

Measuring femicide in France

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 France

There is no definition of femicide in the French Penal Code ⁽⁴⁾. However, this type of offence may fall under other provisions of French law. The relevant articles for identifying femicide cases are, inter alia, Articles 221-1, 221-2, 221-3, 221-4, 221-6, 132-77 and 132-80 ⁽⁵⁾.

Article 221-1 – Voluntary murder

The wilful causing of the death of another person is murder. It is punished with 30 years' criminal imprisonment.

Article 221-2

Murder that precedes, accompanies or follows another crime is punishable by life imprisonment.

Article 221-3

A killing committed with premeditation or ambush constitutes a murder. It is punished with life imprisonment.

Article 221-4

Murder is punished with life imprisonment when committed: (1) against a minor under 15 years of age; (2) against a natural or legitimate ascendant or the adoptive father or mother; (3) against a person whose particular vulnerability, due to age, sickness or infirmity, or to any physical or psychological disability or to pregnancy, is apparent or known to the perpetrator; [...] (9) by the spouse or partner of the victim or a partner linked to the victim by a civil solidarity pact; (10) against a person because of a refusal to contract a marriage or to enter into a union.

Article 221-6 – Manslaughter

Manslaughter is punishable with 3 years' imprisonment and a fine of EUR 45 000. If committed in a manifestly deliberate violation of a particular obligation of prudence or safety imposed by law or regulation, the punishment is increased to 5 years of imprisonment and a fine of EUR 75 000.

Article 222-7

Violence resulting in death without intention of giving it is punished by 15 years of criminal imprisonment.

Since 2017, sexism has been considered an aggravating circumstance for a crime or misdemeanour (**Article 132-77**), in the same way as homophobia or racism. Likewise, **Article 132-80** provides for an aggravating circumstance when the perpetrator is a victim's current or former intimate partner.

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 ⁽⁶⁾. A detailed report regarding the methodology for the collection, reporting and validation of data, along with detailed metadata per country, has been published ⁽⁷⁾. 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) 'In the beginning of 2020, the Parliament fact-finding mission, in charge of this specific question, chaired by *La République En Marche* (LREM) MP Fiona Lazaar, ... ruled it would be useless to add femicide to the penal code, deeming that there were already enough legislative media to combat violence, and fearing that such an offence would be ruled unconstitutional for violating the principle of equality between citizens and the universalism of law.' Giacinti, M. (2020), *Femicides: Naming the phenomenon to better combat it*, Jean-Jaurès Foundation, Paris, p. 7 (https://www.jean-jaures.org/wp-content/uploads/drupal_fjj/redac/commun/productions/2020/2011/publicationfeminism-v2-en_0.pdf).

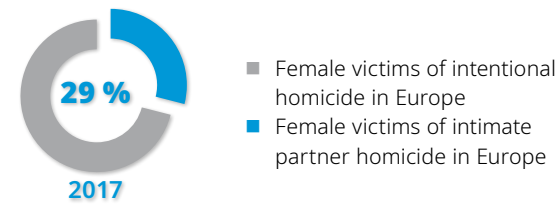
(5) For more information, see indicator 9 of the Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv__ipv_indic_9/metadata) and the French Penal Code (in French) (https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/codes/section_lc/LEGITEXT000006070719/LEGISCTA000006117596/#LEGISCTA000006117596).

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

(7) 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 ⁽⁸⁾. UNODC estimates that, in Europe ⁽⁹⁾, about 29 % of female victims of homicide ⁽¹⁰⁾ are killed intentionally by an intimate partner.



Intimate partner femicide in France

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 France, most femicides would be covered by the articles of the Penal Code identified above. According to data from the Ministry of the Interior, in 2017 there were 267 female ⁽¹¹⁾ victims of homicide ⁽¹²⁾, of whom 49 % were victims of intimate partner femicide ($n = 130$) ⁽¹³⁾.



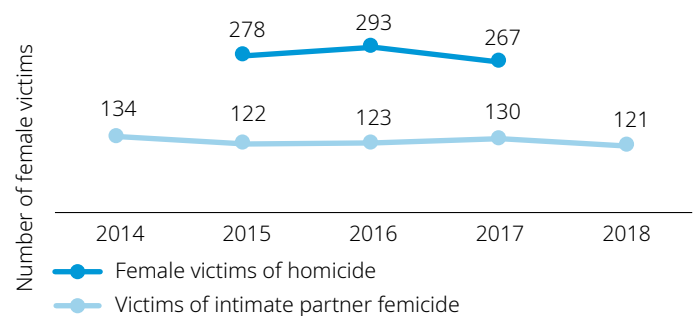
Female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide in France

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. In France, the Ministry of the Interior provides data on victims of intimate partner femicide for 2014 onwards; however, for female victims of homicide, data is available only from 2015. Figure 1 includes data regarding female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide. Although there was a decrease in homicides in 2017, the number of intimate partner femicides increased in that year.

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) husband/wife; (ii) cohabitants; (iii) unofficial couples; (iv) illegitimate couples; (v) ex-partners; (vi) couples who have entered into a solidarity civil pact; and (vii) ex-husband/wife.

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



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 ⁽¹⁴⁾. 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.

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

⁽⁹⁾ 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.

⁽¹⁰⁾ 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.

⁽¹¹⁾ 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.

⁽¹²⁾ 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.

⁽¹³⁾ Data is available at: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv_ipv_indic_9/metadata

⁽¹⁴⁾ 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 ⁽¹⁵⁾. 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 France?

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

(*) In France, there is no system in place to monitor 'gender-related killings of women'; instead, a definition of 'violent deaths within the couple' has been established and used for statistical purposes since 2006 (some revisions have been made during this period).

Official data concerning femicide is collected and analysed in France by the Delegation for Victims under the Ministry of the Interior ⁽¹⁶⁾. In addition, non-governmental organisations such as *Féminicides par compagnons ou ex* ⁽¹⁷⁾ and media outlets such as Agence France-Presse ⁽¹⁸⁾ and Libération ⁽¹⁹⁾ collect non-official

data from different sources. 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 also collect and analyse data on femicide in France ⁽²⁰⁾.

	Institution ^(a) Delegation for Victims under the Ministry of the Interior	Institution ^(b) <i>Féminicides par compagnons ou ex</i>	Institution ^(c) Agence France-Presse	Institution ^(d) Libération
Type of data collection	Official	Non-official	Non-official	Non-official
Sources of data	Police crime investigations; press reports	Press reports	Press reports; victim's friends, lawyers and family; procurers; other sources	Press reports
Stage at which the homicide is established as a femicide	During the data analysis	During the initial data collection	Information not available	During the data analysis
Stage at which the homicide is registered as a femicide	During the data analysis	During the initial data collection	Information not available	Information not available
Parameters for establishing the killing as a femicide	Victim-perpetrator relationship; aggravating circumstance related to victim's gender	Information not available	Information not available	Information not available
Regularity of data collection	Annual	Continuous	Annual	Continuous
Network(s) with which information is shared	Interministerial Mission for the Protection of Women Victims of Violence and the Fight against Human Trafficking; High Council for Equality between Women and Men; National Observatory of Crime and Criminal Justice	Information not available	Information not available	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 France. 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 may be available in France for other years. Data from the Ministry of the Interior shows that, in 2019, there were 146 killings of women by intimate partners and 25 children were killed in the context of domestic violence.

⁽¹⁵⁾ 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>).

⁽¹⁶⁾ Ministry of the Interior (2019), *Étude nationale sur les morts violentes au sein du couple*, Ministry of the Interior, Paris (<https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/fr/Actualites/Communiqués/Etude-nationale-relative-aux-morts-violentes-au-sein-du-couple-en-2019>).

⁽¹⁷⁾ <https://www.facebook.com/feminicide/>

⁽¹⁸⁾ <https://www.afp.com/sites/default/files/afpcommuniqué/201911/pdf/cpafpfeminicides19112019.pdf>

⁽¹⁹⁾ <https://www.liberation.fr/apps/2018/02/meurtres-conjugaux-derriere-les-chiffres/>

⁽²⁰⁾ For example, the General Inspectorate of Justice is currently conducting an internal study on cases of domestic violence-related homicide in 2015 and 2016. Overall, 88 cases have been analysed for these 2 years. However, homicides followed by the suicide of the perpetrator, about one third of the cases, were not taken into account.

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

Data availability	2014 ^(a)	2015 ^(a)	2016 ^(a)	2017 ^(a) ^(d)	2018 ^(a) ^(d)	2019 ^(a) ^(b) ^(c) ^(d)
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 child-related

femicide and femicide related to the victim's sexual orientation and gender identity ^(a).

Types of femicide	
Intimate partner femicide ^(a) ^(b) ^(c) ^(d)	●
Family-related femicide	○
Child femicide ^(a)	●
Prostitution-related femicide	○
Robbery-related femicide	○
Other types of femicide ^(a)	●
Femicide due to sexual orientation or gender identity ^(a)	●

Characteristics of the victim and perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator
Age ^(a) ^(b) ^(d)	●	●
Sex ^(a) ^(b) ^(d)	●	●
Gender identity	○	○
Sexual orientation	○	○
Nationality ^(a)	●	●
Education ^(d)	●	●
Occupation ^(a) ^(d)	●	●
Applied for protection order	○	n/a
Active protection order ^(a) ^(d)	n/a	●
Socioeconomic profile ^(d)	●	●
Recidivist status ^(a)	n/a	●
Alcohol/drug abuse ^(a)	●	●
Victim-perpetrator relationship ^(a) ^(b) ^(c) ^(d)	●	●
Other ^(a)	●	●
	Marital status; handicap; pregnancy; other vulnerable condition ^(a)	Marital status; place of residence ^(a)

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

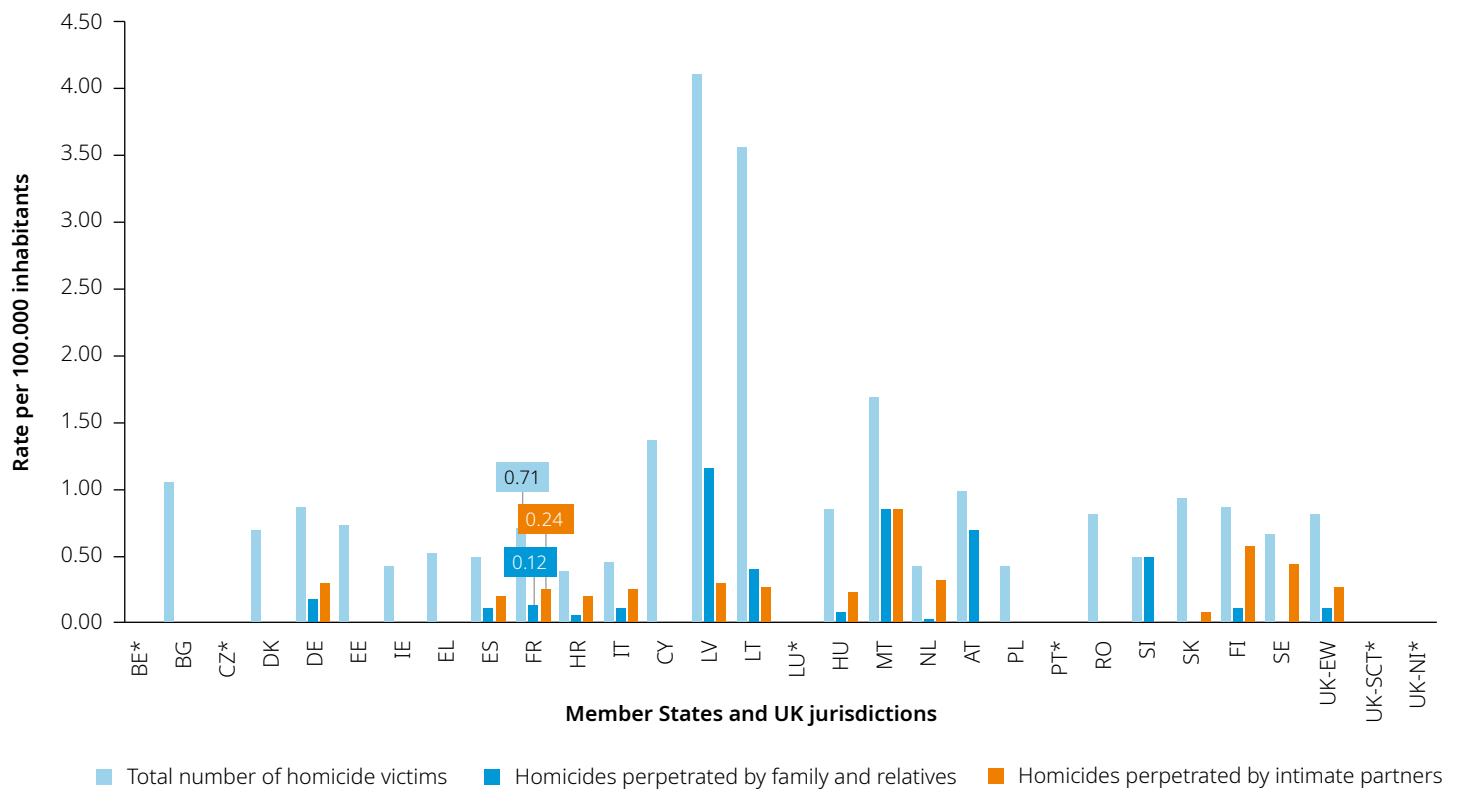
NB: n/a, not applicable.

Female homicide in the 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 France was 0.71 per 100 000 inhabitants, the 14th highest

rate among the 24 Member States for which information is available and the United Kingdom. France has the seventh highest rate (0.12) of female victims of homicide perpetrated by family and relatives (out of 14 jurisdictions) and the sixth lowest rate (0.24) of female victims of intentional homicide perpetrated by intimate partners (out of 15 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/data/database>) or this link: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/crim_hom_vrel/default/table?lang=en

Key findings

- France does not have a legal definition of femicide / feminicide⁽²¹⁾. However, the perpetrator may be liable for voluntary or aggravated murder or manslaughter.
- In 2016, the National Consultative Commission on Human Rights considered that it was not appropriate to introduce the term 'femicide' into the French Criminal Code; however, it recommended using it 'both on the international stage in French diplomatic language and also in everyday vocabulary, particularly in the media'⁽²²⁾. The inclusion of feminicide in the French Penal Code is still unlikely in 2020⁽²³⁾.
- The Ministry of the Interior is the main institution that collects or analyses official data for the identification of femicide. Data is available for intimate partner femicide and other types of femicide. Since 2006, the Delegation for Victims, a joint police-gendarmerie unit attached to the Ministry of the Interior, has published an annual report on violent deaths among couples. In addition to public bodies, three non-governmental organisations collect non-official data.
- EIGE has gathered data on homicide and intimate partner femicide for 2014 to 2018; however, data may be available in France for other years. 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 latest report from the Ministry of the Interior shows that, in 2019, 41 % ($n = 60$) of female victims of intimate partner homicide had previously experienced at least one form of violence by the perpetrator. Of this total, 38 women reported violence to the police, and in 26 cases a complaint was formally filed. In addition, 111 children were orphaned and 25 children were killed in a domestic violence context⁽²⁴⁾.

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⁽²⁵⁾. 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) In France, the term *fémicide* officially entered the vocabulary of law and the human sciences in 2014 and is defined as 'the homicide of a woman, girl or child because of her sex'. A detailed definition is available on the government's website (<https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORF-TEXT000029461189>).
- (22) National Consultative Commission on Human Rights (2016), *Avis sur les violences contre les femmes et les féminicides*, National Consultative Commission on Human Rights, Paris, p. 21 (https://www.cncdh.fr/fr/search/apachesolr_search/feminicide).
- (23) Assemblée nationale (2020), Proposition de résolution visant à rappeler le caractère prioritaire de la lutte contre les violences faites aux femmes et à reconnaître le caractère spécifique des féminicides, présentée par Madame Fiona Lazaar (http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/rapports/ega/115b2695_rapport-information).
- (24) Ministry of the Interior (2019), *Étude nationale sur les morts violentes au sein du couple*, Ministry of the Interior, Paris (<https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/fr/Actualites/Communiqués/Etude-nationale-relative-aux-morts-violentes-au-sein-du-couple-en-20192>).
- (25) European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2018), *Recommendations to improve data collection on intimate partner violence by the police and justice sector – France*, 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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