



11 December 2000

## VIOLENCE AT WORK

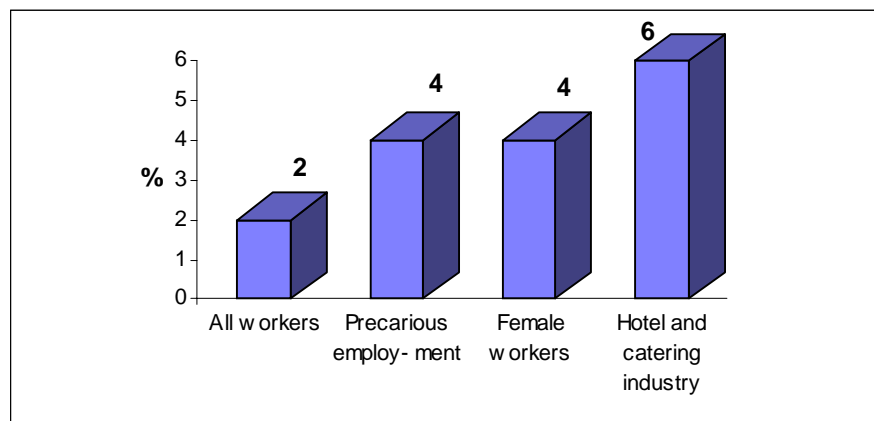
The Third European Survey on Working Conditions, based on 21.500 face to face interviews with workers throughout the EU indicates that:

- ◆ 2% (3 million) workers are subjected to physical violence from people belonging to their workplace
- ◆ 4% (6 million) workers are subjected to physical violence from people outside their workplace
- ◆ 2% (3 million) workers are subjected to sexual harassment
- ◆ 9% (13 million) workers are subjected to intimidation and bullying

### Sexual harassment

2% of all workers are subjected to sexual harassment. Highest exposures are to be found in: catering services (hotels and restaurants) with 6%; among female workers (4%); and among employees with a precarious status (4% of employees with temporary agency contracts).

Table 1 *Sexual harassment*



## Physical violence

4% of all workers are subjected to physical violence from people not belonging to their workplace. Highest exposures are to be found in services (public administration: 6%, trade and retail industry: 5%).

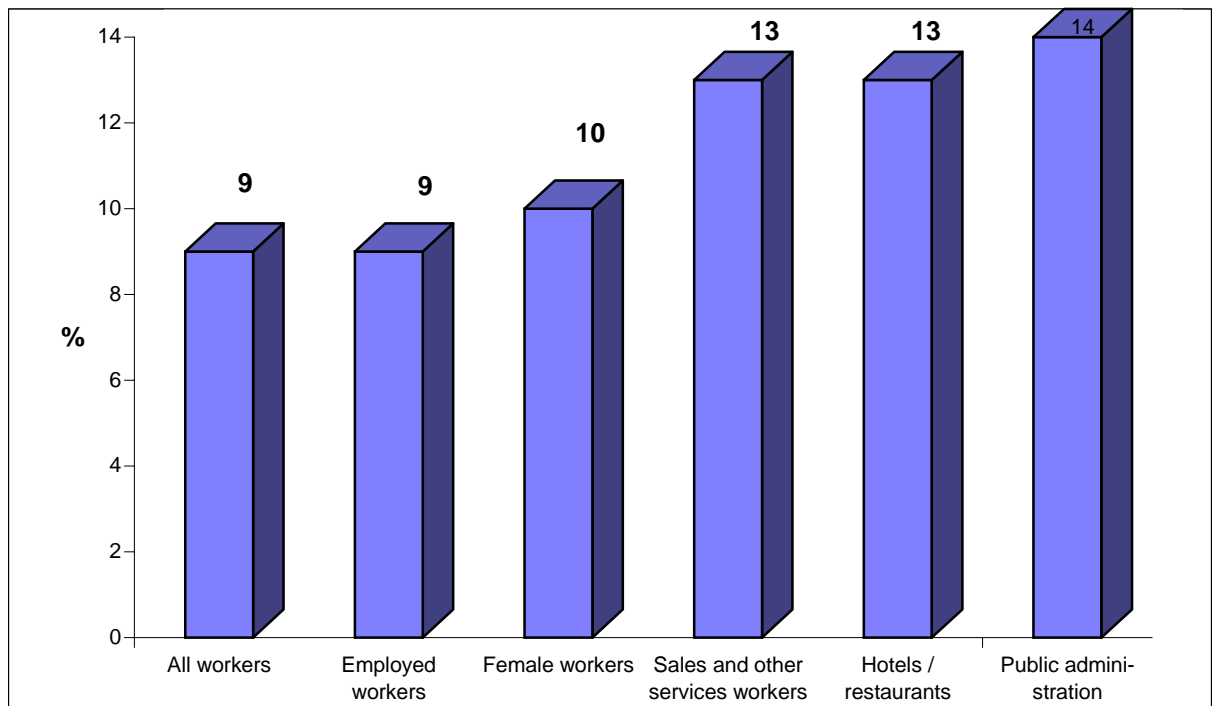
2% of all workers are subjected to physical violence from people belonging to their workplace.

## Intimidation and bullying

9% of all workers are subjected to intimidation and bullying with highest exposure rates in services (14% in public administration, and 13% in hotels/restaurants and 12% in other services). Service and sales workers (13%) are the most affected occupations.

Female workers (10%) are more concerned than male workers (8%).

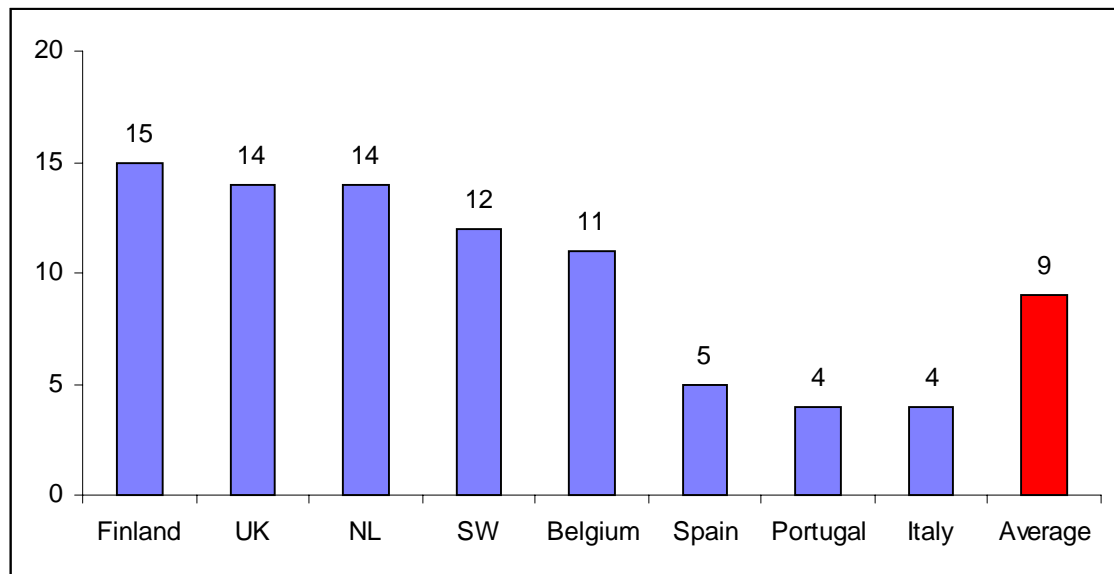
Table 2 *Bullying*



## Differences between countries

There are considerable differences (which are not described in this note) between the various member States. We suspect these differences to be due to underreporting in some countries and to greater awareness in others. For example we have: 15% in Finland, 14% in UK and The Netherlands, 12% in Sweden, 11% in Belgium, but only 4% in Italy and Portugal, 5% in Spain.

Table 3: Differences between countries



### Factors increasing the chances of violence:

- *Status*

Precarious employment is an aggravating factor.

- *Sex*

Especially in the case of sexual harassment, female workers are more exposed.

- *Time pressure*

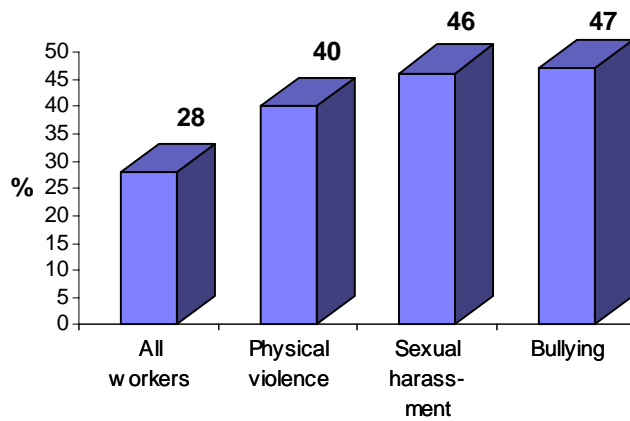
The pressure within an organisation to perform is certainly a factor which needs to be explored further. Intensity of work is increasing strongly and can be seen as a factor exacerbating tension in the workplace.

### Health effects of violence at work

Violence at work clearly leads to an increase in health complaints, in particular stress:

- 40% of workers exposed to physical violence experience stress
- 47% of workers exposed to bullying experience stress
- 46% of workers exposed to sexual harassment experience stress

Table 4 Exposure to stress (1996)



### Effects on absenteeism

Health related absenteeism increases with violence at work:

- 35% of workers exposed to physical violence have been absent from work over the last 12 months
- 34% of workers exposed to bullying have been absent from work over the last 12 months
- 31% of workers exposed to sexual harassment have been absent from work over the last 12 months

Table 5: Absenteeism in % over the last 12 months (1996)

