



WAVE Working Group on Sexualised Violence

(including discussion on prostitution)

**Report of Baseline Information on service provision for sexualised violence
within the WAVE Membership**

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List of abbreviations

DV – Domestic violence

GBV – Gender-based violence

IC – Istanbul Convention

NGO – Non-governmental organisation

PTSD – Post-traumatic stress disorder

SART – Sexual Assault Response Team

SV – Sexualised violence

WAVE Network – Women Against Violence Europe Network

WG – Working Group

WGSV – Working Group on Sexualised Violence (including discussion on prostitution)

Background to report

Introduction

The WAVE Network is the only European network focusing solely on violence against women for over twenty years. With 130 Member organisations mostly constituting specialist women's support services, the network is highly regarded as a key expert in research and data collection on gender-based violence (GBV) within Europe. The Network has access to not only professionals working in front-line services, but also with a large platform to effectively lobby stakeholders and policymakers for improved legislation to support and protect women's rights, particularly their right to live a life free from violence. Domestic violence (DV) has been a form of violence which the WAVE Network has rightfully paid strong attention to, with most WAVE Members offering support and services to women survivors of DV. It is true that DV encompasses various forms of violence including sexualised violence, so indeed WAVE has been including sexualised violence in the conversation and its research.

However, as the membership of WAVE grows, so too does the conversation about the need for greater accessibility and improved quality and quantity of services. With this comes the need to provide even stronger attention to the many other specialist support services for women which exist around Europe, such as services specifically for survivors of sexualised violence (i.e. rape crisis centres), as well as other services which in one way or another address different forms of sexualised violence, so that Members can continue to share good practices and information but on an even greater scale.

Improving the conversation about sexualised violence within the WAVE Network also reflects recent developments around the world – such as legislative developments, #MeToo and other awareness-raising campaigns – aiming to increase the attention on sexualised violence and the special needs which survivors of this violence have. Article 25 of the Istanbul Convention is entirely dedicated to ensuring states provide adequate support for survivors of sexualised violence:

*“Parties shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to provide for the setting up of appropriate, easily accessible rape crisis or sexual violence referral centres for victims in sufficient numbers to provide for medical and forensic examination, trauma support and counselling for victims”.*¹

The Istanbul Convention Explanatory Report also acknowledges that, since sexualised violence is especially traumatising, it needs a particularly sensitive response by trained and specialised staff. Such support can include immediate medical care, trauma support, forensic examinations, therapy, information, guidance and accompaniment to different social services as well as accompaniment to the police to make a report or provide guidance in potential legal cases including navigating secondary victimization through judicial decisions.²

The topic of sexualised violence was voted on by WAVE Advisory Board Members in April 2016 as one of the top three most important issues for the Network to focus on. It quickly became clear that sexualised violence is a form of violence which WAVE Members are already actively engaged in preventing but which needs to be elevated more. Therefore, to more effectively address the issue of sexualised violence within the WAVE Network, a specific thematic working group (WG) was formed in April 2017 called “Working Group on Sexualised Violence, including discussion on prostitution” (WGSV). This working group aims to build on the already existing diverse knowledge and experiences of the WAVE Network, share expertise, good practices and challenges, so that the network can work together towards a more united European approach for addressing sexualised violence on a European level. Interested WAVE Members were invited to join the WG, and bring their own experience, knowledge, or the forms of sexualized violence which they as an organization focus on, regardless of their experience, knowledge, or the forms of sexualised violence.

¹ Council of Europe. (2011). Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence. Explanatory Report, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg. p. 14.

² Ibid, p. 82.

In order to capture and include the many different experiences and models of support for survivors of sexualised violence, the WG includes a wide variety of forms of violence which may be relatively new concepts to some, or which may not be considered sexualised violence by others, namely, prostitution, pornography, stripping and some forms of cyber violence. Therefore, the WGSV acknowledges that there are different models of service provision and addressing these forms of violence, and that in some member organizations (some of which are umbrella organisations/networks), there may not be a stance on, or clear definition of, a particular issue. It is important to keep in mind that the different understandings and models of service provision are diverse and as vast as the Network itself.

Furthermore, the complex question of sexualised violence, and what does or does not constitute sexualised violence, is not only challenged within the WAVE Network, but also historically and more broadly within the feminist movement. Some feminists view issues such as prostitution as inherently violent against women, and that in many cases, coercion and poverty may override a woman's 'free choice' to be in the industry. Other feminists support woman's right to choose and see prostitution and pornography as economically empowering as well as self-empowering for women, so long as consent and safety are present, and rather support legalisation or decriminalisation over abolition. Of course, within the feminist movement there are also undetermined positions, which attempt to shed light on the nuance, complexity and personal experiences of women in the industry to avoid further marginalisation of women.

Differences in service provision, perspectives as well as personal opinions regarding sexualised violence are extremely important to highlight and highlight in order to better understand the different contexts member organisations operate in, their varying standpoints and views, as well as to facilitate and improve the processes of experience exchange and mutual learning among Members. The WG is therefore diverse in terms of geographical representation as well as service provision and definitions. The WGSV acknowledges that organisations within WAVE are diverse in several ways, including history, social needs, political situation and legislation in the countries they represent, and that the understanding and different models of support for survivors of sexualised violence are therefore also diverse and unique. The models of service provision within one organisation or country to protect survivors of sexualised violence may be completely different from what another organisation or country does.

The study that this report summarises is the very first activity of the WGSV. ***The main purpose of the study is to gather data on how the WAVE member organisations define and work with the issue of sexualised violence, what kind of attitudes and priorities they have in their work and what challenges they face.*** In other words, ***this study opens up the possibility for conversation in the WAVE Network and showcases the many different ways sexualised violence is understood and addressed within WAVE.*** This report therefore captures and provides an overview of the different types of service provision which exist around Europe for survivors of sexualised violence.

Research design

To conduct the study, the WGSV developed a **questionnaire**³ containing both multiple-choice and open-ended questions.⁴ Each question provides the possibility for further explanation, particularly if multiple-choice alternatives do not fully reflect the respondents' specific situation and in case the respondents need to customise their answers or want to highlight additional forms of violence or issues. By and large, the questionnaire was designed to primarily collect **qualitative data** and was distributed to all Members of the WAVE Network.

For the purpose of analysis, the collected data was divided into following categories:

³ See Appendix 1.

⁴ Open-ended questions: (i) definition of sexualised violence which is used in the country/organisation; (ii) examples of best practices of work with sexualised violence in the country/organisation; and (iii) top three challenges the organisations face in addressing the issue of sexualised violence. The question on legislation (Question 8) gives respondents the opportunity to evaluate their national legislation regarding different forms of sexualised violence on a **scale from 1 to 5** (1 being 'very bad' and 5 being 'very good') depending on how they feel legislation works in terms of protecting women/girls/children and punishing perpetrators.

The remaining questions are multiple-choice questions.

- ✓ Definitions of sexualised violence;
- ✓ Types of sexualised violence the organisations work with;
- ✓ Ways of working with sexualised violence and multi-agency cooperation;
- ✓ Prostitution and pornography;
- ✓ Legislation; and
- ✓ Good practices and challenges⁵

The final report consists of six main parts as well as the List of abbreviations, Background to report and Appendix.

Part 1 is dedicated to the definitions of sexualised violence that the WAVE member organisations use and refer to in their work.

Part 2 focuses on the members' work with the issue of sexualised violence. Here the closer look is taken on (i) the types of violence the respondents consider being sexualised violence; (ii) the types of sexualised violence the member organisations address in their work; (iii) the ways the member organisations work with the issue of sexualised violence, and (iv) multi-agency cooperation.

Part 3 focuses on prostitution and pornography analysing why these issues should be either included into or excluded from the notion of sexualised violence.

Part 4 gives an insight into the national legislation on sexualised violence in the countries the member organisations represent as well as the efficiency of its application.

Part 5 is gives an overview of the member organisations' good practices in addressing different forms of sexualised violence.

Finally, **Part 6** is entirely dedicated to the analysis of the many challenges the members face when addressing sexualised violence.

Research implementation

The four-page questionnaire was developed by two members of the WGSV in the beginning of September 2017. By the end of September 2017, the questionnaire was distributed by e-mail to all 130 WAVE



Members⁶ (mostly women's organisations/specialist support services, as well as individuals and governmental bodies working in the field of violence against women).

The countries which returned answered questionnaires are: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, England, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden and Ukraine.

Respondents who answered the questionnaire replied with viewpoints representing their own organisations which means that their responses do in no way depict the attitudes, priorities, approaches, etc. applied in the entire countries they represent. Four countries provided multiple questionnaires (two member organisations from Belgium, three member organisations from Croatia, two in Cyprus and two in Montenegro) and therefore are more represented than the remaining countries in which only one member organisation answered the questionnaire. This was considered

⁵ 5 WGSV members were assigned to analyse between one and two categories each.

⁶ A full list of the WAVE membership can be found on the WAVE website: <https://www.wave-network.org/about-us/wave-members>

during the analysis of the collected data. The following analysis accounts for single member organisation responses, and therefore the report accounts for **33 total responses**, unless otherwise indicated⁷.

The data analysis was conducted between December 2017 and the end of February 2018. The open call for participation in the data analysis was sent via email to the WGSV members in the beginning of the indicated period and the choice of the participants was based on their availability for work on this assignment as well as on their interest in taking part in the analysis. All in all, 5 out of 12 WGSV members showed their interest in the data analysis and all of them were assigned with the specific category/categories of data to work with.

From March to April 2018, the different parts of the compiled data analysis were put together into a draft report and sent to the WGSV members via email for editing. The work on the report was finalised in the beginning of April 2018 taking into account all WGSV members' feedback, questions and suggested corrections.

Limitations of the study

During data collection, analysis and discussions of the collected data within the WG, a number of limitations to the questionnaire and methodology were revealed in terms of definitions, forms of sexualised violence, and legislation, as well as in terms of scope.

Answers to the questionnaire clearly demonstrate that there are many different opinions and approaches to sexualised violence among WAVE Members. This has made it challenging to effectively determine categories⁸ of sexualised violence on a European level which are inclusive of all member organisations. Some member organisations do not have a particular stance on, or definition of, some of the forms of violence listed in the questionnaire; this was most often true for network offices/associations representing multiple members in their countries. In other cases, the definitions which member organisations adhere to are much different than the definitions of others. These differences resulted in many instances where member organisations responded to multiple-choice questions with further explanation demonstrating that the answers are much more nuanced and require improvement in the future development of questionnaires for the WGSV. The complex answers given by the WAVE Members are included into this report to accompany the analysis.

For example, one member organisation explains that their organisation does not impose a definition of sexualised violence on the women they support. The organisation clarifies that the forms of violence listed within the questionnaire may constitute sexualised violence to some individuals, while not to others. Therefore, in order to provide empowering support, their goal is to *'be open to all the needs of women and not exclude any form of violence they experience...'* Here, self-definition of survivors is the organisation's guiding principle in providing support. Reflecting this, the analysis may be weakened as answers themselves may not always be absolute or objective. This reflects how many organisations working with sexualised violence refer to agency and self-determination of women and children being exposed to this violence, and therefore to some member organisations, providing concrete answers is impossible as they depend on the subjective experiences of each survivor.

Data collection and analysis also show that for two particular forms of violence - namely prostitution and pornography - several member organisations provided detailed explanations while some other members answered the questions regarding prostitution and pornography by posing further questions. In several cases, for example, member organisations make clear distinctions between pornography and revenge pornography, or between prostitution and forced prostitution, indicating the absence of consent or the influence of coercion, as the factors determining whether to categorise an act as a form of sexualised violence. This resulted in either unanswered/undetermined answers, or answers which had further elaboration and may not be as straight-forward as the analysis reflects. Therefore, figures provided in the analysis are accompanied by further explanation, where relevant.

⁷ 33 organisations constitute approximately 25% of all WAVE members.

⁸ Types of sexualised violence listed in the questionnaire were: rape, sexual harassment, human trafficking for sexual purposes/sex trafficking, incest, sex as self-destructive behaviour, prostitution, sexting, pornography and stripping. The option to provide other forms of violence was also included.

For instance, it was pointed out by one member organisation that both pornography and prostitution should be excluded from the notion of sexualised violence as it would be patronising and divisive to consider all women 'working in the sex industry' as victims solely based on their activity because some of them choose prostitution/pornography themselves. According to this member organisation's experience, prohibition of prostitution only increases women's vulnerability to violence, including sexualised violence, and further excludes and stigmatises women who are already among the most vulnerable. Referring to the question on prostitution and pornography, in general, they pointed out that "WAVE as an umbrella organisation should refrain from taking positions that drive a wedge into the movement and exclude parts of it from the WAVE Network".

Furthermore, it was pointed out by member organisations that the question regarding legislation was weak in terms of how it was framed. As legislation can be quite complex, and often the existence of legislation does not always result in effective implementation of legislation, choosing numbers from 1-5 for how legislation in countries work in terms of protecting survivors and punishing perpetrators was criticised for not leaving adequate space for interpretation and implementation. It was pointed out that the formulation of the question does not allow space for reflecting on legislation's quality in terms of effecting victim protection and their actual implementation in practice.

Furthermore, as a baseline report, the information collected is not representative of all women's specialist support services in Europe, or of the entire WAVE Network. With 33 member organisations spanning 28 countries in Europe, the report is representative of approximately 25% of the WAVE Network membership.⁹ Nonetheless, the response provides a good overview of the situation in Europe towards sexualised violence and equips the WGSV with a better knowledge and understanding for deeper analysis in the future.

⁹ 21 out of 33 respondents are members of WAVE Advisory Board.

Part 1. What is sexualised violence?

All **33** WAVE member organisations that participated in the survey answered the question on definition(s) of sexualised violence. Even though the replies considerably vary in their scope and focus there are many similarities among the member organisations in their ways of defining sexualised violence.

First of all, many member organisations refer to the definitions used in different international documents and by different international organisations.

Thus, **8 out of 33** respondents define sexualised violence as a form of men's violence against women and use the following definition of the **Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention)**:

"Violence against women is understood as a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life".¹⁰

4 out of 33 member organisations refer to the **United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (1993)** specifying that:

"... the term 'violence against women' means any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life".¹¹

The official definition of sexualised violence used by the **World Health Organisation (2002)** is referred to by **4 out of 33** responded member organisations:

"Sexual violence is defined as any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work".¹²

Secondly, **10 out of 33** member organisations use the definitions of sexualised violence/types of sexualised violence from their national Criminal/Penal Codes. What sticks out here and is therefore worth mentioning is the definition used in Penal Codes in Armenia and Russia. In both countries, "homosexual acts and lesbianism" are included in the notion of violent sexual actions.¹³

Finally, there are other definitions the respondents refer to, such as:

- ✓ definitions from various national strategies and action plans;
- ✓ definitions from various national institutes/authorities (for instance, the National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence in Ireland, the Institute of the Equality of Women and Men in Belgium);
- ✓ feminist definitions (for example, Liz Kelly)¹⁴;
- ✓ member organisations' own definitions.

¹⁰ <https://rm.coe.int/168008482e>

¹¹ <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/res/48/a48r104.htm>

¹² http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/violence/sexual_violence/en/

¹³ Armenia: Chapter 18, Article 139 of the Penal Code; Russia: Article 132(1) of the Criminal Code of Russia.

¹⁴ 'Sexual violence includes every physical, visual, verbal or sexual act that in the time it happened or later, woman or girl has felt like a threat or attack, and which has hurt her or degrade her, and in which she was taken control' (2008).

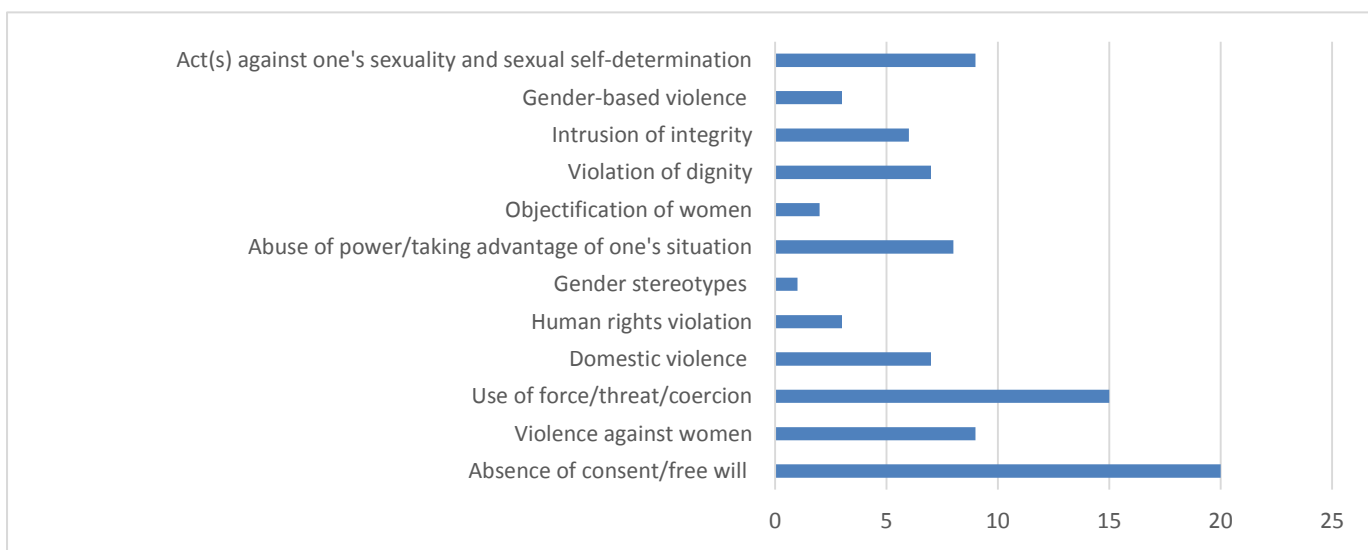
6 out of 33 respondents point out that there is no national definition of sexualised violence in their countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Georgia, Ireland, Malta and Ukraine).

As it was mentioned above, the definitions provided by the responded member organisations have a lot in common. For instance, the respondents underline that sexualised violence takes different forms and is expressed by different physical, psychological and sexualised means.

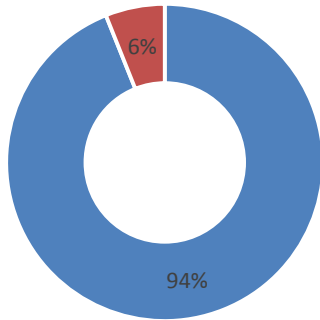
20 out of 33 member organisations state that sexualised violence is characterised by **the absence of consent/free will from the one being subject to it**, while **15** respondents mention **the use of force, threat and coercion** as one of the major patterns of sexualised violence. Moreover, sexualised violence is often defined as:

- ✓ violence against women (9 respondents);
- ✓ act(s) against one's sexuality and sexual self-determination (9 respondents);
- ✓ abuse of power/taking advantage of one's vulnerable situation (8 respondents);
- ✓ domestic violence (7 respondents);
- ✓ violation of dignity (7 respondents);
- ✓ intrusion of integrity (6 respondents);
- ✓ human rights violation (3 respondents);
- ✓ gender-based violence (3 respondents); and
- ✓ objectification of women (2 respondents).

One member organisation argues that sexualised violence is both an expression and a means of reinforcement of gender stereotypes that exist in the society nowadays.



Part 2. WAVE member organisations' work with sexualised violence



- Members who answered "yes"
- Members who answered "no"

Only **2 out of 33** member organisations (**Armenia, Kosovo**) answered 'no' to the question on whether they work with issues related to sexualised violence. However, these organisations explain that they only deal with cases of domestic violence, which can include sexualised violence. Therefore, it would be accurate to say that all organisations which participated in this survey, work with questions related to sexualised violence, either in the context of domestic violence or exclusively, or apart from, domestic violence.

31 out of 33 member organisations responded to the question on whether they work solely with sexualised violence or address it together with other types of violence. The responses show that the degree to which sexualised violence plays a role in the member

organisations' daily work varies.

No member organisations work solely with sexualised violence, while **2 out of 31** member organisations **work mainly with sexualised violence**, and sometimes with psychological and physical violence.

The majority – **26 out of 31** respondents – **integrate their work with sexualised violence with addressing physical and psychological violence**, often within the context of domestic violence.

"Almost all women who experience violence also experience sexual violence, including rape by male partners/ex-partners, friends/ex-friends, acquaintances, etc."
(Austria)

3 out of 31 member organisations chose '**other**' in response to the question on whether they address sexualised violence in combination with other types of violence or work solely with it. For instance, the

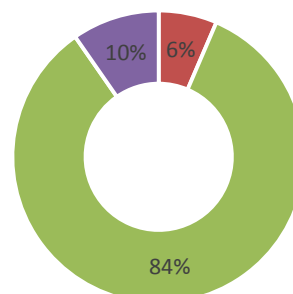
"We are an umbrella organisation with various members, some work with sexualised violence, some work with domestic violence, and some work on both (besides other forms of violence)"
(Germany)

member organisations from **Germany** and **Malta** are in fact networks, or umbrella organisations, and therefore their work depends on – and is defined by – the work of their members. Among their member organisations there are those working with sexualised violence, providing specific services related to sexualised violence.

One of the WAVE member organisations from **Belgium** indicates that '**sometimes**' they work solely with sexualised violence, while other times they work integrated with other forms of violence.

2.1. Types of violence considered being sexualised violence

Among **33** respondents there is only one member organisation from **Germany** that **could not give any definite answer** to the question on what types of violence are being considered as sexual violence. This organisation indicates '**other**' for all alternatives suggested in the questionnaire¹⁵, explaining that, as an umbrella organisation, they do not have any definition of sexualised violence and/or types of sexualised



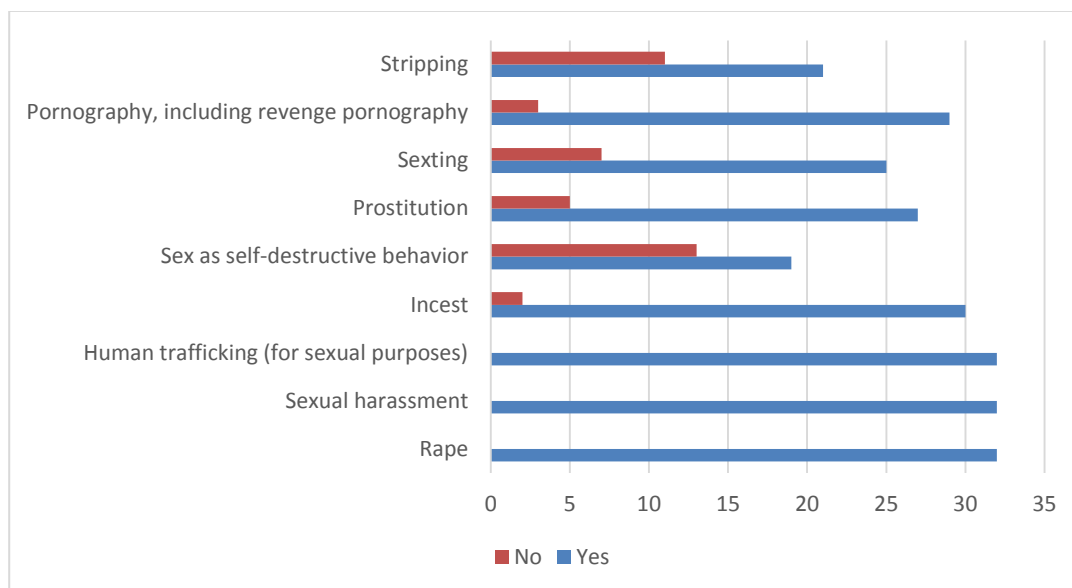
- Work solely with SV
- Work mainly with SV
- Work integrated with other forms of violence
- Other

¹⁵ See Appendix 1.

violence relevant for all members. Therefore, they could not answer the question as there are different points of view among their member organisations.

Additionally, while the respondent from **Austria** agrees that all forms of violence listed in the questionnaire are considered to be sexualised violence by their organisation, they emphasise that no strict definitions of the types of violence are imposed on survivors.

Overall, there is often discrepancy when it comes to definitions in which some member organisations indicate that the given categories (i.e. prostitution, pornography, stripping) can only be qualified as sexualised violence by their organisations if it clearly involves coercion or lack of consent, implying that some categories can be consensual activities and therefore not qualify as sexualised violence.



(1) Rape: 32 out of 33 member organisations consider sexualised violence to include rape. The respondent from **Serbia** clarifies that within their understanding of rape, they include rape within marriage, rape by an unknown perpetrator, so called date rape or rape within intimate partner relationships, and rape in war.

(2) Sexual harassment: 32 out of 33 respondents consider sexualised violence to include sexual harassment. No further explanation was provided.

(3) Human trafficking for sexual purposes: Here again, **32 out of 33** member organisations consider sexualised violence to include human trafficking for sexual purposes with no further explanation provided.

(4) Incest: 30 out of 33 member organisations consider incest being a type of sexualised violence. One of the respondents from Belgium underlines that they prefer to use the term ‘child sexual abuse’, which more accurately reflects that there is not always a familial relationship between victim and perpetrator.

“We rather call it child sexual abuse, as there is not always a family relationship between victim and perpetrator” (Belgium)

(5) Sex as self-destructive behaviour is recognised to be a form of sexualised violence by 19 out of 33 member organisations. No additional comments were provided by the respondents.

(6) Prostitution: 27 out of 33 respondents **consider** sexualised violence to include prostitution. The member organisation from Bulgaria clarifies that it primarily focuses on prostitution which is exploitative and violent. **5** other member organisations **do not consider** prostitution to be a form of sexualised violence. No further explanations were provided, except for the respondents from Belarus and Croatia, who consider prostitution to be sexualised violence only if it is forced or coerced.

(7) Sexting is included in the notion of sexualised violence by **25 out of 33** member organisations. One of the respondents from **Belgium** clarifies that they only consider non-consensual receiving and the

publication of sexual images without the consent of pictured people as sexualised violence. In other words, sexualised violence does not occur in cases where sexting is conducted with the consent of all participants. Another respondent from **Croatia** underlines that their organisation only considers sexting to be sexualised violence if there is an element of coercion or if it is conducted without consent. The member organisation from **Germany** only qualifies sexting as sexualised violence if contents are misused.

(8) Pornography (including revenge pornography): 29 out of 33 responded organisations consider sexualised violence to include pornography. However the member organisation from **Belarus** only classifies revenge pornography as sexualised violence. One of the respondents from **Belgium** clarifies that, as in the case of sexting, their organisation only considers pornography to be sexualised violence if it is non-consensual receiving and publication of sexual images. One of the member organisations from **Croatia** does also provide a similar explanation, stating that pornography can only be considered to be sexualised violence if it involves coercion or the absence of consent.

The respondent from **Germany** finds the term '*revenge porn*' problematic, as it insinuates potential use for sexual stimulation, and ultimately plays down the element of blackmail as crime. They define it as a tool to blackmail a victim or to threaten a rape survivor by shaming them. The member organisation from **Slovenia** also prefers to use the term '*cyber-net rape*' as opposed to revenge porn.

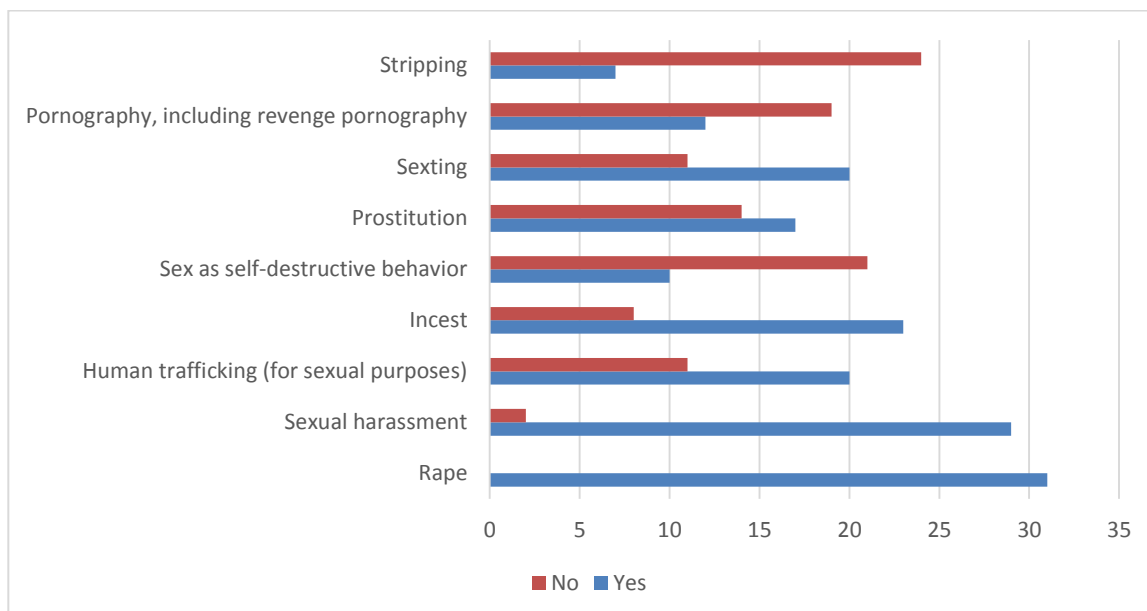
(9) Stripping is classified as sexualised violence by **21 out of 33** member organisations. No further explanation was provided.

(10) There are some **other types of violence** that are considered to be sexualised violence by the respondents, but are not listed in the questionnaire, such as:

- ✓ hyper-sexualisation of children and youth;
- ✓ violence related to pregnancy, childbirth and access to safe abortion;
- ✓ online sexualised violence;
- ✓ female genital mutilation;
- ✓ date rape;
- ✓ femicide (when sexualised);
- ✓ flashing and peeping;
- ✓ sexual assault;
- ✓ image-based sexual abuse;
- ✓ sextortion;
- ✓ child sexual abuse;
- ✓ paedophilia;
- ✓ marital rape/rape in close relationships;
- ✓ forced marriage;
- ✓ prohibition from use of contraception;
- ✓ forced pregnancy;
- ✓ mandatory check for virginity;
- ✓ forced abortion; and
- ✓ surrogacy

2.2. Types of sexualised violence member organisations work with

In total, **31 out of 33** member organisations were eligible to answer this question and are accounted for in the analysis below.



(1) Rape: All **31** member organisations address rape as a form of sexualised violence in their work. The respondent from **Italy** clarifies that their organisation specifically works with rape within marriage.

(2) Sexual harassment is addressed in the work of **29 out of 31** responded member organisations.

(3) Human trafficking for sexual purposes: **65%** of the respondents – **20** organisations – work addressing human trafficking for sexual purposes.

(4) 23 out of 31 member organisations address **incest** in their work. The respondent from **Serbia** explains that their organisation provides free legal aid, and refers victims/survivors to a specialised NGO for counselling if it is needed.

(5) Sex as self-destructive behaviour is only addressed by **10 out of 31** responded member organisations.

(6) Prostitution: **17 out of 31** of the member organisations which responded – to some extent address the issue of prostitution in their work, although the definition/approach to this work varies among the respondents. For instance, one of the respondents from **Belgium** works with women in prostitution to support them “to fight against the violence they may experience in this aspect of their lives, as well as in others”, while the member organisation from **Serbia** supports women who have experience with prostitution, however it is not their primary focus. The member organisation from **Portugal** states that they have supported women who have been forced into prostitution in the context of intimate partner relationships, while the respondent from **Belarus** clarifies that they work with “forced prostitution as a form of sex trafficking”.

(7) 20 out of 31 respondents work with the issue of **sexting**. The member organisation from **Germany** underlines that they consider sexting to be a form of online violence, while the member from **Serbia** qualifies it as a form of sexual harassment.

(8) Pornography as a type of sexualised violence is only addressed in the work of **12 out of 31** member organisations; **5** of these **12** respondents specifically include **revenge pornography** in their answer. One of the member organisations from **Croatia** clarifies that they do work with pornography, but only if it is coerced and does not include the person’s consent.

(9) Only 7 out of 31 responded member organisations work with the issue of **stripping** which means that, among the types of sexualised violence listed in the questionnaire, this issue is addressed the least by countries and organisations represented within WAVE.

(10) There are some other types of sexualised violence that the responded members work with, but that are not listed in the questionnaire, namely:

- ✓ forced prostitution;
- ✓ violence related to pregnancy, childbirth and access to safe abortion;
- ✓ online sexualised violence;
- ✓ filmed rape;
- ✓ sexual abuse in childhood and youth;
- ✓ sexual assault;
- ✓ image-based sexual abuse;
- ✓ marital rape and sexual harassment;
- ✓ forced marriage;
- ✓ forced pornography; and
- ✓ surrogacy

Some of these ‘other’ forms of sexualised violence could be included in the types of violence listed in the questionnaire. The separate indication of them as ‘**others**’ shows that:

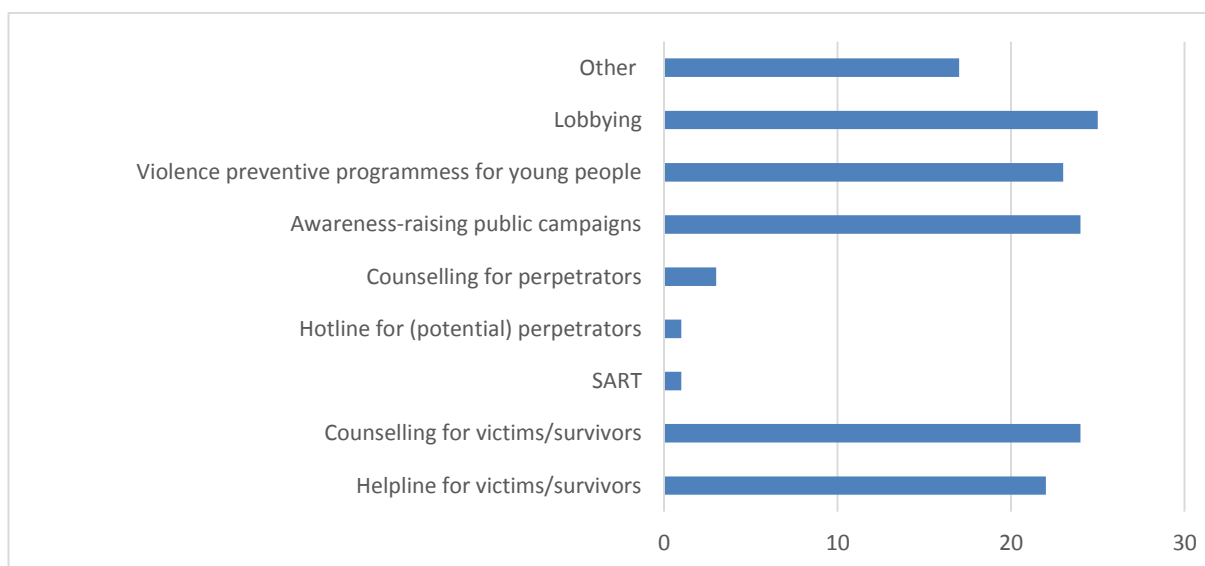
- ✓ some of the respondents want to emphasise that their organisations only consider certain acts (i.e. prostitution, pornography, sexting) to be sexualised violence only if forced/coerced;
- ✓ there is no certainty when it comes to definitions of different types of sexualised violence (for instance, ‘online sexualised violence’ and ‘image-based sexual abuse’ could be included into the notion of pornography if being defined accordingly).

2.3. The ways the member organisations work with sexualised violence

Even though the member organisation from Armenia answered ‘no’ to the question on whether they work with questions related to sexualised violence, indicating that they address sexualised violence while working with domestic violence, they indicated the concrete ways of addressing sexualised violence later in the questionnaire. Therefore, there is only one organisation (Kosovo) that did not answer the question regarding the ways of working with sexualised violence.

Among the **32** responded members:

- (1) **22** organisations work with **helplines for victim/survivors**;
- (2) **24** organisations provide **counselling for victims/survivors**;
- (3) **1** organisation runs a **Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)**;
- (4) **1** organisation work with a **hotline for (potential) perpetrators**;
- (5) **3** organisations provide **counselling for perpetrators**;
- (6) **24** organisations work with **awareness-raising public campaigns**;
- (7) **23** organisations offer **violence preventive programmes for young people (i.e. school interventions)**; and
- (8) **25** organisations actively work with **lobbying and advocacy**.



Moreover, **17 out of 32** member organisations indicated some other ways of addressing sexualised violence in their work, such as:

- ✓ legal counselling/assistance for victims/survivors (5 out of 17 organisations);
- ✓ shelters for victims/survivors (4 out of 17 organisations);
- ✓ self-help programmes (3 out of 17 organisations);
- ✓ capacity building programmes for professionals/practitioners (2 out of 17 organisations);
- ✓ psychotherapy for victims/survivors (2 out of 17 organisations);
- ✓ research on the topics related to sexualised violence (2 out of 17 organisations);
- ✓ medical counselling (1 organisation);
- ✓ violence prevention groups for adult women, including migrant, older, LGBTQ women, etc. (1 organisation);
- ✓ chat/online counselling (1 organisation);
- ✓ Publications/articles (1 organisation).

2.4. Multi-agency Cooperation

Out of **33** respondents, the member organisation from **Armenia** did not provide any reply to the question regarding multi-agency cooperation; while the respondent from **Austria** did not give any definite answer either, instead highlighting the need for discussion on this topic. The reply of the member organisation from **Iceland** as to how they cooperate with other agencies was not clear as they only state that they do collaborate ‘for obvious reasons’. The member organisation from **Bulgaria** does not as yet have a multi-agency cooperation system in place; however they plan on adopting one.

To explain multi-agency work is also difficult to do in a few lines, which might lead to misunderstandings. We suggest to have a discussion on the topic” (Austria)

All in all, the experiences of the member organisations described under multi-agency cooperation fall into three main categories:

- (1) international and European cooperation;
- (2) national and regional cooperation with agencies and NGOs;
- (3) collaboration with politicians.

(1) International and European cooperation:

4 out of 32 responded member organisations indicate that they collaborate **with other European organisations**. For instance, one of the respondents from **Belgium** collaborates with the **European Society platform on Trafficking in Human Beings, European Women’s Lobby** (on prostitution and violence against women) and **WAVE**. The member organisations from **Slovenia** and **Croatia** do also collaborate with **European Women’s Lobby** and **WAVE**, while another **Belgian** member organisation reports that they collaborate with two political groups within the **European Parliament** on sexual/sexist harassment in the workplace. The respondent from **Georgia** indicates that they work with **UNHCR, UN Women** and **Oxfam**.

(2) National, regional cooperation with agencies and NGOs:

22 out of 32 organisations state that they collaborate **with other NGOs**. **26 out of 32** respondents indicate that they cooperate with **national and local authorities**. The member organisations from **Slovenia, Croatia** and **Montenegro** highlight their work within informal regional networks where they – together with partner organisations from **Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, FYR Macedonia, Kosovo**, etc. – run joint projects against sexualised violence.

(3) The member organisations from **England, Germany** and **Serbia** specifically mention that they **collaborate with politicians**.

When it comes to the **forms of multi-agency cooperation**, they do vary, although the majority of the responded member organisations collaborate on raising awareness and educational programmes. Thus, **12 out of 32** member organisations cooperate with other organisations on **raising awareness** on different

aspects of work against sexualised violence, while **6 out of 32** respondents indicate that they **lobby** and do **advocacy work** in collaboration with other organisations.

As for **educational programmes for youth** (for instance, in schools), **9 out of 32** respondents run programmes and workshops on sexualised violence that address both students and teachers. The member organisation from **Estonia** reports that they do not run any educational programme themselves – instead the educational programmes are provided in school by their partner organisation.

One member organisation from **Belgium** provides **workshops on sexual harassment and sexism in workplaces for employers and trade unions**. **6 out of 32** respondents report that their organisations offer trainings for professionals and agencies providing support services.

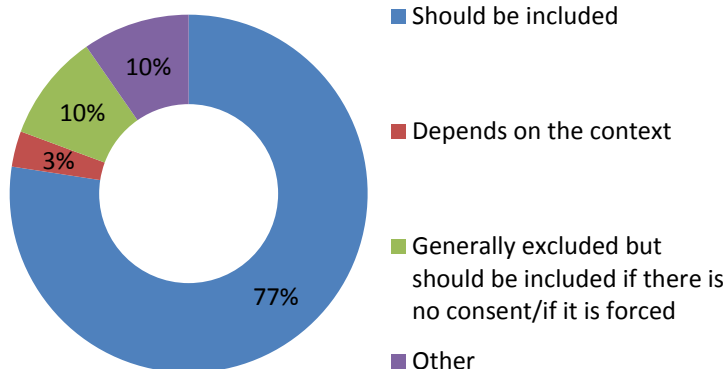
One of the member organisations from **Cyprus** works closely with **media providers** offering **trainings to journalists** on how to write about sexualised violence without '*victimising the victim*', and what photos to choose for a particular article.

9 out of 32 member organisations form **platforms and/or working groups** to tackle sexual violence, and **10 out of 32** member organisations **provide services** and **refer cases to other agencies and NGOs**.¹⁶

The respondent from **Belarus** is the only organisation that reports that they have a multi-agency cooperation on **capacity building for professionals, policy makers and practitioners**. However there is no indication as with whom they collaborate, whether it is national and/or international, whether this collaboration involves authorities, other NGOs or both.

¹⁶ Some organisations mention specifically sexual violence, including rape. Others also address sexism and human trafficking. Serbia specifies that this cooperation is limited to intimate partner violence and domestic relations.

Part 3. Prostitution and pornography



31 out of 33 member organisations answered the question on inclusion of prostitution and pornography in the notion of sexualised violence.

The received responses can be divided into the following categories:

- (1) should be included;
- (2) generally excluded but should be included if there is no consent/forced;
- (3) depends on the context;
- (4) other.

10% of the respondents (**3 out of 31** organisations) do by and large **exclude** the issues of prostitution and pornography from the notion of sexualised violence. For member organisations from **Belarus, Croatia** and

“We think that is a difference between sex work and human trafficking, and the main difference is consent of both sides. It becomes sexual violence when there is no consent” (Romania)

Romania the central question here is consent: pornography and prostitution can only be defined as sexualized violence if being forced which means *if the consent is not given*. For instance, the member organisation from **Romania** clearly distinguishes between “sex work” – where consent is in place, and “human trafficking” which happens against the woman’s will.

The member organisation from **Russia** highlights the role of **different socioeconomic and political contexts** in approaching the question of prostitution and pornography. They state that different approaches to – and definitions of – prostitution and pornography may depend on:

- ✓ the overall level of gender sensitivity in society;
- ✓ the status of women’s human rights at the national level;
- ✓ the way police and justice system function (i.e. level of corruption, institutional victim blaming, etc.);
- ✓ the possible risks connected to work with these issues.

3 out of 31 member organisations (**10%**) – from **Austria, Belgium** and **Germany** – responded to the question by indicating that were **not able to give any certain answer** regarding inclusion of prostitution and pornography in the notion of sexualized violence.

Thus, the member organisation from **Austria** indicated that before they could answer the question they would need to better understand why this specific question on pornography and prostitution was posed, and therefore asked for explanations.

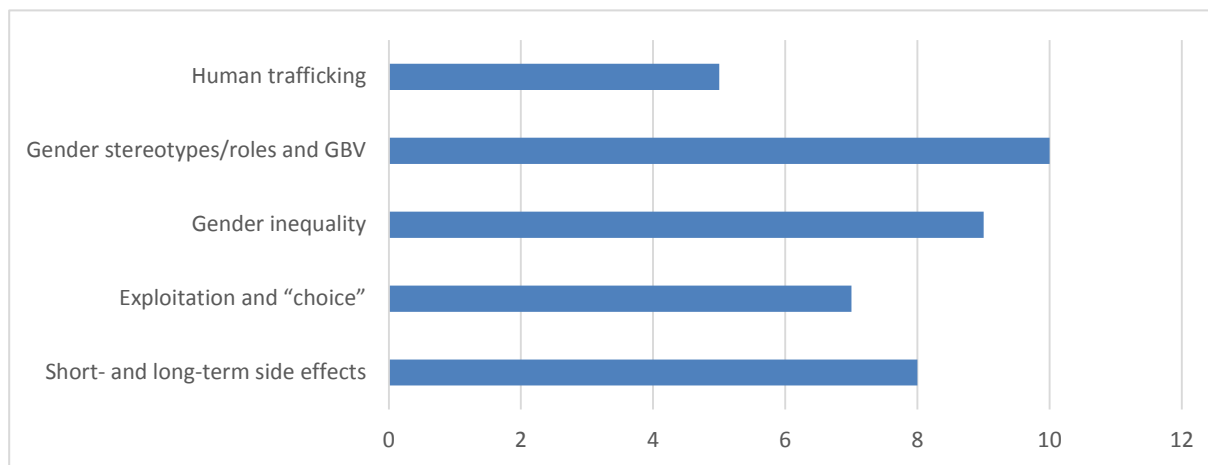
The respondent from **Germany**, as an umbrella organisation, highlighted the difference of opinions and approaches among the member organisations and therefore could not give any definite answer to this question.

Similarly, one of the member organisations from **Belgium** was unable to give a certain answer as they do not have a specific position on the topic. However, the respondent shared her personal opinion on the question, which is reflected in the Background as a part of reflection on the methodology of this report.

“Many of (women in prostitution) are victims of sexualised violence, not because they sell sex, but because clients, officials etc. benefit from their vulnerable position as social outcasts” (Belgium)

The rest of the respondents – **77%** – believe that prostitution and pornography should be included in the notion of sexualised violence, and most of them highlight the importance of understanding prostitution and pornography as violation of women’s human rights in order to prevent and better combat men’s violence against women.

The reasons why **24 out of 31** member organisations see and approach prostitution and pornography as



sexualized violence vary, but can be broken down into the following categories (with prostitution and pornography often being referred to interchangeably):

- (1) short- and long-term side effects;
- (2) exploitation and “choice”;
- (3) gender inequality;
- (4) gender stereotypes/roles and gender-based violence; and
- (5) human trafficking.

(1) Short- and long-term side effects

Member organisations from **Albania, Ireland, Iceland, Montenegro** and **Serbia** underline that prostitution can result in physical harm and severe injuries of women, particularly from sexual abuse and rape, as well as in psychological harm such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression and low self-confidence. Violence that women in prostitution and pornography are subjected to is complex and often combines physical, sexualised violence, verbal aggression and even economic violence.

The member organisation from **Iceland**, for instance, provided user statistics to further demonstrate that prostitution and pornography are often a consequence of sexual violation: out of 41 women in prostitution between 2013 and 2016, 44% had been subjected to incest and 68% had been raped. Suicide attempts were mentioned by 66% and 73% had suicidal thoughts¹⁷.

One of the members from **Croatia** also referred to how many women who were previously or currently in prostitution and pornography were victims of sexualised violence prior to entering the industry as well as while being in the industry.

Moreover, as the member organisation from **England** pointed out, in addition to being subjected to various forms of abuse, women in prostitution and pornography can even be exposed to more extreme violence including murder by pimps, clients or partners.

(2) Exploitation and “choice”

One of the important elements of exploitation of women in the industries is closely linked to the lack of choice available for women, whose bodies are historically and violently bought and sold to powerful industries through coercion and control.

¹⁷ Stigamot’s Annual Reports from 2013-2016 provide statistics on prostitution and pornography based on the client contacts in Iceland.

“It is very difficult to identify free will in (cases of prostitution). Human’s body cannot be the object” (Estonia)

Many member organisations that include prostitution and pornography in the notion of sexualized violence – **Estonia, Ireland, Croatia, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg** and **Sweden** – challenge the concept of “choice” or “free will”. Given various factors and contexts, prostitution and pornography are rarely a free choice for most women and it can be difficult to distinguish between forced

and “unforced” prostitution.

Thus, one of the member organisations from **Croatia** underlines that there can be no question of women’s free choice in prostitution as it to a large extent depends on and is caused by economic and social vulnerability of women. The member organisation from **Sweden** highlights the thirty years of research that show how pornographers exploit the socially vulnerable women and girls in order to “recruit” them into pornography, and explain how women in prostitution and pornography share the same background factors, such as extreme poverty and childhood sexual abuse¹⁸.

(3) Gender inequality

Prostitution and pornography contain clear elements of abuse of power, control and force by men, thereby reinforcing domination over women. Through male dominance, women’s bodies are continuously being exploited as objects to be used for male sexual gratification.

Some member organisations from **Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Italy, Kosovo, Portugal, Serbia** and **Sweden** underline that prostitution and pornography have no positive effects on women, but rather dehumanise and degrade them, jeopardize women’s overall health and well-being. Consequently, pornography and prostitution are violations of women’s human right to physical integrity, life and freedom and do totally diminish women’s dignity. Male domination over women through power imbalance and force normalises women’s subordination and objectification of women not only in pornography and prostitution, but in the society as a whole, promotes sexism and sustains gender inequality.

The respondents assert that by perceiving prostitution and pornography as legitimate industries, patriarchal institutions, attitudes, social norms and values are upheld, which can be seen as both the cause and the consequence of women’s inequality.

(4) Gender stereotypes/roles and gender-based violence

Member organisations from **Croatia, Cyprus, England, Georgia, Ireland, Kosovo, Luxembourg** and **Montenegro** refer to how the two industries maintain sexualized violence within relationships, in particular, and society, in general, by promoting negative stereotypes and myths about sexuality and supporting stereotypical, patriarchal and violent gender roles. For instance, as the member organisation from **Georgia** points out, pornography shows how a man should always be dominant and aggressive while a woman should be passive and subordinate. By perpetuating harmful gender stereotypes, women continue to be perceived as sexually available objects or commodities to be bought and sold for male pleasure. That, in turn, reinforces rape culture and normalises sexual harassment.

One of the respondents from **Belgium** refers to the study by Melissa Farley¹⁹ which shows that the use of pornography leads to more aggressive behaviour among men; sex buyers in the study reported to use significantly more pornography than non-buyers, and three quarters of them reported that they received their sex education from pornography. The glorification of violence against women within pornography desensitises men as well as women to this sexual aggression.

(5) Human trafficking

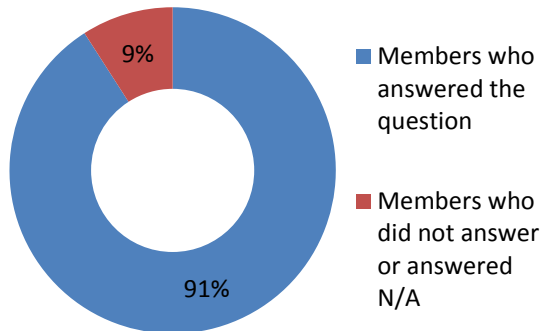
¹⁸ Grudzen, C., Ryan, G., Margold, W., Torres, J., and Gelberg, L. (2009). “Pathways to Health Risk Exposure in Adult Film Performers,” *Journal of Urban Health*, Vol. 86(1):67--78.

¹⁹ Farley et al. (2004). “Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries: An Update on Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.” *Journal of Trauma Practice*, Vol. 2:33-74.

Member organizations such as **Georgia, Luxembourg, Croatia, Portugal** and **Ukraine** point out that, through coercion, power and control by men (i.e. johns, pimps, or partners), women in prostitution and pornography are vulnerable to eventually being exploited in human trafficking. Prostitution can be linked to organised crime and helps create a supply of victims.

Part 4. Legislation

Not all the organisations that participated in the survey answered the question on national legislation for work with different types of sexualised violence. At the same time some organisations that answered the question did not evaluate their national legislation in accordance with the given scale from 1 to 5 (1 – very bad, 5 – very good plus the alternative “Legislation is missing”) giving comments to the mentioned types of sexualized violence instead.



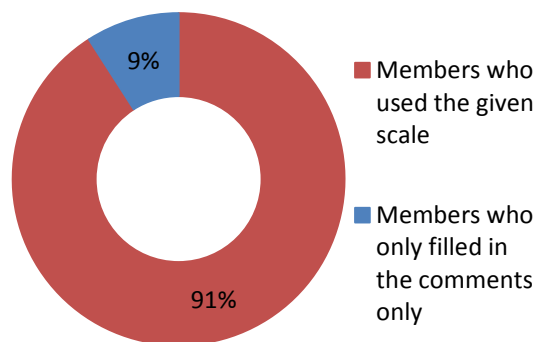
The answers and comments received from the member organisations point out the following limitations of the way the question is formulated:

✓ The suggested scale is too general,

and the particularities of the national legislations make it difficult for the respondents to use this scale for an adequate evaluation.

✓ Different organisations representing the same country may give totally opposite evaluation of the same legislation based on their concrete experiences with application of the legislation.

✓ It is not entirely clear the member organisations whether they get to evaluate the legislation itself or the application of the legislation in their countries. Evaluating both aspects appears to be very hard or even impossible. Generally speaking, the content of the existing national legislation is rated higher than its implementation.



“This question is complex and impossible to answer on a scale from 1-5, number say little” (Austria)

“We think that the problem is not always legislation in and of itself, but the implementation of the legislation” (England)

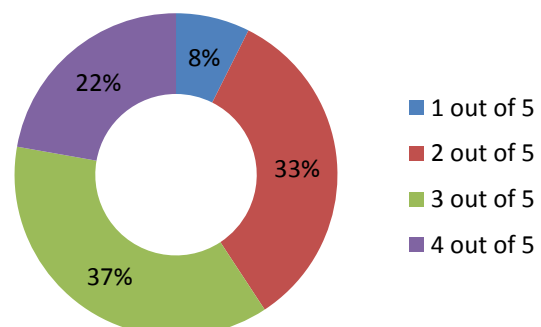
✓ The respondents are asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the legislation in terms of protection of women/girls/children and punishing perpetrators at the same time. Even though support and protection of survivors and punishing perpetrators should go hand in hand, the effectiveness of legislation and proceedings for these target groups may vary significantly.

✓ No additional instructions or clarifications are given to the respondents in connection to this question. As a result some of the respondents provide comments explaining why they rated legislation in one or another way while others do not leave any comments at all.

Taking into account all the above-mentioned limitations we will, first of all, focus on presenting the analysis of the relevant and comparable variables, and secondly, illustrate the numbers with the concrete examples given by the member organisations.

(1) Rape

National legislation on rape is in place in all **28 countries** represented by the member



organisations participated in the survey.

27 out of 33 member organisations evaluated the national legislation on rape. The majority of the organisations refer to the legislation in their countries as **satisfactory (37%)** or **bad (33%)**, and only **2 respondents (8%)** of the respondents consider the legislation being **very bad**. Organisations from Portugal and Sweden bring about the notion of consent as being crucial for legislation concerning rape. Thus, in **Portugal** the notion of consent is not yet present in the national Penal Code, and instead rape is still associated with “constraining the victim, severe threats, making the victim unconscious or incapable of resisting”. **Sweden** is currently experiencing a paradigm shift both in public and legal spaces resulting in the draft law on consent being recently proposed by the government.

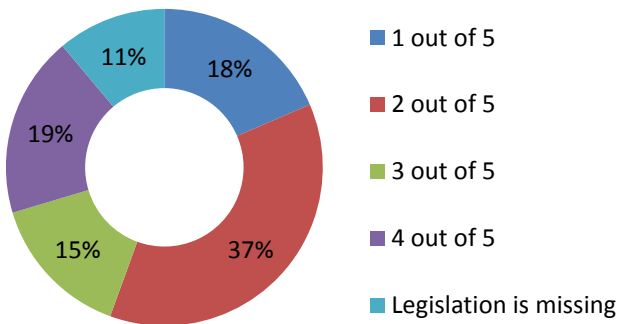
In **Slovenia** the legislation on rape is generally good but the court practice with its long proceedings and victim-blaming attitudes is still very harmful for survivors.

(2) Sexual harassment

27 out of 33 respondents evaluated the national legislation on sexual harassment.

10 out of these **27** member organisations (**37%**) that answered the question on legislation consider the laws

“Labour laws have a very good definition of sexual harassment, but this is completely lacking in the criminal code. However there are some laws such as that of harassment that are often used for sexual harassment, but are too generic and not reflective of the action” (Malta)



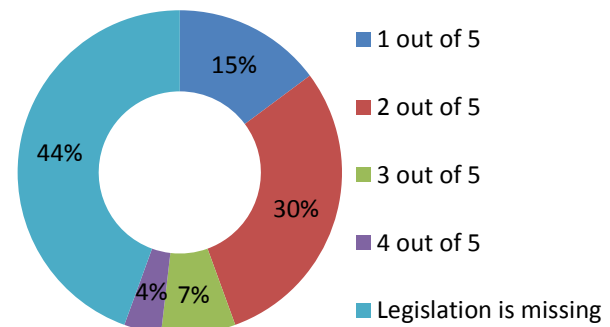
and legal procedures in their countries being bad. Member organisations from **Russia, Georgia** and **Cyprus** state the total absence of any legislation on sexual harassment in these countries. Several member organisations specify that sexual harassment is addressed in – and regulated by – the national Labour law, and therefore it is often considered as a work place issue. In **Sweden** sexual harassment is addressed in Discrimination Act.

(3) Sexting

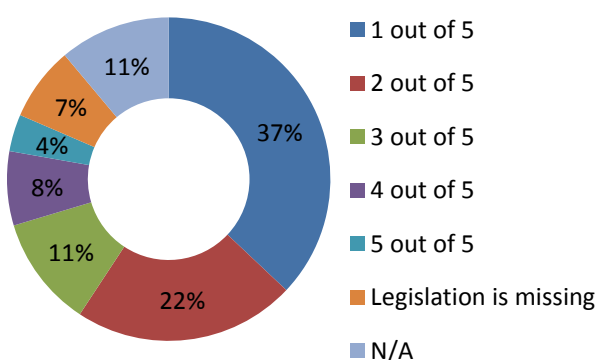
receiving – sexually explicit messages, photos and other materials via mobile phones, computers and other suitable for it electronic devices. Sending so-called “naked pictures” is not a crime per se, and that is why the question of consent (including legal age of consent) is central for understanding and addressing cases of sexting.

Sexting is usually defined as sending – and

National legislation on sexting was also evaluated by **27 out of 33** member organisations. According to **12 out of 27** responding member organisations (**44%**) there is no legislation on sexting in the countries they represent. At the same time there is an uncertainty in the answers as some of the respondents, for instance, **Armenia** and **Ireland**, are not aware of any specific legislation on sexting in their countries. Sexting may technically



be addressed using legislation on sexual harassment, rape or cybercrime depending on its scope and consequences but as a relatively new phenomenon legal practices on sexting are not yet developed enough.



(4) Prostitution

Generally speaking, among the countries represented in this survey there are (i) those where

prostitution is legalised both for women/men in the industry and for buyers, (ii) those where selling one's body in prostitution is illegal while purchasing one's body is not, and (iii) those where the so-called Nordic Model criminalising pimping and purchase of one's body is applied.

Member organisations do also have different opinion on whether prostitution is/should be considered as sexual exploitation and men's violence against women or not (see Part 5 of the current Report).

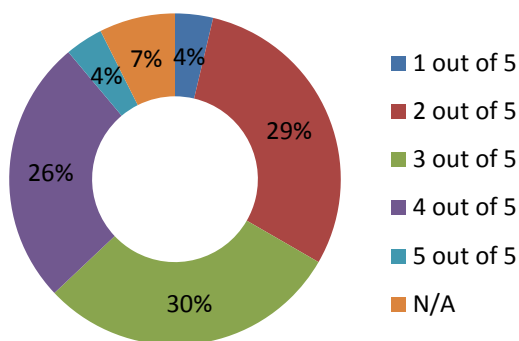
The majority of the 27 respondents that evaluated the national legislation on prostitution consider legislation on prostitution in their countries being either very bad (37%) or bad (22%). There is only one member organisation (Ireland) that rates the national legislation as very good, at the same time pointing out that it was quite recently enacted and therefore will need to be monitored and evaluated later on. 3 respondents (11%) did not evaluate legislation on prostitution at all, and the members from **Croatia** and **Russia** view the national legislation as being missing or inadequate.

"... prostitution is not perceived as violence against women and sexual exploitation or a violation of their right to physical integrity, life and freedom, but merely as a behaviour that violates social order and morality" (Cyprus)

(5) Human trafficking for sexual purposes

National legislation on human trafficking for sexual purposes was evaluated by **27 out of 33** member organisations. The majority of the respondents consider the national legislation on human

trafficking for sexual purposes in their countries as being either satisfactory (30%) or bad (29%). At the same time 26% of the member organisations give a more positive evaluation of legislation (4 out of 5 respondents). For instance, in **Slovenia** the local NGOs working with survivors of human trafficking for sexual purposes are very satisfied with the legislation itself as well as with its application by police and courts both when it comes to support and protection of survivors and punishment of perpetrators. Only one member organisation –

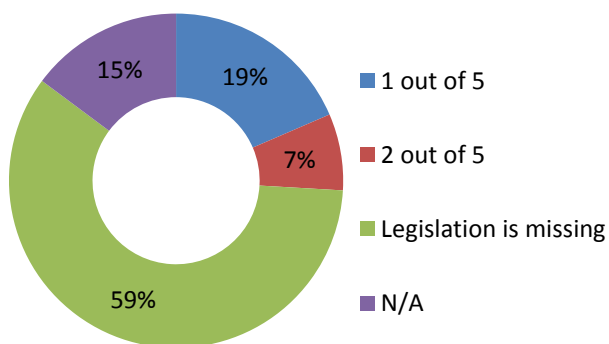


"... legislation can be very strong on punishment for perpetrators of human trafficking, but leave victims in the cold in terms of residence, support and rights" (Belgium)

Malta – evaluates its national legislation on trafficking or sexual purposes as being 5 out of 5. Respondents from **Portugal** and **Sweden** point out the low number of cases being classified and proceeded as cases of human trafficking, and as a result, the low number of convictions.

(6) Stripping

Legislation on stripping is missing in the absolute majority of the countries represented in the survey – 59% of those 27 member organisations, that evaluated the national legislation on stripping, indicated the absent of specific legal regulations, and 15% of the member organisations did not evaluate the legislation on stripping in their countries at all. Even though stripping and strip clubs are usually legal, some member organisations point out the connection between stripping and prostitution/trafficking for sexual purposes.



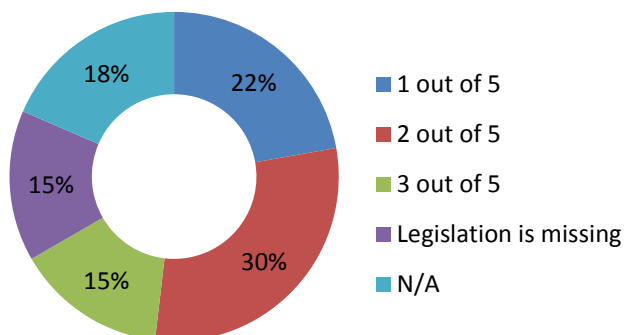
Thus, for instance in **Sweden**, women exploited in strip clubs are often also exploited in prostitution. Technically the legislation on prostitution can be used there but in practice this legislation is not applied. In **Cyprus** the women performing in

cabarets can be victims of trafficking for sexual purposes, and therefore the legislation on trafficking may be applicable.

(7) Pornography

Recent changes in the pornography industry, its scope and distribution in the epoch of digitalisation and internet make the issue related to pornography and its consumption similar throughout the globe.

Again, **27 out of 33** member organisations evaluated the national legislation on pornography. Most of them refer to the national legislation on pornography in the countries they represent as either bad (**30%**) or very bad (**22%**). **4 out of 27** the member organisations (**15%**) state that legislation on pornography in their countries is either missing or not being adequate.



Even when some regulations on pornography are in place they are often connected to so-called “child pornography” which is documented sexualised abuse of children, like in the cases of **Russia, Portugal, Cyprus, Sweden**, etc.

All in all, taking into account all data gathered within this survey, we are to conclude that the legal systems in the countries represented in the survey can be characterised as weak, often failing to protect survivors and punish perpetrators. So far most of the reported sexualised crimes do not go to trial and the level of victim-blaming is still high.

“...cases of sexual violence remain very under-reported or non-reported at all. For better understanding it must be said that in 2016 among 3653 domestic violence calls received by our organization in Yerevan and regions only 17 reported sexual violence” (Armenia)

Part 5. Good practice

31 out of 33 member organisations **responded to** the question on the good practice. While answering this question they referred to (i) the good practice that they have developed within their organisations; (ii) the good practice that was developed on the national level by institutions; and (iii) the lack of this kind of practice. Some member organisation described good practice through specific cases they supported while others focused on legal solutions and its implementation.

All in all, the good practice of the responded member organisations fall into the listed below categories:

- ✓ Provision of direct support to women survivors of sexualised violence (including establishment of self-help groups);
- ✓ Advocacy and public campaigns;
- ✓ Networking;
- ✓ Training programmes for professionals in institutions and NGOs;
- ✓ Support to women survivors of war related sexualised violence;
- ✓ Legal representation for victims at European Court for Human Rights;
- ✓ Recognising pornography as a form of sexual violence;
- ✓ Support for women with disabilities;
- ✓ Online help/counselling; and
- ✓ Counselling applying feminist perspective.

The majority of the respondents – **23 out of 31** member organisations – describe their good practice, first of all, through the **services they and/or other organisations develop and directly provide to support for women survivors of sexualized violence**.

For instance, **Centre ANNA (Russia)** highlights the work of Syostri (Sisters) – Sexual Assault Recovery Centre located in Moscow. Syostri team provides counselling for survivors and this is the only specific helpline for women exposed to sexual violence in Russia. **The Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters (Finland)** lifts the work of Seri Support Centre – the sexual assault support centre for people over the age of 16 who have experienced sexual assault regardless of sex or gender. This support centre provides a low-threshold service where a person can seek help alone, or with the loved ones, or as guided by the authorities. The member organisations from **Austria** and **Italy** emphasize importance of application of the feminist perspective/principles in work with survivors.

Advocacy and public campaigns are indicated as good practice by **14 out 31** respondents from **Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Cyprus, England, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal, Russia, Sweden, and Ukraine**.

Thus, the **Public Organisation “La Strada-Ukraine”** emphasises that they constantly conduct training and professional development of specialists in cooperation with their partners. Moreover, they do organise and conduct various information campaigns. **Women’s Aid (Ireland)** especially highlights the participation in the **Turn Off the Red Light** campaign. This campaign was run by an alliance of civil society organisations, unions, NGOs and individuals and aimed to end prostitution and sex trafficking in Ireland. It succeeded in having the Sexual Offences Act, which criminalises the purchase of sexual services and decriminalises persons in prostitution, passed in 2017.

Member organisations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, England, Kosovo, Portugal, Russia and Sweden mention **networking** as one of the good practices highlighting the importance of joint work and cooperation not only among NGOs but also between NGOs and relevant institutions/authorities.

For instance, **AMCV – Association of Women against Violence (Portugal)** considers the Project “New Challenges in combating Sexual Violence” that the organisation ran between 2014 and 2016, to be of a great importance not only for raising awareness about the issues of sexualised violence but also for providing help, support and empowerment for survivors. The project also helped build a network that included 9 NGOs, 16 public institutions and 3 Human Rights and Legal experts that started to work with cases of sexualised violence in a new integrated way. **The Autonomous Women’s House Zagreb and**

Centre for Women War Victims – ROSA especially underlines the importance of regional cooperation in post-Yugoslav countries on the issue of war rape.

7 out of 31 responded member organisations refer to training programmes are seen as one of the good practices.

Thus, together with its partners, the **Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation – BGRF** has been implementing the training of the European lawyers within the Women’s Human Rights Training Institute. Among other topics, this training focuses on the issues of violence against women and sexualised violence. In **Luxembourg, Frauenhaus (Femmes en Detresse)** provides the training for students in police school. This training has a specific section dedicated to domestic violence, including the issue of sexualised violence.

Member organisations from the countries that relatively recently experienced war (**Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia and Ukraine**), see provision of help and support to women survivors of war related sexualised violence as one of the most important parts of their work.

2 out of 31 respondents point out representation of victims/survivors at the European Court of Human Rights as one of their good practices. They do especially emphasise the impact that some verdicts have on the European judicial practice. For instance, according to the **Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation – BGRF** there are Bulgarian cases that shaped the practice of international courts on sexualised violence.

Member organisations from **Iceland** and **Sweden** highlight the importance of recognising pornography as a form of sexual violence. In **Sweden** the work with the issue of pornography has taken a new level. In July 2016 **Unizon (Sweden)** launched the report on Pornography and Prostitution that incorporated Unizon’s member organisations experiences and several decades of research, and during the past years, among other activities, organised the first national conference on pornography and co-organised a national conference on violence prevention where a significant section was dedicated to pornography-related questions.

The member organisation from **Germany (BFF: Bundesverband Frauenberatungsstellen und Frauennotrufe)** mentions their good practice in development of the support services for women with disabilities, while **The Federation of Mother and Child Homes and Shelters (Finland)** particularly highlights their work with online counselling.

The Autonomous Women’s Centre – AWC (Serbia) points out the importance of feminist perspective in counselling highlighting an example of the pilot project financed by the UN Trust Fund, developed and led by the regional government in Vojvodina. This project aims at opening seven rape crisis centres in Vojvodina region as well as enhancing collaboration between health and social institutions. The project is in its first year, and it is conceived as a good practice, but as the institutions show quite some resistance and mistrust towards women’s organisations, the implementation of the project is problematic.

Both member organisations from **Montenegro** state that **there are no good practices** when it comes to the issue of sexualised violence in their country.

Among other good practices indicated and described by the respondents are the following:

- ✓ Outreach and one-to-one support to women in prostitution;
- ✓ Training for students at police school;
- ✓ Violence prevention programmes;
- ✓ Child protection programmes;
- ✓ Work on sexual harassment and sexism at workplaces and in public space;
- ✓ Establishment of self-help groups;
- ✓ Cooperation with local authorities;
- ✓ Active involvement and participation of students and youth;
- ✓ Implementation of the law on sexual harassment; and
- ✓ Gathering valuable statistics on sexualised violence.

Part 6. Main challenges

Even though the WAVE member organisations participated in the survey highlight several good practices and show that the work with different types and aspects of sexualised violence in many of the represented countries is developing, they still face a lot of challenges addressing sexualised violence in their work.

31 out of 33 member organisations responded the question on three main challenges. The respondents were asked to describe three main challenges they face in their work with the issue of sexualised violence, and **26 out of 31** organisations indicated **three challenges**. **3 out of 31** organisations highlighted **four or more challenges**, and **2 out of 31** respondents described **two challenges**.

Altogether, the main challenges can be listed as:

- ✓ Problems in treatment of victims/survivors of sexualised violence by relevant institutions;
- ✓ Lack of knowledge on men's violence against women among institutions working with victims/survivors of sexualised violence (i.e. police, judiciary);
- ✓ Victim blaming;
- ✓ Patriarchy, gender stereotypes and traditional values;
- ✓ Stigma and unwillingness of women to report sexualised violence they have been exposed to;
- ✓ Lack of specialised services for victims/survivors and sustainability of these services;
- ✓ Lack of funding for combating sexualised violence; and
- ✓ Gender neutrality discourse.

Various problems in treatment of victims/survivors of sexualised violence by relevant institutions are highlighted as one of the main challenges by **21 out of 31** responded member organisations.

For instance, the member organisations from **Croatia** indicate both the lack of political will to deal with the issue of sexualised violence and the lack of institutional support for victims/survivors. In **Albania**, the

“Front line professionals (Police, Social Welfare Services, and Health Services) do not receive systematic training and often lack the ability to offer adequate support and protection. Often professionals have stereotypical attitudes hence often leading to a secondary traumatization of the victims. Training is offered by NGOs, but not systematically” (Cyprus)

police sometimes avoids cases of sexualised violence by failing to respond to these cases *‘in a professional way and timely manner’*. The still rigid and inadequate legislation in **Bulgaria** fails to ensure protection of victims/survivors of sexualised violence.

The failure of the authorities and institutions to protect and support victims/survivors of sexualised violence goes hand in hand with two more challenges, namely **the lack of knowledge on men's violence against women among institutions working with**

victims/survivors of sexualised violence, and **victim blaming**.

Thus, the respondents from **Estonia** point out that the lack of specific knowledge on sexualised violence among judges, prosecution and police often results in *‘de-victimisation of victims’*. The member organisation from **Austria** highlights the issue of victim blaming in the justice system that keeps women from reporting violence and seeking help, and may cause secondary traumatising of women on a large scale

8 out of 31 respondents mention **patriarchy, gender stereotypes and traditional values** among the biggest challenges they face while addressing sexualised violence.

For instance, the member organisation from **Kosovo** underlines that the traditional values and attitudes towards women are still very strong in the society. According to one of the respondents from **Cyprus**, the politicians and decision makers are not always open and willing to discuss

“In the last five years there is an increasing renaissance of what is called “traditional values”. These discriminatory sentiments and practices are easily maintainable in the environment where gender equality and women's human rights issues are rejected and considered to be the matters of alien ideology and “foreign” influence both by the state and the general public” (Russia)

questions related to the issue of sexualised violence, which is not surprising as there is only one woman among 11 ministers and only 10 out of 56 parliament members are women. In **Russia**, spreading gender stereotypes is one of the most significant challenges in combating violence against women.

Stigma and unwillingness of women to report sexualised violence they have been exposed to is recognised as one of the major challenges by **6 out of 31** member organisations. This challenge is closely related to the previous one as well as to the issue of victim blaming in the society.

As the respondent from **Romania** puts it, the cultural and social norms in society, even if they undergo certain changes, create a big impact and shape individual behaviour. Breaking these norms – willingly or unwillingly – often leads to shame and stigmatisation, as in cases of victims/survivors of sexualized violence. In Romania, for example, victims of marital rape are highly stigmatised. The member organisation from **Austria** points out that stigmatisation and victim blaming discourage survivors of sexualized violence from talking about their experiences.

8 out of 31 responded member organisations see **the lack of specialised services for victims/survivors and sustainability of these services** as a significant challenge.

Thus, the member organisation from **Croatia** underlines that victims/survivors of sexualised violence need legal counselling, psychosocial support, adequate medical support, etc. which is impossible to provide if no specialised services are in place. The respondents from **Georgia** specifically points out the lack of support services for victims/survivors of sexualised violence living in rural areas.

Lack of funding for combating sexualised violence is identified as one of the main challenges by **10 out of 31** respondents.

For instance, member organisations from **Germany** and **Croatia** see the need to secure financial situation of the support system in order to be able to provide victims/survivors with services that states do not provide. The respondent from **England** is also concerned about securing funding for the work, *‘including when commissioning sets of a framework for delivery that we do not believe best meets the needs of women’*.

Member organisations from **Belgium** and **Sweden** do also mention **gender neutrality discourse** among the main challenges in their work with men’s violence against women, in general, and with the issue of

sexualised violence, in particular. As the respondent from Belgium argues, the gender neutrality discourse in cases of sexualised violence seems to be even worse than in cases of intimate partner violence.

Apart from the challenges described, the member organisations which responded indicated the following challenges of high importance:

“The federal government just launched a new type of victim support service specific to sexualised violence to catch up with the Istanbul Convention requirements. It is a one-stop service with doctors, lawyers, psychosocial workers and the police, and at least in their communication, everything is gender neutral. They are too new to evaluate the quality of their services, but this is another example of a worrying evolution towards gender-neutral policies and services”.
(Belgium)

- ✓ Lack of awareness about sexualised violence in the society;
- ✓ Lack of violence prevention programmes;
- ✓ Lack of networking;
- ✓ Istanbul Convention is still not ratified by many countries;
- ✓ Negligence of sexualised violence in favour of intimate partner violence;
- ✓ Normalization of violence;
- ✓ Insignificant punishment/sentences for perpetrators of sexualised violence;
- ✓ Lack of recognition of prostitution as male violence against women;
- ✓ Pornography and other digital forms of violence;
- ✓ No signs that violence is decreasing; and
- ✓ Lack of motivation/difficulty to go from online counselling to face-to-face counselling sessions.

Part 7. Ways Forward

As the data for this report was collected and analysed, the WGSV started discussing possible ways forward both for the work of the WG and for the WAVE work with the topic of sexualised violence. All in all this report is to be used as a tool for development and planning of the WG's future activities and focus points. The possible ways forward are considered in the following paragraphs.

Istanbul Convention and its ratification Introduction

The report makes it clear that the Istanbul Convention has not yet been ratified by many countries. As of May 2018, the IC has been ratified by 30 countries. Furthermore, with challenging political climates threatening the sustainability and existence of specialist women's support services within Europe, the effective implementation of the Convention should be monitored and actively promoted. The IC is critical in ensuring the survival of specialist women's support services and the prevention of GBV, particularly sexualised violence. *Article 25* of the Convention acknowledges that sexualised violence is especially traumatising and requires a particularly sensitive response by trained and specialised staff.

The IC can form the foundation of the WGSV aims and endeavours going forward. Ratification of the IC and its effective implementation can be set as a priority and can be used to guide lobbying activities of the WG. In this aspect, the WGSV could continue its work by focusing specifically on legislation and policy concerning sexualised violence within countries and seek ways to improve national legislation and the ways in which specialist support services work with the Convention.

Using the IC as a tool itself for lobbying would also ensure that adequate punishment and sentences for perpetrators of sexualised violence is achieved within countries, as well as the adequate use of state legislation to defend and protect victims of sexualised violence.

Common definition of sexualised violence Introduction

One of the important challenges brought up by member organisations is the lack of a common definition on sexualised violence (see *Part 1. What is sexualised violence?*). For instance, as pointed out in the report, not all member organisations include prostitution and pornography in their definition of SV, or they do so with an emphasis on the notion of consent. The IC also does not recognise pornography and prostitution as male violence against women within its definition of SV.

A way forward would thus be to have a common discussion where all opinions and views on the matter are well represented and respected. This discussion could include other networks and organisations to work towards a common definition as well as to strengthen cooperation on joint activities. This would allow a proper exchange of views, from which further steps and actions could be decided. For instance, hosting a WAVE webinar on the issue of prostitution and pornography on the basis of this report is suggested by one WG member.

Focus on stereotypes and victim-blaming

Another challenge underlined by the report shows that the lack of specific knowledge on sexualised violence of professionals in the judiciary and police systems often results in the '*re-victimisation of victims*', which can prevent women from reporting violence and seeking help (see *Part 6. Main challenges*). The WGSV should therefore focus on this particular issue by researching how such practices affect society as a whole and the judicial system as such. The WG should also focus on how victim-blaming behaviours and attitudes impact the reporting of sexualised violence by victims, their access to justice as well as the ways victims seek help. Here, stereotypes and stigma can be further unpacked in relation to institutionalised re-victimisation of victims of sexualised violence. This focus could be connected to data collection (see below).

Common framework for data collection

The lack of data on the issue of sexualised violence is one of the main challenges brought about by the report, indicating that data collection on the reporting of SV should be strengthened in many countries.

The current report could lead to a common framework within the WAVE Network – potentially even an EU framework – for data collection on sexualised violence. The WGSV could work towards achieving such a framework to better combat and prevent men’s sexualised violence against women.

For instance, a database on the different awareness campaigns on sexualised violence developed and carried out by WAVE members could be established. This kind of database could contain information on how different campaigns are carried out, what feedback is being received, do’s and don’ts of campaigning activities, etc., and would serve as a learning and inspirational tool, first of all, for those WAVE members that are willing to launch similar campaigns in the future.

Furthermore, also connected to the focus on stereotypes and victim-blaming mentioned earlier in this section, data collection tools could be used in order to analyse factors which contribute to under-reporting of SV-cases in certain countries. For instance, an Italian member organisation pointed out that within Italy, the reporting of sexualised violence has decreased, despite the widespread awareness of sexualised violence within society in part due to global campaigns such as the #MeToo movement. Data could be collected to determine similar patterns in other countries, and to better understand how under-reporting could be linked to societal attitudes which perpetuate harmful gender norms.

WAVE Working Group on Sexual(ised) Violence (including Prostitution and Pornography)

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is intended to support the development of the WG on sexual(ised) violence, in order to better understand current attitudes, priorities and experiences of WAVE Members regarding sexual(ised) violence prevention and work with survivors of sexual(ised) violence.

Please return this questionnaire to Kelly Blank, kelly.blank@wave-network.org and Natalia Batenkova, natalia.batenkova@unizon.se by **November 19, 2017**.

Organisation: _____

Filled by: _____

Contact details: _____

1. What is the definition of sexual(ised) violence that is used in your country/organisation? _____

2. Does your organisation work with questions related to sexual(ised) violence?

- Yes
- No – please specify why: _____
- Not yet, but we are planning to – please specify how: _____

3. In case you answered “yes” on *question 2*, do you solely work with sexual(ised) violence or do you combine work with sexual(ised) violence with work with other types of violence?

- We work solely with sexual(ised) violence
- We work mainly with sexual(ised) violence and sometimes with psychological and physical violence
- We work integrated with physical, psychological and sexual(ised) violence
- Other – please specify: _____

4. What types of violence does your organisation consider being sexual(ised) violence?

- Rape
- Sexual harassment
- Human trafficking for sexual purposes/sex trafficking
- Incest
- Sex as self-destructive behaviour²⁰

²⁰ Self-destructive behaviour is usually defined as any behaviour that is harmful or potentially harmful towards the person who engages in the behaviour. There is no common definition of sex as self-destructive behaviour but many scholars and international organisations that work with children, i.e. Save the Children, define it as follows: a behavioural pattern characterised by seeking

- Prostitution
- Sexting
- Pornography (including revenge pornography)
- Stripping
- Other – please specify: _____

5. Why do you think prostitution and pornography should be included in/excluded from the notion of sexual(ised) violence? _____

6. In case you answered “yes” on question 2 what types of sexual(ised) violence does your organisation work with?

- Rape
- Sexual harassment
- Human trafficking for sexual purposes
- Incest
- Sex as self-destructive behaviour
- Prostitution
- Sexting
- Pornography
- Stripping
- Other – please specify: _____

7. How do you work with the issue of sexual(ised) violence?

- Helpline for victims/survivors
- Counselling for victims/survivors
- Sexual Assault Response Teams (SART)
- Hotline for (potential) perpetrators
- Counselling for perpetrators
- Awareness-raising public campaigns
- Violence preventive programmes for young people (i.e. school interventions)
- Lobbying
- Other – please specify: _____

8. How does legislation in your country work in terms of protecting women/girls/children and punishing perpetrators when it comes to:

Rape	<input type="radio"/> 1 2 3 4 5 1 – very bad 5 – very good <input type="radio"/> Legislation is missing
Sexual harassment	<input type="radio"/>

sexual relationships in order to hurt oneself physically or mentally. A person with this behavioural pattern causes significant suffering to her-/himself and results in the loss of ability to function well in school, at work and in other important areas.

	1	2	3	4	5
	1 – very bad 5 – very good <input type="radio"/> Legislation is missing				
Sexting	<input type="radio"/> 1 1 – very bad 5 – very good <input type="radio"/> Legislation is missing	2	3	4	5
Prostitution	<input type="radio"/> 1 1 – very bad 5 – very good <input type="radio"/> Legislation is missing	2	3	4	5
Human trafficking for sexual purposes	<input type="radio"/> 1 1 – very bad 5 – very good <input type="radio"/> Legislation is missing	2	3	4	5
Stripping	<input type="radio"/> 1 1 – very bad 5 – very good <input type="radio"/> Legislation is missing	2	3	4	5
Pornography	<input type="radio"/> 1 1 – very bad 5 – very good <input type="radio"/> Legislation is missing	2	3	4	5
Other comments					

9. Multiagency cooperation: does your organisation work together with other NGOs, national/regional/local authorities, politicians, schools etc. addressing the issue of sexual(ised) violence?

- Yes – please specify how: _____

- No – please specify why: _____

- Not yet, but we are planning to – please specify how: _____

10. Please give 3 examples of best practices of work with sexual(ised) violence in your organisation/country: _____

11. Please name top 3 challenges your organisation faces addressing the issue of sexual(ised) violence: _____

Thank you!