

FRA Gender-based violence against women survey: Project update – November 2012

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has completed the fieldwork for its dedicated EU-wide survey on gender-based violence against women – involving personal interviews with a random, representative sample totalling over 40,000 women. The FRA survey will, for the first time, provide comparable data on the extent, nature and consequences of various forms of violence against women in the 27 European Union (EU) Member States and Croatia. The FRA factsheet '[Gender-based violence against women – an EU-wide survey](#)' (available in 22 EU languages) provides a concise description of the project's background, the aims, and the content of the survey.

In preparation for the survey the Agency carried out a number of activities in 2010-2011 – including background research and consultations with stakeholders and survey experts. In 2011, the FRA conducted a pre-test study in six Member States to prepare and test the questionnaire and other fieldwork materials for the full-scale survey.

This project update presents the steps taken concerning the survey from May 2012 until now, as well as planned activities – for later in 2012 and 2013 – relating to the survey.

Interviews

Most survey interviews took place during a period from April to mid-July (over 95% were completed by this time), while in a few countries the final interviews were completed by mid-September following a summer recess which was designed to ensure that the holiday period would not affect the fieldwork. All interviews were carried out by female interviewers who – in addition to their professional experience as interviewers – were trained on the issues related to the content and the requirements of the survey, including how to:

- ensure the safety of the respondents and the interviewers
- ensure privacy of the interview setting and how to deal with interruptions by other persons
- deal with distressed respondents
- provide assistance to respondents who need it (for example through referral to victim support organisations)
- deal with stressful situations.

All interviews were based on the structured questionnaire developed by the FRA, translated into national languages. The fieldwork – which was contracted by FRA – was managed by [Ipsos MORI](#), working together with the European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control, affiliated with the United Nations ([HEUNI](#)) and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute ([UNICRI](#)).

The interviews took place in respondents' homes, or at another location chosen by the respondent. Apart from the respondent and the interviewer, no other people could be present during the interviews,

and it was possible for the interviews to be rescheduled if the conditions regarding privacy and confidentiality could not be met. After each interview the interviewers were requested to fill in a short questionnaire concerning their experiences on how the interview went and how they felt after the interview.

Analysis of results

After the interviews were completed, the survey contractors collected the data files to form a single data set containing all 40,000+ interviews. Following this, weight variables were added to the data so as to ensure that the results will be representative of all women aged 18-74 at the level of each country and at the EU level. During the analysis the results will be examined for each of the areas covered by the survey, such as:

- Sexual harassment
- Physical violence
- Sexual violence
- Psychological violence
- Stalking
- Worry about victimisation
- Respondent's experiences before the age of 15
- Opinions of violence against women and awareness of victim support services

Prevalence of various forms of violence is measured in the past 12 months preceding the interview as well as since the age of 15 – with a separate section of the questionnaire tailored to collecting information on incidents that may have taken place before the age of 15.

The survey also collects a number of details about women's experiences of violence – for example: concerning the incidence rate (that is, the number of times similar acts have taken place in the past 12 months); details about the perpetrator; information on physical injuries as well as psychological and emotional consequences; women's contact with services (e.g. health care, social services, victim support) and reporting to the police – including reasons for not contacting any type of service or the police. Women were also asked about their unmet needs – what type of assistance would have been useful – and how they have coped with experiences of violence.

The results concerning the extent and consequences of violence will be analysed against the backdrop of a set of socio-demographic variables collected from all survey respondents – such as age, education and employment status. The survey also collected many other respondent background variables, which can be used in examining the results for specific sub-groups of respondents – when these sub-groups are large enough for robust analysis.

Raising awareness on the FRA survey

In preparation for the release of the results of the FRA survey the Agency has engaged in efforts to raise awareness of the survey among key stakeholder groups – including in the context of conferences and events related to violence against women.

Cyprus presidency conference on combating domestic violence against women in the EU (8-9 November, Nicosia)

Under the Cyprus Presidency of the EU, the conference brought together representatives from government ministries, the European Commission, the Council of Europe, civil society and academia – amongst others – to present and discuss the situation of and responses to domestic violence, and violence against women more generally, in the EU. Joanna Goodey – Head of the Freedoms and Justice Department at the FRA – gave a presentation about the survey, focusing on the theme of ‘Protecting victims of domestic violence: existing support and protection measures in the EU’, where she was able to inform the conference participants about areas covered in the survey that address these issues. The conference provided an opportunity to inform people ahead of time about what they can expect from the survey, and how they might be able to use the findings in their own work.

14th annual conference of the WAVE network (18-20 October 2012, London)

The title of the conference ‘Whose voices? Whose needs? Whose decisions’ re-emphasised the commitment of WAVE to explore the obstacles which minority women face in access to support services and to ensure that women’s needs are met. The topic was approached through presentations concerning undocumented migrant women, Roma women, Black and minority ethnic women, and victims of female genital mutilation. The Council of Europe provided an update on the Istanbul Convention¹, which initiated a discussion on ways in which organisations working across Europe can promote quick ratification of the Convention vis-à-vis their national governments. Local experts gave participants an overview of the situation and responses in London and in Wales, while Sylvia Walby and Ailsa McKay provided a commentary on the mechanics and the effects of the financial crisis and violence against women. Sami Nevala – Team coordinator for statistics and surveys at the FRA – gave an update on recent activities concerning the FRA survey.

Other recent events where the FRA has made presentations on the survey:

- Stockholm Criminology Symposium, 11-13 June 2012, Stockholm
- CEPOL Presidency Conference ‘Overcoming Attrition in Domestic Violence through Policing’, 10-12 July 2012, Limassol
- European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) conference ‘Eradicating domestic violence against women’, 21 September 2012, Brussels
- Moving forward to end violence against women – European Women’s Lobby strategic seminar, 8 October 2012, Brussels
- Fifth meeting of the EIGE working group on the Beijing indicators, 10-11 October 2012, Vilnius
- First meeting of the group of experts on the policy needs for data on crime, 11-12 October 2012, Brussels
- WAVE final conference of the PROTECT II project, 14-15 November 2012, Vienna

Preparations for the launch of the results

The FRA plans to launch the results in the fourth quarter of 2013 – in the form of reports (in various languages) as well as on the FRA website. In due course, selected results will be made available online

¹ Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence.

on the FRA website through an interactive data visualisation tool, which will allow users to browse survey results and display them as maps, tables and graphs. At a later stage when the FRA has completed its own series of reports on the results, the Agency is planning to make the survey microdata available for researchers (for example – working for government administrations, civil society, practitioners and academia) who are interested in carrying out their own analysis. More details concerning the availability of data will be made available in future project updates.

If you are aware of conferences and events where the FRA survey results could be communicated in 2013 or 2014, please contact the FRA gender-based violence against women survey team to discuss what results and materials might be available at the time of the meeting (please see the contact address below).

Survey mailbox

The FRA team working on the gender-based violence against women survey can now be reached through a new mailbox: violence-against-women@fra.europa.eu. Please feel free to contact the FRA survey team if you have questions concerning the survey, or if you know other people who would like to be included on our mailing list to receive project status updates and information related to the launch of the results in 2013.