

da [Uni-Europa](#) - To be able to work safely and in dignity, free from violence and harassment of any kind, is a fundamental human right which no worker must be denied.

Over the course of a two-day workshop, trade unionists and employers from across Europe's finance sector had the opportunity to share their experiences and learn more about initiatives at the European and global levels aiming to put a definitive end to workplace violence and harassment.

"Women's health and safety is being undermined every day and this also has an impact in the workplace," said **Cinzia Ongaro from FISAC-CGIL Italy and UNI Europa Women's Committee Vice President**. "Legislation is sadly not enough if it is not properly implemented - we need public outcry to eliminate violence and harassment for good!" she added.

It has been almost 3 years since the ILO adopted, in June 2019, its Convention 190 on the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work and yet, to date, only 11 countries around the world have ratified it - and only 3 of these in Europe! (Italy, Greece and the United Kingdom).

"This situation is unacceptable, especially when 1 in 3 women will be a victim of violence in her lifetime," said **Amel Selma Djemail, UNI Europa Equal Opportunities Director**. Whether it happens in the workplace or not, being subjected to violence and harassment will invariably have an impact on a worker's performance and productivity, and supporting the victim whilst ensuring due process must be part of an employer's duty of care.

"As European Social Partners we must present a unified voice in developing robust tools to fight workplace violence and harassment!", continued Amel. "The adoption of ILO C190 is just the first step - now it is up to us as trade unions to campaign for its ratification and negotiate strong agreements with employers to prevent violence and harassment at work."

One such example is the landmark [Joint Declaration](#) recently signed by the European Insurance Social Partners. "I am proud that the European Insurance sector has set the example, negotiating joint commitments on Diversity, Inclusion and non-Discrimination", said **Bianca Cuciniello, UILCA Italy Organisation Office Director and member of the project Steering Group**. This sentiment was backed by project co-applicant AMICE, the Association of Mutual Insurers and Insurance Cooperatives in Europe. "Europe's mutual insurers and insurance cooperatives believe in a diverse and inclusive sector, working with the unions to guarantee a workplace where everyone is protected and can work in safety," said **AMICE Secretary General Sarah Goddard**.

"Europe's finance sector is leading the way on this important issue - with unions negotiating strong agreements at the global, national sectoral and company level to end violence and harassment at work," said **Maureen Hick, UNI Europa Finance Director**, in her overview of actions being taken on this important issue across the sector.

There are excellent examples of strong collective agreements negotiated by unions to protect workers and ensure victims have access to due process. "Spain's finance sector bargaining agreements are clear: any workplace violence and harassment is an extremely serious case of misconduct and must be dealt with swiftly

and firmly,” said **Nuria Lobo Aceituno from CCOO Servicios Spain**. “No one should go to work in fear and victims must be given the support to denounce the perpetrators,” she added.

Ensuring victims feel secure enough to speak up, however, is also part of the battle. “45% of Swedish finance employees have been subject to harassment at work but reporting levels remain shockingly low,” said **Ella Sjödin from FSU Sweden**. “Reporting is crucial but so is genuine employer follow-up. Management and trade unions both need to be trained in how to deal with violence and harassment incidents appropriately and justly,” she added.

**Dr Jane Pillinger, global expert on gender equality and gender-based violence at work**, also highlighted that the finance sector has an important role to play not only in protecting and supporting its workforce but also its customers. “Approximately 90% of cases of domestic violence involve financial abuse. The finance sector could play a key role in providing crucial support services for victims,” she noted, adding, “Studies show that unionised workplaces build more trust and are more likely to negotiate joint policies and solutions to prevent violence and harassment.”

The workshop ended with a brainstorming on what should be included in the cross-sector guidelines which will be developed throughout the course of the project and presented at its final conference next year. Key points that came out of the discussions were that we need strong collective agreements on this issue that are continuously monitored and reviewed, and that the employer has a duty of care and must take its health & safety responsibilities seriously, including by raising awareness and providing training.

This finance-specific workshop was one of 7 sectoral workshops that will be organised as part of the UNI Europa EU Cross-sectoral Social Dialogue joint project “*Eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work*” (VS/2021/0041). Inequality between women and men persists in the world of work in many forms, from career prospects and development opportunities to various terms and conditions. The aim of this UNI Europa Equal Opportunities cross-sector project is to end violence and harassment at work, including from third-parties, and to tackle domestic violence, as – with rising remote work – the home has become the new workplace.

In order to achieve this goal, UNI Europa will:

- continue to campaign for the ratification of ILO Convention 190 and Recommendation 260;
- train and inform about the tools and mechanisms available to prevent violence and harassment in the world of work;
- encourage affiliates and employer organisations to use collective bargaining as a tool to reach these objectives;
- address the gender pay and pensions gap in order to tackle the issue of economic violence;
- discuss the content of the draft EU Pay Transparency Directive;
- encourage active participation in campaigns, activities, marches, and protests;
- combat all forms of social regression;
- support a multifaceted, joint social partner strategy, including the exchange of best practices to tackle exclusion and discrimination in the workplace as well as the development of participatory workplace cultures where inclusion and diversity are a priority;
- and develop cross-sectoral EU guidelines for services workers on the prevention of violence and harassment at work.

For further information on the project, please contact UNI Europa Equal Opportunities Director [Amel Selma Djemail](#).



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The 30-31 March 2022 UNI Europa Finance sector workshop presentations can be found here:

- [Multisectoral guidelines on violence and harassment](#)
- [Eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work Spanish Finance Sector](#)
- [ILO Convention 190 & Recommendation 206](#)
- [Cross-sectoral Social Dialogue project “Eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work”](#)
- [Mutuals eliminating violence in the workplace](#)
- [Threats and violence against finance employees](#)