

The role of the police in administrative data collection on intimate partner violence

Why do we need administrative data on intimate partner violence?

Intimate partner violence is a recurrent form of violence affecting women in the European Union. Efforts to combat this form of violence require an understanding of its scale and nature through reliable, systematic and comparable data.

Data is necessary to measure the prevalence and consequences of such violence, to monitor state responses to it and to evaluate policies combating it.

The requirement for high quality administrative data is also in line with Member States' international commitments to fight violence against women, as defined in Directive 2012/29/EU (the Victim's Rights Directive) and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention).

What is the role of the police?

The police play a crucial role in collecting data in the early stages of the criminal justice process. Accurate police data is essential for grasping the total number of intimate partner violence incidents reported, even if some of these are not recognised as crimes.

Data from the justice sector tends to focus more on the perpetrator, while police data can also provide information on the victim. Police data reveals how many recorded crimes do not reach court and the effectiveness of policies meant to protect victims of violence.



Main challenges for data collection

■ Lack of legal definitions for 'intimate partner violence' and 'partner'

Intimate partner violence is not recognised as a specific offence in most Member States. Member States' legislation also defines the term 'partner' differently, excluding informal relationships in a number of cases. This has implications for administrative data collection, as Member States use legal rather than statistical concepts for data collection purposes.

■ Limited recorded data on specific forms of intimate partner violence, in particular economic violence

The Istanbul Convention recognises four different forms of intimate partner violence: physical, sexual, psychological and economic ⁽¹⁾. In the majority of Member States, physical, sexual and psychological violence are recognised and penalised, with fewer Member States criminalising economic violence. However, when it comes to police data collection, data is rarely collected for all forms of violence recognised by law.

■ Lack of breakdown by the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator

Information on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is necessary in order to identify offences committed by an intimate partner. However, in most cases there is no systematic recording by the police of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator or the victim's sex and age.

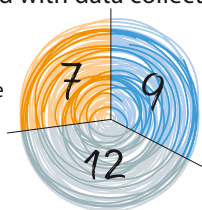
■ Potential bias when the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is recorded by hand

When the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is recorded, this is often done by hand and therefore cannot be statistically processed. Furthermore, there is little training available for police officers (who most often are not specialised) on what intimate partner violence is and how to recognise and record such incidents.

⁽¹⁾ Intimate partner violence and its four different forms are recognised under the definition of domestic violence in the Istanbul Convention.

To support Member States in reporting on intimate partner violence under the Victims' Rights Directive and the Istanbul Convention, the European Institute for Gender Equality has developed nine indicators based on uniform statistical definitions that should be populated with data collected by the police.

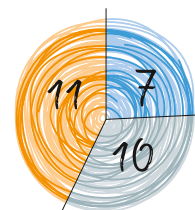
1. Annual number of women (aged 18 and over) victims of intimate partner violence committed by men (aged 18 and over), as recorded by police (1)



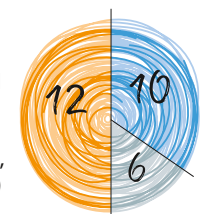
2. Annual number of reported offences related to intimate partner violence against women committed by men (aged 18 and over) (1)



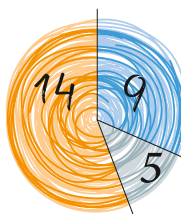
3. Annual number of men (aged 18 and over) perpetrators of intimate partner violence against women (and percentage of male population that are perpetrators) (2)



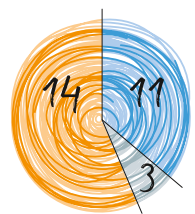
4. Annual number of women (aged 18 and over) victims of physical intimate partner violence committed by men (aged 18 and over), as recorded by police (2)



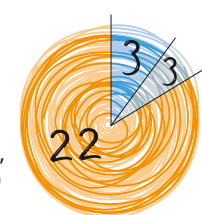
5. Annual number of women (aged 18 and over) victims of psychological intimate partner violence committed by men (aged 18 and over), as recorded by police



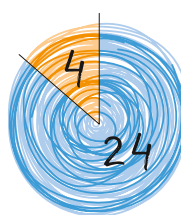
6. Annual number of women (aged 18 and over) victims of sexual intimate partner violence committed by men (aged 18 and over), as recorded by police



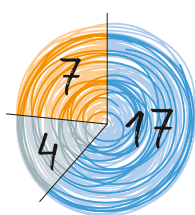
7. Annual number of women (aged 18 and over) victims of economic intimate partner violence committed by men (aged 18 and over), as recorded by police (2)



8. Annual number of women (aged 18 and over) victims reporting rape committed by men (aged 18 and over), as recorded by police



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)



- Number of Member States that can populate with exact data
- Number of Member States that can partly populate the indicator using approximate data
- Number of Member States that cannot populate the indicator

(1) The UK has three different jurisdictions, each with their own data collection processes: England and Wales (EW), Northern Ireland (NI) and Scotland (SC). Approximate data is available for the UK: EW cannot populate the indicators 1 and 2, NI can partly populate the indicators using approximate data, SC can populate with exact data.
 (2) Approximate data is available for the UK: EW cannot populate the indicator, NI and SC can partly populate the indicator.
 (3) Approximate data is available for the UK: EW and SC cannot populate indicators 4 and 7, NI can partly populate the indicators using approximate data.

Step-by-step recommendations

Step 1: Finding common ground

It is necessary to select the offences that would form the basis for administrative data collection on intimate partner violence. A full mapping of these offences in each country, in line with the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), is a vital first step for making data comparable across the EU.

Step 2: Recording the necessary information

To increase data comparability, it is important for the police to provide the same breakdowns, in particular the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator as

well as their sex. It is recommended that all Member States that cannot provide full data adapt their recording systems so as to provide information on all offences across their national legislation including all the necessary breakdowns. This would also provide data on the different forms of intimate partner violence, creating a more complete picture of this phenomenon.

Step 3: Publishing data and metadata

Few countries make data publicly available with the breakdowns needed to monitor the response to intimate partner violence. It is recommended that Member States invest in the publication of data, ideally in the form of dynamic databases or detailed cross tabulations. Considering the diversity of crime statis-

tics across the EU, this should be accompanied by metadata in order to make it usable. EIGE has proposed a reporting tool which will be useful in this regard, as it will inform stakeholders on the type of metadata to provide.

Step 4: Creating synergies between the police and justice sectors

In order to fully assess initiatives to combat intimate partner violence, it is important that the police and justice sectors come together to provide reliable and complementary data. An efficient way of doing so is by integrating databases and recording systems throughout the criminal justice chain. This will create synergies, overcome comparability challenges and discrepancies in recording practices, and it will also eliminate the duplication of work for the justice sector.

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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