



## **ETNO and UNI Europa ICTS are committed to protecting all telecommunications workers from violence and harassment at the workplace**

The social partners of the telecommunications sector, represented by the European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (ETNO), and UNI Europa ICTS, the European services workers' union for workers in ICT and related services, hereby condemn any violence and harassment at the workplace.

We recognise that violence and harassment at work are serious problems that affect both workers and the organisation. We are committed to working together to eliminate all forms of violence and harassment at our workplaces, including gender-based violence and harassment, and to promote a healthy and safe working environment for all.

Intimidation and discrimination are a major threat to good mental health (OECD, 2019). According to Eurofound's European Working Conditions Telephone Survey, services and sales workers in particular were the target of different types of intimidation (12%). The survey shows that "about 4% of female services and sales workers reported having received unwanted sexual attention, and 7% reported having experienced violence, bullying or harassment <sup>1</sup>".

We want to ensure that the issue of violence and harassment at the workplace is addressed through social dialogue and collective bargaining between trade unions and employers, and that the applicable co-decision rights of workers regarding health and safety at work are respected.

In this context, we recognise that there are gender differences in how employees experience violence at work. As part of this overall commitment, we will raise awareness of gender-sensitive approaches, address gender inequalities in working conditions and eliminate all forms of violence against women at work, including sexual harassment. We recognise that domestic violence has an impact on the work climate and that employers in association with their trade union partners can integrate appropriate support and safety measures for victims of domestic violence within their policies through collective bargaining. The Covid-19 pandemic and the massive uptake of remote work, and new forms of hybrid working, have increased the problem of domestic violence, and must be addressed as a work-related issue. <sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eurofound (2022), *Working conditions in the time of COVID-19: Implications for the future*, European Working Conditions Telephone Survey 2021 series ([Working conditions in the time of COVID-19: Implications for the \(europa.eu\)](https://www.eurofound.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20220223|PR23904/new-eurobarometer-survey-highlights-severe-impact-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-women))

<sup>2</sup> According to a Eurobarometer survey (March 2022), 77% of women in the EU think that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in physical and emotional violence against women in their own country. (<https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20220223|PR23904/new-eurobarometer-survey-highlights-severe-impact-of-covid-19-pandemic-on-women>)



We are also determined to ensure that all workers are safe from third-party violence and harassment, sexual harassment, and discrimination. Third-party violence and harassment refers to abuse which staff may suffer at the workplace and which is not at the hands of a co-worker. This covers cases such as a technician attacked by a member of the public, a contact centre employee harassed by a customer, or an employee targeted by cyber-bullying.

We commit ourselves to working together to ensure that all workers can perform their duties in a safe environment free from any form of violence or harassment and promote “work” as a safe place for all individuals. More concretely, we are expecting to integrate the relevant outputs and recommendations of the action plan of the EU Multi-sectoral social partners’ guidelines to tackle and prevent third-party violence and harassment related to work (2010) as well as the recommendations of the EU Cross-sectoral Social Dialogue project: "Eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work".

To implement these objectives, we will promote social dialogue and collective bargaining to build comprehensive strategies, establishing or strengthening enforcement and monitoring mechanisms. We will also share best practices on access to remedies, support for victims, tools, and training.

We will raise awareness in accessible formats when appropriate. We will support employers to take relevant steps to ensure as far as practicable the prevention of violence and harassment in the world of work.

A comprehensive approach to the prevention of workplace violence and harassment starts with a robust policy. In the management of occupational safety and health, a comprehensive approach considers the psychosocial risks of violence and harassment, including their effects on individuals, groups, and organisations.

The next step is to identify hazards and assess the risks. This includes recognising what might trigger violence or harassment in the workplace, as well as how it can be prevented.

Once hazards have been identified, workers need to be informed about them. They need information about what might cause violence or harassment at work, as well as how it can be prevented. Training is also key for ensuring that workers are aware of the hazards they may face at the workplace. Workers will need training on how to recognise when they may be at risk of being exposed to violence or harassment at work.

Training is also needed around ensuring effective, safe and trusted complaints mechanisms, including training for employees on how to report incidents if they do occur. Employees need to be assured that work is a safe environment for them to raise issues of violence and that their concerns will be dealt with in a sensitive, professional, and confidential manner. This also applies to witnesses and whistle-blowers.



Supervisors must also be trained on how best to handle complaints about workplace harassment and sexual assault as well as being familiar with the supports and remedies available for affected employees. Supervisors must also be aware that they must not participate in any sort of discriminatory behaviour towards others within their own organisation.

The social Partners also condemn all of forms of cyberviolence, which, unlike other forms of violence, often comes from anonymous perpetrators. The social partners also acknowledge the work of the ETNO Child Protection Task Force, which aims to create a common understanding and greater awareness to help ETNO members identify and understand existing and potential risks, emerging trends, adopt new measures and improve existing frameworks, thus contributing to making ICT services and its use safer for children.

The telecommunications sector social partners recognise that all organisations may be at different levels of the journey against violence and harassment. However, we strive to emulate, promote a common awareness, and develop other appropriate measures, in accordance with each organisation's specificities and competence.

**Lise Fuhr**, Director General, ETNO,: 'There is no place for violence at the workplace and any kind of harassment must be condemned to the fullest. It is through open and inclusive dialogue that we can fully exploit our innovative potential, strengthen our social engagements and nurture our creative thinking. Making sure that people are safe at work is central to a business's success.'

**Oliver Roethig**, Regional Secretary, Uni Europa: "Working together is how we address violence and harassment in the world of work. It is great to count employers in the ICT sector as partners in this crucial effort. Prevention, complaints mechanisms and effective remediation require training, enforcement and monitoring. This strong statement shows our joint resolve to achieve these objectives together," said Oliver Roethig, Regional Secretary of UNI Europa.

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Lise Fuhr  
Director General  
ETNO

Handwritten signature of Oliver Roethig in black ink.

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Oliver Roethig  
Regional Secretary  
UNI Europa

This commitment is inspired by:

1. [The ILO Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment \(2019\)](#)



2. [The EU Multi-sectoral social partners' guidelines to tackle and prevent third-party violence and harassment related to work \(2010\).](#)

3. ETNO and UNI Europa ICTS are partners in the EU Cross-sectoral Social Dialogue project: "Eliminating violence and harassment in the world of work" (VS/2021/0041).

4. [Joint Statement of the UNI Europa ICTS and the Telecom Industry Representatives Attacks against telecom employees.](#)