



**FRA**

EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY  
FOR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

# CRIME, SAFETY AND VICTIMS' RIGHTS

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FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS SURVEY

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Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2021

Print	ISBN 978-92-9461-135-2	doi:10.2811/127900	TK-06-20-040-EN-C
PDF	ISBN 978-92-9461-136-9	doi:10.2811/351635	TK-06-20-040-EN-N

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# Foreword

Crime harms individual victims, their loved ones, as well as society as a whole. Its effects are multi-faceted, causing physical, psychological and material injury. Fear of crime can be almost equally damaging, often changing how people live their daily lives.

Crime undermines the individual rights of victims, including their core fundamental rights, such as the right to life and human dignity. The EU Charter of Fundamental Rights obliges states to protect these rights. The Charter and the Victims' Rights Directive also give victims a right to redress and to be treated without discrimination. In addition, victims' property and consumer protection rights can be affected.

This report presents results from FRA's Fundamental Rights Survey – the first EU-wide survey to collect comparable data on people's experiences with, concern about, and responses to select types of crime. It focuses on violence and harassment, as well as on certain property crimes. The survey reached out to 35,000 people in the EU, the United Kingdom and North Macedonia.

Many EU Member States carry out crime victimisation surveys. But these surveys cover different time periods and types of crime, and phrase questions differently. This makes it difficult to compare findings. FRA's survey used the same questionnaire in all countries covered. As such, it is an important new data source to inform both policy efforts and action on the ground.

The results underscore that some people are more vulnerable to crime than others. The young – aged between 16 and 29 – experience both more physical violence and harassment, on- and offline. So do people who do not identify as heterosexual, and people who have disabilities or health issues that limit their activities.

Gender differences are also striking. Men most often face violence in public settings, while women often encounter threats in their own home. Women also face more harassment of a sexual nature.

Not surprisingly, more women than men avoid certain places or people to avoid the risk of harm. Shockingly, 83 % of women aged between 16 and 29 limit where they go or who they spend time with to protect themselves.

Among property crimes, consumer fraud looms large, though rates vary greatly from country to country. Large differences across the Union may also stem from cultural differences. For example, experiences with misuse of online bank accounts or payment cards differ considerably – suggesting that their use is not equally common.

Surveys have long shown low crime reporting rates. Our survey also reveals a certain pragmatism. While most violence and harassment is not reported, most people do report property crimes, largely because they need a police report for their insurance claim.

The survey also shows that more than half of people are willing to step in when they see a wrong occur – whether it involves someone slapping their partner on the street, a parent slapping their child, or an environmental crime. Yet around one in five would not be at all willing to intervene.

People feel overall comfortable calling the police. But this differs across countries, again reflecting cultural differences – and varying levels of trust. People who are older, have lower education levels, or struggle to make ends meet are generally less willing to engage law enforcement.

More people worry about crime than actually experience it. They are especially anxious about somebody misusing their online bank account or payment card; stealing their mobile phone, wallet or purse; or burglarising their home.

Again, not all worry equally. Women, people with lower education levels, people who are unemployed or struggle to make ends meet, as well as people whose disability or health limits their usual activities, who are born outside the EU, or are ethnic minorities all tend to worry about crime at higher rates.

By showing to what extent people in the EU are exposed to and concerned about different types of crime, the findings can help policymakers assess existing measures and identify protection and assistance gaps. We hope the resulting insights spur much-needed action in this sphere.

**Michael O’Flaherty**  
Director

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## Country codes

<b>AT</b>	Austria	<b>EL</b>	Greece	<b>LT</b>	Lithuania	<b>RO</b>	Romania
<b>BE</b>	Belgium	<b>ES</b>	Spain	<b>LU</b>	Luxembourg	<b>SE</b>	Sweden
<b>BG</b>	Bulgaria	<b>FI</b>	Finland	<b>LV</b>	Latvia	<b>SI</b>	Slovenia
<b>CY</b>	Cyprus	<b>FR</b>	France	<b>MT</b>	Malta	<b>SK</b>	Slovakia
<b>CZ</b>	Czechia	<b>HR</b>	Croatia	<b>NL</b>	Netherlands	<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>DE</b>	Germany	<b>HU</b>	Hungary	<b>MK</b>	North Macedonia		
<b>DK</b>	Denmark	<b>IE</b>	Ireland	<b>PL</b>	Poland		
<b>EE</b>	Estonia	<b>IT</b>	Italy	<b>PT</b>	Portugal		



# FRA's Fundamental Rights Survey

FRA's Fundamental Rights Survey collected data from 35,000 people about their experiences, perceptions and opinions on a range of issues that involve fundamental rights. They include awareness of rights, discrimination and equality of treatment, data protection and privacy, and crime victimisation.

This is the second main report from the survey. It focuses on selected questions on respondents' experiences as victims of crime. Becoming a victim of crime – in particular violent crime – undermines core human and fundamental rights. It is an extreme manifestation of violation of one's rights, which can encompass the right to life and human dignity in the context of violent crime, alongside access to justice when reporting crime and non-discrimination in one's treatment as a victim. Other rights, including those related to property and consumer protection, are also affected, as this report shows. It focuses on:

- violence,
- harassment, both online and offline,
- and property crimes – burglary, misuse of someone's online bank account or payment cards, and consumer fraud.

The report also examines how often these crimes are reported to the police, and presents further details about harassment and violence, such as information on the perpetrators and where the incidents took place. The selection of these crimes reflects both in-person and property offences, and both 'traditional' crime, such as burglary, and crimes that can take place both online and offline.

In addition to personal experiences of victimisation, the analysis examines how concerned people are about experiencing crime, and if they have adopted measures in response to perceived risk of assault or harassment to avoid situations where such incidents could occur.

The report also examines how willing people would be to intervene, report to the police or, if asked, give evidence in court in three hypothetical scenarios: physical violence between partners, physical violence against a child, and a crime against the environment.

## Fundamental Rights Survey: key facts

The Fundamental Rights Survey collected data in 29 countries: 27 EU Member States, the United Kingdom (an EU Member State at the time) and North Macedonia (the only non-EU country with observer status at FRA when the survey was designed). In each country, a representative sample of respondents – ranging from about 1,000 in most countries to about 3,000 in France and Germany – participated in the survey. The survey interviews, which took place between January and October 2019, resulted in a total sample of 34,948 respondents (see [Annex I, Table 1](#)).

The results are representative at the EU level, as well as for each country, of people who are 16 years old or older and usually reside in the country where they took part in the survey.

Information concerning the technical implementation of the survey is available in [Annex II](#). The dedicated Technical Report provides further details concerning survey development, fieldwork implementation and outcomes (forthcoming 2021).

## Outputs from the Fundamental Rights Survey

FRA's first main report from the survey is entitled **What Do Fundamental Rights Mean for People in the EU?**. It examines people's opinions about human rights – or 'fundamental rights' as they are called in the internal context of the EU – their views and perceptions on the functioning of democratic societies as a pillar on which human rights can flourish, and their thoughts on and engagement with public services that have a duty to enforce human rights law and to protect people's rights.

In addition, two short focus papers on specific survey results offered timely input to key policy developments in 2020:

- **Your Rights Matter: Data protection and privacy**
- **Your Rights Matter: Security concerns and experiences.**

FRA plans to publish further results from the survey in 2021.

The survey results are also available through an interactive online data explorer. It offers the opportunity to browse results by question, country by country, and disaggregated by key socio-demographic characteristics, such as gender, age and education.

Selected results from the survey will also be communicated on other occasions to feed into policy debates at the EU and national levels.

FRA will also make the anonymised survey data set (microdata) available for organisations and researchers who are interested in carrying out further analysis of the results after the survey's relevant reports come out.

The results presented in this report offer the first EU-wide crime survey data on the general population's experiences of crime victimisation, based on selected crimes, that can be used to inform EU and national policy and legislation on crime victims.

The majority of crime victims do not report incidents of crime victimisation to the police, as crime surveys over several decades have established. Given that, the data presented here counterbalance official crime statistics. Official data on reported and recorded crime should be read together with crime survey data to better understand the full extent and nature of victimisation, as people experience it. For example, FRA's annual overview of official police and criminal justice data on antisemitism<sup>1</sup> should be read alongside the agency's regular survey data collection on incidents of antisemitism<sup>2</sup> that members of the EU's Jewish communities experience, many of which they do not report to the police. Comparison of official and crime survey data illustrates that most official data under-represent the actual extent of crime.

This report examines the results with respect to people's socio-demographic characteristics. These include gender, age, education, employment status, household's main source of income, ability to make ends meet with the respondent's household income, and type of area where people live. It also considers the results on the basis of additional characteristics of the respondents, which can be used to examine the situation of selected groups in the population in terms of disability, country of birth, citizenship, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

<sup>1</sup> For the latest report in the series, see FRA (2020), **Antisemitism: Overview of antisemitic incidents recorded in the European Union 2009–2019**, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union (Publications Office).

<sup>2</sup> The results of the latest FRA survey can be found in FRA (2018), **Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism: Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU**, Luxembourg, Publications Office.

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**“Crime is a wrong against society as well as a violation of the individual rights of victims. As such, victims of crime should be recognised and treated in a respectful, sensitive and professional manner without discrimination of any kind [...]”**  
*Victims’ Rights Directive (Directive 2012/29/EU), Recital 9*

## WHY IS THIS REPORT NEEDED?

### **Absence of crime survey data – mapping the hidden extent of victimisation**

The Fundamental Rights Survey is the first survey to collect comparable data on people’s experiences of crime and safety in the EU-27.

Prior to this survey, the most comprehensive initiative to collect data on crime and safety was the 2004–2005 European Survey of Crime and Safety (EU ICS),<sup>3</sup> which was based on the methodology of the International Crime Victimization Survey (ICVS).<sup>4</sup> EU ICS collected data in 16 EU Member States while, in parallel, a separate initiative also collected data in three other EU Member States based on the same methodology.<sup>5</sup>

### **The first EU-wide crime victimisation survey data – unmasking the extent and nature of crime in the EU**

In the years following EU ICS, Eurostat – the statistical office of the EU – started to develop a survey that would collect comparable data on crime for the EU Member States. However, the European Parliament did not support the European Commission’s legislative proposal, which was needed to establish the survey, so the Commission withdrew its proposal.<sup>6</sup>

Although the European Commission has not made another legislative proposal for a survey on crime, the EU Survey on gender-based violence against women and other forms of inter-personal violence (EU-GBV) builds on FRA’s survey on violence against women.<sup>7</sup> The EU Member States are implementing it on a voluntary basis in 2020–2023. It includes an optional module for countries to collect data concerning other forms of crime in addition to incidents of violence and harassment that the survey covered. Member States can also opt to collect data on men’s, as well as women’s, experiences of violence.

In comparison with crime survey data, all EU Member States collect and publish statistics based on the number of crime incidents that the police record. These include incidents reported to the police as well as those that the police uncover on their own initiative. However, as crime survey data indicate,<sup>8</sup> people may not report crime incidents to the police. For example, they may consider it to take too much time or effort, or that reporting would

<sup>3</sup> Jan van Dijk, Robert Manchin, John van Kesteren and Gergely Hideg (2007), **The Burden of Crime in the EU: A comparative analysis of the European Survey of Crime and Safety**, Brussels, Gallup Europe.

<sup>4</sup> For more information see ICVS (2020), **‘About the ICVS’**, and UNICRI (n.d.), **‘Data’**.

<sup>5</sup> EU ICS 2004–2005 took place in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom (results presented separately for England and Wales, Northern Ireland, and Scotland). In parallel with the EU ICS project, data were also collected independently in Bulgaria, Estonia and Poland. For more details see Jan van Dijk, John Kesteren and Paul Smit (2007), **Criminal Victimization in International Perspective: Key findings from the 2004–2005 ICVS and EU ICS**, The Hague, Boom Juridische uitgevers.

<sup>6</sup> For more details concerning the procedure initiated by the European Commission in 2011 and withdrawn in 2014, see **‘Procedure 2011/0146/COD’**.

<sup>7</sup> FRA (2014), **Violence against Women: An EU-wide survey – Main results**.

<sup>8</sup> For details see data from FRA surveys on reporting crime to police and other authorities, for example in Section 3.5 of FRA (2014), **Violence against Women: An EU-wide survey – Main results**; Section 2.2 of FRA (2017), **Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey – Main results**; Section 2.3.3 in FRA (2020), **A Long Way to Go for LGBTI Equality**; and Section 3.4 in FRA (2018), **Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism – Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU**.

not lead to anything. As a result, only some of people's experiences that could fit the legal definition of a crime come to the attention of the authorities. This leads to an incomplete picture of the situation based on statistics on police-recorded crime alone.

Police-recorded crime statistics are nevertheless an important data source concerning the incidents that come to the attention of the authorities, and there are efforts to make these statistics more comparable at the EU level. For example, in the area of gender-based violence, the reports by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) have included recommendations to harmonise terminology and indicators on gender-based violence.<sup>9</sup>

The existing statistics on police-recorded crime are also not very comparable between countries. Eurostat receives from EU Member States – and other countries – statistics on police-recorded crime based on selected crime categories. The rate of assaults recorded by the police in 2018 ranges from 553.95 assaults per 100,000 people in Belgium and 927.84 in the United Kingdom to 1.29 in Romania.<sup>10</sup> It is clear that differences of this scale cannot be due to differences in the prevalence of violence alone. Indeed, Eurostat publishes alongside these statistics detailed notes that demonstrate how the definitions used in recording and counting crime differ from country to country.

In spite of efforts to harmonise data collection across countries, based on the classification of crime for statistical purposes developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,<sup>11</sup> police-recorded data on crime cannot be easily compared between countries. The information that Eurostat collects and publishes underlines that the definitions used in different countries vary even in statistics on police-recorded intentional homicides – the category of crime considered most reliable and comparable between countries.<sup>12</sup>

Data collected through population-based surveys can be an alternative evidence base to complement statistics on police-recorded crime. Surveys on crime victimisation can also collect more information about the context and consequences of incidents when people experience crime, which can inform efforts to prevent crime, support victims and identify groups in the population that may be particularly vulnerable to crime and disproportionately experience specific offences. Moreover, such surveys can also collect data on incidents that were never reported to the authorities.

Many EU Member States carry out their own crime victimisation surveys. However, the surveys vary in their periodicity, the types of crime they cover and the way the questions are phrased, which means that it is difficult to compare the results between countries. Eight EU Member States and the United Kingdom carry out crime victimisation surveys on a regular basis, while a further 10 EU Member States have conducted such surveys occasionally,

<sup>9</sup> For more information, see the section '**Data collection on violence against women**' on EIGE's website.

<sup>10</sup> Eurostat database, data code [**crim\_off\_cat**], updated on 20 July 2020.

<sup>11</sup> UNODC (2015), **International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS)**, Version 1.0.

<sup>12</sup> For more information see '**Recorded offences by offence category – police data (crim\_off\_cat)**' on Eurostat's website.

according to the *European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics 2014*.<sup>13</sup>

The United Nations has developed guidance for countries that want to carry out crime victimisation surveys, but these recommendations leave a lot of room for the states to decide if, when and how to collect the data.<sup>14</sup>

**The results from FRA's Fundamental Rights Survey on crime victimisation are based on the same questionnaire used in all survey countries. As such, they are an important new data source on the general population's experiences of crime, and crime reporting, for use at the EU and Member State levels to inform policy and action on the ground.**

#### **Data to inform EU law and policy on victims of crime**

The survey results should be examined in the context of applicable EU law and policies, as the results of the Fundamental Rights Survey can help assess the effectiveness of existing measures and identify gaps in protection and assistance provided to victims of crime, and steps taken to prevent victimisation. The results also contribute to the protection of consumer rights by providing data on the extent of consumer fraud and reporting of incidents to the authorities.

The central piece of legislation providing for minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime in the EU is the Victims' Rights Directive.<sup>15</sup> It sets out safeguards to ensure that victims of crime get the information, support and protection they need, and that they are able to take part in criminal proceedings. By showing the extent to which people in the EU are exposed to different types of crime – in particular violence, harassment (both online and offline) and property crimes (burglary, misuse of an online bank account or payment cards, and consumer fraud) – the survey results underline the need to ensure that the various provisions of the Victims' Rights Directive are effectively applied in practice.

For example, the directive includes provisions on the need to identify if a victim's vulnerability requires specific support, and on taking special measures to avoid secondary or repeat victimisation, intimidation or retaliation. These are particularly relevant when reading the survey results on how some groups in society experience physical violence and harassment at a higher rate – including women, young people, those born in another EU Member State or outside the EU, ethnic minorities and people who do not self-identify as heterosexual.

Furthermore, the fact that most incidents of violence and harassment are not reported to the police, as the survey results show, should be read in conjunction with the obligation under the Victims' Rights Directive to safeguard effective communication with victims and ensure a safe environment for victims

<sup>13</sup> The EU Member States that conduct surveys on a regular basis are Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden. The following EU Member States have carried out occasional crime victimisation surveys: Austria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. For more details see HEUNI (2017), **European Sourcebook of Crime and Criminal Justice Statistics 2014 (2nd revised printing)**, Helsinki, Hakapaino.

<sup>14</sup> See UNODC and UNECE (2010), **Manual on Victimization Surveys**, to which FRA also contributed.

<sup>15</sup> Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA.

to report crime. To encourage crime reporting, in line with the directive, competent authorities need to respond effectively to victims' reports. That should also address the directive's call to put in place third-party reporting mechanisms and the possibility of using communication technology – such as email, video recordings or online electronic forms – for making complaints.

Finally, the survey results show the extent to which women in particular feel the need to take active measures to feel safe in response to perceived risk, by adopting risk avoidance measures. That underlines the need for effective safeguards to be in place for women victims of gender-based violence, to provide them with special support and protection because of the high risk of secondary and repeat victimisation, which is highlighted in the Victims' Rights Directive.

Examples of other relevant secondary law instruments adopted at the EU level include the Directive on compensation to crime victims,<sup>16</sup> the European protection order in criminal matters<sup>17</sup> and the Regulation on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters, which aims to protect victims of violence and harassment from further aggression by the offender.<sup>18</sup> Some additional pieces of EU secondary law also provide for protection of specific groups of victims of crimes committed with a bias or discriminatory motive, such as victims of sexual harassment as a specific type of violence against women,<sup>19</sup> or victims of harassment motivated by racism or xenophobia.<sup>20</sup>

In June 2020, the European Commission published the first EU strategy on victims' rights (2020–2025). Taking stock of recent progress, the strategy notes that “victims of crime still cannot fully rely on their rights in the EU”.<sup>21</sup> As a result, the strategy on victims' rights aims, among other things, to empower victims of crime so they can report crime, participate in criminal proceedings, claim compensation and ultimately recover – as much as possible – from the consequences of crime.

To achieve this, the strategy focuses on actions towards strengthening effective communication with victims and creating a safe environment for reporting crime; improving support and protection to the most vulnerable

### Referring to the Victims' Rights Directive

Where articles in the Victims' Rights Directive, or paragraphs in the recitals, are directly relevant to the research findings, the appropriate part of the report refers to them. However, large sections of the directive address parts of the victim experience – for example in relation to the victim's treatment in the run up to or during a trial – that the survey research does not capture. Therefore, the report refers to only those parts of the directive, and its recitals, that relate to the survey results.

<sup>16</sup> Council Directive 2004/80/EC of 29 April 2004 relating to compensation to crime victims.

<sup>17</sup> Directive 2011/99/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the European protection order.

<sup>18</sup> Regulation (EU) No 606/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 June 2013 on mutual recognition of protection measures in civil matters.

<sup>19</sup> Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast); Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services; Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC.

<sup>20</sup> Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law.

<sup>21</sup> European Commission (2020), *EU Strategy on victims' rights (2020-2025)*, COM(2020) 258 final, Brussels, 24 June 2020, p. 2.

victims; facilitating victims' access to compensation; strengthening cooperation and coordination among the relevant actors working with crime victims; and strengthening the international dimension of victims' rights. The survey results can inform the actions outlined under the first two pillars of the strategy: strengthening effective communication with victims and creating a safe environment for reporting crime, and improving support and protection to the most vulnerable victims.

To support the European single market for goods and services, while addressing the potential for consumer fraud, a number of EU laws guarantee fair treatment, products that meet acceptable standards and a right of redress if something goes wrong.<sup>22</sup> More specifically, EU consumer protection law also protects the rights of victims who experience misuse of their online bank account or payment cards, or consumer fraud. For example, the Payment Services Directive<sup>23</sup> limits the amount a person can be asked to pay if they are the victim of card or payment fraud.

In November 2020, the European Commission published the New Consumer Agenda 2020–2025, which includes plans for changes to legislation in areas such as consumer information about goods and services, consumer credit and product safety.<sup>24</sup> Two of its main objectives are to address gaps in the effective enforcement of consumer rights and to improve the existing instruments for data collection and analysis, in the light of the need for data to better inform policy responses to trends and challenges, including new priority areas.<sup>25</sup>

### **EU Member States and international commitments**

All EU Member States are bound by international human rights law.<sup>26</sup> So is the European Union itself, to the extent that human rights standards have become part of customary international law or that it – in addition to its Member States – has acceded to the relevant convention. That is the case with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). To fulfil these human rights commitments, the EU and its Member States need to adopt laws, policies and programmes, to set up institutions and services, and to assign them sufficient resources to operate. Public institutions and services have the task of ensuring that people can access and enjoy their rights in practice. They need to provide information, create ways to report fundamental rights abuses and make sure that cases are processed fairly and in a reasonable time, thus enabling effective access to justice.

<sup>22</sup> Directive 2005/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2005 concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market and amending Council Directive 84/450/EEC, Directives 97/7/EC, 98/27/EC and 2002/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council ('Unfair Commercial Practices Directive'); Directive 2013/11/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 on alternative dispute resolution for consumer disputes and amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 and Directive 2009/22/EC (Directive on consumer ADR); Regulation (EU) No 524/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 on online dispute resolution for consumer disputes and amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 and Directive 2009/22/EC (Regulation on consumer ODR).

<sup>23</sup> Directive (EU) 2015/2366 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015 on payment services in the internal market, amending Directives 2002/65/EC, 2009/110/EC and 2013/36/EU and Regulation (EU) No 1093/2010, and repealing Directive 2007/64/EC.

<sup>24</sup> European Commission (2020), **New Consumer Agenda – Strengthening consumer resilience for sustainable recovery**, COM(2020) 696 final, Brussels, 13 November 2020.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> FRA has developed an online data hub – the European Fundamental Rights Information System – outlining Member States' commitments to international human rights law.

While there are no international human rights treaties solely concerning the rights of crime victims in general, some sector-specific treaties entail obligations relevant to victim protection and have been widely ratified within the EU. The survey results on physical violence and harassment, and on reporting crime, are particularly relevant to obligations under the binding international rules relating to victims of violence against women.

These rules are included in the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). More specifically, CEDAW sets out the due diligence obligation of states, under which they have a duty to take positive action to prevent and protect women from violence, punish perpetrators of violent acts and compensate victims of violence.<sup>27</sup>

The Istanbul Convention is the most comprehensive international instrument on violence against women to date, setting out the core elements that are crucially important in combating partner violence, such as targeted criminal law protection against partner violence, an effective system of protection orders and specialised support organisations available to all women victimised by their violent partners or ex-partners. The Istanbul Convention also makes specific references to the protection of children from violence, echoing Article 19 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).<sup>28</sup>

The case law of the European Court of Human Rights regarding the European Convention on Human Rights, to which all EU Member States are parties, has also resulted in a number of key rules for Member States to follow.<sup>29</sup>

The United Nations has adopted the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)<sup>30</sup> in an effort to realise human rights for all. Personal security and safety are key issues in ensuring human rights, which, once established, underpin many other rights. In particular, Goal 16 is to “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”, while Goal 11 is to “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”. Based on Goals 11 and 16, UN Member States have adopted a number of indicators, including survey-based indicators. Examples are:

- the proportion of the population who have experienced various forms of violence;
- the proportion of victims of violence who reported the incident to competent authorities;
- the proportion of the population who feel safe in the area where they live.

<sup>27</sup> See also the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (UN General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993), which largely follows the same lines.

<sup>28</sup> Similar provisions on victim protection also appear in, for example, the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

<sup>29</sup> There are also non-binding political commitments in this area. For example, as regards crime victims in general, in June 2006 the Council of Europe’s Committee of Ministers adopted Recommendation Rec(2006)8 to member states on assistance to crime victims; and in December 2012 the UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Principles and Guidelines on Access to Legal Aid in Criminal Justice Systems.

<sup>30</sup> United Nations (2015), *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, General Assembly resolution A/RES/70/1 of 21 October 2015.



The results in this report can also be examined in the context of the SDGs and the related indicators, and the relevant chapters of this report refer to specific SDG indicators.

### **Who is the report for?**

The results of this report are primarily intended to inform EU institutions, Member State governments and institutions that are working on victims' rights and in fields related to crime and safety, as well as crime prevention more generally. They include victim support organisations, law enforcement agents and prosecutors, to name just a few. The findings provide an evidence base to inform action. It can ultimately be used to prevent crime victimisation and enhance people's safety, as well as to ensure protection and support for victims of crime.

Throughout the report the results are broken down to illustrate some key differences between Member States and between socio-demographic groups. Core findings on gender, age, income and educational level – to name some examples – are reported where they are of particular note. The results are therefore of particular policy relevance with respect to social rights, as they indicate the differential impact of crime, including reporting rates, across social groups, and therefore are of relevance to those working outside the 'justice' area.

The evidence from the survey is essential reading for those who believe in bottom-up evidence-based policy making. In this regard, it is hoped that those whose work encompasses the rights of victims of crime, prevention of crime, public safety and combating social inequality will make use of the data to inform their work and also to challenge their own assumptions about what the public thinks and experiences.

## Collecting data on experiences of crime – official data and crime surveys

Most survey data on crime – including the results in this report – are based on asking people if they have experienced selected incidents within a given reference period, such as 12 months or five years before the survey. Some surveys also ask if respondents themselves have committed criminal acts. Youth surveys, for example, have applied this method to estimate the extent of self-reported offending.\*

Crime survey questionnaires typically present respondents with a description of various incidents without using the term ‘crime’. That is, respondents are not expected to be familiar with the legislation or legal terms pertaining to various offences. As a result, the survey results present people’s accounts based on their personal experiences of incidents that they may or may not have reported to the authorities. This means that crime surveys include incidents before the police or another competent authority has determined whether or not the incidents fit the legal definition of a crime. This method is well established in crime surveys, and has been shown to achieve a more accurate count of the extent of crime victimisation than questionnaire wording that reflects articles of law and terms unfamiliar to the general population.\*\* Furthermore, survey respondents are often not in a position, and should not be expected, to determine whether or not an incident is a crime in a legal sense. That is a task for the judiciary.

*\* As an example of surveys collecting data on self-reported offending, as well as experiences of crime, 19 EU Member States, North Macedonia, Serbia and the United Kingdom have participated in the latest, third, wave of the **International Self-Report Delinquency study**.*

*\*\* See UNODC and UNECE (2010), **Manual on Victimization Surveys**, Ch. IV, ‘Counting offences and victims’, Geneva, pp. 49–104.*

### Surveys on particular crimes and population groups

In parallel to surveys collecting data on crime victimisation overall, specialised surveys have been developed to collect more detailed data concerning specific types of crime. They focus on the experience of certain groups in the population.

For example, FRA has carried out a specialised survey concerning women’s experience of physical, sexual and psychological violence, alongside sexual harassment and stalking. Collecting reliable and comparable data on women’s experiences of violence – including intimate partner violence and sexual violence – required dedicated measures to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of the interviews, and the safety of the interviewer and the interviewee.

FRA has also conducted targeted surveys concerning the experiences of immigrants and descendants of immigrants; ethnic minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) people; and Jews. These surveys included questions tailored to reflect the experiences of these groups, including hate-motivated violence and harassment.

## Notes on quotes and presentation of survey results

### Quotes used in the report

The survey was based on a series of questions with pre-defined response options. At the end, it invited respondents to share any thoughts about their rights with respect to the country where they live. The report uses some of these comments anonymously to illustrate certain challenges or particular situations people face.

In addition, FRA carried out 32 focus group discussions in eight EU Member States to collect in more detail people's views on some of the topics covered in the survey, including personal safety, police and courts, and equal treatment. Each focus group discussion involved six to 10 participants and was led by a moderator. Participants could share their own views and discuss with other participants the situation in their country concerning the general topics of personal safety, tolerance and equality, and data protection and privacy. The discussions were recorded and the anonymised transcripts provide a source of illustrative quotes, to complement and contextualise the quantitative survey findings.

However, unlike the quantitative survey results, the quotes – both from the survey and the focus groups – should not be interpreted as being representative of the general situation in a given Member State.

### Presentation of results

The survey data collection took place in 2019, when the United Kingdom was still a Member State of the European Union. In this report, the EU aggregate results have been calculated to reflect the new situation, since 1 February 2020, since when the United Kingdom is no longer part of the EU. The EU aggregate results presented in this report refer to the current 27 EU Member States, denoted as 'EU-27'. Figures that present results by country also present the results for the United Kingdom and North Macedonia, in addition to the average for the EU-27 and the results for each EU Member State.

# Key findings and FRA opinions

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## Experiences of violence

- ★ Nearly one in 10 people (9 %) in the EU-27 experienced physical violence in the five years before the survey, and 6 % experienced physical violence in the 12 months before the survey. This corresponds to more than 22 million people experiencing physical violence in one year in the EU-27 (an estimate based on the results of the survey relative to the EU's population).
- ★ These results include experiencing one or more of the four broad acts of physical violence asked about in the survey: a person slapping you, throwing something at you, pushing you or pulling your hair; hitting you once with a fist or with something else that could hurt you; kicking or dragging you, or beating you up; or trying to suffocate or strangle you.
- ★ The experiences vary by country within the EU, ranging from 3 % to 18 % experiencing physical violence in the five years before the survey. Such Member State differences need to be looked at alongside official statistics on police-recorded crime in each country (which is beyond the scope of the current report), and alongside data on patterns in reporting crime, which a specific chapter in this report explores.
- ★ Young people (16–29 years old) are at the highest risk of experiencing physical violence, compared with people from other age groups, and also compared with other socio-demographic characteristics that the survey examines. Close to one in four people (23 %) aged 16–29 years experienced physical violence in the five years before the survey. In other age categories, one in 10 people, or fewer, experienced physical violence in the same time frame.
- ★ Other groups experiencing physical violence at a higher rate than the average for the entire population include people who consider themselves to be part of an ethnic minority (22 % in the five years before the survey); people who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or 'other' (19 %); and persons who have limitations in their usual activities due to a health problem or disability (17 %).

Violence is a clear violation of victims' rights, in particular their human dignity and their right to integrity (Articles 2 and 3 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (the Charter)). In line with the Victims' Rights Directive, a victim of violent crime should be recognised as the person wronged by the offender, protected against repeat victimisation, granted access to justice and enabled to participate in criminal proceedings. The survey shows that a significant number of people in the EU experience physical violence every year. FRA's violence against women survey supports that finding, as do other FRA surveys that have focused on the experiences of violence among groups such as immigrants and ethnic minorities, and LGBTI people.

As the EU's first strategy on victims' rights (2020–2025) recognises, for the most vulnerable victims, such as victims of gender-based violence, child victims, victims with disabilities or victims of hate crime, it is particularly

## More than 22 million people in the EU experienced physical violence in the year before the survey.

challenging to go through criminal proceedings and to deal with the aftermath of crime. In this respect, the Victims' Rights Directive requires that appropriate structures be in place providing for general and specialist support services, as well as protection in accordance with victims' specific needs. To identify victims with specific protection needs, the directive requires Member States to pay particular attention to cases involving violence in a close relationship and gender-based violence, sexual violence, hate crime and other crimes related to victims' personal characteristics, and victims with disabilities.

Accordingly, in line with Articles 8 and 9 of the Victims' Rights Directive, victims with specific needs must have access to specialist support organisations with sufficient staff and funding. Article 18 also requires special measures to protect these victims from the risks of secondary victimisation (as a result of their treatment by the police and criminal justice system), and repeat victimisation (when they are victimised again), intimidation and retaliation (from the perpetrator(s)).

Other specific pieces of EU secondary law, such as the Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia, also underline the rights of specific groups of vulnerable victims. In relation to child victims, the Victims' Rights Directive obliges Member States to ensure that the child's best interests are a primary consideration and will be assessed on an individual basis. A child-sensitive approach, taking due account of the child's age, maturity, views, needs and concerns, must prevail (Article 1(2)).

Article 16(4) of the CRPD specifically calls on States Parties to 'take all appropriate measures to promote the physical, cognitive and psychological recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration of persons with disabilities who become victims of any form of exploitation, violence or abuse, including through the provision of protection services'.

In terms of policy instruments, the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025 sets out concrete actions to tackle racist hate crime and hate speech, while the EU Roma strategic framework 2020–2030 highlights the experiences of hate crime and hate speech among the Roma population. In the EU LGBTIQ equality strategy 2020–2025, ensuring the safety of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, non-binary, intersex and queer people is one of the four main areas to be addressed.



### FRA OPINION 1

Physical violence is a worrying reality across the EU, as the survey data show. In line with the Victims' Rights Directive, Member States should increase their efforts to ensure access to justice for all victims of crime, including the most vulnerable, by providing victims with appropriate information, support and protection, and by enabling their participation in criminal proceedings.

The rate of physical violence experienced by young people is much higher than in other age groups. This warrants action by EU Member States to ensure that young people are informed about their rights and where to turn after experiencing physical violence. In this age group, some experiences of violence can occur at school or in tertiary education settings, involving victims' peers. This makes it important to adopt targeted measures for particular contexts.

EU Member States should develop targeted measures to prevent physical violence against persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex people, who experience higher rates of physical violence – and harassment – than others. In addition to physical violence in general, these groups are susceptible to hate-motivated incidents, as FRA's targeted surveys with specific groups highlight. This can have a negative impact on the feeling of safety of these groups.

## Women experience physical violence disproportionately at home, while men often experience violence in public settings.

### FRA OPINION 2

EU Member States should – in addition to measures needed to encourage and empower these victims to report incidents of crime (see [opinion 5](#)) – consider introducing specific measures to ensure targeted support for victims of violence in the domestic sphere. This is needed to ensure that the rights guaranteed by the Victims' Rights Directive are effective in practice for those – disproportionately women – who experience violence in the home, from family members or relatives, and who therefore struggle to obtain support to break the cycle of violence, and to access justice. This can include training and specific guidelines for professionals who are in contact with victims (such as healthcare professionals or teachers) on how to detect crime that occurs in the home, and how to deal with it appropriately. In this context, the European Commission is also encouraged to draw on the expertise and use the potential of the newly established Victims' Rights Platform.

The EU and all EU Member States that have not yet done so are encouraged to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention). In parallel, EU institutions and Member States are encouraged to draw on data from the Fundamental Rights Survey, and FRA's previous survey on violence against women, when exploring gaps in existing law, alongside ways to more effectively address gender-based violence through the enactment of current law and policy – in alignment with the Commission's plan of action set out in the EU strategy on victims' rights as well as the Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025.

★ Incidents of physical violence against men (excluding specifically sexual violence) most often took place in public settings (39 %), such as streets, parks or other public places. Incidents of physical violence against women (again excluding specifically sexual violence) most often took place in their own home (37 %).

★ For men, these incidents most often involved a perpetrator they did not know (42 %). In contrast, physical violence against women most often involved a family member or a relative as the perpetrator.

These survey results should be read alongside the earlier findings of FRA's violence against women survey, which measured in more detail women's experiences of violence, including intimate partner violence and sexual violence, which disproportionately affect women.

★ In the majority of cases of physical violence, the perpetrator was a man or a group of men. This was the case in 72 % of incidents of physical violence against men and 60 % of those against women.

When asked if any of the physical violence involved incidents of a sexual nature, more women (13 %) than men (10 %) said yes. Here, it is important to note that, according to the data, victims of physical violence experience various psychological consequences and injuries more often when these incidents include acts of a sexual nature. Overall, 51 % of men say that the most recent incident of physical violence (non-sexual) did not cause any psychological consequences, compared with 30 % of women. By contrast, 34 % of women say that they experienced four or more types of psychological consequences as a result of an incident of physical violence that also had elements of a sexual nature, compared with 9 % of men.

The results of the survey point to key differences between women's and men's experiences of violence. These differences have important consequences for the impact on victims, and for victims' access to justice. When violence takes place in a public setting, it is more common for other people to be around who may intervene or can act as witnesses, while this is often not the case when violence happens in the home. This means that, on average, women and men find themselves in different positions as victims of violence in terms of seeking assistance, reporting incidents to the police or having incidents examined in court.

It is in this context that the EU strategy on victims' rights 2020–2025 pays particular attention to actions needed to cater to the specific needs of victims of gender-based violence. It outlines actions aiming to strengthen the rights of this group of victims, including through strengthening

physical protection; setting up an EU network on the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence; and providing EU funding. The Victims' Rights Platform brings together all EU-level bodies relevant to victims' rights. Through it, the Commission also aims to facilitate continuous exchange of best practices and cross-fertilisation between the EU strategy on victims' rights and, for example, the European Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2025.

In line with Articles 8 and 9 of the Victims' Rights Directive, women who experience violence at home, by family members or relatives, and who therefore struggle to obtain support to break the cycle of violence and to access justice, must have access to specialist support organisations with sufficient staff and funding. Article 18 also requires special measures to protect these victims from the risks of secondary victimisation, repeat victimisation, intimidation and retaliation.

Given that the survey results underline the gendered nature of violence, as experienced differently by women and men, the findings can be read alongside specific human rights documents that emphasise the need for gender-sensitive education. For example, Article 10 of CEDAW obliges States Parties to ensure in the field of education the elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women, and Article 14 of the Istanbul Convention stresses the importance of an education that fosters equality between women and men, non-stereotyped gender roles, mutual respect and non-violent conflict resolution in interpersonal relationships.

In fact, to date, the Council of Europe's Istanbul Convention stands out as the most comprehensive international instrument on violence against women. It sets out measures that are crucially important in combating partner violence, such as targeted criminal law protection against partner violence, an effective system of protection orders, and specialised support organisations available to all women victimised by their violent partners or ex-partners. At the time of writing this report, 21 EU Member States have ratified the Istanbul Convention, and six have signed the convention but not yet ratified it.<sup>31</sup> The EU has also signed the convention but is yet to ratify it.

Pursuant to the EU strategy on victims' rights, Member States should set up national victims' rights strategies that ensure a coordinated and horizontal approach to victims' rights, including through mainstreaming victims' rights into policies such as education.

Recognising men's disproportionate role as perpetrators of violence, and in line with Article 84 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, on crime prevention, the EU should promote and support Member State action in the field of crime prevention. Such action would aim at introducing measures to educate boys and young men in a way that enables them to resolve conflicts without violence or abusive conduct, and to treat girls and women – as well as other boys and men – with respect, drawing on relevant human rights values including human dignity, equality and non-discrimination.

Member States are encouraged to develop criminal sanctions that have a potential to rehabilitate male offenders and to support them in developing as accountable and respectful persons. This could include anti-violence training that pays due attention to gender roles and stereotypes with respect to male aggression. Those Member States that have not done so already are encouraged to consider introducing gender-sensitive anti-violence training as a criminal sanction, with the aim of reducing rates of repeat victimisation, in line with Article 18 of the Victims' Rights Directive.

<sup>31</sup> As of January 2021, the following EU Member States have ratified the Istanbul Convention: Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. In addition, out of the countries covered in the Fundamental Rights Survey, North Macedonia has also ratified the convention. The following EU Member States have signed the convention but are yet to ratify it: Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia. The United Kingdom has also signed the Convention but has not yet ratified it.

## Experiences of harassment

- ★ In the EU-27, two in five people (41 %) experienced harassment – ranging from offensive and threatening comments in person to offensive and threatening gestures and messages sent online, including through social media – in the five years before the survey. In the 12 months before the survey, 29 % experienced harassment. This corresponds to almost 110 million people in the EU-27 experiencing harassment in a year (an estimate based on the results of the survey relative to the EU’s population).
- ★ Experiences of harassment range from 46 % to 9 %, depending on the country (in the 12 months before the survey).
- ★ The most common form of harassment that people in the EU experience involves offensive or threatening comments made in person, experienced by 32 % of people in the five years before the survey.
- ★ Overall, 14 % of people in the EU experienced cyberharassment in the five years before the survey. This could involve receiving offensive or threatening emails or text messages, or coming across offensive or threatening comments about oneself disseminated online.
- ★ Three in five people (61 %) in the age group 16–29 years experienced harassment in the five years before the survey. Overall, in the same age group and time frame, 27 % experienced cyberharassment. These are the highest rates in all the age groups, with harassment experiences decreasing with age.
- ★ While the prevalence of harassment is similar for women and men, 18 % of women described the most recent incident of harassment as being of a sexual nature, compared with 6 % of men.
- ★ While the average rate of harassment is 41 % (over a five-year period), higher rates are revealed when the data are broken down by specific socio-demographic groups (for the same period): 57 % for people who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or ‘other’; 54 % for those without the citizenship of the country they live in; 51 % for those born in another EU Member State; 49 % for those born outside the EU; and 50 % for people with disabilities (those who have difficulties in activities people usually do, due to a health problem or disability).
- ★ Harassment that does not involve acts of a sexual nature is often by somebody the victim does not know (52 % of incidents experienced by women and 59 % of incidents experienced by men). However, women are more likely than men to experience harassment that involves acts of a sexual nature by previously unknown perpetrators: 72 % of incidents of harassment of a sexual nature against women were committed by unknown persons, compared with 40 % of incidents against men. Furthermore, 57 % of women say that harassment involving acts of a sexual nature took place in public – in the street, a park or another public place – compared with 30 % of incidents of a sexual nature experienced by men.
- ★ In incidents of harassment that did not involve acts of a sexual nature, 77 % of men and 58 % of women say that the perpetrator was a man (or a group of men).

The survey shows that many people in the EU are exposed to various forms of harassment, but there are notable differences when the general population is broken down into specific groups.

Notably, young people experience harassment at a much higher rate than older people, including incidents of cyberharassment. The EU has already taken



## Almost 110 million people in the EU experienced various forms of harassment in the year before the survey.

one measure in this regard: the 2018 amendment of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive sets out to better protect the moral development of minors. Moreover, the European Commission has announced its intention to propose a Digital Services Act package, to modernise the legal framework established in the e-Commerce Directive (Directive 2000/31/EC). Among other issues, the Digital Services Act package would include rules on how to deal with illegal content online (for example illegal incitement to violence, hatred or discrimination on any protected grounds such as race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation). In its resolution on the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027, the Council of the EU notes the need to ensure that young people have the ability to recognise and report hate speech and discrimination online and offline.<sup>32</sup>

In turn, people with a serious health problem or disability, those born outside the country or with an ethnic minority background, and LGBTI people, all experience harassment at higher rates than average. Conceivably, this may be partly due to these groups' exposure to hate-motivated harassment. In this regard, the 2008 Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia partly recognises the need to protect groups of persons or a member of such a group – defined by reference to race, colour, religion, descent, or national or ethnic origin – from incitement to violence and hatred. However, other groups that are exposed to high levels of harassment, according to the survey data, such as people with a serious health problem or disability, and LGBTI people, do not have the same level of protection through EU law against possible hate-motivated crime. The reference to victims of “crime committed with a bias or discriminatory motive” (Article 22(3)) in the Victims' Rights Directive goes some way to addressing this reality, as it brings all victims of hate crime on an equal footing, regardless of the attribute invoked by offenders.

The Commission's annual work programme 2021 announced further legislative developments at the EU level in this area. It refers to a new initiative on extending the list of EU crimes to all forms of hate crime and hate speech, whether because of race, religion, gender, sexuality or other grounds.

Harassment is gendered. Women disproportionately experience harassment of a sexual nature at the hands of strangers, these incidents are perpetrated overwhelmingly by men and they often take place in a public setting, the data show. The current scope of EU gender equality law limits recognition of harassment – and



### FRA OPINION 3

In view of the widespread nature of harassment, the EU should consider reviewing the existing legislative and policy responses to harassment, including sexual harassment, and all possible settings where the harassment takes place (including on the internet), encompassing harassment beyond the workplace and the educational domain.

In view of the disproportional impact of harassment – in particular cyberharassment – on young people, EU Member States should ensure that its victims have access to simple and effective methods to report incidents and have them investigated. The EU can support Member States in this regard by helping to ensure, for example through the future Digital Services Act, provision of harmonised rules on tackling illegal content online – including incitement to violence, hatred and discrimination.

In view of the evidence presented in this and several other FRA reports on the impact of hate-motivated harassment on various groups in society, EU Member States should ensure that they apply in full the protection provided by the EU Victims' Rights Directive, which treats all victims of hate crime equally, regardless of the attribute invoked by offenders. This would be in line with the principle of non-discrimination, according to which criminal law measures should cover equally all grounds of discrimination covered by Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. It would also be in line with the Commission's plans to propose to extend the list of Euro crimes to include all forms of hate crime and hate speech.

<sup>32</sup> Council of the European Union (2018), **Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field: The European Union Youth Strategy 2019–2027 (2018/C 456/01)**, OJ C 456.

its gendered nature – to the areas of the labour market and the supply of goods and services.<sup>33</sup> In its recital 17, the Victims’ Rights Directive recognises sexual harassment as a type of gender-based violence – that is, a form of discrimination and a violation of the fundamental freedoms of the victim – and affords its protection to victims of sexual harassment accordingly.

## Experiences of selected property crime and fraud

### *Burglary*

- ★ Overall, 8 % of people in the EU-27 experienced a burglary of their home or other property in the five years before the survey. Meanwhile, 3 % experienced burglary in the 12 months before the survey.
- ★ Depending on the country, experiences of burglary (in the five years before the survey) range from 14 % to 2 %.
- ★ Certain people in society experience higher rates of burglary than others. These include people who are limited in their usual activities (by a health problem or disability), and people who self-identify as belonging to an ethnic minority. Differences in people’s gender, age, education, urban/rural status and ability to make ends meet are not associated with differences in rates of experiencing burglary in the five years before the survey.

### *Fraud*

- ★ In the EU-27, 8 % of people experienced online banking or payment card fraud (that is, involving a credit or a debit card) in the five years before the survey. Meanwhile, 3 % experienced online banking or payment card fraud in the 12 months before the survey.
- ★ Experiences of online banking or payment card fraud range from 19 % to 1 %, depending on the country. That may be partly explained by rates of online transactions in individual Member States.
- ★ The rate of experiencing online banking and payment card fraud does not differ notably with respect to most socio-demographic characteristics examined. However, 14 % of people with limitations in their usual activities (due to a health problem or disability) experienced online banking or payment card fraud in the five years before the survey, compared with 6 % of people who do not have such limitations.
- ★ One in four people (26 %) in the EU-27 experienced consumer fraud in the five years before the survey. That encompasses being cheated or misled in terms of the quantity, quality, pricing or delivery of goods, items or services purchased. In the 12 months before the survey, 16 % experienced consumer fraud.
- ★ Experiences of consumer fraud (in the five years before the survey) range from 46 % to 8 %, depending on the country.
- ★ Among the socio-demographic groups examined, young people and those with high levels of education experience greater rates of consumer fraud than older age groups and those with lower levels of education.

<sup>33</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 (recast); Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services; Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC.

## One in six people (16 %) in the EU experienced consumer fraud in the year before the survey.

That may reflect exposure to risk – 81 % of 16-to-29-year-old internet users shop online, compared with 56 % of internet users aged 65 years and over in the EU-27 – coupled with greater awareness of the problem of fraud.

- ★ People who are limited in their usual activities (by a health problem or disability) experience higher rates of consumer fraud (36 % in the five years before the survey) than those who do not have such limitations (23 %). Higher rates are also associated with belonging to an ethnic minority (37 %) and self-identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or 'other' (not heterosexual) (35 %).
- ★ Describing the most recent incident of consumer fraud, two in five people (41 %) who had bought the goods or services online, by telephone or by mail say that they had ordered the goods or services from abroad. In some EU Member States, the rate of cross-border purchases was much higher: 94 % in Luxembourg and 87 % in Malta.

Experiencing burglary of one's home or other property can result in victims feeling unsafe and afraid that it could happen again. This crime also has an economic impact – loss of property and damage to the home – which people have to tackle in different ways, depending on their financial means and insurance coverage. Burglary interferes with the right to property (Article 17 of the Charter), respect for private and family life (Article 7), and the right to human dignity (Article 1). Victims are therefore entitled to a criminal justice response to their victimisation that serves as an effective remedy in line with Article 47 of the Charter and the Victims' Rights Directive.

A similar proportion of people in the EU experience misuse of their online bank account or payment cards. That indicates the equal importance of online fraud in victimisation experiences. The survey results concerning online banking and payment card fraud are relevant to EU Member States as they implement the measures in the Directive on combating fraud and counterfeiting of non-cash means of payment (Directive (EU) 2019/713), which Member States are due to incorporate into national law by 31 May 2021. The higher rates of online banking and payment card fraud against people who experience limitations in their usual activities (due to a health problem or disability) raise concerns about exploitation of some of the most vulnerable in society. This issue relates to Article 16 ('Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse') of the CRPD.

Article 38 of the Charter and the relevant EU secondary law (such as the Directive concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market) envisage a generally high level of consumer protection. Nonetheless, one in four people (26 %) in the EU-27 experienced consumer



### FRA OPINION 4

The EU and Member States should ensure continued attention to property crime, including cross-border crime, using various established EU-level networks, including the EU Crime Prevention Network. In this context, they should also consider carrying out awareness-raising campaigns and develop tools to prevent property crimes, including burglaries, alongside online banking and payment card fraud.

Member States should ensure that they effectively implement existing EU law in this area, including on combating fraud as well as consumer laws, in practice. The survey results could be used to guide their efforts. For example, EU Member States could consider either establishing or enhancing existing specialist teams to carry out effective investigations in cases of online fraud, ensuring that victims of online offences can report incidents easily. They should also consider actions to align consumer protection with today's realities, notably the ease of conducting cross-border and online transactions, in relation to (online) consumer fraud, in line with the New Consumer Agenda 2020-2025.

National authorities responsible for implementing and monitoring the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities should take particular note of the higher rates of burglary, online banking and payment card fraud, and consumer fraud among people with limitations in their usual activities (due to a health problem or disability), to address the challenges of some of the most vulnerable in society.

fraud in the five years before the survey – that is, they feel cheated or misled in terms of the quantity, quality, pricing or delivery of goods, items or services they have purchased. This does not always involve criminal activity, but the end result is a customer who feels that their expectations of the product or service they paid for were not met. Where this does involve criminal activities, the Victims' Rights Directive provides for the rights of victims of consumer fraud to receive proper protection, support and access to justice, like other crime victims.

Notably, the results also point to a high volume of cross-border transactions when goods or services are bought online, by telephone or by mail. This underlines the need for consumer protection measures that work effectively in these cases. As with online banking and payment card fraud, those who are limited in their usual activities (by a health problem or disability) experience consumer fraud at a higher rate, and therefore need particular protection and support in access to justice in line with the CRPD.

The need to strengthen the protection of consumers' rights, including through their empowerment as well as more effective enforcement, is among the key issues that the EU is currently discussing in the context of Commission's New Consumer Agenda 2020-2025.

### **Reporting experiences of crime to the police and other authorities**

- ★ Describing the most recent crime incident experienced in the five years before the survey, 30 % of people in the EU-27 reported physical violence to the police and 11 % reported an incident of harassment.
- ★ Rates of reporting physical violence to the police range from 40 % to 9 %, depending on the country, with respect to the most recent incident in the five years before the survey. This may partly reflect relative levels of trust in the police's ability or willingness to pursue crime. Rates of reporting harassment to any authority (including the police) range from 31 % to 5 %, depending on the country, regarding the most recent incident in the five years before the survey.
- ★ Besides reporting incidents of physical violence to the police, 17 % of victims were in contact with medical services as a result of an incident, and 6 % contacted a specialised victim support organisation.
- ★ Reporting rates vary by people's socio-demographic characteristics. People who make ends meet easily or very easily with their household income, students and people living in rural areas are more likely than others to leave unreported an incident of violence they have experienced. In contrast, people who have limitations in their usual activities (due to a health problem or disability), people belonging to an ethnic minority and those self-identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or 'other' report incidents more readily to the police than those who do not consider themselves as belonging to these groups. This may reflect levels of hate-related crime experienced by these specific groups.
- ★ Elements of physical violence that can indicate more severe incidents are associated with higher reporting rates. In particular, of violent incidents of a sexual nature, 60 % were reported to the police, compared with 27 % of incidents that were not sexual. Reporting is lower than average when the perpetrator was a family member or a relative (only 22 % of incidents were reported to the police). That has significant implications for under-reporting of domestic and/or intimate partner violence.
- ★ Three in five people (62 %) who reported harassment to the police were satisfied with the way the police handled the incident, as were 63 %

## Most incidents of physical violence and harassment are not reported to the police.

of those who reported to the police the most recent incident of physical violence. However, only 42 % of victims of harassment who were not citizens of the country where they live were satisfied with the way police handled the incident when they reported it, compared with 63 % of citizens of the country.

- ★ When people did not report incidents of violence and harassment to the police, the most common reason they mentioned was that they did not consider the incident serious enough to make the effort to report it. Among the reasons for not reporting physical violence to the police when the victim was injured, one in four people (23 %) believed that the police would not do anything, and 14 % mention not trusting the police.
- ★ Property crimes are reported – to the police or other authorities – at a higher rate than violence or harassment. In the EU-27, 73 % of burglaries were reported to the police, while 95 % of online banking or payment card frauds were reported (to the police or other authorities). Overall, 50 % of incidents of consumer fraud in the EU-27 were reported – but in most cases to other authorities than the police.

Most incidents of violence and harassment are not reported to the authorities, whereas the majority of property crimes the survey asked about are reported to the police, and some of the incidents not reported to the police are reported to other authorities. High rates of reporting property crime are typically because reporting is a prerequisite for receiving compensation for the incident, for example from an insurance policy. These results suggest that people are ready to report crime to the police when they consider it effectual – that is, it has a concrete, beneficial outcome.

Incidents of physical violence were more often reported if the incident led to injuries, had psychological consequences or was of a sexual nature.

Comparisons between types of crime – such as violent crime and property crime – should be made with the utmost caution. Nevertheless, for certain types, many incidents are reported to authorities other than the police, the results show. That could encourage the adoption of alternative reporting opportunities for a range of incidents. FRA's violence against women survey supports the findings reported here, as it shows that many women who are victims of physical and sexual violence contact doctors and health services, rather than the police. The results of FRA's surveys on the experiences of immigrants and descendants of immigrants, Roma, Jews and LGBTI people also show that many victims of hate-motivated harassment and violence contact various service providers as a result of the incident, while not reporting the incident to the police.



### FRA OPINION 5

EU Member States should consider introducing specific measures to encourage and empower people to report incidents of crime – in particular, incidents of violence and harassment, as the rate of reporting these crimes is lower than for some other crimes. This is an important condition for ensuring effective access to justice, because in this way victims of crime can be informed about their rights and support available to them. Measures to encourage people to report crime should take note of the survey results about the reasons for not reporting, and about lower rates of satisfaction among non-citizens when they do report harassment incidents.

When introducing such measures, EU Member States should recognise that a relationship between perpetrator and victim affects the likelihood of reporting crimes to the police, such as incidents of domestic or intimate partner violence. As outlined in [opinion 2](#), every effort should be made to encourage and facilitate reporting of such crimes and to allow the victims to break the cycle of repeat victimisation. In this context, Member States should also consider opportunities to provide assistance and advice on rights to those victims of crime who contact services other than the police, such as medical service providers, in the aftermath of an incident.

In recording crime incidents and reporting on the situation in the country, EU Member States could make use of third-party reporting mechanisms to capture more incidents. Some of these incidents would otherwise not come to the attention of the police, such as incidents that victims do not – for any reason – perceive as 'serious' enough to contact the police.

Victims are entitled to an effective remedy via the criminal justice system. In order to assert this claim, they must have access to the criminal justice system (Article 47 of the Charter), and this access should be not only theoretical, but effective in practice. This requires practical facilitation of victims' reporting to the police, by empowering and encouraging victims, in line with the overall objective in Article 1 of the Victims' Rights Directive, and with its recital 63, which calls for reliable support services. They should be available to victims independently of a victim making a formal complaint about a crime to a competent authority (Article 8(5)). In addition, the directive says, victims should receive a respectful, sensitive, professional and non-discriminatory response from competent authorities; there should be training of practitioners who are likely to receive complaints, which can facilitate reporting; and third-party reporting mechanisms, as well as the use of communication technology for making complaints, are also encouraged.

Despite the measures in the Victims' Rights Directive, crime under-reporting is in general a serious problem, particularly in relation to cases of sexual and gender-based violence, the EU strategy on victims' rights (2020–2025) notes. The strategy also refers to under-reporting by victims of crime who belong to disadvantaged or vulnerable communities or minorities, who may have little trust in public authorities, which prevents them from reporting crime. In this context, the strategy on victims' rights calls on Member States to "ensure full and correct implementation of the Victims' Rights Directive and other EU rules on victims of particular crimes, in particular in relation to provisions on victims' access to information, to support and protection".

## Witnessing crime and taking action

**More than one in two people in the EU would be willing to intervene when witnessing a crime. Yet one in five would not be at all willing to step in.**

- ★ When seeing someone hit their partner on the street, 54 % of people in the EU-27 would be 'willing' or 'very willing' to intervene. The results are similar when people are asked how they would respond to a parent slapping their child in the street, with 52 % 'willing' or 'very willing' to intervene.
- ★ In case of witnessing a non-violent environmental crime – someone dumping a used refrigerator in the countryside – 57 % would be 'willing' or 'very willing' to intervene.
- ★ Overall, people are most likely to call the police when witnessing a person hitting their partner, followed by the dumping of an old refrigerator. On average, people in the EU-27 would be less willing to involve the police if they saw a parent slapping their child.
- ★ The percentage of people 'not at all willing' to give evidence in court, even when asked to do so, ranges from 17 % in the case of witnessing a person hitting their partner to 25 % in the example of a parent slapping their child. However, these results vary considerably between EU Member States and especially with respect to a parent slapping their child.
- ★ People's willingness to engage with the criminal justice system – such as by calling the police and, if asked, giving evidence in court – is lower among older people, those with lower levels of education, and people who struggle to make ends meet.
- ★ People are less willing to intervene when a woman hits a man (44 % in the EU-27 'willing' or 'very willing') than when a man hits a woman (64 % 'willing' or 'very willing').

Social cohesion involves individuals' sense of cooperation and solidarity, including their readiness to intervene when the rights of others are violated. Any normative order is premised on the willingness of members of a community to defend its basic norms. The results of the survey suggest that just over half of people in the EU would be ready to actively intervene if they observed people being physically assaulted in public, while more would be willing to intervene when witnessing a 'non-personal' environmental crime.

When crime takes place in public, people who witness it can have a crucial role to play in supporting the victim. This can involve, for example, people intervening in the situation when they see crime taking place, calling the police or, if needed, giving evidence in court against the perpetrator. For some offences – such as the example of a crime against the environment, which was used in the survey – there is often no single 'victim', but bystanders can play an important role in notifying the authorities. In relation to other types of offences, such as those involving a particularly vulnerable group of victims, namely children, the key role of the public can be seen in the context of the need for effective safeguards to protect children from all forms of



### FRA OPINION 6

EU Member States could consider strengthening awareness-raising efforts to highlight individual responsibility when witnessing a crime, which could enhance rates of reporting to the authorities.

Member States are encouraged to set up campaigns that strengthen the readiness of witnesses to intervene in defence of the dignity and rights of others when they are in peril, while ensuring the safety of witnesses.

To further facilitate victims' access to justice, Member States could consider having in place effective third-party reporting mechanisms that would encourage witnesses of crime who are not willing to engage with the criminal justice system – such as by calling the police – to contact a third party, such as civil society organisations. Member States could also consider strengthening access to alternative ways to report crime in person, such as by email, video recordings or online electronic forms.

violence – which includes the use of physical force intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light, e.g. slapping – while they are in the care of parents and others, in line with the CRC.

In its recital 63, the Victims' Rights Directive goes some way towards acknowledging the importance of an indirect reporting possibility: it calls for a mechanism for third-party reporting, including by civil society organisations, to be put in place to facilitate the reporting of crimes. In this context, it also calls for introducing the possibility of using communication technology, such as email, video recordings or online electronic forms, for making complaints.

### Worry about crime and risk avoidance

## Women, more than men, avoid places and situations due to concern about being assaulted or harassed. This reduces their opportunities to take part in public life.

### FRA OPINION 7

EU Member States need to recognise that concern about personal safety has a negative impact, particularly on women. They often feel the need to limit where they go and what they do in response to the threat of physical and sexual assault and harassment, as shown earlier by FRA in its survey report on violence against women. Authorities working in crime prevention can draw further on the results of the current survey, to enact measures that ensure equality of access to public space, such as approaches to prevent crime and reduce fear of crime through environmental design.

EU Member States' measures to improve people's feelings of safety should focus on groups in the population that disproportionately feel concerned for their safety, leading them to avoid places and situations perceived as potentially unsafe. Alongside women, this includes people with lower educational levels, those who are unemployed, and people who struggle to make ends meet.



- ★ In the EU-27, 63 % of people are very or somewhat worried about someone misusing their online bank account or credit/debit cards in the next 12 months. Meanwhile, 62 % worry about their mobile phone, wallet or purse getting stolen in the next 12 months. Furthermore, 54 % are very or somewhat worried about someone breaking into their home to steal or try to steal something. Moreover, 47 % are very or somewhat worried about experiencing a terrorist attack.
- ★ Certain socio-demographic characteristics are associated with differences in how concerned people are about experiencing crime. Rates of worry about crime are higher among women, people with less education, the unemployed and those who struggle to make ends meet with their household income. People who are limited in their usual activities (by a health problem or disability), people who were born outside the EU, and those who consider themselves part of an ethnic minority also display more concern about experiencing crime than people without activity limitations, people born in the survey countries, and those who do not consider themselves part of an ethnic minority.
- ★ For fear of being physically or sexually assaulted, or harassed, women engage in active risk avoidance more than men in the three situations listed in the survey: avoiding places where there are no other people around, avoiding certain streets or areas, and avoiding being alone with someone they know.
- ★ Whereas 64 % of women at least sometimes avoid going to places where there are no other people around, 36 % of men do so. Avoiding certain situations and places is also more common among young people, but with noticeable gender differences. In the age group 16–29 years, 83 % of women and 58 % of men avoid one or more of the three situations listed in the survey, for fear of assault or harassment.



- ★ Specifically, 41 % of women at least sometimes avoid being alone with someone they know, for fear of assault or harassment, compared with 25 % of men.
- ★ People who have experienced physical violence and/or harassment are more likely to avoid situations they perceive as potentially unsafe. For example, 37 % of women in the EU-27 who have experienced physical violence and/or harassment take care to avoid situations they perceive to contain a risk of physical or sexual assault or harassment, compared with 21 % of women who have not experienced physical violence and/or harassment.

The possibility of experiencing crime has a significant impact on social life, as it can influence people's choices, such as decisions on areas or situations to avoid. In some cases, the threat that crime poses can spread to a much wider group of people than those who are personally victimised. The results show a difference between the experiences of women and men, both in concern about various crimes and especially in risk avoidance behaviours adopted out of concern for one's safety. Women, and especially young women, adopt significant risk avoidance measures against the threat of (in particular) sexual harassment and sexual violence, which disproportionately affects women. Being discouraged from going to public places restricts various fundamental rights, in particular the right to liberty (Article 6 of the Charter) and respect for private life (Article 7).

Risk avoidance can be a rational response to experiences, such as women's experiences of sexual harassment, as FRA's violence against women survey shows. However, this finding needs to be put into the context of the ability, and equality of opportunity, to use public space. Moreover, men's lower levels of risk avoidance also require attention, given that they experience high rates of certain types of crime in public places.

Concern about experiencing crime is higher among those who have lower levels of education, are unemployed, are limited in their usual activities (by a health problem or disability) or have difficulty making ends meet with their household income. This could be related to different factors, including living in high crime areas; the relative impact of property crime on those who are already struggling, compared with people who have the financial means to easily replace what was stolen, or have comprehensive insurance policies; and lower incomes restricting means to stay safe, reflected in lower rates of car ownership or not being able to take a taxi when being out late at night, for example.

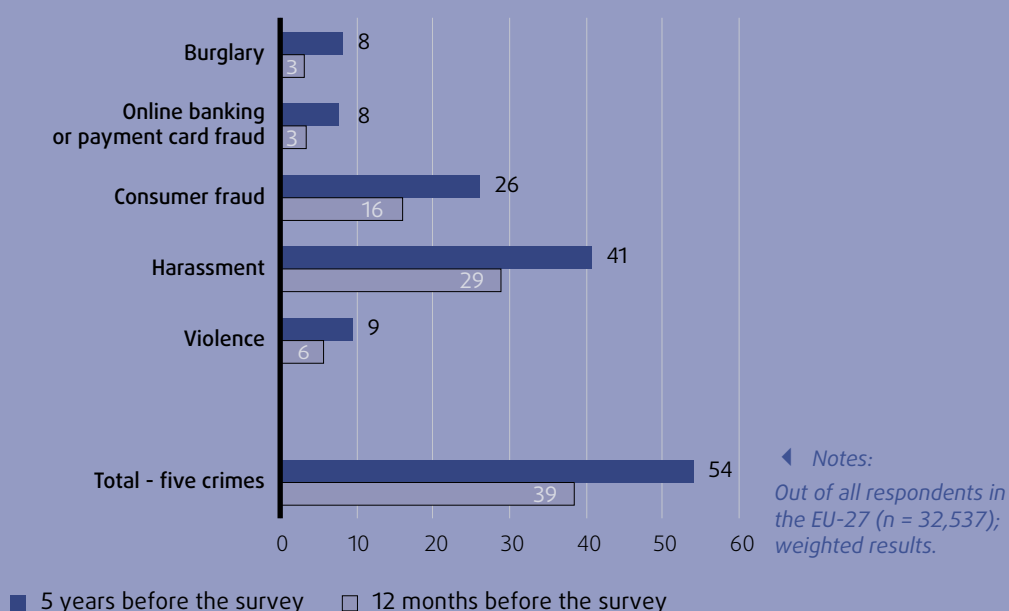
## Overall rate of crime victimisation in the survey

The Fundamental Rights Survey asked about people's experiences of five types of crime: burglary, online banking or payment card fraud, consumer fraud, harassment and violence. This report examines the results for each of the five types.

Taken together, 54 % of people in the EU-27 experienced one or more of these crimes in the five years before the survey, and 39 % experienced them in the 12 months before the survey. Within these rates, the prevalence of the five types of crime varies widely.

Of the five types, people most often experienced harassment (41 % in the five years before the survey), followed by consumer fraud (26 %). Experiences of burglary, online banking or payment card fraud are less frequent – fewer than one in 10 experienced these in the five years before the survey. The overall prevalence rates of crime experiences, both in the five years and in the 12 months before the survey, are closely related to the experiences of harassment and consumer fraud, as they are the most widespread of the five types of crime in the survey.

**FIGURE 1: EXPERIENCES OF FIVE CRIMES ASKED ABOUT IN THE SURVEY, IN THE FIVE YEARS AND IN THE 12 MONTHS BEFORE THE SURVEY (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS, NL), Centre des technologies de l'information de l'État (CTIE, LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

In addition to the five types of crime listed above, the Fundamental Rights Survey asked respondents if a public official or a civil servant has asked or expected them to do a favour (such as giving a gift or donation) in exchange for a particular service. A total of 4 % of people have experienced this in the past five years in the EU-27. However, the experiences vary greatly between EU Member States. FRA's **first report on the Fundamental Rights Survey** analyses the results in more detail.

# 1

## EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE

### KEY FINDINGS

- ★ In the EU-27, 9 % of people experienced physical violence in the five years before the survey and 6 % experienced it in the 12 months before the survey. This corresponds to over 22 million people in the EU-27 experiencing physical violence in a year (an estimate based on the results of the survey relative to the EU's population).

These results include experiencing one or more of the four acts of physical violence asked about in the survey: a person slapping you, throwing something at you, pushing you or pulling your hair; hitting you once with a fist or with something else that could hurt you; kicking or dragging you, or beating you up; and trying to suffocate or strangle you.

- ★ The results vary by country, from a low of 3 % experiencing violence in the five years before the survey to a high of 18 %. Such differences can be explored alongside official crime statistics at Member State level.
- ★ Experiences of physical violence differ between women and men in some key characteristics. In non-sexual incidents of physical violence against men, the perpetrator was most often somebody the man did not know (42 %). In contrast, non-sexual incidents of physical violence against women were most often by a family member or a relative (32 %). Incidents of violence by family members or relatives are less common for men (11 %). This underlines the role that intimate partner violence or domestic violence plays in women's experiences of violence.
- ★ Reflecting the results concerning the perpetrator(s) of violence, non-sexual incidents against men most often took place in public settings (39 %), such as streets, parks or other public places. Incidents experienced by women most often took place in their own home (37 %). Again, for women who experience violence, this confirms the significant role of intimate partner violence or domestic violence.
- ★ A common thread in experiences of violence against women and against men is that in a majority of cases the perpetrator was a man (or a group of men). This was the case in 72 % of incidents of physical violence that men experienced and 60 % of those that women experienced.
- ★ Some of these incidents of physical violence involved acts of a sexual nature: 13 % of women and 10 % of men say this was the case in the most recent incident of physical violence they experienced. Across all age groups in the survey, women report higher rates of experiencing sexual violence than men. These results should be read alongside the findings of FRA's violence against women survey, which measured in more detail women's experiences of violence, including intimate partner violence and sexual violence, which have a disproportionate impact on women.

- ★ Young people (16–29 years) experience violence much more commonly than other age groups. Close to one in four people (23 %) in this age category experienced physical violence in the five years before the survey, compared with one in 10, or fewer, in other age categories.
- ★ Experiencing violence is also more common among some population groups: persons who have limitations in usual activities (due to a health problem or disability; 17 % in the five years before the survey); people who consider themselves part of an ethnic minority (22 %); and people who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or other (19 %). Only 8–9 %, depending on the group, of people who do not identify with these categories experienced physical violence in the five years before the survey.
- ★ Victims of violence experience various psychological consequences and injuries more often if the violence also has elements of a sexual nature. Overall, 51 % of men say that the most recent incident of physical violence (non-sexual) did not cause any psychological consequences, compared with 30 % of women. Overall, 34 % of women say that they experienced four or more types of psychological consequences as a result of an incident of physical violence that also had elements of a sexual nature, compared with 9 % of men.

Violence is a clear violation of a victim's rights, in particular human dignity and the integrity of the person (Articles 1 and 3 of the Charter). A victim can legitimately expect the law to come to the defence of their rights. In the light of the right to an effective remedy (Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 47 of the Charter), criminal proceedings assert the victim's rights in that they preserve the identity of a community of law based on human dignity and human rights.<sup>34</sup>

In line with Directive 2012/29/EU (the Victims' Rights Directive), Article 1 and recital 9 in particular, a victim of violent crime should be recognised as the person wronged by the offender, protected against repeat victimisation, granted access to justice and enabled to participate in criminal proceedings.

This chapter presents the survey results concerning the extent (prevalence) of violence, disaggregated by selected socio-demographic and group characteristics of the victim, to examine differences in people's risk of experiencing violent incidents. Furthermore, the survey asked respondents to describe in more detail the most recent incident of violence they had experienced in the five years before the survey. These details will be examined to form a picture of the context in which violence takes place, and the impact these factors have on issues such as reporting the incident to the police.

As a part of the UN 2030 Agenda and SDG 16 to 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels', the UN Member States have adopted target 16.1, 'Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere'. One of the indicators used to monitor progress towards this target is indicator 16.1.3 'Proportion of population subjected to (a) physical violence, (b) psychological violence and (c) sexual violence in the previous 12 months'. The survey results in this chapter can act as a proxy indicator, offering data on the situation in the EU Member States, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom.

<sup>34</sup> FRA (2019), *Victims' Rights as Standards of Criminal Justice – Justice for victims of violent crime, Part I*.

The data can also serve as an evidence base for future actions to be adopted at the EU and national levels in implementing the EU strategy on victims' rights (2020–2025) and its two-strand approach, namely empowering victims of crime and working together for victims' rights.

## What did the survey ask?

*In the past five years [and in the past 12 months], how many times has somebody done each of the following things?*

- Slapped you, thrown something at you, pushed you or pulled your hair
- Hit you with their fist or with something else that could hurt you
- Kicked or dragged you, or beaten you up
- Tried to suffocate or strangle you

Answer categories: Never in the past five years [Never in the past 12 months], once, twice, three to five times, six to 10 times, more than 10 times, all the time. In addition, respondents who did not select one of these answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

*Note: In the survey, respondents who indicated that they had experienced one or more of the four listed acts of physical violence in the 5 years before the survey were asked how many times this had happened to them in the 12 months before the survey – based on the same acts of physical violence and the same answer categories, as shown above.*

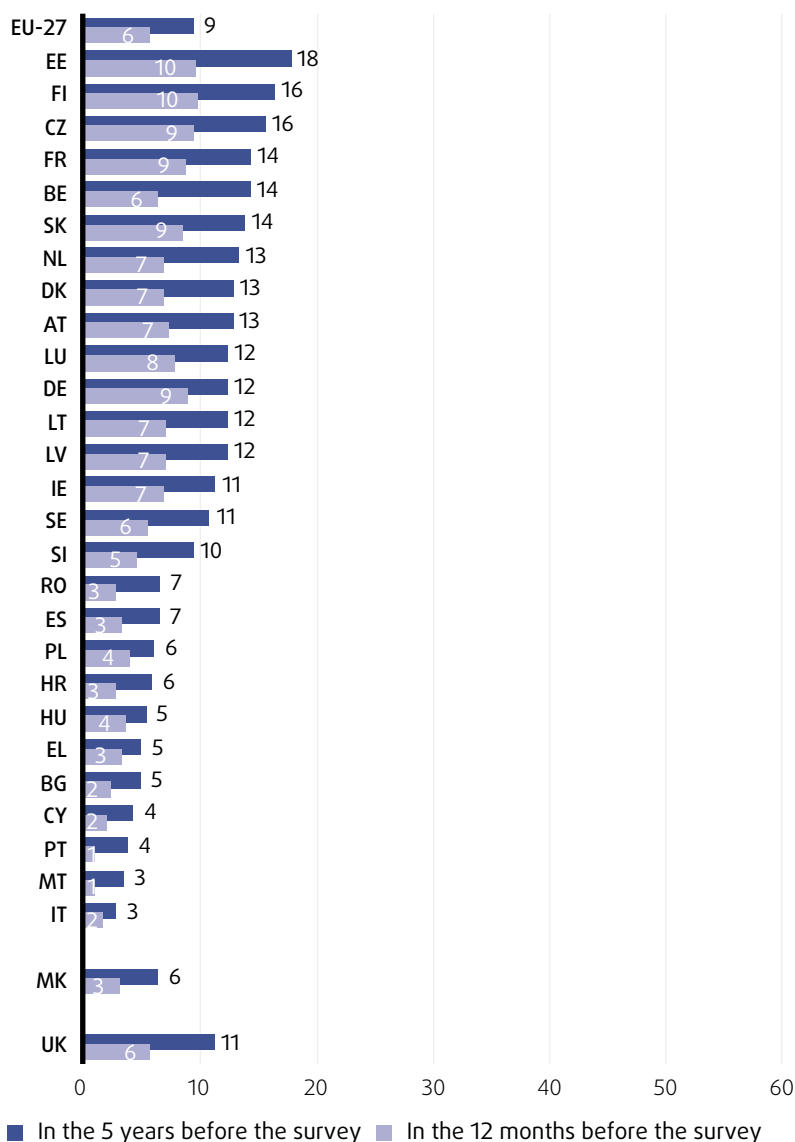
### 1.1. EXTENT AND FORMS OF VIOLENCE

One in 10 (9 %) people in the EU-27 experienced physical violence in the five years before the survey (**Figure 2**). This can involve one or more of the four acts of physical violence listed in the survey, experienced in a single incident or multiple incidents over the five-year period. In the 12 months before the survey, 6 % – roughly one in 20 people – experienced physical violence in the EU-27. This corresponds to over 22 million people in the EU-27<sup>35</sup> experiencing physical violence in a year (an estimate based on the results of the survey relative to the EU's population). The results suggest a large variation in victimisation rates between the EU Member States. The lowest five-year rates, under 5 %, are in Cyprus, Italy, Malta and Portugal, while the highest, over 15 %, are in Czechia, Estonia and Finland.

In the five years before the survey, 8 % in the EU-27 experienced an incident in which somebody slapped them, threw something at them, pushed them or pulled their hair, followed by 5 % being hit with a fist or with something else that could hurt them, 4 % being kicked, dragged or beaten up, and 2 % experiencing somebody trying to suffocate or strangle them.

<sup>35</sup> Based on Eurostat statistics on the population in EU-27: 374,462,200 people aged 16 years or older in 2019 (data code [[demo\\_pjan](#)], updated on 3 July 2020).

**FIGURE 2: EXPERIENCES OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE, IN THE FIVE YEARS AND IN THE 12 MONTHS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY COUNTRY (%)**



Notes: Out of all respondents in the EU-27, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom (n = 34,948); weighted results.

Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

## FRA ACTIVITY

### Access to justice and victims of violent crime

In 2019, FRA published a series of reports examining the rights of victims of violent crime, including their right to protection and access to justice. The reports assess how victims' rights are realised in practice: whether or not victims of violent crime are properly seen, informed, empowered and heard.

The reports published in the 'Justice for victims of violent crime' series are:

- Part I – **Victims' rights as standards of criminal justice;**
- Part II – **Proceedings that do justice;**
- Part III – **Sanctions that do justice;**
- Part IV – **Women as victims of partner violence.**

In addition, the **Handbook on European law relating to access to justice** – a joint publication by FRA, the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights, from 2016 – offers a summary of key European legal principles related to access to justice. They include relevant legal standards set by the European Union and the Council of Europe, particularly case law of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights.

These reports are all available on **FRA's website.**

## Differences between countries

Throughout the report, the survey results show differences in crime victimisation rates between EU Member States. This merits further attention and additional research at country level to identify the factors related to these differences. At the same time, differences in results between countries are a normal feature of all international surveys, including crime surveys.

As an example of some of the factors and challenges in explaining differences in reported rates of crime across countries, the main results report from FRA's violence against women survey offers possible explanations for variations in violence against women between EU Member States.

See FRA (2014), **Violence against Women: An EU-wide survey – Main results**, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union (Publications Office), pp. 22–26.

In the five years before the survey, 8 % of women and 11 % of men in the EU-27 experienced physical violence (Figure 3). The higher rate of physical violence experienced by men than women corresponds with findings of some of the national crime victimisation surveys and other data, such as the gender-disaggregated EU statistics on intentional homicides. Between 1.5 and 5.1 times as many men as women are victims of intentional homicides, depending on the EU Member State.<sup>36</sup> Overall, men are 2.8 times more likely than women to die as a result of interpersonal violence in the WHO European Region, the WHO Regional Office for Europe has estimated.<sup>37</sup> Large-scale national crime victimisation surveys in Belgium,<sup>38</sup> Germany<sup>39</sup> and Sweden,<sup>40</sup> for example, have found that men's rate of experiencing physical violence is higher than that of women.



<sup>36</sup> Eurostat database, data code [crim\_hom\_soff], updated on 14 July 2020.

<sup>37</sup> WHO Regional Office for Europe (2020), **Violence and Injuries in Europe: Burden, prevention and priorities for action**.

<sup>38</sup> Police Fédérale (2018), **Moniteur de sécurité 2018 – Grandes tendances**.

<sup>39</sup> Bundeskriminalamt (2019), **The 2017 German Victimisation Survey**.

<sup>40</sup> Brottsförebyggande rådet (2020), **Nationella trygghetsundersökningen 2020 – Om utsatthet, otrygghet och förtroende**.

## Violence against women – FRA’s EU-wide survey

The results of the Fundamental Rights Survey can be read alongside the findings of FRA’s survey on violence against women, published in 2014. The violence against women survey interviewed 42,000 women in the EU-28 (Croatia, included in the survey, was not yet an EU Member State when the data were collected in 2012 but it was a Member State by the time the results of the survey were published in 2014).

- The violence against women survey found that 7 % of women experienced physical violence in the 12 months before the survey, while the prevalence goes up to 8 % if experiences of sexual violence are included. Overall, 31 % of women have experienced physical violence since the age of 15, while one in three women (33 %) have experienced physical and/or sexual violence.
- According to the Fundamental Rights Survey, 5 % of women experienced physical violence in the 12 months before the survey.

Interpreting the results of the two surveys, it is necessary to consider the differences in the ways the surveys collected data on experiences of violence.

FRA’s violence against women survey included separate, extensive sets of questions concerning physical violence and sexual violence. The survey also addressed separately women’s experiences of violence by various perpetrators, including the respondent’s current and previous partners as well as other persons. This was done to allow respondents opportunities to disclose experiences of violence that may be difficult to talk about, such as violence by an intimate partner. The survey also put in place special measures recommended when collecting data on violence against women, such as using only female interviewers.

In contrast, the questions in the Fundamental Rights Survey listed examples of physical violence only, and respondents were asked later if the most recent incident of violence they had experienced contained elements of a sexual nature. On the other hand, whereas the violence against women survey interviews were carried out face to face, by trained interviewers, in the Fundamental Rights Survey the questions concerning physical violence were asked in a self-completion module of the survey, to enhance the confidentiality of data collection and help respondents to disclose sensitive experiences.

In sum:

- The results of the violence against women survey should be considered a better reflection of women’s experiences of violence – including intimate partner violence – whereas the Fundamental Rights Survey provides data on women’s and men’s experiences of selected forms of violence. Although respondents in the Fundamental Rights Survey could disclose experiences of violence irrespective of the type of perpetrator, the survey did not include specific measures used in the violence against women survey to support the disclosure of intimate partner violence.
- In particular, the Fundamental Rights Survey results do not provide a prevalence estimate of sexual violence, whereas the prevalence of sexual violence against women was among the key indicators that FRA’s violence against women survey measured.

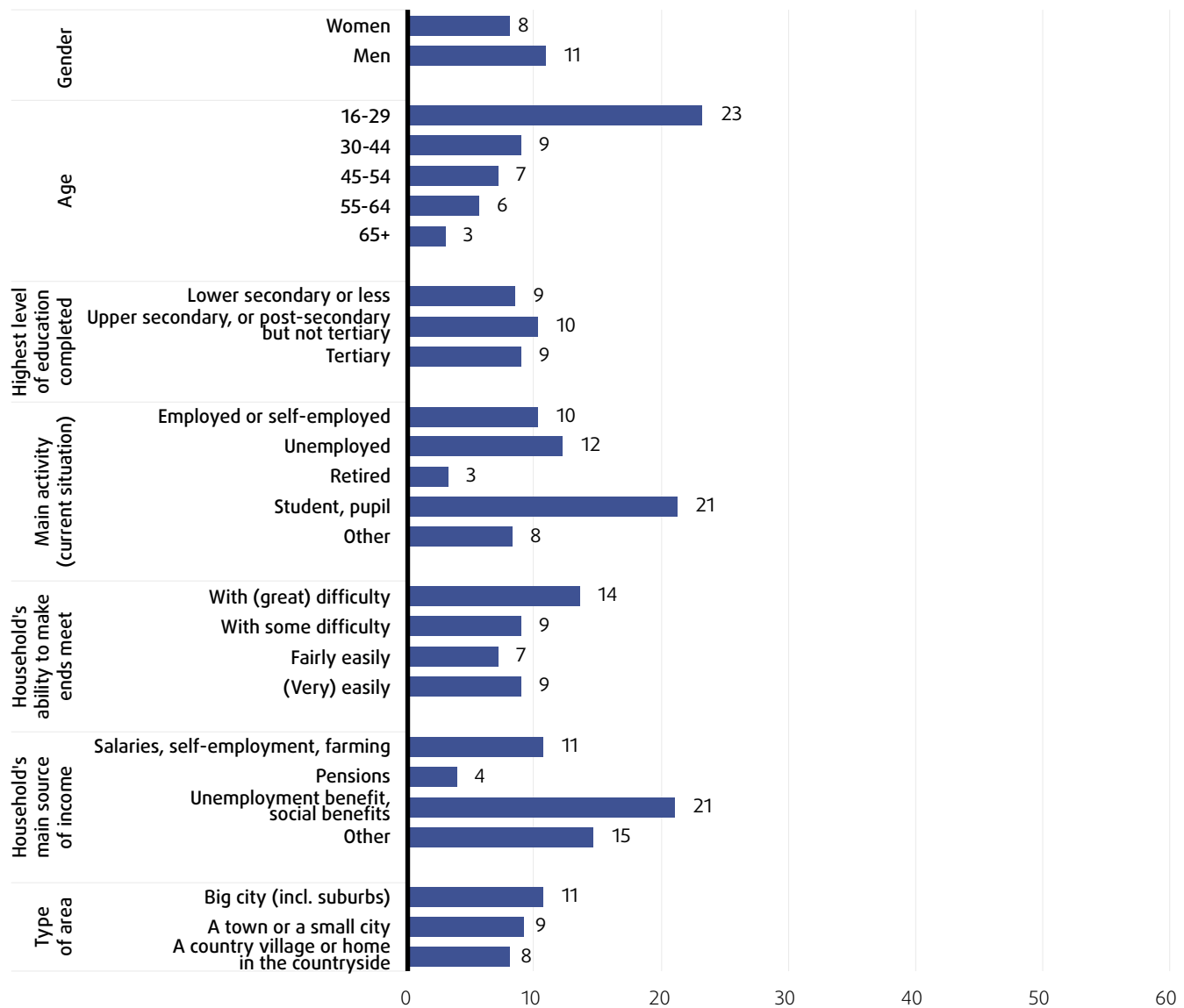
Nevertheless, in presenting and analysing the Fundamental Rights Survey results concerning the most recent incident of violence, for some findings this report distinguishes between incidents of a sexual nature and incidents that were not of a sexual nature. It brings out differences between women’s and men’s experiences, and the context in which women and men experience violent incidents. Women predominantly experience them at home.



Differences linked to age are more substantial than those based on gender. Experiences of violence are notably higher in the age group 16–29 years – 23 % in the five years before the survey – than in other age groups, such as 3 % among people who are 65 years old or older. The impact of age on experiences of violence is also reflected in the results disaggregated by people’s main activity and by main source of income (people receiving a pension as opposed to those receiving unemployment or other social benefits, including student allowances), and the difference between students and pupils on the one hand and retired persons on the other.

Notes:  
Out of all respondents in the EU-27  
(n = 32,537); weighted results.

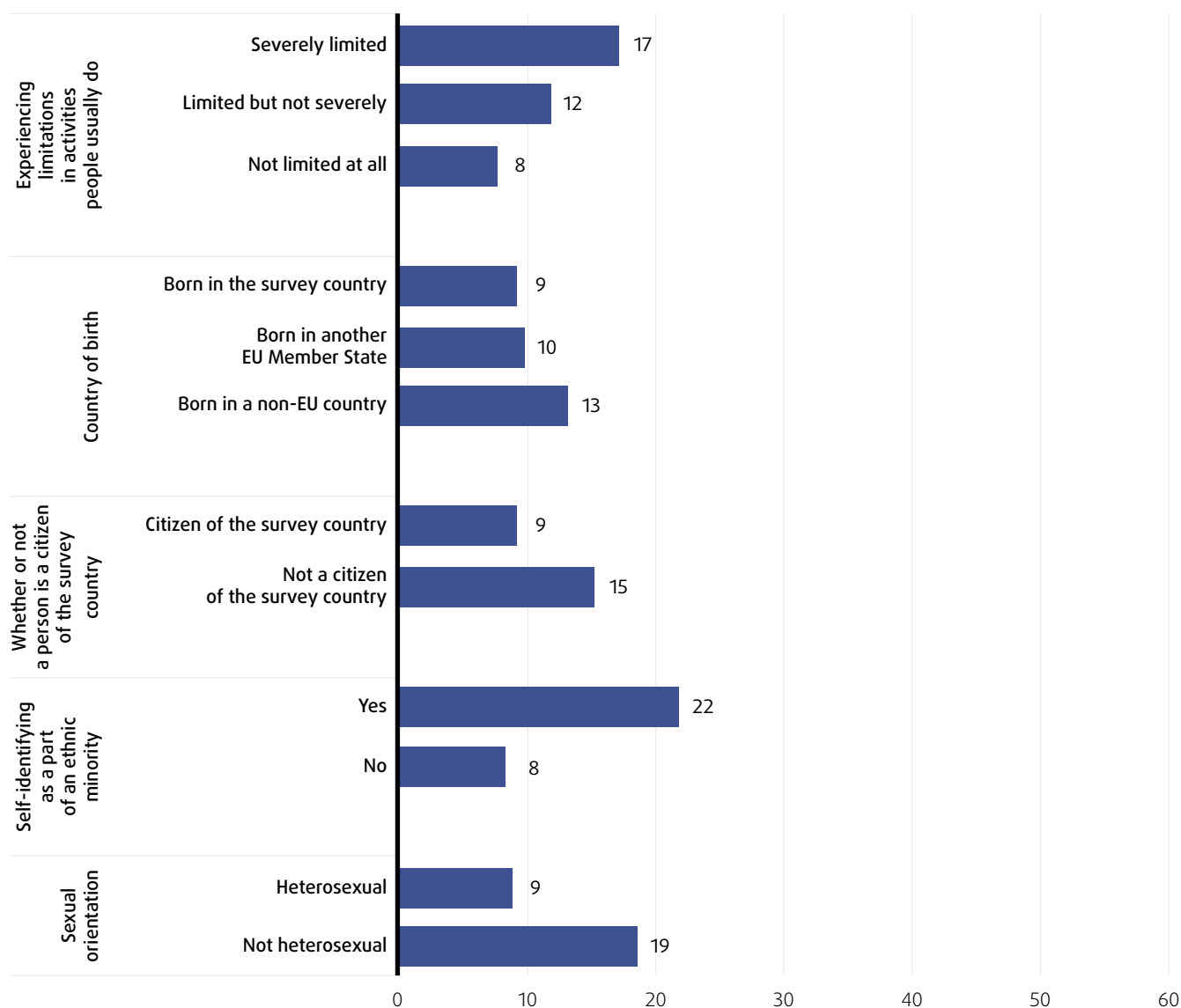
**FIGURE 3: EXPERIENCES OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IN THE FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY SELECTED SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

People whose activities are severely limited (by a health problem or disability) have a higher prevalence rate of violence, 17 %, compared with 8 % among people who do not experience such limitations. A higher prevalence of violence is also associated with being part of an ethnic minority: 22 % experienced violence in the five years before the survey, as opposed to 8 % of those who do not self-identify as belonging to an ethnic minority. Similarly, respondents who self-identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual or 'other' (combined in **Figure 4** into the category 'not heterosexual') face a higher rate of physical violence than heterosexuals (19 % and 9 %, respectively).

**FIGURE 4: EXPERIENCES OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IN THE FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY SELECTED GROUPS (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

Notes:  
 Out of all respondents in the EU-27 (n = 32,537); weighted results.

## What did the survey ask?

*You indicated that in the past five years you have experienced different incidents where somebody physically hurt you. Thinking about the most recent incident, who did this to you?*

Answer categories: An acquaintance or friend, neighbour, work colleague, customer or client from work, a family member or relative, somebody else you knew, somebody you did not know.

*How would you describe the person or people who did this to you?*

Answer categories: Somebody who has an ethnic minority or immigrant background, somebody who does not have an ethnic minority or immigrant background, both those with an ethnic minority or immigrant background and those without were involved, background was not clear.

*Was the person who did this to you a man or a woman?*

Answer categories: Man (or more than one man), woman (or more than one woman), both a man and a woman were involved, I don't know whether it was a man or a woman.

*Still thinking about the most recent incident, was it of a sexual nature?*

Answer categories: Yes, no.

*You indicated that in the past five years you have experienced different incidents where somebody physically hurt you. Thinking about the most recent incident, where did it take place?*

Answer categories: In your home; in some other house or apartment; at school or college; at work; in a shop, café, restaurant, pub or club; in the street, a square, park, car park or other public place; some other place in [this country]; abroad.

For each of these questions, respondents who did not select one of the listed answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

## 1.2. CONTEXT OF THE MOST RECENT INCIDENT OF VIOLENCE

Efforts to prevent incidents of violence, support the victims and, where possible, treat the perpetrators need to build on an understanding of the context in which violence takes place. This can include factors such as the relationship between the victim and perpetrator, the location of the incident and whether the incident involved physical violence only or was of a sexual nature. This section examines the impact of these contextual factors on prevalence rates of violent incidents. Specifically, respondents who had experienced physical violence in the five years before the survey were asked in more detail about the most recent incident, for them to describe the perpetrator(s) or details such as the location where the incident took place.

The survey questions concerning incidents of violence list four acts of physical violence. They give no examples of acts of sexual violence. However, when describing the most recent incident of violence, respondents could indicate if this incident was of a sexual nature. That is, while the survey does not provide an estimate of the prevalence of sexual violence (such as the results available from FRA's violence against women survey), it is possible to examine details of the most recent incident by differentiating between sexual and non-sexual incidents of (physical) violence. For example, the results of the survey on violence against women point to differences in type and gender of perpetrators between physical and sexual violence.<sup>41</sup> As a result of these findings, in many cases this section presents the results concerning the context of violence separately for sexual and non-sexual incidents.

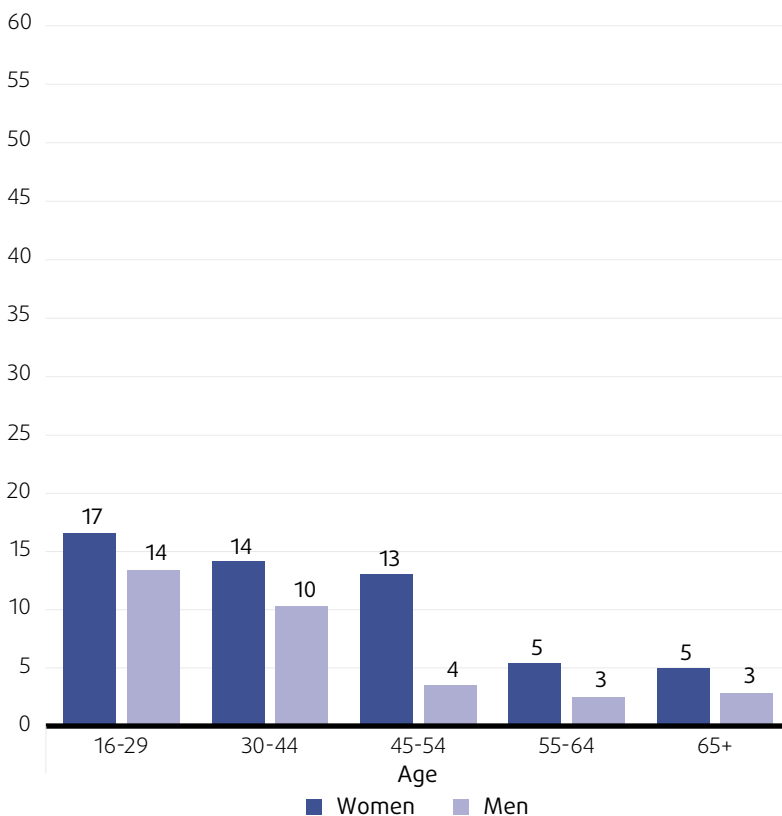
Respondents could determine what incidents they consider to be of a 'sexual nature', so they can represent a wide range, from incidents of physical violence that included sexual comments or touching to rape with physical violence. Because the initial list of violent acts was limited to physical violence, respondents may have excluded incidents of sexual violence that did not use physical violence, for example sexual acts performed when the victim was unconscious or otherwise unable to indicate lack of consent.

<sup>41</sup> FRA (2014), *Violence against Women: An EU-wide survey – Main results*, Luxembourg, Publications Office.



Overall, 11 % of people – 13 % of women and 10 % of men – who experienced an incident of violence in the five years before the survey indicate that it was sexual – 183 women and 110 men. Incidents of physical violence that involve acts of a sexual nature are most common among the youngest age group in the survey (16- to 29-year-olds), and incidents of a sexual nature become less common with advancing age. However, this drop in the rate of sexual incidents occurs earlier for men than for women. **Figure 5** shows that for men the biggest drop in the rate of sexual incidents – as recorded in the survey – happens between the age groups 30–44 and 45–54 years, while for women the rate of sexual incidents remains at a higher level for longer and drops notably when moving from the 45–54 to the 55–64 age group. The results point to a higher rate of sexual incidents among women than men in each age group.

**FIGURE 5: MOST RECENT INCIDENT OF VIOLENCE WAS OF A SEXUAL NATURE, BY VICTIM’S GENDER AND AGE (EU-27, %)**



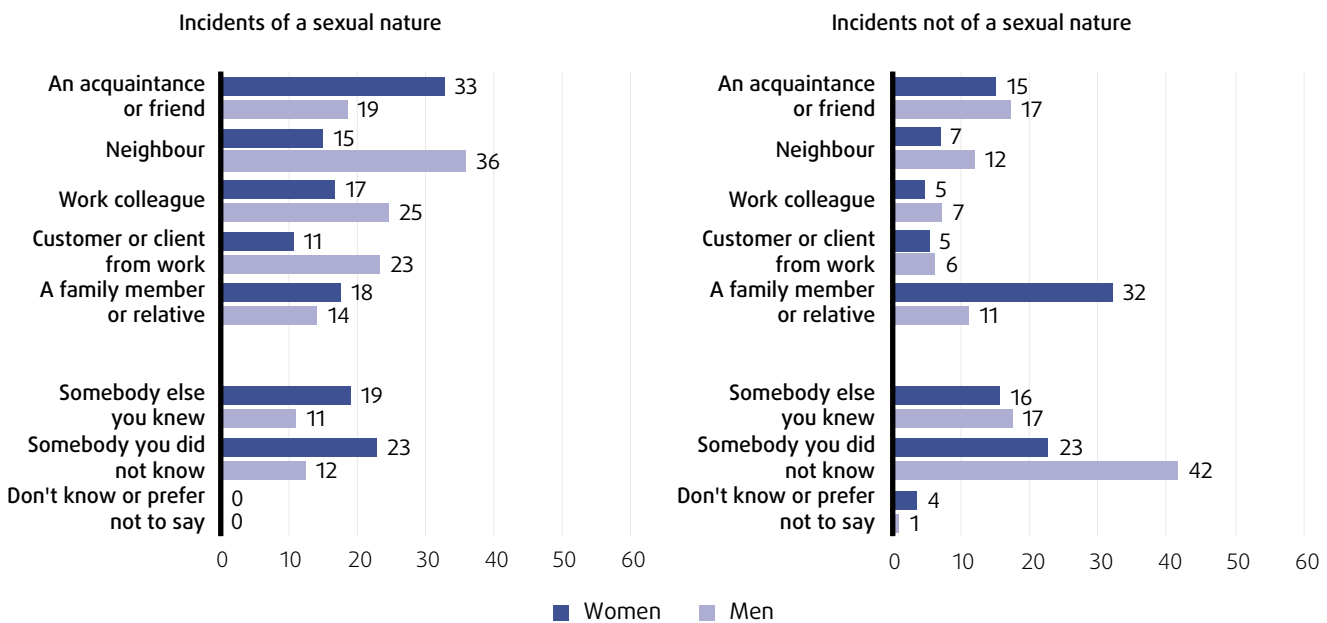
◀ **Notes:**

Out of respondents in the EU-27 who described in the survey the most recent incident of violence (n = 3,238); weighted results.

Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

The Fundamental Rights Survey supports the earlier research findings, which point to a difference in the type of perpetrators involved in sexual and non-sexual incidents. **Figure 6** also shows some differences between violence against women and against men. In terms of physical (non-sexual) incidents, violence against men is most often by a perpetrator whom the victim did not know before: 42 %, compared with 23 % for women. However, incidents of physical violence against women are most often by a family member or a relative (32 %), but less commonly for men (11 %). These incidents could involve domestic violence, where the perpetrator may be the partner or other family member.

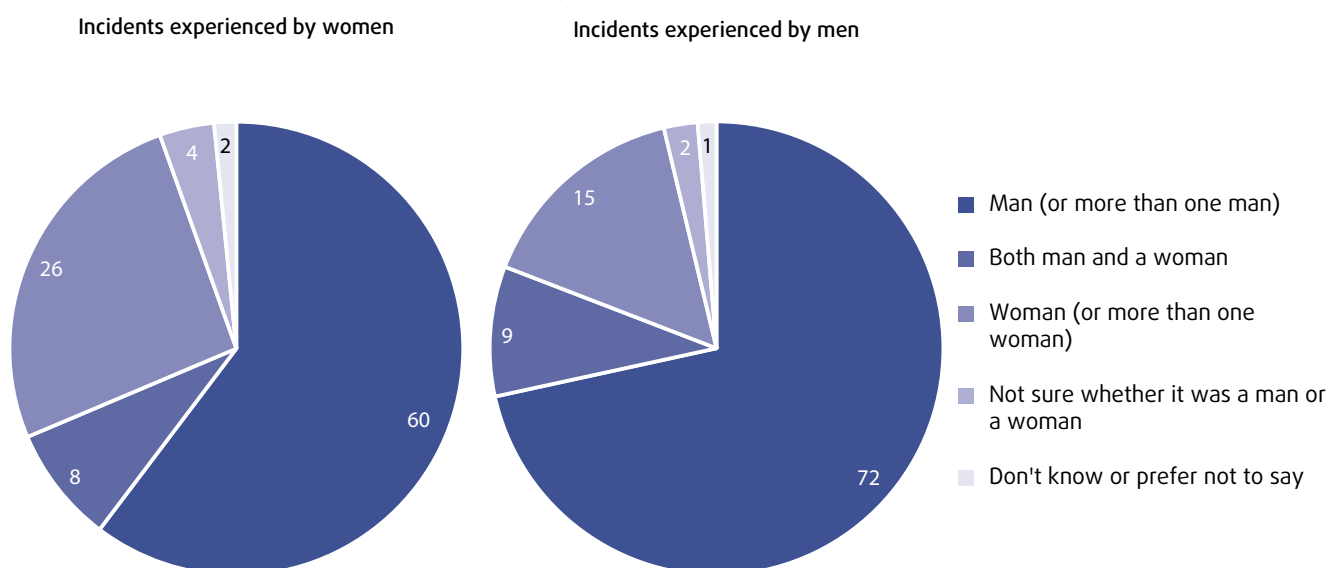
**FIGURE 6: PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE IN SEXUAL AND NON-SEXUAL INCIDENTS, BY VICTIM'S GENDER (EU-27, %)<sup>a,b</sup>**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

- Notes:
- <sup>a</sup> Out of respondents in the EU-27 (women and men) who described whether the most recent incident of physical violence was of a sexual nature or not (n = 3,212; incidents of a sexual nature – women, n = 183, men, n = 110; incidents not of a sexual nature – women, n = 1,382, men, n = 1,237), excluding respondents who answered ‘don’t know’ or ‘prefer not to say’ when asked if the most recent incident was of a sexual nature; weighted results.
  - <sup>b</sup> When the survey asked about the type of perpetrator(s) of the most recent incident of violence, respondents were shown a list of answer categories and could select one or more categories, depending on their experiences. For this reason, in the figure above, the sum of the answers across categories can exceed 100 %.
- Violent incidents against women and those against men are predominantly committed by men. Out of all incidents against men, 72 % were by a man or a group of men, while in another 9 % men were perpetrators alongside women (**Figure 7**). Three in five (60 %) incidents of physical violence against women were by a man or a group of men, and another 8 % involved men alongside women as perpetrators. Compared with incidents against men, violence against women is more likely to involve only a female perpetrator or perpetrators – 26 %, as opposed to 15 % of incidents against men.

**FIGURE 7: GENDER OF PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE, INCIDENTS EXPERIENCED BY WOMEN AND MEN (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

Non-sexual incidents experienced by men are often perpetrated by somebody the victim did not know before, as Figure 6 shows. Out of all incidents experienced by men (sexual and non-sexual incidents) in which the perpetrator was somebody the victim did not know, in 84 % this perpetrator was a man and in 4 % a woman. On the other hand, women mention experiencing non-sexual violence most often from family members and relatives. Out of all incidents of violence (sexual and non-sexual) against women by a family member or relative, the perpetrator was a man in 68 % of cases and a woman in 24 %.



**Notes:**

Out of respondents in the EU-27 who described in the survey the most recent incident of violence (n = 3,230; women, n = 1,573, men, n = 1,657); weighted results.

In the survey, 6 % of respondents say that they are a part of an ethnic minority in the country where they live, and 6 % were born in another country (2 % in another EU Member State and 4 % in a non-EU country). In half of all incidents of violence (52 %), the perpetrator was described as having no ethnic minority or immigrant background, while one in four incidents (24 %) were perceived to have been committed by somebody with an ethnic minority or immigrant background. Respondents consider that 9 % of cases involve perpetrators both with and without an ethnic minority or immigrant background, and in the remaining 15 % the respondent was not able to assess the background of the perpetrator.



Overall, 29 % of the violent incidents took place in an open public setting: in a street, square, park, car park or other public place. The second most common setting was the victim's home (24 %). Further analysis shows, however, a difference in where women and men experience violence, as well as differences between sexual and non-sexual incidents. Physical (non-sexual) violence in an open public setting is particularly common for men (39 % in the five years before the survey, most recent incident) while non-sexual violence against women most often occurs in their home (37 % in the five years before the survey, most recent incident). The location where violence occurs has important consequences for the victims. In an open public setting, there can be other people present who can intervene and

de-escalate the incident, report it to the police and/or act as witnesses later, whereas incidents at home may often occur without other people present, or in front of the victim's children, who are also exposed to the violence.

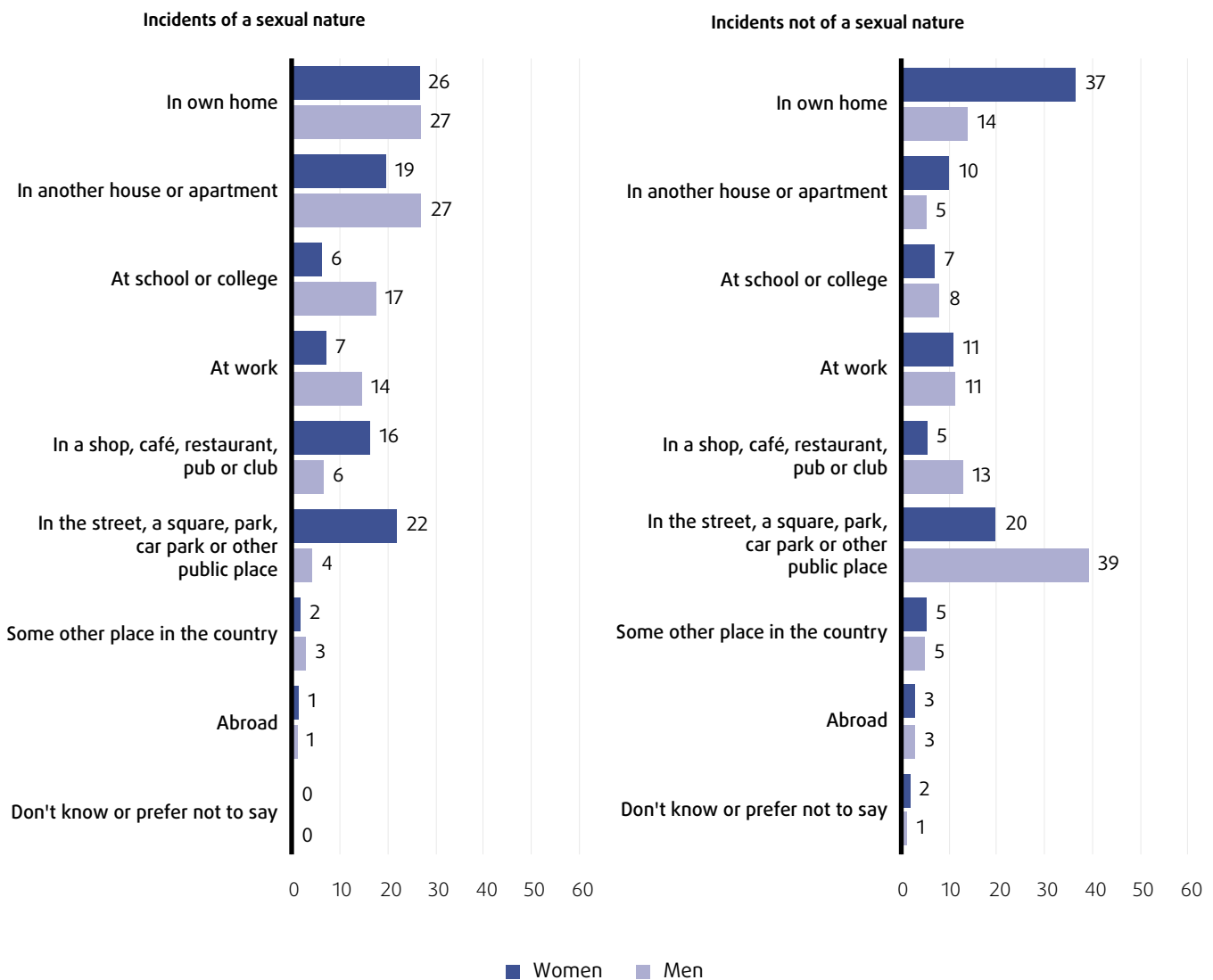
The most notable differences between women's and men's experiences of violence regard where the incident took place (Figure 8). As an illustration, 22 % of women mentioned that an incident of violence that did include a sexual element took place in an open public place (in a street, square, park, car park or other public place), compared with just 4 % of men who described the most recent incident of violence of a sexual nature. By contrast, the majority of incidents against men that did not contain a sexual element took place in public spaces (39 %), while for women the majority of such incidents took place in their own home (37 %). Men who are victims of physical violence that also involves some sexual element are, like women, most at risk of such an incident in their own home or in another house or apartment, it would appear from the data. This finding warrants further investigation.

**Notes:**

Out of respondents in the EU-27 who described in the survey the most recent incident of violence (n = 3,212; incidents of a sexual nature – women, n = 183, men, n = 110; incidents not of a sexual nature – women, n = 1,382, men, n = 1,237), excluding respondents who answered 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say' when asked if the most recent incident was of a sexual nature; weighted results.



**FIGURE 8: LOCATION WHERE THE MOST RECENT INCIDENT OF VIOLENCE TOOK PLACE, BY VICTIM'S GENDER (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

### 1.3. CONSEQUENCES OF THE MOST RECENT INCIDENT OF VIOLENCE

A violent incident can have a profound impact on the victim, including, for example, psychological consequences and (physical) injuries. In addition, violence can have economic consequences, such as loss of income if the victim has to take time off from work as a result. All of this also imposes a burden on society, in terms of the cost of medical treatment, psychological counselling, criminal justice intervention or loss in productivity.

The Fundamental Rights Survey asked respondents who had experienced an incident of violence about two types of consequences: psychological impact and injuries. The details of the impact can also be used to assess the seriousness of the violent incident, alongside information concerning the type of violence used and number of incidents experienced over a period. Chapter 4 examines how often incidents of violence are reported to police and other authorities, including readiness to report incidents depending on their seriousness.

Data on consequences of violence and the rate of reporting can also contribute towards estimating the cost of violence. Incidents of violence can lead to costs in terms of interventions: medical, criminal justice, victim support, emergency housing and social, counselling and other services. Society or victims themselves may bear the costs. Violence can also lead to a loss of income and productivity, for example due to time taken off work. The costs related to intimate partner violence against women alone add up to EUR 109 billion per year, according to research by EIGE.<sup>42</sup>

The most common types of consequence of experiencing an incident of violence are anxiety (30 % of all victims) and feeling vulnerable (27 %). The rates of various psychological consequences are higher for women than for men. For both groups sexual incidents are more likely than non-sexual incidents to have various psychological consequences.

## What did the survey ask?

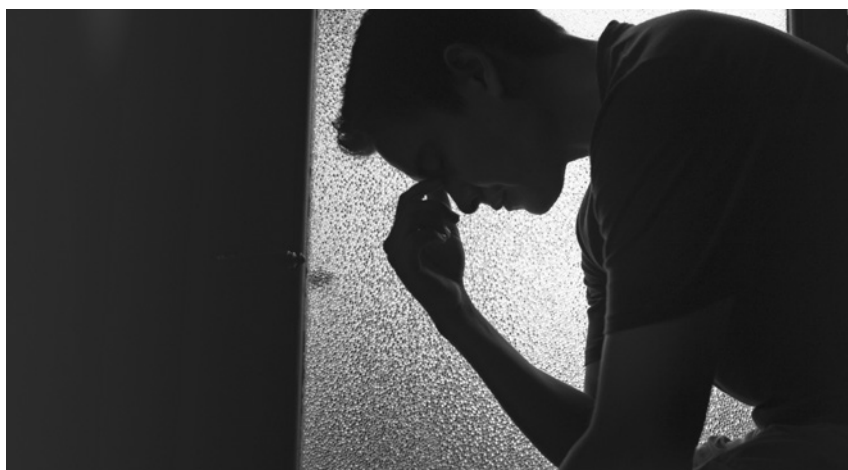
*Did you feel any of the following as a result of this incident?*

Answer categories: Depression, anxiety, panic attacks, loss of self-confidence, feeling vulnerable, difficulty in sleeping, concentration difficulties, other, none of the above.

*Thinking about the most recent incident, did it result in any of the following?*

Answer categories: Bruises, scratches; wounds, sprains, burns; fractures, broken bones, broken teeth; concussion or other head injury; internal injuries; other; none of the above.

For each of these questions, respondents who did not select one of the listed answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

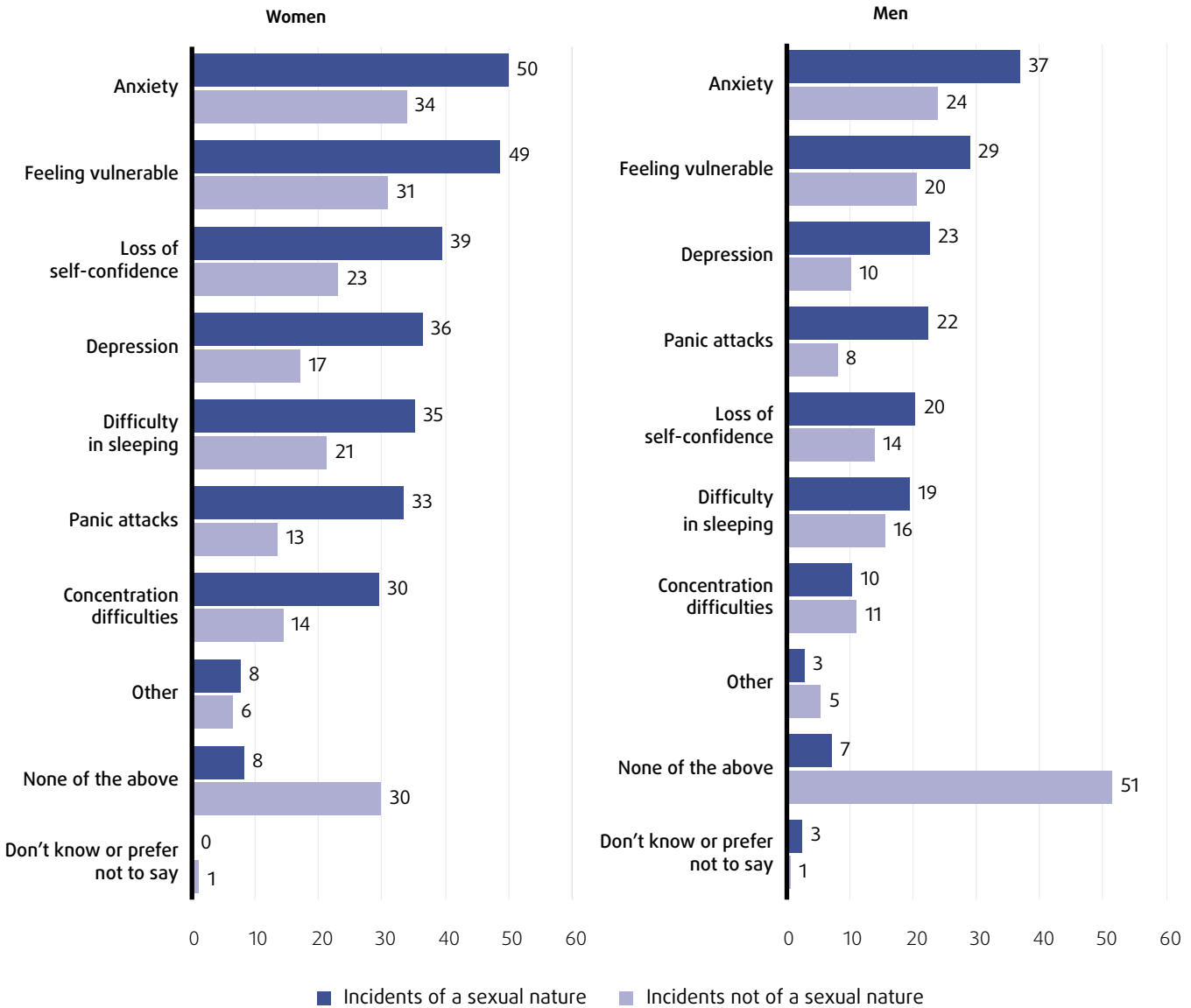


<sup>42</sup> For more information, see '[Estimating the costs of gender-based violence in the European Union](#)' on EIGE's website.



In half the cases of physical violence (51 %), men say that the incident did not lead to any of the consequences listed, compared with 30 % of women who experienced physical violence (Figure 9). A few victims of sexual violence – 8 % of women and 7 % of men – indicate that the incident did not cause any of the problems listed.

**FIGURE 9: PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES EXPERIENCED AS A RESULT OF THE MOST RECENT INCIDENT OF VIOLENCE, BY VICTIM'S GENDER AND TYPE OF INCIDENT (EU-27, %)<sup>a,b</sup>**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

▲ Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Out of respondents in the EU-27 who described in the survey the most recent incident of violence (n = 3,212; incidents of a sexual nature – women, n = 183, men, n = 110; incidents not of a sexual nature – women, n = 1,382, men, n = 1,237), excluding respondents who answered 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say' when asked if the most recent incident was of a sexual nature; weighted results.

<sup>b</sup> When the survey asked about the consequences of the most recent incident of violence, respondents were shown a list of answer categories and could select one or more categories, in accordance with their experiences. For this reason, in the figure above, the sum of the answers across categories can exceed 100 %.

More than nine in 10 victims – both women and men – say that they experienced psychological consequences if the incident of physical violence was of a sexual nature. However, there are notable differences between women’s and men’s experiences in the number of different types of psychological consequences. While 9 % of men who experienced an incident of violence of a sexual nature say that they experienced four or more types of psychological consequences (out of the eight categories in the survey, as shown in **Figure 9**), 34 % of women say that they experienced four or more types of psychological consequences. The differences are less pronounced if the incident had no sexual element: 9 % of men and 14 % of women experienced four or more types of psychological consequences. However, from these incidents too, women are more likely than men to have experienced one or more psychological consequences, and 51 % of men indicate that the incident did not result in any psychological consequences.

In 59 % of cases, the most recent incident of violence led to a physical injury. Most commonly, they were bruises and scratches (41 %) or wounds, sprains or burns (14 %). According to 40 % of those experiencing violence, the most recent incident of violence did not cause any injuries. Most incidents of a sexual nature resulted in injuries: 81 % of women and 92 % of men say they sustained injuries in the most recent incident of physical violence with elements of a sexual nature, compared with 51 % of women and 59 % of men being injured in the most recent incident of physical violence without elements of a sexual nature.

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**“Was attacked about one year ago, I suffered a broken leg and spent three weeks in hospital. Police response was bad. I gave them the address of the attacker and they did nothing.”**

(Man, between 45 and 54 years old, survey respondent, Ireland)



# 2

## EXPERIENCES OF HARASSMENT

### KEY FINDINGS

- ★ Two in five people (41 %) in the EU-27 experienced harassment in the five years before the survey, and 29 % did so in the 12 months before the survey. This corresponds to almost 110 million people in the EU-27 experiencing harassment in a year (an estimate based on the results of the survey relative to the EU's population).
- ★ The most widespread forms of harassment involve offensive or threatening comments (32 % experienced them in the five years before the survey) or gestures made in person (29 %). Some 14 % of people experienced cyberharassment in the five years before the survey.
- ★ Between 62 % and 15 % of people, depending on the country, experienced harassment in the five years before the survey.
- ★ Age and education are the socio-demographic characteristics with the strongest impact on rates of harassment experienced. Young people (16–29 years) and those with a higher level of education experience the highest rates of harassment. For example, 61 % of young people experienced harassment in the five years before the survey, compared with 25 % of people who are 65 years old or older. Half (49 %) of people with tertiary education experienced harassment in the five years before the survey, compared with 32 % of those with lower secondary education or less.

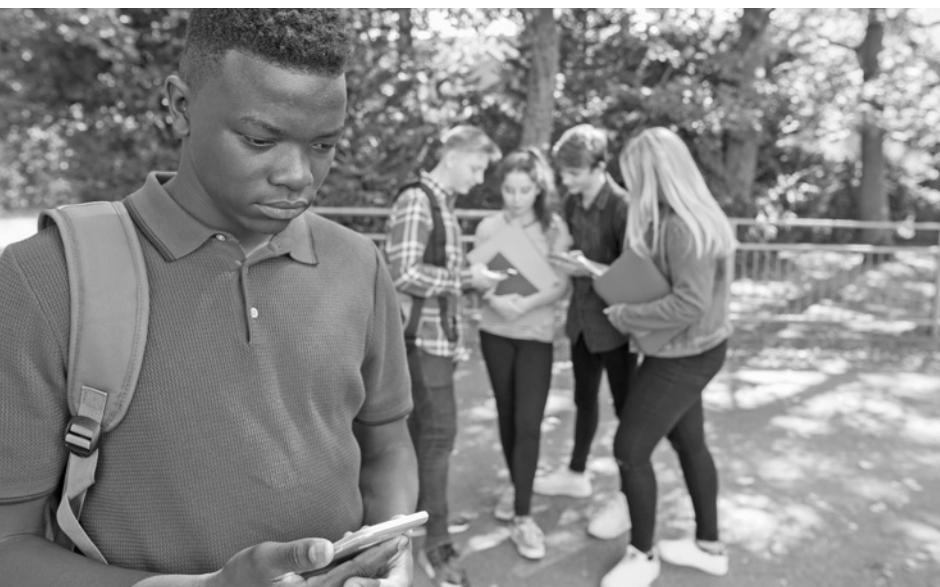
A similar result with respect to education and experiences of harassment emerged from FRA's violence against women survey. The impact of age can help explain differences in experiences related to some of the other socio-demographic characteristics analysed: lower rates among people who are retired or whose main income source is pension payments; higher rates among students and pupils.

- ★ While the prevalence of harassment is similar for women and men, 18 % of women described the most recent incident of harassment as being of a sexual nature, compared with 6 % of men.
- ★ Specific groups with higher rates of harassment experiences than the EU average include: people who have difficulties in activities people usually do (due to a health problem or disability; 50 % experienced harassment in the five years before the survey); people who were born in a country other than their current country of residence (51–49 %, depending on whether they were born in another EU Member State or outside the EU); those who are not citizens of the country where they live (54 %); people who consider themselves to be a part of an ethnic minority; and people who self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or 'other' (57 %).

- ★ Non-sexual harassment typically involves somebody the victim did not know before (52 % of incidents experienced by women and 59 % of incidents experienced by men). However, women are more likely than men to experience sexual harassment by previously unknown perpetrators: 72 % of such incidents against women were committed by unknown persons, compared with 40 % of incidents against men.
- ★ Of incidents of harassment that do not have a sexual element, 77 % of men and 58 % of women indicate that the perpetrator was a man (or a group of men). In incidents of harassment of a sexual nature, 82 % of those against women and 51 % of those against men involved a male perpetrator (or a group of men).

Harassment makes victims feel distressed, humiliated or threatened. Harassment can be by someone a victim knows, such as a neighbour or colleague, or by a stranger. Examples of harassment that the survey asked about include making offensive or threatening comments to the victim in person, threatening the victim with violence in person, making offensive or threatening gestures or staring at the victims inappropriately, sending the victims emails or text messages that were offensive or threatening, and posting offensive or threatening comments about the victim on the internet. As such, harassment can interfere with the whole spectrum of victims' fundamental rights, such as human dignity (Article 1 of the Charter), respect for private and family life (Article 7), protection of personal data (Article 8), right to marry and right to found a family (Article 9), freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 10) or freedom of expression and information (Article 11).

Harassment is often committed with a discriminatory motive that relates to a victim's personal characteristics (e.g. race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, age, language, disability, sexual orientation or sexual identity). Thus it interferes with the right to non-discrimination (Article 21 of the Charter). Offences with a bias motivation can be referred to as crimes committed with a discriminatory motive – as in the Victims' Rights Directive – or simply as hate crimes. With people increasingly spending their time in the digital world, many fall victim to online hate.



In its recital 56, the Victims' Rights Directive emphasises the need to take the specific nature of such hate crime into account. The aim is to identify if a victim's vulnerability requires specific support, as well as to take special measures to avoid secondary or repeat victimisation, intimidation or retaliation. Some categories of victims, such as children, victims of domestic violence and victims with disabilities, are considered particularly vulnerable. This group includes "victims who have suffered a crime committed with a bias or discriminatory motive which could, in particular, be related to their personal characteristics" (Article 22(3) of the Victims' Rights Directive). Hence, in assessing victims' vulnerability, the police must pay attention to such motives. Member States must ensure that the relevant measures put in place in line with the Victims' Rights Directive keep pace with developments in the digital world, to offer all victims the same protection – both online and offline.

Some additional pieces of EU secondary law also provide for the protection of specific groups of victims of crimes committed with a bias or discriminatory motive, such as victims of sexual harassment as a specific type of violence against women,<sup>43</sup> or victims of harassment motivated by racism or xenophobia.<sup>44</sup> In terms of policy instruments, the EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025<sup>45</sup> sets out concrete actions to tackle racist hate crime and hate speech, while the EU Roma strategic framework 2020–2030<sup>46</sup> highlights the experiences of hate crime and hate speech among the Roma population. In the EU LGBTIQ equality strategy 2020–2025, ensuring LGBTIQ people's safety is one of the four main areas to be addressed.<sup>47</sup>

Based on the UN's 2030 Agenda and SDGs, UN Member States have set indicator 11.7.2, 'Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months'. This indicator relates to SDG 11, 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable', and target 11.7 associated with it: 'By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities'.

<sup>43</sup> Directive 2006/54/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 on the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation (recast); Council Directive 2004/113/EC of 13 December 2004 implementing the principle of equal treatment between men and women in the access to and supply of goods and services; Directive 2010/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2010 on the application of the principle of equal treatment between men and women engaged in an activity in a self-employed capacity and repealing Council Directive 86/613/EEC.

<sup>44</sup> Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law.

<sup>45</sup> European Commission (2020), **A Union of equality: EU anti-racism action plan 2020–2025**, COM(2020) 565 final, Brussels, 18 September 2020.

<sup>46</sup> European Commission (2020), **EU Roma strategic framework for equality, inclusion and participation for 2020–2030**.

<sup>47</sup> European Commission (2020), **'LGBTIQ Equality Strategy – 2020–2025'**.

## 2.1. EXTENT AND FORMS OF HARASSMENT

Harassment can involve various acts intended to intimidate or threaten the victim, as well as acts that lead the victim to feel intimidated or threatened even when this was not the conscious aim of the person responsible for these acts. The acts of harassment asked about in the survey may involve a single incident or repeated incidents experienced over a longer time, by the same or different perpetrators. The survey asked respondents to consider five acts of harassment, including offensive or threatening comments or gestures made in person as well as harassment taking place on social media or other online platforms. The survey's list of acts of harassment refers to offensive or threatening actions or comments in general. Later, respondents could indicate if the most recent incident of harassment they had experienced was of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment against women, as a specific form of harassment, has been examined more comprehensively in FRA's violence against women survey. Respondents to that could describe their experiences on the basis of 11 acts of sexual harassment, including sexual touching, sexually suggestive comments and indecent exposure.<sup>48</sup>

Overall, two in five people (41 %) in the EU-27 experienced harassment (one or more acts) in the five years before the survey, and 29 % experienced it in the 12 months before the survey. That corresponds to almost 110 million people in the EU-27<sup>49</sup> experiencing harassment in a year (an estimate based on the results of the survey relative to the EU's population).

These experiences involved primarily harassment in person (38 %): 32 % mention receiving offensive or threatening comments in the five years before the survey and 29 % mention offensive or threatening gestures or being stared at inappropriately (**Figure 10**). Overall, 14 % mention experiences of cyberharassment: 11 % have received offensive or threatening emails or text messages, and 7 % have found such comments about them on the internet, including social media.

## What did the survey ask?

*In the past five years [and in the past 12 months], how many times has somebody done any of the following things to you?*

- Made offensive or threatening comments to you in person such as insulting you or calling you names
- Threatened you with violence in person
- Made offensive or threatening gestures or stared at you inappropriately
- Sent you emails or text messages (SMSs) that were offensive or threatening
- Posted offensive or threatening comments about you on the internet, for example on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter, WhatsApp

Answer categories: Never in the past five years [Never in the past 12 months], once, twice, three to five times, six to 10 times, more than 10 times, all the time. In addition, respondents who did not select one of these answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

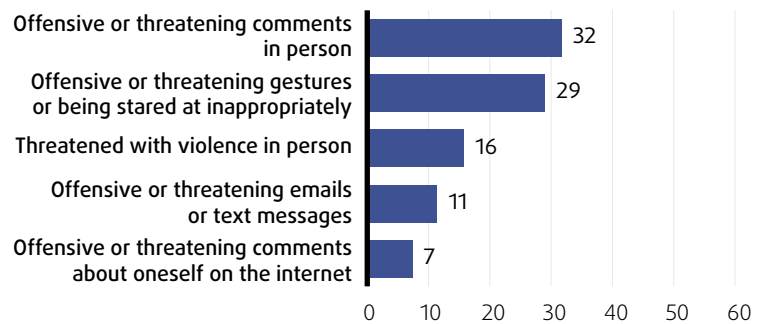
<sup>48</sup> FRA (2014), *Violence against Women: An EU-wide survey*, Luxembourg, Publications Office.

<sup>49</sup> Based on Eurostat statistics on the population in EU-27: 374,462,200 people aged 16 years or older in 2019 (data code [demo\_pjan], updated on 3 July 2020).

► Notes:

Out of all respondents in the EU-27 (n = 32,537); weighted results.

**FIGURE 10: EXPERIENCES OF SELECTED ACTS OF HARASSMENT IN THE FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE SURVEY (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

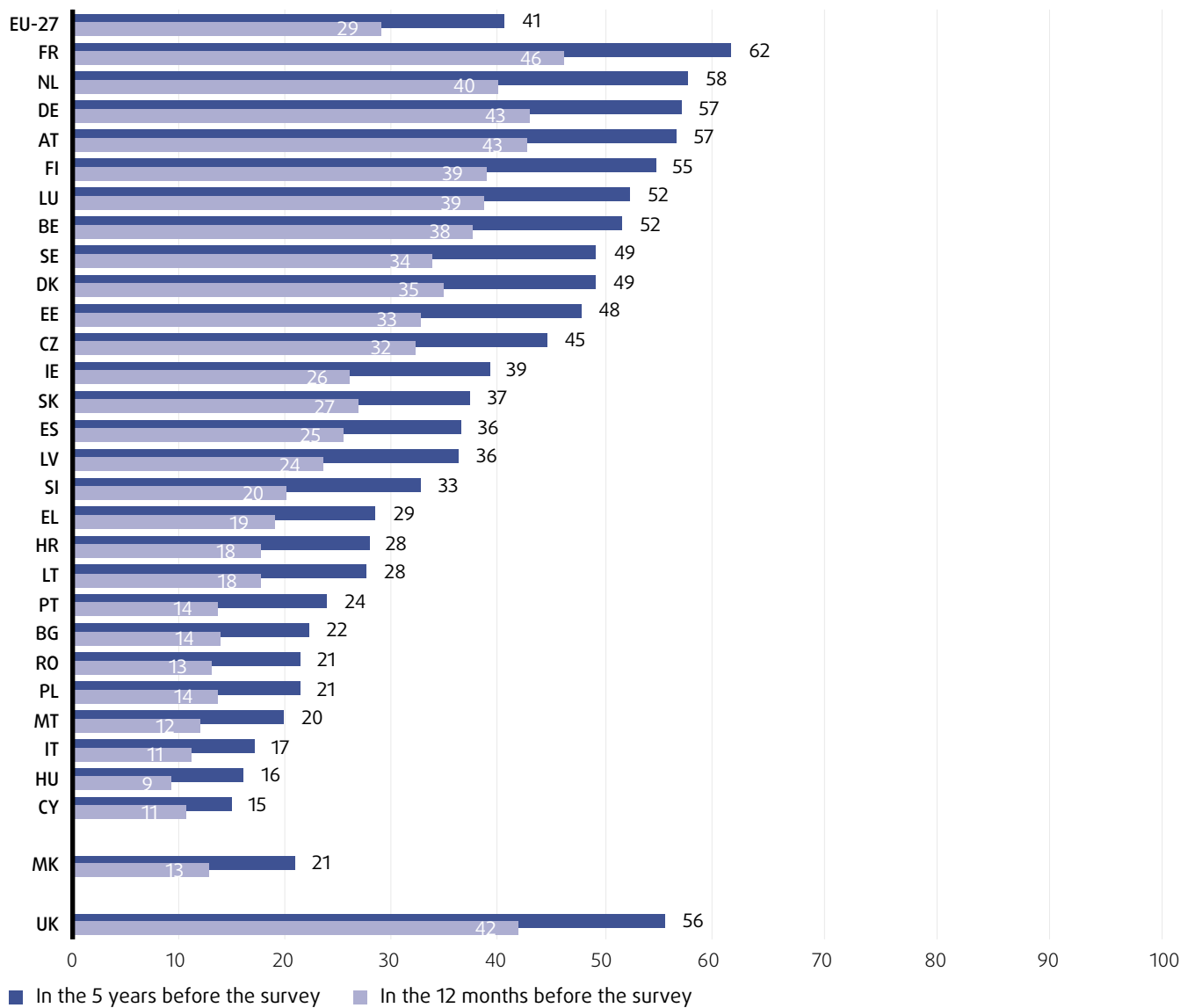
The extent of harassment experiences varies greatly between the countries. In the EU, the 12-month rate of harassment ranges from one in 10 in Hungary (9 %), Cyprus and Italy (both 11 %), and Malta (12 %); to nearly one in two in France (46 %), Germany and Austria (both 43 %), and the Netherlands (40 %) (Figure 11). Of the two non-EU Member States in the survey, the results place North Macedonia (13 %) among the countries with the lowest 12-month rates of harassment in the survey, while the United Kingdom has one of the highest rates (42 %).

**“Well, I know that if I return home at 3 in the morning there are going to be lots of guys who will come up to me, etc. I am not afraid but I have lots of friends who are afraid when they come to mine.”**

(Woman, between 18 and 29 years old, focus group participant, France)



**FIGURE 11: EXPERIENCES OF HARASSMENT, IN THE FIVE YEARS AND IN THE 12 MONTHS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY COUNTRY (%)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

Notes: Out of all respondents in the EU-27, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom (n = 34,948); weighted results.



## Comparing results with FRA's violence against women survey

FRA's violence against women survey included a section dedicated to women's experiences of sexual harassment. This involved a set of 11 questions concerning various forms of sexual harassment, such as unwanted touching, hugging or kissing, or sexually suggestive comments or jokes that were unwanted and offensive. According to the survey, 55 % of women in the EU (ages 18-74) had experienced sexual harassment (one or more of the 11 acts listed in the survey) since the age of 15, and 21 % had experienced sexual harassment in the 12 months before the survey.

The Fundamental Rights Survey asked about experiences of harassment in general, not specifically sexual harassment. It listed five acts of harassment. In response, 28 % of women (16 years and older) say that they experienced harassment in the 12 months before the survey, and 39 % experienced it in the five years before survey. Of the women who experienced harassment in the five years before the survey, 18 % say that the most recent incident was of a sexual nature. For details of how this question was asked, see box 'What did the survey ask?' in Section 2.2.

The results of the two surveys are not fully comparable, because they had different focuses and, as a result, asked different questions. Whereas the Fundamental Rights Survey collected data on harassment overall, the violence against women survey focused on sexual harassment, with specific and more detailed questions.



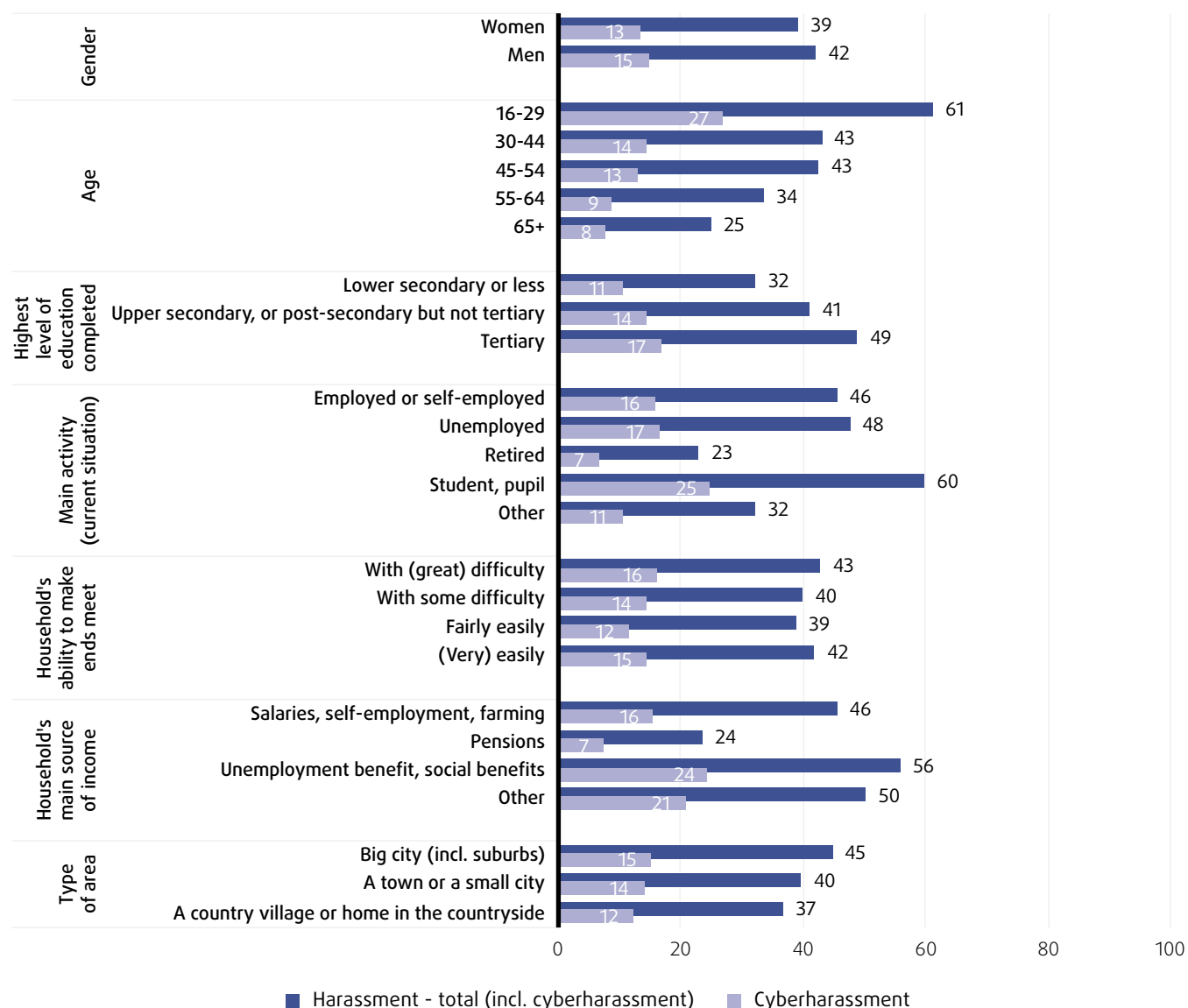
**Figure 12** presents the experiences of harassment in total (in-person harassment and cyberharassment) and separate rates of cyberharassment, disaggregated by selected socio-demographic characteristics. Generally, the rates of cyberharassment follow the same patterns as the rates of harassment in total. In other words, if the total rates show no difference in terms of various socio-demographic characteristics, neither do cyberharassment rates, and differences related to socio-demographic characteristics can be found in both rates.

The analysis shows no notable difference in the rates of harassment incidents experienced by women and by men in the five years before the survey.

In terms of age, the five-year rate of harassment experiences is highest among young people aged 16-29 years, at 61 %. The rates decrease by age, down to 25 % among people 65 years and over. That trend is reflected in the low rate of harassment of people who are retired and receive pension payments, and young people's higher rates can be seen in the higher rates for students and pupils. For cyberharassment too, the highest rate is in the 16-29 age group: 27 % experienced cyberharassment in the five years before the survey.

Besides differences in harassment experiences associated with age, other socio-demographic characteristics associated with higher rates include the level of education (tertiary education) and living in a big city.

**FIGURE 12: EXPERIENCES OF HARASSMENT (TOTAL OF ALL FORMS) AND CYBERHARASSMENT IN THE FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY SELECTED SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (EU-27, %)<sup>a,b</sup>**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

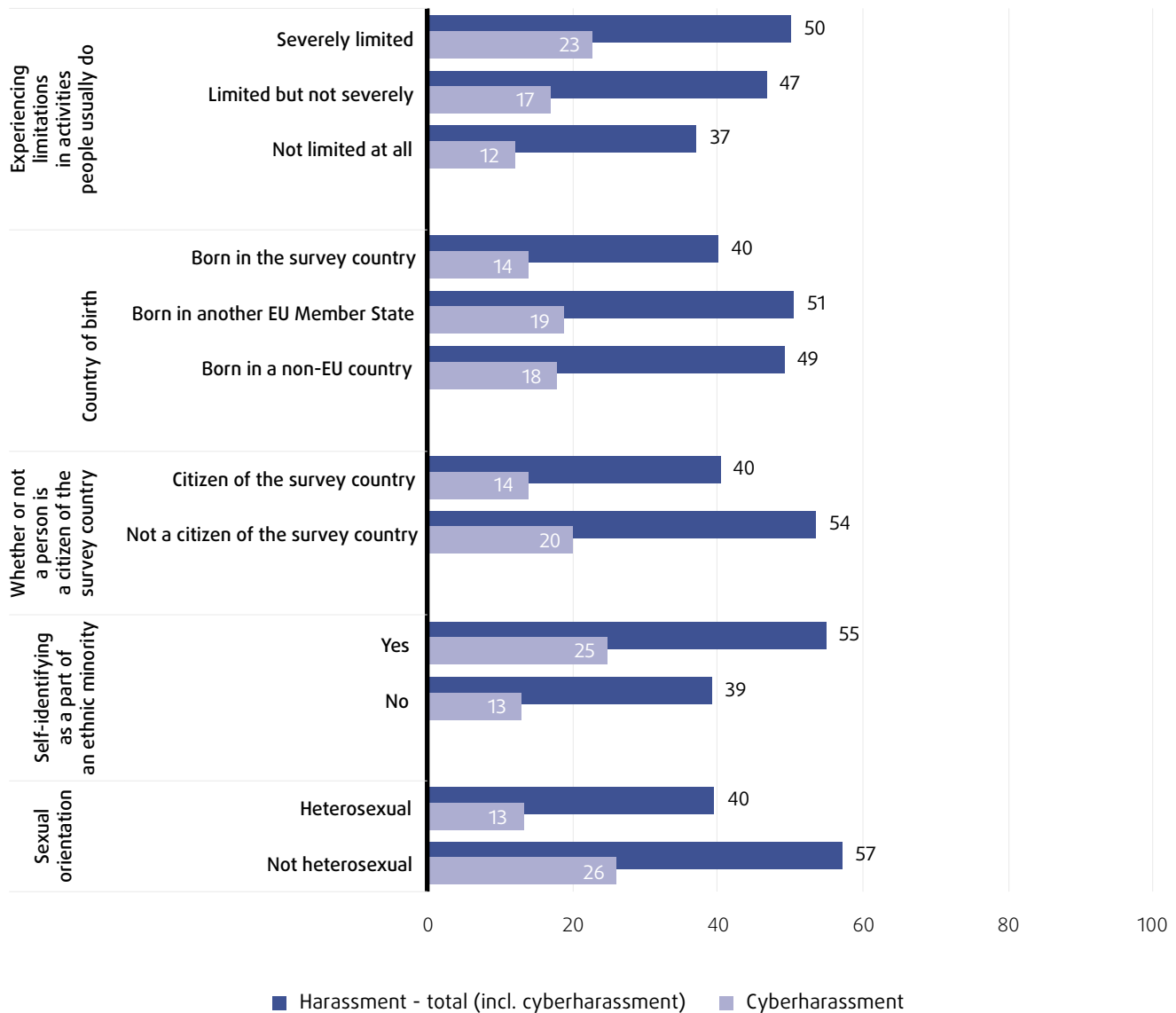
Comparing selected groups in society, people who have limitations in the activities people usually do (due to a health problem or disability) experience harassment at a higher rate – 50 % in the five years before the survey – than people who do not experience such limitations (Figure 13). Higher rates of harassment are also found among people who were born in another country, are not citizens of the country where they live or consider themselves a part of an ethnic minority. Furthermore, 57 % of people who self-identified in the survey as gay, lesbian, bisexual or ‘other’ (combined in the analysis as ‘not heterosexual’) experienced harassment in the five years before the survey, compared with 40 % of heterosexuals.



Notes:

- <sup>a</sup> Out of all respondents in the EU-27 (n = 32,537); weighted results.
- <sup>b</sup> Category ‘cyberharassment’ includes receiving emails or SMSs that were offensive or threatening and/or finding offensive or threatening comments posted about oneself on the internet. Category ‘harassment – total’ includes experiences of all five acts of harassment that the survey asked about, including the two acts of cyberharassment listed above. For more details of the wording of the survey questions about harassment, see box ‘What did the survey ask?’ at the beginning of Section 2.2.

**FIGURE 13: EXPERIENCES OF HARASSMENT (TOTAL OF ALL FORMS) AND CYBERHARASSMENT IN THE FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY SELECTED GROUPS (EU-27, %)<sup>a,b</sup>**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

Notes:

- <sup>a</sup> Out of all respondents in the EU-27 (n = 32,537); weighted results.
- <sup>b</sup> Category 'cyberharassment' includes receiving emails or SMSs that were offensive or threatening and/or finding offensive or threatening comments posted about oneself on the internet. Category 'harassment - total' includes experiences of all five acts of harassment that the survey asked about, including the two acts of cyberharassment listed above. For more details of the wording of the questions about harassment in the survey, see box 'What did the survey ask?' at the beginning of Section 2.1.

## 2.2. CONTEXT OF THE MOST RECENT INCIDENT OF HARASSMENT

In the survey, respondents who had experienced harassment in the five years before the survey had the opportunity to describe the incident in more detail: the people responsible for the offensive or threatening actions or comments, where the incident happened and if the incident was of a sexual nature. The following analysis often makes a distinction between sexual and non-sexual incidents, to better understand how this aspect is reflected in contextual factors, such as the type of perpetrators involved or the location of incidents. We also distinguish between incidents experienced by women and by men.

While the prevalence of harassment is similar for women and men, 18 % of women describe the most recent incident of harassment as being of a sexual nature, compared with 6 % of men. There is also a difference in terms of age: 19 % of 16- to 29-year-olds describe the most recent incident as being of a sexual nature, compared with 7 % in the age categories 55-64 years and 65 and over. The differences between the experiences of women and men are even more pronounced when examined together with the victim's age. That is, 30 % of 16- to 29-year-old women, in contrast to 9 % of men in the same age group, indicate that the most recent incident of harassment was of a sexual nature. Another notable difference concerns self-identified sexual orientation: 11 % of heterosexuals identify the most recent incident as being of a sexual nature, compared with 24 % in the non-heterosexual category.

## What did the survey ask?

*You indicated that in the past five years you have experienced different offensive or threatening incidents. Thinking about the most recent incident, who did this to you?*

Answer categories: An acquaintance or friend, neighbour, work colleague, customer or client from work, a family member or relative, somebody else you knew, somebody you did not know.

*How would you describe the person or people who did this to you?*

Answer categories: Somebody who has an ethnic minority or immigrant background, somebody who does not have an ethnic minority or immigrant background, both those with an ethnic minority or immigrant background and those without were involved, background was not clear.

*Was the person who did this to you a man or a woman?*

Answer categories: Man (or more than one man), woman (or more than one woman), both a man and a woman were involved, I don't know whether it was a man or a woman.

*Still thinking about the most recent incident, was it of a sexual nature?*

Answer categories: Yes, no.

*Thinking about the most recent of these incidents, where did it take place?*

Answer categories: In your home; in some other house or apartment; at school or college; at work; in a shop, café, restaurant, pub or club; in the street, a square, park, car park or other public place; some other place in [this country]; abroad.

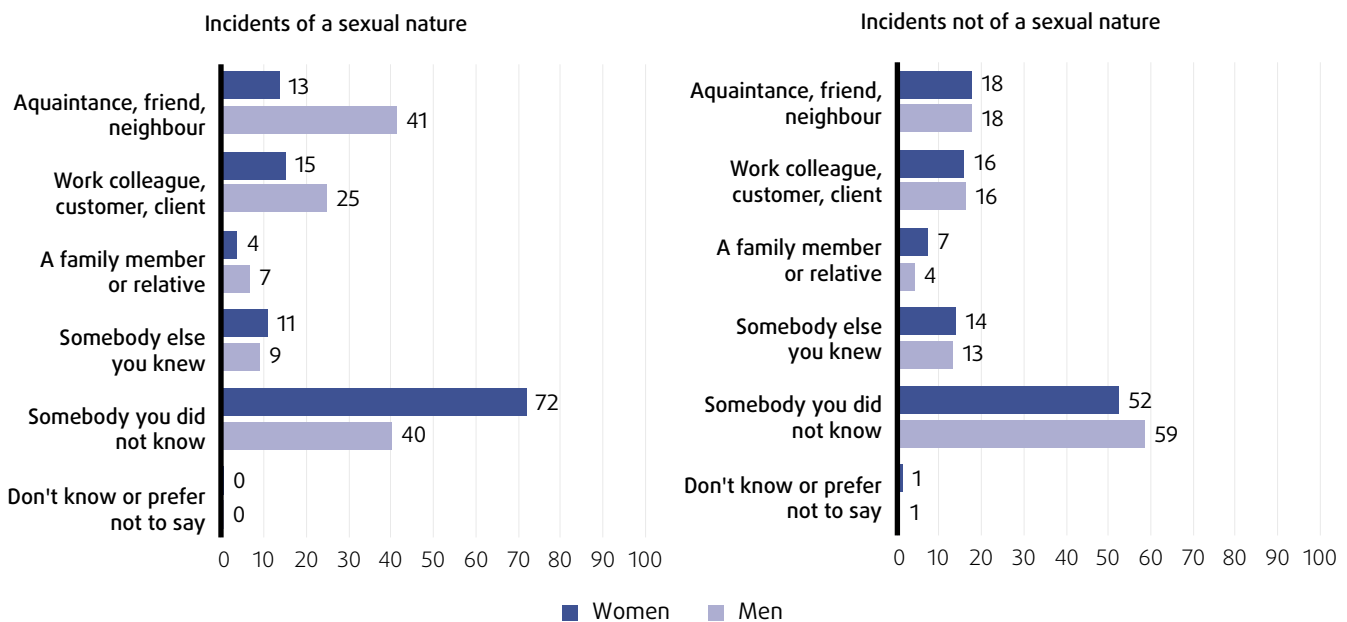
For each of these questions, respondents who did not select one of the listed answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.



In addition, the experiences of women and men differ in terms of the perpetrators of sexual harassment. When harassment is not of a sexual nature, there are no notable differences between women and men in the perpetrators' characteristics (Figure 14). However, sexual harassment of women is often by somebody they did not know before. This was the case for 72 % of women who experienced harassment of a sexual nature, compared with 40 % of men. Men who experienced harassment of a sexual nature mention more often than women a perpetrator they already knew, such as an acquaintance or somebody from work.

However, it should be borne in mind that – as noted earlier – women experience sexual harassment more often.

**FIGURE 14: PERPETRATORS OF HARASSMENT, INCIDENTS OF A SEXUAL NATURE AND INCIDENTS NOT OF A SEXUAL NATURE, BY VICTIM'S GENDER (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

Notes: Out of respondents in the EU-27 who described in the survey the perpetrator(s) of the most recent incident of harassment (n = 12,900; incidents of a sexual nature – women, n = 1,145, men, n = 291; incidents not of a sexual nature – women, n = 5,743, men, n = 5,721), excluding respondents who answered 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say' when asked if the most recent incident was of a sexual nature; weighted results.

Describing the most recent incident of harassment in the five years before the survey, 44 % say that the perpetrator was someone without an ethnic minority or immigrant background, 22 % say that it was someone with an ethnic minority or immigrant background and 9 % say that there was more than one perpetrator with different backgrounds. A quarter (24 %) indicate that they could not determine the background of the perpetrator. That could be the case in, for example, some forms of cyberharassment, in which the victim and the perpetrator do not come into face-to-face contact. Respondents' descriptions of the perpetrators' ethnic minority or immigrant backgrounds should be interpreted with caution, given that in some incidents respondents may have had limited opportunities to assess it.

In more than two in three cases (69 %), the perpetrator of the most recent incident of harassment was a man or a group of men, and 10 % of cases

involved both men and women. In 14 % of cases the perpetrator was a woman or a group of women, and in 7 % the victim was not sure, for example when anonymous offensive messages or comments were posted online from anonymous user accounts.

Figure 15 shows the description of the perpetrator separately for incidents experienced by women and men, as well as differentiating between harassment of a sexual nature and other incidents of harassment, based on the most recent incident experienced in the five years before the survey. When the harassment experienced by women was sexual, four cases out of five (82 %) involved men as perpetrators. Out of the four situations depicted in Figure 15, the proportion of women as perpetrators is highest in non-sexual incidents of harassment against women. In 23 % of these incidents only women were perpetrators, and in 11 % women and men together, but also in this case the majority of incidents were perpetrated only by men.

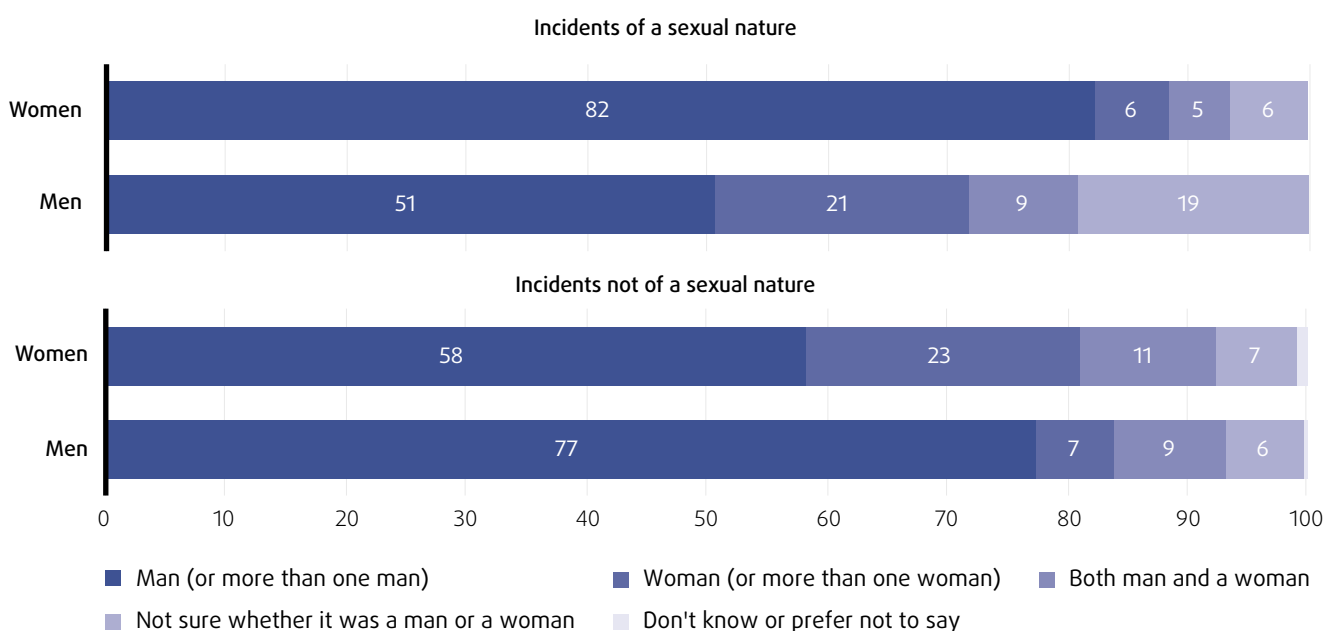
When respondents' most recent experience of harassment was in person (as opposed to cyberharassment), the survey asked about the place where the incident happened. In almost half of the cases (48 %) the incident was in an open public setting: a street, square, park, car park or other public place. In more detail, 57 % of sexual harassment incidents against women were in such a place, compared with 30 % of those against men. Compared with women, sexual harassment of men takes place more often in somebody's home.

This is in line with the results presented earlier concerning the perpetrators of harassment, showing that harassment of a sexual nature experienced by men often involves a friend, an acquaintance or a neighbour as a perpetrator, whereas sexual harassment of women is often by unknown offenders. In this context it should also be noted that women experience sexual harassment more often than men. A total of 18 % of women said that the most recent incident of harassment was of a sexual nature, compared with 6 % of men.

**“Regarding violations ... It’s men. Always men. Staring, commenting etc. So it has been since I was a teenager and all my life.”**  
 (Woman, between 45 and 54 years old, survey respondent, Sweden)

*Notes:*  
 Out of respondents in the EU-27 who described in the survey the perpetrator(s) of the most recent incident of harassment (n = 12,900; incidents of a sexual nature – women, n = 1,145, men, n = 291; incidents not of a sexual nature – women, n = 5,743, men, n = 5,721), excluding respondents who answered ‘don’t know’ or ‘prefer not to say’ when asked if the most recent incident was of a sexual nature; weighted results.

**FIGURE 15: GENDER OF THE PERPETRATOR(S) OF HARASSMENT IN SEXUAL AND NON-SEXUAL INCIDENTS, BY VICTIM’S GENDER (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

# 3

## PROPERTY CRIME – EXPERIENCES OF BURGLARY AND FRAUD

### KEY FINDINGS

- ★ In the EU-27, 8 % of people experienced a burglary of their home or other property in the five years before the survey. The results range from 14 % to 5 % depending on the country. Overall, 3 % of the population experienced a burglary of their home or other property in the 12 months before the survey.
- ★ Certain people in society experience burglaries at a higher rate than others. These include people who are limited in their usual activities (by a health problem or disability) and people who self-identify as belonging to an ethnic minority. Differences in people's gender, age, education, urban/rural status and ability to make ends meet are not associated with differences in rates of burglary experiences (in the five years before the survey).
- ★ In the EU-27, 8 % of people experienced online banking or payment card fraud in the five years before the survey, and 3 % experienced online banking or payment card fraud in the 12 months before the survey. The 12-month figure ranges from 19 % to 1 % of people, depending on the country. This variation in experiences may reflect the extent to which online banking and payment cards are used in different countries.
- ★ Experiences of online banking and payment card fraud do not differ notably with respect to most socio-demographic characteristics that the analysis examines. However, 14 % of people with limitations in usual activities (due to a health problem or disability) experienced online banking or payment card fraud in the five years before the survey, compared with 6 % of people who do not have such limitations.
- ★ One in four people (26 %) in the EU-27 experienced consumer fraud in the five years before the survey. This could involve feeling cheated or misled in terms of quantity, quality, pricing or delivery of goods, items or services purchased. One in six (16 %) experienced consumer fraud in the 12 months before the survey.
- ★ The rates of consumer fraud (in the five years before the survey) vary from 46 % to 8 %, depending on the country.
- ★ Young people and those with high education levels experience consumer fraud at higher rates than older age groups and those with lower levels of education. This may also reflect exposure to risk when buying things online, for example.

- ★ People who are limited in their usual activities (by a health problem or disability) experience consumer fraud at a higher rate (36 % in the five years before the survey) than those who do not have such limitations (23 %). Higher rates are also associated with belonging to an ethnic minority and self-identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or 'other' (combined in the analysis into the category 'not heterosexual').
- ★ Describing the most recent incident of consumer fraud, two in five people (41 %) who had bought the goods or services online, by telephone or by mail indicate that they had ordered the goods or services from abroad. In some EU Member States the rate of cross-border purchases was much higher: 94 % in Luxembourg and 87 % in Malta.

Burglary is not only about property being stolen or damaged. It can cause anxiety and the sense that one is no longer safe at home. Given its nature, burglary undermines various rights of victims, in particular the right to human dignity (Article 1 of the Charter), respect for private and family life (Article 7) and the right to property (Article 17). In line with the Victims' Rights Directive (recital 63 as well as Articles 8 and 9 in particular), it is essential that reliable support services are available to these victims to encourage and facilitate reporting of the crime, and that competent authorities are prepared to respond to victims' reports in a respectful, sensitive, professional and non-discriminatory manner.

Misuse of online bank account or payment cards, as well as consumer fraud, undermines (among other things) victims' right to property (Article 17 of the Charter) and consumer protection (Article 38). From the criminal justice perspective where this applies, as in the case of other crime victims, the Victims' Rights Directive provides for the rights of victims of online payment or consumer fraud to receive proper protection, support and access to justice. Specific measures to further support and assist victims of fraud are in the specific Directive on combating fraud and counterfeiting of non-cash means of payment, which Member States are due to incorporate into national law by 31 May 2021.



In its EU strategy on victims' rights 2020–2025, the European Commission emphasised that it “will inter alia work with Member States to ensure that the relevant provisions of the Directive on combating fraud and counterfeiting of non-cash means of payment will be fully implemented and will examine how to support further action against online fraud and identity theft, including support to victims”.<sup>50</sup>

EU consumer protection law also protects the rights of victims of the misuse of online bank accounts or payment cards, as well as consumer fraud. It includes rules that guarantee fair treatment, products that meet acceptable standards and a right of redress if something goes wrong. For example, in relation to the misuse of online bank accounts or payment card fraud, the

<sup>50</sup> European Commission (2020), *EU Strategy on victims' rights (2020-2025)*, COM(2020) 258 final, Brussels, 24 June 2020, p. 5, footnote 33.



Payment Services Directive limits the amount an unwitting victim of card or payment fraud can be asked to pay. These rules, furthermore, oblige Member States to designate competent authorities to handle complaints from payment service users and other interested parties, such as consumer associations, who consider that their rights under the directive have not been respected. Under the directive, payment service providers should put in place a complaints procedure that consumers can use before seeking out-of-court redress or launching court proceedings. Payment service providers must respond in writing to any complaint within 15 business days.

EU consumer protection law also contains specific rules related to consumer fraud, i.e. intentional conduct aimed at deceiving the buyer, such as offering a product with no intention to deliver.<sup>51</sup> When promoting, selling or supplying products, companies must give their consumers enough accurate information to enable them to make an informed decision before purchasing something. If they fail to provide this information, their actions may be considered unfair. In this case, victims of such actions have the right to seek redress if they are treated unfairly.

Despite EU legislation guaranteeing a generally high level of consumer protection, the recently adopted EU Consumer Agenda acknowledges the need to further strengthen the protection of consumers' rights. This includes empowering them as well as more effective enforcement. It highlights concrete actions that need to be taken in this area, including passing laws.<sup>52</sup>

In the survey, respondents could also indicate if they had reported the most recent incident of property crime – burglary, online banking or payment card fraud, or consumer fraud – to the police or other relevant authorities. Respondents who had not reported the incident were asked why. The results about reporting property crime incidents to the authorities are presented in **Chapter 4**, together with results about reporting experiences of violence and harassment.

Even when people have not experienced property crime personally, they may be concerned about it, and those who have already experienced such a crime could be worried about experiencing another incident. Chapter 6 of this report examines how much people worry about experiencing various offences, including burglary of their home, online banking or payment card fraud, or theft of a mobile phone, wallet or purse. In addition to crimes leading to the loss of physical property, people may experience the misuse of their online identities: personal information shared online. The Fundamental Rights Survey asked how concerned people are that various groups, including criminals and fraudsters, may access the data they have shared online without their knowledge or permission. The results are in a separate FRA publication.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Directive 2005/29/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 May 2005 concerning unfair business-to-consumer commercial practices in the internal market.

<sup>52</sup> European Commission (2020), **New Consumer Agenda – Strengthening consumer resilience for sustainable recovery**, COM(2020) 696 final, Brussels, 13 November 2020.

<sup>53</sup> FRA (2020), **Your Rights Matter: Security concerns and experiences**, Luxembourg, Publications Office.

### 3.1. BURGLARY

The survey asked respondents if they had experienced burglary in the five years and in the 12 months before the survey. The question refers to burglary of one's 'home or property'. Besides a respondent's main residence, this could include a storage space or garage, second home or holiday home. Furthermore, the question covers incidents when something was stolen and cases when the home or premises were entered unlawfully but nothing was stolen. Even if nothing was stolen, the incident could result in costs to the victim, such as replacing broken doors, locks or windows, or clearing up any other damage to property. Burglary can also have a significant, negative psychological impact on the victim and their family.

## What did the survey ask?

*Over the past five years, did anyone get into your home or property without permission and steal or try to steal something?*

*Did this happen to you in the past 12 months?*

*Thinking about the last time this happened, did you or anyone else report it to the police?*

Answer categories (separate answers for each of the questions above): Yes, no. In addition, respondents who did not select one of these answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

Respondents who had experienced someone getting into their home or property without permission, to steal or try to steal something, in the five years before the survey were asked if they reported this incident anywhere. Those who did not report the incident were asked about the reasons for not reporting it. **Chapter 4** analyses the results for these questions.

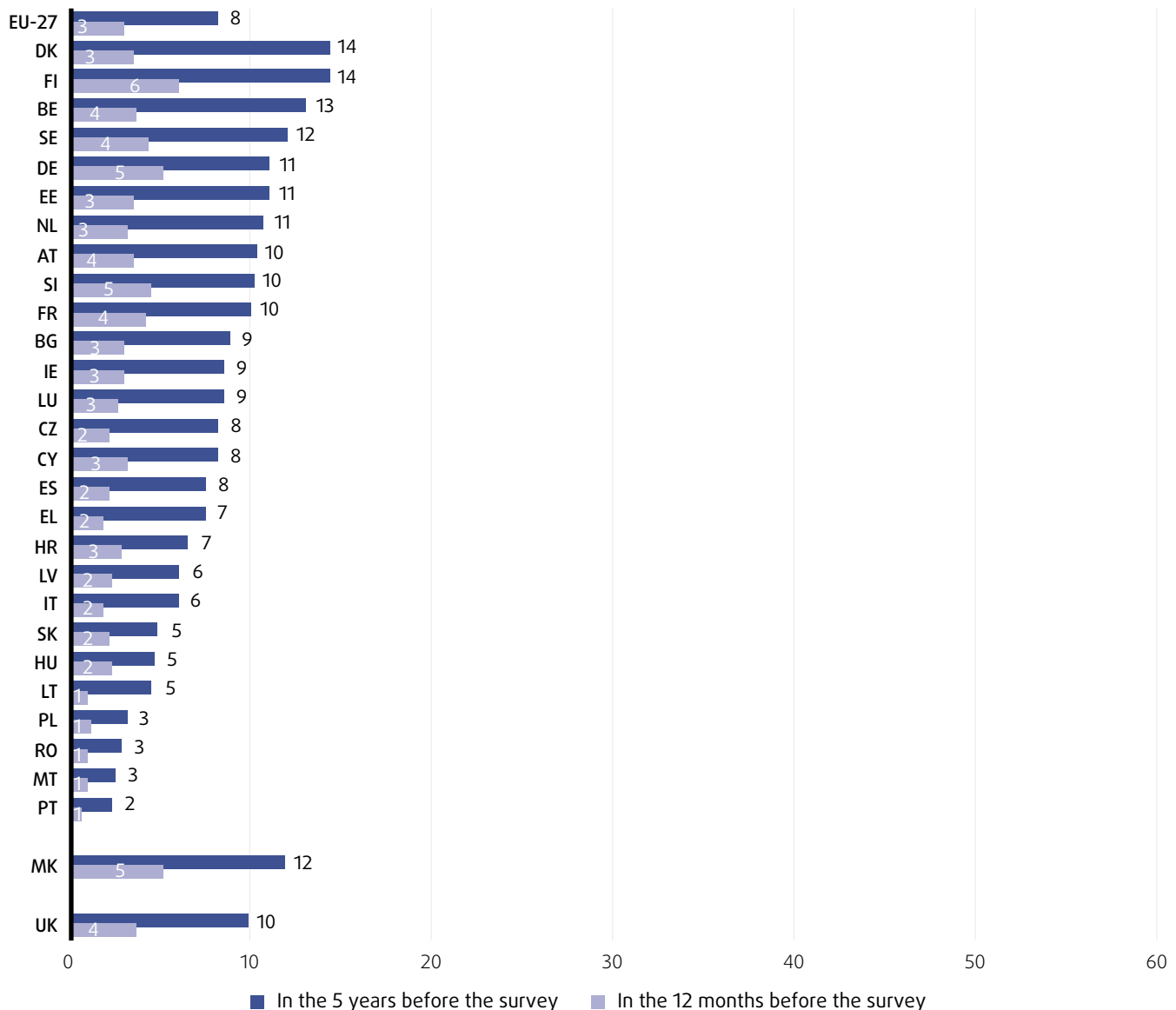


**“As my house got robbed three times already, you can imagine how safe we are around here! It’s enormously distressing having your home burgled!”**

(Woman, between 54 and 64 years old, focus group participant, Bulgaria)

Just under one in 10 people (8 %) in the EU-27 experienced a burglary in the five years before the survey, and 3 % experienced it in the 12 months before the survey (Figure 16). The five-year rates range from under 5 % in Poland, Romania, Malta and Portugal to 14 % in Denmark and Finland, 13 % in Belgium and 12 % in North Macedonia and Sweden.

**FIGURE 16: EXPERIENCES OF BURGLARY, IN THE FIVE YEARS AND IN THE 12 MONTHS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY COUNTRY (%)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

▲ Notes:

Out of all respondents in the EU-27, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom (n = 34,948); weighted results.

There are no notable differences at the level of the EU-27 in the prevalence of burglary by some socio-demographic characteristics in the analysis, including gender, age, education, urban/rural status and people’s ability to cope with their available household income, among others. However, among people who feel severely limited in their everyday activities (by health problems or disability), 15 % experienced burglary in the five years before the survey, compared with 7 % among those who do not experience such limitations. Of those who self-identified in the survey as being part of an ethnic minority in the country where they live, 15 % experienced a burglary in the five years before the survey, as opposed to 8 % among people who do not consider themselves part of an ethnic minority.

Comparisons between the results of the Fundamental Rights Survey and national crime victimisation surveys – where these exist – are hampered by differences in how the various surveys formulate the questions. These differences can partly reflect differences in legislation. They are also one of the main challenges for comparing the national crime victimisation surveys of different countries with each other. For example, in the case of burglary, some national surveys include separate questions concerning completed and attempted burglaries. Surveys may also differentiate between burglaries of the respondent's permanent residence, burglaries of buildings that are detached from the home, such as a garage or a garden shed, burglaries of holiday homes and theft of property from one's garden (which some surveys also present as burglary). The question the Fundamental Rights Survey asked – 'Did anyone get into your home or property without permission and steal or try to steal something?' – can include burglaries of other property as well as one's home, and attempted as well as completed burglaries.

The Fundamental Rights Survey covers three property crimes: burglary, online banking and payment card fraud, and consumer fraud. Many national crime victimisation surveys collect data on burglary. Fewer ask about experiences of online banking and payment card fraud or consumer fraud. We attempt some comparisons here.

The Irish Crime and Victimization Survey<sup>54</sup> found that, in the 12 months before the survey, 2.7 % of households had experienced a burglary; 3 % of respondents in Ireland had, according to the Fundamental Rights Survey. In Estonia, according to the 2018 Victim Survey,<sup>55</sup> 2 % have experienced a theft from a house, apartment or basement, 1 % a theft from a garage, shelter or shed, and 2 % a theft from a cottage, country house or garden (all in the 12 months before the survey); in total, 3 % of respondents to the Fundamental Rights Survey in Estonia have experienced a burglary of any kind in the 12 months before the survey.

In Belgium, the Security Monitor 2018<sup>56</sup> shows that 4 % have experienced a burglary of the home in the 12 months before the survey – also 4 % in the Fundamental Rights Survey. According to the German victimisation survey (2017),<sup>57</sup> 0.53 % have experienced a burglary (with theft) of their apartment and 1.4 % have experienced an attempted burglary of one's apartment in a one-year period; the corresponding figure is 5 % in the Fundamental Rights Survey for experiences in the 12 months before the survey, which can include burglaries of other types of property besides one's permanent home.

<sup>54</sup> Central Statistics Office (2020), '**Crime and Victimization 2019 – Household crime**'.

<sup>55</sup> Ministry of Justice (2019), **Ohvriuringud 2010–2018**.

<sup>56</sup> Police Fédérale (2018), **Moniteur de sécurité 2018 – Grandes tendances**.

<sup>57</sup> Bundeskriminalamt (2019), **The 2017 German Victimization Survey**.

## What did the survey ask?

*In the past five years, has your online bank account or have details of your credit or debit card been used without your permission to defraud or steal from you?*

*Did this happen to you in the past 12 months?*

Answer categories (separate answers for each of the questions above): Yes, no. In addition, respondents who did not select one of these answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

Respondents who had had their online bank account or credit or debit card used without their permission in the five years before the survey were asked if they reported this incident anywhere. Those who did not report the incident were asked about the reasons for not reporting it. **Chapter 4** analyses the results for these questions.

## 3.2. MISUSE OF ONLINE BANK ACCOUNT OR PAYMENT CARDS

According to a study by the European Central Bank, 93 % of consumers in the countries where the euro is the currency own or have access to a payment card (data collected between October 2015 and July 2016, 65,281 respondents).<sup>58</sup> Recently, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, people have been encouraged to use contactless payment to reduce the risk of spreading or contracting the virus. Based on Eurostat statistics for 2017, 51 % of people in the EU use online banking (up to 90 % in some EU Member States).<sup>59</sup>

Increasing use of online banking and payment cards (as well as other methods of contactless payments using one's mobile phone or other device) means that more people are at risk of experiencing online banking or payment card fraud. Increases in online payments and banking also make these transactions more attractive to criminals, who can take advantage of people who have less experience in using these payment and banking methods. These include some older people who may have felt forced to adopt online banking and payment cards after banks closed local branch offices and automated teller machines (ATMs).

Besides having one's account or card details hacked, misuse of online bank account or payment cards can also involve 'phishing'. That is when criminals use fraudulent means to obtain one's card or account details or other sensitive information, and later use the information to make illicit purchases or transfers.

Overall, 8 % of people in the EU-27 experienced online banking or payment card (credit or debit card) fraud in the five years before the survey, and 3 % experienced it in the 12 months before the survey (**Figure 17**). Results range from 19 % in France, 15 % in Denmark and 14 % in Ireland experiencing online banking or payment card fraud in the five years before the survey, to 1 % in Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal and Romania.

The extent to which online banking and credit/debit cards are used differs greatly from country to country. To enhance comparability, the results exclude people who confirmed in the survey that they do not use online banking or credit/debit cards. Alongside the results on online banking and payment card fraud, Figure 17 shows the percentage of people in each country who say that they do not use online banking or credit/debit cards and who were therefore excluded when calculating the victimisation rates.

Comparison of the two bar charts shows that, even though victimisation rates reflect experiences of people who use online banking and/or payment cards in each country, the differences in victimisation rates correlate with the use of

<sup>58</sup> European Central Bank (2017), **The Use of Cash by Households in the Euro Area**, Occasional Paper Series, No. 201.

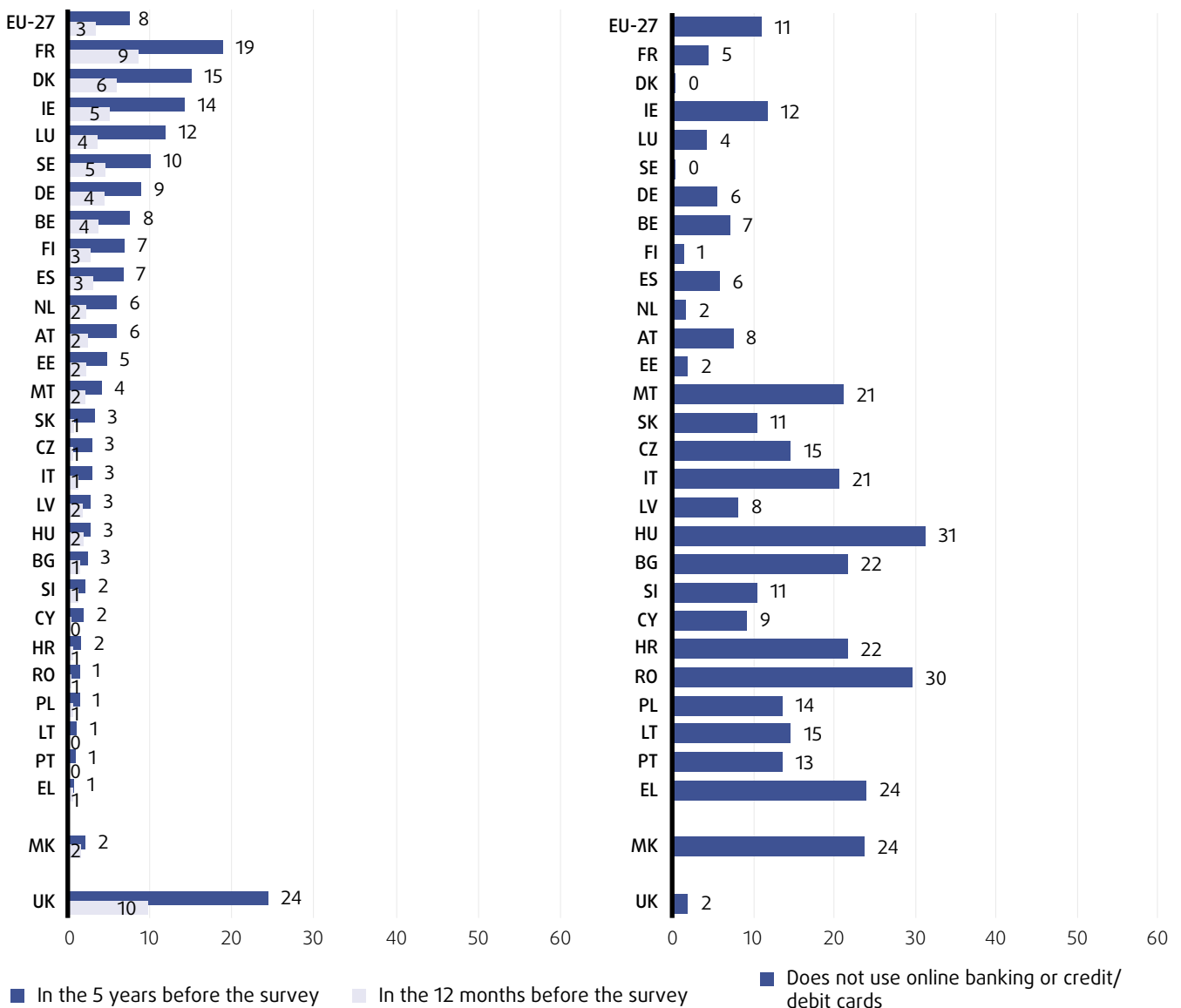
<sup>59</sup> Eurostat (2018), **'Internet banking on the rise'**.

online banking and payment cards. As mentioned earlier, this could be partly because, in countries where use of online banking and payment cards is more widespread, there are more opportunities for criminals than in countries where use of online banking and payment cards is less common. In some countries, where the use of online banking and payment cards is particularly high, this could mean that people who are less confident with using these banking and payment methods, and therefore more vulnerable to fraud, have various incentives to use them. They include banks raising the cost of transactions carried out in person in the banks' branch offices, or closing down ATMs, which makes it more difficult to withdraw cash from one's account.

Interpreting these results – particularly the rates concerning the use of online banking and payment cards – one should also consider that the survey data collection took place online in Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. While the survey data for these countries have been weighted to ensure that the results reflect key population characteristics, it is plausible that online respondents also often use online banking.

*Notes: Out of all respondents in the EU-27, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom who use online banking or credit or debit cards (n = 31,163); weighted results.*

**FIGURE 17: EXPERIENCES OF ONLINE BANKING AND PAYMENT CARD FRAUD, IN THE FIVE YEARS AND IN THE 12 MONTHS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY COUNTRY (%)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

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**“My case of abuse of my credit card did not end at all as expected. The man came to trial, got in prison and I get no compensation since he has no money for it.”**

(Woman, between 30 and 44 years old, survey respondent, Denmark)

The prevalence of online banking and payment card fraud does not differ notably by people’s socio-demographic characteristics such as gender or age. An exception is the main source of income. The prevalence of online banking and payment card fraud is 5 % among people whose main source of income is a pension, compared with 11 % among people living on unemployment benefits or other social benefits. Pensioners are predominantly older respondents, who are less likely to use internet banking services and/or credit and debit cards, and therefore are less exposed to the risk of crime in this way. People who are severely limited in everyday activities (by a health problem or disability) have a higher rate of online banking and payment card fraud (14 %) than people who do not experience such limitations (6 %).



### 3.3. CONSUMER FRAUD – ONLINE AND OFFLINE

Consumer fraud, as the survey describes it, could involve intentional conduct aimed at deceiving the buyer, such as offering a product with no intention to deliver it. The question in the survey allowed people to also mention situations in which they had felt misled when purchasing something. That may or may not be due to intentional conduct on the seller's part. For example, the buyer receives the item or service but it does not fully correspond with the description received before the transaction, or, when ordering things online, the final cost taking all charges into account is higher than initially advertised.

The European Consumer Centres Network is a network that the European Commission and the EU Member States set up. Members of the network have encountered instances of consumer fraud involving fraudulent websites, fraud when selling used cars online or sale of counterfeit products, among others.<sup>60</sup> Besides breaching intellectual property rights, counterfeit products may not fulfil EU product safety standards, putting consumers at risk.

The results in this report concerning consumer fraud complement the findings of a survey that the European Commission carried out in 2019 to examine scams and fraud that consumers experience.<sup>61</sup> That survey collected data in the 27 EU Member States, Iceland, Norway and the United Kingdom concerning experiences of scams when buying products or services, monetary fraud and identity theft.

## What did the survey ask?

*In the past five years, have you ever felt cheated or misled in terms of the quantity, quality, pricing or delivery of goods, items or services you were purchasing? For example, when buying something in a shop or online.*

*Did this happen to you in the past 12 months?*

*Thinking about this incident [the most recent incident in the past five years], did you order the product or service from another country?*

Answer categories (separate answers for each of the questions above): Yes, no. In addition, respondents who did not select one of these answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

*Thinking about the last time this happened, how did you order or buy the product or service?*

- I went into a shop
- By speaking to someone over the telephone
- Online / over the internet / email
- The salesperson or service provider came to my home
- I made an order by post / mail
- In some other way

Respondents could select one or more of the answer categories listed above. In addition, respondents who did not select one of these answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

Respondents who had felt cheated or misled when purchasing goods, items or services in the five years before the survey were asked if they reported this incident anywhere. Those who did not report the incident were asked about the reasons for not reporting it.

**Chapter 4** analyses the results for these questions.

<sup>60</sup> European Consumer Centres Network (2017), **Fraud in Cross-border e-Commerce**.

<sup>61</sup> European Commission (2020), **Survey on 'Scams and Fraud Experienced by Consumers'**.

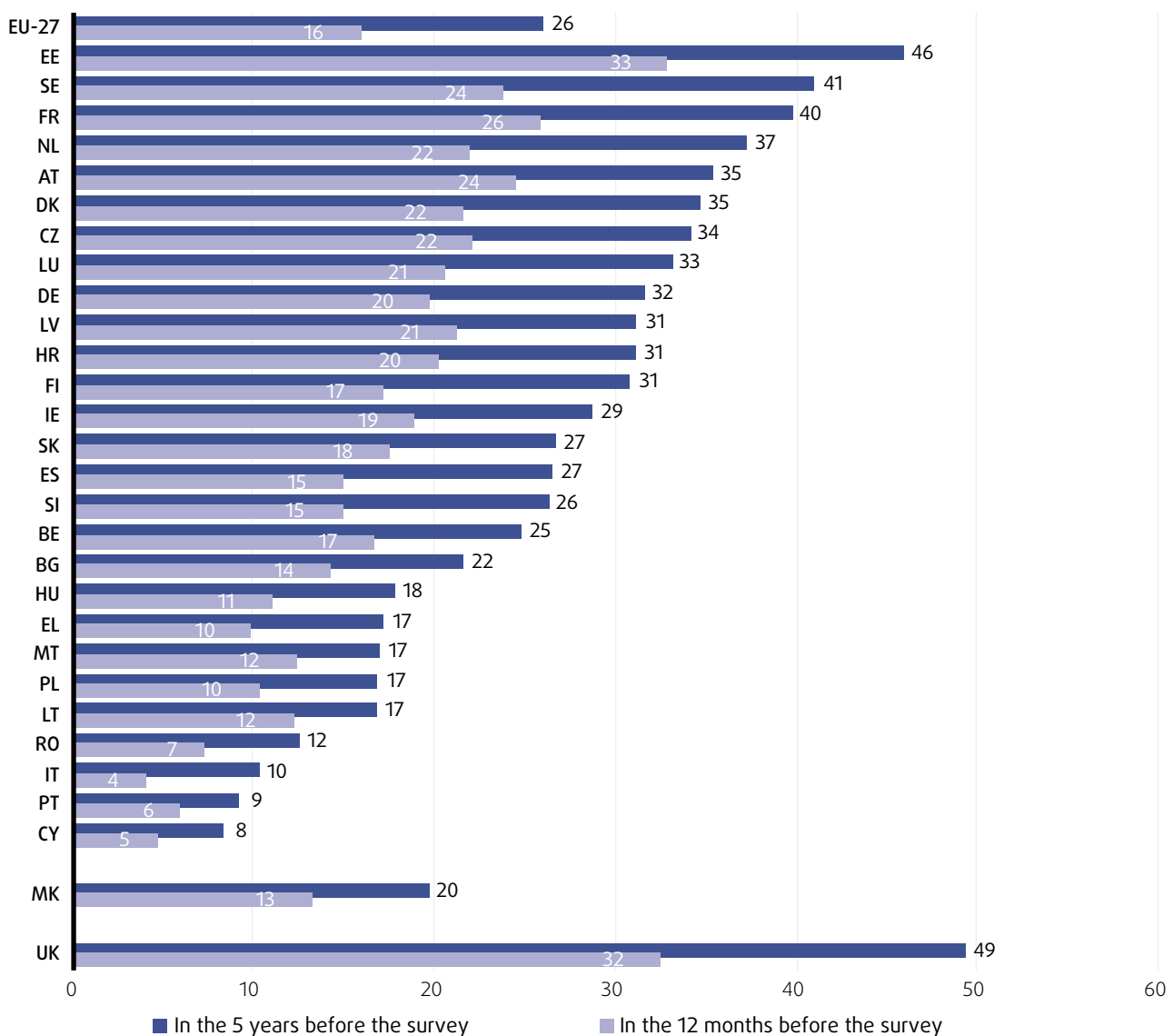




Some one in four people (26 %) in the EU-27 experienced an incident of consumer fraud in the five years before the survey, and 16 % in the 12 months before the survey (Figure 18). In terms of the five-year rates, 40 % or more experienced consumer fraud in Estonia, France, Sweden and the United Kingdom, compared with 10 % or fewer in Cyprus, Italy and Portugal. In Estonia and the United Kingdom, one in three people experienced an incident of consumer fraud in the 12 months before the survey (33 % and 32 %, respectively).

Notes: Out of all respondents in the EU-27, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom (n = 34,948); weighted results.

**FIGURE 18: EXPERIENCES OF CONSUMER FRAUD, IN THE FIVE YEARS AND IN THE 12 MONTHS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY COUNTRY (%)**



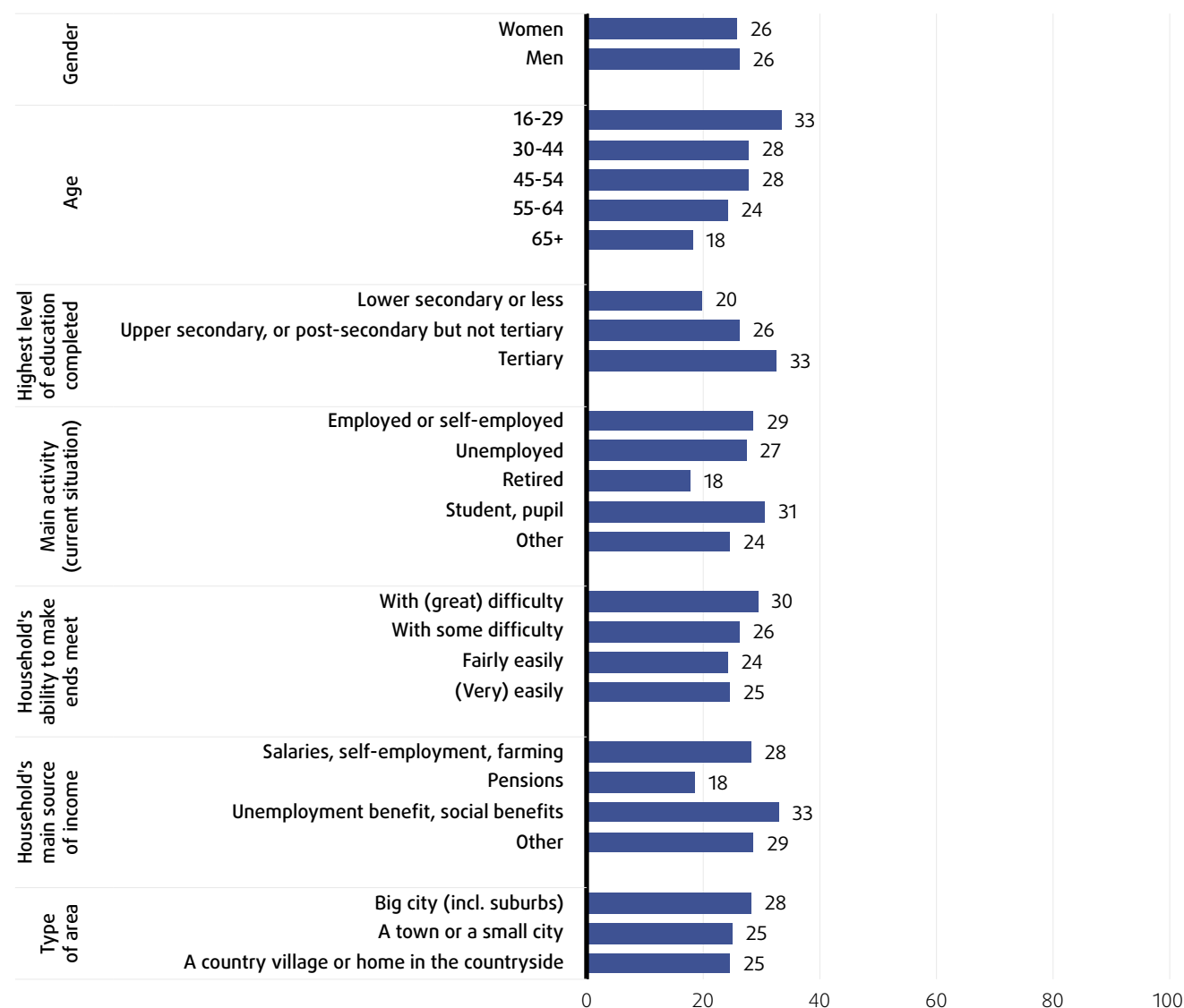
Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

There is no difference between the rates of consumer fraud experienced by women and by men (Figure 19), but there are differences based on age and education. Young people experience consumer fraud at a higher rate than older people. The rates go from 33 % in the five years before the survey for people aged 16–29 years all the way down to 18 % for people aged 65 years and older. The lower rate of consumer fraud among older people is reflected in lower rates for people who are retired and whose main income source is a pension. These results also reflect age-related differences in internet use: while 81 % of 16- to 29-year-old internet users shop online, 56 % of internet users who are 65 years of age or older do so.

One in three people with tertiary education (33 %) have experienced consumer fraud, compared with one in five people with lower secondary education or less (20 %). Higher rates of consumer fraud are associated with having severe limitations in everyday activities (36 % in the five years before the survey), being part of an ethnic minority (37 %) and not being heterosexual (35 %) (Figure 20).

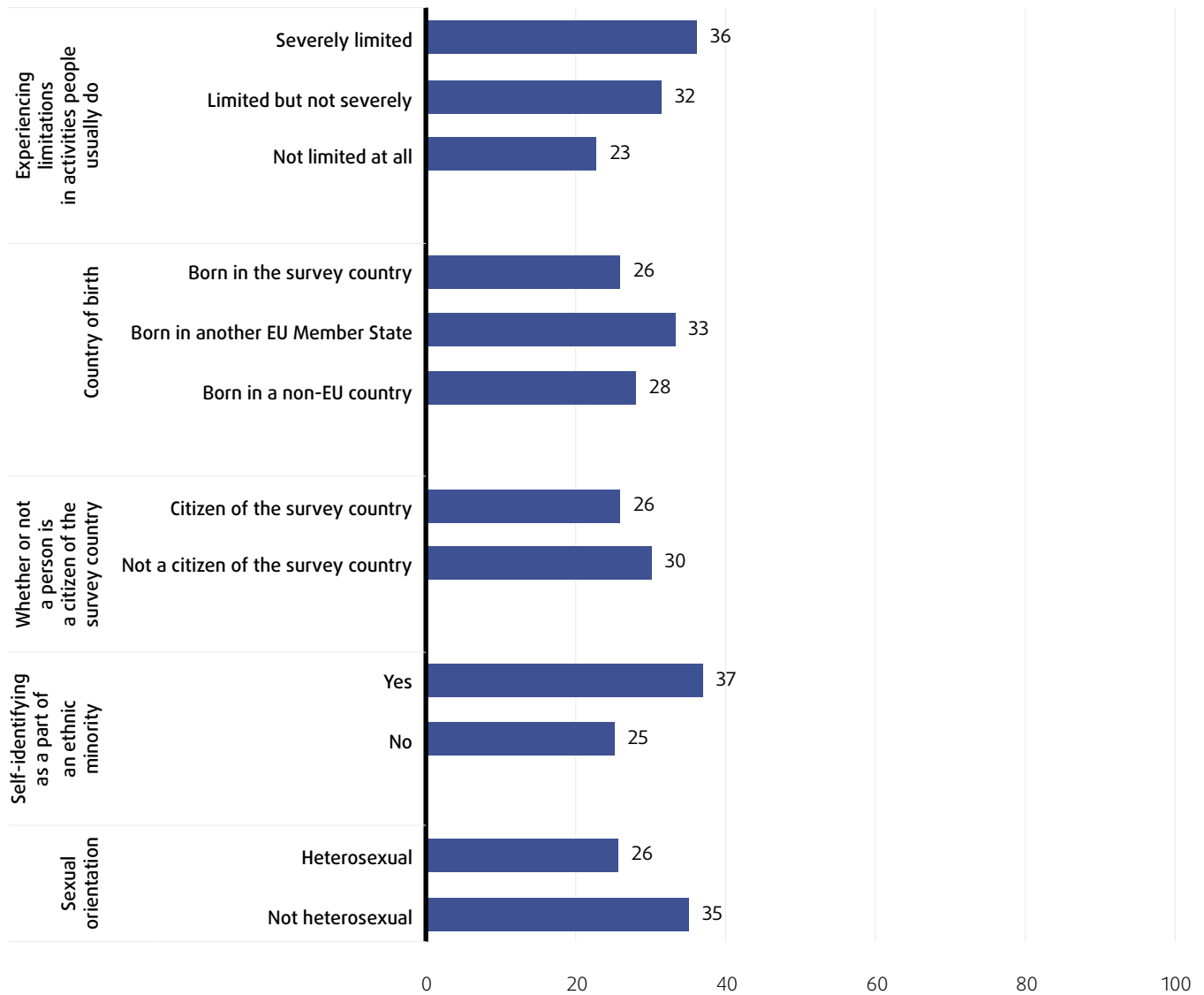
Notes: Out of all respondents in the EU-27 (n = 32,537); weighted results.

**FIGURE 19: EXPERIENCES OF CONSUMER FRAUD IN THE FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY SELECTED SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

**FIGURE 20: EXPERIENCES OF CONSUMER FRAUD IN THE FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY SELECTED POPULATION GROUPS (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

Notes:  
 Out of all respondents in the EU-27  
 (n = 32,537); weighted results.

The survey asked respondents who had experienced consumer fraud in the five years before the survey to specify how they had purchased the goods or services when the most recent incident took place. If they said that they had made the purchase online, by phone or by mail, it asked whether they had ordered the goods or services from abroad or from their own country. One in two of the most recent incidents of consumer fraud in the five years before the survey took place when goods or services were ordered online or by email (54 %), followed by incidents when the customer purchased the goods or services in a shop (28 %). Other incidents involved purchases made over the telephone, by post or in some other way.

Examining these results by country, bear in mind that the rates of internet penetration and use vary between countries and that in 10 countries the survey was conducted online. Of only internet users in the EU-27, 51 % who have experienced consumer fraud indicate that this involved buying something online, while 30 % experienced it when going to a shop to buy something. The share of online consumer fraud ranges from over two in three in the United Kingdom (73 %), Germany (69 %), Ireland and Denmark (both 67 %) to under three in 10 in Slovakia (27 %), Bulgaria (22 %) and Greece (19 %).

Among the people who had bought the goods or services online, on the phone or by mail, two in five incidents (41 %) of consumer fraud involved goods or services ordered from abroad. The rate goes up to 94 % in Luxembourg and 87 % in Malta. Many incidents involved purchases made online, and small countries may have fewer local online providers. That leads to many online purchases being made on websites based in other EU Member States or outside the EU. In four countries, fewer than one in three incidents of consumer fraud involving orders online, on the phone or by mail involved goods or services ordered from abroad: Poland and Romania (both 21 %), the Netherlands (24 %) and the United Kingdom (29 %).



# 4

## REPORTING CRIME VICTIMISATION EXPERIENCES

### KEY FINDINGS

- ★ Most incidents of violence and harassment are not reported to the authorities. With respect to the most recent incident experienced in the five years before the survey in the EU-27, 30 % of incidents involving physical violence, and 11 % of those involving harassment were reported.
- ★ Rates of reporting physical violence vary between countries, from 40 % to 9 %.
- ★ Besides reporting the incident to the police, 17 % of victims of violence were in contact with medical services as a result of the incident, and 6 % contacted a specialised victim support organisation.
- ★ People who make ends meet easily or very easily with their household income, students and people living in rural areas are less likely than others to report an incident of violence they experience. In contrast, people who have limitations in usual activities (due to a health problem or disability), people belonging to an ethnic minority, and those self-identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual or 'other' report incidents to the police more readily than those who do not consider themselves part of these groups.
- ★ Rates of reporting incidents of violence increase with the severity of the incident. In the survey, 60 % of violent incidents of a sexual nature were reported to the police, compared with 27 % of those of a non-sexual nature. However, reporting is lower for incidents in which the perpetrator was a family member or a relative: 22 % of these incidents were reported to the police. That includes incidents that could involve domestic violence.
- ★ The most common reason for not reporting incidents of violence and harassment to the police was that the incident was not serious enough to make the effort.
- ★ Property crimes are reported – to the police or other authorities – at a higher rate than violence or harassment. A major factor in this difference is that police reports are required for making an insurance claim. Respondents in the EU-27 reported 73 % of burglaries to the police; 95 % of incidents of online banking or payment card fraud to the police or other authorities; and 50 % of incidents of consumer fraud, in most cases to other authorities than the police.

Article 47 of the Charter grants victims of violent crime a right of access to justice. According to the Victims' Rights Directive, victims must receive practical support to enable them to access justice. This includes providing victim support to encourage and facilitate reporting, raising victims' awareness of their rights, and sufficient training of law enforcement personnel. As recital 63 of the Victims' Rights Directive states, "it is essential that reliable support services are available to victims and that competent authorities are prepared to respond to victims' reports". The need for effective communication with victims and a safe environment for victims to report crime is one of the priorities of the current EU strategy on victims' rights (2020–2025).

Despite this, many incidents of violence do not come to the attention of authorities. This may be partly because the characteristics of violent incidents can vary greatly, from a single physical attack between people on the street to domestic violence when the victim and perpetrator share a home and violence can take place repeatedly over a long period.

When a crime is reported, authorities can offer information and other assistance to the victims, refer them to support services, and of course start an investigation. Recording crime allows authorities to assess trends in reported incidents, to identify where additional resources should be allocated to prevent and investigate crime and to assist victims, and to see where to further develop police working practices in response to increases in particular types of crime or the emergence of new types, such as cyberoffences. People may report crime to the police, to request an investigation or to receive confirmation that they have reported the incident, for example when required by an insurance company. They may also seek assistance and advice from various other organisations, including specialised victim support services.

The UN 2030 Agenda and SDG 16, in particular target 16.3, recognise the need to promote the rule of law and equal access to justice for all. Related to this target, the UN Member States have adopted indicator 16.3.1: 'Proportion of victims of violence in the previous 12 months who reported their victimization to competent authorities or other officially recognized conflict resolution mechanisms'. The results in this chapter on reporting experiences of violence are closely related to this indicator. The Fundamental Rights Survey data on reporting violence to the police and other authorities refer to experiences in the previous five years, to have more data available for analysis than if the reference period were the 12 months before the survey.



## What did the survey ask?

*Did you or anyone else report this incident to the police?*

Answer categories: Yes, I reported the incident; yes, somebody else reported the incident; no; police were already aware about it so no need to report.

*Why was this incident not reported to the police?*

Answer categories: Not serious enough; inconvenient / too much trouble to report; police won't do anything about it; don't trust the police; reported to other authorities or services; took care of it myself; fear of reprisals; other reasons. Respondents could select one or more answer categories, as relevant.

*Overall, how satisfied were you with the way the police handled the matter?*

Answer categories: Very satisfied; somewhat satisfied; somewhat dissatisfied; very dissatisfied.

*Apart from the police, did you contact any of the following services as a result of this incident?*

Answer categories: Doctor, health centre, hospital or other healthcare institution; social services; victim support organisation; church/faith-based organisation; legal service/lawyer; another service/organisation; I did not contact any service/organisation. Respondents could select one or more answer categories, as relevant.

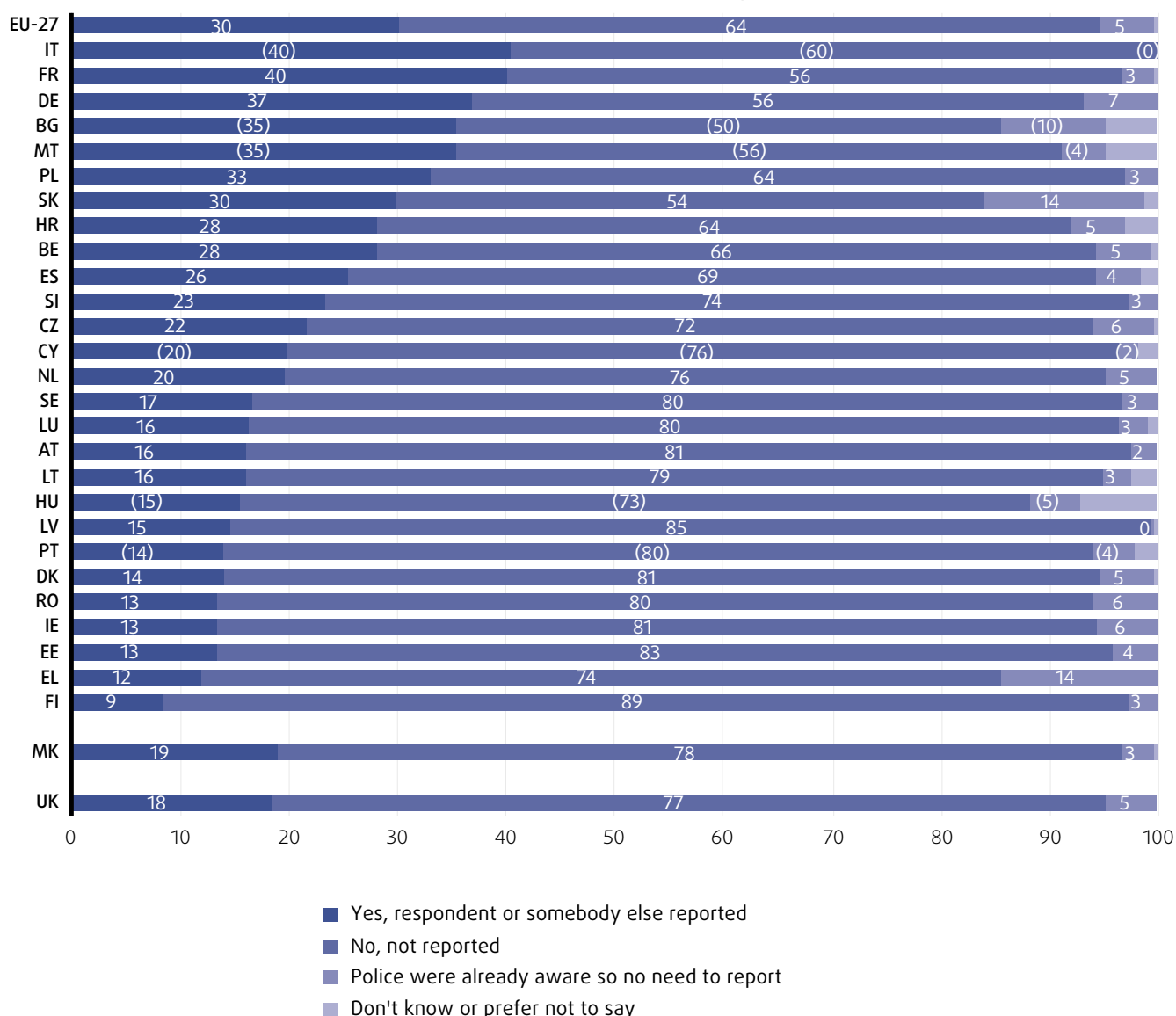
For each of these questions, respondents who did not select one of the listed answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

### 4.1. REPORTING EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENCE

Most people in the EU-27 have not experienced violent incidents in the five years or the 12 months before the survey, the results presented earlier in this report show. For those who do, the experience can be traumatising, as shown by the results concerning the multitude of consequences that violence can have on the victim. The level of trauma can depend on the context of the incident – for example whether the perpetrator is a stranger or someone close to the victim – or the type of violence: physical or sexual. These factors can also affect the likelihood of reporting violent incidents to the authorities, including the police.

Asked if they reported the most recent incident to the police, 30 % of people in the EU-27 who experienced a violent incident in the five years before the survey indicate that they reported it, while 64 % did not report the incident. Another 5 % note that the police was already aware of the incident and they did not have to report it, for example if the police intervened in a fight on the street (**Figure 21**). Reporting rates vary from 40 % in France and 37 % in Germany to 9 % in Finland, 12 % in Greece and 13 % in Estonia, Ireland and Romania. For some countries, the results are less reliable because a small number of cases is available for analysis, so we do not comment here on the results for these countries.

**FIGURE 21: REPORTING THE MOST RECENT INCIDENT OF VIOLENCE TO THE POLICE, BY COUNTRY (%)<sup>a,b</sup>**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

Besides reporting to the police, 17 % of people who experienced an incident of violence contacted healthcare services – a doctor, health centre or hospital; 8 % social services; 7 % a lawyer; and 6 % a victim support organisation.

Compared with other groups, students and pupils tend not to report incidents of violence they have experienced (Figure 22). Non-reporting is also more common among those who make ends meet easily or very easily (77 % did not report the most recent incident of violence) than people who have difficulty (or great difficulty) making ends meet (59 %). Non-reporting is also somewhat more common among people living in a country village or in the countryside (70 %) – where police may take more time to arrive or there is no police station nearby – than in a big city (61 %).

People who are severely limited in the activities people do (by a health problem or disability) report the violence to the police more often than those who do not experience such limitations: 71 % of people with no limitations in everyday activities left the most recent incident of violence unreported, compared with 49 % of people experiencing severe limitations (Figure 23). Similarly, people who are not a part of an ethnic minority and those who are



Notes:

<sup>a</sup> Out of respondents in the EU-27, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom who described in the survey the most recent incident of violence experienced in the five years before the survey (n = 3,421); weighted results.

<sup>b</sup> Results based on a small number of responses are statistically less reliable. Therefore, results based on 20 to 49 unweighted observations in a group total are noted in parentheses. Results based on fewer than 20 unweighted observations in a group total are not published.



Notes:

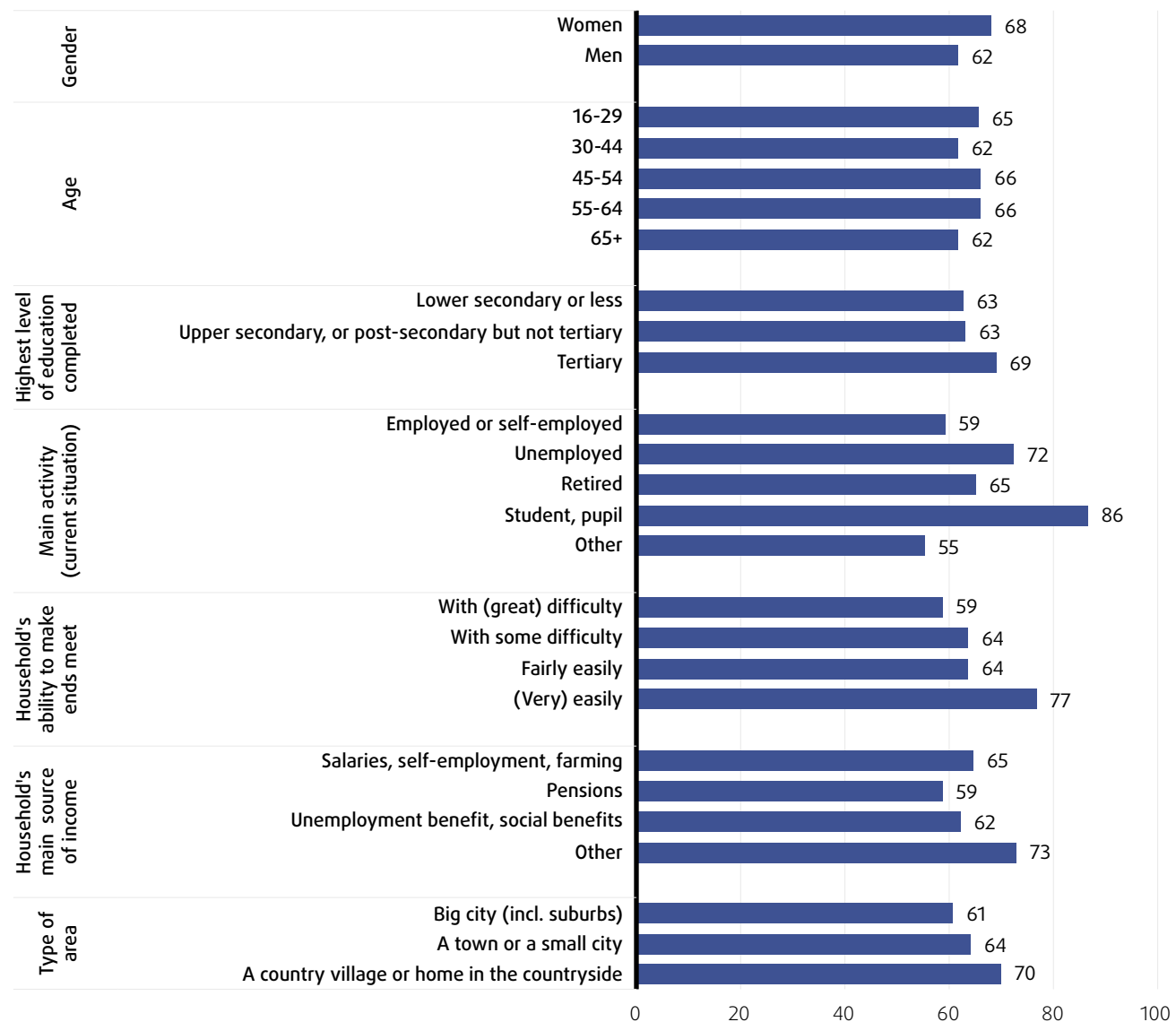
<sup>a</sup> Out of respondents in the EU-27 who described in the survey the most recent incident of violence experienced in the five years before the survey (n = 3,238); weighted results.

<sup>b</sup> The results relate to cases that were not reported by the respondent or anybody else.

heterosexual are more likely not to report the violence they have experienced than people who self-identify as belonging to an ethnic minority and people who are not heterosexual.

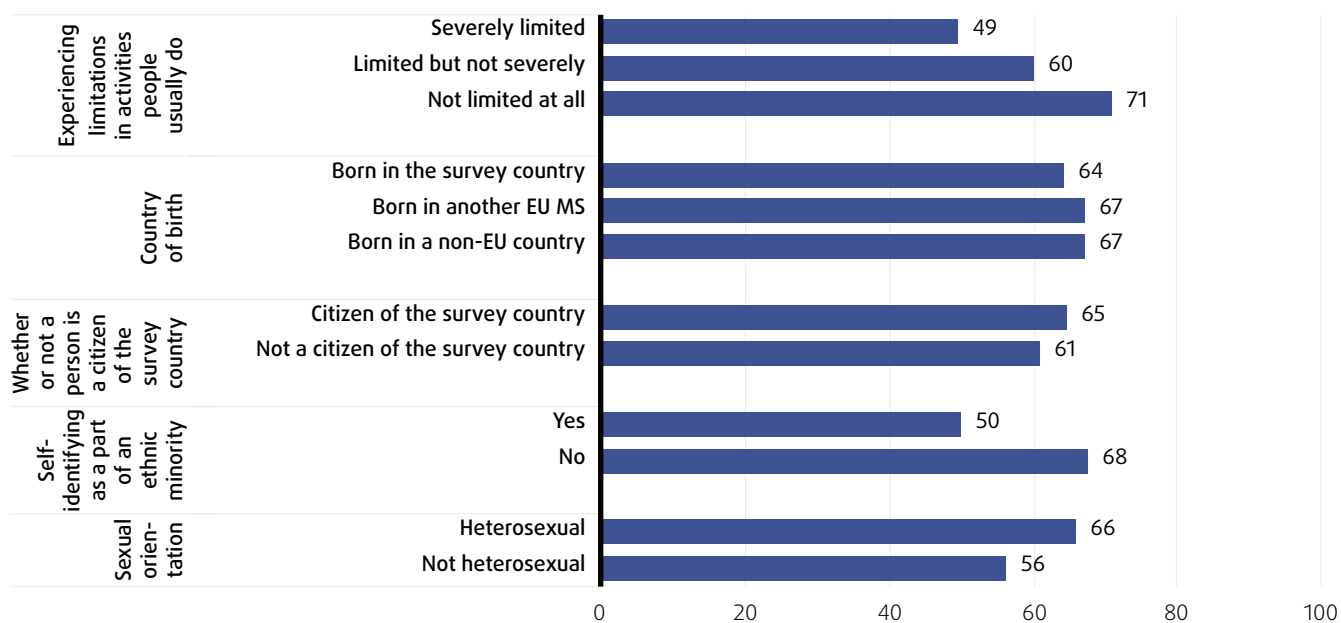
These differences could be related to the characteristics of the violent incidents they experience. For example, people belonging to minority groups in society may be targeted by bias-motivated incidents and may feel particularly motivated to report some of these incidents, given that they have an impact on the broader minority community, whereas violent incidents against other people may lack any particular bias motivation.

**FIGURE 22: VIOLENT INCIDENTS THAT WERE NOT REPORTED TO THE POLICE, BY SELECTED SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (EU-27, %)<sup>a,b</sup>**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

**FIGURE 23: VIOLENT INCIDENTS THAT WERE NOT REPORTED TO THE POLICE, BY SELECTED GROUPS (EU-27, %)<sup>a,b</sup>**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)



Notes:

- <sup>a</sup> Out of respondents in the EU-27 who described in the survey the most recent incident of violence experienced in the five years before the survey (n = 3,238); weighted results.
- <sup>b</sup> The results relate to cases that were not reported by the respondent or anybody else.

Besides victims’ socio-demographic characteristics and population groups, reporting rates vary with respect to factors related to the context and characteristics of the incident. For example, 60 % of sexual incidents were reported, compared with 27 % of incidents that were not of a sexual nature (Figure 24). This can be related to people considering sexual incidents more serious, and therefore more worth reporting, than incidents involving only physical violence. Experiences of violence are reported more often when the incident resulted in psychological consequences or injuries, causing the incident to be considered more serious.

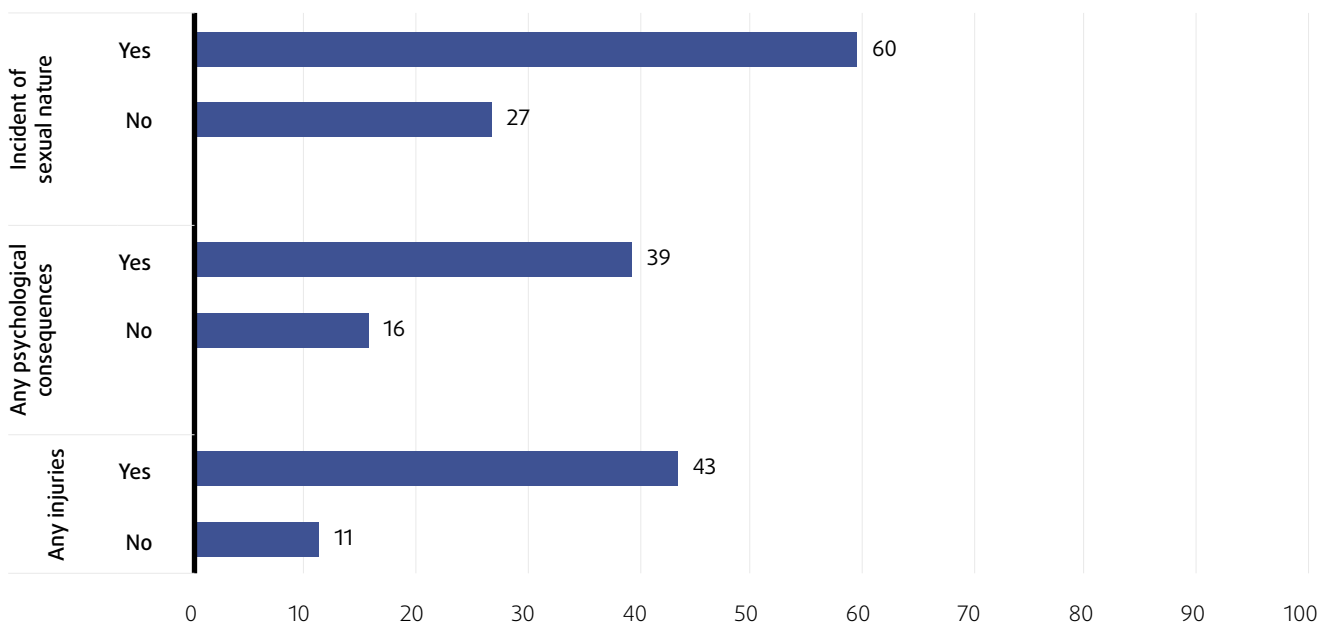
Other factors besides the perceived seriousness of the incident also have an impact on deciding whether or not to report it to the police. Notably, people are less likely to report incidents of violence if the perpetrator was

a family member or a relative: 22 %, compared with 44 % reporting incidents involving somebody from work or 38 % reporting incidents perpetrated by acquaintances, friends and neighbours (Figure 25).

People report incidents at a higher rate (40 %) if they perceive the perpetrator to have an ethnic minority or immigrant background than if not (27 %). This could partly explain why people with an ethnic minority or immigrant background are overrepresented as perpetrators of crime in official statistics,<sup>62</sup> where these statistics are disaggregated by ethnicity or immigrant background.

Regarding characteristics of violent incidents listed in Figure 25, incidents at work are reported more often (39 %) than incidents happening elsewhere, for example in the street, a square or another public place (27 %).

**FIGURE 24: REPORTING INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE TO THE POLICE, BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INCIDENT (EU-27, %)<sup>a,b</sup>**



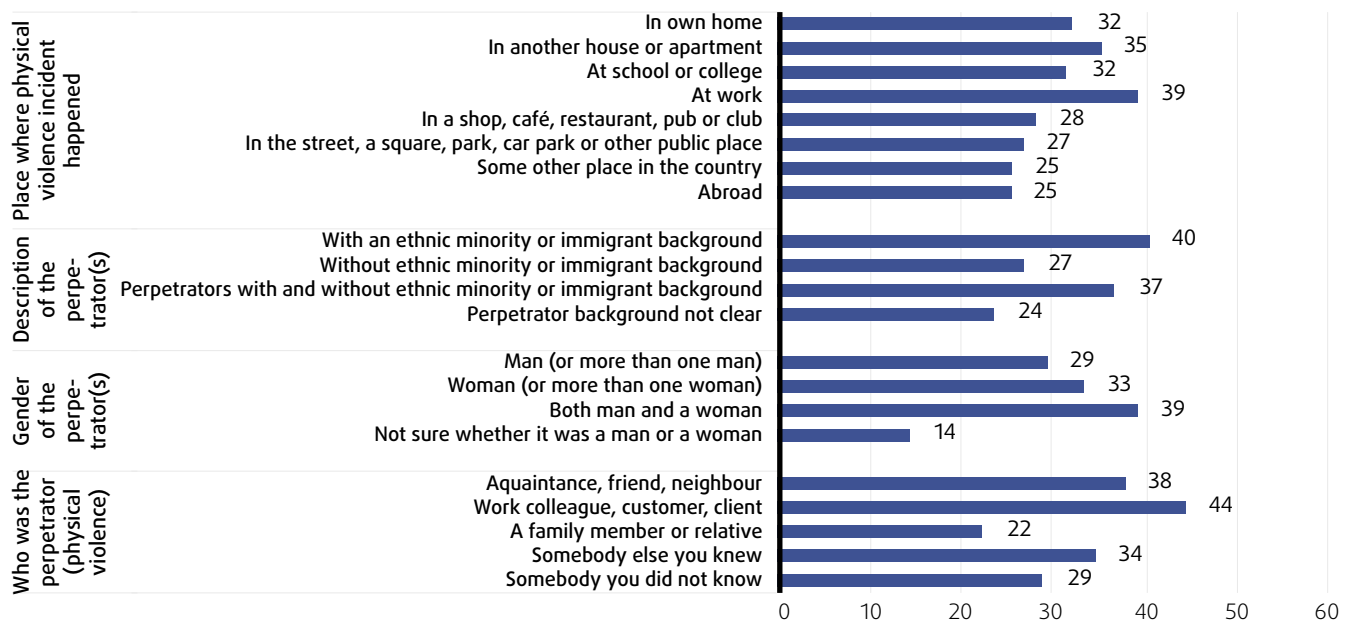
Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

▲ Notes:

- <sup>a</sup> Out of respondents in the EU-27 who described in the survey the most recent incident of violence experienced in the five years before the survey (n = 3,238); weighted results.
- <sup>b</sup> The results presented above show the percentage of incidents reported to the police in terms of selected characteristics of the incident. For example, 43 % of victims who suffered physical injuries from the physical violence, but only 11 % of those who did not, reported the incident to the police.

<sup>62</sup> To provide some illustrative examples, according to Eurostat data for 2018, 37 % of people recorded as suspects in crime incidents (persons brought into formal contact with the police and/or criminal justice systems) in Belgium had other than Belgian citizenship, whereas 12 % of people living in Belgium have non-Belgian citizenship. In Italy, 32 % of suspects had other than Italian citizenship, compared with 9 % of people with non-Italian citizenship in the country's population. In Denmark, 36 % of suspects were not Danish citizens, while non-citizens represent 9 % of people living in Denmark. These comparisons are based on data available in Eurostat's [online database](#) (data codes [crim\_just\_ctz] and [migr\_pop1ctz]).

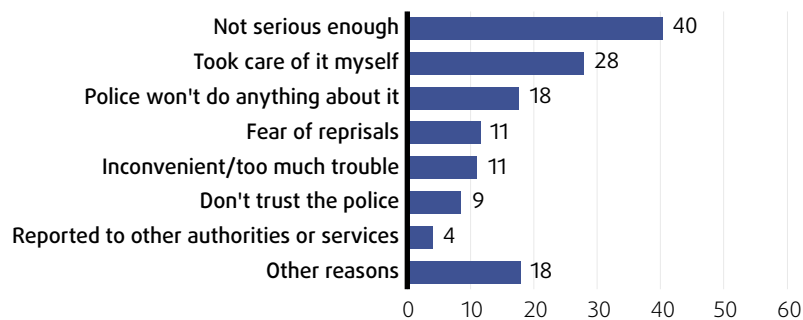
**FIGURE 25: REPORTING INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE TO THE POLICE, BY CONTEXT OF THE INCIDENT (EU-27, %)<sup>a,b</sup>**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

People who did not report the most recent incident of violence to the police could indicate in the survey one or more reasons why they did not make a report. Reflecting the results presented earlier in this section, 40 % mention that they did not report the incident because they did not consider it serious enough and 28 % indicate that they were able to deal with the situation themselves without the need to involve the police (Figure 26). Among those who did not report the most recent incident of violence, one in five (18 %) believed that the police would not do anything about it even if they reported the incident, and one in 10 (9 %) mention not trusting the police.

**FIGURE 26: REASONS FOR NOT REPORTING VIOLENCE TO THE POLICE (EU-27, %)<sup>a,b</sup>**



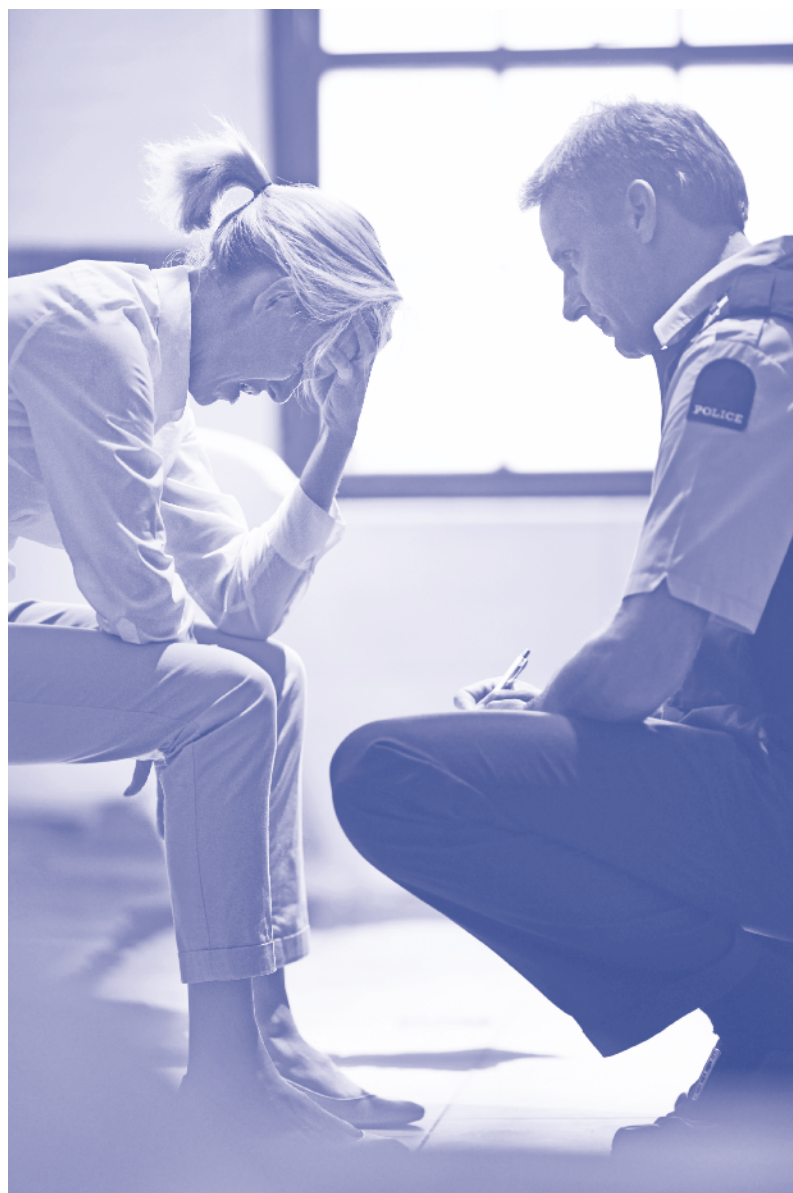
Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

▲ Notes:

- <sup>a</sup> Out of respondents in the EU-27 who described in the survey the most recent incident of violence experienced in the five years before the survey (n = 3,238); weighted results.
- <sup>b</sup> The results presented above show the percentage of incidents reported to the police in terms of selected contextual factors regarding the incident. For example, the results show that the incident of physical violence was reported to the police in 22 % of cases when a family member or a relative was involved as the perpetrator, while 44 % of incidents perpetrated by a work colleague, customer or client were reported to the police.

▲ Notes:

- <sup>a</sup> Out of respondents in the EU-27 did not report to the police the most recent incident of violence experienced in the five years before the survey (n = 2,317); weighted results.
- <sup>b</sup> In the survey, respondents could indicate one or more reasons for not reporting the incident, as relevant in their case. Respondents could also answer 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say'.



Of those who were injured in the most recent incident of violence, 26 % indicate that they did not report it because the incident was not serious enough, whereas out of those who did not have injuries as a result of the incident 54 % did not report the incident for this reason. Compared with those who did not suffer injuries, people who did not report the incident in spite of being injured mention more often as a reason that the police would not do anything (23 %, compared with 13 %) or that they do not trust the police (14 %, compared with 4 %).

Some two in three people (63 %) who reported the incident of violence to the police were very or somewhat satisfied with the way police handled the incident, and 36 % were very or somewhat dissatisfied. These results do not differ notably when disaggregated by the gender of the victim, or between sexual and non-sexual violent incidents. Given the low number of incidents of violence reported to the police overall, there are too few cases available to analyse people's satisfaction with reporting to the police at the national level.

## 4.2. REPORTING EXPERIENCES OF HARASSMENT

Respondents who experienced harassment in the five years before the survey were asked if they had reported the incident, either to the police or some other organisation. If not, respondents could indicate why.

Overall, 19 % of people in the EU-27 who experienced harassment in the five years before the survey reported the most recent incident, to the police, another organisation or both (**Figure 27**). Specifically, one in 10 harassment incidents (11 %) were reported to the police. Just 2 % of harassment incidents were reported both to the police and to another organisation. This means that statistics on police-recorded incidents of harassment and statistics collected by other organisations concerning harassment incidents that come to their attention are largely complementary and overlap only a little.

The country results vary. In Cyprus, 31 % of harassment incidents in the five years before the survey were reported to the police or other authorities, followed by 23 % reported in each for Belgium, Ireland and Malta. The lowest rates of harassment experiences reported to any authority (including the police) are in Portugal (5 %), Austria (6 %), Greece (10 %) and Estonia (11 %).

## What did the survey ask?

*You indicated that in the past five years you have experienced different offensive or threatening incidents. Thinking about the most recent incident, did you report this anywhere – either to the police or another organisation?*

Answer categories: Police, another organisation, both police and another organisation, no report or complaint was made.

*Why was this incident not reported to the police?*

Answer categories: Not serious enough, inconvenient / too much trouble to report, police won't do anything about it, don't trust the police, reported to other authorities or services, took care of it myself, fear of reprisals, other reasons. Respondents could select one or more answer categories, as relevant.

*Overall, how satisfied were you with the way the police handled the matter?*

Answer categories: Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied.

For each of these questions, respondents who did not select one of the listed answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

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**"I am very discouraged by the behaviour of the police officers because they told me, 'You are beautiful, that's why these [things] happen to you.'"**

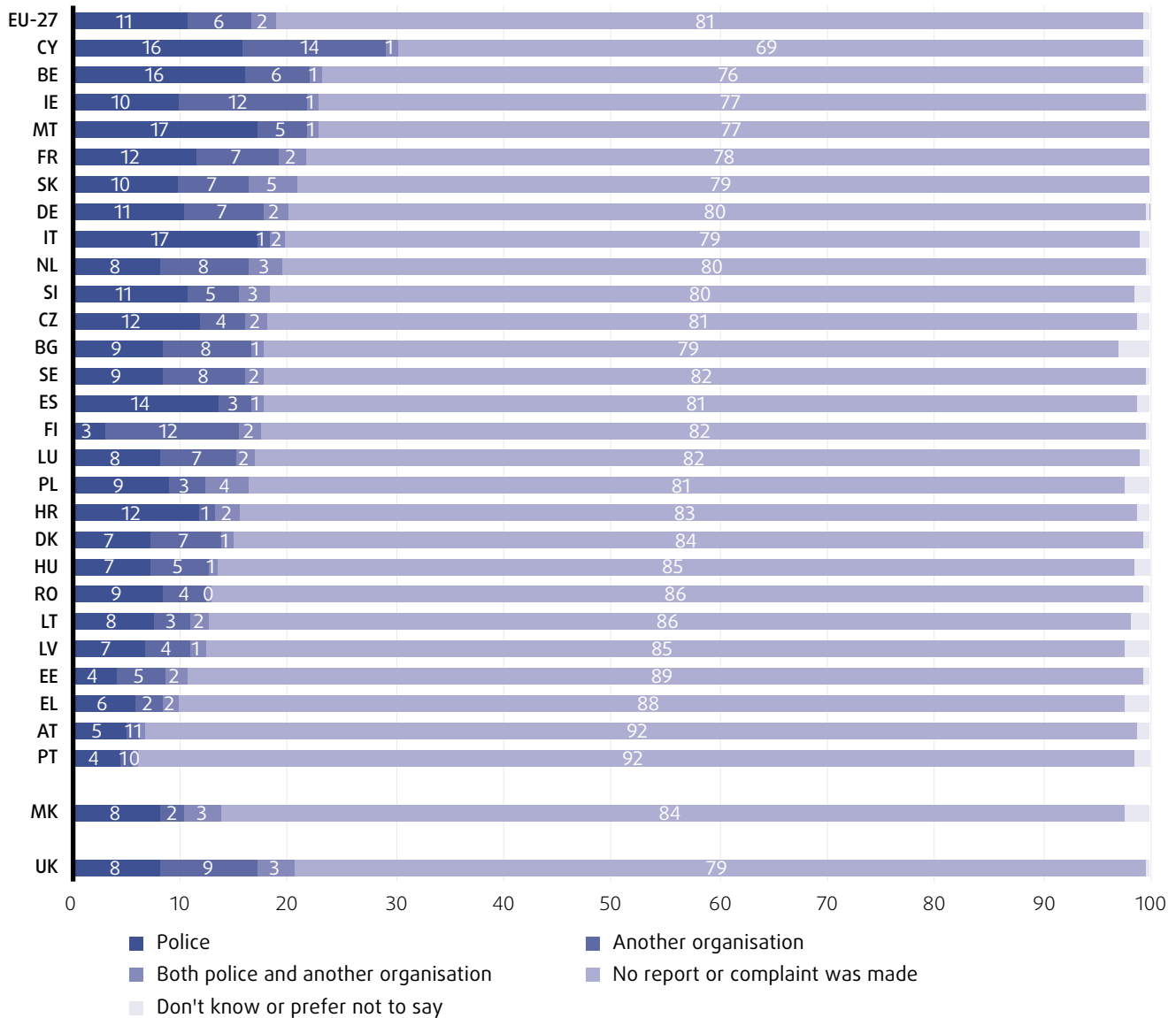
(Woman, between 45 and 54 years old, survey respondent, Cyprus)

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**"I worry that I as a woman won't be taken seriously, be respected or get the protection I would need if I was subjected to a crime related specifically to me being a woman."**

(Woman, between 16 and 29 years old, survey respondent, Sweden)

**FIGURE 27: REPORTING THE MOST RECENT INCIDENT OF HARASSMENT AND THE TYPE OF AUTHORITY TO WHICH THE INCIDENT WAS REPORTED, BY COUNTRY (%)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

Notes: Out of respondents in the EU-27, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom who described in the survey the most recent incident of harassment experienced in the five years before the survey (n = 13,899); weighted results.

The rate of reporting the most recent incident of harassment does not differ notably by most socio-demographic characteristics, including gender and age. However, people in certain population groups report harassment at a higher rate than others. Of people who experience severe limitations in everyday activities, 28 % reported the most recent incident of harassment, compared with 16 % of people who do not experience such limitations. Of people who consider themselves part of an ethnic minority, 27 % reported the most recent incident, as opposed to 18 % of those who do not consider themselves to belong to an ethnic minority. Reporting harassment is also more common among people in the non-heterosexual category (26 % reported) than heterosexuals (18 % reported). These differences could be because persons from various minority groups experience harassment that is of a different nature – including hate crime – and more frequent, leading to greater sensitivity to the issue and greater awareness of how and where to report incidents.

Respondents who had not reported the most recent incident of harassment to the police were asked why. They could select answers from a list of possible reasons for not reporting (selecting as many of the options as apply), or indicate that they had another reason to not report. Most people (54 %) do not report harassment because they do not perceive it as being serious enough to report. About one in five people indicate that they 'took care of it myself' (21 %) or believe that 'police won't do anything about it' (20 %). One in seven (14 %) consider that reporting the incident would have been inconvenient or too much trouble. Other reasons for not reporting the incident to the police include fear of reprisals (6 %), distrust of the police (4 %) and having reported the incident to another authority or service (4 %).

People with severe limitations in everyday activities, people who consider themselves to be part of an ethnic minority and non-heterosexuals are more likely to report incidents of harassment, as mentioned earlier. They indicate less often than others that they did not report an incident of harassment because it was not serious enough. This supports the argument that the higher rate of reporting among these groups may be related to differences between the harassment they experience and what other groups experience. Whereas 43 % of people who have severe limitations in their everyday activities say that they did not report the harassment because it was not serious enough, 56 % of people without activity limitations give this as the reason. Again, 40 % of people who consider themselves part of an ethnic minority did not report because the incident was not serious enough, compared with 55 % of people who do not belong to an ethnic minority. However, this pattern is not reflected in differences between heterosexual and non-heterosexual people's reasons for not reporting the most recent incident of harassment.

Of people who reported the most recent incident of harassment to the police, 62 % were very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the way police handled the matter, while 38 % were very dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied. There are no notable differences in people's satisfaction with reporting harassment to the police based on most of the socio-demographic characteristics in the analysis, including gender and age. However, 70 % of people who make ends meet easily or very easily were satisfied (very or somewhat) when reporting the most recent incident of harassment to the police, compared with 58 % of those who struggle to make ends meet with their household income. Satisfaction with reporting harassment to police is also greater among students and pupils (72 %) than people who are unemployed (58 %) or employed (62 %). Notably, while 63 % of people who are citizens of the country where they live were satisfied with the police after reporting harassment, 42 % of non-citizens were.

## FRA ACTIVITY

# Hate-motivated violence and harassment

FRA has collected detailed data concerning people's experiences of hate-motivated violence and harassment in surveys that have focused on experiences of specific groups in the population: immigrants and descendants of immigrants, ethnic minorities (including Roma), Jews and LGBTI people. These surveys have been repeated over time, to assess changes in people's experiences across the EU of situations that can have a disproportionate negative impact on certain groups in society.

For more information, see:

- **Second European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS II)** – based on interviews in 2015–2016 with 25,500 people (immigrants, descendants of immigrants, ethnic minorities) in the 27 EU Member States and the United Kingdom;
- **A long way to go for LGBTI equality** – selected findings from the most recent survey, carried out in 2019, with data collected from 140,000 LGBTI people in the EU-27, North Macedonia, Serbia and the United Kingdom;
- **Experiences and Perceptions of Antisemitism – Second survey on discrimination and hate crime against Jews in the EU** – most recent survey, carried out in 2018, with data collected from 16,500 Jews in 11 EU Member States and the United Kingdom.

*In addition to the surveys listed above, FRA's **EU-wide survey on violence against women**, carried out in 2012, collected detailed data concerning women's experiences of violence and sexual harassment.*



## What did the survey ask?

### **Burglary**

*Thinking about the last time this happened [in the five years before the survey], did you or anyone else report it to the police?*

Answer categories: Yes, no.

*Why was the incident not reported to the police?*

Answer categories: Not serious enough, inconvenient / too much trouble to report, police won't do anything about it, don't trust the police, reported to other authorities or services, took care of it myself, fear or reprisals, other reasons. Respondents could select one or more answer categories, as relevant.

### **Online banking or payment card fraud**

*Thinking about the last time this happened [in the five years before the survey], did you or anyone else report it to the police, your bank or a financial authority?*

Answer categories: Police, bank or financial authority, somewhere else.

*Why was the incident not reported anywhere?*

Answer categories: Not serious enough, inconvenient / too much trouble to report, nothing would happen/change if reported, I didn't know how to make a complaint/ where to report it, took care of it myself, I was concerned about negative consequences (such as not being able to use the service again), I had no proof, other reasons. Respondents could select one or more answer categories, as relevant.

### **Consumer fraud**

*And still thinking about this incident [in the five years before the survey], did you or anyone else report it to any of the following?*

Answer categories: Police, consumer association or authority, shop or website where you made the purchase, somewhere else, incident was not reported anywhere.

*Why was the incident not reported anywhere?*

Answer categories: Not serious enough, inconvenient / too much trouble to report, nothing would happen/change if reported, I didn't know how to make a complaint/ where to report it, took care of it myself, I was concerned about negative consequences (such as not being able to use the service again), I had no proof, other reasons. Respondents could select one or more answer categories, as relevant.

For each of these questions, respondents who did not select one of the listed answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

## 4.3. REPORTING PROPERTY CRIME

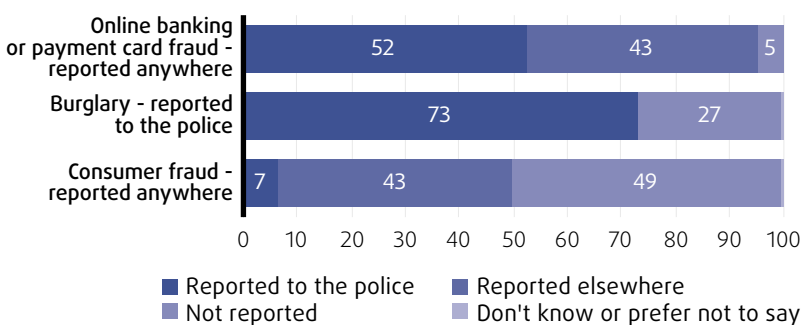
Reporting property crime may be a requirement for receiving compensation from an insurance company (in the case of burglary), having the bank or credit card company reimburse unauthorised credit card purchases, or receiving a refund or a replacement for an item that did not meet expectations. That is, reporting property crime can lead to a tangible outcome that compensates, at least partly, for the damage incurred. This is often not the case for experiences of violence and harassment. The damage can be non-material and difficult to assess in monetary terms, and compensation may come only after a lengthy process involving courts or other forms of conflict resolution such as third-party mediation.



In contrast to violence and harassment, all three property crimes in the survey are reported to the police and other authorities at higher rates (Figure 28). The survey asked respondents who had experienced burglary in the five years before the survey if anyone reported the most recent incident to the police. It asked victims of online banking and payment card fraud and consumer fraud about reporting the incident to the police or other relevant authorities. Online banking or payment card fraud could be reported to the police but also to the respondent's bank, another financial authority or elsewhere. Respondents who had experienced consumer fraud could indicate that it was reported to the police, a consumer association or authority, the shop or website where the purchase was made, or elsewhere.

In total, 95 % of incidents of online banking or payment card fraud were reported. Most of the incidents were reported to the police but many incidents were also reported elsewhere. On the other hand, 50 % of the incidents of consumer fraud were reported somewhere, but most of them not to the police.

**FIGURE 28: REPORTING THE MOST RECENT INCIDENT OF THREE PROPERTY CRIMES ASKED ABOUT IN THE SURVEY (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

**“Have you ever reported the theft of a telephone? Or a bicycle, automobile, radio? [...] If you know that you are going to hit a wall, why go there at all? It’s enough to submit a claim to the insurance company.”**  
 (Man, between 30 and 44 years old, focus group participant, Poland)

*Notes:*

Out of respondents in the EU-27 who described in the survey the most recent incident experienced in the five years before the survey (online banking and payment card fraud – n = 2,010; burglary – n = 2,705; consumer fraud – n = 8,928); weighted results.



Consumer fraud was the least often reported of the three property crimes. At least 60 % reported the most recent incident in Portugal (69 %), France (65 %) and Germany (60 %), while reporting rates are lower in Greece (25 %), Croatia (28 %), Slovenia (29 %) and Sweden (30 %).

In most 'small' consumer cases, the costs of litigation are higher than the actual amount disputed.<sup>63</sup> That is an important factor deterring consumers from claiming their rights. The lack of affordable court procedures is a weakness in the court-based system of consumer protection, as interviewees for FRA's report on business and human rights pointed out. The resources of consumer protection authorities are also inadequate, that project found.

When burglary was not reported to the police, 48 % of people give as a reason that they did not consider the incident serious enough, followed by 25 % believing that the police would not do anything about it. The reasons for not reporting consumer fraud anywhere are similar: 49 % think that the incident was not serious enough, and 25 % consider that nothing would happen/change if the incident were reported. Almost all incidents of payment card fraud are reported to the police or elsewhere, and there was no one predominant reason for not reporting. Overall, 22 % say they did not report online banking or payment card fraud anywhere because it was not serious enough, 22 % say it was because there was no proof and 21 % did not see the need to report, as they took care of the matter themselves. However, 28 % also indicate that they did not report online banking or payment card fraud for 'other reasons' than those listed in the survey.



<sup>63</sup> FRA (2020), **Business and Human Rights – Access to remedy**, Luxembourg, Publications Office.



# 5

## WILLINGNESS TO TAKE ACTION AS A WITNESS OF CRIME

### KEY FINDINGS

- ★ On average, the majority of people in the EU-27 would be willing or very willing to intervene if they saw somebody hit their partner in the street (54 %) or a parent slap their child in the street (52 %). This is also the case if they witnessed someone dumping a used refrigerator in the countryside (57 %).
- ★ People are most willing to call the police if they witness a person hitting their partner (63 % 'willing' or 'very willing'). Willingness to call the police is lowest (among the three situations in the survey) in response to witnessing a parent slapping their child (42 % 'willing' or 'very willing').
- ★ While on average one in five people (19 %) in the EU-27 would be very willing to involve the police if they saw a parent slap their child, the results vary considerably between countries, from 48 % to 4 %.
- ★ Depending on the situation described in the survey – physical violence against a partner, a parent slapping their child, an environmental crime – 16 % to 19 % of people would not be at all willing to intervene in the situation, and between 15 % and 25 % would not be at all willing to call the police. The percentage of people not at all willing to give evidence in court, even if asked to do so, ranges from 17 % in the example of a person hitting their partner to 25 % in the example of a parent hitting their child.
- ★ People's preference to intervene in person or call the police when witnessing the situations described in the survey varies between countries. In Ireland, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom, people are more willing to call the police than intervene personally. In Bulgaria, Greece and North Macedonia, people are more willing to intervene in person than call the police. Here, as for some other survey results, culture can play a factor in how people respond, as can trust in the police's ability to respond effectively to an incident.
- ★ Older people, those with lower levels of education, and people who struggle to make ends meet are less willing to engage with the criminal justice system, such as by calling the police and, if asked, giving evidence in court, on witnessing one of the three situations described in the survey.
- ★ People are less willing to intervene when a woman hits a man than when a man hits a woman. Each of those versions of a violent incident in which a person hits their partner in the street was shown to half of the survey respondents. If the woman was hitting the man, 44 % were 'willing' or 'very willing' to intervene. If the man was hitting the woman, 64 % were 'willing' or 'very willing' to intervene. There was no similar difference between seeing a father hit his child and seeing a mother hit her child.

The reporting of crimes, by either victims or witnesses, is normally necessary for the police to become aware of the crime in order to investigate and prosecute it. This applies to most, but not all, crimes. For example, so-called victimless crimes, such as certain types of fraud, can be uncovered often as a result of police activity.

The Victims' Rights Directive requires victims to be empowered and encouraged to report crimes to the police. That is in line with the overall objective set out in Article 1, and with recital 63, which calls for reliable support services. At the trial stage, the directive provides victims with the right to participate actively in criminal proceedings, including by providing evidence (Article 10(1)).



In many cases the police are not present when the crime takes place, so they are not immediately available to intervene. In some instances, other people may be present and able to intervene or inform the police and, if asked, act as witnesses in criminal proceedings. In this manner, the realisation of one's fundamental rights can depend on those around. Several studies have examined the bystander effect and if people would be ready to intervene when witnessing a crime. A recent cross-country study<sup>64</sup> analysed real-life situations based on closed-circuit television footage in three countries: the Netherlands, South Africa and the United Kingdom. Bystanders are often ready to step in and help when witnessing a conflict taking place in public, it suggests. However, this can depend on many factors such as the type of situation and the perceived danger of intervening.<sup>65</sup>

In recital 63, the Victims' Rights Directive calls for a mechanism to be put in place to facilitate third-party reporting of crimes, including by civil society organisations. This goes some way towards acknowledging the importance of indirect reporting options. It also calls for communication technology, such as email, video recordings or online electronic forms, to be available for making complaints.

<sup>64</sup> R. Philpot, L.S. Liebst, M. Levine, W. Bernasco and M.R. Lindegaard (2020), 'Would I be helped? Cross-national CCTV footage shows that intervention is the norm in public conflicts', *American Psychologist*, Vol. 75, No. 1, pp. 66–75.

<sup>65</sup> P. Fischer, J.I. Krueger, T. Greitemeyer, C. Vogrincic, A. Kastenmüller, D. Frey, M. Heene, M. Wicher and M. Kainbacher (2011), 'The bystander-effect: A meta-analytic review on bystander intervention in dangerous and non-dangerous emergencies', *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 137, No. 4, pp. 517–537.

## What did the survey ask?

*Imagine that you were out and saw someone dumping an old fridge in the countryside. How willing would you be to do the following things?*

- Go over and intervene / say something
- Call the police
- If asked, give evidence in court against the person who did this

*Imagine that you saw a couple together on the street, and the man [woman] suddenly hit the woman [man]. How willing would you be to do the following things?*

*[Note: The question used a split-sample design. The survey asked half of the sample about a man hitting a woman, and the other half about a woman hitting a man.]*

- Go over and intervene / say something
- Call the police
- If asked, give evidence in court against the person who did this

*Imagine that you saw a father [mother] slapping his [her] child in the street. How willing would you be to do the following things?*

*[Note: The question used a split-sample design. The survey asked half of the sample about a father hitting his child, and the other half about a mother hitting her child.]*

- Go over and intervene / say something
- Call the police
- If asked, give evidence in court against the person who did this

Answer categories used for all of the items above: Not at all willing, not very willing, willing, very willing. In addition, respondents who did not select one of these answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

The key role of the public can also be seen in the context of the need for effective safeguards to protect particularly vulnerable victims in line with well-established international law. For example, the United Nations CRC requires that effective safeguards are put in place to protect children from all forms of violence while they are in the care of parents and others. In line with General Comment No. 8 of the Committee on the Rights of the Child<sup>66</sup>, this includes the use of physical force intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light, e.g. slapping.

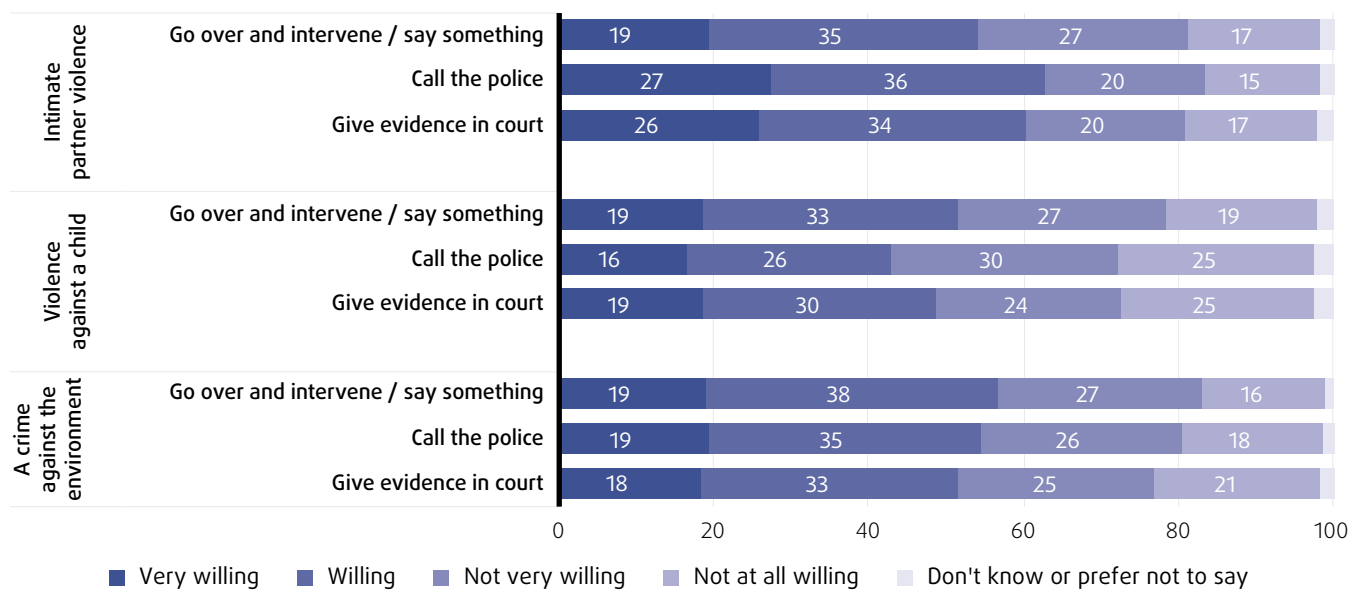
The survey asked people about their willingness to take action in three scenarios:

- seeing somebody dump an old fridge in the countryside (offence against the environment);
- seeing a couple on the street and witnessing one of the couple suddenly hitting the other one (physical violence against a partner);
- seeing a parent slap their child in the street (physical violence against a child).

In each of the three scenarios, it asked how willing people would be to go over and intervene in the situation, call the police and, if asked, give evidence in court against the person responsible. In the EU-27, some one in five people would be very willing to take action in each of the three scenarios – one in four when it comes to calling the police or giving evidence in court against a person responsible for hitting their partner (**Figure 29**). Half or more of people would be willing or very willing to take all three types of action in each situation, except for calling the police after seeing a parent hit their child; 42 % would be willing or very willing to do this.

<sup>66</sup> UN, Committee on the Rights of the Child (OHCHR) (2007), **General comment No. 8 (2006) on the right of the child to protection from corporal punishment and other cruel or degrading forms of punishment (arts. 19; 28, para. 2; and 37, inter alia)**, CRC/C/GC/8, 2 March 2007.

**FIGURE 29: WILLINGNESS TO TAKE ACTION WHEN WITNESSING SELECTED OFFENCES, BY SCENARIO AND TYPE OF ACTION (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

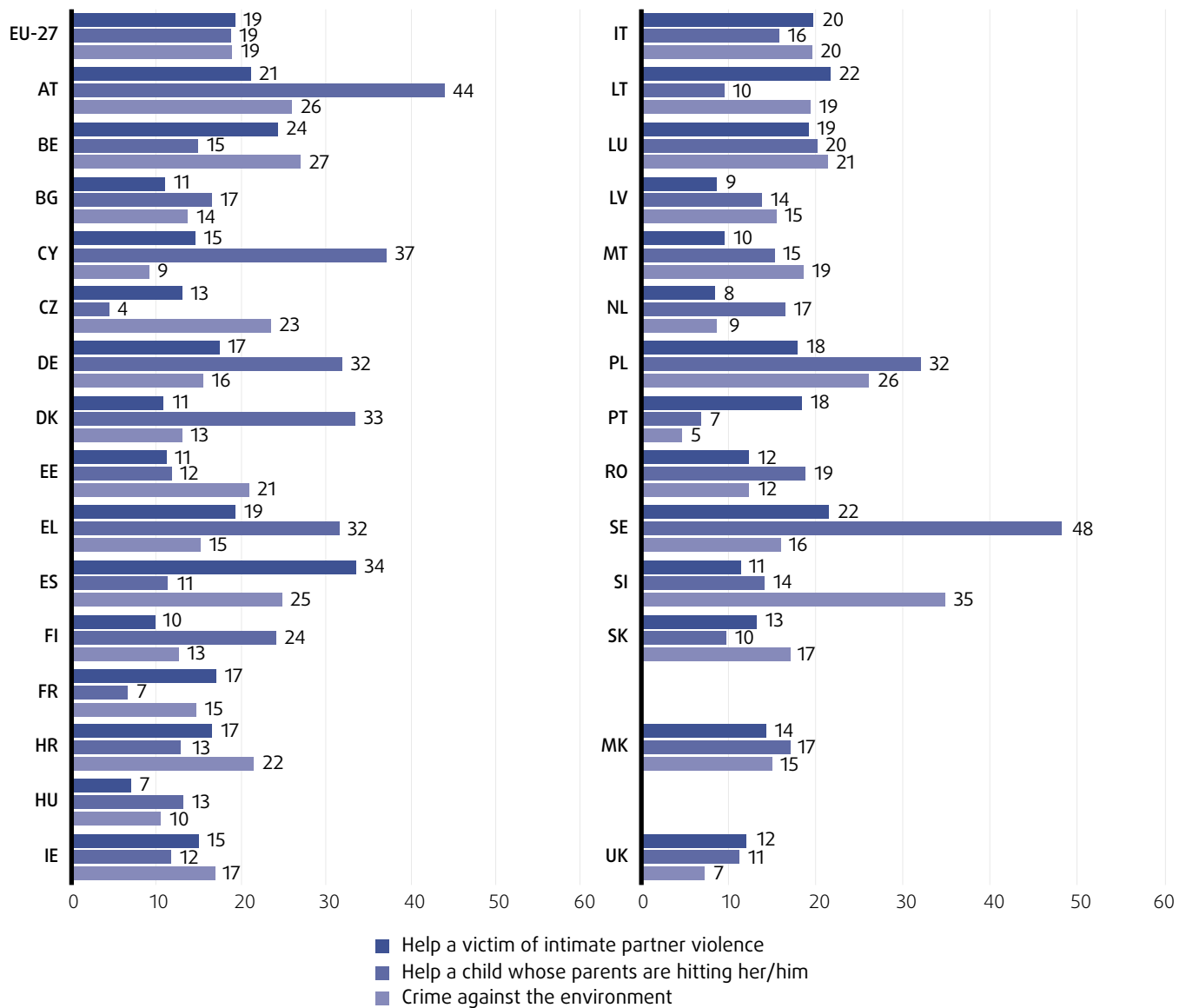
There are only minor differences in people’s readiness to go over and intervene in the three situations at the EU level. However, there are notable differences at the country level. For example, in some countries many people would be very willing to go over and intervene if they saw a parent hitting their child – 48 % in Sweden, 44 % in Austria and 37 % in Cyprus, to name only a few – but only 4 % in Czechia and 7 % in France and Portugal (Figure 30). Spain has the highest percentage (34 %) of people who would be very willing to intervene if they saw a woman or a man hit their partner, and in several other countries some one in five people would be very willing to intervene, compared with 7 % in Hungary, 8 % in the Netherlands and 9 % in Latvia. Slovenia has the highest percentage of people who would be very willing to intervene if they witnessed an offence against the environment – more people in Slovenia would intervene in this offence than in partner violence or a parent hitting their child.

▲ Notes:

Out of all respondents in the EU-27 who were asked to complete the section ‘Rights awareness and responsibilities’ of the survey (n = 24,354); weighted results.



**FIGURE 30: BEING 'VERY WILLING' TO GO OVER AND INTERVENE IN THREE DIFFERENT SITUATIONS, BY COUNTRY (%)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

▲ Notes:  
Out of all respondents in the EU-27, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom who were asked to complete the section 'Rights awareness and responsibilities' of the survey (n = 26,045); weighted results.

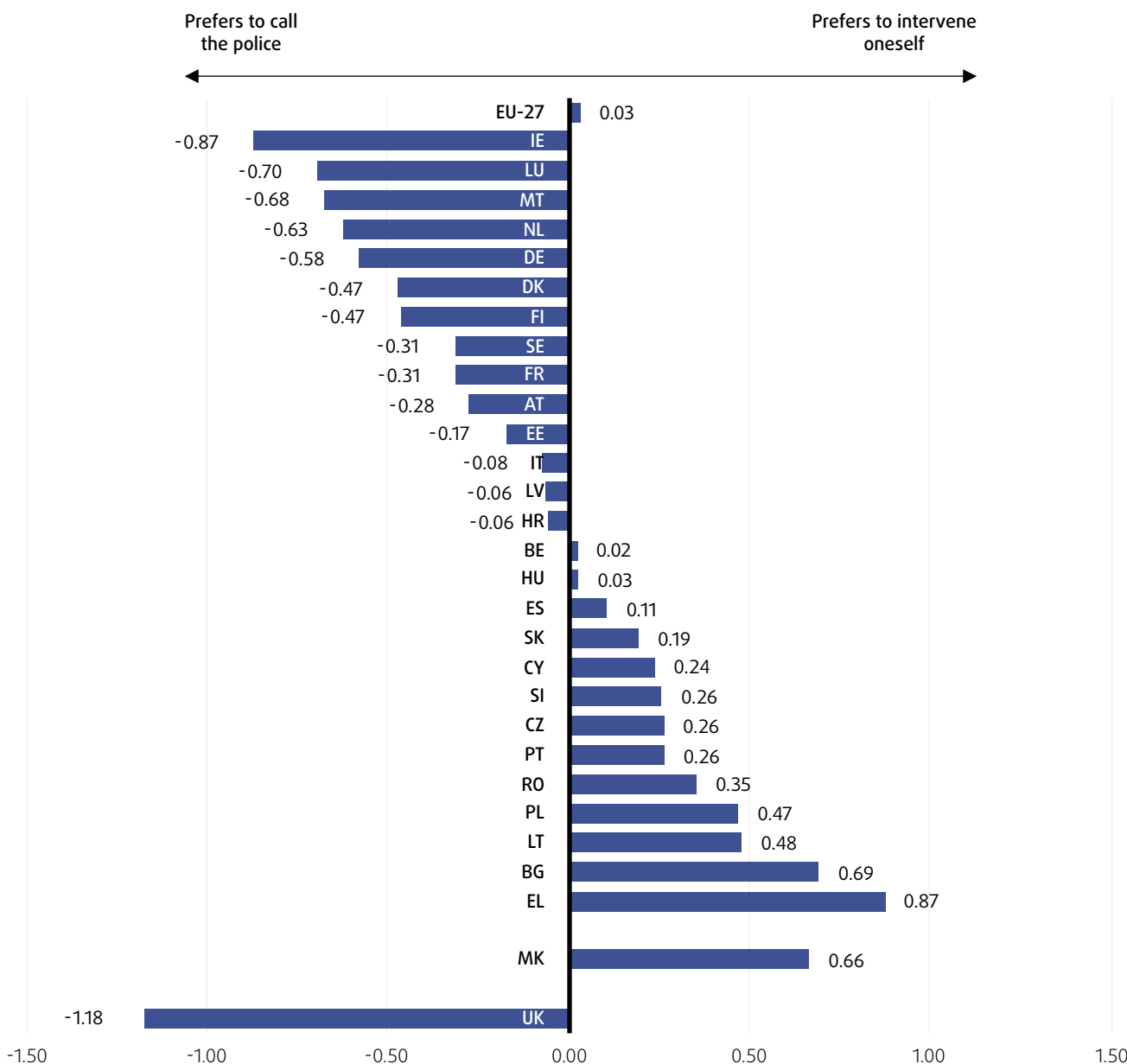
People's willingness to take action, in general, can be examined by calculating an overall score. The answer categories are given numerical values from 1, for 'not at all willing' to take the described action, to 4, for 'very willing'. Adding up the answers for each scenario results in a score for which the minimum value, 3, corresponds to being not at all willing to take any of the three actions and the maximum value, 12, corresponds to being very willing to take all three actions.

Among EU Member States, Austria, Denmark, Germany and Sweden are among the five Member States with the highest scores for each of the three actions (willingness to intervene, call the police, give evidence in court), indicating high expressed willingness to take action. In addition, Luxembourg is among the five Member States with the highest score in terms of willingness to call the police and give evidence in court, while Poland is among the five EU Member States with highest scores on willingness to go over and intervene.. Bulgaria, Hungary and Portugal are among the five Member States with the lowest scores for each of the three actions. Other EU Member States among those with the lowest scores – depending on the action – are Czechia, Lithuania, Latvia and Malta.

It is possible to identify differences in how ready people in various countries would be to intervene personally when witnessing an offence, as opposed to calling the police – that is, engaging the criminal justice system (Figure 31). In countries such as Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta and the United Kingdom, people prefer having the police address the situation to direct personal intervention. In countries such as Bulgaria, Greece, Lithuania, North Macedonia and Poland, people would rather intervene themselves than call the police.

**“I was summoned to court as a witness and even as a witness I was so extremely humiliated, I left crying.”**  
 (Woman, between 30 and 44 years old, focus group participant, Hungary)

**FIGURE 31: OVERALL PREFERENCE FOR INTERVENING OR CALLING THE POLICE, DIFFERENCE IN TOTAL SCORE, SUM OF THREE SITUATIONS ASKED ABOUT, BY COUNTRY (%)**



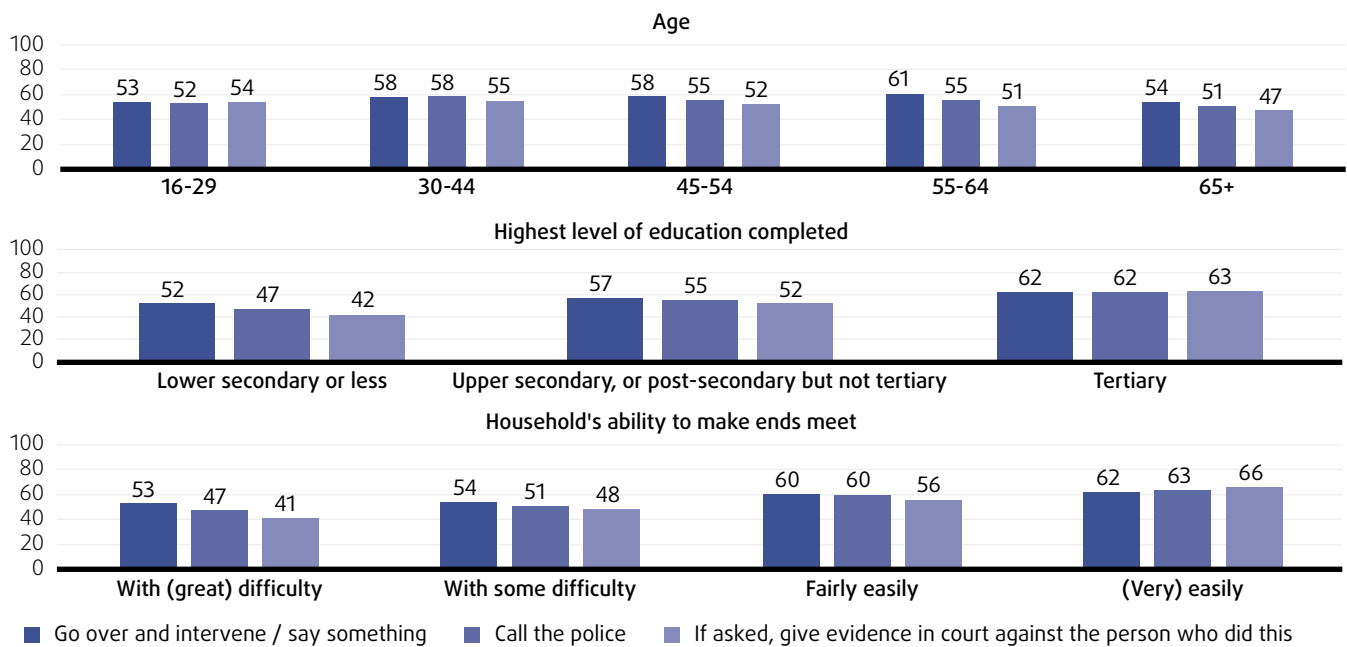
Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

People’s age, education and ability to make ends meet, in particular, affect their readiness to engage in more formal ways (Figure 32). In the scenario concerning a crime against the environment, young people are equally likely to intervene, call the police and, if asked, give evidence in court. In some of the older age groups, people are less ready to take more formal action (such as call the police or give evidence in court) than to intervene in the situation (Figure 32). People with lower levels of education and those who struggle to make ends meet also shy away from taking formal action, compared with people with higher levels of education or those who make ends meet (very) easily.

▲ Notes:  
 Out of all respondents in the EU-27, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom who were asked to complete the section ‘Rights awareness and responsibilities’ of the survey (n = 26,045); weighted results.



**FIGURE 32: PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING OR VERY WILLING TO TAKE ACTION WHEN WITNESSING A CRIME AGAINST THE ENVIRONMENT, BY SELECTED SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

Notes:  
 Out of all respondents in the EU-27 who were asked to complete the section 'Rights awareness and responsibilities' of the survey (n = 24,354); weighted results.

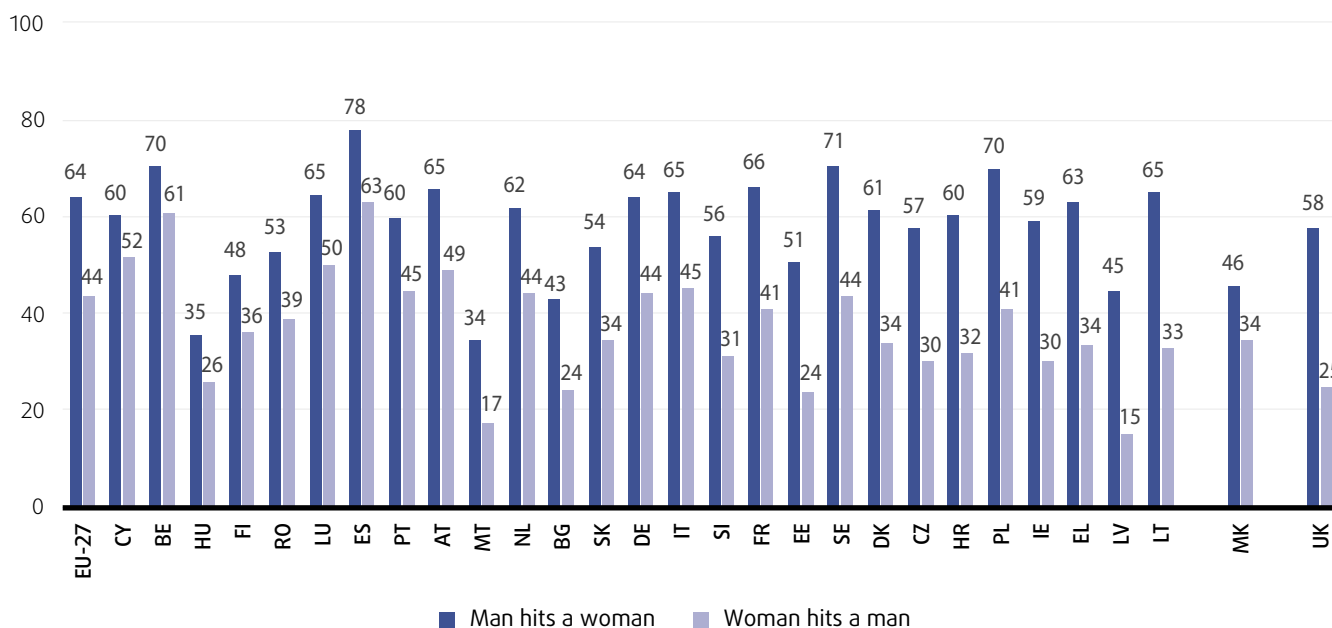
**Impact of genders of victim and perpetrator on people's willingness to intervene**

In two out of the three scenarios, the questionnaire used a split sample design. In the scenario concerning physical violence against a partner, half of the sample saw the question about a man hitting a woman, while the other half of the sample saw the same question but about a woman hitting a man. Similarly, the question concerning a parent being physically violent to a child referred alternately to a mother slapping her child and a father slapping his child.

The split sample design helps to balance out any unconscious bias respondents may have. For example, if the question were worded as 'a person hits their partner', some respondents might automatically associate this with a man hitting a woman, even though the question does not refer to the gender of the victim or the perpetrator. In addition, when translating the question into different survey languages, it can be very difficult to phrase it in a gender-neutral way in all languages.

Based on the wordings which respondents saw, there is a notable difference between answers to the question about violence against a partner. In the EU-27, 64 % would be willing or very willing to intervene if they saw a man hitting a woman on the street, compared with 44 % being willing or very willing to intervene if they saw a woman hitting a man (Figure 33). In all countries in the survey, people would be more willing to intervene if they saw a man hitting a woman than a woman hitting a man. The difference in results between the two situations ranges from 30 percentage points or more in Greece, Latvia and Lithuania to 10 percentage points or less in Belgium, Cyprus and Hungary.

**FIGURE 33: PEOPLE WHO ARE WILLING OR VERY WILLING TO INTERVENE WHEN WITNESSING PHYSICAL VIOLENCE BETWEEN PARTNERS, BY SITUATION AND COUNTRY (%)<sup>a,b</sup>**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

The differences in the results between the two scenarios are irrespective of the respondent's gender. Specifically, 61 % of women and 68 % of men would be willing or very willing to intervene if they saw a man hit a woman on the street, while 40 % of women and 48 % of men would be willing or very willing to intervene when seeing a woman hit a man.

When witnessing a parent slapping a child, 52 % of people in the EU-27 would be willing or very willing to intervene against a father, and 50 % against a mother. At the country level, the differences depending on the parent's gender are smaller than those regarding gender in partner violence. In all but one case the difference in the willingness to intervene against a mother and against a father is within +/- 10 percentage points. The exception is Luxembourg, where 63 % would be willing or very willing to intervene if a father slapped his child compared with 48 % if a mother slapped her child, a difference of 15 percentage points.



Notes:

- <sup>a</sup> Out of all respondents in the EU-27, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom who were asked to complete the section 'Rights awareness and responsibilities' of the survey EU-27 (n = 26,045); weighted results.
- <sup>b</sup> The order of the EU Member States is based on the difference between the willingness to go over and intervene when witnessing a man hitting a woman and when witnessing a woman hitting a man. The EU Member States on the left have the smallest differences in people's willingness to intervene in the two situations, while those on the right have the biggest differences.

# 6

## WORRY ABOUT CRIME AND RISK AVOIDANCE

### KEY FINDINGS

- ★ People's concern about experiencing crime varies by type of crime. For example, 63 % are very or somewhat worried about somebody misusing their online bank account or credit/debit cards in the 12 months following the survey. Meanwhile, 47 % are very or somewhat worried about experiencing a terrorist attack.
- ★ Overall, 54 % are very or somewhat worried about someone breaking into their home to steal or try to steal something, and 62 % worry about their mobile phone, wallet or purse being stolen, both in the 12 months following the survey.
- ★ Concern about experiencing various crimes varies based on people's socio-demographic characteristics. Rates of worry about crime are higher among women, people with lower levels of education, the unemployed, and those who struggle to make ends meet with their household income. In this last group, 52 % worry about experiencing a crime, compared with 30 % of those who make ends meet easily or very easily.
- ★ People who are limited in their usual activities (by a health problem or disability), people who were born outside the EU, and those who consider themselves part of an ethnic minority also express more concern about experiencing crime than people without activity limitations, people born in the survey countries, and those who do not consider themselves part of an ethnic minority.
- ★ Women engage in active risk avoidance more than men to protect themselves from the perceived risk of being assaulted or threatened. This means they avoid going to places where there are no other people around, avoid certain streets or areas, and avoid being alone with someone they know who might cause them harm. These findings reflect the survey results indicating that women experience a much higher rate of sexual harassment by strangers than men do. That would help explain risk avoidance behaviours.
- ★ For example, 64 % of women at least sometimes avoid going to places where there are no other people around, compared with 36 % of men. Avoiding certain situations and places is even more common among young people. For fear of assault or harassment, 83 % of women and 58 % of men aged 16–29 years avoid one or more of the three situations listed in the survey.
- ★ Specifically, 41 % of women at least sometimes avoid being alone with someone they know, for fear of assault or harassment, compared with 25 % of men.

- ★ Those who have experienced physical violence and/or harassment are more likely to avoid situations they perceive as potentially unsafe. For example, 37 % of women in the EU-27 who have experienced physical violence and/or harassment take care to avoid situations they perceive to present a risk of physical or sexual assault or harassment, compared with 21 % of women who have not experienced physical violence and/or harassment.

The impact of crime goes beyond direct, personal experience. People who perceive themselves to be at risk of becoming victims of crime may take action that they believe will reduce their risk of experiencing crime. That could involve avoiding taking certain routes or avoiding going outside late at night, or investing in protective measures such as burglar alarms. These actions come at a cost, monetary (the price of protective equipment or private security) as well as the more intangible cost of limiting one's movements and the psychological burden of worry.



## What did the survey ask?

*How worried are you that in the next 12 months you could experience any of the following?*

- Burglary of your home
- Terrorist attack
- Misuse of your online bank account or credit card details. This could involve someone making purchases online using your card or account details without your permission
- Theft of your mobile phone, wallet or purse

Answer categories: Very worried, somewhat worried, not very worried, not worried at all. In addition, respondents who did not select one of these answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say', 'don't know' or 'does not apply to me'.

*At any time in the past 12 months, have you done any of the following for fear of being either physically or sexually assaulted, or harassed?*

- Avoided certain streets or going to certain areas
- Avoided going to places where there are no other people around, for example parks or car parks
- Avoided being alone with someone you know who makes you feel unsafe

Answer categories: Never, sometimes, often, all the time. In addition, respondents who did not select one of these answer categories could answer 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

The results show a difference between the experiences of women and of men, in both concern about various crimes and, especially, risk avoidance behaviours adopted out of concern for one's safety. Women, and young women particularly, adopt risk avoidance measures against the threat of (in particular) sexual harassment and sexual violence, which has a disproportionate impact on women. Being discouraged from going to public places imposes restrictions on different fundamental rights, in particular the right to liberty (Article 6 of the Charter) and respect for private life (Article 7). In this context, the Victims' Rights Directive requires that women victims of gender-based violence be provided with special support and protection because of the high risk of secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation and retaliation connected with such violence.

Based on the UN 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, UN Member States have set out to assess their progress on addressing perceptions of safety with indicator 16.1.4, 'Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live'. This indicator is related to target 16.1, 'Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere', under SDG 16: 'Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels'.

This chapter examines the survey results regarding people's worry about experiencing specific crimes and the measures people have taken as a reaction to the perceived risk of crime.

In addition to concerns about crime that potentially involves the loss of life, property or money, the increasing role of technology and online communication in people's lives means that they may also be concerned about the misuse of their personal information online. The Fundamental Rights Survey asked how concerned people are that various groups will access the information they share online without their permission or consent, including criminals, fraudsters or foreign governments. The results from this question are in a separate FRA publication.<sup>67</sup>

## 6.1. WORRY ABOUT CRIME

The Fundamental Rights Survey asked respondents how worried they felt about experiencing four types of crime<sup>68</sup> in the following 12 months. People in the EU-27 are equally worried about having their online bank account or payment card details misused (in total, 63 % 'very worried' or 'somewhat worried') and having their mobile phone, wallet or purse stolen (62 %), the results indicate (Figure 34). People expressed slightly less concern about experiencing a burglary or a terrorist attack.

However, it is notable that one in five people in the EU-27 (19 %) are very concerned about experiencing a terrorist attack. This is in spite of terrorist attacks being rare. According to Europol, in 2019, 10 people died in the EU as a result of terrorist attacks and 27 people were injured, and a total of 119 terrorist attacks were recorded.<sup>69</sup> Worry about terrorism is much higher in some EU Member States than others, the present results show. Overall, 52 % of people in Spain, 26 % in France and 23 % in Latvia are very worried about experiencing a terrorist attack in the next 12 months, compared with 3 % in Ireland, 5 % in Poland and 6 % in the Netherlands.<sup>70</sup>

**"I have this big problem since the terrorist attacks, it's this thing that scares me, seeing soldiers, too many police, I feel watched from everywhere and it distresses me more than anything else."**

(Man, between 18 and 29 years old, focus group participant, France)



<sup>67</sup> See FRA (2020), **Your Rights Matter: Security concerns and experiences**, Luxembourg, Publications Office.

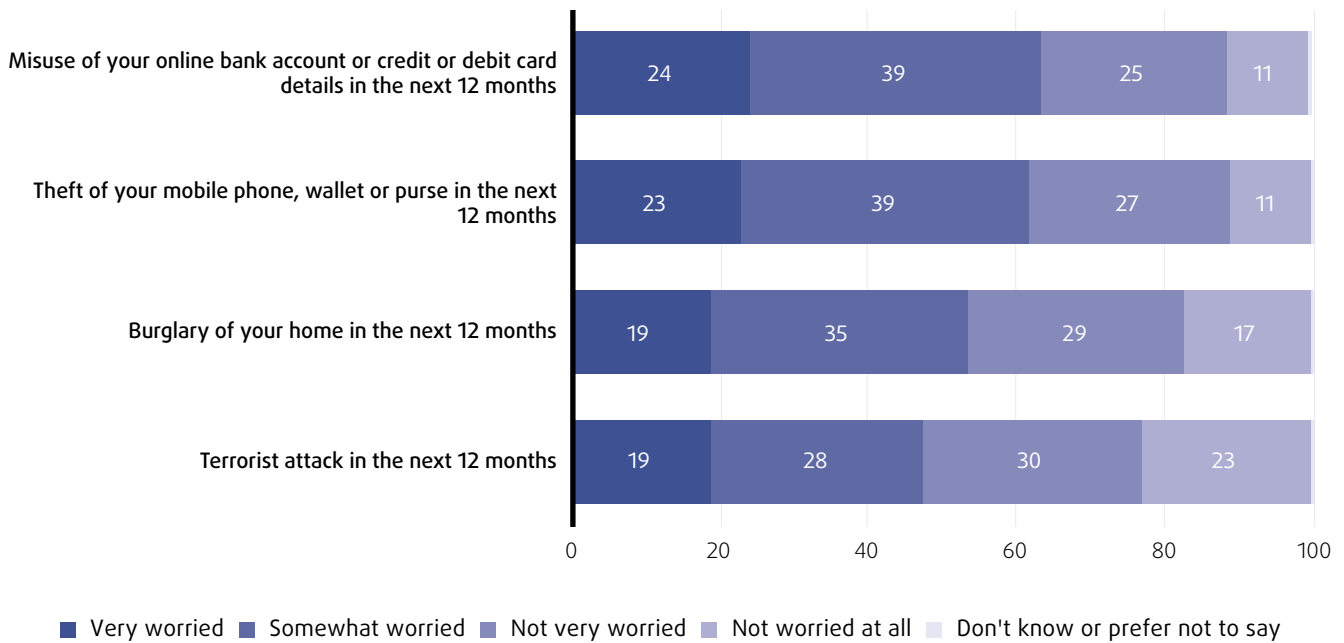
<sup>68</sup> The four crimes asked about in the survey are burglary of your home; terrorist attack; misuse of your online bank account or credit card details; and theft of your mobile phone, wallet or purse.

<sup>69</sup> Europol (2020), **European Union terrorism situation and trend report (TE-SAT) 2020**.

<sup>70</sup> For a full breakdown of the results by country, see FRA (2020), **Your Rights Matter: Security concerns and experiences**, Luxembourg, Publications Office.



**FIGURE 34: WORRY ABOUT EXPERIENCING SELECTED CRIMES IN THE 12 MONTHS FOLLOWING THE INTERVIEW (EU-27, %)**



Notes: Out of all respondents in the EU-27 (n = 32,537), excluding respondents who answered ‘does not apply to me’; weighted results.

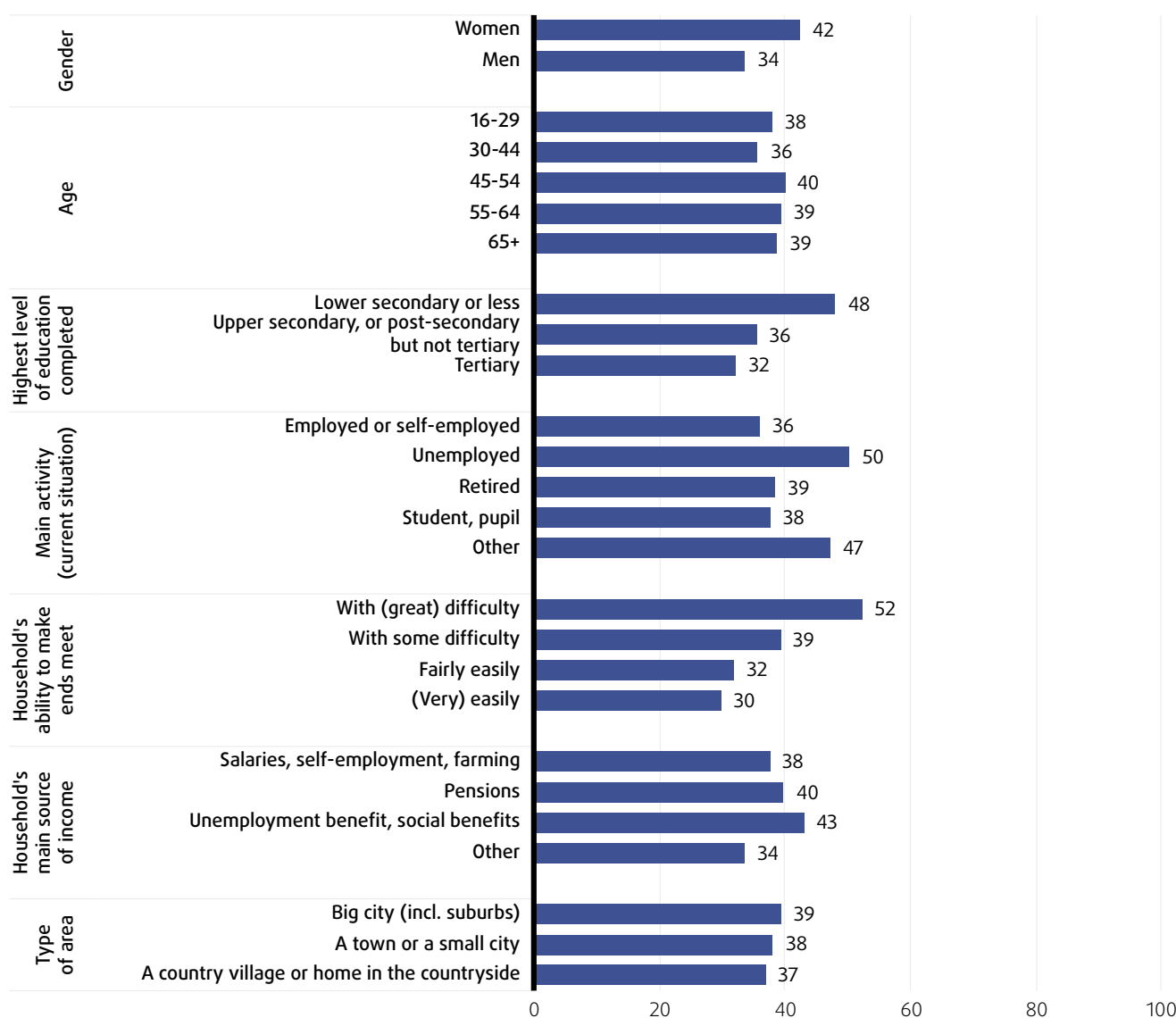
Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

**“For example, I sometimes wonder, when my daughter comes home from her classes and passes by the woods... I assume that nothing will happen, but somewhere inside there is some anxiety. The longer she is gone, the more I get anxious...”**

(Woman, between 45 and 54 years old, focus group participant, Poland)

Higher rates of worry about experiencing one or more of these four types of crime are associated with lower levels of education, being unemployed and having (great) difficulty making ends meet with the household’s income (Figure 35). Women are also more worried about crime than men: 42 % of women are very worried about experiencing one or more of the four crimes asked about in the survey, compared with 34 % of men. In contrast, there are no notable differences in the rate of worry by age or area where people live.

**FIGURE 35: FEELING VERY WORRIED ABOUT EXPERIENCING ONE OR MORE OF THE FOUR CRIMES LISTED IN THE SURVEY, IN THE 12 MONTHS FOLLOWING THE INTERVIEW, BY SELECTED SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS (EU-27, %)**



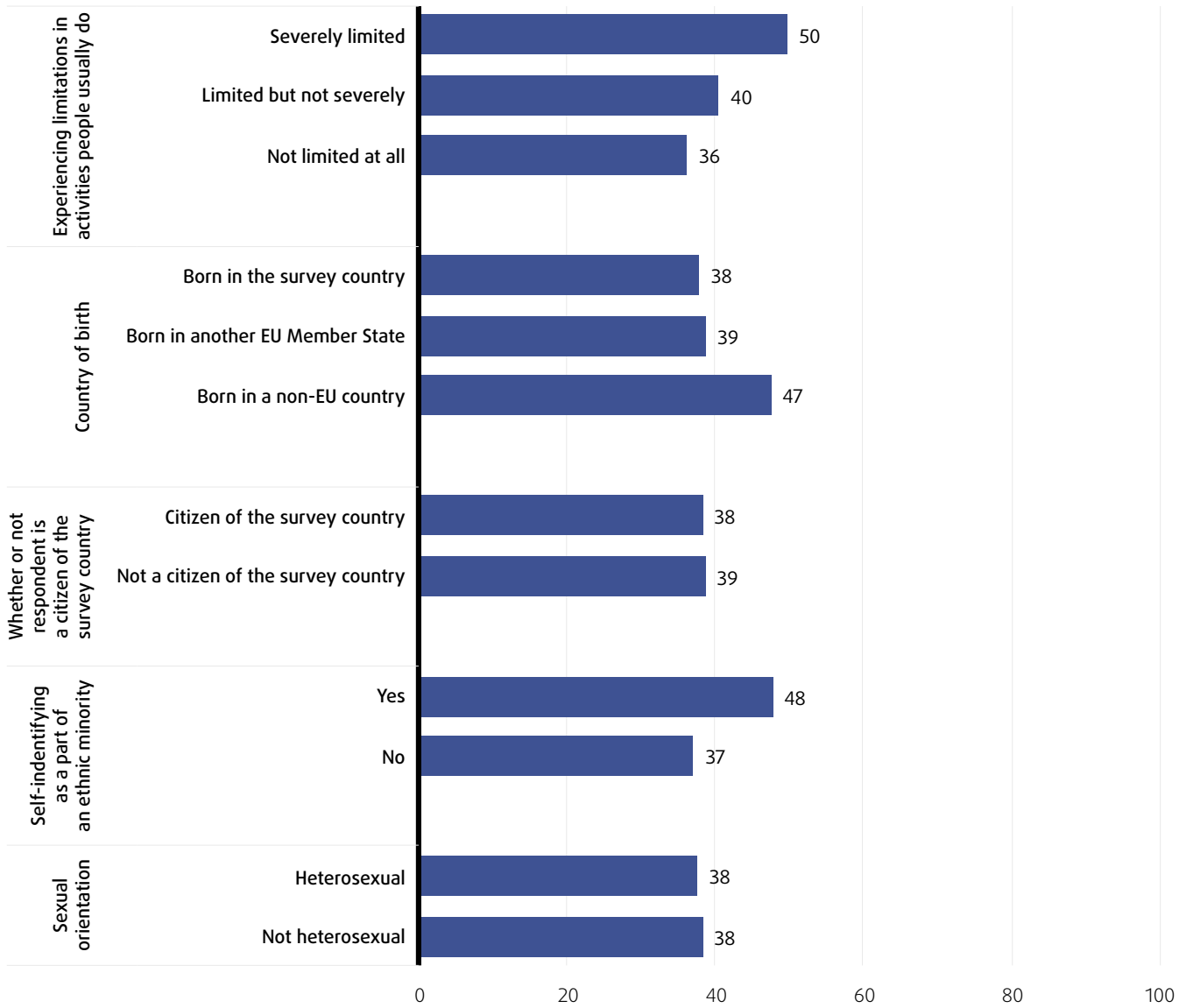
Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

People who experience limitations in activities people usually do (due to a health problem or disability) express more concern about becoming a victim of crime – 50 % very worried – than people who do not experience such limitations (36 %) (Figure 36). Those who consider themselves part of an ethnic minority and those who are born in a non-EU country are also more concerned about experiencing crime than people who do not consider themselves part of an ethnic minority and people who were born in the survey country or another EU Member State.

▲ Notes:

Out of all respondents in the EU-27 (n = 32,537), excluding respondents who answered 'does not apply to me'; weighted results.

**FIGURE 36: FEELING VERY WORRIED ABOUT EXPERIENCING ONE OR MORE OF THE FOUR CRIMES LISTED IN THE SURVEY, IN THE 12 MONTHS FOLLOWING THE INTERVIEW, BY SELECTED GROUPS (EU-27, %)**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

▲ Notes:

Out of all respondents in the EU-27 (n = 32,537), excluding respondents who answered 'does not apply to me'; weighted results.

## 6.2. RISK AVOIDANCE

One of the ways in which people respond to the risk of crime is to avoid situations they consider risky. This can be an effective tactic to avoid victimisation and can result in a lower rate of victimisation if used by many. However, avoiding situations that involve a risk of crime can mean that people limit their activities and are not able to enjoy and participate in public spaces as much as others. Avoidance can also exert a toll, for example in extra time spent in taking a safer route or the psychological burden of being on the lookout for danger.

The survey asked people if in the 12 months before the survey they had avoided any of three situations for fear of assault or harassment: places where there are no other people around (such as empty streets or parking garages), certain streets or areas, and being alone with someone.

One in two people in the EU-27 avoid, at least sometimes, certain streets or areas, or places where there are no people around, for fear of being assaulted or threatened, the results show. Avoiding being alone with someone is less common, but one in three people (34 %) still do that at least sometimes (Figure 37). The results show notable differences by gender. Women avoid all three situations more commonly than men. Whereas 64 % of women avoid deserted places at least sometimes, only 36 % of men consider it necessary to do so. As another example, 41 % of women at least sometimes avoid being alone with someone they know, for fear of assault or harassment, compared with 25 % of men.



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**“This is a nice and peaceful place to live, unless you have to go home late at night. I had to learn the safe routes home.”**

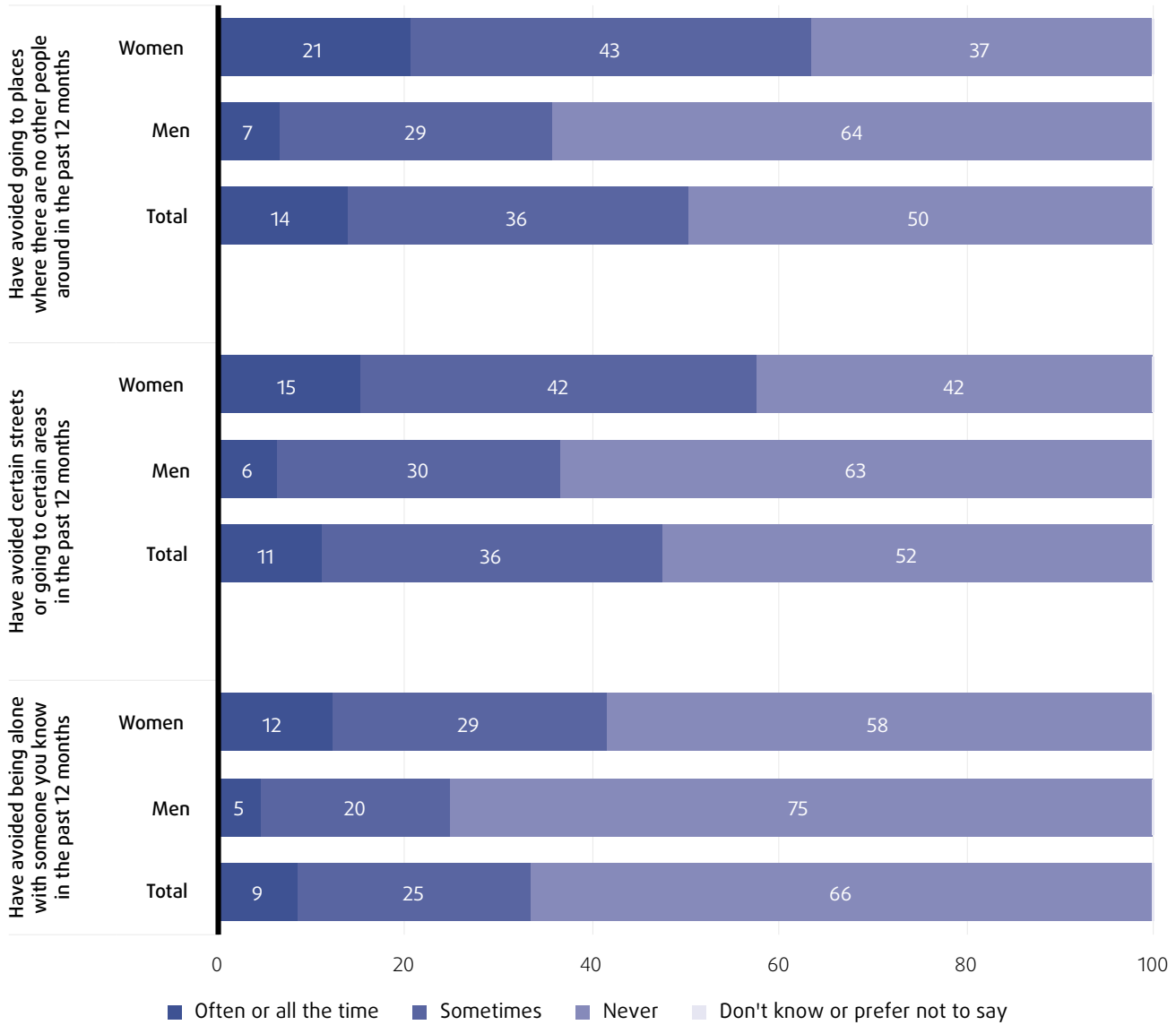
(Woman, between 18 and 29 years old, focus group participant, Bulgaria)

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**“In fact I have been followed several times, but apart from that I have told myself that I will not speak to other people that I do not know, especially in the evening.”**

(Woman, between 30 and 59 years old, focus group participant, France)

**FIGURE 37: AVOIDING SELECTED SITUATIONS FOR FEAR OF ASSAULT OR HARASSMENT, IN THE 12 MONTHS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY GENDER (EU-27, %)**



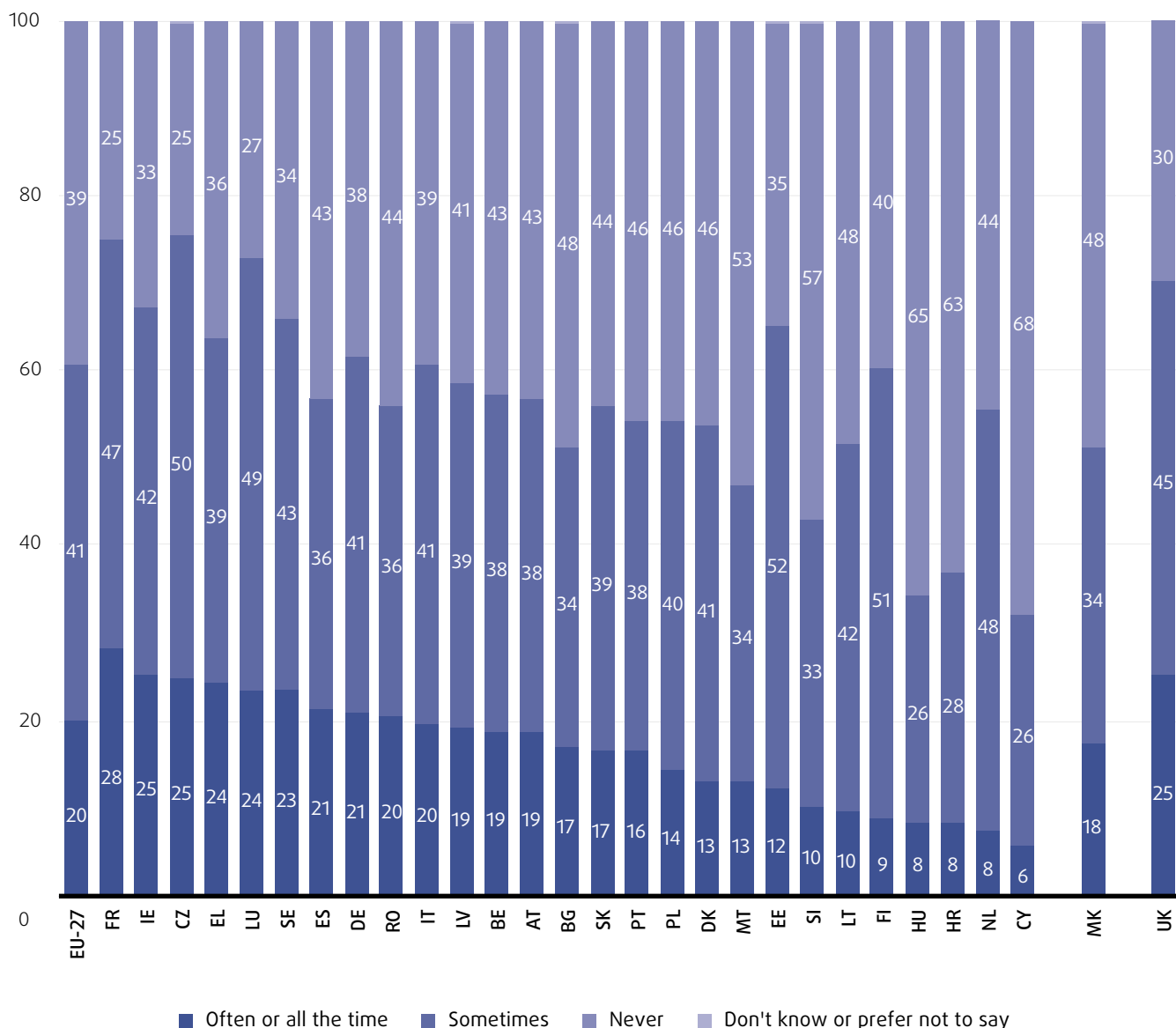
Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

▲ Notes:

Out of all respondents in the EU-27 (n = 32,537); weighted results.

The use of avoidance strategies varies between countries. One in four people or more in Czechia, France, Ireland and the United Kingdom avoid certain situations or places often or all the time for fear of assault or harassment (one or more of the three listed situations) (Figure 38). In contrast, fewer than one in 10 in Croatia, Cyprus, Finland, Hungary and the Netherlands consider it necessary to avoid certain situations or places.

**FIGURE 38: AVOIDING ONE OR MORE OF THE THREE LISTED SITUATIONS FOR FEAR OF ASSAULT OR HARASSMENT, IN THE 12 MONTHS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY COUNTRY (%)<sup>a,b</sup>**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

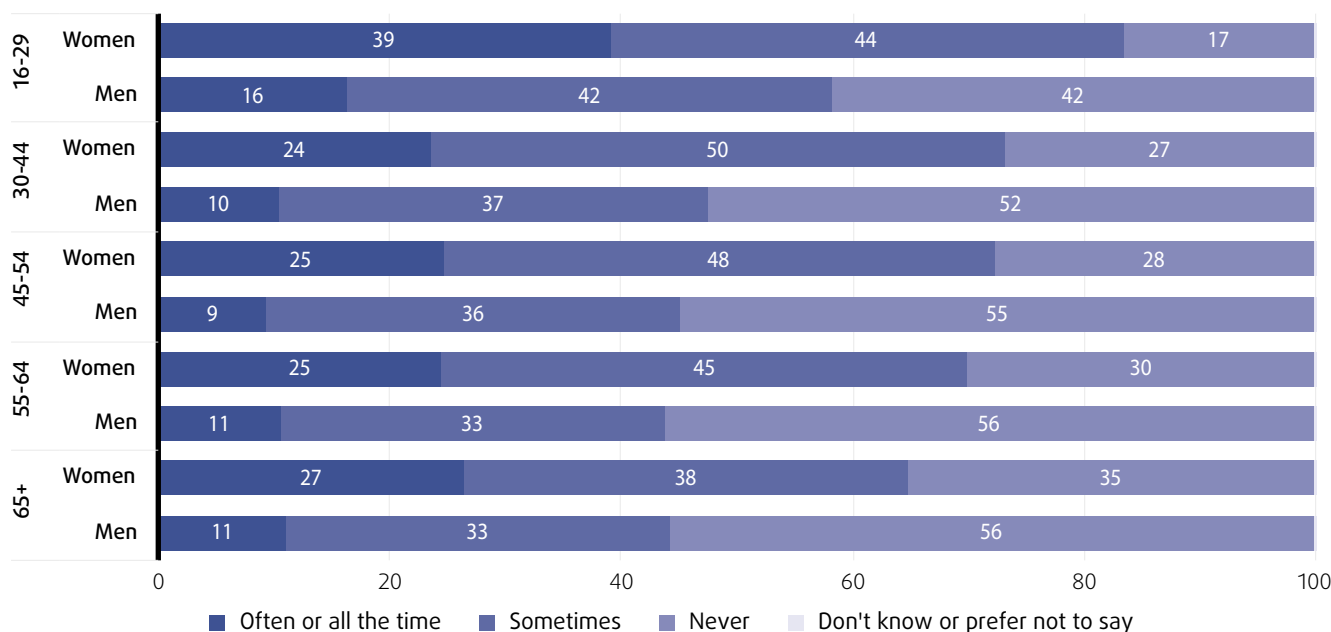
▲ Notes:

- <sup>a</sup> Out of all respondents in the EU-27, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom (n = 34,948); weighted results.
- <sup>b</sup> In the survey, respondents were asked the following question: “At any time in the past 12 months, have you done any of the following for fear of being either physically or sexually assaulted, or harassed? A) Avoided certain streets or going to certain areas, B) Avoided going to places where there are no other people around. For example, parks or car parks, C) Avoided being alone with someone you know who makes you feel unsafe”. The figure summarises respondents’ answers to the three items. If a respondent answered ‘often’ or ‘all the time’ to any of the three, their answer is represented in that category. If a respondent answered any of the three items with ‘sometimes’ but none with ‘often’ or ‘all the time’, their answer is represented above as ‘sometimes’. Respondents who answered all three items ‘don’t know’ or ‘prefer not to say’ are included in the category ‘don’t know or prefer not to say’.

As already shown in **Figure 37** with respect to results concerning each of the three situations in the survey, avoiding situations for fear of assault or harassment is more common for women than men. Overall, whereas 72 % of women in the EU-27 indicate that they avoid one or more of the situations listed at least sometimes, 48 % of men mention that they avoid these situations. This may partly explain women’s lower rate of experiences of violence and harassment than men’s, although the differences in rates are small (see Chapters 1 and 2).

The differences between women and men are even more striking when age is considered alongside gender. Most women in the age group 16–29 years avoid certain places or situations at least sometimes, and 39 % often or all the time, for fear of assault or harassment (Figure 39). Among all the age groups, the results for 16- to 29-year-olds stand out. The use of avoidance strategies remains relatively stable from the age of 30 onwards, decreasing slightly with increasing age. At the same time, in all age groups the percentage of women who avoid certain places or situations often or all the time is at least twice that of men.

**FIGURE 39: AVOIDING ONE OR MORE OF THE THREE LISTED SITUATIONS FOR FEAR OF ASSAULT OR HARASSMENT, IN THE 12 MONTHS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY GENDER AND AGE (EU-27, %)<sup>a,b</sup>**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

▲ Notes:

- <sup>a</sup> Out of all respondents in the EU-27 (n = 32,537); weighted results.
- <sup>b</sup> In the survey, respondents were asked the following question: "At any time in the past 12 months, have you done any of the following for fear of being either physically or sexually assaulted, or harassed? A) Avoided certain streets or going to certain areas, B) Avoided going to places where there are no other people around. For example, parks or car parks, C) Avoided being alone with someone you know who makes you feel unsafe". The figure summarises respondents' answers to the three items. If a respondent answered 'often' or 'all the time' to any of the three, their answer is represented in that category. If a respondent answered any of the three items with 'sometimes' but none with 'often' or 'all the time', their answer is represented above as 'sometimes'. Respondents who answered all three items 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say' are included in the category 'don't know or prefer not to say'.

Avoidance is also more common for young people. They also have the highest rate of experiencing violence and harassment; see Chapters 1 and 2. In the age group 16–29 years, 71 % avoid situations for fear of being assaulted or threatened, in contrast to 60 % or fewer in other age groups. The higher rate of avoidance among young people than in other age groups is also reflected in 72 % of students and pupils avoiding situations where they perceive a risk of assault or harassment.

Two in three people (66 %) who live in big cities also use avoidance as a strategy, compared with 53 % of people who live in a rural area (country village or countryside). This may reflect differences in the actual risk of experiencing violence or harassment, although the results in Chapters 1 and 2 suggest there are only small differences in rates of violence and harassment between urban and rural areas. Another possible explanation is that avoidance is a less useful strategy in rural areas; in urban areas it is easier to avoid certain places or people by selecting a different route or visiting different places (such as supermarkets, cafés or bars).

Experiencing violence and/or harassment makes it more likely that people will start avoiding situations they consider potentially unsafe. Of women in the EU-27 who had experienced one or more incidents of physical violence or harassment in the five years before the survey, 37 % avoided certain situations (any of the three listed in the survey) often or all the time in the 12 months before the survey, compared with 21 % of women who had not experienced physical violence or harassment. A similar impact of victimisation experiences can be seen among men: 18 % avoid certain situations often or all the time if they had experienced physical violence or harassment in the five years before the survey, as opposed to 7 % of those men who had not experienced physical violence or harassment.

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**“As a city dweller you have it in your blood a little more to watch out, like where am I walking and in what way am I walking there, can I approach people, are there enough people here so that maybe I can appeal to their attention? So, that’s a game in a city, at least a little bit.”**

(Man, between 54 and 64 years old, focus group participant, Germany)





# Concluding remarks

The results of this survey powerfully indicate the extent to which people in the EU are exposed to physical violence. Overall, 6 % of people in the EU experience physical violence in a year, some 22 million people (an estimate based on the results of the survey relative to the EU's population). The findings also document the pervasive impact of physical violence through the victims' injuries and psychological consequences. Furthermore, most experiences of violence are not reported to the police, the results show. Some incidents that are not reported to the police come to the attention of other authorities and services, when victims either report the incidents or seek assistance on issues linked to experiencing violence, such as medical treatment for injuries. The contact that police and other authorities and services have with victims of violence should be seen as opportunities to inform victims of their rights and other measures put in place to help them to seek redress and overcome the incident and its consequences.

These survey results – based on interviews carried out in 2019 – form a baseline for experiences of crime and feelings of safety with respect to a number of EU strategies adopted in 2020, including the EU Strategy on Victims' Rights 2020-2025, European Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, EU LGBTIQ equality strategy 2020-2025, as well as the measures that will be adopted as a follow-up to the European disability strategy 2010-2020. The results also provide a backdrop for data on the experiences of specific population groups and allow for an analysis of differences in outcomes in crime victimisation and safety, contributing in this way to the evidence base relevant for the EU anti-racism action plan 2020-2025 and the EU Roma strategic framework 2020-2030.

The survey results presented in this report on crime victimisation and safety can contribute to the implementation of these and other policies – and the changes they seek to implement and accelerate – in a number of ways. These include identifying good practices through a comparison of results at the country level; identifying groups at risk of being left behind or at risk of not having their voices heard due to concern for crime and safety restricting their participation in society; and supporting efforts to raise awareness of people's rights as crime victims and their responsibilities as witnesses.

Before this survey no comparable data measured the extent and nature of experiences of physical violence in the EU, although it constitutes a clear violation of the fundamental rights to human dignity and the integrity of the person, as Articles 2 and 3 of the Charter set out. Previously, the most comprehensive data set concerning experiences of violence came from FRA's survey on violence against women. However, that survey did not collect data on men's experiences of violence. The data collected in the present survey also help identify who in the population is more likely to experience physical violence. Young people, persons with limitations in their usual activities (due to a health problem or disability), ethnic minorities, and people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, or identify in another way, experience physical violence at higher rates and therefore require particular attention in efforts to ensure people's personal safety.

In addition to differences between groups in society at the EU level, the survey results point to notable differences in victimisation rates between

EU Member States. This merits further attention and additional research to identify the factors related to these differences. Differences between results for countries are normal in all international surveys, including the Commission's Eurobarometer surveys.

The violent incidents that women experience differ from those that men experience. As women disproportionately experience violence from family members or relatives, and at home, violence against women tends to stay hidden. Therefore, the survey results underline the need to continue efforts to encourage victims of intimate partner violence – and domestic violence more generally – to share their experiences and seek assistance, so that victims can receive specialised support and advice. Physical violence is often by men, against both women and men. This highlights the need to address men's role as perpetrators of violence.

Harassment is even more widespread than physical violence. Some 110 million people in the EU experience harassment in a year (an estimate based on the results of the survey relative to the EU's population). However, like violence, some groups in society encounter harassment at higher rates, including young people, those born in another EU Member State or outside the EU, ethnic minorities, and people who are lesbian, gay or bisexual, or identify in another way. Especially for young people, a large proportion is cyberharassment. That reflects the way people interact and communicate, as well as the increasing role of social media. Women, more than men, experience harassment in public settings, by perpetrators previously unknown to the victims, and these perpetrators are disproportionately men. The results stress the need to counter deep-rooted gender norms and patterns of behaviour towards women that some men consider acceptable.

Out of the three property crimes the survey asked about, the rates are highest for consumer fraud, followed by online banking and payment card fraud, and then burglary. Many incidents of consumer fraud involved cross-border purchases when victims bought goods and services online, by telephone or by mail order. In some cases they may have ordered items from outside the EU, delivered directly to the consumers. Experiences of consumer fraud, both within and from outside the EU, highlight the on-going need for EU measures to ensure a high level of consumer protection. Many property crimes are reported to the police and other authorities at a higher rate than experiences of violence and harassment. Although these crimes are of fundamentally different natures and comparisons should be made with the utmost care, these results show that low reporting rates for certain crimes should not be accepted as a given. Victims are ready to report a crime when reporting will bring about a tangible benefit and redress the damage it caused.

Crime prevention is not only a matter for the police. The responsibility extends to everyone. The majority of people in the EU would be willing to intervene if they came across incidents of environmental crime or interpersonal crime, and would also be willing to inform the police about the incident and, if requested, give evidence in court, the survey shows. However, not all people would be willing to take such action. Older people, those with lower levels of education and people experiencing difficulty making ends meet with their household income would be more reluctant to give evidence in court than to intervene while the crime was taking place. That could have a negative impact on the realisation of the rights of victims of crime in certain situations. There are also differences between EU Member States in people's readiness to contact the police. They can be influenced by different levels of trust in police. The results also point to gender asymmetry in people's willingness to intervene when witnessing a man or a woman hitting a partner of the opposite sex: more people are willing to intervene when a man is hitting a woman.

Finally, crime has a negative impact not only on the victim, but also on other people, who have heightened concern about becoming victims. Experiencing a crime can lead victims to fear repeat victimisation. Other factors, such as their gender, health status, economic standing, education and job stability, can also affect the level of concern people have about crime. Because concern about crime can be the result of many factors besides personal victimisation experiences, measures to increase people's feelings of safety can take many forms and need not be limited to addressing only crime-related matters.

Many people – particularly women – feel the need to take active measures to feel safer in response to perceived risk. While these measures can help increase people's perceived and actual safety, they place the burden on the (potential) victim, who has to make a conscious effort and limit the scope of their activities by avoiding certain places and situations. Risk avoidance measures can be a burden in terms of both time and money spent on protective equipment – a cost to the victim and not the offender.

# Annex I: Socio-demographic and other characteristics considered in the analysis

This report examines the survey results with respect to the following socio-demographic characteristics. Each question apart from those about gender and age allowed respondents to answer 'don't know' or 'prefer not to say'. These answers are not shown when results are disaggregated by socio-demographic characteristics, because so few respondents selected them.

## GENDER

Respondents were asked whether they would describe themselves as male or female, or in another way. In total, 32 respondents in the EU-27, United Kingdom and North Macedonia selected the answer 'in another way' (from zero to six respondents per country), making this group too small for a robust statistical analysis of their experiences. Therefore, this report does not show the category 'in another way' when disaggregating survey results by socio-demographic characteristics.

## AGE

Persons who were 16 years old or older were eligible to take part in the survey. The only country with an upper age limit (74 years) for respondents was Austria, where Statistics Austria collected the data.

## EDUCATION

In each country, the survey presented respondents with a list of levels of education, in the local language(s) and using the local names for types of educational institutions. The list was based on the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) to ensure that the local education categories could be coded according to a set of standard categories for EU-level comparative analysis of the results.

## SELF-DECLARED MAIN ACTIVITY

Respondents were asked to select the category that best described their current situation, based on the following list:

- employed
- self-employed
- unemployed
- retired
- unable to work because of long-standing health problems
- student, pupil
- fulfilling domestic tasks
- compulsory military or civilian service
- other.

The analysis in this report combines the answer categories 'employed' and 'self-employed'. The categories 'unable to work because of long-standing health problems', 'fulfilling domestic tasks', 'compulsory military or civilian service' and 'other' have been combined as 'other'.

## ABILITY TO MAKE ENDS MEET

Respondents were asked to assess their household's ability to make ends meet with its total income, using a scale of six answer categories, ranging from 'with great difficulty' to 'very easily'. This report presents the results in four categories: 'with (great) difficulty' (combining 'with great difficulty' and 'with difficulty'), 'with some difficulty', 'fairly easily' and '(very) easily' (combining 'easily' and 'very easily').

## MAIN SOURCE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Respondents were asked about the main source of income in their household using the following answer categories:

- wages or salaries
- income from self-employment (excluding farming)
- income from farming
- pensions
- unemployment/redundancy benefit
- other social benefits or grants
- income from investment, savings, insurance or property
- income from other sources.

The analysis combines the first three categories above as 'salaries, self-employment, farming'. The categories 'unemployment/redundancy benefit' and 'other social benefits or grants' have been combined into 'unemployment benefit, social benefit', and the last two in the list have been combined into the category 'other'.

## TYPE OF AREA

The survey asked respondents to describe the area where they live, using the following answer categories:

- a big city
- the suburbs or outskirts of a big city
- a town or a small city
- a country village
- a farm or home in the countryside
- other.
- The analysis in this report combines the first two into 'big city (incl. suburbs)'. 'A country village' and 'a farm or home in the countryside' are combined into 'a country village or home in the countryside'. The category 'other' is not shown because of the low number of respondents who selected it.

## ACTIVITY LIMITATIONS

The survey incorporated the questions of the Minimum European Health Module, developed by Eurostat, to collect data on self-perceived health. The module includes the following question:

*"For at least the past six months, to what extent have you been limited because of a health problem in activities people usually do? Would you*

*say you have been... [Answer categories: Severely limited, Limited but not severely, Not limited at all, Prefer not to say, Don't know]"*

The question can measure long-standing limitations related to physical or mental health problems, illness or disability.<sup>71</sup>

## COUNTRY OF BIRTH

Respondents were asked if they were born in the survey country – that is, their country of residence where they took part in the survey. Those who were not born in the survey country were asked to select their country of birth from a drop-down list of countries. The analysis presents the answers in the following three categories: 'born in the survey country', 'born in another EU Member State' and 'born in a non-EU country'.

## CITIZENSHIP OF THE SURVEY COUNTRY

Irrespective of their country of birth, respondents were asked if they were citizens of the survey country. Based on this question, the analysis of the survey results can differentiate between the categories 'citizen of the survey country' and 'not a citizen of the survey country'.

## SELF-IDENTIFICATION AS A PART OF AN ETHNIC MINORITY IN THE SURVEY COUNTRY

The survey asked the following question:

*"Do you consider yourself to be part of an ethnic minority in [the survey country]?"*

The analysis presents selected results separately for people who answered 'yes' and those who answered 'no'.

## SELF-IDENTIFIED SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The survey asked respondents the following question:

*"Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself? [Answer categories: Heterosexual/Straight, Gay/Lesbian, Bisexual, Other, Prefer not to say, Don't know]"*

That is, the question wording did not refer specifically to sexual orientation, but the answer categories were defined on this basis. The analysis of the results combines the categories 'gay/lesbian', 'bisexual' and 'other' into 'not heterosexual'. Otherwise, the low number of responses in individual answer categories would have made analysis impossible.

Despite a lack of data concerning the experiences of sexual minorities, many social surveys still do not ask about respondents' sexual orientation. Therefore, it is good to note that, based on the Fundamental Rights Survey, 91 % of people in the EU-27 identify as 'heterosexual/straight'; 5 % identify as 'gay/lesbian', 'bisexual' or 'other'; and 4 % answered 'prefer not to say' or 'don't know'.

<sup>71</sup> Eurostat (2013), **European Health Interview Survey (EHIS wave 2) – Methodological manual**, Luxembourg, Publications Office, pp. 16–17.

# Annex II: Methodology

This annex summarises the implementation and data collection outcomes of the Fundamental Rights Survey. A detailed description of the survey methodology and fieldwork outcomes will be available in a technical report, which will be published in 2021. The technical report will also describe the pre-test FRA carried out in 2015–2016 to develop the survey questionnaire, and the pilot that took place in 2017 to help inform the final design. The survey was conducted in 2019.

## POPULATION AND REPRESENTATIVENESS

People aged 16 years and older who had their usual place of residence in the survey country were eligible to take part in the survey. The results are representative of this population at the EU level as well as for each individual country included in the survey.

## GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE AND SAMPLING

The survey was carried out in the 27 EU Member States, the United Kingdom (an EU Member State at the time) and North Macedonia (the only non-EU country with observer status at FRA when the survey was designed).

In each country, available sampling frames were assessed before the main data collection. The frames that offered close to 100 % coverage of the population nationwide were selected for use in the survey, to draw a random probability sample of respondents and to contact them. These sample frames could include sources such as population registers or registers of addresses. In countries where such sample frames did not exist, or national authorities did not give access to the frames, the sample was selected in a multi-stage selection procedure, as commonly used in surveys. The addresses of the population were enumerated (listed) in a random selection of areas within the countries, partly including random route methods. This method allowed the selection of a representative sample of people based on the enumerated addresses.

The survey could not access existing sample frames or use enumeration of addresses in Germany and France. In these two countries, the data collection used existing online panels.

In all cases, irrespective of the sample frame used, the published results have been adjusted through weighting so that the key respondent characteristics of the sample replicate the distribution of key population characteristics according to official statistics (see the section on 'Weighting' in this annex).

## FIELDWORK TEAMS

Ipsos MORI carried out the main data collection. Partner agencies implemented the survey activities in each country. TNS Kantar implemented the feasibility study and pre-test, which preceded the main data collection. Both contractors were selected through open and competitive EU-wide tendering procedures.

In three countries FRA cooperated closely with national statistical authorities and registers in implementing the survey, so the survey fieldwork could benefit from population register data that otherwise would not have been available to FRA or its survey contractor, Ipsos MORI. In Austria, Statistics Austria (Statistik Austria) implemented the mainstage data collection. In Luxembourg, the CTIE managed the sampling and contact with respondents. In the Netherlands, the CBS provided sampling and weighting services.

## METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

FRA started developing the Fundamental Rights Survey by first testing if it could collect data online in some EU Member States. Surveys, including those by national statistical institutes, increasingly use online data collection. It can offer a more flexible way for respondents to complete the survey at a time and place of their own choosing, and can in some cases help reduce costs. To ensure representative samples in online surveys, FRA conducted a feasibility assessment in 2015–2016. The assessment started by identifying suitable sample frames in each country that could be used for a representative online survey. In the next stage, FRA carried out pilot surveys, which confirmed that online data collection would be well suited to a number of EU Member States.

Based on the results of the pilot, the full-scale Fundamental Rights Survey was carried out online in Austria, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In other countries an interviewer contacted the respondents in person. The default approach to contacting the respondents in the online countries was through a letter sent by post to a representative, random sample of recipients. The letter contained instructions for filling in the survey online, using a computer, tablet, smartphone or other device, at home or elsewhere. Respondents who initially did not complete the survey were sent additional letters as a reminder.

In France and Germany, the survey was carried out with quota samples of people participating in online survey panels. Quotas ensured that the samples matched the structure of the total population in each of the two countries in terms of age, gender, employment status, education and region. In all other countries, a representative probability sample of respondents was selected from sources typically used for social surveys. Depending on the availability of data sources in each country, they included population registers and address registers, or sampling by following an enumeration of addresses, including in some cases the use of random route procedures.

Where interviewers contacted respondents in person (in 19 of 29 countries in the survey), the interviewers supplied the respondents with a laptop or tablet computer and asked them to complete parts of the questionnaire autonomously. This approach helps to ensure comparability across countries and data collection modes (online versus face to face). Having an interviewer ask the questions can affect the answers respondents give, particularly if the questions concern topics that may be considered sensitive or the answers could be interpreted as less socially desirable. The survey used the self-completion mode specifically in sections that could be considered sensitive. This ensured better quality of data, given that the user experience of answering the questions was similar and respondents provided their answers directly using a device such as a laptop or a tablet.



## SAMPLE SIZE

In total, the final survey data set contains the answers of 34,948 respondents in the EU-27, the United Kingdom and North Macedonia. The survey set out to complete 1,000 interviews in each country. To achieve this, it determined a larger gross sample size for each country, based on available estimates of likely response rates. In most cases, the final response rate exceeded the initial estimate. In only a few cases was the final number of completed interviews slightly below the target of 1,000 respondents, as Table 1 shows.

In France and Germany, where the data collection used online panels, the sample size was increased to ensure that a large enough sample was available to examine the representativeness of the data and weight the data to adjust for any divergence from available official statistics concerning the composition of the population.

Before the analysis of the survey results began, a small number of cases were deleted from the final data set as a result of the data checks that were put in place to ensure the high quality of the data. While all survey data were checked for quality and consistency, the checks were particularly important for assessing the data collected online. For example, if a respondent completed the survey in a very short time, it was unlikely that they could fully consider their answers, so the data were excluded.

**TABLE 1: NET SAMPLE SIZE, FIELDWORK PERIOD AND DATA COLLECTION MODE, BY COUNTRY**

Country	Number of respondents (net sample size)	Fieldwork period (in 2019)	Data collection mode
Austria	1,233	2 Apr–9 May	Online
Belgium	1,047	15 Jun–21 Oct	Face to face
Bulgaria	1,016	15 Feb–23 Apr	Face to face
Croatia	1,019	18 Mar–4 Jul	Face to face
Cyprus	1,005	6 Feb–22 Jun	Face to face
Czechia	1,074	22 Mar–6 Jun	Face to face
Denmark	1,173	14 Mar–7 May	Online
Estonia	1,067	25 Mar–21 May	Online
Finland	1,048	14 May–3 Sep	Online
France	2,987	21 Jun–27 Aug	Online (panel)
Germany	2,972	21 Jun–27 Aug	Online (panel)
Greece	1,001	30 Mar–12 Jun	Face to face
Hungary	993	29 Mar–2 Jul	Face to face
Ireland	1,006	14 Mar–1 Aug	Face to face
Italy	1,013	22 Mar–18 Oct	Face to face
Latvia	1,034	7 May–2 Aug	Face to face
Lithuania	1,008	23 Apr–8 Aug	Face to face
Luxembourg	966	13 May–23 Sep	Online
Malta	1,004	18 Jan–28 Jul	Face to face
Netherlands	1,626	16 Jan–20 Mar	Online
Poland	1,000	19 Feb–8 Jun	Face to face
Portugal	1,001	25 Feb–27 May	Face to face
Romania	999	11 Feb–21 Jun	Face to face
Slovakia	1,081	4 Feb–29 Aug	Face to face
Slovenia	1,007	3 May–28 Jun	Face to face
Spain	1,002	6 Mar–7 Jul	Face to face
Sweden	1,155	18 Apr–13 Jun	Online
<i>Total EU-27</i>	<i>32,537</i>		
United Kingdom	1,384	26 Mar–23 May	Online
North Macedonia	1,027	15 Mar–15 May	Face to face
<i>Grand total</i>	<i>34,948</i>		

## THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey questionnaire was developed in English and translated into the national language(s) of each country using a multi-stage workflow consisting of an initial translatability assessment, two independent translations, adjudication of the two translations and agreement on the final version, followed by final proofreading. The final questionnaire consisted of the following sections:

- Introduction
- Personal security and safety
- Tolerance and equality
- Rights awareness and responsibilities
- Personal discrimination
- Respondent characteristics
- Everyday life experiences
- Technology
- Closing.

In countries where data collection took place face to face, the respondents were asked to complete several sections of the survey autonomously using the interviewer's tablet or laptop computer, so that respondents read the questions on the screen and entered their answers directly on the device.

In countries where the survey was carried out online, respondents were assigned randomly into two groups. Certain sections of the survey were administered to either group 1 or group 2, but not both, while other sections were administered to all respondents. This was done to shorten the overall length. It can be more challenging to motivate respondents to complete long surveys online than when interviewers are present. The median time for completing the survey was 26 minutes online, and 36 minutes face to face. Depending on the country, respondents were also offered a small incentive to thank them for taking part in the survey.

## SAMPLING ERROR

All sample surveys are affected by sampling error, given that the survey interviews only a fraction of the total population, with the aim of drawing conclusions concerning the population at large on the basis of the sample. Therefore, all results presented are point estimates, with statistical variation. Small differences of a few percentage points between groups of respondents have to be interpreted as remaining within the range of statistical variation, and only more substantial differences between population groups should be considered actual differences in the total population. Results based on small sample sizes are statistically less reliable, and the illustrations flag them. For example, numbers in graphs are in brackets to indicate samples between 20 and 49 respondents in total. Results based on fewer than 20 respondents in the group total are not shown.

## WEIGHTING

The results in this report have been weighted, to make the key respondent characteristics of the sample closely reflect the corresponding population characteristics in each country, according to official statistics. First, design weights are used to reflect the probabilities of selection, taking into account the multi-stage, clustered sample design in countries using the face-to-face data collection mode and in the United Kingdom. In Austria, design weights are used to adjust for the increased sampling rate among persons with only compulsory schooling, who are estimated to have a lower response rate.

Second, post-stratification or calibration weights address differences between the sample and the population, based on key population characteristics. In all countries, respondents' age, gender and education, and information concerning the region where the sampling unit was located and its urban/rural status, were taken into account when calculating the weights.

In France and Germany, where respondents were selected from online panels, the sample was also adjusted based on household size. In Austria, where Statistics Austria selected the sample from its proprietary population register, weighting could also take into account the respondent's employment status and citizenship. In the Netherlands, the CBS calculated the weights, and was able to use register information concerning respondents' age, gender, household income, marital status, migration background, household composition and urban/rural status.

Finally, weighting has been used to ensure that the aggregate results for the EU-27 take into account the population size of each country. This means that countries with larger populations have more influence on the aggregate results than smaller countries, in line with their population sizes.

## CONFIDENCE INTERVALS

In all surveys that calculate results based on a sample of respondents from the population, the results are subject to various sources of uncertainty. To assess the uncertainty of statistical estimates from the Fundamental Rights Survey, **Table 2** presents the standard errors and confidence intervals (95 %) for two indicators: the prevalence of physical violence in the five years before the survey and the prevalence of harassment in the five years before the survey. **Figure 40** and **Figure 41** show how to interpret the confidence intervals when comparing the survey results between countries. The confidence intervals were produced using the statistical software R.<sup>72</sup>

The standard errors were calculated based on the sampling weights of the survey. In addition, in countries with multi-stage sampling, the primary sampling units were defined as clusters. In France and Germany, the sample was drawn from an online panel, including pre-defined quotas of the total population. In these two countries, the sampling variation – expressed in the confidence intervals – is calculated as coming from a simple random sample, which might not capture additional variation from the process of self-selection into the online panel.

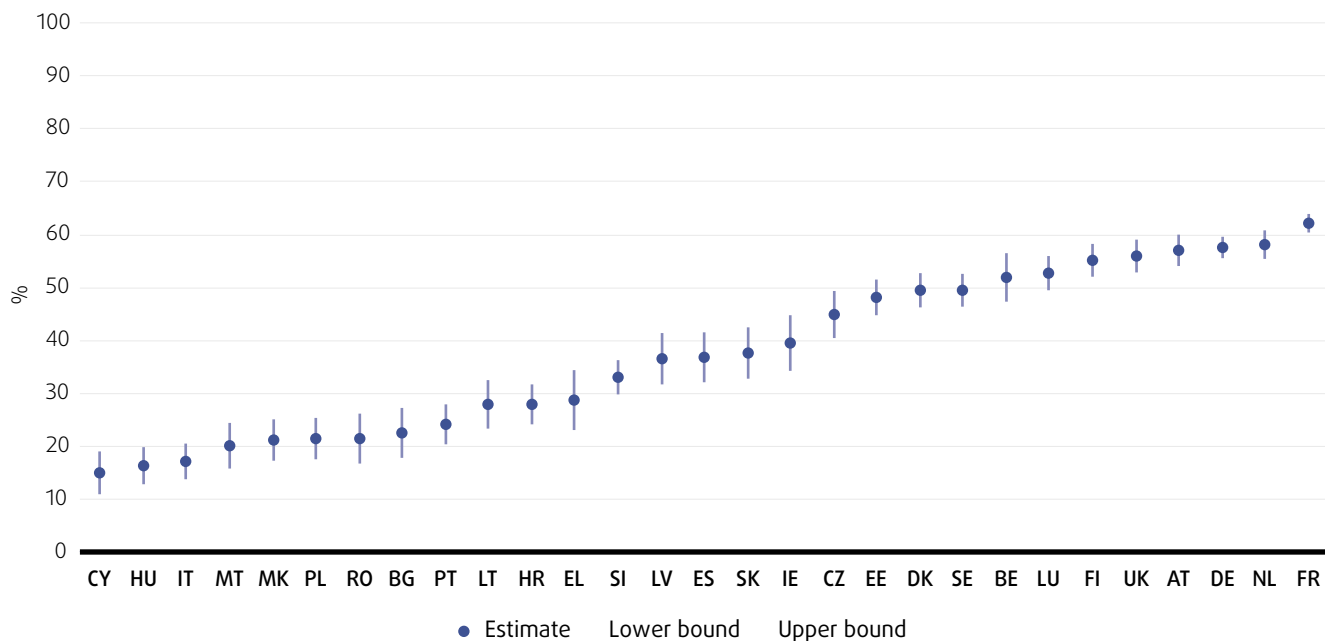
<sup>72</sup> For more information see R Foundation (n.d.), 'The R Project for Statistical Computing'.

**TABLE 2: CONFIDENCE INTERVALS AND STANDARD ERRORS FOR PREVALENCE ESTIMATES OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT EXPERIENCES IN THE FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY COUNTRY**

Prevalence of harassment in the five years before the survey					Prevalence of physical violence in the five years before the survey				
Country	Estimate	Lower bound	Upper bound	Standard error	Country	Estimate	Lower bound	Upper bound	Standard error
AT	56.8	53.8	59.8	1.5	AT	12.8	10.8	14.7	1.0
BE	51.7	47.1	56.4	2.4	BE	14.3	11.4	17.2	1.5
BG	22.2	17.5	26.9	2.4	BG	4.9	1.9	8.0	1.6
CY	14.8	10.8	18.9	2.1	CY	4.4	2.1	6.7	1.2
CZ	44.6	40.2	49.1	2.3	CZ	15.6	12.6	18.7	1.6
DE	57.3	55.2	59.3	1.0	DE	12.4	11.0	13.8	0.7
DK	49.2	46.0	52.4	1.6	DK	12.9	10.7	15.0	1.1
EE	47.8	44.5	51.2	1.7	EE	17.8	15.2	20.4	1.3
EL	28.5	22.8	34.2	2.9	EL	5.0	3.3	6.7	0.9
ES	36.4	31.8	41.1	2.4	ES	6.5	4.6	8.5	1.0
FI	54.8	51.7	57.9	1.6	FI	16.4	14.1	18.8	1.2
FR	62.0	60.1	63.8	0.9	FR	14.4	13.0	15.8	0.7
HR	27.7	24.0	31.5	1.9	HR	6.0	4.2	7.7	0.9
HU	16.1	12.6	19.6	1.8	HU	5.4	3.4	7.4	1.0
IE	39.1	33.9	44.4	2.7	IE	11.3	8.4	14.2	1.5
IT	17.0	13.8	20.3	1.7	IT	2.9	1.1	4.7	0.9
LT	27.6	23.1	32.2	2.3	LT	12.4	9.3	15.5	1.6
LU	52.5	49.2	55.8	1.7	LU	12.4	10.2	14.6	1.1
LV	36.3	31.6	41.1	2.4	LV	12.4	9.5	15.3	1.5
MT	19.9	15.4	24.3	2.3	MT	3.5	1.8	5.2	0.9
NL	57.9	55.3	60.6	1.4	NL	13.3	11.5	15.2	0.9
PL	21.3	17.5	25.1	2.0	PL	6.2	3.8	8.5	1.2
PT	23.9	20.0	27.8	2.0	PT	3.9	2.6	5.2	0.7
RO	21.3	16.6	26.0	2.4	RO	6.6	4.2	9.0	1.2
SE	49.3	46.1	52.5	1.6	SE	10.8	8.7	12.9	1.1
SI	32.7	29.6	35.9	1.6	SI	9.5	7.5	11.5	1.0
SK	37.4	32.6	42.1	2.4	SK	13.9	11.0	16.8	1.5
MK	20.8	17.0	24.7	2.0	MK	6.5	4.5	8.5	1.0
UK	55.8	52.7	58.8	1.6	UK	11.2	9.7	12.6	0.7

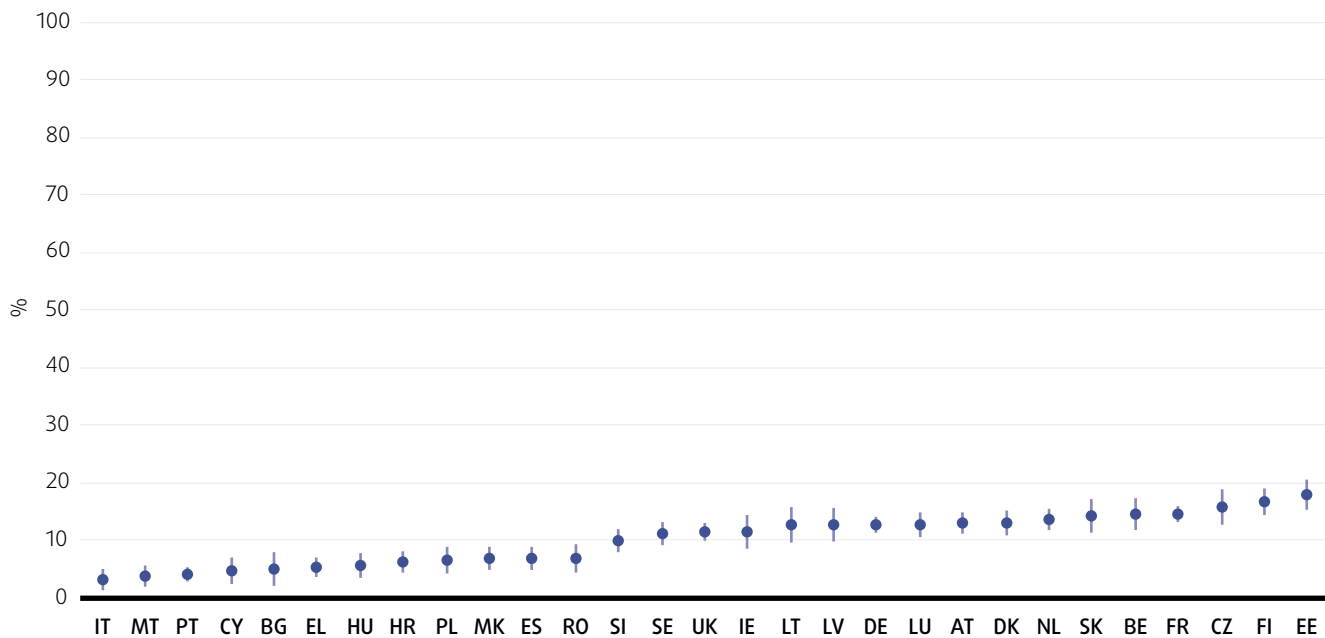
Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

**FIGURE 40: CONFIDENCE INTERVALS (95 %) FOR ESTIMATE OF EXPERIENCING HARASSMENT IN THE FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY COUNTRY**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

**FIGURE 41: CONFIDENCE INTERVALS (95 %) FOR ESTIMATE OF EXPERIENCING PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IN THE FIVE YEARS BEFORE THE SURVEY, BY COUNTRY**



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey 2019; data collection in cooperation with CBS (NL), CTIE (LU) and Statistics Austria (AT)

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

In addition to the quantitative survey data collection, qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions to complement the survey results. This report uses illustrative quotes from the focus group discussions alongside the survey findings.

In the focus group discussions the participants were asked to reflect on some of the topics that the survey also addressed: personal safety, equal treatment, and data protection and privacy. The focus groups took place in eight EU Member States: Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy and Poland. Since it was not possible to cover all EU Member States in qualitative focus group research, these eight countries were selected from different parts of the EU, including both smaller and larger Member States.

In each country, four focus group discussions took place, two in urban areas and two in rural areas, with six to 10 participants in each group. The selection of participants paid attention to a balance of ages, genders, education levels and employment statuses. A moderator led the discussions, based on a common guidance document that FRA had developed, and the conversations were recorded and transcribed for easier analysis. At the national level, FRA's multidisciplinary research network, Franet, implemented the research. Further details of the focus group discussions will be in the survey's technical report.









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# PROMOTING AND PROTECTING YOUR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS ACROSS THE EU —

This is the second main report from FRA's Fundamental Rights Survey, which collected data from 35,000 people on a range of issues. This report focuses on respondents' experiences as victims of selected types of crime, including violence, harassment, and property crime.

The report also examines how often these crimes are reported to the police. In addition, the report discusses how concerned people are about experiencing crime, and if they have adopted measures to avoid situations where such incidents could occur. The report also looks at how willing people would be to intervene, report to the police or, if asked, give evidence in court in three scenarios: physical violence between partners, physical violence against a child, and a crime against the environment.

The results presented offer the first EU-wide crime survey data on the general population's experiences of crime victimisation that can be used to inform EU and national policy and legislation on crime victims.



Victims



Access to Justice



Information Society



EU Charter of Fundamental Rights

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