



The EU Mutual Learning Programme in Gender Equality

Tackling sexual harassment

Denmark, 27-28 September 2017

Summary Report



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Introduction

The mutual learning seminar was held in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 27-28 September 2017. The seminar discussed how to address and prevent sexual harassment, with a focus on good practices in tackling digital sexual abuse in the host country, Denmark, and sexual harassment in public transport in the associated country, France. The discussion of good practices took place amongst sixteen further Member States, and with representatives of the European Commission and the European Institute for Gender Equality. Particular emphasis was given to learning from the good practices to inform effective new policy measures and awareness raising. The seminar concluded with a discussion of learning from and transferability of the good practices, emerging national and European policy issues, and ways forward.

In recent years there have been significant discussions about the need for policy measures to tackle sexual harassment in all contexts, both in and beyond the workplace. The EU Fundamental Rights Agency survey of 2014 found that up to 55% of women in the EU had experienced sexual harassment since the age of 16 years, which rises to 75% of women in management and recognised professions. Priority has been given to the issue of violence against women under the European Commission's 2016 actions to combat violence against women. This has led to a range of focussed actions aimed at mobilising all relevant stakeholders and national awareness raising to prevent violence against women in areas such as education, online abuse, the workplace and violence against migrant women.

1. The good practices of the host and associated country

1.1. Denmark

The good practice example from Denmark focussed on the government's recent initiative to urgently tackle the problem of digital sexual abuse. The increased exposure of children and young people to new online risks led to the government launching in 2017 an ambitious inter-ministerial programme: *Stepping Up Initiatives Against Sexual Abuse*. A multi-faceted action plan was introduced as an urgent response to online abuse, including a highly publicised case of a young woman who received shocking levels of online harassment and sexual abuse after naked photos of her were spread across social media platforms without her consent. The terminology of digital sexual abuse was adopted to reflect the gravity of the issue and to ensure that responses deal with safety, consent and risks of sharing photos. These are issues that go beyond the problem of revenge porn.

The *Stepping Up Initiatives Against Sexual Abuse* is currently being implemented through inter-ministerial coordination between three Ministries (Ministry of Equal Opportunities, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Education). It brings together political, social and institutional actions across three main areas: prevention and knowledge, help for victims, and sanctions for perpetrators. An important feature of the inter-ministerial cooperation is a shared responsibility for addressing the problem and a commitment to learning from good practices. For example, a big emphasis is given to supporting schools in working with parents, teachers and pupils to raise

awareness about the risks of online sexual abuse and how to tackle the problem. In addition, having better data and sharing of knowledge led to an important survey on digital sexual abuse in the Nordic context in 2017. In relation to help for victims, initiatives are designed to promote well-being in upper secondary education. Emphasis is also given to improving how the police handle cases, to improving access to reporting and making complaints, and for the provision victim counselling. Measures to address the consequences of digital sexual abuse and sanctions for perpetrators include the possibility of higher sentencing, allowing schools to take measures, and better processes for handling digital abuse cases.

An inter-ministerial communication strategy was launched by the three Ministers at a high school with involvement and questions from students. There has also been follow-up in the media and good practice initiatives by NGOs. One example is an award-winning video made by a young woman affected by online abuse on the consequences of sharing a picture online, published on YouTube by *Save the Children*. *Save the Children* has also established a web site to support young people who have had pictures shared online. The NGO *Cyberhus* - the Centre for Digital Youth Care - runs a national helpline and offers practical advice and information for children and young people about online abuse and the importance of consent before sharing pictures. The experience of working with children and young people at *Cyberhus* shows that girls and boys taken pictures differently - girls are usually the victims of a sexual act and are less tech-savvy than boys.

The *Stepping Up Initiatives Against Sexual Abuse* are still in the early stage of development and there is scope to further develop new strategies. The initiatives have broad and ambitious goals and a key conclusion is that the Danish approach is based on trust, freedom and information, rather than on protection, and a model of young people as capable and responsible consumers/agents. An important element of the good practice is that the problem is defined as sexual abuse – this means that it is treated seriously and as a crime and that an emphasis is given to the person who shares photos without consent.

1.2. France

The second good practice example from France emerged because of concerns about street harassment and particularly of sexual harassment of women in public transport. In July 2015, the government launched a *National Action Plan and campaign on sexual violence and sexual harassment in public transport*. It is a key component of the 5th *National Action Plan on violence against women*.

In France, 55% of public transport users are women, rising to 61% of bus users. Two surveys carried out by the *National Federation of Transport Users* show that gender-based violence, and particularly sexual harassment in public transport, is a massive and growing phenomenon. The Federation's surveys found that 90% of women declared that they had experienced sexual harassment in public transport. Moreover, violence was found to have a big impact on women's daily and professional lives, and their mobility, and was deemed to be a breach of equality between women and men. For example, 80% of women stated that they changed how they travel because of sexual harassment, 48% changed the way they dressed, 34% now use other types of transport, and 9% do not travel alone. A report by the High Council on equality between women and men was also issued at the request of the government – it found that two-thirds of victims of verbal abuse were women and

that 100% of women users of public transport had experienced sexual harassment and sexual abuse at least once in their lives.

The first *National Action Plan to combat sexual harassment and sexual violence in public transport* contains 12 concrete measures developed through three groups of actions: better prevention, more efficient reaction and better support to victims. Actions relating to better prevention include an awareness raising campaign to stop sexual harassment in transport, launched in 2015 by the national rail operator SNCF and the Paris public transport company RATP – the campaign includes the innovative posters ‘*Stop Ça Suffit*’ (‘Stop It’s enough’). The participation of women transport users has also been encouraged through participative safety walks to ameliorate women’s security in transport, carried out in 72 metro and train stations in 2016. A successful experimental project in Nantes, *Stop on Demand*, has been implemented on buses at night. A seminar in 2017 to report on the pilot for the participatory walks led to an extension of the project and the *Stop on Demand* initiative is currently being piloted in a several regions in France with a view to generalising it across the country. Several actions have been implemented to ensure better responses – they include an emergency telephone number (3117) operated by the state railway SNCF and a free app for smartphones which enables a woman at risk of violence to send a SMS text message security alert (31177) where they may not be able to speak on the phone. Actions relating to improving support for victims include better trained personnel, a training kit and training course to prevent gender-based violence. In 2017, it is planned that 500 transport personnel will be trained to improve responses to victims and there will be continued work with police and justice personnel on the handling of complaints.

In addition to the national campaign, there are a range of local campaigns and action plans to tackle violence against women in transport. Examples include local awareness campaigns run by municipalities, training and awareness raising, and in the local authorities of Paris and Bordeaux sexist advertisements are prohibited.

An important feature of the government’s campaign is that it is situated in a gender-equality framework. A commitment to promote gender balance in employment in transport companies and fight the spread of sexist messages, for example, are also promoted to improve the working environment and reduce the potential of a hostile environment for women. Marlène Schiappa, the Secretary of State for gender equality has given a strong commitment to ending violence against women in transport. She has established a group to agree a legal definition of street harassment with a view to integrating gender equality issues into discussions about mainstream transport issues and plans to continue to raise awareness about gender-based violence. In addition, discussions are currently taking place about the introduction of stronger legislation on sexual abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment. This will outlaw sexual harassment in any context, including public places, for the first time in criminal law.

2. The situation in the other participating countries

Belgium: Digital sexual abuse has been widely discussed in Belgium. The gravity of the problem was highlighted in a 2016 report which showed high levels of digital abuse amongst young people. In 2014 legislation was introduced making sexual harassment in public spaces a criminal offence in Belgium, which includes intimidating sexual remarks in the street and online sexism through social media. A

Flemish action plan aims to promote and protect the physical, psychological and sexual integrity of minors and to promote collaboration between organisations in the field of youth and sexuality to prevent potential abuse. Good practices include the NGO *Child Focus*, which has a comprehensive approach to addressing sexting amongst young people. *Child Focus* has a *Clicksafe* initiative to raise awareness amongst young people and professionals. Addressing online abuse in the school context is one of the activities carried out by SENSOA, the Centre on sexual health, youth and media literacy. Prevention activities include education packages for young people about online risks and the consequences of sexting, as well as games and theatre performances. An important part of the current approach in Belgium is to put emphasis on the responsibility of those sharing pictures and to avoid blaming victims.

Croatia: Laws on sexual harassment cover the workplace, but not street harassment and digital harassment. Existing research points to the street harassment being the most prevalent form of sexual harassment. There is also a high incidence of digital sexual abuse and low awareness and understanding of the risks amongst children and parents. Digital harassment has largely been addressed in education and since 2014 safety on the internet has been included in the school curriculum under the *Strategy for Education, Science and Technology*. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has recently enhanced its focus on reporting, prevention and prosecution of digital abuse of children, with the introduction of a SOS phone line and internet support. The NGO *Hollaback Croatia* is working to create safer spaces through the project *Safer Neighbourhoods 2015-2016*. A pilot project on city planning took place in a neighbourhood in Zagreb leading to discussions and participatory safety walks with women victims of street harassment, with waitresses in clubs and cafes and young people. The *Child and Youth Protection Centre of Zagreb* and the NGO *Woman's Room* has a project with school students on sexual harassment and a Facebook campaign aimed at tackling digital abuse.

Czech Republic: Cyber-violence is not defined in the law, although some protections are provided in criminal and civil law. The government has signed the Istanbul Convention and it is envisaged that ratification of the Convention will lead to legal changes on cyber-violence. Most attention has been linked to the risks faced by children and young people of cyber-bullying. This has resulted in some prevention programmes with children, schools and families run by NGOs, but to date there have been no government programmes. Generally, there is a lack of focus on the gendered aspects of digital sexual abuse, which results in low reporting and a lack of services on intimate partner violence online, sexual harassment online, digital-based violence or gender-based violence online, sexting, etc. The issue is further compounded by a lack of gender disaggregated data on the issue. Good practices include NGO telephone support and advice for children and young people and awareness raising in schools and preparation of teaching tools. Under the Action Plan for prevention of domestic violence and gender based violence for 2015-2018 the first conference on Media, Cyberspace and Violence was held in 2015.

Cyprus: Several initiatives have been introduced to tackle digital sexual abuse by the public authorities and other stakeholders under the *National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children and Child Pornography 2016-2019*. Data shows that 24% of children age 9-16 years were exposed to online sexual images in the last year, and according to the police 95% of victims are girls aged 13-16 years of age. Initiatives to prevent online abuse are often carried out as part of European programmes, for example, *Better Internet for Kids* and the *One in Five* campaign. A Cyber Crime Unit has been established by the police and this has

led to improved procedures for identifying victims in close cooperation with civil society organisations. The *Cyprus Safer Internet Centre* carries out awareness raising on the issue and runs a helpline. Although there are no specific laws on sexual harassment in public spaces, it is anticipated that attention to all forms of sexual harassment will be implemented following the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. This is particularly important as many women do not report sexual harassment in public places. Currently the main focus has been on the workplace where legislation and a Code of Practice agreed between trade unions and employers has been implemented.

Estonia: Despite attention to some gender equality issues in Estonia, researchers and policy makers have given relatively limited attention to the issue of sexual harassment in public places and online digital abuse. An amendment to the Estonian Penal Code in 2017 led to sexual harassment being defined as an offence, introduced to bring Estonia in compliance with the requirements of the Istanbul Convention. Most existing data is of sexual harassment in the workplace and there is an absence of data on sexual harassment in public spaces and in the digital sphere. In relation to digital sexual abuse several initiatives have been introduced to raise awareness amongst children and the police carry out monitoring of abuse in social media portals. Awareness raising takes place, for example, in talks to school children by the police. During the *Safer Internet Day* competitions, games and other events for children and young people are held. Information about the internet and social media safety is included in the web page *Smart in the Net*.

Finland: Since 2014 physical forms of sexual harassment and grooming of children for sexual purposes have been criminalised. The Finnish approach to addressing digital sexual abuse is to build on the positives of the internet and teach children and young people how to use it safely. Data shows a significant increase in the problem in the last decade, leading to challenges for Finland's National Bureau of Investigation in effectively investigating crimes of digital sexual abuse. NGOs have been at the forefront of raising this issue in public debate and although it is part of the school curriculum teachers often lack the time and resources to seriously address the issue. Good practices include the dissemination of a book '*We should all be feminists*' to school pupils which has helped to stimulate a national discussion. All schools are required to carry out anti-bullying planning and to implement measures for the effective handling of cases of bullying and sexual harassment. A further good practice is that data collection, carried out through a national school health promotion study, includes questions on bullying, violence and sexual harassment of school pupils. The survey is completed by school pupils on a computer and there have been good response rates.

Greece: Legislation exists on tackling sexual harassment in the workplace. However, the issue of sexual harassment in public spaces and in public transport has received relatively limited attention in research and by decision-making bodies. Cyber-bullying and digital sexual harassment of young people have been addressed as a priority issue with teachers, parents and pupils in the education system and through nationwide campaigns in schools. It is included as a concrete measure in the *Action Plan on the Rights of the Child 2015-2020* and the Greek Ombudsperson for Children has implemented awareness raising activities in schools and local communities. Special measures have been introduced by the police under the *Cyber Crime Unit*, including a Cyberkid App for mobile use enabling children to communicate directly with the *Cyber Crime Unit*. Several inter-agency initiatives have been drawn up under the remit of the *Ministry of Education's Central Scientific Committee*, including collaboration between government Ministries on prevention of

cyber-bullying. Further good practices include the online platform *Live without Bullying* run by the *Centre for Family and Child* targeted towards children, young people, parents and educators, and the *Smile of the Child* organisation that raises awareness about digital sexual abuse and provides counselling for victims.

Italy: Sexual harassment is not a crime in Italy, although the Penal code recognises ‘harassment or annoyance to the person’. The growing problem of digital sexual harassment, particularly of sexting, is highlighted in national research which shows that over 40% of young people had sent images with a sexual content and 60% of them had received such images. Often sexual bullying is viewed as a normal part of life – and young women experience more frequent and systematic appearance based bullying, physical sexual bullying and sexual harassment than young men. Experience shows that tackling the problem requires a whole-school approach and peer education has been found to work well in generating discussion amongst young people. In 2017 new legislation was passed on the protection of minors and the prevention and reduction of cyber-bullying – it combines a preventive and reparative approach, new procedures for removing or blocking harmful content, and places specific responsibilities on schools. Cyber-bullying has also been added to the administrative sanctions issued by the police in cases of stalking with the aim to help minors take responsibility for their actions. Campaigns against sexual harassment take place around *International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women* and as part of *Safer Internet Day*.

Latvia: The wide availability of mobile phones and the internet has led to a significant increase in sexting in Latvia. Several organisations are involved in raising awareness about how to eradicate sexting and sexual harassment on the internet. Surveys show that children and young people lack understanding and knowledge about safety on the internet, including the risks of sending nude pictures of themselves to someone else. The Latvian *Safer Internet Centre* educates children, teachers and parents about digital sexual harassment and sexting through education materials and videos, and a telephone line is available to report illegal content. A *Safe School* initiative has been developed in cooperation with the police to provide information to school personnel about how they can react if a child is communicating with strangers and/or sending sexual photos. The ‘*I Only Forwarded*’ campaign launched by the *Centre Dardedze* in 2016 raises awareness amongst young people of the risks and possible criminal sanctions of forwarding their peers’ nude pictures. Sexting is classified as criminal action relating to pornographic material, but is seriously under-reported. Girls are the overwhelming majority of victims. Policy measures include internet safety and awareness under the government’s *Information Society Development Guidelines* for 2014-2020 and the *Gender Equality Action Plan* 2012-2014. The Ministry of Justice is currently developing a sex crime prevention plan.

Malta: Like in other EU Member States sexual harassment is illegal under employment legislation and the offence of harassment is included in the criminal code. The *National Commission for the Promotion of Equality for Women and Men* (NCPE) has the responsibility for matters related to sexual harassment and has published a *Sexual Harassment Code of Practice* setting out a definition of sexual harassment and the rights of employees and employers in the workplace. Several campaigns have been held to raise awareness about sexual harassment and NCPE awards an Equality Mark certificate to companies that promote equality, including internal measures to tackle sexual harassment. Despite these measures sexual harassment at work is widespread and under-reported. There has been an increase in complaints related to revenge porn and the illegal sharing of sex videos and

photos. One of the problems identified is that violence and bullying are often discussed in a de-gendered way. Further measures are also needed to respond to the challenges of sexual harassment in relation to digitalisation.

Portugal: Tougher provisions on tackling sexual harassment and bullying at work were introduced into the labour code and the penal code in 2017. Key features of the change in legislation is that digital forms of harassment connected to work are included, measures are introduced to prevent employers from taking retaliatory action against complainant. Furthermore medium and large size companies are required to establish codes of conduct and internal complaints and redress systems designed to tackle sexual harassment and bullying at work. In addition, the law makes it obligatory for blacklisted companies convicted of harassment to be published on the ACT (Authority for Working Conditions) website. The main problem is that the Portuguese economy is dominated by small and very small companies. Research shows that majority of sexual harassment cases occur in small companies, which are not protected under the new legislation. Furthermore, the majority of workers affected by sexual harassment at work are working in precarious jobs typified by non-standard and temporary contracts of employment – many do not report sexual harassment because they are vulnerable to retaliation from employers.

Slovakia: Sexual harassment in the workplace is included in the general framework for equal treatment law, and harassment is an offence in the Criminal Code. A new study on gender-based and domestic violence in Slovakia has highlighted the problem of stalking from partners and ex-partners and the problem of harassment via text messages, emails and telephone. Tackling sexual harassment at work is included as a priority in the *National Action Plan on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women 2014-2019*. In response to the 2016 Eurobarometer survey which revealed attitudes accepting and legitimising sexual harassment, an awareness raising campaign '*Because I say NO*' was launched by the Ministry of Labour in 2017. Support and counselling services, including peer to peer help, for young people have been established by the NGO *IPčko*. An innovative way of raising awareness is through the Slovakian '*best sexist ad*' competition which has led to guidelines from the advertising regulator. Several campaigns aim to raise awareness amongst young people through social media, posters in bars and on campuses and in cinemas. TV spots have been aimed at girls and young women about the value of consent and that they have the right to say no and for this to be respected – and separate TV spots have been targeted at boys about the impact of violence and unacceptable behaviour. Strong female role models, celebrities and pop stars have joined the campaign.

Slovenia: Sexual harassment at work is included in equality legislation. As part of the ratification of the Istanbul Convention new criminal offences on stalking, forced marriage and revenge porn have been added to the Criminal code. Concerns exist about a significant increase in online sexual bullying amongst young people and the fact that cyber-violence and harassment are not specifically recognised as a form of violence against women and girls. National surveys show significant levels of online harassment and cyber-crime. Since July 2017 the *Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities* has led a project – *Cyber Violence and Harassment against Women and Girls* - co-financed by the European Commission. It aims to address cyber-violence and harassment as a form of violence against women and girls. This is being carried out with a gender sensitive approach through awareness raising, training and the development of learning tools for young people, groups at risk, parents and potential perpetrators and witnesses. The main target groups are young people aged between 12-19 years; professionals in schools, police, justice

and NGOs; policy makers and media; and the general public. In addition, the *Safer Internet Centre Slovenia* (SAFE.SI) is a national project with a helpline for children and young people and a hotline for anonymous reporting. The NGO *LOGOUT – Centre for digital addiction, help and treatment* - assists children and adults with all kinds of digital addictions and excessive use of digital media.

Spain: Evidence of the increasing number of young women suffering from sexual harassment, including digital sexual harassment, has led to a call for new policy measures to tackle sexual harassment to cover all contexts and public spaces. In recent years there has been a growing concern about increased levels of unreported sexual harassment in universities, leading to the creation of a *Solidarity Network of Victims of Gender Violence at Universities*. The recognition of this problem by the *Spanish Observatory on Gender Violence*, the introduction of pro-active legislation on violence against women and the creation of the *National Pact against Violence Against Women* were important steps forward to tackling the issue. This has helped to ensure that sexual harassment is addressed in a range of spaces, including sexual harassment and dating violence amongst young people and online sexual harassment. A key issue highlighted is the need for prevention programmes on sexual harassment - from early childhood including kindergarten, primary school, high school and university education – to be based on scientific evidence. A further key issue is the importance of responsible media reporting on sexual harassment.

United Kingdom: Sexual harassment is defined in the Equality Act 2010 and relates to workplaces, educational institutions and private clubs/associations. Criminal law protects victims from all forms of harassment. Legislation introduced in 2015 criminalised revenge porn, but does not cover all forms of image-based sexual abuse, such as ‘upskirting’ or threats to share images. Scottish law goes further on this issue and covers a wider range of abusive behaviours. The government recently introduced a helpline and an information campaign with the messages *This is abuse* and *Disrespect no-one*. Evidence from national surveys shows increased levels of online sexual harassment, and sexual harassment in public places and in public transport. Victims of sexual harassment are overwhelmingly female. Some groups of women, particularly Muslim women, suffer disproportionate levels of abuse and violence, and sexual harassment and cyber-bullying, and school bullying against LGBT people is high. Transport for London has a campaign and video *Report It to Stop It*, which has led to an increase in reporting and arrests. The BBC and *Hollaback! London* have provided online mapping systems. A debate is currently taking place about whether watching pornography on smartphones in public should be a criminal offence, as this is viewed by some as a common form of street harassment.

3. Key issues discussed during the seminar

The **good practices from Denmark and France** provoked discussion and valuable learning about ways forward in tackling the alarming increase in digital sexual abuse and of sexual harassment in public transport. All participating countries viewed Denmark’s recently introduced *Stepping Up Initiatives* to tackle digital sexual abuse to be a comprehensive and multi-faceted approach that can be replicated elsewhere. The French national campaign against sexual harassment in public transport similarly is viewed as a positive example of a high-level government commitment to tackling this issue – all participating Member States recognise the importance of addressing this form of sexual harassment and to ensure that public spaces are safe for women.

There was a common agreement about the need for **gender-sensitive approaches and the importance of tackling sexual harassment in all contexts**. In some countries, there are active debates about how to stem sexual harassment in workplaces, public spaces and transport, and in digital technologies. However, some countries highlighted the need for new policy measures to tackle digital sexual abuse and sexual harassment in public places. A key issue discussed was the importance of addressing these issues in the context of gender roles and relations, culture and attitudes, and to ensure that consent and respect towards women are an integral part of the discourse.

The importance of **multi-faceted and multi-stakeholder approaches to tackling sexual harassment in all contexts** was also emphasised. Discussion focussed on the ways of tackling sexual harassment through both criminal sanctions, and education and awareness raising to change attitudes. Seminar participants highlighted the importance of all stakeholders working together, stressing also that education providers, the media and social media platforms need to play a pro-active role in prevention and awareness raising about digital sexual abuse and the consequences of sharing sexual content. A problem highlighted is that in some Member States there is limited data, making it difficult to assess the real extent of digital sexual abuse and sexual harassment in public places.

The use of terminology and having **common definitions of sexual harassment and digital sexual abuse** was seen as important to further progressing actions to prevent and address digital sexual abuse and sexual harassment in public places. Several participants argued that a common EU definition of sexual harassment would be helpful to encompass sexual harassment in public spaces, public transport and digital forms of sexual harassment. The Danish terminology of **digital sexual abuse** was widely regarded by seminar participants as being comprehensive and helpful in incorporating a gender perspective.

The different ways to tackle the under-reporting of sexual harassment in public spaces and digital sexual abuse was a further point of discussion. Participants highlighted the need for new methods to encourage women and girls to make confidential complaints. This should include having complaints procedures that women and girls understand and trust, implementing better procedures and sensitivity in handling of complaints and prosecutions, ensuring that women and girls receive support when making complaints, and in some cases examining how a restorative approach may be relevant. A further problem is that the police have insufficient resources to effectively investigate complaints of street harassment and digital sexual abuse.

Furthermore, seminar participants explored learning about **stalking and other forms of coercive control in cases of domestic violence**. This is seen as particularly relevant for understanding of and promoting measures to tackle cyber-stalking and harassment by violent partners or ex-partners. In some countries stalking is criminalised, as is the case in Finland, Malta and Italy. In Denmark, the government's initiative on stalking has led to the police becoming more aware of the problem and how to tackle it. Seminar participants agreed that more awareness raising and action is needed to address stalking through digital sexual abuse.

The importance of **sharing and learning from innovative ways of raising awareness** about all forms of sexual harassment was stressed by participants. Examples from across Europe were shared, such as peer learning (Denmark),

‘entertainment education’ through movies documentaries and media, and ‘narrative communication’ through story-telling (Belgium), and multi-lingual telephone help lines and written leaflets for immigrant women (Spain), as well as gender-sensitive awareness and education initiatives aimed at prevention of digital sexual abuse and the promotion of internet safety. Several Member States gave examples of ways in which school staff and parents have been given a vital role to play in detecting and preventing digital sexual abuse, including in implementing schools’ policies. However, participants agreed that teachers need to be given resources and training in identifying gender-based violence and in strengthening awareness of risks associated with digital sexual abuse.

The need for **effective response to harassment in public places** was highlighted. The discussion included examples of how to ensure that city planners and architects consult with women about how they use the city and what makes a city safe. Unfortunately, most planners do not consider how women use cities. Good practices were discussed from France, Denmark and Croatia of consultations with women for safe cities, including women’s participative city walks to influence city planning.

A final issue discussed is how to **model appropriate behaviour** across society in workplaces, education, the community and in public spaces. For example, in Austria, France and Belgium integration classes for new immigrants have included gender equality topics and information about what is considered to be appropriate behaviour. However, it was stressed that it is vitally important not to reduce gender violence to immigrants and to recognise that sexism is deep in the whole of society and concerns all cultures.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

- The examples of good practice from Denmark and France demonstrate the importance of political will and high-level government action to tackling the issue of sexual harassment. In addition, it was concluded that all relevant stakeholders in education, media, culture, employment and across society have a role to play in tackling sexual harassment.
- It was agreed that where laws exist, they should be fully implemented, and that adequate resources and information are essential to enable victims of sexual harassment to be supported and to know how the law can be used.
- Despite new policy developments in some Member States, greater attention needs to be given to thinking about how policy can address the multiple causes of sexual harassment, taking into account such aspects as power relations, gender and social relations. The learning from the good practices is that it is vitally important that there is a gender-perspective.
- As many of the issues discussed at the seminar reflect new and emerging areas of policy, it is essential that there is more evaluation of effectiveness of programmes to ensure that actions to raise awareness and prevent sexual harassment are evidence-based and effective.
- The ratification of the Istanbul Convention was highlighted as an important opportunity for Member States to further develop integrated policies and programmes to tackle digital sexual abuse and sexual harassment in public places and in transport. Ratification of the Convention will also give greater

attention to the gender-related aspects of digital sexual abuse in areas such as digital stalking of victims of domestic violence.

- Access to better data, including disaggregated data, is also needed for better understanding of digital sexual abuse and sexual harassment in public spaces and in transport. Data is important in informing both policy developments and practical initiatives on the ground.
- Prevention is crucial and this needs to take place at the earliest possible opportunity and in the education system by working with schools, children/young people and parents. Innovative ways of communicating with and engaging young people are needed to ensure that girls and boys understand issues of consent and how to avoid harm. Participants pointed to a lot of good practice already taking place in schools, but stressed the importance of resources for schools and other relevant child and youth organisations to enable them to play a critical role in preventing digital sexual abuse, and to recognise the importance of a gender-sensitive approach.
- Training of police, judges, teachers, NGOs and other professionals is urgently needed to raise awareness about different types of sexual harassment and how to respond in gender-sensitive ways.
- A common EU-wide definition of sexual harassment was seen by participants as an opportunity to have a shared approach to tackling all forms of sexual harassment so that it encompasses digital sexual abuse and sexual harassment in public spaces and in transport.