



Mestna občina Ljubljana
City of Ljubljana



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Sexual Violence in Ljubljana Nightlife Venues

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SHINE



Sexual violence in nightlife areas and its prevention

A working definition of sexual violence or unwanted sexual behaviour, which is defined as verbal, non-verbal and physical behaviour and acts of a sexual nature that violate a person's integrity and inviolability and which individuals feel as unwanted or are exposed to under coercion.

Nightlife areas play an important role in contributing to the vibrancy and diversity of cultural life.

The term 'nightlife' encompasses a specific segment of nocturnal activity that typically takes place in pubs, bars and restaurants and includes activities such as drinking, dancing, eating and socialising (Shaw, 2023).

Nightlife venues can sometimes be associated with an increased risk of sexual violence.

- When considering prevention of sexual violence in nightlife areas in Ljubljana, we need to consider the specifics of the urban environment and nightlife areas, including:
 - Social norms, gender stereotypes and gender inequalities,
 - Alcohol/drug consumption,
 - Environmental factors within nightlife venues, such as crowding, poor lighting and loud music,
 - Victim blaming and social stigma for reporting incidents,
 - Poor enforcement of codes of conduct and legal measures,
 - Reduced informal connections and supervision due to mutual unfamiliarity,
 - Greater anonymity, density and diversity of people.



About the EU project SHINE

Sexual Harassment in Nightlife Entertainment Spots: Control and Prevention

Aim → to create a common culture among nightlife stakeholders and give them appropriate tools to prevent sexual harassment in nightlife venues.



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Awareness-raising campaign targeted to a wider public.

Partnership → Centre for Crime Prevention in Lithuania, Efus, University of Maribor, University of Vilnius, Municipality of Vilnius, Municipality of Ljubljana.

Research → in Lithuania and Slovenia

- To **identify the main causes and situational factors of sexual harassment in nightlife entertainment venues.**
- These will comprise **a set of procedures and the necessary skills that relevant stakeholders need to learn** and use for its prevention.
- Based on the results of the preliminary research, **quality management systems will be designed and introduced in selected nightlife entertainment venues.**

Capacity building of nightlife venues' staff and **training and awareness-raising sessions for stakeholders; signature of memorandum.**



About the survey



- Aim – to obtain insight into the sexual violence in the City of Ljubljana.
- 135 participants; including stakeholders, nightlife personnel, and nightlife patrons.
- We were interested in obtaining a general view of the phenomenon, so we unified the analysis and did not analyse the results of each group separately.

Round tables, training sessions, and interviews.

- Perception of sexual violence in nightlife areas,
- perceived existing preventive activities and
- proposals for improvement in terms of reducing, preventing and controlling the incidence of sexual violence in nightlife areas.

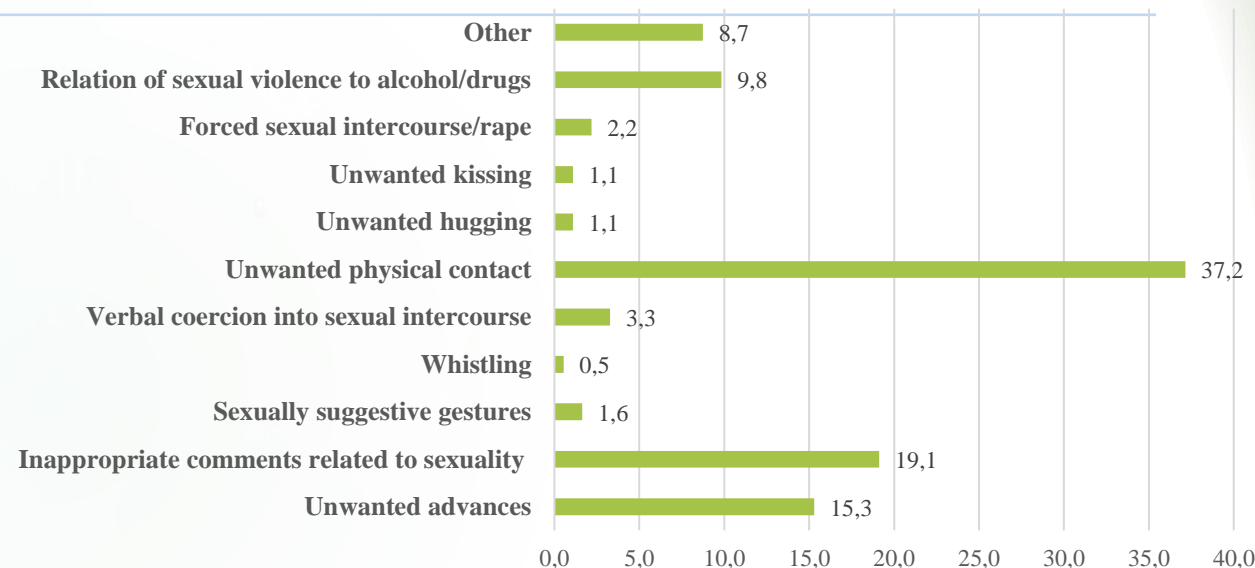
- Within the conducted activities we gave the participants working material on which they wrote their answers.
- Collected answers were transcribed and arranged → set the codes → collected the texts to which we attributed the same concept and organize the data → interpretation of results.



Prevalence and forms of sexual violence in nightlife venues in Ljubljana

The prevalence of observed sexual violence in nightlife venues:

- Rarely (between one and three times) (30%),
- Occasionally (four to six times) (22%)
- Often (seven to ten times) (11%),
- Very often (more than ten times) (10%).
- The smallest proportion of participants (10%) did not report any cases of sexual violence.



The most frequently perceived forms of sexual violence (%)

The most common incidents were unwanted physical contact (37.2%), inappropriate comments about sexuality (19.1%) and unwanted advances (15.3%).

9.8% mentioned a link between sexual violence and alcohol and drugs, particularly excessive drinking and 'drugging'.

Other notable responses included staring, invasion of personal space, buying drinks and forcing conversation (e.g. feeling 'obliged' to spend time with someone who has bought a drink), stalking, offering rides home and attempted rape.

Other forms of sexual violence were observed to a lesser extent, but are still common violations.



Observed preventive activities

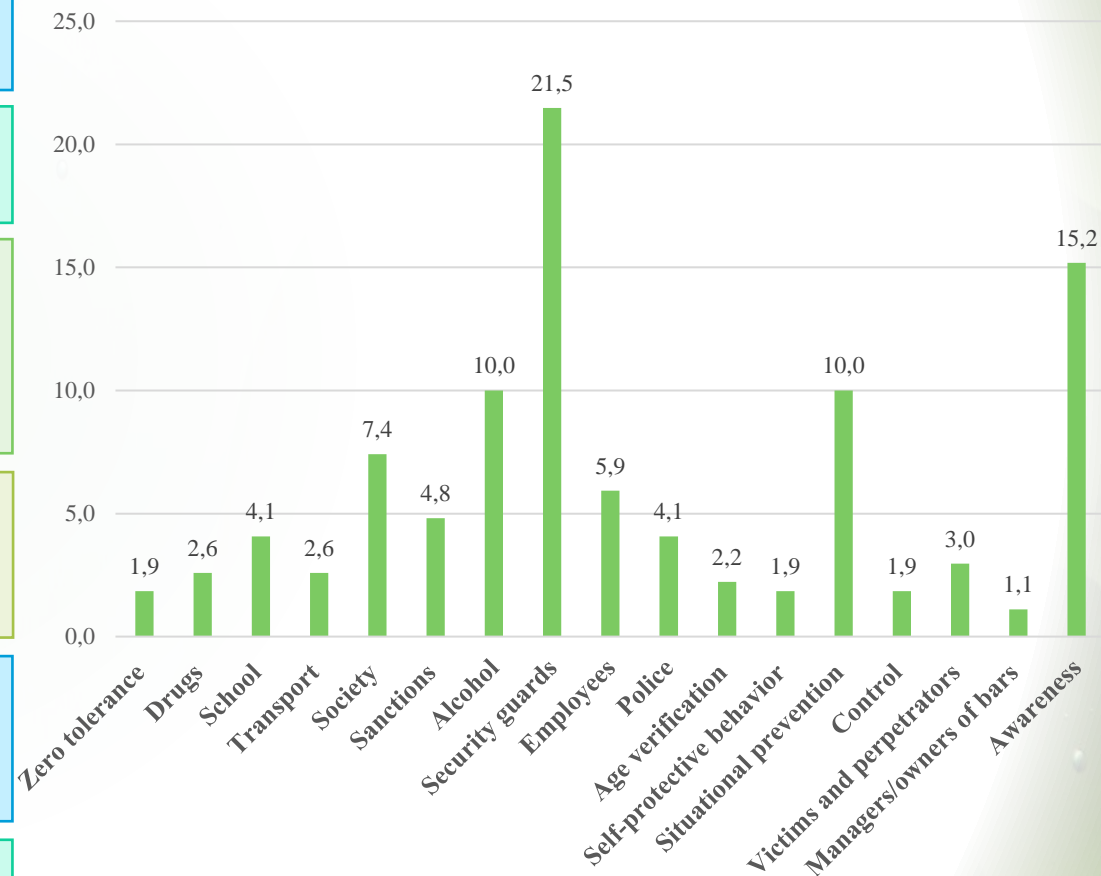
- The most frequently mentioned category was the presence of security personnel (28.3%),
 - awareness raising (8.3%),
 - posters and billboards about sexual violence and consent displayed near toilets, increased police presence and their preventive actions, along with visitor caution and attention to self-protective behaviour, each accounted for 6.7%.
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- Less frequently observed (5% for each activity) were preventive measures such as raising employee awareness about appropriate actions and bystander intervention.
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- In the subsequent category, measures observed in 3.3% (by activity) included working with young people, advertising the prohibition of drug use at the event, limiting entry, imposing age restrictions, and issuing warnings about drink safety.
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- The least observed measures (at 1.7% per activity) encompassed anonymous reporting mechanisms, informing attendees about alcohol consumption, police officer training, security camera surveillance, enhancing security guard, police officer, and organizer awareness, waiter attentiveness, submitting reports to organizers, lighting improvements, and raising security guard awareness and fostering a culture of care for others.

Proposed preventive measures

Most common prepositions:

- The most common suggestions relate to **security personnel**, with respondents emphasizing the need for more trained security staff, visible security presence, increased number of security personnel.
- The second most frequently suggested category of preventive measures relates to **awareness raising**.
- Similarly, respondents suggested **situational prevention** measures and **measures related to alcohol consumption**.
- In terms of **community-based suggestions**, respondents highlighted mutual support, informal interpersonal supervision, active involvement in nightlife with encouragement of bystander intervention, sensitising visitors to the unacceptability of sexual violence.
- **Employee-related preventive measures** included educating and training staff on recognition and response, increasing staff numbers and protecting serving staff from visitor violence.
- Within the category of **sanctions**, possible solutions included consistent sanctions, encouraging reporting to the police, tougher sanctions and sanctions for even 'milder' forms of sexual violence.

Apart from participation in nightlife itself, suggestions about **safe transport** emerged due to the potential for sexual violence after participation in nightlife.



Discussing about the findings 1/2

- The most frequently observed current preventive measure is the presence of security staff. This was also the most frequently highlighted aspect in the suggestions for improving prevention, underlining the importance of well-trained and informed security staff.
- In terms of general prevention, the implementation and enforcement of explicit codes of conduct prohibiting sexual violence and harassment play a crucial role, a view that is also supported by our research.
- In Ljubljana, there are already specific regulations addressing these issues.
 - The Action Plan for Gender Equality in the City of Ljubljana and the Strategy for the Development of Social Welfare in the City of Ljubljana define strategies for the prevention of violence, including sexual violence.
 - The cooperation between local government and the community, facilitated by a city manager responsible for communication between bars and the city, also ensures the promotion of safety in nightlife venues.
- The third most commonly suggested approach was to improve situational prevention - changing the immediate environment to minimise opportunities for criminal activity.
- It is important to provide comprehensive training to employees, including security personnel, to effectively recognise and respond to such incidents.
- However, it's important to emphasise that staff have a responsibility to adhere to and enforce clear alcohol policies within nightlife venues.



Discussing about the findings 2/2

- The provision of comprehensive support services is essential for victims.
- Promoting bystander intervention training is a crucial aspect of addressing sexual violence and harassment in nightlife settings.
- We should not forget the importance of addressing the root causes of sexual violence and harassment. This requires a comprehensive approach that includes changing societal attitudes and norms.
 - This includes campaigns, education and open dialogue aimed at fostering a cultural shift towards respecting consent, promoting gender equality and rejecting harmful behaviour.
- The combination of situational and general prevention strategies offers a comprehensive approach to combating sexual violence and harassment in nightlife venues.
 - These strategies should be adapted to the unique context of each venue and regularly evaluated for effectiveness.
 - These efforts require the cooperation of venue owners, staff, patrons, community members and authorities.
 - The effectiveness of these strategies depends on their flexibility, as venues may respond differently to unwanted sexual attention and have different cultural and environmental factors.

The current study aims to provide insights into sexual violence in an urban setting, specifically in Ljubljana.

However, further research is needed to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and to develop more effective prevention measures.



**Thank you for you
Attention.**



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<https://efus.eu/tag/shine-en/>



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