

Gender-Based Violence in Higher Education and Research in Europe Institutional Culture & intersectional approach : Knowledge. Policy. Implementation.

1. An institutional necessity: fighting and preventing gender-based violence in higher education

The fight against gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and all forms of discrimination in higher education constitutes an institutional necessity, driven by an unprecedented political commitment at the European level, framed by the Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women (2011). This is based on the idea that these violent acts are gender-based, meaning they occur due to the gender or sexuality of the people experiencing them. The Istanbul Convention has formalized a protective framework around four "P"s: Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Coordinated Policies. It also emphasizes that women are not the only victims of these violent acts and encourages extending the protective framework to all people exposed to violence. Governments and their institutions are mobilizing to implement it.

Additionally, institutional inertia has been disrupted by demands for rapid change since 2017, sparked by the #MeToo movement. The effects of this movement are evident in the widespread awareness of the reality of gender-based violence in all fields. They also demand profound and sustainable cultural change and pressure for accelerated changes, especially in higher education.

At the end of 2017 in France, on December 4th, the international conference titled "Sexist and Sexual Violence in Higher Education and Research" was held at the University Paris-Diderot. During the conference, the former Minister of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation requested universities to create a reporting mechanism for incidents of sexual violence and harassment. At the end of the conference, four working groups were established, bringing together actors and stakeholders in gender equality in sciences and universities.

Awareness. One of them produced an awareness campaign for students and staff;

Survey. Another working group developed recommendations for designing and conducting specific research on sexist and sexual violence;

Listening and reporting system. The third group designed a support guide to assist universities, schools, and institutes in designing and implementing listening and reporting mechanisms;

Training. Finally, the last group created an extensive training program ("VSS-Formation") on sexual and sexist violence for establishments, led by a network of specialized trainers.

Identifying the prevalence of violence, raising awareness, supporting, training... over six years, we have moved from episodic and scattered actions to the articulation of coherent and tailored training programs to the specificities of institutions, to the multiplication of awareness actions and the audiences they reach, to the structuring of listening mechanisms, to coordination among actors, organizations, institutions, associations, etc.

Collective vigilance has never been stronger. The expressed expectations have never been so solid and supported. The responses provided have never been so scrutinized and commented upon.

At the European level, the European Commission has initiated the European Research Area (ERA), which calls for the design and implementation of equality action plans including an axis on combating gender-based violence in higher education. These action plans became mandatory in France in 2021. Since then, higher education institutions set up a listening unit and a reporting mechanism (REMEDE survey, 2023). During its final conference (Namur, November 2023), the UniSAFE project presented numerous avenues to end gender-based violence in higher education, formalizing a protective framework inspired by the Istanbul convention and specified to higher education consisting of seven articulated axes (the 7P framework): Policy, Prevalence, Prevention, Protection, Prosecution (and internal disciplinary measures), Provision of services, and Partnerships.

We are now at a turning point.

Awareness has been raised. Regular data is produced on sexist and sexual violence as well as discrimination. Higher education organizations work on the prevention and handling of violent acts.

2. The Challenge of Collaborative Work (VOICES & CPED) for the international conference

However, we may question the state of their structuring. What are the effects of the policies produced? How are they implemented? How is prevention and training done? How are listening mechanisms organized? What is their scope? How does the chain of reporting incidents of violence, harassment, and discrimination operate? How are the situations monitored and handled by higher education institutions? And how are violent acts known, and through what observation or collection mechanisms? How is communication done... about what exists? How is trust built in listening and reporting mechanisms? What human and financial resources are dedicated to these questions, for which raising the sensitivity threshold generates greater expectations and demands, both from the student community and staff?

To address these questions, the CPED is organizing an international conference in Lyon from November 25th to 26th, 2024, in partnership with the European network produced by the COST Action VOICES.

Established in 2011, the CPED (*the French Standing Conference of Equality-diversity Officers*) gathers equality and diversity officers appointed in French Higher Education. CPED plays a unifying and cross-cutting role in promoting and fostering equality and diversity in Higher Education. CPED monitors and offers global expertise on equality and diversity, including specific expertise on sexual and sexist violence recognized by institutional and associative partners.

The COST Action VOICES network aims to make visible the inequalities experienced by young researchers from a gender perspective. Its working group number four (WG4) is specifically dedicated to the analysis of gender-based violence, and sexual harassment in connection with the institutional culture of higher education.

The stakes of collaborative work are quite clear.

It's about benefiting from our collective expertise acquired at the European level and sharing our knowledge but also our experiences in managing prevention, implementation, and monitoring of reports of violence and discrimination, carrying out administrative procedures, how we structured our universities, institutes, schools, and laboratories, how we established links with associative partners, law enforcement and judicial institutions, public authorities, etc.

For this purpose, the animation of a professional network of specialists is necessary, to which this conference will contribute, as well as the triple intersection between what we know and what we do, what is done here and what is done elsewhere, what is conceived (at European, national, local and institutional levels) and what is implemented.

3. From Research to Policy Implementation

This conference can be a starting point for a network of researchers, actors, and actresses for equality and the fight against violence and discrimination in Higher Education and Research at the European level.

The conference will be a hybrid conference, not just in the sense that this term has taken since the COVID epidemic online but structurally with:

- a. a scientific component allowing for an update on data, especially on the prevalence of violence, but also on the specificity of certain organizations (engineering schools, for example) and their culture (hazing culture in health studies, sports culture in sports faculties...), on the risks inherent in certain situations (internships, international travel, conferences...), contexts (PhD, hazing...) or audiences (LGBTI individuals, vulnerable, refugees, people with disabilities...), on the consequences of power and authority relationships...
- b. a section on the design of prevention policies, on the articulation between European and national frameworks and their translation into higher education institutions. This part will be designed dynamically to grasp how prevention and gender-based violence policies are made and adjusted.
- c. a section on implementations where examples of targeting an audience, designing, implementing, and financing action plans in higher education and other fields. It will also involve articulating the data obtained from an intersectional perspective, whether in prevention, education, or research.

The event will be held in Lyon, France, from November 25 to 27, 2024, in French and English.

A call for proposals open to the scientific community and people involved in preventing violence will be online on July, 15th.

SEE THE CALL FOR PROPOSAL BELOW

**Gender-Based Violence in Higher Education and Research in Europe
Institutional Culture & intersectional approach :
Knowledge. Policy. Implementation.**

European Conference, University of Lyon, 25-26-27 November 2024

Call for communication

In 2017, the international impetus of the #metoo movement triggered a wave of testimonies, awareness, and decision-making regarding the reality of sexual violence in all areas of social life. At the end of the same year, the symposium "Gender-based and Sexual Violence in Higher Education and Research: From Awareness to Action" organized at the University of Paris 7 Diderot initiated a series of coordinated actions in France at the national level: an awareness campaign, a methodological guide for research on gender-based and sexual violence, a second guide to help institutions structure listening and reporting mechanisms for gender-based violence, and finally, to design and deliver coordinated and sustainable training actions. Since then, the Public Service Transformation Act (2019) has required all French administrations to establish a mechanism for reporting and handling acts of violence, discrimination, moral or sexual harassment, and sexist behavior, and to integrate it into their professional equality action plans. In March 2021, universities and schools submitted their first action plans to the Ministry of Higher Education. Institutions that did not have mechanisms for listening, support, and reporting acts of violence and discrimination have since created them. Others have worked to strengthen theirs. Furthermore, decree no. 2020-256 of March 13, 2020, defines the scope of these mechanisms to include the collection of acts of violence, discrimination, moral or sexual harassment, and sexist behavior. Therefore, the protection of individuals extends beyond gender-based violence to encompass all forms of discrimination and moral harassment. At the European level, the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 includes the prevention of violence against women and invites institutions to frame their policies from an intersectional perspective. According to this strategy, gender-based violence is explicitly named and considered "one of the greatest challenges to our societies [...] deeply rooted in gender inequalities" (Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025). Higher education is not exempt. In its thematic document "Gender Equality in and through Education," the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport, and Culture of the European Commission identifies gender-based violence and intersectionality as key concepts. It states that gender-based violence in education spans a continuum from sexist jokes and remarks to physical

violence, including mockery, intimidation, insults, and harassment (including online). The few incidents reported to authorities indicate the difficulty institutions face in becoming resources for those affected. Seven years after #MeToo and seven years after this symposium, it is time to take stock. First, in terms of available data. What do we know? What data has been produced since then, and how does this data contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms generating violence and discrimination? How has higher education been a field of study for researchers working on gender-based violence, discrimination, or harassment? What are the specificities of higher education? How have intersectional approaches contributed to understanding gender-based violence? Despite advances at the European level, gender-based violence remains a major issue in higher education, deeply affecting the health, well-being, and academic trajectories of students and staff. Despite some numerous data, the prevalence of the problems tends to be dramatically underestimated and incorrectly identified by authorities. Gender-based violence, though often invisible, is endemic in higher education institutions and requires a coordinated and systematic response. These violences do not manifest uniformly; they affect individuals differently depending on their level of study, field of study and institutional culture, social or ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, and, of course, gender. The UniSafe survey (2023) notes that minority groups are more likely to report violence. Respondents who identify as belonging to an ethnic, sexual, or gender minority or living with a disability are much more likely to have experienced gender-based or sexual violence. An intersectional approach seems necessary to better understand how this violence affects different groups within university communities. For example, LGBTI individuals, those with disabilities, or migrants face higher rates of gender-based violence and specific forms of discrimination, highlighting the need to design inclusive policies and implement targeted action plans, prevention, and training. To address the multiple realities of violence and discrimination, it is essential to understand in order to act, meaning to design, deploy, and implement effective prevention, protection, and prosecution policies while ensuring appropriate training and strengthening reporting mechanisms. International frameworks, such as the Istanbul Convention – with its four pillars (the 4 Ps: Coordinated Policies, Prevention, Protection, Prosecution) – provide valuable guidelines to help states structure their efforts. The application of these policies (European and national) must be adapted to the specific context of each institution. For higher education, the recommendations of the UniSafe project (November 2023) also rely on seven pillars, developed in its 7P Framework, adding to the four pillars of the Istanbul Convention the issues of measuring the prevalence of violence, partnerships, and service provision.

Objectives of the Symposium

Fighting gender-based violence in higher education is essential to create a safe and equal academic environment. This symposium will gather contributions on the various dimensions of gender-based violence based on current knowledge, existing policies, and practical implementations. The goal is to promote an integrated and effective approach against this violence. In this perspective, the symposium aims to explore and address three essential questions regarding gender-based violence in higher education:

1. **What do we know?** This section will share the latest data to understand the specific dynamics of gender-based violence in higher education; refine data on the prevalence of violence; contribute to cross-referencing sources; better understand the specificities of different higher education contexts; identify vulnerability contexts...
2. **What are the existing policies and frameworks?** This section will analyze and compare international, European, and local policies on combating gender-based violence, understand their dynamics and effects, blind spots, and perverse effects; compare evaluations; identify recommendations.
3. **How are policies implemented in institutions?** This section will:
 - Share practical experiences,
 - Compare implementation strategies for prevention, protection, support for victims, training, and prosecution of perpetrators,
 - Identify obstacles and enablers for these implementations,
 - Contribute to the skill development of specialized actors and all staff,
 - Exchange on the design and use of tools,
 - Question their integration into teaching and training,
 - Incorporate intersectional approaches into communication, prevention, training, and awareness.

Types of Contributions and Formats

Three types of contributions are accepted:

1. **Scientific Communications** Presenting research results on gender-based violence in higher education. Particular attention will be given to the work of young researchers.
2. **Policy Communications** Discussing policies to combat violence in higher education and research at the European, national, local, and institutional levels, through ministerial or university action plans. These contributions can be proposed by institutional or associative actors and may address policy design, advocacy, lobbying, vertical and horizontal policy coordination, partnership network articulation, etc.
3. **Implementation Communications** Presenting the implementation of these policies, whether through awareness campaigns, training plans

(for staff and students), listening and reporting mechanisms, creating educational content, developing tools and guides, processing acts of violence, as well as communication and partnership with associations, institutions, etc.

1. Scientific Communications

Topics Covered: Special attention will be given to proposals that incorporate an intersectional approach. Proposals that include an epistemological or methodological questioning are also welcome. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches are accepted. - Data on Gender-based Violence in Higher Education: Prevalence, typology, risk factors, impacts, international or inter-institutional comparisons; specific risks (doctorate, internships, international travel, accommodation, festive events...) - Data on reports of violence and discrimination, their handling, exposed publics... - Violence against specific groups (migrants, persons with disabilities, LGBTI people, etc.): Studies focusing on the specificity of these individuals or comparative studies are expected.

2. Policy Communications

Topics Covered:

- International, European, and Local Policies: Analysis of policy frameworks, transformations, priorities, articulation between different levels
- Prevention: Awareness strategies; integration into university curricula; role of student associations; importance of intersectional approaches for transversal policies; definition of target audiences.
- Protection of Individuals: Support and protection mechanisms for victims; Legal framework; Association and institutional partnerships.
- Administrative and Disciplinary Prosecution: Processes and effectiveness of prosecution; Articulation of legal procedures.
- Consideration of gender-based violence in action plans for equality.

3. Implementation Communications

Topics Covered: The presentation of topics is analytical. However, it is possible to present communications that highlight comprehensive implementations or expose the entire chain from reporting to disciplinary procedures, including support or referral of individuals. These concrete implementations can also highlight partnerships, and agreements, expose what works and what doesn't, and how blocks are overcome if they are.

Communications that address temporalities (institutional, penal, procedural, collective, personal, etc.) and the plurality of actors are welcome. Likewise, proposals that work on the complementarity of approaches and consider specific publics, contexts, or periods are appropriate.

- Training: Initiatives for staff and students. Training plans. Training materials. Targeting
- Support and accompaniment: Role of health services, legal assistance, support groups...
- Networks and partnerships: Collaborations with local and international organizations; Referral of individuals; Knowledge of the local ecosystem against violence and discrimination.
- Listening and Reporting Mechanisms, Vigilance Cells: Functioning of reporting systems. Exchange of practices. Local, national mechanisms. Complementarity of approaches. Platforms and mechanisms. Functioning, organization, structuring.
- Listening: Diversity of listening approaches. Welcoming testimonies. Collecting information.
- Investigating: Administrative investigations, procedures, and personnel. Articulation of procedures (administrative, penal, etc.).
- Role of Students in the Prevention Process: Student initiatives. Institution/student partnerships.
- Actions towards specific publics, vulnerable populations, or focused on risk contexts. - Evaluation of actions: Annual reports, policy and action adjustments, etc.

Communication Formats

1. **Oral Presentations:** These are fifteen minutes long and will be held in sessions with three to four people.
2. **Poster Sessions:** These will be organized for all types of communications (scientific, on prevention policies, on implementations).
3. **Workshops:** Workshops can be proposed.
4. **Thematic Round Tables:** Thematic round tables will also be organized, as well as professional sessions.

It is possible to contact the organizers directly for specific proposals.

Submission Guidelines

Proposals must:

1. Select the area for which they are proposed:
 - a – scientific communication
 - b – public policy
 - c – implementation and actions
2. Follow the format below:
 - A 500-word abstract including context, approach type, and a brief presentation of methodology, main results, and research implications.
 - A bibliography (minimum 5 references).
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3. **Format:**
 - Word or PDF document containing the title of the communication, type of communication (scientific, policy, implementation, roundtable, workshop, seminar, poster, professional session), abstract or proposal, and author's contact information (name, institution, email address).
 - File name: AreaCommunication_AuthorName&FirstName_ShortTitle (e.g., a_Dupont_Maria_PreventionStrategies)

Evaluation of Proposals

Proposals will be evaluated by a selection committee based on the following criteria:

- Relevance to the general theme and specific topics.
- Originality and innovation.
- Clarity of presentation and soundness of methodology or approach.
- Potential contribution to understanding and combating gender-based violence in higher education.

Publication and Presentation

Authors of accepted proposals will be invited to present their communications at [Name of Conference/Symposium] and will have the opportunity to submit full versions of their work for publication in the conference proceedings.

deadline: September 15 2024

Submission adress : [gbvihedlyon2024 \(at\) sciencesconf.org](mailto:gbvihedlyon2024@sciencesconf.org)

Location: University of Lyon, France

Organizers: CPED and VOICES

Contact

For any questions regarding this call for papers, please contact:

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for the organizing committee,
Elif Kaya* & Philippe Liotard**

* Teacher and researcher, Kilis University, leader of VOICES WG4 (Gender-Based Violence, Sexual Harassment and Institutional Culture)

** President of CPED, leader of VOICES WG4