



UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG

No more excuses

Moving beyond gender-based violence in academia

Prague 24-25 November 2022

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Violence matters

- From the problem with no name, to named, framed, and condemned
- Extreme expression of inequality and a human rights violation
- A normalised part of academic cultures
- Impedes the access to academic freedom
- Higher education and research as democratic institutions are at stake



UniSAFE
ENDING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

survey on gender-based violence in academia

“

Nearly 2 in 3 respondents
have experienced at least one form of
gender-based violence
since starting at their institution

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Lipinsky, A., Schredl, C., Baumann, H., Humbert, A., Tanwar, J. (2022). *Gender-based violence and its consequences in European Academia, Summary results from the UniSAFE survey*. Report, November 2022. UniSAFE project no.101006261.

Conceptual clarity

Structural oppression

(Brownmiller 1975; Sinha 2017)

Continuum

(Hearn 1998; Kelly 1988)

Autotelic

(Schinkel 2010, 2013)

Normalisation

(Lundgren 2004; Rodelli et al 2022)

Intersectionality

(Crenshaw 1989; Walby et al. 2012)

Prevention

(Anitha & Lewis 2018; Bondestam & Lundqvist 2020)

Gender-based violence is defined in the UniSAFE project as all forms of “violations and abuse, including but not limited to, physical violence, psychological violence, economic and financial violence, sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender harassment, stalking, organisational violence and harassment – in both online and offline contexts, including emerging forms of violence, experienced as violence, violations and abuse not yet necessarily named or recognised as violence”.

Strid, S., Humbert, A.L., Hearn, J., Bondestam, F., & Husu, Liisa. (2021). *Theoretical and conceptual framework*. EU: UniSAFE, p. 13 <https://zenodo.org/record/5529668#.Y3dt9YTM12x>

Consequences

- Stress, anxiety, depression, PTSD, attempt of and actual suicide.
- Headache, stomach pain, sleep disorder, drug and alcohol abuse.
- Intention to drop out, forced mobility, actual drop out.
- Motivation, performance, engagement, participation.
- Student learning, peer and work groups, work environment.
- Quality and excellence of research and education.
- Limited academic freedom and a democratic shortfall.
- **Severe and qualitatively different** consequences for women, minorities and intersecting identities

Academic contexts and cultures

- Distinct organisational structures with hierarchies of power (Hearn & Parkin 2001).
- Violence by acquaintances, colleagues, and bystanders (Chandra & Erlingsdottir 2021).
- Structural inequalities and **elitism** (Münch 2007).
- Laissez-faire attitudes and normalisation (Ågotnes et al. 2018; Phipps et al. 2018).
- Toxic masculinity, hypercompetition and individualism.

EU policy framework

- EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 sets out to make gender-based violence "a thing of the past"
- Gender Equality Plan requirement for Horizon Europe suggest gender-based violence as 1 of 5 areas "organisations may wish to consider"
- The Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation, 2021
- The Prague Call for Action to end gender-based violence, 2022
- The ERA Policy Agenda, Action 5 on gender equality, 2022

The Ljubljana Declaration on Gender Equality in Research and Innovation 2021

- Cohesive infrastructure and procedures for preventing and tackling gender-based violence and harassment in academia in the Member States and other countries are missing.
- There is a prominent lack of relevant policies, legislation/regulations, responsible authorities, gender-based violence/sexual harassment experts, gender-sensitive protocols and reporting procedures and up-to-date prevalence data

Challenges for the future

- **Perception:** experiences of gender-based violence are expected for a majority of students and staff in the European Research Area
- **Precision:** shift from a reactive, policy-centred, binary, singular event to a proactive, survivor-centred, intersectional, process of abuse and recovery
- **Priority:** ending gender-based violence is one of the main factors for achieving quality and excellence in research and innovation
- **Precious:** acknowledge inclusive, restorative, feminist claims on epistemic justice as a stairway to academic freedom

"Doors were beginning to open for them, and then, bam, the same old story, opportunity turning to ashes."

Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution*, 1999



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