



# SWIM

## Safe Women in Migration

### FACT SHEET

SWIM - Safe Women in Migration. Strengthen GBV protection  
for migrant and asylum seeker women

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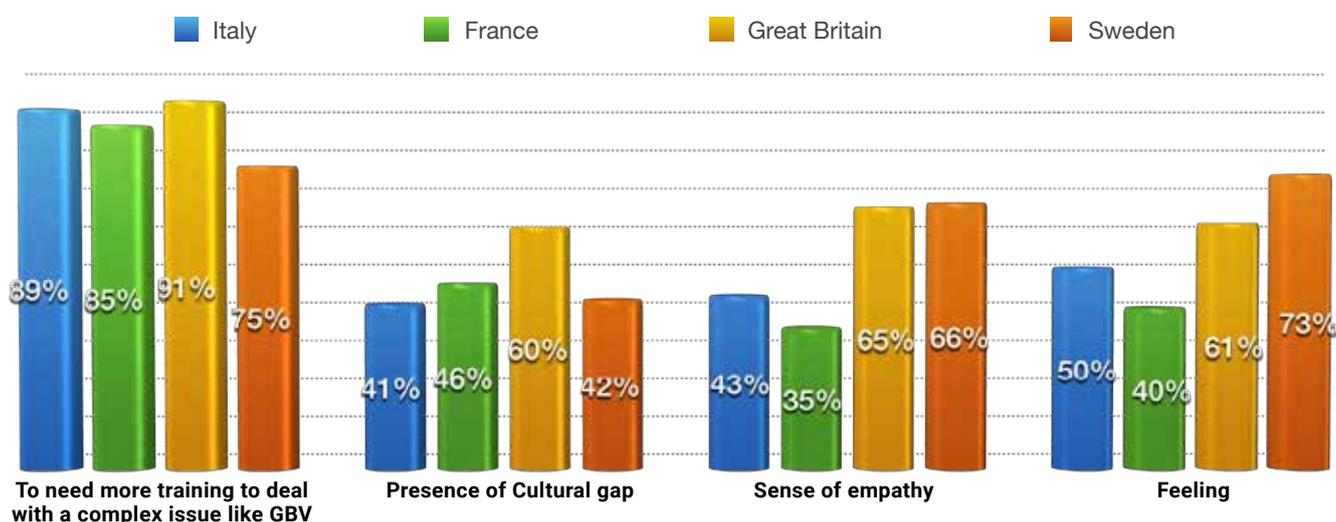
The SWIM project envisaged a survey targeted to the reception systems' operators belonging to the Countries involved in the project. More precisely, four Countries participated to the survey: Italy, France, Great Britain and Sweden.

The total number of questionnaires collected in the 4 Countries are 437. Among the respondents, 70% are women (304); 35% of them is aged between 33 and 45 years old; 57% has an academic degree (or equivalent). especially in formal educational qualification. In fact, in Italy the 39% of respondents has an upper secondary education diploma while, in general, in the other Countries the practitioners involved in the survey have higher formal qualifications and are also a bit younger. In all the Countries the highest share of respondents (between 42 and 52%) works in migrants support services but since quite a short time (from 1 to 3 years). These features are obviously relevant only for this survey: they describe the profile of our sample and do not identify the profile of all the practitioners working in the receptions systems of the 4 Countries.

**1 The relationship with migrant women → is a trust relationship with a high level of empathy but that needs time to build up and requires more skill for those who work within the reception facilities**

The professional men and women of the reception systems of the 4 countries state that once a trust relationship has been built up, migrant women are more willing to talk about their lives in their Countries of origin, indeed more so than about their trip, which in fact highlights the painful aspects of that experience and confirms what is emerging increasingly frequently regarding the abuse and violence that migrants, especially women migrants, experience during their voyage (particularly on their way through Libya). The greatest difficulty in building up this type of relationship with migrant women who have suffered abuse is the lack of specific skills in dealing with cases of sexual abuse/gender violence and more specifically, in handling the more complex cases (respectively: Italy 89%, France 85%, Great Britain 91%, Sweden 75%). Building up a relationship of trust therefore takes a very long time, also partly due to the cultural gap, which is keenly felt by both the female and the male workers in the 4 Countries (respectively: Italy 41%, France 46%, Great Britain 60%, Sweden 42%), and the differences in their life experiences. That notwithstanding, the professional men and women of the reception systems of the 4 Countries feel a strong sense of empathy with the migrant women with whom they are working and therefore it's not too difficult for them to understand what they're thinking (respectively: Italy 43%, France 35%, Great Britain 65%, Sweden 66%) and feeling (respectively: Italy 50%, France 40%, Great Britain 61%, Sweden 73%), or to understand the choices that they make.

**The relationship with migrant women: the perception of professional men and women of the reception systems**

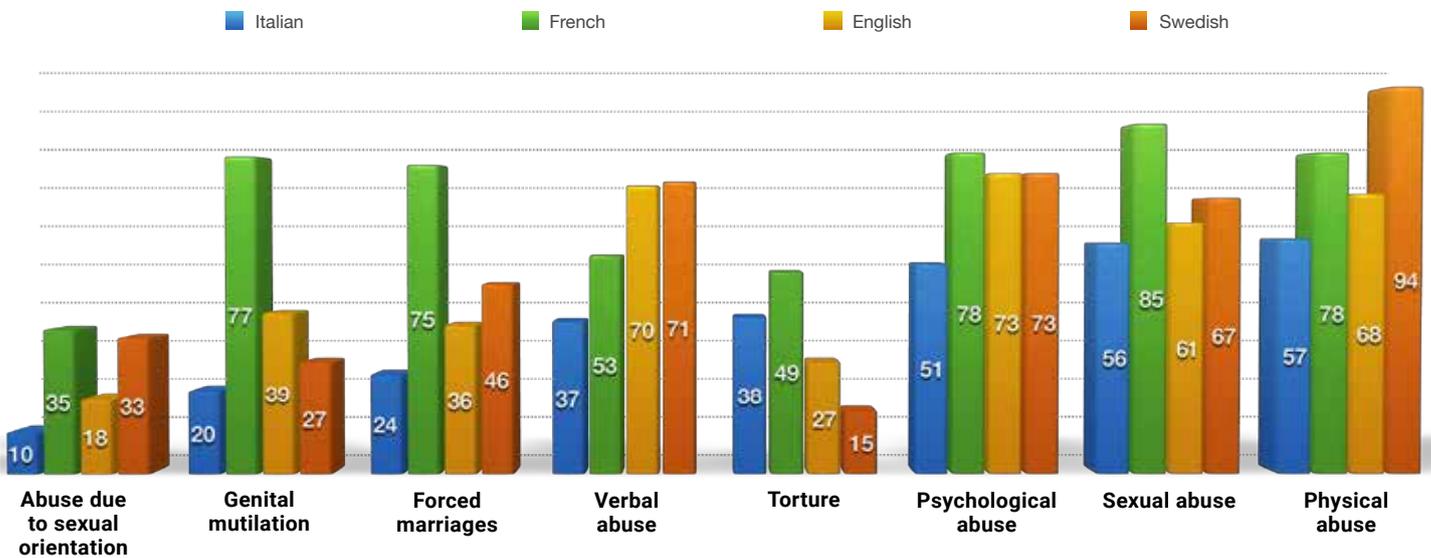


## 2

### The most common forms of gender violence encountered → numerous kinds of violence perpetrated by men known to the victims and by traffickers in their countries of origin or during the voyage

Numerous forms of violence have been encountered: a significant number of cases of physical, sexual and psychological violence are reported in all the Countries. Cases of torture have been encountered predominantly by aid workers in France (49%) and in Italy (38%), whereas cases of genital mutilation and forced marriage are frequently encountered by the French aid workers, partly due to the countries of origin of the women asylum seekers and refugees, where these kinds of violent acts are more common. Reported acts of gender violence due to sexual orientation are encountered less frequently, particularly in Italy (10%) and in Sweden (18%).

#### The kinds of gender violence most frequently encountered by aid workers

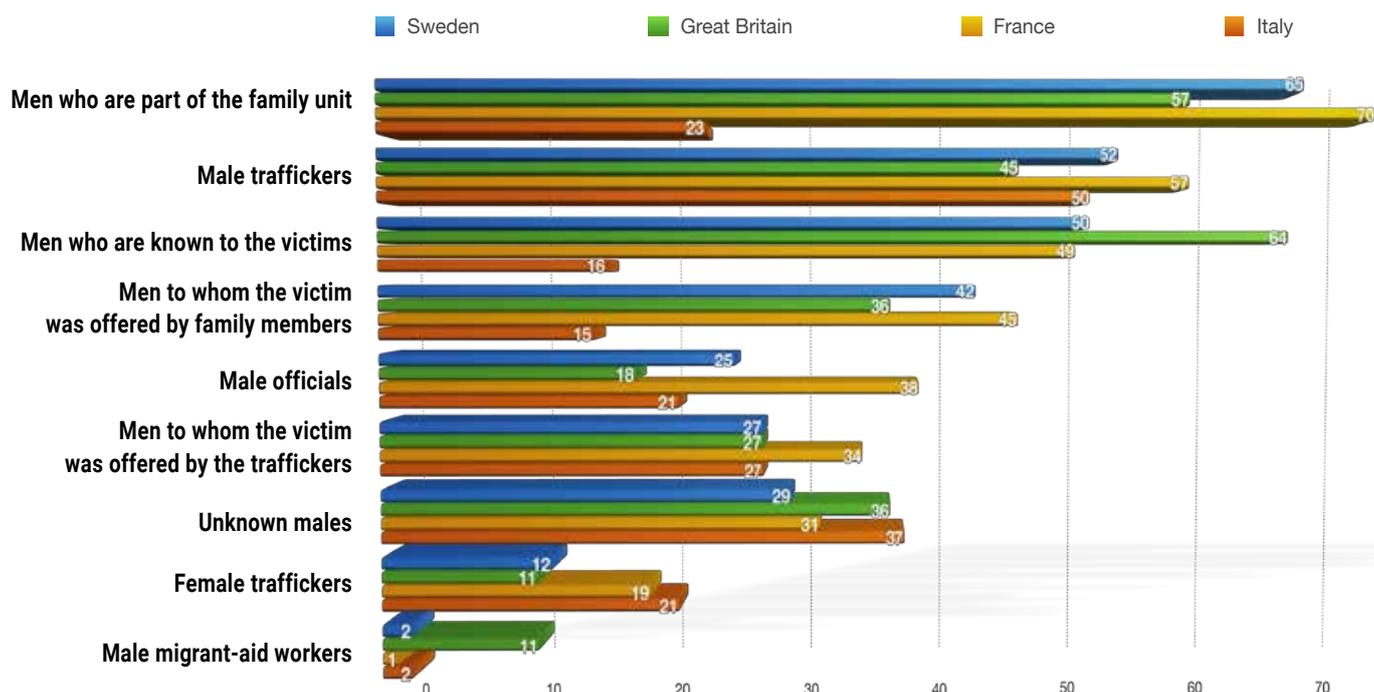


Source: ISMU data and analysis

These forms of abuse are more frequently perpetrated by men who are close to the migrant women and are part of the family unit, above all in the cases encountered by the aid workers in France and Sweden and slightly less so by those in Britain. In the case of the Italian aid workers, the main perpetrators are the people traffickers and known males in general. Cases of family members “offering” their women to people traffickers during the voyage are significantly more common in France and Sweden, but less so in Italy.

According to the aid workers from all of the countries, the abuse occurs predominantly in the victim’s country of origin, but slightly less so according to the Italian aid workers (28%), who state that during the voyage itself is when these women appear to be most at risk (62%). This depends at least in part on the migratory routes used by the migrant women to get to the various countries involved in the SWIM project.

## The most frequent perpetrators of gender violence against migrant women



Source: ISMU data and analysis

### 3 Vulnerability of women migrant asylum seekers and refugees → aid workers perceive a high level of vulnerability amongst woman migrants, particularly in a number of high-risk groups

Around 40% of Italian, French and Swedish aid workers view migrant women as being at high risk of falling victim to gender violence, whereas in the case of British aid workers the figure drops to a quarter of the respondents. According to 53% of English aid workers, there are specific groups of woman migrants who are at greater risk of falling victim to gender violence, such as victims of human traders and women who are fleeing alone from hazardous places or situations.

Overall, the aid workers in all of the countries believe that migrant women suffer abuse more frequently than what is reported, as reflected in the table below, and that they are more likely to fall victim to gender violence than members of the general population. Italian aid workers believe that the gender-based culture in the victims' countries of origin plays a major role in gender violence, whereas the number of aid workers in the other countries who concur with this belief drops to around 50%, or even down to 30% in the case of the Swedish aid workers. Furthermore, to a fairly significant number of aid workers it seems as if migrant women are accustomed to enduring gender violence, while all the aid workers agree that there is no amplification effect regarding the gender violence suffered by migrant women and very few of them concur with the idea that migrant women actually suffer gender-based violence (GBV) less frequently than what is generally believed.

#### Level and origin of the vulnerability of migrant women

	IT % agree/fully	FR % agree/fully	GB % agree/fully	SW% agree/fully
Suffer gender violence far more frequently than reported	85	82	86	50
Are more subject to blackmail and more prone to abuse	69	79	74	59
Come from a culture that condones gender violence	82	51	57	30
Are accustomed to enduring significant levels of abuse	47	49	39	27
Endure gender violence less frequently than what is generally believed	10	7	6	5

Source: ISMU data and analysis



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