

SURVEY ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE EU-GBV, 2021

Violence takes many forms, from the physical and sexual violence most commonly associated with it, to neglect, insults, threats, harassment and other psychological violence.

Society and researchers are interested in knowing the true nature of violence, where and when it happens, how often, and who the perpetrators are. Important are the characteristics of the victims of violence, directly or indirectly, and what the short and long-term consequences are for individuals and for society as a whole.

In response to the growing need for statistical data on the prevalence of violence against women, the National Statistical Institute has joined a project initiated by the European Commission to conduct a survey and provide such information. The aim is to provide reliable, comparable, representative data on the prevalence, frequency, intensity and severity of violence against women at a national level and in the EU Member States, using a common and harmonised methodology. The information gathered can significantly complement the one from existing administrative sources - such as police, judicial or prosecution statistics.

The prevalence of the following types of violence is measured: psychological, sexual and physical violence (including threats), stalking, sexual harassment at work, and violence in childhood. It provides important information on the relationship with perpetrators - intimate partners (current and former); household members; other persons.

The survey was conducted between November 2021 and February 2022 among women aged 17 - 84 years. The main method of data collection was a face-to-face interview using an electronic device (CAPI). Due to the sensitive nature of the topic for the convenience of the respondents and considering the epidemic situation in the country at the time of the fieldwork, for the first time, the NSI also applied a web-based application for respondents' self-interviewing (CAWI).

A nationally representative sample of 8 240 private households with at least one woman aged 18 - 74 was drawn. In accordance with the methodology, institutionalised households, such as boarding houses, residencies for students or workers, social service institutions, prisons, etc. were excluded from the target population. The survey was conducted on the principle of voluntary participation and consent. Only one woman per household in the respective age group was interviewed. A total of 5 580 women were successfully interviewed and the response rate was 77.4%.

Depending on the nature of the questions, the period covered is different - last 12 months, last 5 years, lifetime or from age 15 to the time of the interview (as an adult). The choice for this observation period was made to obtain the most reliable answers. The period is also essential in correctly referring to the experience by type of violence and by perpetrator, in cases where a woman has been the victim of more than one type of violence by more than one perpetrator.

All presented data are based on the subjective assessment of the respondents and no documents were required to verify the accuracy of the answers.

The indicators calculated refer to unwanted experiences by women after the age of 15, except where a specific age is indicated or concerning violence in childhood. Indicators for intimate partner violence refer to the entire period since the relationship began, regardless of age.

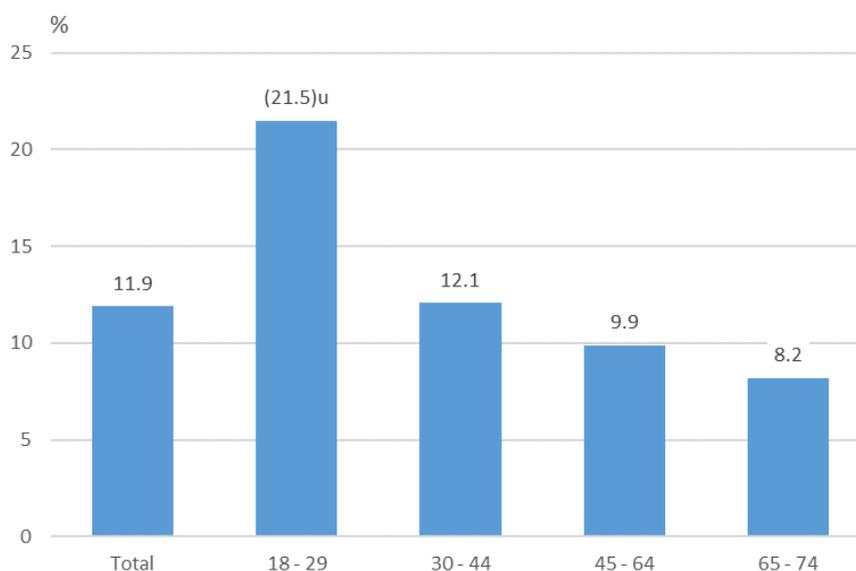
Women who have experienced physical (including threats) or sexual violence by any perpetrator

Violence against women is most often associated with physical or sexual violence. According to the methodology of the survey, physical violence is intentional behaviour aimed at causing suffering and inducing fear through the use of direct physical force resulting in bodily pain and/or injury. Sexual violence is intentional conduct to coerce to obtain unwanted sexual acts using physical force or coercion without the person's consent. It includes any type of harmful or unwanted behaviour, including any act that the person finds humiliating.

The results of the survey show that 11.9% of women aged 18 - 74 have experienced at least one of the two types of violence at some point in their adult lives, regardless of who the perpetrator is and what their relationship is with him/her. Physical violence, including threats of such violence, was more common (8.5%) compared to sexual violence (3.4%).

Young women are more likely to share about their unwanted experiences. The proportion of women experiencing physical or sexual violence by any perpetrator decreases with increasing age (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Share of women who have experienced physical (including threats) or sexual violence by any perpetrator, by age¹
(EU-GBV, 2021)



Depending on when the last episode of one of the two types of violence occurred, the prevalence is as follows:

- ✓ In the last 12 months - among 2.9% of women aged 18 - 74;
- ✓ In the last 5 years - among 5.9%;
- ✓ During adulthood - among 11.9%.

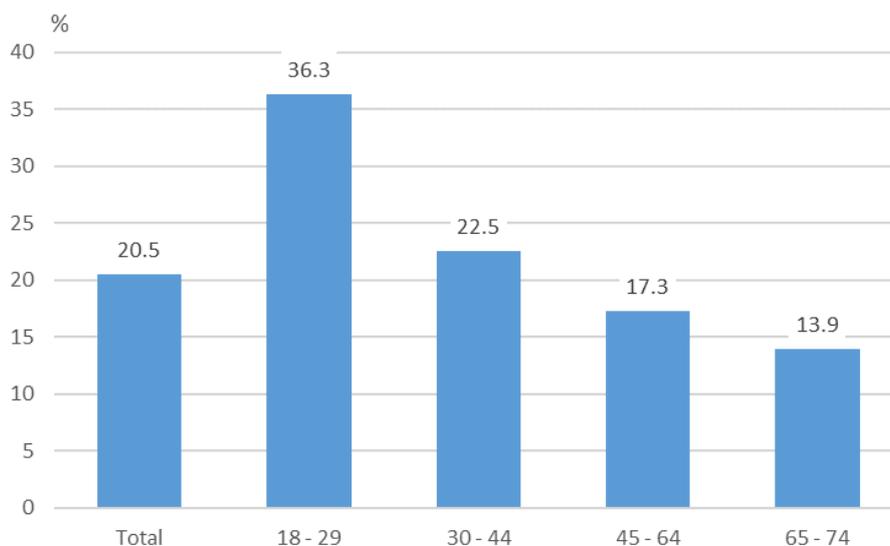
¹ Due to a small sample size data in the 18 - 29 age group are not reliable.

Women who have experienced violence by an intimate partner

One of the most common perpetrators of violence against women is their intimate partner. According to the survey methodology, intimate partner violence includes unwanted experiences with current and/or former partner/s, covering psychological, sexual and physical violence (including threats).

Survey data show that 20.5% of women aged 18 - 74 in the country who currently have or have ever had a partner have experienced one or more acts of violence by an intimate partner (Figure 2). Young women (aged 18 - 29) are at the highest risk of intimate partner violence compared to women in other age groups. One in three women aged 18 - 29 has been abused by a current or former partner (36.3%). Among women aged 30 - 44, the relative share of having experienced partner violence was 22.5%. As age increased, the share of women reporting this type of experience decreased to 13.9% in the 65 - 74 age group.

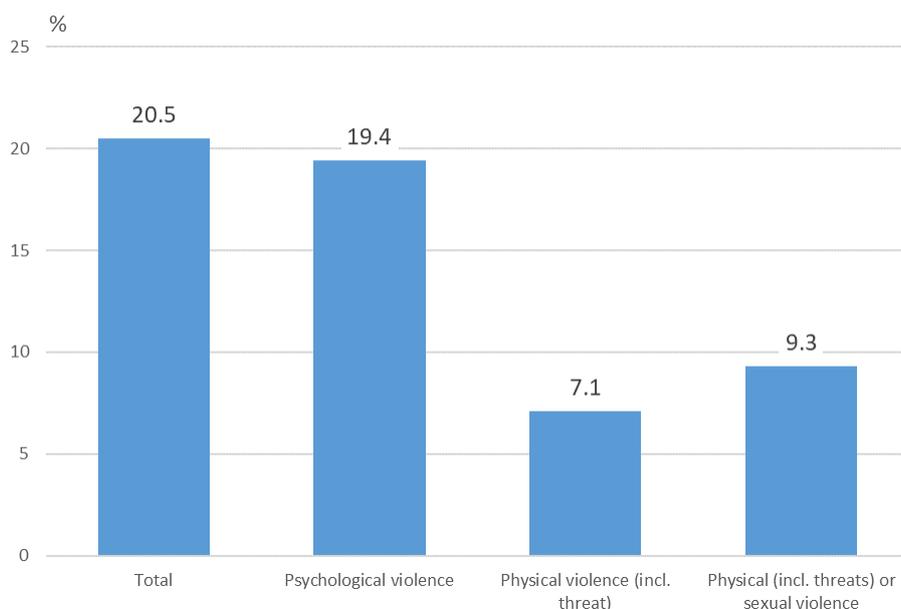
Figure 2. Share of women who have experienced violence by an intimate partner, by age (EU-GBV, 2021)



The survey results show that among the types of intimate partner violence, psychological violence¹ is the most common (Figure 3). Of all women who have or have ever had a partner, 19.4% have experienced such violence. Physical violence by intimate partners was experienced by 7.1% of women, and 9.3% said they had experienced physical or sexual violence by current and/or former partners.

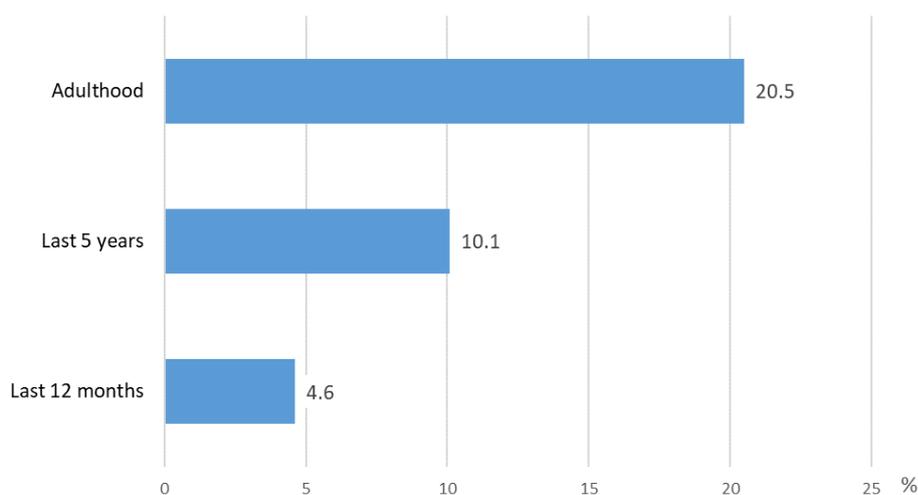
¹ Psychological violence is observed only in intimate partner relationships and includes a range of behaviours involving emotional abuse and controlling behaviour such as: belittling and humiliation; forbidding the respondent from seeing friends, parents or relatives; forbidding the respondent from engaging in hobbies; forbidding the respondent from leaving the house without the permission or locking the respondent up; threatening to harm the respondent's children or other people close to the respondent; threatening to take the respondent's children away or deprive the respondent of parental rights; threatening of self-harm if the respondent leaves them, etc.

Figure. 3. Share of women who have experienced violence by an intimate partner, by type of violence (EU-GBV, 2021)



Depending on when the last episode of intimate partner violence occurred, the data show that one in ten women (10.1%) aged 17 - 84 had experienced violence in the five years prior to the survey, and 4.6% had experienced such violence in the 12 months prior to the survey (Figure 4).

Figure. 4. Share of women who have experienced violence by an intimate partner, by last episode of violence (EU-GBV, 2021)



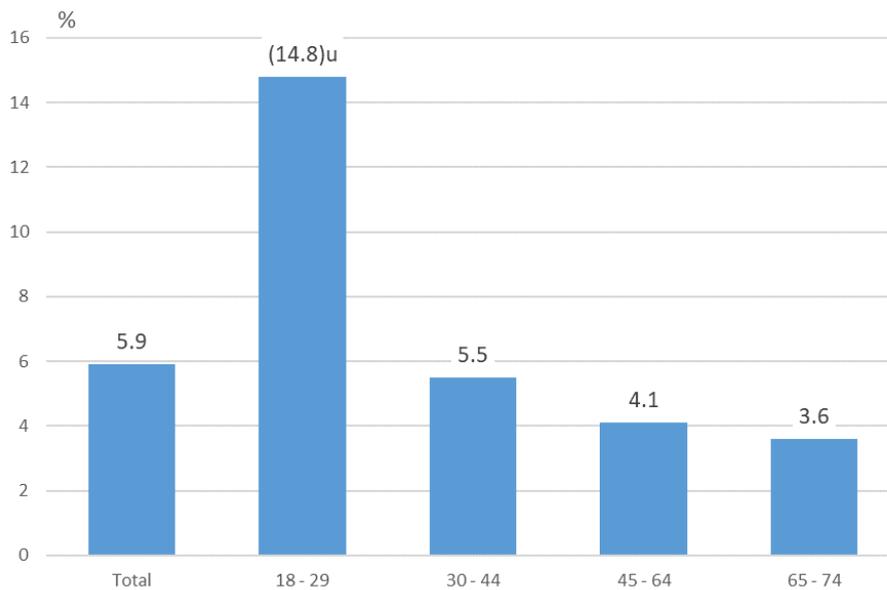
Women who have experienced violence by a non-partner

The present survey is a source of information on the prevalence of unwanted experiences with intimate partners as well as experiences with others. This includes threats and physical or sexual violence perpetrated by an acquaintance, friend, colleague, stranger or neighbour, whether male or female. A specific characteristic is that the violence occurred after the age of 15 of the respondent.

According to the survey, 5.9% of women aged 18 - 74 have experienced physical violence (including threats) or sexual violence by someone other than their partner. The majority of women who experienced physical violence (including threats) were 3.5%, while 2.4% were victims of sexual violence, including 1.5% of rape.

For both intimate partner violence and non-partner violence, the prevalence decreased with the increasing age of women (Figure 5). Among women aged 30 - 44, 5.5% have experienced physical or sexual violence by a non-partner in their entire adult life. The lowest share of women victims was among those aged 65 - 74. Special attention should be taken when analysing the data for the youngest group, aged 18 - 29, as the data are not reliable due to a small sample size.

Figure. 5. Share of women who have experienced violence by a non-partner, by age¹ (EU-GBV, 2021)



Depending on when the last violent episode occurred, the prevalence is as follows:

- ✓ 2.1% of women experienced violence in the last 12 months;
- ✓ 3.4% - in the last 5 years;
- ✓ 5.9% - in their entire adult life after the age of 15 (including cases where the period is not specified).

¹ Due to a small sample size data in the 18 - 29 age group are not reliable.

Physical or sexual domestic violence

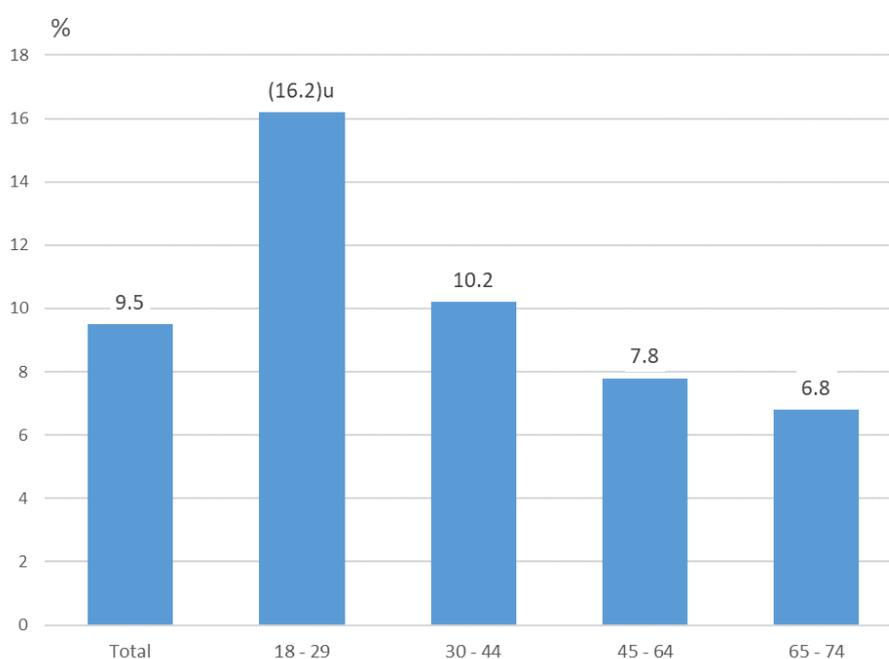
Domestic violence includes any act of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence, as well as attempted violence in the family or in the household. It includes family members, intimate partners and persons who live or have lived in the same household when the violence occurred. Data from the survey provide calculation of indicators for physical (including threats) and sexual violence perpetrated by a member of the household.

Depending on the perpetrator, the time period covered is different. In cases where the respondent has experienced violence from an intimate partner, the period from the time of the relationship is covered, and where the violence experienced is from a person other than a partner, the period since 15 years age of the woman to the time of the survey is covered.

Almost one out of ten women aged 18 - 74 in the country (9.5%) reported having experienced physical (including threats) or sexual violence by persons in the household, with 6.9% experiencing physical violence (including threats) and 2.6% - sexual violence.

In the 18 - 29 age group, 16.2% of women have experienced violence in the family or in the household. As age increased, the relative share of women who said they have experienced such domestic violence decreased to 6.8% in the 65 to 74 age group (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Share of women who have experienced physical or sexual violence by a domestic perpetrator, by age¹
(EU-GBV, 2021)



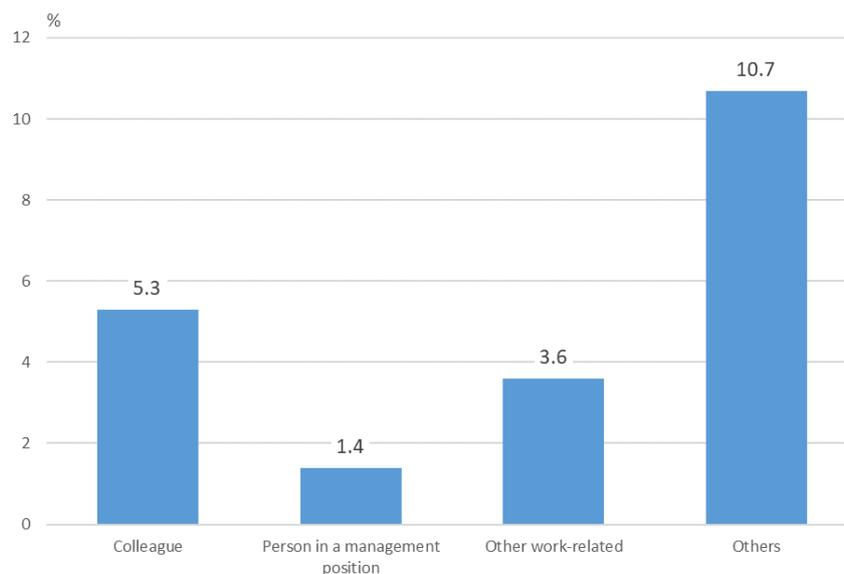
¹ Due to a small sample size data in the 18 - 29 age group are not reliable.

Sexual harassment at work¹

Sexual harassment at work includes any form of unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a person in the work environment resulting in a violation of a person's dignity, insult or humiliation, such as inappropriate staring, touching, remarks, jokes or inappropriate suggestions. The perpetrator can be any person with whom the woman has a professional relationship - a supervisor, colleague, as well as non-employee, e.g. a customer, patient, supplier, etc.

Data from the survey show that 12.2% of women aged 18 - 74 in the country have experienced sexual harassment at work by a man in their working life. The relative share of women who experienced sexual harassment by male colleagues² was 5.3% and by a man in a management position - 1.4%. The highest share of women who experienced sexual harassment at work by other men (10.7%) included cases where the exact professional relationship with the perpetrator was not specified (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Share of women who have experienced sexual harassment at work, by type of perpetrator³ (EU-GBV, 2021)



Violence in childhood

Violence against children refers to physical, sexual or emotional violence. It occurs in a variety of contexts, including a child's home, school, community or the internet. The perpetrator can be any person - a family member or relative, teacher, family friend, neighbour, stranger or other children. The presence of such

¹ The questions refer to the entire period during which the women worked.

² A person in a similar position/level in the organization with whom the respondent works or has worked.

³ Only male perpetrators are included.

violence causes harm, pain or humiliation to children and has a significant role in their well-being and growth as adults.

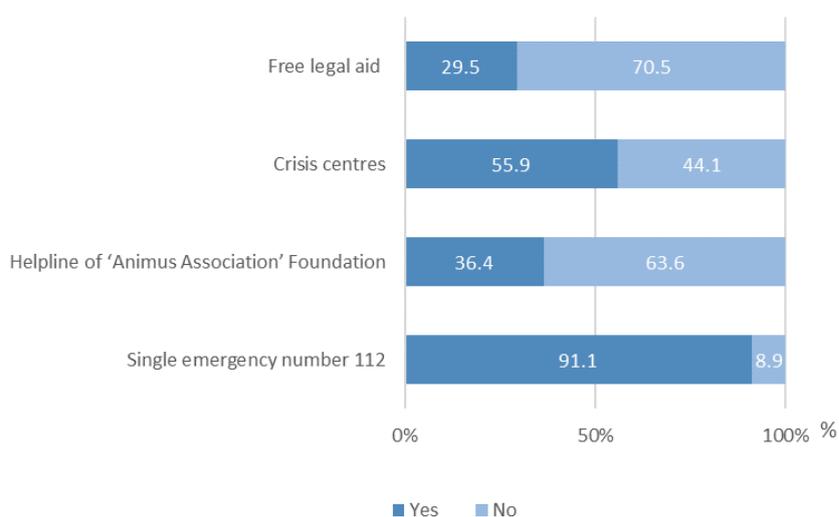
The results of the survey show that 28% of women aged 18 - 74 experienced physical or emotional violence from one of their parents in childhood. The father (26.1%) than by the mother (23%) inflicted emotional violence more often. There was a non-significant difference in the experience of physical violence by parents depending on the perpetrator. It was inflicted by the mother for 3.1% of women and by the father for 3.5%.

Awareness about support services for victims of violence

The existence of a network of services for women who have experienced violence or are at risk of violence and awareness of how to access them is an essential part of supporting victims. The survey measures women`s awareness of the existence of helplines where they can get support and protection, as well as the existence of a crisis centre for victims of domestic violence and the possibilities to receive free legal assistance.

The survey results show that the single emergency number 112, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and is free of charge, is recognised by 91.1% of women aged 18 - 74. Significantly fewer (36.4%) are aware of the existence of another national helpline for victims of violence, such as the one managed by the ‘Animus Association’ Foundation. More than half of the women interviewed (55.9%) are aware that there were crisis centres for victims of domestic violence in the country, which provide free accommodation and accepting children. Only 29.5% of women aged 18 - 74 have heard of the possibility of free legal aid for victims of sexual violence in the country (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Awareness about support services for victims of violence (EU-GBV, 2021)



Subjective assessment of the prevalence of intimate partner violence

The survey is also a source of information on the general subjective opinion of how common intimate partner violence is in the country, measured separately for violence against women and men. The results show that 64.9% of women aged 18 - 74 consider that intimate partner violence against women is very or

fairly common in Bulgaria (Figure 9). When the question refers to violence against men by their intimate partners this share is 12.1% (Figure 10).

Figure. 9. Subjective assessment of the prevalence of violence against women by an intimate partner (EU-GBV, 2021)

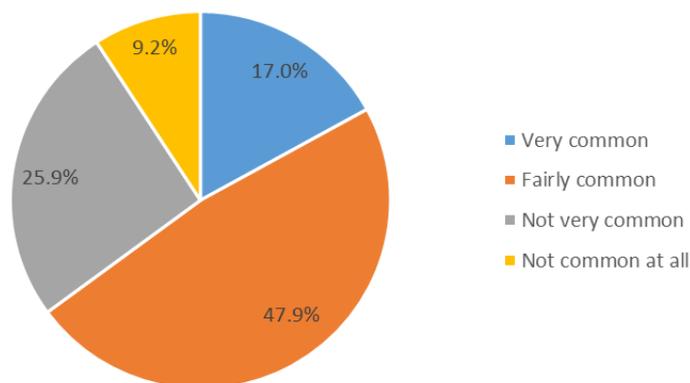
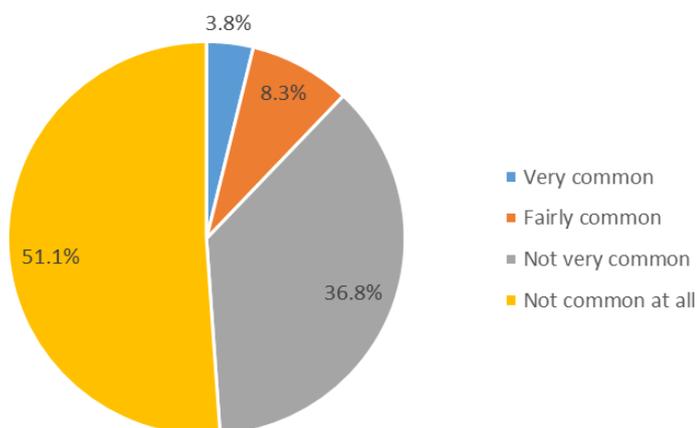


Figure. 10. Subjective assessment of the prevalence of violence against men by an intimate partner (EU-GBV, 2021)



Methodological notes

The aim of the ‘Survey on Gender-Based Violence’ is, using a common and harmonised methodology, to provide reliable, comparable and representative data on all types of violence covered by the survey, as well as on the frequency and intensity of experiences, at a national level and in all countries of the European Union. The survey results provide up-to-date statistics on the prevalence of violence against women.

The survey was conducted between November 2021 and February 2022 among women aged 17 - 84 years. The main method of data collection was a face-to-face interview using an electronic device (CAPI). Due to the sensitive nature of the topic for the convenience of the respondents and considering the epidemic situation in the country at the time of the fieldwork, for the first time, the NSI also applied a web-based application for respondents` self-interviewing (CAWI).

A nationally representative sample of 8 240 private households with at least one woman aged 18 - 74 was drawn. In accordance with the survey methodology, institutionalised households, such as boarding houses, residencies for students or workers, social service institutions, prisons, etc. were excluded from the target population.

The survey applies the principle of voluntary participation and consent, and only one person per household was interviewed. A total of 5 580 women were successfully interviewed and the response rate was 77.4%.

The object of the survey are women aged between 18 and 74 years living in private households.

Modes of data collection were combined - personal interview with an electronic devices (CAPI) or web-based application for respondents` self-interviewing (CAWI).

The following types of violence **were covered**:

- **Physical violence** - intentional behaviour aimed at causing suffering and inducing fear using direct physical force resulting in bodily pain and/or injury.
- **Psychological violence** - intentional behaviour that involves seriously impairing a person`s psychological integrity through coercion or threats by an intimate partner. This type of violence includes a range of behaviours involving acts of emotional abuse and controlling behaviour.
- **Economic violence** - intentional behaviour to control and/or limit a person`s access to financial resources, property, labour market and education by an intimate partner, as well as control and/or limit in decision making related to economic status.
- **Sexual violence** - intentional behaviour intended to coerce a relationship of a sexual nature by physical force or coercion without the person`s consent. Includes any type of harmful or unwanted sexual conduct, such as rape, attempted rape, forcing another person to engage in acts of a sexual nature with a third person, and other acts (touching without consent, any act the person finds humiliating).
- **Domestic violence** - includes any act of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence, as well as attempted violence in the family or in the household. It includes family members, intimate partners and persons who live or have lived in the same household when the violence occurred.
- **Sexual harassment at work** - includes any form of unwanted verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by a person in the work environment resulting in a violation of a person`s dignity, insult or humiliation. For example, inappropriate staring, touching, remarks, jokes or inappropriate suggestions from persons with a professional relationship.
- **Violence in childhood** - covers the following experiences before the age of 15: psychological or physical violence perpetrated by parents; sexual violence perpetrated by any person; acts of

violence between parents. Parents are biological, step or foster parents, other persons responsible for raising and educating, occupying the ‘figure of parents’.

Sample selection

A three-stage stratified cluster sample on national and regional levels was used. The sample was stratified by using the administrative regions in the country and persons` place of residence (town, village). As a result of the stratification 56 strata were designed. At the first stage, the census enumeration units (PSU) were selected. At the second stage, private households with women aged 18 - 74 were identified. In the third stage - one woman aged between 18 and 74 years was identified per household.

The statistical accuracy of the results of some basic indicators

Standard errors of key indicators are commonly used as a measure of the reliability of data collected through a sample survey. The standard error was calculated as follows:

Indicator	Number of respondents - n (unweighted)	Estimated proportion - p (weighted)	Standard error - SE	Confidence interval		Design effect deff
				95% lower limit, in %	95% upper limit, in %	
Share of women who have experienced psychological violence by an intimate partner						
Total	5451	19.4	0.9	17.7	21.1	2.665
Share of women who have experienced physical violence (including threats) by an intimate partner						
Total	5451	7.1	0.6	5.9	8.3	2.878
Share of women who have experienced sexual violence by an intimate partner						
Total	5451	2.2	0.3	1.5	2.9	2.949
Share of women who have experienced physical (including threats) or sexual violence by an intimate partner						
Total	5451	9.3	0.7	7.9	10.7	3.323
Share of women who have experienced psychological, physical (including threats) or sexual violence by an intimate partner						
Total	5451	20.5	1.0	18.6	22.4	3.133
Share of women who have experienced physical violence (including threats) by a non-partner						
Total	5580	3.5	0.4	2.7	4.3	2.741
Share of women who have experienced sexual violence by a non-partner						
Total	5580	2.4	0.4	1.6	3.3	4.432
Share of women who have experienced physical (including threats) or sexual violence by a non-partner						
Total	5580	5.9	0.7	4.6	7.3	4.696
Share of women who have experienced physical violence (including threats) by any perpetrator						
Total	5580	8.5	0.6	7.4	9.6	2.287
Share of women who have experienced sexual violence by any perpetrator						
Total	5580	3.4	0.5	2.5	4.4	3.697
Share of women who have experienced physical (including threats) or sexual violence by any perpetrator						
Total	5580	11.9	0.8	10.4	13.4	3.179

Additional statistical information and data about the ‘Survey on gender-based violence’ are published on the NSI’s website (www.nsi.bg), section ‘Justice and crime’.