

Understanding intimate partner femicide in the European Union

The essential need for administrative data collection

Defining intimate partner femicide

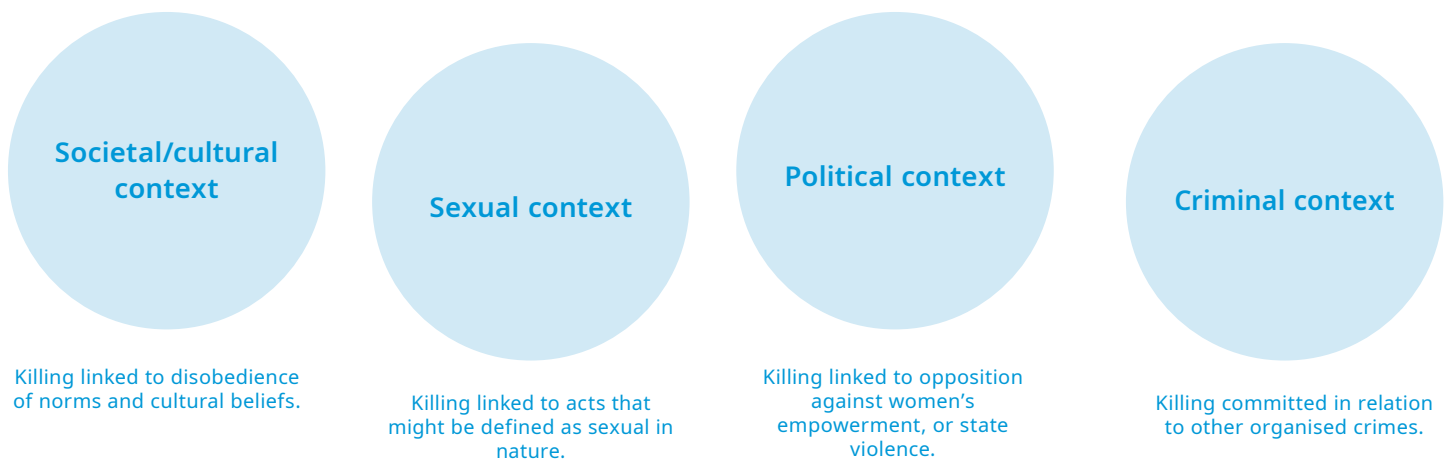
Femicide is an extreme form of gender-based violence, defined broadly as 'the killing of a woman or girl because of her gender'. EU and international institutions use various terms to refer to femicide, including 'gender-related killing of women' and 'feminicide'.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) provides the following **statistical definition of intimate partner femicide**:

'The killing of a woman by an intimate partner and the death of a woman as a result of a practice that is harmful to women. Intimate partner is understood as a former or current spouse/partner, whether or not the victim/perpetrator share or have shared a residence.'

Different contexts of femicide

Intimate partner and family-related femicide is linked to unequal power relations between the victim and the perpetrator, in intimate or family relationships. However, it also occurs in other contexts.



The prevalence of intimate partner femicide and the need for actions to combat it

Tailored policymaking is needed to provide effective responses to intimate partner femicide, including prevention, protection and prosecution.

In 2020, 47 000 women and girls worldwide were killed by their intimate partners or other family members (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), 2021) ⁽¹⁾.

In 2019, while women accounted for only 19 % of total homicide victims, they comprised:

- 82 % of intimate partner homicide victims (UNODC, 2019) ⁽²⁾;
- 64 % of all intimate partner/family-related homicide victims (UNODC, 2019).

The findings above illustrate the need for a gendered analysis of femicide to ensure that gender-based killing is not hidden under general homicide data.

Figure 1. Victims of intimate partner homicide



The elimination of gender-based violence and the protection of victims is a stated goal of the EU and a key area of work for EIGE. However, this is not possible without accurate, reliable and timely data on femicide victims, perpetrators and events.

Only with a strong evidence base and solid data is it possible to generate and implement appropriate knowledge-based measures to combat intimate partner femicide.

⁽¹⁾ UNODC (2021), 'Killings of women and girls by their intimate partner or other family members – Global estimates 2020', *Data Matters No 3*, Vienna (https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/statistics/crime/UN_BriefFem_251121.pdf).

⁽²⁾ UNODC (2019), *Global Study on Homicide – Gender-related killing of women and girls*, Vienna (https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/gsh/Booklet_5.pdf).

The need for administrative data collection on intimate partner femicide

Administrative data is information that is created when people interact with public services (e.g. law enforcement, court systems and healthcare institutions).

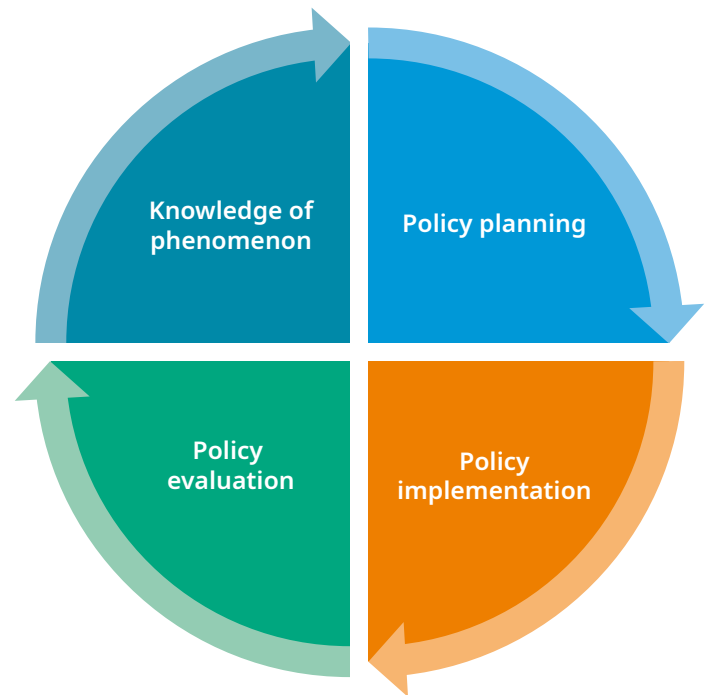
Even though administrative data is primarily collected for administrative purposes, it plays an important role in monitoring the implementation of policies and in assessing the effectiveness of the state response.

Administrative data on violence against women, collected by governments and different types of service providers, provides information about the use and demand of services and about the institutional response and/or outcomes for victims and perpetrators (e.g. prosecution and conviction rates). In addition, it can result in more efficient resource and budget allocation.

The lack of comparable data across Member States hampers the appropriate allocation of funds and the development of effective national and EU-wide policies to prevent violence against women.

Systematic data collection is of the utmost importance for effective policymaking in preventing and combating violence against women.

Figure 2. The role of data in policymaking



Legal obligations for administrative data collection in the EU

The EU victims' rights directive (Directive 2012/29/EU) establishes minimum standards on the rights of victims of crime and highlights the importance of statistical data collection as an essential component of effective policymaking.

The directive asks Member States to provide the European Commission with data on how victims have been able to access their rights, including the number and type of crimes reported by victims and, if available, the number of victims by age and gender.

Recital 64 of the directive's preamble provides further details on statistical data collection:

'Relevant statistical data can include data recorded by the judicial authorities and by law enforcement agencies and, as far as possible, administrative data compiled by healthcare and social welfare services and by public and non-governmental victim support or restorative justice services and other organisations working with victims of crime.

Judicial data can include information about reported crime, the number of cases that are investigated and persons prosecuted and sentenced.'

The EU victims' rights directive (Directive 2012/29/EU), recital 64.

The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (the Istanbul Convention) requires state parties to produce, analyse and disseminate disaggregated data on violence against women to understand its root causes, incidence and effects, and conviction rates.

This data facilitates international cooperation, allows international benchmarks to be set and supports the development of evidence-based policies to prevent violence against women.

The UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) encourages the compilation of statistics and research on the extent, causes and effects of violence.

In 2017, the CEDAW Committee recommended that state parties establish a system to collect, analyse and publish statistical data on all forms of gender-based violence against women. The committee notes that the analysis of statistical data can help to identify protection failures and further develop measures to prevent violence against women.

Specific reference is made to the need for data disaggregated by type of violence, victim-perpetrator relationship and age of the victim, and in relation to intersecting forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW 2017, GR No 35, point 49) ⁽³⁾.

⁽³⁾ CEDAW (2017), General recommendation No. 35 on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19 (<https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cedaw/launch-cedaw-general-recommendation-no-35-gender-based-violence-against-women-updating-general>).

Data availability in the EU on intimate partner femicide

EIGE has developed 13 indicators on intimate partner violence to guide data collection by the police and justice sectors across the EU. Indicator 9 collects data on the occurrence of intimate partner femicide.

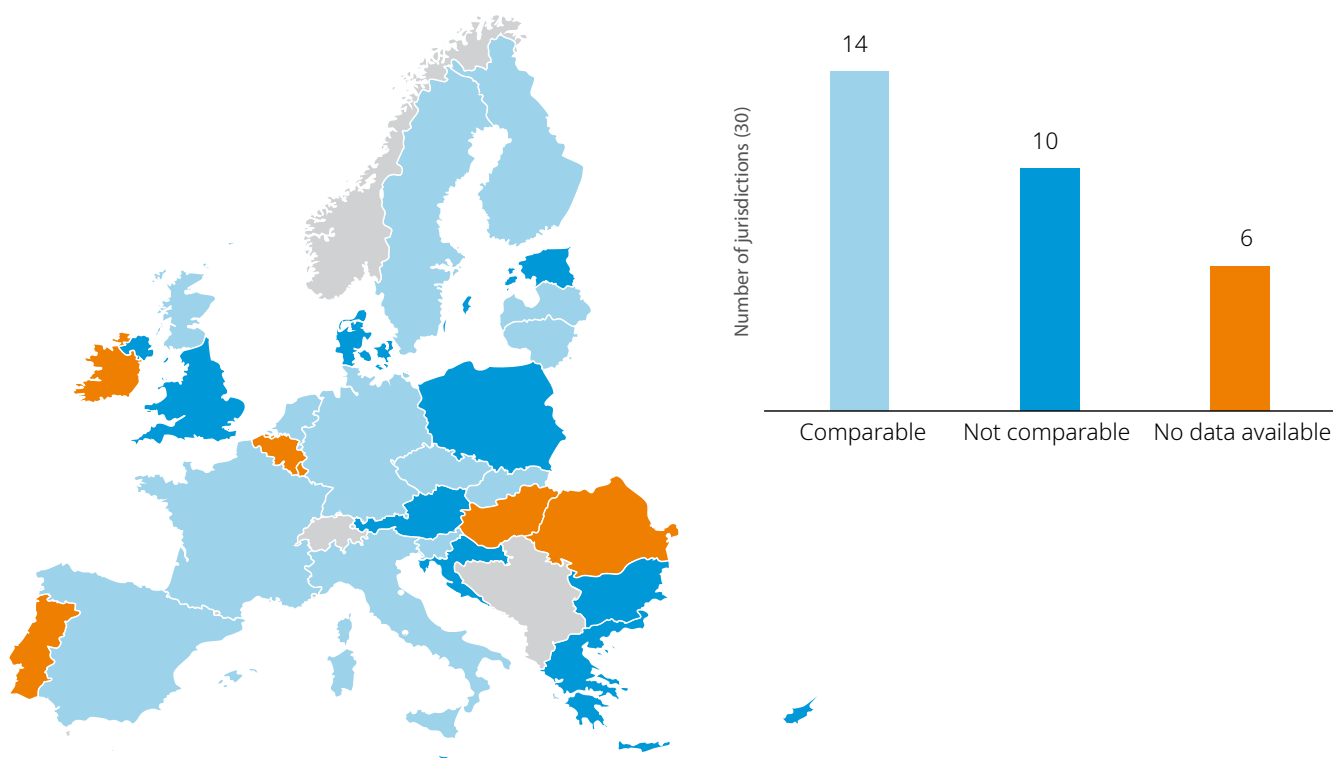
Indicator 9: women victims of intimate femicide (aged 18 and over) committed by a male intimate partner (aged 18 and over), as a share of the women victims of homicide aged 18 and over.

Between 2018 and 2020, EIGE collected data from national police and justice sectors on the 13 intimate partner femicide indicators. A new data collection exercise covering the 2018–2022 period will be conducted in 2023.

Based on the data collection exercise (2018–2020), EIGE published a detailed analysis in 2021 of the current availability and comparability of the indicators at the level of the 30 jurisdictions in the EU-27 and the United Kingdom.

As shown in Figure 3, only **14 jurisdictions (countries) have comparable data or proxy data on EIGE’s indicator on intimate partner femicide**, while 10 other jurisdictions have data for only some of the indicator components. In the six jurisdictions that did not provide data, the main reasons were issues with the reliability or availability of victim–perpetrator relationship data.

Figure 3. Data comparability of EIGE’s indicator on intimate partner femicide by jurisdiction (27 in the EU and 3 in the United Kingdom)



In the 14 jurisdictions with data comparable with EIGE’s indicator on intimate partner femicide, the latest available annual figure of women victims of homicide is 1 142 victims, 469 of which are victims of homicide perpetrated by intimate partners.

While the indicator on intimate partner femicide has the highest comparable data availability among EIGE’s 13 indicators for intimate partner violence, the definition is highly variable among jurisdictions. The offences and types of relationships included are particularly variable. Regardless of the comparability of the indicator, ‘intentional homicide’ and ‘murder’ are the most common type of femicide that the jurisdictions collect data on.

In addition, while it is important to differentiate between attempted and completed homicides, six jurisdictions cannot disaggregate this data.

What is needed for high-quality data on intimate partner femicide?

High-quality data on intimate partner femicide is consistent, comprehensive, continuous and disaggregated.

Consistent data. Data must be provided in a regular manner, use the same categories for variables to describe femicide, and establish a consistent understanding of how those variables are defined.

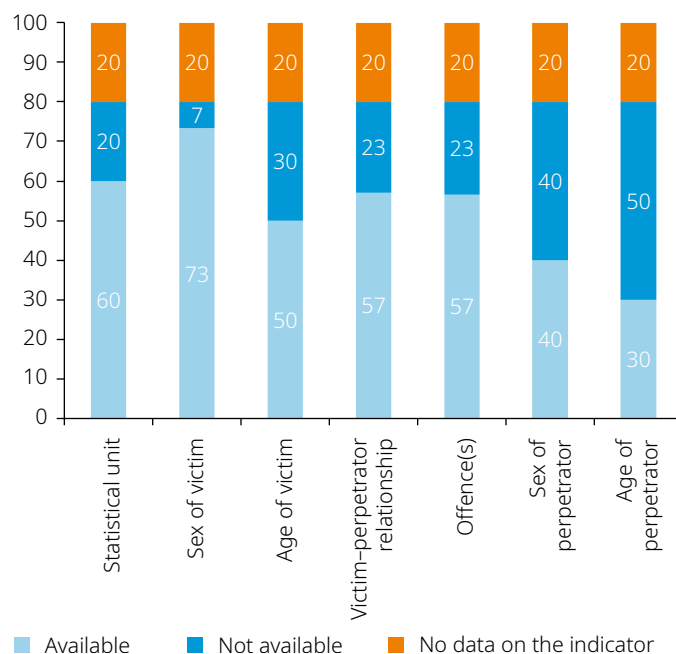
Comprehensive data. High-quality data on femicide includes data on the prevalence of femicide and data on attempted and completed femicides.

Continuous data. Data on victims and perpetrators should be collected at each stage of the criminal justice process.

Disaggregated data. Information on specific variables that make up EIGE's indicators on femicide should be collected and disaggregated by Member States. Relevant variables include the sex and age of the victim and perpetrator, the victim-perpetrator relationship, the statistical unit and the offence(s) committed.

The victim-perpetrator relationship is available in almost 60 % of cases: among the 14 jurisdictions that have data comparable with EIGE's indicator on intimate partner femicide, and in Croatia, Northern Ireland and Wales. However, in Czechia, the intimate relationship is restricted to partners living in a common dwelling.

Figure 4. Share of jurisdictions (27 in the EU and 3 in the United Kingdom) with data available on indicator 9 variables (%)



Barriers to data collection on intimate partner femicide

Institutional barriers

Lack of standard definitions. Member States have not established a common definition for femicide. The lack of a uniform definition hampers the measurement of femicide, which becomes hidden under general homicide data.

Lack of standardised methods of data collection across EU jurisdictions. Member States use different units of measurement, counting rules, recording processes and databases for collecting data on femicide.

Lack of disaggregated data. There are gaps in data availability for data disaggregated by the sex and age of the victim and perpetrator, the victim-perpetrator relationship and other factors needed to populate the indicator on femicide.

Limited scope. The data on femicide measured by Member States is often limited in scope. For example, there is limited information available on the 'gender motive'.

Poor coordination. In some Member States, there is a lack of effective coordination between institutions that collect administrative data on femicide.

Resource constraints. There are resource constraints in the police and judicial sectors limiting the extent to which jurisdictions can effectively collect comparable data on the various forms of femicide.

Societal barriers

Lack of awareness of conditions that contribute to femicide, including gender roles and risk factors that increase women's vulnerability.

Recommendations to improve data collection on intimate partner femicide in the EU

Table 1. EU- and Member State-level recommendations for improving data collection on femicide

Member State-level recommendations	
Recommendation 1	Standardise the definitions of femicide across the EU.
Recommendation 2	Adapt data-recording systems to include specific breakdowns essential for identifying femicide, including data on the sex and age of the victim and perpetrator and the victim–perpetrator relationship as a minimum.
Recommendation 3	National statistical offices, ministries, governmental and independent equality bodies, and other public bodies should analyse the gender dimension of femicide, along with its causes and consequences.
Recommendation 4	Member States should ensure coordination between administrations, equality bodies, civil society and universities to collect data on femicide, analyse the data and issue relevant policy proposals.
Recommendation 5	Ensure the continuity of data-gathering activities and statistical capacity building and training through dedicated funding for administrations that collect data on femicide.
Recommendation 6	Based on the data gathered and analysed, competent authorities should regularly report on femicide. The reports shared by authorities should be made publicly available, and act as a basis for developing further measures against femicide.
EU-level recommendations	
Recommendation 7	Accede to the Istanbul Convention to ensure that all Member States are made accountable for upholding Article 11 on data collection.
Recommendation 8	Adopt an EU directive on all forms of violence against women to complement the implementation of the Istanbul Convention.

Further reading

All data is published in EIGE's [Gender Statistics Database](#), which provides a one-stop source for all gender statistics at the Member State and EU levels. Statistical evidence from the database can be used to support the Commission's strategy on gender equality and support Member States in monitor-

ing progress, as well as improving the violence against women institutional response. Further resources on femicide and EIGE's work to combat femicide through data collection are listed in the table below.

Learn more about intimate partner femicide

Council of Europe (2021), *Second general report on GREVIO's activities – Covering the period from June 2019 to December 2020*, Strasbourg.

EIGE (2017), *Terminology and Indicators for Data Collection: Rape, femicide and intimate partner violence*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

EIGE (2020), *Intimate Partner Violence: Data collection methodology*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

EIGE (2021a), *EIGE's Indicators on Intimate Partner Violence, Rape and Femicide: EU state of play*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

EIGE (2021b), *EIGE's Indicators on Intimate Partner Violence, Rape and Femicide – Recommendations to improve data quality, availability and comparability*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

EIGE (2021c), *Measuring Femicide in the EU and Internationally: An assessment*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

EIGE (2021d), *Defining and Identifying Femicide: A literature review*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

EIGE (2021e), *Femicide: A classification system*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Eurostat (2020), *European Statistical System Handbook for Quality and Metadata Reports – 2020 edition*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Fundamental Rights Agency (2014), *Violence Against Women: An EU-wide survey – Main results*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

UN Women and World Health Organization (2022), *Improving the collection and use of administrative data on violence against women – Global technical guidance*, New York.

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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