

Measuring femicide in Sweden

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 the 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 Sweden

There is no definition of femicide in the Swedish Criminal Code. However, this type of offence may fall under other provisions of Swedish criminal law. The relevant sections for identifying femicide cases are, inter alia, Sections 1 and 2 of Chapter 3 ⁽⁴⁾.

Chapter 3 – On offences against life and health Section 1 – Murder

A person who takes the life of another person is guilty of murder and is sentenced to imprisonment for a fixed term of at least 10 and at most 18 years, or for life. As grounds for life imprisonment, particular consideration is given to whether the act was preceded by careful planning, was characterised by particular cunning, aimed to promote or conceal other offences, involved severe suffering for the victim or was otherwise particularly ruthless (Act 2019:805).

Section 2 – Manslaughter

If, in view of the circumstances that occasioned the act or for some other reason, an offence referred to in Section 1 is considered less serious, the person is guilty of manslaughter and is sentenced to imprisonment for at least 6 and at most 10 years.

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).

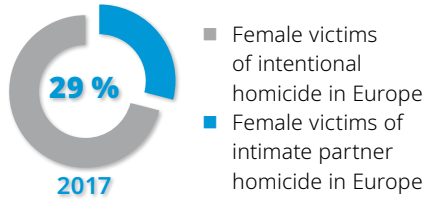
⁽⁴⁾ For more information, see indicator 9 of the Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv__ipv_indic_9/metadata) and the Swedish Criminal Code (<https://www.government.se/4a8349/contentassets/7a2dcae0787e465e9a2431554b5eab03/the-swedish-criminal-code.pdf>).

⁽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.

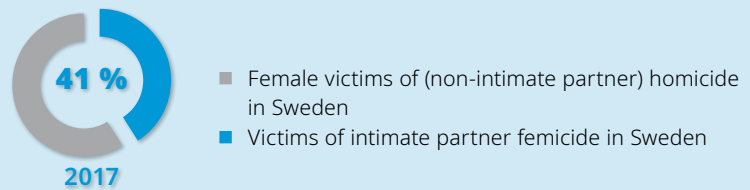
Intimate partner femicide in Europe

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 Sweden

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 Sweden, most femicides would be covered by the sections of the Criminal Code identified above. According to data from Brottsförebyggande rådet (Brå), the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, in 2017 there were 27 female (10) victims of homicide (11), of whom 41 % were victims of intimate partner femicide ($n = 11$) (12).



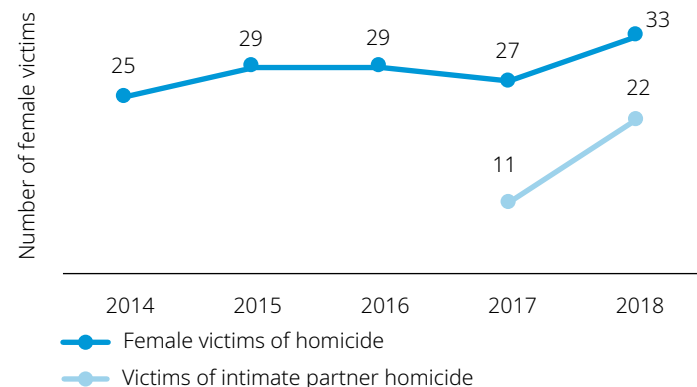
Female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide in Sweden

The official administrative data used in Figure 1 is collected by Brå, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention. Although the police collect data about everyone who is found dead (including those deaths resulting from suicide, disease and accident), the council manually examines and analyses all the reported offences, to distinguish homicides and disaggregate data by the sex and age of the victim, the relationship with the perpetrator and whether a firearm was used.

EIGE has gathered data on homicide and intimate partner femicide for 2014 to 2018. Brå, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, provides data on female victims of homicide for 2014 onwards, but for intimate partner homicide used as an approximation for femicide it provides data only for 2017 onwards. Figure 1 includes data regarding female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide. The data regarding female victims of homicide is fairly stable between 2014 and 2017; however, an increase can be observed in 2018, which is reflected in the increase in intimate partner femicides during the same period. It should be noted that a few cases in which the relationship status could not be established for different reasons are missing in each year.

in a dating relationship. Short-term dating or sporadic sexual relations are not included in the definition. Same-sex relationships are also included in this classification, although they are very rare in cases of fatal violence against women in Sweden.

Figure 1: Female victims of homicide and intimate partner homicide, as a proxy for femicide, in Sweden



Source: EIGE's Gender Statistics Database.

Type of relationship between the victim and the perpetrator

Brå, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, collects data on homicide and manslaughter cases in which the victims and the perpetrator were or had been in an intimate partnership. Intimate partners include people who are or were married, cohabiting or living apart, with or without common children, and persons who are or were

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 compar-

able 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 Sweden?

Definition of femicide and availability of data	
Definition of femicide used for statistical purposes	No
Collection of data on femicide	Yes, official data

Two institutions collect or analyse data on femicide in Sweden: Brå – the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention⁽¹⁵⁾ – and the National Board of Health and Welfare⁽¹⁶⁾. Where data on femicide in this fact-

sheet is drawn from these institutions, this is indicated by (a) and (b), respectively. Other institutions and researchers collect and analyse data on femicide in Sweden⁽¹⁷⁾.

	Institution (a) Brå – Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention	Institution (b) National Board of Health and Welfare
Type of data collection	Official statistics on reported cases of homicide/manslaughter	Evaluation commissioned by the government of cases of domestic homicides/violence
Sources of data	Police reports and other relevant documents or information collected from administrative sources, such as the prosecutor or the courts	Documents from different authorities and organisations that possess information about the victim and the perpetrator
Stage at which the homicide is established as a femicide	During data analysis	During data analysis, cases of intimate partner / family-related homicide are defined and included
Regularity of data collection	Annual	On an ongoing basis
Availability of data to the public	Statistics are presented in tables that are publicly available, and a report is published on the council's website (www.bra.se)	Results are publicly available in a report published every second year

Official sources inform administrative data collection in Sweden. In line with EIGE's data collection, official administrative data on the total number of female victims of homicide is displayed for 2014 onwards; however, data on intimate partner homicide is available only for 2017 onwards. Data from Brå, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, shows that, in both 2019 and 2020, 25 women were victims

of homicide. Of these cases, 16 in 2019 and 13 in 2020, involved lethal violence against women by a partner or ex-partner. The number of female victims includes those aged under 18 years; in 2018 4 female victims of homicide were aged under 18 years, and in both 2019 and 2020 2 female victims were aged under 18 years.

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

Data availability from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (official statistics)	2014 (a)	2015 (a)	2016 (a)	2017 (a)	2018 (a)	2019 (a)
Female victims of homicide	●	●	●	●	●	●
Victims of intimate partner homicide	○	○	○	●	●	●

⁽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.bra.se/bra-in-english/home/crime-and-statistics/murder-and-manslaughter.html>

⁽¹⁶⁾ <https://www.government.se/government-agencies/national-board-of-health-and-welfare--socialstyrelsen/>. The National Board of Health and Welfare has a legal duty (Act 2007:606) to conduct investigations on children who have died as the result of a crime and adults who have died as the result of a crime by someone next-of-kin or previously next-of-kin.

⁽¹⁷⁾ For example, Kvinnofridslinjen (<https://kvinnofridslinjen.se/en/what-is-violence/violence-women-close-relationships/>).

Administrative data on intimate partner homicide, including femicide, is collected from official sources. Sweden has information about intimate partner femicide but also other types of femicide. The domestic homicide / homicide reviews conducted by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare also include data on family-related and child femicide.

Brå, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, also has statistics on types of female homicide other than the ones committed by an intimate partner, as well as cases committed by an acquaintance or stranger. Cases of reported lethal violence within a partner relationship are counted by the Swedish National Council of Crime Prevention and cases within the family are reviewed by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare, statistics and reviews include the following information.

Types of femicide	
Intimate partner femicide ^(a) ^(b)	●
Family-related femicide ^(b)	●
Child femicide ^(b)	●
Prostitution-related femicide	○
Robbery-related femicide	○
Other types of femicide	○

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

Contextual variables		Motive for femicide	
Method of killing	○	Variables that indicate gender-related motivation	○
Location ^(b)	●	Investigating femicide	
Suicide of the perpetrator ^(b)	●	Protocol for investigating femicide cases	○
Killing of children ^(b)	●	Analysing femicide	
Killing of other persons in the family ^(b)	●	Homicide reviews / domestic homicide reviews ^(b)	●
Children present ^(b)	●	Analysis of court cases ^(b)	●
Other killings in connection with the femicide	○	Administrative data from police ^(a) ^(b)	●
Other ^(a)	●	Administrative data on cause of death	●
If firearm was used ^(a)		Media information	○
		Other ^(b)	●

NB: n/a, not applicable.

Investigating femicide

The Swedish Police Authority under Brå, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, has several protocols on working methods to be used in investigating different crimes concerning gender-based violence. The relevant materials include checklists for initial investigations at crime scenes for domestic violence, sexual assault (primarily rape) and crimes against children, and guidelines for interviewing, supporting and protecting victims of domestic violence. The police also have support materials on how to identify and investigate honour-related violence and special guidelines on investigating murder (which should be used together with guidance on investigating domestic violence in cases of intimate partner femicide).

Analysing femicide

Brå, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, compiles statistics on female victims of homicide/manslaughter by a partner/ex-partner (femicide) in annual reports, which are published on the authority's website. The data collected for these reports includes par-

ticular paper copies of all police reports registered and may also include other documents and information needed for the assessment of cases, such as lawsuit applications, autopsy records and court convictions. Verbal information from investigators is also collected during the reviewing phase. The council also carries out in-depth analyses of homicides, including violence in close relationships, with some regularity. This analysis is carried out using the council's own data collected as part of its research activities.

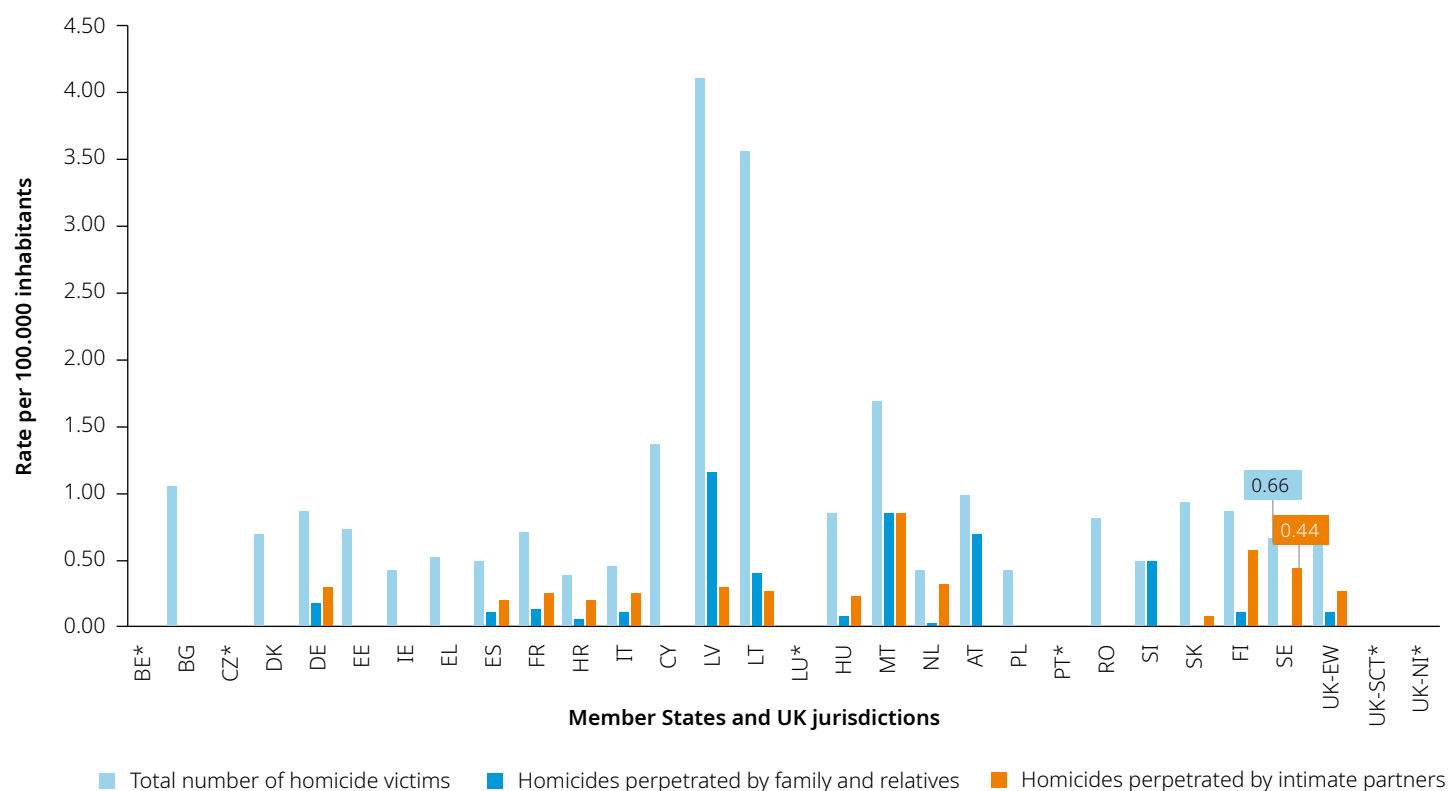
The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare has conducted domestic homicide / homicide reviews since 2012. The first available report on adult female victims of intimate partner homicide was published in 2014. The domestic homicide reviews / homicide reviews and the results are published regularly as descriptive statistics, based on the number of cases obtained by the prosecutor's office. The documents used in these reviews are collected from various authorities and organisations that have information about the victim and the perpetrator, or that the victim or the perpetrator had some contact with or received help from before the homicide occurred. These reports are submitted to the government as a basis for decision-making and are also used by policymakers at different levels of society.

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 Sweden was 0.66 per 100 000 inhabitants, and the rate of female victims of homicide perpetrated by intimate partners was 0.44. The rate of homicide perpetrated by family and relatives is not available.

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>).

Key findings

- Sweden does not have a legal definition of femicide. However, the perpetrator may be liable for murder or manslaughter.
- There are two main institutions that collect or analyse data for the identification of femicide. Sweden has information about intimate partner femicide but also other types of femicide. The domestic homicide / homicide reviews conducted by the Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare also include data on family-related and child homicide. Brå, the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention, also has statistics on types of female homicide other than the ones committed by an intimate partner, as well as cases committed by an acquaintance or stranger.
- Administrative data on homicide of female victims is available for 2014 onwards. However, intimate partner homicide data is available only for 2017 onwards. Available data includes information about the sex and age of the victim and whether a firearm was used in the killing.
- Femicide is analysed on the basis of official sources, such as domestic homicide reviews and data from police.
- The Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare conducts domestic homicide reviews and publishes regular reports every 2 years. These reports are submitted to the government as a basis for decision-making and are used by policymakers at different levels.
- Sweden is part of the European Homicide Monitor, which began as a 3-year pilot project implemented in the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden and financed by the EU.

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.

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 – Sweden*, 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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