
MEPs propose measures to combat mobbing and sexual harassment

- Up to 55% of women have been sexually harassed in the EU
- Reporting should be made easier for victims
- Perpetrators should face tough and dissuasive sanctions

Sexual harassment victims should be helped to report cases and perpetrators should face sanctions, say Women's Rights MEPs in a draft report adopted on Tuesday.

In the context of the public debate prompted by the Weinstein scandal and the #MeToo campaign, which helped to redraw the boundaries of what constitutes sexual harassment and acceptable behaviour, Women's Rights and Gender Equality Committee MEPs adopted a draft report (21 votes in favour, 0 against, 5 abstentions) proposing measures to combat mobbing and sexual harassment in the EU.

Deploring the fact that laws and the definitions in this area vary across member states, they reiterate their call on the EU Commission to propose a Directive against all forms of violence against women (VAW), including updated common definitions and legal standards that treat it as a crime.

Victims should not be afraid to report a case in the workplace

The draft report underlines the urgent need for member states, local authorities and trade unions to understand the barriers that women face in reporting cases of sexual harassment in the workplace and to offer them full support to report these cases safely, without fear of possible consequences.

It also calls on member states to encourage workplace policies based on prevention, confidential procedures to deal with complaints, and tough and dissuasive sanctions for perpetrators.

Zero tolerance of sexual harassment in politics

MEPs call on all political parties to tackle sexual harassment notably by revising party rules to introduce a zero-tolerance policy and sanctions for perpetrators. They also urge national and local parliaments to fully support victims, investigate cases, maintain a confidential register of cases and ensure mandatory training for all staff and members on respect and dignity.

“Virtual” public spaces: how to combat online harassment

The draft report urges the EU Commission to come up with a new definition of “public space”, reflecting evolving communication technologies and the rise of “virtual” public spaces such as social networks and websites, which have created more possibilities for harassment and violence at every level of society. MEPs call on member states to remind internet providers of their duty to protect their online customers by addressing cases of repetitive abuse or stalking and to inform the perpetrators that they cannot act with impunity.

Finally, they reiterate that awareness-raising campaigns and education at every level are fundamental tools in helping to address gender-based violence in public spaces.

Quote

EP rapporteur [Pina Picierno](#) (*S&D, IT*) said: “The #MeToo movement has shown the world how big and widespread the phenomenon of sexual harassment and mobbing is, including in public and work spaces. With this report we ask the EU Commission to act at European level, starting by proposing a clear legal definition of what sexual harassment is, stressing educational strategies and tackling the dramatic phenomenon of online harassment. Failing to do so would mean ‘tolerating’ mobbing and harassment and leaving women even more alone.”

Next steps

The own-initiative report will be put to a vote in plenary during the September session in Strasbourg.

Further information

[EP Think Tank: Sexual harassment of women in the EU](#)

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[Procedure file](#)

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