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POSITION PAPER

FINDING A VOICE, SEEKING JUSTICE

**The barriers women face to reporting
corruption in the European Union**

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Position paper

Finding a voice, seeking justice

The barriers women face to reporting corruption in the European Union

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Global research on the linkages between gender and corruption reveals that women perceive and experience corruption differently from men. They are disproportionately affected by the impact of corruption on the quality and quantity of public services available to them; as primary carers of children and the elderly, women are more reliant on public services and more likely to be a victim of corruption when accessing services, such as health care or education.

They are also particularly vulnerable to sexual extortion – or sextortion – where sex is the currency of the bribe. This violates human rights and dignity, and disproportionately targets women, with serious – sometimes life-changing – consequences.

Corruption also limits women's access to economic and career development opportunities. It creates additional obstacles for them to access leadership positions in the public and political spheres, limiting their opportunities to participate in political processes and inform the development of public policies that affect their lives.

Some groups of women are particularly vulnerable to corruption, due to the mutually reinforcing impacts of corruption and discrimination. Such groups include women belonging to gender and sexual minorities, those from certain ethnic or religious groups, elderly women, those with disabilities and women living in poverty.

Yet, although they are more vulnerable to the impact of corruption, women are less likely than men to challenge corrupt practices, report corruption and access justice.

There is limited evidence and data exploring the linkages between gender and corruption in the European Union (EU). In 2021, as part of the Global Corruption Barometer (GCB), Transparency International surveyed more than 40,000 people in the 27 EU countries on their perceptions and experiences of corruption. We also gather data from our Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALACs),

which provide free and confidential legal advice to witnesses and victims of corruption across nearly 60 countries. Together, these channels make Transparency International the largest source of victim/survivor-generated corruption information in the world. Our gender analysis of GCB and ALAC data provides unique insight into how women in the EU experience corruption in their daily lives and the challenges they face when they speak up against it.

This analysis reveals that deeply ingrained discriminatory and gender-based factors impede women's ability to report corruption, and seek and obtain redress. Due to their social roles, childcare and housework responsibilities, as well as gendered income inequalities, women lack the financial and time resources to report corruption and access justice. They tend to be less aware of their rights and of where and how to report corruption, and often have a weaker voice to demand accountability.

They are also more likely than men to fear reprisals when reporting corruption. Existing reporting mechanisms also often fail to consider their specific needs in terms of accessibility, affordability, safety and effectiveness. Women may also lack confidence in the credibility, trustworthiness and responsiveness of reporting mechanisms. Due to the trauma, social stigma and cultural taboos associated with sexual abuse, these challenges are exacerbated when reporting sextortion. Reporting mechanisms are often ill-equipped to handle such cases and fail to provide the adequate financial, psychological or legal support that survivors or victims of sexual abuse often need. These initial findings call for developing a better understanding of the drivers behind the GCB data and further exploring gendered patterns of reporting in the EU in order to achieve equal access to justice in the region.

To address these challenges, governments and anti-corruption practitioners in the EU should provide accessible, affordable, safe, credible, effective and gender-sensitive reporting mechanisms that take

into consideration the specific challenges women face when reporting corruption in this region.

GENDERED PATTERNS OF REPORTING

Although women are more vulnerable to the impact of corruption, they are less likely to report it than men.

Between 2015 and 2021, for the 10th edition of the Global Corruption Barometer (GCB), Transparency International surveyed more than 110,000 ordinary citizens on their perceptions and experiences of corruption in [Africa](#)¹ (2015-2019), [Latin America](#)² (2017- 2019), the Middle East and Northern Africa ([MENA](#))³ (2017-2019), [Asia](#)⁴ (2020) and the [EU](#)⁵ (2021). As in other regions of the world, gender analysis of the findings indicates significant gender differences in patterns of reporting corruption in the EU.

Women perceive and experience corruption differently from men.⁶ There is evidence suggesting that women tend to be [less tolerant of corruption](#),^{7,8} as well as more vulnerable to its corrosive impact on [access to public services](#),⁹ [economic opportunities](#)¹⁰ and [political leadership](#).¹¹ They are also targeted by gendered forms of corruption, such as sextortion, when those with authority use their power to sexually exploit those dependent on that power.

There is evidence that across the world, women and men have different levels of tolerance for corruption and its various forms.¹² This is also true in Europe. For example, GCB data indicates that women tend to perceive worse levels of corruption, with five per cent more women than men believing that corruption is a big problem in their country.

In terms of their experiences of corruption, evidence is inconclusive for the extent to which women pay more bribes than men at the point of service delivery, especially in the EU, where bribery rates are very low. In other regions of the world, GCB data shows little gender difference in terms of

experience of bribery, except in a few regions and for accessing specific services, typically in areas of life determined by their social roles and identities. The [GCB – Latin America and the Caribbean](#), for example, indicates that women are more likely to pay bribes for health services and public school education, while men are more likely to pay bribes to the police or for utility services and identity documents.

Women are also particularly vulnerable to sextortion, where sex is the currency of the bribe. This gendered form of corruption occurs in both developed and developing countries. In Europe, 74 per cent of citizens think that sextortion occurs at least occasionally, and seven per cent of people report either having experienced it directly or knowing someone who has.¹³ In Latin America and the MENA region, one in five people experienced or knows someone who experienced sexual extortion when accessing government services, while in Asia, the figure is one in seven. In a 2019 survey conducted in Zimbabwe, 57 per cent of women reported that they had needed to offer sexual benefits to corrupt officials in exchange for jobs, medical care and even when seeking places at schools for their children.¹⁴ While women are disproportionately targeted by this form of corruption, it can affect all vulnerable individuals – including men, undocumented migrants crossing borders, and transgender and gender non-conforming people – as well as established professionals.¹⁵

Irrespective of whether women pay more or fewer bribes than men to access public services, they are, like other groups exposed to discrimination, disproportionately affected by the indirect impact of corruption on the quality and quantity of public services available to them. Corruption reduces the amount of public resources available for distribution

and distorts resource allocation processes, to the detriment of marginalised groups. Leakages of state resources primarily occur from those earmarked for groups who have a weaker voice to demand accountability.¹⁶ This includes resources available for public services, on which women and disadvantaged groups are more reliant, and for promoting gender equality and addressing women's needs.

Corruption also limits women's access to economic and career development opportunities¹⁷ and creates additional obstacles for them to access political leadership positions.¹⁸ This is especially the case in corrupt and clientelistic environments, where women are more likely to be excluded from male-dominated economic and political networks. In such environments, candidates to leadership positions are selected through informal rather than formal processes, which lack transparency, rely on "old-boy networks" and exclude women from the recruitment process. This is also the case in the EU, where evidence¹⁹ at the sub-national level shows that where corruption is high, the number of elected women is low, limiting women's opportunities to

inform and influence the policy development process.

Against this background, women are likely to have both greater awareness of the damage of corruption on their lives and greater incentive to advance the anti-corruption agenda. This derives from their tendency to be more dependent than men on a well-functioning and corruption-free state that provides key services such as childcare, health care and education.²⁰

Yet, with discriminatory and gender-based obstacles impeding their ability to challenge corrupt practices, women are less likely than men to report corruption. They also tend less to seek and obtain redress. According to GCB EU data, women are also significantly less likely to think that they can report corruption safely (44 per cent) compared to men (50 per cent). This fear of retaliation is shared by women from various backgrounds, irrespective of age, level of education or information available to them,²¹ or whether they live in urban or rural areas. Similar trends have been observed in other regions of the world. In Latin America and the Caribbean,

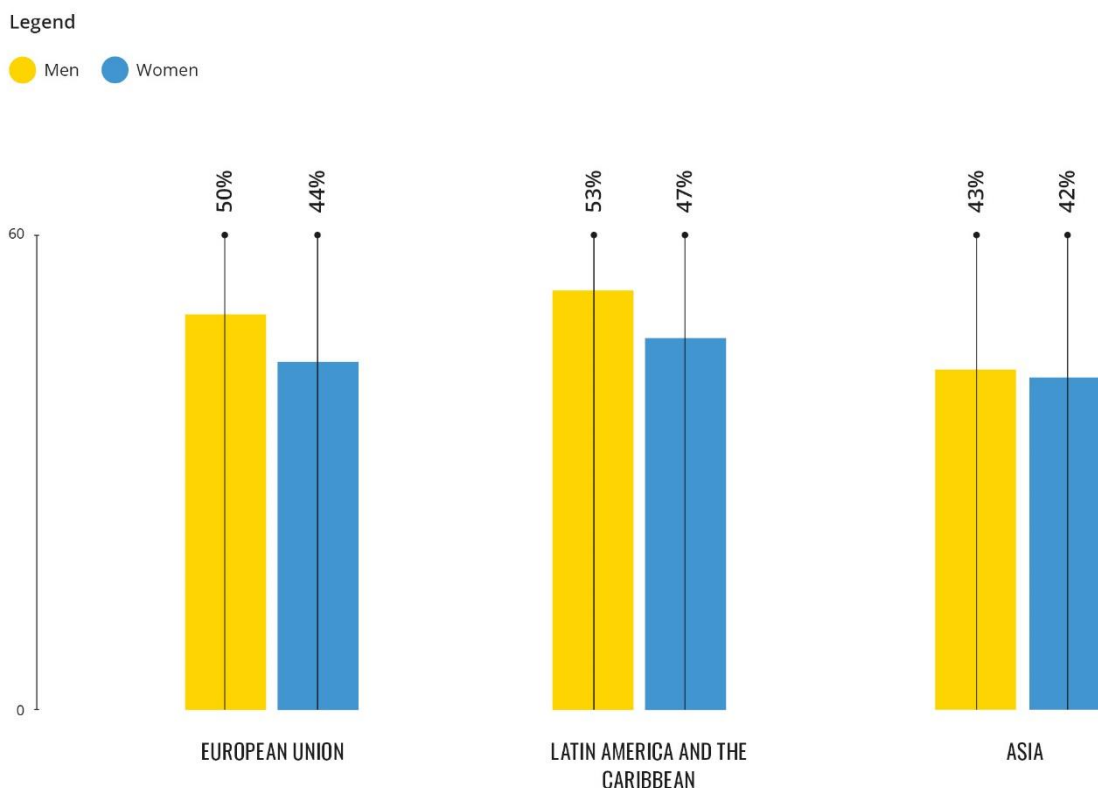


Figure 1: Percentage of respondents who think that people can report corruption without fear of retaliation.

women are also less likely to think that appropriate action will be taken if corruption is reported.²²

The data collected through Transparency International's Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres (ALACs) appears to confirm this trend. In 2019, more than 4,000 people have contacted the global ALAC network to report corruption and seek assistance.²³ Only 27 per cent of these reports were made by

women.²⁴ In the EU, only 29 per cent of the recorded ALAC corruption cases in 2019 were reported by women, with little evolution overtime. 30 % of the cases recorded in the EU between 2011 and 2021 were filed by women, in line with (although slightly below) the global average of 34 per cent of complaints received by ALACs worldwide made by women.²⁵

GENDERED BARRIERS TO REPORTING

Women face discriminatory and gender-based obstacles to reporting corruption, and seeking and obtaining redress.

Differences in reporting patterns between men and women are rooted in deeply ingrained gender factors that undermine women's sense of personal efficacy and engagement with anti-corruption measures. These factors impede their ability to report and challenge corruption.

Women lack the financial and time resources to report corruption and access justice

Reporting corruption comes at a cost in terms of time, money and perceived risks of retaliation. In order for people to report corruption, the perceived benefits of taking action need to outweigh these costs. There are indications that gender and social roles may influence the cost-benefit assessment of taking action against corruption.

Reporting corruption takes time. Complainants need to find information on how and where to report, take the time to report, sometimes travel long distances to the court or reporting facility, and sustain engagement throughout lengthy judicial proceedings when seeking redress through the judicial system. Due to their social role as primary caregivers, women have less time to engage in social accountability mechanisms, and their housework and caregiving responsibilities might discourage them from filing a complaint. The COVID crisis creates additional obstacles in this regard, as women have taken on a disproportionate share of the household responsibilities during lockdown,

spending up to 15 hours a week of additional time on childcare and household tasks in the United States and Europe.²⁶ GCB Europe data from 2016 indicates that 39 per cent of women would not report corruption if they had to spend one day in court to provide evidence, compared to 36 per cent of male respondents.

Reporting corruption also costs money for transportation, accommodation and childcare. When victims of corruption consider seeking redress through the judicial system, the costs of judicial taxes, legal fees and services may discourage them further to access justice through the courts, especially in the context of a lack of adequate and affordable legal aid for women in the EU.²⁷ In the EU, women's ability to carry this financial burden is lower than that of men, as they earn on average 14 per cent less than men for each hour worked and not all women have access to family income or an independent income.²⁸

According to the Council of Europe, particular groups of women face additional restrictions to accessing justice. These include those living in rural areas, the elderly, women with disabilities, those belonging to gender and sexual minorities, and those from certain ethnic or religious groups. Women with vulnerable legal status, such as unregistered or irregular migrants, asylum-seekers or those who have been trafficked, may face additional challenges to reporting.²⁹

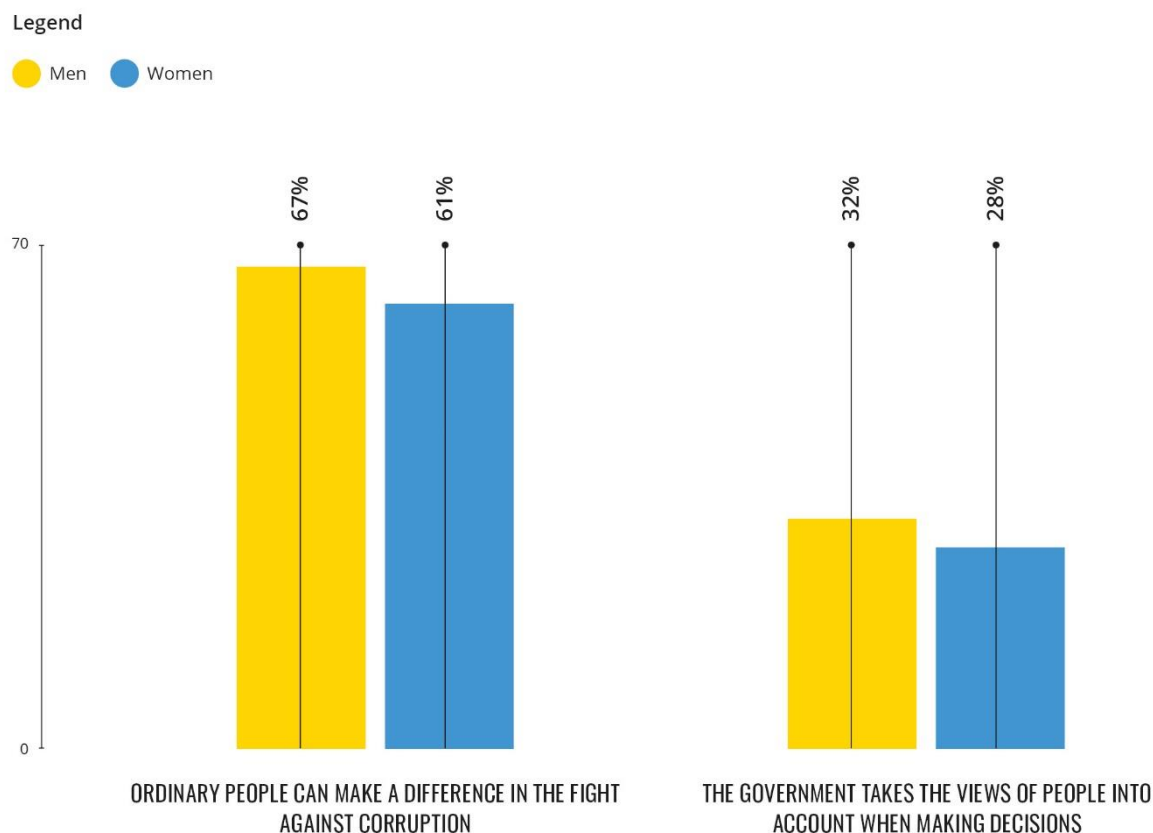


Figure 2: Can ordinary people make a difference and are their views taken into account by governments?

Lack of voice and fear of reprisals dissuade women from reporting corruption

GCB data suggests significant gender differences in women's sense of empowerment and engagement with anti-corruption measures across all regions. This may be due to a combination of factors, including women's lack of awareness of their rights and entitlements, lack of voice to demand accountability, and fear of reprisals when reporting corruption.

Women do not always have the necessary knowledge of their legal entitlements. Both [the Council of Europe](#)³⁰ and [the United Nations Development Programme](#)³¹ suggest that women's lack of awareness about their rights, combined with the weak capacity of judicial officials to enforce them, acts as a major obstacle to women's access to justice in Europe. GCB data supports this conclusion

in terms of women's awareness of their rights, measured by their knowledge of their right to information and of anti-corruption mechanisms. While this data was not collected in the European Union, in Asia, for example, 46 per cent of men are likely to be aware of their right to access key facts and data from the government (compared to 43 per cent of women). Similarly, 43 per cent of men are likely to know about their country's anti-corruption commission (compared to 34 per cent of women).³²

Women also tend to hold more pessimistic views about the outcome of reporting corruption. In Latin America, men are more likely to think that appropriate action would be taken in response to a report of corruption.³³ This could be explained by the perception that women are less likely than men to be taken seriously when reporting corruption. In Latin America, 39 per cent of men and women respondents hold this view, rising to more than half of respondents in the Dominican Republic, Honduras and Guatemala. Six per cent more women than men share this perception.³⁴ More

data would be needed to assess the extent to which European women hold these views. These pessimistic views about the actual change that reporting corruption would bring could also be linked to women's perceived lack of voice and sense of personal efficacy to act against corruption. In Europe, women are significantly less likely than men to believe that the government takes the views of citizens into account when making decisions (61 per cent compared to 67 per cent), and that ordinary people can make a difference in the fight against corruption (28 per cent versus 32 per cent). Similar trends have been observed in other regions, such as Latin America and Asia.

This perceived lack of voice, empowerment and awareness of rights may also be linked to or compounded by a fear of retaliation, which remains one of the main reasons women choose not to risk reporting corruption.

In the EU, as in other regions of the world, women are 6 per cent more likely than men to believe that they cannot report corruption without fear of retaliation. This could be linked to their perceived lack of voice with which to demand accountability. It may also be due to their caregiving social roles making women more risk-averse, through fear of losing their jobs, as they may feel additional responsibilities for those under their care. While women are also more likely to conform to social norms, the results from the GCB Europe 2016 showed no significant differences between men and women over the social acceptability of reporting corruption, with 53 per cent of women and 55 per cent of men finding it socially acceptable.

While whistleblowing is a stressful experience for both men and women, women also tend to experience the stress and anxiety associated with exposing corruption more strongly.³⁵ Reasons for this include differences in the socialisation patterns of boys and girls.³⁶ Women are socialised to play by the rules to a greater extent than men. Their propensity to report corruption is influenced by social norms and how they will be perceived by their peers, social networks and family circles.³⁷ Some authors have also documented examples of harsh retaliation – at times violent – against women whistleblowers in the former Yugoslavia and Egypt, indicating that women can be severely punished for reporting corruption in some contexts.³⁸

There are also documented examples of such retaliation campaigns against women whistleblowers in the EU. In 2009, [Ana Garrido](#)

[Ramos](#) – who would go on to win the 2018 Anti-Corruption Award – revealed evidence of widespread corrupt practices within the Boadilla town hall in Madrid, where she then worked. This triggered the “Gürtel case” that led to the fall of the Spanish government. As a result of her revelations, Ms Garrido Ramos was targeted by a virulent campaign of harassment and her employment was finally terminated by the Boadilla town hall in an out-of-court settlement.³⁹ She continues to advocate for a law to protect whistleblowers in Spain.⁴⁰

Existing reporting mechanisms often ignore women's specific needs

Ensuring women's access to redress requires providing them with access to fair, affordable, safe and effective reporting mechanisms. The features of existing reporting mechanisms often create barriers for women to report corruption by failing to consider gender-specific needs in terms of access, safety, relevance and trustworthiness. This is especially important for reporting gendered forms of corruption, such as sextortion. In both Europe and the Pacific, the GCB survey providers reported that some women felt uncomfortable answering the sextortion-related questions when men were conducting the interviews. This reluctance to report might be compounded further for individuals from a gender or sexual minority, because they may be compelled to divulge this sensitive information when reporting a case of sextortion.

Women need to have enough information on where and how to report. As already mentioned, women tend to be less aware of their rights and lack knowledge of anti-corruption mechanisms in most regions of the world. This is also true for anti-corruption reporting mechanisms. Data from the GCB Europe 2016 indicates that in Europe and Central Asia, 18 per cent of women interviewed reported “I do not know where to report” as the reason for not reporting corruption (versus 15 per cent of men).^{41,42} To ensure people are aware of the reporting mechanisms available to them, [outreach campaigns](#) need to target women and other groups exposed to discrimination with messages understandable to people with different literacy levels and across different types of media.⁴³

The features of a reporting mechanism also need to address the gender-specific challenges women face in terms of distance, language and affordability, to ensure equal access to redress. As discussed earlier, the prospects of travelling long distances, seeking

childcare support, taking time off work and overcoming financial challenges to access legal services may dissuade women from reporting corruption. [Case studies](#) conducted by the Council of Europe in Austria, Finland, Portugal and Sweden indicate that this is particularly true for certain groups of women, including those living in remote areas, the elderly or disabled women. Women from such groups may be unable to travel long distances, under-informed of their right to access legal aid, or lacking physical access to reporting or judicial facilities.⁴⁴

Women may also lack confidence in a reporting mechanism's safety, credibility, trustworthiness, responsiveness and sensitivity to their needs. First, as women tend to fear reprisals, reporting mechanisms need to anticipate and mitigate the potential risks women may face when reporting corruption. These include legal, physical, digital and social risks, and the need to ensure confidentiality of reporting. [Confidentiality](#) and special protocols for managing information are especially important in contexts where certain sexual orientations or gender identities are criminalised.⁴⁵

Second, women may distrust the institution or individual handling their grievance and be unsure of whether their complaint will be taken seriously. If they experience a lack of communication and follow-up from the case handler, they may also be discouraged to engage further in the reporting process. There are some [indications](#) that women, especially those from minorities and other groups exposed to discrimination, experience gender bias in courts and among law enforcement officials, which may further discourage them from seeking redress through the judicial system.⁴⁶ Due to a gender insensitive institutional culture, women can suffer discriminatory attitudes or re-victimisation in which they re-live their trauma during the reporting process. They may also face mistreatment and dismissive attitudes from law enforcement or justice officials, or inadequate legal support. These factors may dissuade them from seeking redress through the justice system.

Probably due to this combination of factors, women may also lack confidence in a reporting mechanism in terms of resolving their complaint and bringing about change. These challenges can be overcome by measures to [build trust](#) in reporting mechanisms. These include regular, truthful and gender-sensitive communication, training case handlers, managing

expectations and following up throughout the engagement process.⁴⁷

Reporting mechanisms are often ill-equipped to handle gender-specific forms of corruption

The challenges women face when reporting corruption are exacerbated when they seek redress for gender-specific forms of corruption such as sextortion. This is due to the trauma, social stigma and cultural taboos associated with sexual abuse. Sextortion has only recently emerged and been conceptualised as a form of corruption.⁴⁸ It is not yet typified as a criminal offence in most countries' legal frameworks. As it is neither recognised as a distinct criminal offence under the anti-corruption framework nor the gender-based violence legal framework, women may feel reporting is not a legitimate option. As a result, it tends to go largely unreported, despite its devastating consequences for victims. Yet GCB data collected in the EU, Latin America, MENA and Asia suggests it is a widespread phenomenon that occurs in all sectors and regions of the world.⁴⁹

Overwhelmed by feelings of shame, fear, guilt, self-blame and distrust, [women](#) who have suffered gender-specific forms of corruption face additional barriers to reporting and experience specific vulnerabilities that complaints mechanisms are often ill-equipped to accommodate.⁵⁰ They are also confronted by potential risks of retaliation from a perpetrator who enjoys a position of power, as well as difficulties in proving that a sexual act occurred and was coerced. They also face the risk of re-victimisation, having to re-live the trauma throughout the reporting process, being blamed for it or not being believed or taken seriously. They may feel uncomfortable reporting sexual abuse to a man, and may be more likely to pursue their case if they can interact with a woman – especially in contexts where it is not culturally acceptable for a woman to report to a man. This is corroborated by the experience of the survey providers collecting GCB data in Europe and the Pacific, with many women hanging up the phone when being asked about their experience and perception of sextortion by a male interviewer.

In many cases, there are no safe and gender-sensitive corruption reporting mechanisms that can provide the financial, psychological or legal support that survivors of sexual abuse often need. Even when they exist, given that sextortion has only

recently been conceptualised as a corruption offence, women may be unaware that such acts can be reported under the anti-corruption framework. They may therefore prefer to turn to longer established gender-based violence reporting channels. This calls for close coordination and building synergies between women's rights and anti-corruption communities.

In addition, [conviction rates](#) for sexual violence are very low in Europe. This is due to a combination of factors, including low reporting rates, insufficient quality of investigations, re-victimisation during legal proceedings, gender stereotypes and lack of training of police, prosecutors and judges.⁵¹ As a form of sexual abuse, sextortion cases are likely to face similar challenges to obtain a conviction. Some vulnerable groups are even less likely to achieve a conviction. In [England](#), for example, younger women and girls – although disproportionately affected by sexual abuse – as well as those struggling with mental health issues, and survivors from Black and minority ethnic group or LGBTQ groups, are even less likely to obtain justice for sexual abuse than white heterosexual survivors.⁵² These low conviction rates and the high probability of not being heard or obtaining justice may further discourage women from seeking redress for acts of sextortion.

EXPERIENCE-BASED SOLUTIONS FROM ACROSS THE TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

Transparency International's network of ALACs across the world has developed [innovative strategies](#) to address these challenges through measures such as mobile clinics in rural areas, digital apps and online platforms where women can report from home. This is all the more relevant in the EU context, where the most common reporting channels are online platforms, telephone helplines and face-to-face in physical offices.

Using technology to facilitate the reporting process

Hotlines and online platforms allow women to report from home, in some cases anonymously. Besides setting up a hotline and an email service to report corruption and gender violence, Transparencia Venezuela has developed an app called Dilo Aquí ("Say it here") available for iPhones and Androids. Through this app, citizens can report corruption and receive direction to relevant institutions. They can also track the status of reported cases.

Collecting and analysing disaggregated data on reporting patterns

Collecting disaggregated data is crucial to understanding gendered patterns of reporting and the vulnerabilities of specific groups exposed to

discrimination. It also informs the design of effective solutions. The GCB provides useful data on perceptions and experience of reporting corruption by gender. Transparency International has also set up a centralised database of ALAC cases to collect and analyse data at the global level.

The corruption information from ALACs is saved in a secure database, which tracks all information relevant to corruption, including demographics (such as age and gender), type of corruption (e.g. bribery, sexual extortion), who was involved and the sector. This database also allows Transparency International to track patterns in corruption at local, national and international levels.

The data generated and analysed at national and multi-country levels provides powerful insights and advocacy tools. For example, Transparency International chapters in Ireland and Italy publish annual reports based on data collected from their ALACs' clients and casework, as analysed through the ALAC database. These reports are a key tool for informing the general public of their work and encouraging more citizens to speak up and report corruption. They also enable targeted recommendations to improve government systems, based on trends identified through ALAC cases.

Transparency International Bosnia Herzegovina has conducted a qualitative analysis of a database of legal aid provided to victims of corruption through the local ALAC. Since the chapter's operations began in 2001, more than 20,000

citizens have contacted it for legal advice. To date, it has acted on around 2,500 evidenced and well-substantiated corruption-related cases. The database of cases provides a rich source of data and information on gendered forms of corruption, the specific vulnerabilities of women and patterns of reporting. This can be used to advocate for gender-sensitive reforms of whistleblowing and reporting policies and strategies.

Providing access through mobile ALACs

In some contexts, one of the challenges to women reporting corruption is the lack of easy access to the reporting institutions. Reporting offices are often located in big cities, meaning significant logistical and financial challenges for women from rural areas to attend. In Sri Lanka, Zimbabwe and Ghana, Transparency International chapters created mobile ALACs to reach out to this population. In Sri Lanka, for example, the whistleblowers reporting in person at the ALAC offices were mostly men, although the ALAC had women lawyers. Women typically prefer to report to the mobile clinics and prioritise face-to-face communications, rather than calling the hotline set up to report corruption. In response, the chapter has organised several mobile clinics specifically focused on issues of sexual bribery and harassment.

Combining mobile reporting units with other less controversial activities

In contexts where reporting corruption is not socially acceptable, especially in sensitive cases of sextortion, combining the use of mobile reporting units that visit communities with other less controversial activities can help encourage women to come forward. Transparency International Zimbabwe, for example, organised several community meetings, named “empowerment circles”, as part of a “Know your Rights” campaign to raise awareness of women’s right to report corruption. This helped provide women with access to ALAC services by framing their attendance in the broader and less controversial context of learning about their rights more generally.

Partnering with women’s listening centres

Cooperation and alliances between anti-corruption organisations, women’s organisations and longer-established, trusted gender-based violence reporting mechanisms can be very useful for handling sensitive sextortion cases. Transparency Maroc, in partnership with the International Association of Women Judges and the Union of Women Judges of Morocco, organised “women’s listening centres”, in partnership with women’s organisations. These made reporting sextortion easier and more accessible to women in Morocco.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Make reporting mechanisms accessible, safe, credible, effective and gender-sensitive.

EU governments should:

- + collect, analyse and disseminate gender-disaggregated data to identify and address gendered patterns of corruption and reporting, giving special consideration to intersectional factors that make certain groups of women more vulnerable to corruption
- + recognise sextortion as a form of corruption in their national legal frameworks
- + adopt and enforce effective and gender-sensitive whistleblowing laws and policies with strong anti-retaliation protections and confidentiality provisions, in line with the EU whistleblower protection directive
- + provide safe, affordable and effective reporting mechanisms for women and groups exposed to discrimination.
- + ensure women's participation and consultation in the design of reporting mechanisms and policies
- + make legal aid widely available to women and groups exposed to discrimination, and raise awareness of its existence and how it works
- + combat gender stereotypes and bias in courts and among law enforcement officials through awareness raising, training and capacity-building programmes – with special attention to the specific needs of women belonging to minorities and groups exposed to discrimination
- + provide psycho-social and legal support to victims of physical and sexual violence at all levels of the criminal justice system
- + promote the representation of women and groups at risk of discrimination in police, law enforcement and justice institutions, especially for investigating, prosecuting or adjudicating gender-based violence and sex crimes

Practitioners operating reporting mechanisms in the EU should:

- make reporting mechanisms safe by ensuring privacy and allowing for confidential and anonymous reporting and safe information management protocols, including through the use of digital tools and technology
- ensure that mechanisms are accessible by promoting them to targeted groups, providing clear guidance and information on reporting processes, and making them widely available through mobile clinics, digital apps and online platforms
- make mechanisms credible and trustworthy by being victim centred, providing truthful and regular communication and follow-up on each case, and managing expectations throughout the reporting process
- guarantee that mechanisms are responsive to women's needs by providing adequate physical, psychological, financial and legal support, and providing childcare while parents make their statements
- ensure that mechanisms are gender-sensitive by using inclusive language and communication, providing gender training to staff in reporting centres – including on the risk of potential re-victimisation – and recruiting female staff to handle women's complaints when needed
- collect and analyse disaggregated data to identify and address gendered patterns of reporting and barriers to reporting, considering both gender and other intersectional factors that shape individual experiences of reporting
- develop and build on synergies between the anti-corruption, anti-discrimination and gender-based violence agendas. These could include establishing partnerships and

ensuring coordination with women's organisations to provide alternative channels of reporting, especially for sextortion cases

Academic and research institutions should:

- address knowledge gaps by further exploring gendered barriers to reporting and obstacles to achieve equal access to justice in the EU
- conduct qualitative research to identify the drivers behind gendered patterns of reporting and develop reporting mechanisms that target these issues
- collect and analyse disaggregated data with a special emphasis on the intersections of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, religion and economic status that make certain groups at risk of discrimination more vulnerable to corruption

ENDNOTES

¹ <https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb/africa/africa-2019>

² <https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb/latin-america/latin-america-and-the-caribbean-x-edition-2019>

³ <https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb/middle-east-and-north-africa/middle-east-and-north-africa-1>

⁴ <https://www.transparency.org/en/gcb/asia/asia-2020>

⁵ <https://www.transparency.org/en/publications/gcb-european-union-2021>

⁶ In recent years, global research has extensively documented the impact of corruption on women and girls, but relatively few studies have specifically focused on the EU. More research and data is needed to document European women's experience and perception of corruption and validate these global findings in the European Union

⁷ <https://www.cmi.no/publications/5851-are-men-and-women-equally-corrupt>

⁸ GCB data from Latin America and the Caribbean confirms that women are significantly more likely to think that a citizen using connections to get better services is unacceptable. Likewise, a politician favouring a campaign funder, a public servant using nepotism to inform hiring procedures, a public official awarding a contract to a bribe-paying company and a person paying the police a bribe to avoid a fine. This data is not available for the EU.

⁹ <https://www.transparency.org/en/publications/working-paper-02-2010-corruption-and-gender-in-service-delivery-the-unequal>

¹⁰ https://www.unodc.org/documents/corruption/Publications/2020/THE_TIME_IS_NOW_2020_12_08.pdf

¹¹ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1354068814549339>

¹² https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/2014_Policybrief1_GenderEqualityCorruption_EN.pdf

¹³ https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/TI_GCB_EU_2021_web_2021-06-14-151758.pdf

¹⁴ http://www.veritaszim.net/sites/veritas_d/files/Transparency%20International%20Zimbabwe%20Gender%20%26%20Corruption%20in%20Zimbabwe.pdf

¹⁵ https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/2020_Report_BreakingSilenceAroundSextortion_English.pdf

¹⁶ <https://www.undp.org/publications/corruption-accountability-and-gender-understanding-connection-0>

¹⁷ <https://www.undp.org/publications/corruption-accountability-and-gender-understanding-connection-0>

¹⁸ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1354068814549339>

¹⁹ <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1354068814549339>

²⁰ <https://anticorr.eu/publications/case-studies-on-gender-and-corruption/>

²¹ As measured by how often respondents read, hear or watch the news on political, economic or social affairs.

²² This data was not collected in the EU.

²³ ALACs offer free and confidential advice to victims and witnesses of corruption in more than 60 countries around the globe. These figures are only representative of the chapters who used Transparency International's centralised ALAC database.

²⁴ Data available only for Italy and Slovenia in the EU.

²⁵ These are outliers: in 2019, 51 per cent of the walk-in cases received by Transparency International Rwanda's ALACs came from women, and 49 per cent came from men.

²⁶ <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/helping-working-parents-ease-the-burden-of-covid-19>

²⁷ <https://rm.coe.int/0900001680597b1d>

²⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/equal-pay/gender-pay-gap-situation-eu_en

²⁹ <https://rm.coe.int/0900001680597b1d>

³⁰ <https://rm.coe.int/0900001680597b1d>

³¹ <https://www.undp.org/publications/gender-equality-and-justice-programming-equitable-access-justice-women>

³² This data was not collected in the EU or other regions of the world.

³³ This data was not collected in the EU.

³⁴ This data was not collected in other regions.

³⁵ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304908138_An_Examination_of_the_Role_Women_Whistleblowers

³⁶ <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D8PC4JHW>

³⁷ https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1415663

³⁸ <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/edit/10.4324/9781315699745/foundations-organizational-evil-carole-jurkiewicz>

³⁹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/15/world/europe/spanish-activists-push-for-laws-to-protect-whistle-blowers.html>

⁴⁰ <https://www.transparency.org/en/press/daphne-caruana-galizia-and-ana-garrido-ramos-winners-of-2018-anti-corruption>

⁴¹ https://www.latinamerica.undp.org/content/rblac/en/home/library/democratic_governance/generocorruptcion.html

⁴² This data was not collected in the 2021 iteration of the GCB.

⁴³ https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/2019_Toolkit_EngagingCitizensAnti-CorruptionMechanisms_English.pdf

⁴⁴ <https://rm.coe.int/0900001680597b1d>

⁴⁵ <https://www.transparency.org/en/publications/defying-exclusion-corruption-discrimination>

⁴⁶ <https://rm.coe.int/0900001680597b1d>

⁴⁷ https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/2019_Toolkit_EngagingCitizensAnti-CorruptionMechanisms_English.pdf

⁴⁸ https://images.transparencycdn.org/images/2020_Report_BreakingSilenceAroundSextortion_English.pdf

⁴⁹ In Latin America, one in five people reported having experienced sextortion or knowing someone who did. In in MENA, the figure was one in five; in Asia, one in seven, and in the EU, one in 14 (7 per cent).

<https://www.transparency.org/en/publications/breaking-the-silence-around-sextortion>

⁵⁰ <https://www.transparency.org/en/publications/breaking-the-silence-around-sextortion>

⁵¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/IO4024232020ENGLISH.pdf>

⁵² <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1748895819863095>

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