

Measuring femicide in Italy

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.

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.

Femicide in Italy

There is no definition of femicide in the Italian Criminal Code. However, this type of offence may fall under other provisions of Italian criminal law. The relevant articles for identifying femicide cases are, inter alia, Articles 575, 576 and 577 ⁽⁴⁾.

Article 575 – Homicide

Whoever causes the death of a person shall be punished with imprisonment of no less than 21 years.

Articles 576 and 577 – Aggravated homicide

A person shall be punished with life imprisonment if the death, for example, involved sexual violence, or was committed by a stalker, against a relative, against an ascendant or a descendant, against a spouse, even if legally separated or divorced, or against a person with whom the offender was in a partnership, whether or not they were living together.

Articles 576 and 577 were modified by Law No 69 of 19 July 2019 regarding the amendments to the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and other provisions regarding the protection of victims of domestic and gender-based violence ⁽⁴⁾.

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 ⁽⁵⁾. A detailed report regarding the methodology for the collection, reporting and validation of data, along with detailed metadata per country, has been published ⁽⁶⁾. The data presented in this factsheet 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'. The data can be accessed through EIGE's Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/browse/genvio/genvio_int).

⁽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).

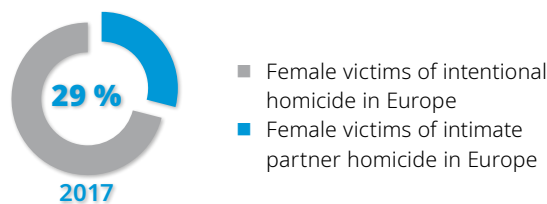
⁽⁴⁾ For more information, see indicator 9 of the Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv__ipv_indic_9/metadata) and the Italian Criminal Code (<https://www.normattiva.it/uri-res/N2Ls?urn:nir:stato:regio.decreto:1930-10-19;1398>).

⁽⁵⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017), *Terminology and Indicators for Data Collection: Rape, femicide and intimate partner violence*, EIGE, Vilnius.

⁽⁶⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2020), *Intimate Partner Violence: Data collection methodology*, EIGE, Vilnius.

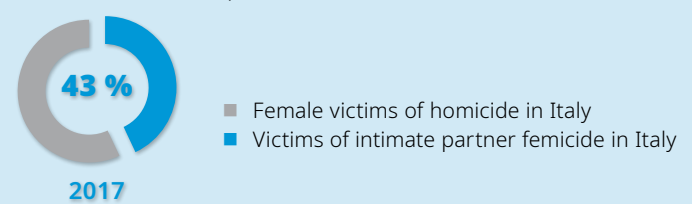
Intimate partner femicide in Europe

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 (7). UNODC estimates that, in Europe (8), about 29 % of female victims of homicide (9) are killed intentionally by an intimate partner.



Intimate partner femicide in Italy

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 Italy, most femicides would be covered by the articles of the Criminal Code identified above. According to data from the Ministry of the Interior, in 2017 there were 123 female (10) victims of homicide (11), of whom 43.9 % were victims of intimate partner femicide ($n = 54$) (12).



Female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide in Italy

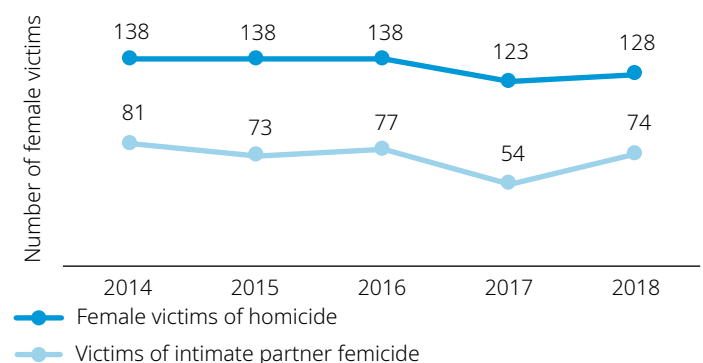
The official administrative data used in Figure 1 is collected by the Ministry of the Interior. EIGE has gathered data on homicide and intimate partner femicide for 2014 to 2018.

Figure 1 includes data regarding female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide. Both trends remained quite stable until 2016. There was a small drop in recorded homicides and intimate partner femicides in 2017, but the numbers increased again in 2018. The data for 2018 indicates a more pronounced increase in intimate partner femicides than in homicides.

Type of relationship between the victim and the perpetrator

The Ministry of the Interior collects data on the type of intimate relationship between the victim and perpetrator according to the following classifications: (i) partner (husband/wife, cohabitant, boyfriend), (ii) ex-partner, (iii) other relative, (iv) other acquaintance, (v) perpetrator unknown to the victim and (vi) perpetrator unidentified.

Figure 1: Female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide in Italy



Source: EIGE's Gender Statistics Database.

Collecting administrative data on femicide



What is administrative data? Administrative data is collected for recording, organising and monitoring purposes (13). Administrative data on femicide can be obtained from different institutions, namely those that are involved in 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.

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

(8) 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.

(9) 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.

(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) 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.

(12) Data is available at: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv_ipv_indic_9/metadata

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

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 Member States is key to gaining this understanding⁽¹⁴⁾. 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 Italy?

Definition of femicide and availability of data

Definition of femicide used for statistical purposes	Yes (*)	
Collection of data on femicide	Yes, official data	Yes, non-official data

(*) For statistical purposes, gender-related killings of women are murders perpetrated by a partner (current or former) or by a relative. In general, a killing perpetrated by a known person is considered gender related. Non-governmental organisations also consider the murder of a woman in prostitution or a trafficked woman to be a gender-related crime.

Four institutions collect or analyse data on femicide in Italy: the Ministry of the Interior⁽¹⁵⁾, the Ministry of Justice⁽¹⁶⁾, EURES Ricerche Economiche e Sociali⁽¹⁷⁾ and Casa delle donne per non subire violenza⁽¹⁸⁾. Where data on femicide in this fact-

sheet is drawn from these institutions, this is indicated by (a), (b), (c) and (d), respectively. Other institutions and researchers collect and analyse data on femicide in Italy⁽¹⁹⁾.

	Institution (a) Ministry of the Interior	Institution (b) Ministry of Justice	Institution (c) EURES Ricerche Economiche e Sociali	Institution (d) Casa delle donne per non subire violenza
Type of data collection	Official	Official	Non-official	Non-official
Sources of data	Data Processing Center (CED) / police force database	Court sentences	Media reports	Media reports
Stage at which the homicide is established as a femicide	During the data analysis	During the data analysis	Not established	During the initial data collection
Stage at which the homicide is registered as a femicide	During the data analysis	During the data analysis	Not registered	During the initial data collection
Parameters for establishing the killing as a femicide	Victim-perpetrator relationship; murders committed in the family context by a male perpetrator against a female victim because of her gender	Victim-perpetrator relationship	Victim-perpetrator relationship	Victim-perpetrator relationship; context of the homicide; the prostitution/trafficking of women
Regularity of data collection	Continuous	Occasional	Annual	Annual
Network(s) with which information is shared	Law enforcement institutions; ministries; Department for Equal Opportunities or another gender equality body; statistics authorities; research institutions; universities	Statistics authorities	Not shared	Information not available
Availability of data to the public	Data publicly available	Data publicly available	Data publicly available	Data publicly available

Official and non-official sources inform administrative data collection in Italy. In line with EIGE's data collection, official administrative data on the total number of female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide is displayed for 2014 to 2019. However, data is available in Italy for 2004 onwards. The

data for 2019 from the Ministry of the Interior shows that 111 women were killed, 68 of whom were killed by current or former intimate partners and 26 by relatives; in 2020, 113 women were killed, 67 by intimate partners and 32 by other family members⁽²⁰⁾.

⁽¹⁴⁾ 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>).

⁽¹⁵⁾ <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/223679>; <https://www.istat.it/it/violenza-sulle-donne/il-fenomeno/omicidi-di-donne>

⁽¹⁶⁾ Bartolomeo, F. (2018), *Inchiesta con analisi statistica sul femminicidio in Italia*, Italian National Institute of Statistics, Rome (<https://www.istat.it/it/files//2018/04/Analisi-delle-sentenze-di-Femminicidio-Ministero-di-Giustizia.pdf>).

⁽¹⁷⁾ <https://www.eures.it/sintesi-rapporto-eures-omicidio-in-famiglia/>

⁽¹⁸⁾ <https://femicidiocasadonne.wordpress.com/ricerche-pubblicazioni/>

⁽¹⁹⁾ For example, (i) the local government in Tuscany (<https://www.regione.toscana.it/osservatoriosocialeregionale/attivita/violenza-di-genero>); (ii) the Research Observatory on Femicide (<https://site.unibo.it/osservatorio-femminicidio/it/materiali-della-ricerca>); and (iii) the Italian Joint Committee of Inquiry (Senato della Repubblica) (<https://senato.it/leg18/4943?dossier=2310>).

⁽²⁰⁾ Ministry of the Interior (2021), *8 Marzo – Donne vittime di violenza*, Ministry of the Interior, Rome (https://www.interno.gov.it/sites/default/files/2021-03/report_2021_-_donne_vittime_di_violenza.pdf).

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

Data availability	2014 ^(a)	2015 ^(a) ^(b)	2016 ^(a) ^(b)	2017 ^(a) ^(b)	2018 ^(a) ^(b)	2019 ^(a)
Female victims of homicide	●	●	●	●	●	●
Victims of intimate partner femicide	●	●	●	●	●	●

Official and non-official sources collect data on intimate partner femicide, but also on other types of femicide, such as family-related femicide, child femicide, robbery-related femicide, prostitution-related femicide and femicide in the context of organised crime. The latest data from the Ministry of the Interior ^(a) reveals that, in 2018, there were 3 robbery-related femicides and 2 femicides related to organised crime. The Department for Equal Opportunities at the Presidency of the Council of Ministers has launched a national strategic plan on male violence against women for 2017–2020, setting up a special working group within the National Observatory on

Violence. This group is composed of representatives of institutions and ministries institutionally interested in the topic, including the Department of Public Security of the Ministry of the Interior. The plan was created to prevent and combat violence against women through strategies aimed at education, awareness and recognition of violence according to specific intervention priorities. The Central Criminal Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior ^(a) has also been conducting a retrospective analysis of intentional murders, namely those perpetrated in the family context, and gender-based killings of women by men.

Types of femicide	
Intimate partner femicide ^(a) ^(b) ^(c) ^(d)	●
Family-related femicide ^(a) ^(b) ^(c) ^(d)	●
Child femicide ^(c)	●
Prostitution-related femicide ^(a) ^(d)	●
Robbery-related femicide ^(e)	●
Other types of femicide ^(e) ^(d)	●
Femicide related to organised crime (<i>omicidi di mafia</i>) ^(a) ^(d)	

Characteristics of the victim and the perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator	Motive for femicide	
Age ^(a) ^(b) ^(c) ^(d)	●	●	Context of sexual violence ^(d)	●
Sex ^(a) ^(b) ^(c) ^(d)	●	●	Prior intimate partner violence ^(a) ^(b) ^(d)	●
Gender identity	○	○	Prior harassment and/or stalking by the perpetrator	○
Sexual orientation	○	○	Prior genital mutilation	○
Nationality ^(a) ^(b) ^(c) ^(d)	●	●	Prior complaints or requests for protection measures	○
Education	○	○	Recent separation ^(b)	●
Occupation	○	○	'Shame or dishonour' brought on the family	○
Applied for protection order	○	n/a	Dowry-related problems	○
Active protection order ^(a)	n/a	●	Refusal to enter into an arranged marriage	○
Socioeconomic profile	○	○	Political role / feminism / activism of the woman who was killed	○
Recidivist status ^(a)	n/a	●	Context of prostitution / pornography ^(a) ^(b) ^(d)	●
Alcohol/drug abuse	○	○	Human trafficking context ^(a) ^(d)	●
Victim–perpetrator relationship ^(a) ^(b) ^(c) ^(d)	●	●	Targeted killing of a woman in an armed conflict	○
Other ^(b)	●	●	Sexual orientation and gender identity	○
			Disfigurement/mutilation of the body ^(b)	●
			Other	○

Contextual variables	Investigating femicide
Method of killings ^(a) ^(b) ^(d)	● Protocol for investigating femicide cases ^(a) ^(b) ●
Location ^(a) ^(b) ^(c) ^(d)	●
Suicide of the perpetrator ^(a) ^(d)	●
Killing of children	○
Killing of other persons in the family	○
Children present	○
Other killings in connection with the femicide ^(d)	●
Other	○

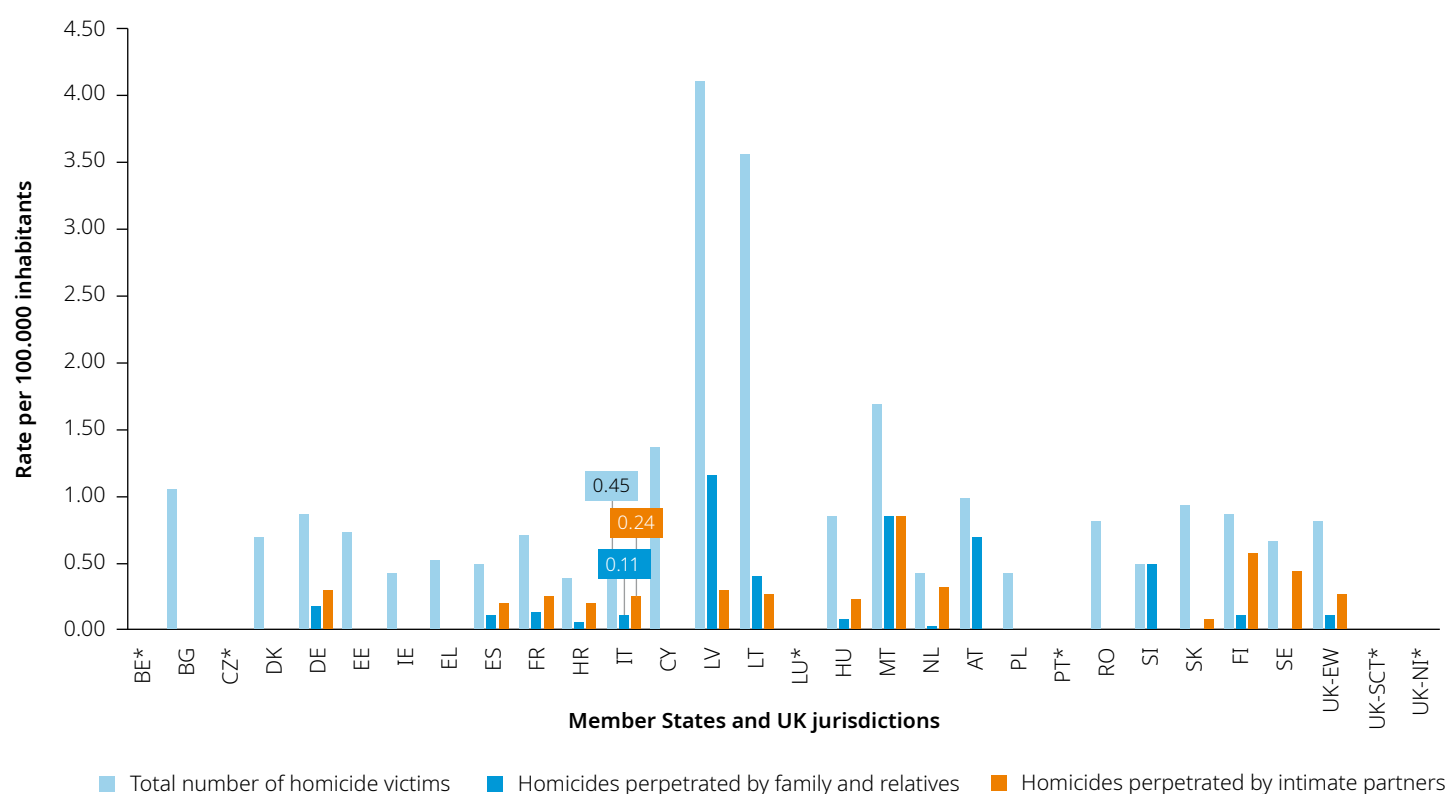
NB: n/a, not applicable.

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 Italy was 0.45 per 100 000 inhabitants, the fifth

lowest rate among the 24 Member States for which information is available and the United Kingdom. Italy has the ninth highest rate (0.24) of female victims of intentional homicide perpetrated by intimate partners (out of 15 jurisdictions), and the tenth highest rate (0.11) of female victims of homicide perpetrated by family members and relatives (out of 14 jurisdictions).

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_vrel/default/table?lang=en).

Key findings

- Italy does not have a legal definition of femicide. However, the perpetrator may be liable for homicide or aggravated homicide.
- In Italy, there are protocols addressing the importance of data collection on femicide.
- There are four main institutions that collect or analyse data for the identification of femicide. Data is available for intimate partner femicide and other types of femicide.
- EIGE has gathered data on homicide and intimate partner femicide for 2014 to 2018; however, data is available in Italy for 2004 onwards. Available data includes information about the characteristics of the victim and the perpetrator, contextual variables and motive.
- Femicide is analysed on the basis of official and non-official sources, such as domestic homicide reviews, data from police, data from court cases and media information.
- The Ministry of Justice conducted a review of sentences for homicides of women. The resulting report was published by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT) on the Data System on Violence against Women ⁽²¹⁾.
- An extraordinary action plan against sexual and gender abuse was adopted in 2015. An integrated data collection and processing system was then developed. ISTAT plays a crucial role in collecting and analysing data on different forms of violence against women, including femicide.
- The Ministry of the Interior undertook an analysis of the impacts of restriction measures on voluntary homicide during the pandemic. The study showed that homicides in 2020 dropped during lockdown (from 31 in January to 16 in February and 18 in March and April). However, homicides rose sharply as restriction measures were lifted, reaching 33 in June ⁽²²⁾.

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 ⁽²³⁾. 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.

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>.

⁽²¹⁾ Bartolomeo, F. (2018), *Inchiesta con analisi statistica sul femminicidio in Italia*, Italian National Institute of Statistics, Rome (<https://www.istat.it/it/files//2018/04/Analisi-delle-sentenze-di-Femminicidio-Ministero-di-Giustizia.pdf>).

⁽²²⁾ Ministry of the Interior (2020), *Violenza di genere e omicidi volontari con vittime donne*, Ministry of the Interior, Rome (<https://www.interno.gov.it/stampa-e-comunicazione/dati-e-statistiche/report-violenza-genere-e-omicidi-volontari-vittime-donne>).

⁽²³⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2018), *Recommendations to improve data collection on intimate partner violence by the police and justice sectors – Italy*, 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.

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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