Sexual Violence in Ireland and across the EU: Permission to Speak?

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16 Rape Crisis Centres in Ireland

FRA Violence Against Women: An EU-wide Survey
Rape Crisis Network Ireland

The National Institute on Rape and Sexual violence and the lead national agency on sexual violence data collection

Aware of the gaps at policy level, and occasional gaps between service providers, in 1985 Rape Crisis Centres (RCCs) established a dedicated agency to gather expert comprehensive data, commission research, ensure best practice services and deliver a joined-up thinking approach from a victim perspective. RCNI is a critical capacity and essential resource in addressing sexual violence.
"Statistics is shaping our understanding of the world."

UN DESA's Under-Secretary-General Wu Hongbo addressed 2013 the UN Statistical Commission, underscoring the fundamental role that data plays for development.

March 2014 - 45th session - Seminar on Managing the Data Revolution bringing together international statisticians.
Comprehensive data on women’s experiences of violence are essential for the development and monitoring of policies to combat violence against women.

Need to improve and harmonise data collection on VAW both in and between EU Member States. Awareness raising must be based on accurate data.
Undoubtedly, the higher the levels of interagency collaboration in collection of reliable data the better, including across front line services delivery.

Institutional cooperation is essential for harmonised and efficient collection and exchange of data.

RCNI, the national institute for rape and sexual violence, is an expert leader on inter-agency data collection in the Irish context.

Design and development of an expert knowledge gathering system across 16 front line service providers, building inter-agency relationships.
What is the data on SV telling us?

EU lifetime average:

• 12% of women reported experiencing sexual violence before the age of 15 **by an adult perpetrator**

• 11% of women reported sexual violence by a partner or non-partner since age 15
Specifically, sexual violence is a pervasive crime that calls for concerted action to address attitudes towards sexual violence against women.

- 1 in 20 women has been raped since the age of 15
- 1 in 10 women disclosed that more than one abuser was involved in sexual violence perpetrated by non-partners
- Young women are particularly vulnerable
**Comparison with Irish data - SAVI: 2002**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SAVI</th>
<th>FRA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child sexual</td>
<td>1 in 3</td>
<td>&lt;&lt; 1 in 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult sexual</td>
<td>1 in 4</td>
<td>&lt;&lt; 1 in 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>violence</td>
<td></td>
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Drastic fall in SV in Ireland?? NO.

**Rationale:** different age categories, omission in FRA of abuse by peer/child, SAVI by ‘phone, FRA: FTF in home, different definitions of SV.
### Some Initial data consideration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Netherlands</th>
<th>Romania</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child sexual violence</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult sexual violence</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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Is Romania leading the way in the elimination of sexual violence?

Are Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria the models for ending VAW, and NL, Sweden, Germany, UK failing miserably?
FRA Violence Against Women: An EU-wide Survey
Violence Against Women: An EU-wide Survey
BREAK

THE

SILENCE
... particular problem in EU member States where discussion about and revelation of personal experiences of violence are not yet the norm...

exacerbated in those Member States where VAW is not mainstreamed as an area for policy intervention...
SHHHhhhhh! It’s unmentionable.

The shame and stigma surrounding sexual violence may be so strong that even identifying to oneself that this has occurred is psychologically, emotionally intolerable. It is too unbearable to recognise.

Perhaps, in another culture, one can acknowledge that crimes occurred, but it is inconceivable to name that the abuser is a family member, relative.

What are the perceived consequences of naming publically, even to one other person? What is it safe to say?
SHHHhhhh! It’s unmentionable.

Recent Irish research shows:

- A narrow stereotype of sexual violence is most easily named and acted upon,
- While many other common forms of sexual violence remain difficult to name and to act upon. For example: young people peer rape, rape when alcohol involved, rape within families.
Consecutive surveys may even show an increase in the **naming of sexual violence** following extensive social, legal and educational programmes.

For this very reason these programmes have been tremendously successful in achieving cultural transformation such that children, women and men can now name and speak what was previously unspeakable.
Appropriate responses to sexual violence

- Nationally coordinated response with the two national sexual and domestic violence networks: RCNI and Safe Ireland
- Targeted prevention campaigns
- Evidence based - wealth of sexual violence data and research from RCNI and others