



UNI Europa Commerce Statement



International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

25 November 2025

On this International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, UNI Europa Commerce stands in solidarity with all women and girls who continue to face violence, harassment, and discrimination — at work, at home, and in society.



Across Europe's retail and commerce sectors, women make up the majority of the workforce. Too many still face verbal abuse, sexual harassment, intimidation, and gender-based violence from customers, co-workers, and supervisors. New technologies, such as self-checkout systems, have added to this pressure — increasing the policing or security tasks expected of retail workers and often triggering customer aggression when employees must verify payments. Combined with precarious contracts, night work, and chronic understaffing, these conditions make workers even more vulnerable.

We also recognise that domestic violence and work are deeply connected. For many women, work can be a place of refuge and independence — but the effects of domestic abuse often follow them into the workplace, through fear, trauma, and insecurity. Employers have a

responsibility to provide support, understanding, and safety measures for workers experiencing domestic violence, including through paid leave, confidentiality, and access to assistance.

We call on employers, governments, and EU institutions to take concrete action to ensure that every woman can work in safety and dignity. This means:

- Ratifying and fully implementing the ILO Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work across all EU Member States.
- Negotiating strong collective agreements that include clear procedures, protections, and support for victims.
- Creating safe reporting systems in every workplace, backed by training, prevention measures, and zero tolerance for retaliation.
- Addressing third-party violence, harassment, and abuse from customers — including work-related cyber violence and harassment — all persistent and growing realities in retail and service jobs.
- Supporting workers affected by domestic violence, ensuring workplaces are safe, supportive, and responsive.

Over the past year, UNI Europa Commerce has worked closely with EuroCommerce towards a joint statement on eliminating violence and harassment in the commerce sector. While a shared position could not yet be finalised, important discussions have taken place and awareness has increased.

UNI Europa Commerce remains fully committed to ensuring that gender-based and domestic violence are recognised as workplace issues and addressed with the seriousness they deserve. We will continue to promote joint action between employers and unions to make every workplace safe and free from violence and harassment.

At company level, Inditex and their trade unions have already taken meaningful steps to support workers affected by domestic violence and to prevent gender-based violence at work – both at global, European and national level. This is only one example of companies showing that progress is not only possible but under way. We continue to aim at completing a sector-specific framework at European level, as, for instance, already achieved by UNI Europa and their social partners on the employers' side in the telecommunications, finance and gaming sectors.

As the voice of retail and commerce workers in Europe, UNI Europa Commerce reaffirms its commitment to eliminate gender-based violence in all its forms. We will continue to work with our affiliates, employers, and EU institutions to ensure that every woman's right to a safe and respectful workplace is upheld in practice — not just on paper.

Together, we can build workplaces — and societies — free from violence, inequality, and fear.