PRESS / Preventing - RESponding – Supporting – young survivors of GBV: sexual harassment, sexual and cyber violence

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Work package WP3 – MONITORING/ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF MEDIA PROFESSIONALS

Deliverable 3.1. – Report on how SH/SV and CYV is reported in the Greek media.
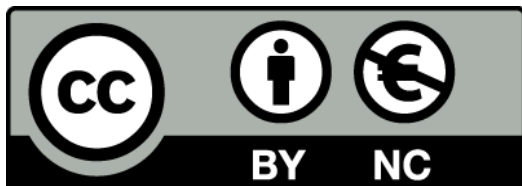
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Disclaimer

The Report was developed in the context of the PRESS project.

Project Coordination: Centre for Research on Women's Issues 'Diotima'

Project Partners:

- National and Kapodistrian University of Athens - Faculty of Communication and Media Studies

- Genderhood

Introduction

While media reporting can function to raise awareness about sexual violence and draw attention to phenomena related to sexual harassment and cyber violence, the distorted picture portrayed by most of the media is also linked to widespread misunderstandings or "myths" that surround gender-based violence, perpetuate and multiply it. Media malpractice can lead, on the one hand, to the trivialization, denial, and silencing of the experiences of survivors, and, on the other, to moral panic surrounding migrants and "strangers", as well as stereotyping, racist depictions of men of color as sexual predators, etc.

Sexual harassment (SH) and sexual violence (SV), including cyber violence (CYV) constitute a systemic issue, meaning that it is based on overarching dominating societal norms and practices which are normalized on every level of society. It is not a matter of any one individual alone, but rather it stems from patriarchal ideologies that reproduce power inequalities through gendered and sexualized lenses, which intersect with other aspects of our identities (age, race, religion, body types, etc.). Its consequences include cause for distress for survivors and in many cases life threats and safety violations.

The PRESS project's goal is to promote the prevention of SH/SV, both in physical and digital spaces, in the EU, and on the national level.

Context and objectives

The "PRESS" project brings together a consortium of Greek stakeholders with Diotima Centre as Coordinator, the National Kapodistrian University of Athens - Faculty of Communication and Media Studies - and Genderhood as partners, along with the Greek Ombudsman and the Hellenic Association of Social Workers as supporting agencies. The PRESS project aims to promote early detection and prevention of sexual harassment/ violence, with a particular focus on gender-based cyber-sexual violence, and offering support services to women, young people, and LGBTIQ victims or potential victims of these types of gender-based violence.

The present deliverable is part of Task: 3.1 "Mapping and recording of the current representation of sexual harassment and violence in the Greek media". Following the clearly defined objectives of the PRESS project, the report adopts a gender-sensitive and culturally diverse approach, aligned with universal women's human rights and European citizenship rights aiming to a) create core professional groups that will acquire the required knowledge and expertise to raise awareness, prevent and address SV/SH and CYV in their working environment, b) promote gender-sensitive media reporting and enhance awareness-raising initiatives on SH/SV through traditional and digital media, and c) raise awareness about the prevalence, causes, and consequences of SV/SH and CYV among young people, the educational community, and the general public.

In media representations, gender-based violence most frequently refers to rape and child sexual abuse, although it can include a wider range of acts such as exhibitionism and voyeurism. While most of these crimes receive little media attention, certain sensational sex crimes are prominent topics in news and entertainment media. Media coverage has also been criticized for victim blaming by focusing on the actions and responsibility of victims, suggesting drinking, flirting, or being in the "wrong place at the wrong time" leads or precipitates sexual violence. Again, these media representations vary significantly according to race and class. However, the emergence of the second-wave feminist movement in the 1970s, and most recently, the #MeToo movement has led to some changes in media representations of gender-based violence. Subsequent decades have seen an increase in positive reporting about victims and increased reporting of sexual crimes perpetrated by acquaintances and family members. There has been a growth in feminist voices and views in media reporting, as well as increased focus on the responsibilities and failings of criminal justice systems. Recent years have seen several examples of media coverage or "rediscovery" of previously ignored allegations against celebrities. SH/SV including CYV has become a highly controversial and contested area, and media coverage reflects this, sometimes supporting progressive social and cultural change and sometimes providing a vehicle for "backlash" sentiments, such as moral panics and intensified racism, depending on the character of the media coverage.

The present report aims to provide readers with a kind of mapping of the way Greek media report on SH/SH and CYV news stories, highlighting the basic trends and themes derived from the research media monitoring that took place during a four-month period (November 2022 -February 2023) recording the coverage of news stories about gender-based violence and more specifically SH/SV and CYV by a number of mainstream Greek media.

Over a period of 4 months NKUA systematically monitored the mainstream TV channels as well as Greek digital news media and analyzed reports of SH/SV (including CYV). The aim of this research media monitoring activity was to identify concrete areas that require improvement and to give insights for the development of a Training of Trainers (ToT) of Media professionals that follows in the context of Task 3.2 ''Design of ToT curriculum'' and of Task 3.3 ''ToT of Media professionals''. The period of the four months was selected as the most recent that could be selected for the PRESS project.

The research monitoring activity led to a comprehensive report on the Greek media and its coverage of SV/SH and CYV news synthesizing the research findings and contextual qualitative analyses.

The main objectives of the report are to:

✔ Map the way that SH/SV including CYV is represented in the Greek publications examined, highlighting the basic, general trends and themes that appear in the public sphere regarding the issues, that characterize the most prominent reporting approaches.
✔ Offer recommendations for improvement in the way the coverage of SH/SV and CYV news stories is made.
✔ Provide input for the development of training material for journalists and media professionals on how to report on SH/SV including CYV.

Furthermore, the present report is intended to serve the PRESS project's objective to develop recommendations for national and EU action to protect and promote gender-sensitive media coverage, and highlight the rights of the public to seek and receive unbiased information relevant to SV/SH and CYV.

1. Research monitoring the SH/SV and CYV media reporting in Greece

1.1. Research media monitoring scope

Based on the literature review delivered in the context of deliverable 2.1. namely ''State of the art'', NKUA decided on the scope and content of the monitoring of SV/SH and CYV coverage in the Greek media. In particular, the NKUA researchers and monitors focused on SV/SH and CYV reporting in the Greek media as defined by the international (ILO) and European (EU) organisations in the following forms: Bodily forms of harassment (e.g. unwanted touches, kissing, groping, sexual assault, rape); Verbal forms of harassment (e.g. offensive questions, sexual comments); Non- verbal forms of harassment (e.g. catcalling, sexually-provocative, offensive or harassing gazing etc.); Cyber forms of harassment (e.g. sending inappropriate pictures to somebody etc.). Furthermore, the following definitions worked as a guide for researchers defining the orientation of the monitoring activity extending the scope to include women, men, children/minors, and members of the LGBT community in the position of the survivor/victim.

Gender-based Violence: An umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will; it is based on socially ascribed and/or perceived gender differences.

Sexual Harassment: Any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which occurs, with the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of a person, in particular when creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment.

Non-consensual pornography (also called 'revenge porn'[1]): Involves the online distribution of sexually graphic photographs or videos without the consent of the individual in the images. Images can also be obtained by hacking into the victim's computer, social media accounts or phone, and can aim to inflict real damage on the target's embodied life, outside the digital/online space. Non-consensual pornography can be the extension of intimate partner violence to online spaces.

Cyber harassment: Harassment by means of email, text (or online) messages or the internet. It can encompass: unwanted sexually explicit emails, text (or online) messages; inappropriate or offensive advances on social networking websites or internet chat rooms; threats of physical and/or sexual violence by email, text (or online) messages; hate speech, meaning language that denigrates, insults, threatens or targets an individual based on her identity (gender) and other traits (such as sexual orientation or disability).

Rape culture: A culture in which dominant ideologies, media images, social practices and institutions promote or condone, explicitly or implicitly, the normalisation of sexual violence and victim-blaming. Incidents are ignored, trivialised, normalised and/or made the basis of (sexist) jokes.

1.2. Criteria for recording and analysis: the research protocol design.

Based on the State of Art developed in the context of the Task 2.1., the research team decided on the variables and content of a research protocol, which defined specifying criteria and areas of weekly recording per medium:

- the date of the news item
- the medium (TV evening news, TV news/entrainment media/digital news site)
- the identity of the victim/survivor (woman/man/minor/LGBT)
- the description of the action (SH/SV/CYV)
- the tone of coverage (neutral, sexist versus the victim/perpetrator/both),
- if the identity of the victim/perpetrator is revealed or not.

These data were recorded for all stories and presented in a table to illustrate differences between outlets and differences over time.

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[1] The term 'revenge porn' has received critique in recent years, with additional alternatives including 'image-based sexual abuse', 'cyber exploitation' or 'non-consensual intimate imagery'.

In addition, the research protocol included additional comments relating to a qualitative content-based analysis that illustrates balance, fairness, accuracy, or attempts to manipulate. As conclusions are reached on these factors, and if they are systematically documented and clearly presented, they provide compelling evidence about media conduct.

- **Balance**: One of the biggest responsibilities of a good journalist is to present more than one side of a story when appropriate, and this should be a focus of any monitoring project. When judging balance, researchers check whether all sides get a chance to tell their stories.
- **Related to critical balance, journalists are required to be informed critics:** At the same time, journalists need to be able to judge and inform the public of their own conclusions, based on their experience, research and knowledge, when possible and appropriate. Researchers in this deliverable attempted to address the ways in which this was performed, or avoided.
- **Manipulative use of film, pictures, or sound:** broadcasting film footage that does not correspond with the events reported to create impressions about the involved agents; using background music or visual effects that lend a specific tone to the story; and the use of manipulative voice tones or sarcasm by news anchors.
- **Missing Information:** researchers tend to become very well-informed and media monitoring of various media resources allows them to make a judgment about the accuracy of stories they review, as well as being able to attest to lack of information in some of the news items / media outlets that present the same story.
- **Unsubstantiated News:** It is difficult for monitors to determine whether or not stories are substantiated properly. However, researchers asked themselves questions about each story, such as: Does a story assert as fact something for which no evidence is given?

Researchers emphasized on recording comments on their forms regarding instances when they notice unbalanced or unfair news coverage. These qualitative data have been analysed, and conclusions were presented when the findings were significant. In such cases, monitored findings were included in the report in a bulleted list presented in the next chapter of the report, which presents the context of the findings and the fundamental themes and trends that highlight the way news stories regarding SV/SH and CSV are covered and reported by the major Greek media.

1.3. Research design and procedure

In November 2022, the Steering Committee in cooperation with NKUA and the scientific responsible of NKUA formed a research team aiming to monitor key TV channels and Greek digital media and to collect, record and analyse reports of gender-based violence including cyber-harassment aiming to map the current media representations and trends regarding sexual harassment and sexual violence in Greece today.

In internal (NKUA) meetings the three senior researchers that form the NKUA team discussed and decided upon the optimal way in which the mapping and examining of the current situation of the media landscape regarding the representation of sexual harassment and sexual violence can be achieved. They also discussed and decided upon the reasons for choosing specific media outlets and decided on the amount and the type, as well as the specific TV and news websites that would be monitored and for what reasons.

Part of this mapping and examination is a form of research media monitoring, which involves systematic monitoring, recording and analysis of a selection of major TV and digital Greek media. This formed the basis of a research protocol/template for the monitoring results for each medium to be filled by the NKUA researchers. Both the protocol and the templates were refined during meetings with the researchers during which the agenda and the scope of the media monitoring were also discussed and decided upon (i.e., which media to monitor, which sexual harassment / sexual violence-related news and shows, etc.).

The NKUA team then established weekly meetings to discuss the media outlets they have been monitoring, and the guidelines and directions the media monitoring should take – and repositioning these guidelines with each problem occurring, thus fine-tuning them. In these meetings, the team formed the protocols as a way of entering a research logic and methodology (discussing which type of news items we are looking for, which are excluded, and the way in which the "silence" of a mainstream media outlet about a news item that we find in social media, for instance, is significant, as well as the language used in the descriptions of sexual harassment and sexual violence as it is depicted in the media outlets that were chosen). Weekly meetings proved to be a good research practice as they encouraged continuous engagement with the themes and news items related to sexual harassment and sexual violence, and allowed the research team's immediate response to issues that came up during the week.

In a period of four (4) months, from November 1st of 2022 till the 28th of February of 2023, the NKUA research team researched five (5) major TV Channels (ERT, Sky, Mega, Ant1, Open) and six (6) major digital news sites (Kathimerini, EfSyn, Proto Thema, Lifo, Zougla and In.gr), aiming to gather records of news stories reporting SV/SH and CYV against a) adult women, b) adult men, c) minors, and d) LGBT people.

The NKUA researchers **collected a total of 314 news stories** reporting SV/SH and CYV, the qualitative (and basic quantitative) analysis of which led to the identification of major themes and concrete areas that require improvement, also providing insights for the development of the ToT.

2. SH/SV and CYV coverage by the mainstream Greek Media

2.1. Overview of the Greek media reporting of SV/SH and CYV

The 314 news stories reporting SV/SH and CYV, and their qualitative (and basic quantitative) analysis brought to light major issues that appear in the literature and could have been expected, but also trends that can be specific to a Greek version of patriarchy. Both are important for the development of Training of Trainers. Basic trends as regards the presentation of SV/SH and CYV in the Greek media can be summarized in the following points

- To begin with, results revealed that **sexual harassment is treated by the publications examined as less newsworthy than physical violence against victims**, and once there have been news stories about sexual violence incidents, the media are reluctant to report on SH. The majority of the collected news stories referred to SV (n=229), while those referred to SH were much less reported (n=43). In addition, CYV is impressively underreported (n=22) by the Greek media.
- **SV/SH and CYV against minors** (n= 171) **appear to dominate the news** when compared to SV/SH and CYV against adult women (n= 84), adult men (n=11), and the LGBT community (n= 3).
- Results show that **the identity of the persons involved** in SV/SH and CYV stories **is commonly revealed in the publications examined, especially the identity of the perpetrator** (n=140), although it is also common to expose details, private information collected by the social media, and other personal clues that may expose the identity of SV/SH and CYV survivors (n=74).
- There is a general **declaration of effort for a so-called 'objective' presentation of facts**, despite the sensualized content including unnecessary and disturbing details of the crime/ incidence of violence. In general, first impression implies that there is a neutral approach in those stories avoiding, at least, obvious, and clearly sexist remarks and characterizations about perpetrators and survivors of SV/SH and CYV. However, results revealed that **the majority of the collected news stories contained several inappropriate and/or unethical journalistic practices. An additional, and quite common gap/significant lack regarding reporting is that information about helplines is rarely mentioned in a news report, which shows there is rarely concern about how to support survivors on part of the media.** Likewise, two more violations that involved speculative reasons and the word "victim" instead of ''survivor'' were also among the most common infringements of ethical guidelines. Furthermore, the results revealed that the **Greek publications examined rarely follow ethical guidelines to report SV/SH and CYV.**

Table 1. Data on the coverage of Sexual Harassment/ Sexual Violence and Cyberviolence by the Mainstream Greek Media

Month	Total # of reports	SH news stories	SV news stories	CSH/V news stories	Victim's Identity				Description "tone"				Victimidentity Revealed	Perpetrator identity revealed
					W	M	CH	LGBT	Neutral	Sexist VS victim	Sexist VS perpetrator	Sexist VS both		
#1/ November 2022	30	12	21	0	12	3	19	0	16	7	0	1	6	14
#2/ December 2022	123	25	98	14	36	14	54	1	84	15	0	15	35	66
#3/ January 2023	75	10	67	5	17	1	44		61	9	2	1	25	42
#4/ February 2023	88	8	71	3	27	3	65	2	53	20	17	2	20	46
TOTAL	316	55	257	22	**92**	**21**	**182**	**3**	214	51	19	19	86	168

[Some news items regarding the rape of minors by minors with a revenge porn-like video, were counted as items referring to both SV (sexual violence) and CSV (online sexual violence /harassment), which is why the total number appears higher].

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2.2. Themes and trends derived from the qualitative analysis

The in-depth content analysis of the collected news stories is in a ''dialogue'' with main arguments of the literature discussion developed in the context of the State-of-the-Art deliverable (2.1.), and unveiled that most selected news reports revealed various types of infringement/violations/gaps and poor reporting/representation of the SV/SH and CSV news in the Greek publications examined. However, extensive details of the incident, proposing speculations about it, and the use of inappropriate language were among the most common ones. A list of other tactics and approaches that lead to the inappropriate manipulation of the SV/SH and CYV news stories by the publications (for example, in sensationalist ways) is presented as follows:

- **''Quasi'' voyeurism:** Although SV/SH and CYV do not present a taboo topic as was historically the case, what characterizes the way the Greek publications deal with the issue, is a paradoxical ambiguity, reflecting a kind of a ''double bind'' message. On the one hand, SH against women is mainly underreported, with its pragmatistic and ideological dimensions marked by silence and, almost, denial. At the same time, sensationalized reporting of a small number of cases of sexual violence that attract a strong public response of profound ''quasi'' voyeurism, especially when femicide and the rape of minors involved, has been a much-exposed feature of media reporting of gender-based violence in Greece today.

- **Limited time / silencing**: In this context, news reports related to SH/SV are addressed within a limited-time/second-priority context, except for the ''big/major sex crimes'' that dominate the media agenda for a long period attracting high visibility and viewership. In parallel, there is silence about key issues of gender-based violence, the actual context is unexplained, and what is underlined are clichés like 'love', and ''passion crimes'', or the sexuality and conduct of the stereotypical ''victim'', which is attributed only to a suffering ''body'' ripped of its identity.

- **Perpetrator's voice heard / victim as body**: Further on this, it is important to note that monitoring exposed how survivors are presented in the publications examined as bodies that are hurt (further verifying the practice of viewing survivors as victimized bodies and neglecting SH because of its attack on the person and their identity and not only on the body). Therefore, sexual harassment is conceptualized as a minor form of GBV and what is disregarded is that it can escalate and aggravate. This may also be due to the fact that mainstream [androcentric/patriarchal] narratives of GBV mainly depict the physical harm and much less psychological violence. Juxtaposed to this, the perpetrators' voices are more often heard, as well as the voices of their lawyers, under the justification that they must be allowed to defend themselves.

- **Secondary importance / secondary priority**: Apart from prioritization and dominance of news stories that attract the curiosity of the public and may cause moral panic (usually involving children as perpetrators, and child rapists), reports for gender-based violence usually do not appear in prime time, thus hiding or silencing the ideological and pragmatistic aspects of the phenomenon. Moreover, the time of reporting is limited, and therefore reporters themselves often do not understand the bigger context or have the opportunity to bring the survivors' perspective into the light.

- **Focus on celebrities at the expense of stories that don't involve celebrities**: Focus on SH/SV stories that involve celebrities suggesting aiming to high viewership was also noted in the examined data.

- **Priority to the "defense" of the perpetrator**: Priority and focus on the argument and the ''discourse'' of the perpetrator, so that the victim/survivor almost becomes invisible, usually

with the excuse that the victimizer needs to be in a position to defend themselves, so as to serve justice.

- **The narrative of the "previously good citizen"**: Portrayal of the perpetrator as a ''previously good person'', ''a father'', ''someone who has never showed signs of bad behaviour before'' was noted in the examined data. This is also supported by repeated and extremely projected reports/accounts about the "shock" of the society regarding the crime committed by the perpetrator who up to then "was never considered a victimiser", and thus acquitting once again both the perpetrator and the local community which did not take into account any indication of previous violent acts on part of the perpetrator. This may reproduce a rape culture or at least a culture tolerating GBV and not taking any proactive steps to eliminate it. The portrayal of the perpetrator as the "good citizen/father/husband/etc., who has never before abused their partner/spouse/child/etc., constructs the idea of an exception which is exactly the opposite of what we know from the data about GBV incidents, as SH/SV is an everyday experience of 1 in 3 women at least.

- **Racism and SH/SV CYV reporting**: Emphasis on the nationality of the perpetrator in the case he is a foreigner, or an immigrant, promoting further stereotyping and change of attention, in some cases relying on the racist feelings of the public, which the news items flatter.

- **Marginalisation of SH/SV and CYV incidents / perpetrators**: Psychologization of the perpetrator, in many of the publications examined, so as he is represented as someone who is not psychologically and intellectually fit to act on their own responsibility e.g. he is ''mad'', ''impulsive'', ''sick'' etc. In addition, the portrayal of perpetrators as ''monsters'' dehumanizes them putting them out of the spectrum of legal and/or ideological consequences, and can even exoticise them, making them a "rebellious" rare occurrence, rendering positive instead of negative characteristics, thus undermining social responsibility.

- **'TV trials' and 'peephole' journalism**: In most cases, what is evident is the so-called phenomenon of "TV trials", broadcasted not only on gossip shows but also on the news, along with the "theatralisation" of penal cases by journalistic discourse. Various TV shows examined seemed to skip the principle of discretion, which affected deontology about case files and other lawsuit documents which were leaked, put up virtual courtrooms with the host of the show taking the role of the judge often in the presence of lawyers on part of the defendant and claimant. This practice creates a context of "peephole journalism", manipulating the public to address the perpetrator with a sort of "congratulatory" gaze, even though there is pity for the victim, as every incident is invested with a pornographic gaze. This gossip-like character of the news, continuously reproducing details about the abusive incident, obscures systemic causes but is also aimed at the most extreme and conservative reactions, developing an increasing ''moral panic'' reaction that simplifies events and promotes caricatures instead of human agents.

- **(Subtle and less subtle) Victim-blaming**: There is an evident approach towards a depiction of the victims as promiscuous, in most of the publications examined, and therefore responsible for what happened to them, i.e. victim-blaming, which renders perpetrators irresponsible (e.g. through the use of phrases such as 'family tragedy'). Victim blaming, especially in the case of women, even underaged,

survivors by implying that there was some kind of provocation on their part that attracted the sexual assault. In most cases, this representation of ''provocativeness'' on behalf of the survivor is built by highlighting parts of the perpetrator's statements (or their lawyers, and their relatives).

- **Sexist vocabulary**: The vocabulary and in general the language used in media depictions of SV/SH and CSV news stories is also highly problematic in many of the publications examined, recycling/reproducing stereotypical, heteronormative, and controlled–based notions of 'love', mis-reasoning and characterisations of victims/survivors as 'unlucky'. It is common for verbal abuse to be present in reporting that 'lectures' or incites judgment and verbal violence/ harassment, inscribing gender-based sexual characteristics, which in turn are used to characterize women, LGBTQ+, and young people only in reference to heterosexual men and/or macho identities.

- **Sensationalised headings**: Headings, titles of articles, and of news items, in general, may be sensationalized in order to attract the audience. This practice is also used by the extreme right to make their audience outraged about something that is not supported in their main articles/reporting. Stereotypes, voyeurism, and further victimization of the victims have dire consequences for both the victims and society in general.

- **Celebrities opinions preferred over real information by experts**: It is seems from the analysis of most of the research media monitoring data, that there is no detailed knowledge of the problem in the media sector, and expert journalists on gender issues or gender equality who may be consulted are absent or ''silenced'' in most of the Greek publications analysed. As a result, more often than not, the eye turns to politicians and/or members of the celebrity culture to be consulted about SV/SH and CSV incidents and news stories. This fact together with the lack of interest in reliable statistics on gender-based violence or the use of forced conclusions about relevant data makes for sensational, or simplistic conclusions, and therefore headlines.

- **Music, sensationalisation and victimhood as an identity rather than an occurrence**: The use of music and other 'props', as well as problematic reporting, makes for a sensational approach to reporting, whereas hidden cameras and undercover methods, especially when used without caution, also contribute to the sensationalisation of the subject matter, and the further victimization of survivors, whose resilience and agency are more than often (intentionally) disregarded or ignored since for mainstream media the notion of the 'victim' becomes an (everlasting) identity.

- **Lack of information supporting survivors**: Also, the publications analysed seemed to rarely focus on journalism that would be beneficial to the victims, such as portraying responses to violence, and a depiction of what the state institutions are doing to combat gender-based violence and support survivors. Rather, the crime is presented as the end of the story, making it seem as though it is inevitable / or that its effects are inevitable and inescapable.

3. Areas that require improvement and insights for the development of the "Training of Trainers" outline

The proposed areas of improvement in the media reporting of SH/SV and CYV in Greece are derived from the research media monitoring findings in the context of Task 3.1. of the PRESS project. In addition, they highlighted the views and experiences shared by the media professionals who participated in the focus group, an activity also conducted in the context of Work Package 3. To a great extent, these areas of improvement also draw on the theoretical study of the phenomena depicted in the State of the Art All these tasks provide input on the design and content of the PRESS ''Training of Trainers'' that follows. It is anticipated that the insights shared further on will be useful for journalists and professionals engaged in the reporting of gender-based violence in their journalistic everyday practice, promoting the education/training and awareness of the public, supporting the prevention of SH/SV in Greece, and making the protection of survivors from media malpractices and inappropriate approaches a priority.

- **Bring forward survivors' voices.** One of the most significant impacts of the feminist anti-rape movement has been to challenge the stigma and shame attached to victims and survivors and to emphasize the importance of survivors' voices. It remains rare for rape survivors to speak publicly about their experience, with most preferring to remain anonymous, a testament to the enduring effects of victim-blaming and rape stigma. However, changing social attitudes and the growth of social media have created more opportunities for victims to speak and be heard. Media professionals can be encouraged and trained to find ways to bring the focus ofattention to the ''voice'' of survivors in a way that will be respected and heard clearly and profoundly.

- **Follow ethical guidelines on reporting SH/SV**. Although many international and national organizations agree on certain ethical groundlines that sexual assault-based media stories should follow, a plethora of malpractices come from ignorance regarding these guidelines. News reports using language that provokes sympathy for the perpetrators, raising doubts about the incident, and using inappropriate language are "noisy" determinants of perceptions and attitudes that audiences and journalists hold about such incidents. Therefore, to contribute to the prevention of gender-based violence, especially the sexual exploitation of women, news media will have to adopt and follow specific ethical guidelines. Above all, it is strongly

recommended that publications should be written following strict ethical guidelines that **secure the** protection of the survivor's identity.

- Also, journalists can receive **education on the gender-based violence terminology** and the basic theory related to this kind of phenomena in the society (e.g. how rape culture works, the role of media in the development of ''myths'' etc.), as well as adopt language and style that will not desensitize the audience regarding relevant incidents, and at the same time would de-sensationalise reporting. The proper language used when reporting sexual assault will help journalists to inform people about the incidents and get involved in the discourse to prevent/eradicate SH/SV against women, promoting a compassionate and professional approach to cover the issue. For example, using the term "alleged", the invisibility of the perpetrators, and mentioning any speculative reasons, can lead the audience to misperceptions. Similarly, revealing the victim's identity/personal data, using the word "victim", attributing specific characteristics to the offender (e.g.beast, monster, etc.) and revealing footage or photograph of the sufferer can be harmful for the survivor. Results indicated that a lot of media reports were mainly based on "scandalous allegations" against both victims and perpetrators.

- There is a profound need for journalists to receive **education/training regarding the psychology of the SH/SV and CYV survivor**, including tips and consultation for conducting a safe, responsible, and respectful interview, to respect the survivor's boundaries, causing no further trauma or harm, as well as any other knowledge that will help them feel confident to approach GBV survivors safely and to handle their journalistic task with empathy and sensibility.

- **Special attention in reporting sexual abuse of children and minors**. Media representations of victims of childhood sexual abuse committed by family members or acquaintances have, historically, shared many features with representations of victims of acquaintance rape. There are strong traditions of victim-blaming, with children frequently portrayed as participating in or even initiating sexual conduct with adults, which were noticed in the data here too. Often referred to as the "Lolita" myth, these representations depict young girls as sexually precocious and seductive, with their adult assailants unable to resist their advances (Davis 2005). "Sympathetic" media reporting of incest and child sexual assault victims occurs more frequently when the perpetrator is a stranger, and these representations are, like representations of rape, highly sensational. Survivors of childhood sexual abuse are also frequently depicted as incurably "damaged" by their experience, a pattern of representation that increases the stigmatization of survivors (Alcoff & Gray 1993). Journalists and media professionals need expertise training, including knowledge of the psychological effect of possible malpractice in the psychology of the underaged survivors of sexual assault and/or crimes.

- Historically, media treatments of **allegations of sexual violence by celebrities** have been accused as to either ignore or discredit victims. However, since the 2010s and in recent years, especially after the #MeToo, a plethora of new and old allegations of rape and child sexual assault against

celebrities receive significant media attention, leading to debates about appropriate social and cultural responses, and the relationship between the accusations to celebrities and their recognition for artistic and sporting achievements. Since this is an area that appears to be an arena of attraction for media exploitation, journalists can receive training on how to handle news reporting that involves celebrities within the ethical guidelines that apply to all other SH/SV cases.

▪ Finally, engaging with stories of sexual violence can have an impact on journalists too, who are not immune to sexual violence. It can result in vicarious trauma or trigger their own memories of sexual violence if they are survivors. An area that requires improvement is also an effort to develop and adapt **suggestions for self-care** addressing the psychological needs of media professionals who cover SH/SV and CYV stories.

Conclusion

As presented in the 'State of the Art (Deliverable 2.1.) coverage of gender-based violence in the mainstream (news) media was extensive, especially in 2021, whereas up to that point, it seems explicitly situatingviolent experiences for women and/or LGBT persons within a broader social context was at best infrequent and usually absent. Even so, however, very few news reports in the publications examined included information for survivors on where to seek help, and news reports rarely elevated the voices of survivors, advocates, and other experts. Despite readiness among journalists and readers to engage in the news about gender-based violence, reporting that promotes public understanding of the issue seems not to be the norm in the Greek context. The four-month research media monitoring task of the PRESS project confirms these prior observations, highlighting major problematic areas related to the reporting and presentation of the SV/SH and CYV news by the major Greek media (mainstream TV channels and digital news sites). The results of the qualitative analysis on most of the publications gathered highlighted poor reporting practices that may further promote negative/sexist stereotypes, normalization of rape myths, and desensitize the public about the SV/SH issues misleading it about its significance and impact and raising potential risks to victims and their families. Sexual harassment against (adult) women appears impressively underreported in the Greek publications analysed, if there is no physical harm or life threat. There is a focus of attention is on sexual crimes that involve children and minors as victims and/or perpetrators, and on femicide cases, which are represented mostly as 'family dramas', 'crimes of passion', 'love crimes' etc. Furthermore, the voice of the female survivor appears silenced, putting in the spotlight the victimized body instead. Above all, there is a need for media professionals in Greece today to get specific training on how to cover SH/SV and CYV stories e.g. knowledge of the gender-based violence terminology and language, of the

psychology of the SH/SV survivors, and how to approach them, on how to report/cover news that involves minors and celebrities, among other issues. Above all, there is an apparent and systemic need for media professionals to be encouraged to follow specific ethical guidelines and deontology. To that end, normalized views on what is newsworthy and what is attracting more viewers needs to be de-constructed, so that there will not be a chase of viewership, sensationalizing and re-victimising of survivors, at the expense of good and ethical reporting at the service of the public.

Further publication of the findings of this project can provide the profiling of the media involved, according to quantitative criteria: how many publications for which media outlets.

Restrictions of the research project

The limited time scope of the PRESS project regarding this analysis dictated data that was gathered within a limited time-frame of four months. More time would be needed to be able to elaborate on the findings of the research project.

More research data would also lead to more elaborate findings.

A comparative analysis with examination of different, and past periods, would be expected that would yield more results.

Further, more factors such as, for example, the gender of the reporters, the orientation of the media intentions, could yield more findings.

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