that SH can occur to an equal extent in the private and the public sector was shared by the P.O.K.D.I.S representative, adding that in private sector the victim would not report the

behavior because they would be in absolute need. In addition, the representative mentioned that the risk of SH could be higher the closer the employee works with their boss.

SEV representative also emphasized on the fact that SH is an issue that can affect every worker, regardless of gender or sector of employment. Concerning the extent of the problem there is lack of recent data, however SEV monitors the situation in Greece following research conducted in Alba Graduate Business School (founded by SEV). The representative specifically referred to the research of project “Breaking the Glass Ceiling” presented in section 2.2 of this report, held by Vodafone, Alba Graduate Business School and “Women on Top”.

For their part, the GSEE representative stated the actual scope of the phenomenon is not registered because the employees are afraid to report cases. Although there are no relevant data, experience shows that some sectors, i.e. sectors of services provision, where more women are employed, are sectors where SH is more susceptible to occur. A crucial factor of the problem of SH in Greece is that the majority of the companies are quite small, consisting of the employer and a few workers, which means that there is no organized human resources department to which the employee can turn to if they deal with a problem in the workplace. The GSEE representative then referred to a case of SH they have handled, in which an employee reported being sexually harassed by her employer. The incident was reported to the Labor Inspectorate and then the employee went to court. She received a compensation but the procedure was exhausting and traumatizing. The employer tried to take revenge both on her and the witnesses that supported her in court by initiating criminal procedures against them. This incident was indicative of the difficulties a victim of SH deals with in order to receive justice. Concerning the extent of the problem in private and public sector, the GSEE representative agreed that in the private sector, the victim of SH could be more reluctant to report the incident due to the fear of losing their job. But at the same time, they mentioned that the private sector is better organized in terms of handling SH cases. More specifically, in the public sector, there is no Labor Inspectorate to which the victim can turn to in order to report the incident, and the mechanisms are less flexible and efficient.

According to the PAME representative, SH entails a wide range of behaviors, but there is no data indicating the extent of the problem. The private sector is more susceptible to see cases of SH happening, i.e. the sector of food supply like supermarkets. She also mentioned an incident of oral SH she personally experienced but did not report, in which the offender later tried to threaten and take revenge on her.

As the representatives of Action Aid Hellas stated, there is no recent and adequate data concerning the extent of the problem of SH. According to them, official reports are few related to the actual cases. In Greece there are no publicized data on working conditions. They



informed that based on the data of a recent research conducted by the non-profit organization DIANEOSIS, 40% of women have experienced SH in general and in 63 % of the cases, SH took place in the workplace. Sexual harassment in the workplace is the most common form of violence in Europe, according to another research conducted in European level. In addition, there is no data concerning in which sector SH is more susceptible to occur. However, in a research conducted in Scandinavian countries, it appears that women working in the “front line” in the sector of service provision, such as waitresses, experience SH in higher extent, that could reach even 60%. The representatives emphasized the role of the State, which is crucial in raising awareness on the subject, but all stakeholders should be involved. It is according to the interviewees very important to raise the awareness of the public on the issue and also to inform the survivors on how they can address the problem. They explained that many women who have experienced SH did not know that they could contact the SOS phone line 15900 of the General Secretariat for Family Policy and Gender Equality. In addition, the representatives stated that companies are reluctant in participating in SH projects. Another significant factor in combatting SH is the media and the way they refer to gender violence. They often adopt a language that shows women as responsible for the violence inflicted on them.

### C. ASSESSMENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

Although no such data are registered, the Ombudsman representative stated that there are consequences not only for the victim (psychological and economic) but also for the State, given that any act of violation of rights has consequences in terms of affecting people’s decisions in a negative way. As the P.O.K.D.I.S. representative mentioned, there are economic and social consequences mainly for the victim, but also for the businesses, such as worst working conditions, staff turnover, possible legal compensation for the victim and a negative impact on the reputation of the company if the incident is publicized.

The GSEE representative agreed on the latter if the case occurs in a big company, but stated that the consequences for the company are minor compared those the victim of SH deals with. The company will have to cope with higher legal costs, the obligation to compensate the victim and also operational difficulties if the victim leaves due to sickness or resign the job. As the PAME representative explained, SH has psychological, social and financial consequences for the victim. It afflicts family life and often leads to losing the job. The victim may need to take sick leaves or have medical expenses.

Taking into account the consequences of SH is a matter that should be studied and researched according to the representatives of Action Aid Hellas. From the researches conducted abroad, it seems that it affects companies in terms of employees resigning their job or often being on sick leave, lowered productivity, worse working environment and higher financial costs after the incident is reported. The consequences for the employees are psychological, physical and financial. Many are never again employed or are obliged to find a job in a whole different field, starting a whole new carrier and receiving low salaries. They often experience insecurity, depression, fear, even guilt for the way they handled the violence against them. They also mentioned that States are considered to be financially affected by the limited participation of women in high positions in the labor market and could also face consequences of SH in terms of lowered productivity.

#### D. IMPACT OF APPLIED COUNTERACTION PROCEDURES - LEGISLATIVE AND COMPANY LEVEL

Law No. 3896/2010 regarding the principle of equal treatment and the prohibition of any kind of discrimination applies to cases of SH. In general, the national legislation is considered adequate and abides by the European Union's rules. To the Ombudsman representative's mind, there is no legislative gap, but a gap in implementing the law. The abovementioned Law entails legal instruments supporting survivors in order to report SH, such as giving to the offender the so-called "burden of proof". The Law also enables trade unions to support and represent workers in the procedure. The most important aspect is that if SH occurred in the private sector, the Ombudsman would cooperate with the Labor Inspectorate. If a case of SH is reported to the Labor Inspectorate, it is obligatory that they inform the Ombudsman in order to investigate the case. After the Ombudsman has completed the investigation, a decision is produced and the Labor Inspectorate (if the case occurred in the private sector) or other authority responsible (if it occurred in the public sector) receive it. In the latter case, the Ombudsman shall recommend to follow a disciplinary procedure within the public administration. In any case, the Ombudsman ought to inform the public prosecutor if a case appears to have criminal aspects. It should be emphasized that the procedure engaging the Ombudsman is free for the victim. Furthermore, the victim maintains the right to go to the court and seek compensation. In this case, a decision of the Ombudsman is a solid evidence material.

The POKDIS representative mentioned that the legislation is insufficient and that European Law could help by establishing a single approach to the matter for all European Union's members. Furthermore, to her opinion, at company level, there is no organized procedure to handle SH.

To her mind, mechanisms should be organized by the Ministry of Labor. Collaboration between employers' unions and trade unions (i.e. by including SH in collective bargaining agreements) is essential to successfully tackle the issue. On the contrary, the SEV representative stated that the legislation is sufficient, but it is not correctly implemented, especially when it comes to small companies, which do not have an organized system of human resources management or mechanisms of internal mediation to solve problems that might occur in the workplace.

The GSEE representative stated that a legislative reform should include a modification in the judicial procedure, to successfully shifting the "burden of proof" to the employer who is accused of abusive behavior. In addition, she emphasized on the fact that the Labor Inspectorate does not investigate SH, unless the employee specifically refers to the law prohibiting discrimination (Law No. 3869/2010). Thus, a case of SH could be overlooked if the employee's reporting is considered mainly a labor case. Therefore, it is important that the Labor Inspectorate investigates ex officio potential acts of discrimination. New European Union's standards could be of use in order to support such evolution. In addition, the GSEE representative stated that the subject of SH is included in the 2004 - 2005 national Collective Bargaining Agreement and it may also be included in the internal rules of a big company, but it is highly uncommon due to the size and structure of Greek businesses, which are mainly small.

Regarding the legislation, the PAME representative agreed that it is partially applied and that new European Union's standards could be useful if they could enforce abidance through financial consequences or even cessation of business activity for the companies that violate the Law.

Action Aid Hellas representatives referred to the 190 ILO Convention and stated that their NGO contacted all parts involved (State and Unions) and there was consensus in adopting it; however, it is still not ratified by the Greek government. The abovementioned Convention entails broader definitions for workers and workplaces, providing a legal framework that is complete, coherent and adapted to the current conditions of the labor market.

## **E. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMON POLICIES AND PREVENTION MEASURES. PARTNERSHIP WITH TRADE UNIONS, NGOS. GOOD PRACTICES. CAMPAIGNS. RESULTS**

In terms of prevention and information to the public, the Ombudsman publishes annual reports in their areas of competence. They also organize seminars with the Police, the Labor Inspectorate as well as trade and employers' unions about the upholding of the principle of equality and the prohibition of discrimination. There is also a guide that can be used as a training

tool by civil servants and the police concerning the prohibition of discrimination (including SH). Undoubtedly, when informed about the rights and the legal procedures the survivors can claim their rights in a more successful way. In addition, in many cases there has been excellent collaboration between the Ombudsman and the trade unions. There can be no actual progress in the matter without the active contribution of trade unions to the matter. Their contribution includes improvement of the implementation of the law, both by supporting the victims as well as preventing those behaviors - it should not be overlooked that in a lot of SH cases, the offender was a fellow worker. Therefore, the Ombudsman's contribution is indeed crucial in combatting SH, however it mainly depends on the victim to report the offense. In this aspect, fighting SH will be reinforced if the parties involved are thoroughly informed on the matter and if the victims have the support needed through an organized scheme to report what they have suffered, receiving adequate financial and ethical support.

The POKDIS representative referred to future "action days" they are planning to arrange and that the administration of the union considers organizing a mechanism, providing support to victims of SH.

The SEV representative referred to the project "EMBRACIVE - Embracing diversity and fostering inclusion in the workplace" (presented above in section 2.3) in which the union is taking part, and aims to promote diversity in business and includes the matter of SH. In the framework of this project, a "toolkit" will be developed as a guide for employers, managers etc. which will later be piloted in companies. In addition, SEV and Alba Graduate Business School offer trainings of creative leadership (project "Together in Knowledge" - presented above in section 2.3) which can help women employees enhancing their skills and have a better knowledge of their strengths and rights. SEV has also published a "Map of Rights and Obligations of Enterprises".

GSEE representative stated that in 2014 – 2015, the Federation collaborated with several employers' unions in a national social partners' plan to implement joint actions related to combatting discrimination in the labor market, including SH (presented above in section 2.3). It is described as an excellent cooperation and a massive event similar to signing a national collective bargaining agreement. In this framework, a policy paper was published and trainings were organized in several places in Greece. According to the representative, this project was the proof that organization is key when willing to raise awareness, even if in practice, there are many obstacles. GSEE tried to encourage the reporting of SH incidents by organized actions in collaboration with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade trade unions; but the majority of the victims (around 80%) stopped the procedure before reaching the Labor Inspectorate. Furthermore, GSEE represents

the employees in court in few cases (around 3 – 4 per year). However, the victim receives inadequate compensation in relevance to the seriousness of the situation.

The PAME representative mentioned that there are no procedures for reporting in the abovementioned trade union and that there is lack of knowledge concerning the matter for both employees and employers. Including the matter in clauses of a Collective Bargaining Agreement could be effective in decreasing its extent. The union uses social and collective approach in order to handle problems of their members with the employer, i.e. by publicizing the incident. The issue of SH could also be addressed by reinforcing education and knowledge of the rights of the workers, even from school age, but also later with seminars and documentation. To her mind, companies should develop a friendly working environment as well as a respectable income so that the employees would feel strong enough to claim their rights. Concerning social dialogue on the matter, PAME would be willing to participate, but at the time there are no such actions organized.

As the representatives of Action Aid Hellas stated, they have established policies and organized trainings on fighting sexual abuse and discrimination. They are also running a campaign on fighting sexual harassment in the workplace, which aims at legal reform especially by exercising pressure to the Government in order to ratify the 190 Convention of International Labor Organization, raising awareness on the issue and promoting corporate responsibility in order to create a safe working environment for women. The SH survivors receive the support they select (psychological, legal etc.). The organization does not collaborate with lawyers that provide pro bono legal services to victims, but they support victims in need, while in their center “Epikentro” they provide legal advice on the procedures they should follow. The organization also offers trainings for their members, which works well in terms of information and raising awareness. Similar trainings could be implemented in companies. It is crucial that the companies provide a reference person, like a “Advocate for Women”, that could work independently from the human resources department and offer advice to SH victims or just the opportunity to talk about the incident (if they do not wish to report it). The Action Aid Hellas representatives also shared a successful practice of a company of the industrial area, where there is a SOS line for employees, in which they can also report SH.

## F. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES AND CURRICULA FOR CAPACITY BUILDING SEMINARS AND AWARENESS RAISING TRAININGS



As the Ombudsman representative stated, trainings could be useful in order to enhance prevention and to support the victims. There is still misunderstanding concerning what SH is. Some behaviors are still considered minor or are justified as a form of “teasing”. All factors involved should be trained (workers, employers, unions, police, judicial authorities), taking part in seminars, like those organized by the Ombudsman. However, first, it is believed that help should be provided to the victim in order to bring the case into the light.

The SEV representative believes that there should be collaboration between employees, employers and the State in handling SH. She also referred to the positive collaboration with GSEE in 2015 concerning the principle of equal treatment in the workplace. As far as trainings are concerned, they should target both parts, employers and the employees, but in any case, education and trainings should begin from an early age. Regarding the content, the trainings should involve information on the legislation, but also skills on better ways to cooperate between employers and employees. There are no trainings concerning the matter in the company members of the federation, but that is something that is considered a useful tool in combatting SH. The POKDIS representative shared the same opinion and she also explained that trainings are organized by NGOs, with the participation of psychologists who have expertise in the matter. She admitted that such trainings could be involved in the “action days” the union is planning to organize.

The GSEE representative also agrees that trainings should be organized and target both employers and employees. GSEE has organized trainings in the framework of the abovementioned project in 2014 -2015 in collaboration with employers’ unions. Trainings on the matter should include information on the legislation and the procedure, but they should also entail experiential approach in terms of open discussion and role play. The representative also mentioned that there is no social dialogue between trade unions, employers’ unions and the State on SH. The last time such dialogue occurred, it was on the implementation of the Directive of the principle of equal treatment in Law No. 3896/2010, in which GSEE participated in the lawmaking committee. The federation would be open to cooperate in the matter with other unions, but the weaknesses of Greek collective bargaining system at this point makes it difficult for such initiatives. The PAME representative mentioned that they have never organized a training on SH, but she finds that annual trainings could be of use. Concerning the form it should take, she proposed to include dialogue on the subject, information especially for the employees for them to know their rights, but also include experiential approach and trainings for professionals of human resources. The State should also take an active role in displaying the extent of the problem.

According to Action Aid Hellas representatives, the social dialogue should focus on exercising pressure on the State and companies to successfully address the problem in cooperation with NGOs. First and foremost, research should be conducted in order to be aware of the extent and consequences of the problem. The media should also be a part of the social dialogue. Campaigns should be held with participation of stakeholders, as well as trainings in companies organized by NGOs. Interactive trainings should be organized and target all parties involved. Thus, they will contribute in better understanding the situation through examples. It was also mentioned as being of great importance to organize meetings of stakeholders in order to facilitate the dialogue, i.e. working groups where authorities, unions and organizations could share information, knowledge and experiences in preventing and handling SH.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Through the desk research, the interviews and the online surveys' findings, we were able to draw certain conclusions about sexual harassment in the workplace in Greece.

- ❖ The legal framework in Greece includes significant protection in terms of legislation and procedures, as well as many authorities and institutions who are competent in dealing with cases of SH in the workplace. The national legislation is adapted to the regulations of international conventions and EU legislation.
- ❖ Research on the matter in Greece is limited and/or outdated and the data does not show the actual extent of the problem.
- ❖ The result of the online survey clearly emphasized the **factors contributing to sexual harassment in the workplace and the factors preventing it**. Employees stated that important **contributing factors** are the lack of reaction of people around, lack of prosecution and measures for perpetrators' punishment, low level of gender equality at the workplace and lack of tailored company's policies and procedures. In most cases, organizations and companies do not have clear and structured guidelines for the prevention and tackling of such incidents, nor do they provide trainings, information or support to employees who live relevant experiences. Employers etc. on the other hand, stated that sexual harassment is a very serious problem but the majority of them mentioned that it is not common in their workplace. According to them, initiatives to combat the phenomenon should be taken by the Government, the companies, media, NGOs and trade unions. However, the lack of reporting reveals that the existing reporting systems are not adequate. Regarding **prevention**, employee respondents stated that awareness raising campaigns should be developed and disseminated online. The majority of employees and employers declared their interest in participating in relevant trainings.

- ❖ Considering the results of the interviews with representatives of stakeholders in Greece (the Greek Ombudsman, trade unions, employers' associations, Action Aid Hellas), it seems that the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace in Greece is more extensive than it appears in official reports. However, it mainly depends on the victims to report the incident to the competent authorities and many are reluctant or afraid to do so due to lack of support. The legislation is generally considered adequate; however, in practice, the law is not implemented in a way that actually help the victim. Trade unions have the legal right to support and even represent their members in authorities and the court but as mentioned in the interviews, the victims are reluctant to follow the procedures, due to the costs related to the procedure, the long time it takes, the inadequate compensation they might receive, and the fear of acts of retaliation by the offender. In addition, most companies do not provide internal reporting mechanisms, which can be explained from the fact that the majority of them are quite small and do not have a human resources department. In general, the ineffective implementation of the law, the fear of losing the job or of acts retaliation, the lack of company internal procedures for dealing with cases of SH are considered contributing factors. On the other hand, all representatives emphasized on the need for a collective approach to the matter, including the State, trade and employers' unions and NGOs. Trainings should be organized to target both employees and employers/HR professionals/Management staff and include information on the legislation and the procedures, as well as an interactive approach for the participants to better understand what sexual harassment entails, how to prevent and identify it and the best ways to help a survivor. All in all, substantial social dialogue with all relevant institutions on the subject, as well as the organization of trainings could be successful preventive measures.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS - FUTURE ACTIONS AT NATIONAL AND ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

From the desk and field research conducted, the following recommendations/future actions seem appropriate:

- ❖ The Greek government should ratify the 190 Convention of the ILO in order to update the legislative protection to the temporary working conditions.
- ❖ Clauses on SH prevention and handling of reported cases should be involved in Collective Bargaining Agreements, as well as in company contracts in order to provide the employees with structured and effective protection.
- ❖ Research should be encouraged to be conducted in order to know the actual extent of the problem.

- ❖ Simplified guidelines and procedures should be developed and established in all companies and organizations, explaining the steps one should follow to report and respond to such phenomena. Such measures should be properly disseminated (i.e. with trainings and info-days). Information regarding helplines and other available services, outside the company, should also be disseminated, so that victims can turn to other organizations, in case they fear or are unwilling to report relevant incidents in the context of their workplace
- ❖ Clear connections with the authorities, trade and employers' unions, social services and NGOs working on this matter should be established, in order to encourage social dialogue.
- ❖ Trainings should be organized with the participation of the State, trade unions, employers' associations and NGOs, targeting all parts involved (employees, employers and HR professionals, social partners and the State) including information on the legal procedures, as well as open discussions and role play to better understand the circumstances and the proper approach of such incidents.

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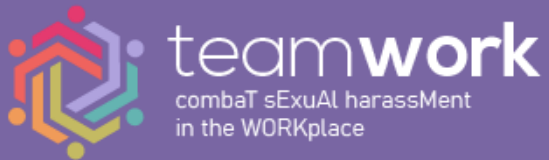
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