

## PRESS RELEASE

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# JUMP

Promoting gender equality, advancing the economy

## “Where do we stand on sexism?” JUMP study on the perception of sexist behaviour in Europe

**All women have, at some point, been subjected to sexist behaviour!**

- **98% in the street or on public transport**
- **95% in a public place**
- **94% at work**

**One woman in two has been physically assaulted in the street or on public transport, one woman in three in a public place and 9% at work!**

The results of the study are available [here](#)

Some European countries, such as Belgium and France have adopted legal means to counteract sexism. Belgium was the first country to introduce a law criminalising sexism on the initiative of the former Minister for Equal Opportunities, Joëlle Milquet. France, for its part, incorporated the notion of “sexist acts” in the Labour Code thanks to the Rebsamen law of 2015. The current Minister for Families, Childhood and Rights of Women has also just launched an action plan against sexism, #SexismePasNotreGenre.

Despite these initiatives, sexism and the resulting aggression, remains very present. We are even witnessing **a rise in gender-based violence** on the streets, on public transport, in public spaces but also in social networks. Our study aims to analyse and understand sexism through the eyes of both women and men.<sup>1</sup>

### **Sexism, what is that?**

*“Sexism are stereotypes and collective representations that can be translated by words, gestures, behaviour or acts which exclude, marginalise or belittle women.”<sup>2</sup> Sexism based on gender stereotypes fuels violence against women.*

*“Sexism constitutes the main and certainly the last obstacle preventing the true emancipation of women. From that harmless remark, under the guise of humour or paternalism, to the most serious psychological and physical violence, sexism is expressed by words and behaviour that make women feel inferior.” Laurence Rossignol, Minister for Families, Childhood and the Rights of Women, France.*

**More women questioned than men considered sexism as an extremely “serious” discriminatory phenomenon. However, as many women as men gave more importance to other types of discrimination such as racism, homophobia, anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.**

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<sup>1</sup> Our global study gathers a total of 3294 testimonies, the majority of which are in Belgium and France, countries where JUMP is the most present for the moment. In order to conduct our analysis, we have chosen to select only those questions that were completed in their entirety.

<sup>2</sup> Brigitte Grésy, *Petit traité contre le sexisme ordinaire*, Albin Michel, 2009, p.11.

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Only 69% of women questioned felt that sexism is extremely serious, this figure varied in relation to age. **The older the respondent the less they recognised the seriousness of sexism:** 73% of women between the ages of 18 and 35 compared with 57% of women older than 65.<sup>3</sup>

### **Sexism in companies is the brake on professional equality.**

80% of women stated that they have been confronted with the phenomenon of “mansplaining” and “maninterrupting” in other words men who interrupt them often in meetings and explain things to them in a condescending manner, considering that men know more than women on a matter and they come to their help reinforcing women’s sense of a lack of legitimacy in their working lives.

But sexist behaviour and remarks not only concerns the work environment... they also affect women’s personal lives. More than three quarters of women have been subjected to remarks on their dress sense and others had received comments on managing their families and on the fact that women are expected to stay at home rather than go out to work.

### **The impact of sexism is very important on the physical and psychological wellbeing of women.**

We are interested in the psychological impact of this behaviour on the victims of sexism. Only 5% among those questioned said that they had felt nothing following sexist remarks or behaviour towards them. While 9 out of 10 women felt angry, 3 out of 4 women also felt hurt and depressed for more than one woman in four. Another noteworthy result: more than 1 woman in 5 felt guilty and 67% felt vulnerable.

These different feelings could explain the low number of complaints of sexism: women often don’t know that there are laws in place and they are confronted with emotions that don’t allow them to testify or feel they have the legitimate right to do so. From “victims” they become “responsible”. 81% never reported such behaviour to the relevant authorities (police, Human Resources, unions).

**To avoid being confronted again with such situations, women adapt their way of life: their dress sense, behaviour, times of going out, places frequented, which restricts their freedom in a daily basis.**

### **Reacting against sexism is everyone’s responsibility!**

63% of women say they were not helped or supported by witnesses! Far from being guilty, JUMP is convinced that encouraging citizen awareness and mobilising the action of public authorities can reduce the violence.

### **Testimonies:**

*“I think there are many aspects of sexism towards women of which men are not fully aware. We need actions to raise awareness about all those commonplace acts of which men cannot even imagine exist because they have never been subjected to them”.*

*“One of the biggest issues in managing sexism is trivialisation. I consider that there is more sexism of men towards women (even if the reverse also exists) but when I pick up on a*

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<sup>3</sup> Women between 36 and 45 amounted to 67% and those between 46 and 65 amounted to 66%.

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*sexist remark, my reaction is often 'oh stop with the feminist attitude'. It's considered normal to make these sorts of jokes."*

### **What can we do to fight against sexism?**

**This taboo phenomenon, sexism necessitates the specific action of public authorities,** 96% of women and 90% of men questioned consider that specific tools are necessary.

To stop sexism, raising awareness and providing information for women and men is an essential step. Women and men should learn to detect and decode sexism in order to face it either as a victim or as a witness. It is essential to provide the keys to act and react to each one in order to face these situations. In France, the campaign #SexismePasNotreGenre, reinforces actions put in place against sexual harassment and violence on public transport.

Wallonia is also campaigning: *"Equality in law should be translated to equality in practice. We can no longer tolerate that our women and girls are afraid on the streets, in the bus, in certain areas to point that they no longer go there. The French anti-sexism campaign is inspiring and I promise that the recommendations by JUMP will not remain a dead letter."* Maxime Prévot, Wallonian Minister for Social Action in charge of Equal Opportunities.

### **Who are we?**

JUMP is a leading European social enterprise that works with organisations and people to eliminate inequality between women and men in the work place, create a sustainable economy and a more egalitarian society.

Every year, JUMP carries out a survey on a societal question linked to gender equality: women managers; female entrepreneurs; women in science and technology; couples who reverse traditional roles; do men want equality at work?

You can find all our surveys on our website:

<http://www.jump.eu.com/surveys-reports>

\*International men's day of 19 November was created in the 90s to counterbalance "Women's Day". It is essential to remember that the 8 March is not just "Women's Day" for more than 100 years but also the "International Day of Women's Rights" which aims to underline the inequality between women and men that still exists in ALL countries of the world. However, let's use the day of 19 November to speak about men's health, discrimination against them, but especially to highlight the positive masculine models of alliance with women and to promote equality with them.

Discover [here](#) the analysis of the results of the study.

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