

Measuring femicide in Bulgaria

Femicide

Femicide can be understood as the extreme end of a continuum of violence against women that happens in all European Union Member States ⁽¹⁾. There is no standard agreed definition of femicide among EU Member States or around the world. The lack of a uniform definition hampers the measurement of femicide, which becomes invisible among general homicide data ⁽²⁾. The general concept of femicide refers to the killing of a woman or girl because of her gender. The United Nations Vienna Declaration on Femicide ⁽³⁾ was the first to identify different types of femicide, including:

- murder of women as a result of intimate partner violence;
- torture and misogynistic slaying of women;
- killing of women and girls in the name of honour;
- targeted killing of women and girls in the context of armed conflict;
- dowry-related killing of women;
- killing of women and girls because of their sexual orientation and gender identity;
- killing of aboriginal and indigenous women and girls because of their gender;
- female infanticide and gender-based sex selection foeticide;
- genital mutilation-related deaths;
- accusations of witchcraft;
- other types of femicide connected with gangs, organised crime, drug dealers, human trafficking and the proliferation of small arms.

Femicide in Bulgaria

There is no definition of femicide in the Bulgarian Criminal Code. However, this type of offence may fall under other provisions of Bulgarian criminal law. The relevant articles for identifying femicide cases are, inter alia, Articles 115, 116, 118 and 124 ⁽⁴⁾.

Article 115 – Murder

A person who deliberately kills another person shall be punished for murder by imprisonment of 10–20 years.

Article 116 – Aggravated types of murder

1. For the murder:

- (3) of a father or mother, or one's own son or daughter,
- (4) of a pregnant woman, a minor or more than one person,
- (6a) committed in the conditions of domestic violence,

[...] the punishment shall be imprisonment from 15 to 20 years, life imprisonment or life imprisonment without replacement.

Article 118

Murder committed in a state of high agitation provoked by the victim through violence, severe defamation or other illegal activities from which severe consequences for the guilty party or his or her relatives occur or could occur shall be punished in cases of Article 115 – imprisonment of 1–8 years – and in cases of Article 116 (1) (1–6) – imprisonment from 3 to 10 years.

Article 124 – Murder as the result of an intentionally inflicted bodily injury

(1) Whoever causes death to another by negligence as a result of intentionally inflicted bodily injury shall be punished by imprisonment of 3–12 years in case of severe bodily injury, 2–8 years in cases of medium bodily injury and up to 5 years in cases of light bodily injury.

(2) If the act under the previous paragraph has been committed in a state of high agitation provoked by the victim through violence, severe defamation or other illegal activities from which severe consequences for the guilty party or his or her relatives occur or could occur, the penalty is imprisonment of up to 5 years in cases of grievous bodily harm, imprisonment up to 3 years in cases of average personal injury and imprisonment of up to 2 years in cases of minor bodily harm.

⁽¹⁾ This factsheet includes data collected before the United Kingdom left the EU, so the reference to EU Member States includes the United Kingdom.

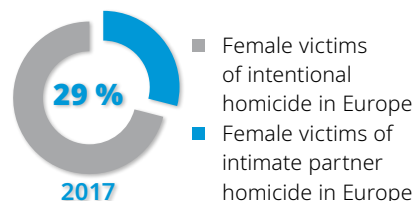
⁽²⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017), *Glossary of definitions of rape, femicide and intimate partner violence*, EIGE, Vilnius.

⁽³⁾ UN Economic and Social Council (2012), *Vienna Declaration on Femicide*, UN, New York (https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/CCPCJ_Sessions/CCPCJ_22/E-CN15-2013-NGO1/E-CN15-2013-NGO1_E.pdf).

⁽⁴⁾ For more information, see indicator 9 of the Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv__ipv_indic_9/metadata) and the Bulgarian Criminal Code (<https://www.lex.bg/laws/ldoc/1589654529>).

Intimate partner femicide in Europe

From a statistical perspective, and based on the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) highlights that intentional homicide of female victims perpetrated by intimate partners or family members is the most prevalent form of femicide⁽⁵⁾. UNODC estimates that, in Europe⁽⁶⁾, about 29 % of female victims of homicide⁽⁷⁾ are killed intentionally by an intimate partner.



Intimate partner femicide in Bulgaria

From a statistical perspective, the working definition that the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) uses for femicide is 'killing of a woman by an intimate partner and the death of a woman as a consequence of a practice that is harmful to women. Intimate partner is understood as a former or current spouse or partner, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim'. In Bulgaria, most femicides would be covered by the articles of the Criminal Code identified above. Although there is no specific collection of data on intimate partner femicide in Bulgaria, according to data from the Ministry of Interior⁽⁸⁾, in 2017 there were 27 victims of femicide perpetrated by intimate partners or close relatives.



Victims of femicide perpetrated by intimate partners and close relatives in Bulgaria

Female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide in Bulgaria

EIGE has gathered data on homicide and intimate partner femicide for 2014–2018. However, in Bulgaria, there is no systematic data collection in which data is broken down by sex of the victim and relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. The official administrative data used in Figure 1 is collected by the Ministry of Interior. The data provided refers to the number of victims of homicide (completed and attempted) perpetrated by men.

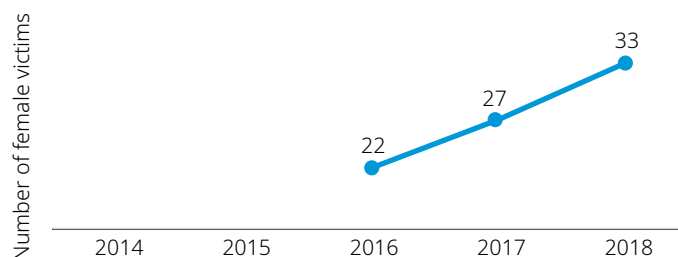
Figures are available only from 2016, and there is no publicly available information on female⁽⁹⁾ victims of homicide. Figure 1 shows an increasing trend in homicides perpetrated by men in Bulgaria.

Type of relationship between the victim and the perpetrator

The Ministry of Interior collects data on the type of intimate relationship between the victim and the perpetrator according to the Law on Protection Against Domestic Violence, which defines domestic violence (Article 2) as follows: 'any act of physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or economic violence, and the experience of such violence, forced restriction of privacy, personal

freedom and personal rights committed against persons who are in a relationship, who are or have been in a family relationship or de facto marital cohabitation'.

Figure 1: Victims of homicide perpetrated by men in Bulgaria



Source: EIGE's Gender Statistics Database.

About the study

Data collection systems vary widely across EU Member States, as they draw on various sources. To improve the collection of administrative data on femicide, EIGE has been working to establish indicators that can harmonise data collection processes across Member States' jurisdictions.

EIGE has collected information from a wide variety of stakeholders through a questionnaire sent to official data providers and an online survey filled in by national experts. The ultimate goal is to identify a classification system of femicide with mutually agreed variables that can be used by all EU Member States.

Methodology for data collection

To address the lack of comparable data on violence against women, EIGE developed 13 indicators with uniform definitions of the multiple forms of intimate partner violence, femicide and rape⁽¹⁰⁾. A detailed report regarding the methodology for the collection, reporting and validation of data, along with detailed metadata per country, has been published⁽¹¹⁾. The data presented in this fact-sheet refers to indicator 9 on intimate partner violence: 'Women victims of intimate femicide (aged 18 and over) committed by a male intimate partner (aged 18 and over), as a share of the women victims of homicide aged 18 and over'. However, the data available for Bulgaria under this indicator is not yet comparable. The data can be accessed through EIGE's Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/browse/genvio/genvio_int).

⁽⁵⁾ UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2019), *Global Study on Homicide – Gender-related killing of women and girls*, UNODC, Vienna.

⁽⁶⁾ Data from UNODC includes European jurisdictions other than the EU Member States. There is no estimation of the percentage of female victims of homicide who were victims of intimate partner femicide limited to EU Member States.

⁽⁷⁾ The term 'homicide' is used when reporting UNODC data given that it is the term used in the original source (p. 17). The gender-related motivation is not recorded, because of the lack of a standardised definition. However, it is clear from the report that this data quantifies a significant share of all gender-related killings of women and girls.

⁽⁸⁾ UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2019), *Global Study on Homicide – Gender-related killing of women and girls*, UNODC, Vienna.

⁽⁹⁾ Data sources can be consulted in UN Human Rights Council (2020), *Visit to Bulgaria – Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences*, UN Human Rights Council, Geneva (https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2032745/A_HRC_44_52_Add.1_E.pdf); and in indicator 9 of the Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv_ipv_indic_9/metadata).

⁽¹⁰⁾ The term 'female' is used instead of 'woman', as it is not always possible to disaggregate data by the victim's age, meaning that the victim could be either a woman or a girl aged under 18 years.

⁽¹¹⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), (2017), *Terminology and Indicators for Data Collection: Rape, femicide and intimate partner violence*, EIGE, Vilnius.

⁽¹²⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), (2020), *Intimate Partner Violence: Data collection methodology*, EIGE, Vilnius.

Collecting administrative data on femicide



What is administrative data? Administrative data is collected for recording, organising and monitoring purposes ⁽¹²⁾. Administrative data on femicide can be obtained from different institutions, namely those that are involved with criminal investigations, prosecutions, the punishment of perpetrators and victim support – that is, institutions in the **police and justice sectors**. Administrative data might include information about the prevalence and types of femicide, the characteristics of the victim, the perpetrator and their relationship, the characteristics of and motive for the crime, and data about the criminal process.

In order to help policymakers design effective policies to combat femicide, it is necessary to understand the nature and prevalence of the issue. The collection of comparable administrative data on femicide across the Member States is key to gaining this understanding ⁽¹³⁾. It is particularly important that the motive for the killing is established by the police or judiciary and that this is then translated into standardised statistical data. The ICCS is a standardised tool for obtaining comparable administrative

data. However, it lacks a gender-related motive variable. This means that the concept of femicide cannot be properly operationalised, which prevents the collection of data that fully captures the phenomenon. The collection of data on femicide would make the issue more visible, which would strengthen the political will to eradicate it. Administrative data on femicide also enables countries to monitor trends over time and evaluate the effectiveness of measures.

What administrative data on femicide is available in Bulgaria?

Definition of femicide and availability of data

Definition of femicide used for statistical purposes	No	
Collection of data on femicide	Yes, official data	Yes, non-official data

Official data regarding femicide in Bulgaria is collected and analysed by the Ministry of Interior ⁽¹⁴⁾. Non-official data is collected by organisations such as the Alliance for Protection Against Gender-based Violence ⁽¹⁵⁾ and the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee ⁽¹⁶⁾.

Where data on femicide in this factsheet is drawn from these institutions, this is indicated by ^(a), ^(b) and ^(c), respectively. There may be other institutions or researchers collecting and analysing data on femicide in Bulgaria.

	Institution ^(a) Ministry of Interior	Organisation ^(b) Alliance for Protection Against Gender-based Violence	Organisation ^(c) Bulgarian Helsinki Committee
Type of data collection	Official	Non-official	Non-official
Sources of data	Information not available	Press reports	Court cases and press reports
Availability of data to the public	Data not publicly available	Data not publicly available	Data publicly available

The Alliance for Protection Against Gender-based Violence ^(b) issued a report on femicide for 2018–2019, and the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee ^(c) launched a website that provides information and an analysis of court cases regarding women killed in Bulgaria from 2012 to 2017, as well as information on women killed based on the monitoring of media reported cases.

Non-official data on intimate partner femicide is available for 2014–2019. The latest data from the ‘Media Monitoring’ of the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee ^(c) shows that 24 women were killed in 2019, of whom 10 were killed by intimate partners, 9 by family or relatives and 5 by unknown persons, and at least 19 women were killed in 2020, of whom 13 were killed by intimate partners, 4 by family members (2 of whom were sons), 1 by an acquaintance and 1 by an unknown man ⁽¹⁷⁾.

⁽¹²⁾ UN Women (2020), *A synthesis of evidence on the collection and use of administrative data on violence against women*, UN Women, New York.

⁽¹³⁾ It is important to note that data and statistics should be produced, developed and disseminated in compliance with the principles in the *European Statistics Code of Practice*: Eurostat (2018), *European Statistics Code of Practice*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4031688/8971242/KS-02-18-142-EN-N.pdf/e7f85f07-91db-4312-8118-f729c75878c7?t=1528447068000>).

⁽¹⁴⁾ See UN Human Rights Council (2020), *Visit to Bulgaria – Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences*, UN Human Rights Council, Geneva (https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2032745/A_HRC_44_52_Add.1_E.pdf).

⁽¹⁵⁾ <http://www.allianceadv.org/>

⁽¹⁶⁾ <https://ubita.org/>

⁽¹⁷⁾ ‘The murders of women in Bulgaria’ (https://ubita.org/bg/media_monitoring).

● Official data available ● Non-official data available ○ No data available

Data availability	2014 (c)	2015 (c)	2016 (a) (b)	2017 (a) (b)	2018 (a)	2019 (c)
Female victims of homicide (*)	●	●	●	●	●	●
Victims of femicide perpetrated by intimate partners or close relatives	●	●	●	●	●	●

(*) The term 'homicide' is used given that the gender-related motivation for the intentional homicides is not recorded, and therefore it is not possible to classify all the killings as femicides.

Official and non-official sources collect relevant data to identify intimate partner femicide, but also other types of femicide, such as family-related femicide and femicide perpetrated by an unknown person (c).

Types of femicide	
Intimate partner femicide (b) (c)	●
Family-related femicide (c)	●
Child femicide	○
Prostitution-related femicide	○
Robbery-related femicide	○
Other types of femicide (c)	● Femicide perpetrated by an unknown person (c)

Characteristics of the victim and the perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator
Age (c)	●	○
Sex (e) (b) (c)	●	●
Gender identity	○	○
Sexual orientation	○	○
Nationality	○	○
Education	○	○
Occupation	○	○
Applied for protection order (c)	●	n/a
Active protection order (c)	n/a	●
Socioeconomic profile	○	○
Recidivist status (e)	n/a	●
Alcohol/drug abuse (c)	●	○
Victim-perpetrator relationship (b) (c)	●	●
Other	○	○

Motive for femicide		Contextual variables	
Context of sexual violence	○	Method of killings (c)	●
Prior intimate partner violence (c)	●	Location (c)	●
Prior harassment and/or stalking by the perpetrator	○	Suicide of the perpetrator	○
Prior genital mutilation	○	Killing of children (c)	●
Prior complaints or requests for protection measures	○	Killing of other persons in the family	○
Recent separation	○	Children present	○
'Shame or dishonour' brought on the family	○	Other killings in connection with the femicide	○
Dowry-related problems	○	Other	○
Refusal to enter into an arranged marriage	○	Investigating femicide	
Political role / feminism / activism of the woman who was killed	○	Protocol for investigating femicide cases	○
Context of prostitution / pornography	○	Analysing femicide	
Human trafficking context	○	Homicide reviews / domestic homicide reviews	○
Targeted killing of a woman in an armed conflict	○	Analysis of court cases (c)	●
Sexual orientation and gender identity	○	Administrative data from police	○
Disfigurement of the body / inflicting fury on the corpse	○	Administrative data on cause of death	○
Other (e) (c)	● Jealousy (e) (c)	Media information (c)	●
		Other	○

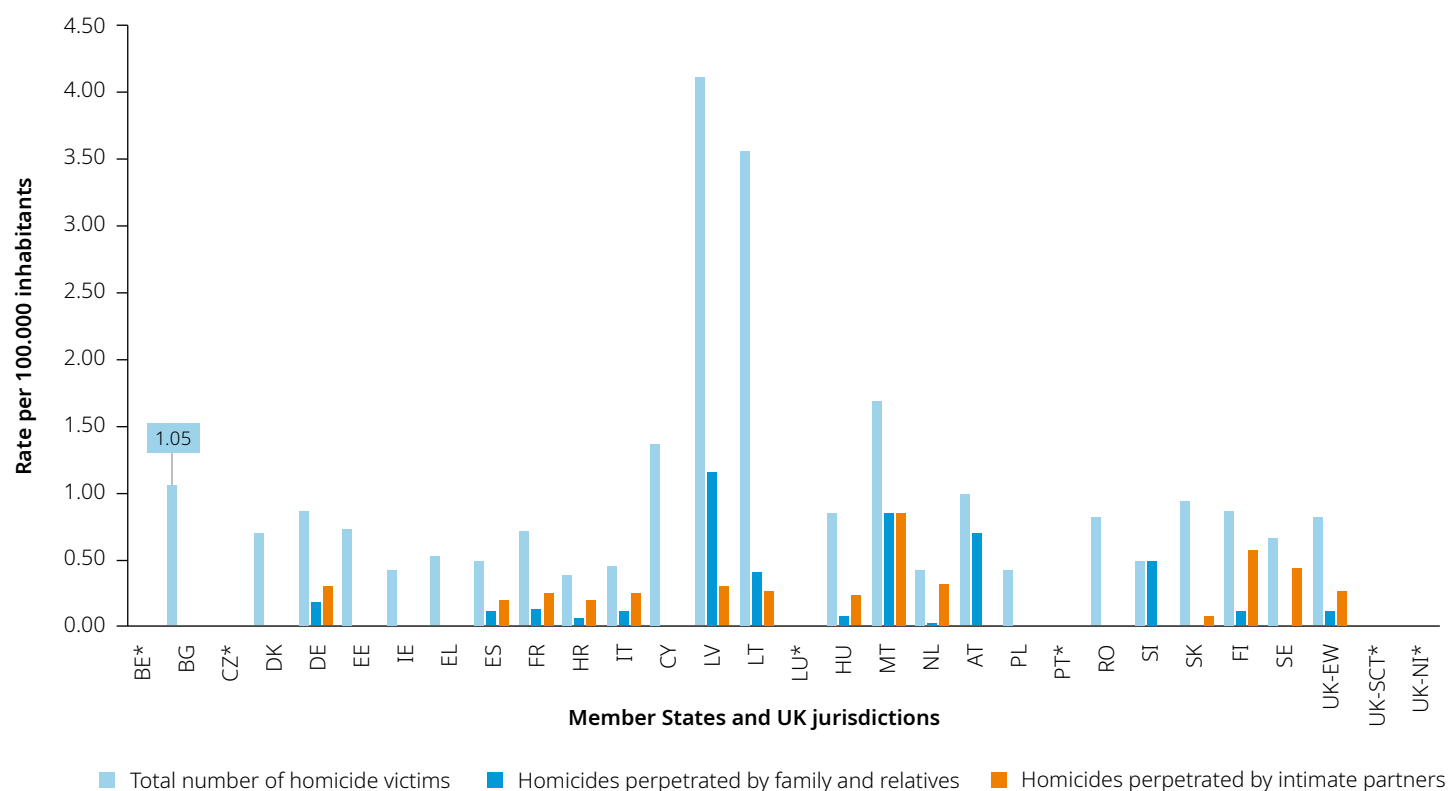
NB: n/a, not applicable.

Female homicide in EU Member States and the United Kingdom (Eurostat)

At the EU level, based on the ICCS, Eurostat compiles data on intentional female homicides, focusing on intimate partner and family-related homicides, disaggregated by age, gender and relationship with the perpetrator. The data from Eurostat presented in Figure 2 reveals that, in 2018, the rate of female victims of homicide in Bulgaria was 1.05 per 100 000 inhabitants, the fifth highest rate among the 24 Member States for which information is available and the United Kingdom. The rates of homicide perpetrated by family and relatives and by intimate partners are not available in the Eurostat database.

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Figure 2: Rate of female victims of intentional homicide in EU Member States and the United Kingdom (2018)



(*) No data available.

NB: UK-EW, England and Wales, United Kingdom; UK-NI, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom; UK-SCT, Scotland, United Kingdom.

Source: Eurostat.

Data information

Eurostat regularly publishes figures on crime and criminal justice. Intentional homicides are recorded by the police in each of the Member States and the United Kingdom. It is not possible to collect information about the gender-related motivation for homicide, the sex of the perpetrator or the age of the perpetrator using this database. Therefore, it is not possible to provide precise data on femicide.

Figures for 2008 onwards are based on the joint Eurostat-UNODC data collection. In this database, homicide is classified by the ICCS.

Data is available on Eurostat's website (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/crim_hom_yrel/default/table?lang=en).

Key findings

- Bulgaria does not have a legal definition of femicide. However, the perpetrator may be liable for different categories of murder.
- The Ministry of Interior is the main institution that collects official data on homicide. Apart from public bodies, two non-governmental organisations collect non-official data. Data is available for intimate partner femicides, femicides perpetrated by close relatives and other types of femicide.
- EIGE has gathered data on homicide and intimate partner femicide for 2014–2018; however, there is no systematic data collection in Bulgaria, and the figures available from the Ministry of Interior, upon request, refer to the total number of completed and attempted homicides, which lack disaggregation by the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.
- Femicide is analysed on the basis of official and non-official sources, such as court cases and media information.

Recommendations

The collection of accurate and comparable data on femicide by the police and justice sectors across Member States helps to increase knowledge and improve responses to prevent femicide⁽¹⁸⁾. It is therefore important to:

- develop a femicide definition for statistical data collection, in order to reflect the specific circumstances relating to the killing of women;
- implement a process of continuous data collection;
- establish comprehensive data collection, adding variables that are important for detecting key aspects of femicide, such as those describing the context and the circumstances of the killing, the gender-related motivation, and the victim and perpetrator characteristics, in order to systematise and harmonise

the collection of data for statistical use;

- cross-reference the variables of the victim and those of the perpetrator, and analyse them using an intersectional approach;
- ensure that the gender dimension of homicide data is made visible.

Recommendations for data collection on femicide in Bulgaria

To populate EIGE's indicator on femicide (indicator 9) and to improve understanding of intimate partner, it is recommended that data collected on homicide be disaggregated by the sex of the victim and their relationship to the perpetrator⁽¹⁹⁾.

This factsheet is based on information from EIGE's study 'Advancing administrative data collection on intimate partner violence and gender-related killings of women' (2021) and has been prepared by the Alternative and Response Women's Association (UMAR). For more information, visit <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/femicide>.

⁽¹⁸⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2018), *Recommendations to improve data collection on intimate partner violence by the police and justice sectors – Bulgaria*, EIGE, Vilnius; European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017), *Recommendations for the EU to improve data collection on violence against women*, EIGE, Vilnius; European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2021), *EIGE's indicators on intimate partner violence, rape and femicide: Recommendations to improve data quality, availability and comparability*, EIGE, Vilnius.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Indicator 9 of the Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv_ipv_indic_9/metadata).

European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.

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