Gender Equality Index 2019. Work-life balance

Data gaps the mask true scale of gender-based violence in the EU

Among LGBT groups across the EU, transgender people are most likely to report experiences of violence. A FRA survey found that 34 % of transgender people had experienced either a physical or a sexual attack or the threat of violence in the previous five years (FRA, 2013). A major concern is the high level of repetitive violence against this group in society, with 44 % of trans women reporting experience of physical/sexual attack or the threat of violence at least three times in the preceding 12-month period (FRA, 2014a). Trans women and men are also most likely to face hate-motivated harassment, including verbal abuse, humiliation and social exclusion. On average, one in three transgender people was harassed in the same time frame, according to the survey.

In the absence of up-to-date and comparable data within the domain of violence in all 28 EU Member States, only the forms of violence against women for which recent data is available are examined, namely femicide, female genital mutilation (FGM) and trafficking in human beings. These three forms of violence are part of the second-tier indicators of the measurement framework for the domain of violence.

Femicide

Femicide is a phenomenon captured partially through national administrative data on intentional homicide of women by an intimate partner or by family member or relatives. In 2016, 16 EU Member States reported a total of 788 women killed by a partner or family member. On average, intimate partners or family members intentionally killed more than one woman every day in those Member States (Figure 32). In the remaining 12 EU Member States there is no comparable or available data disaggregated by sex and the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator on women victims of intentional homicide, therefore the magnitude of the phenomenon cannot be truly known. In addition, to date, the term 'femicide' has not been legally defined in any Member States' criminal law.
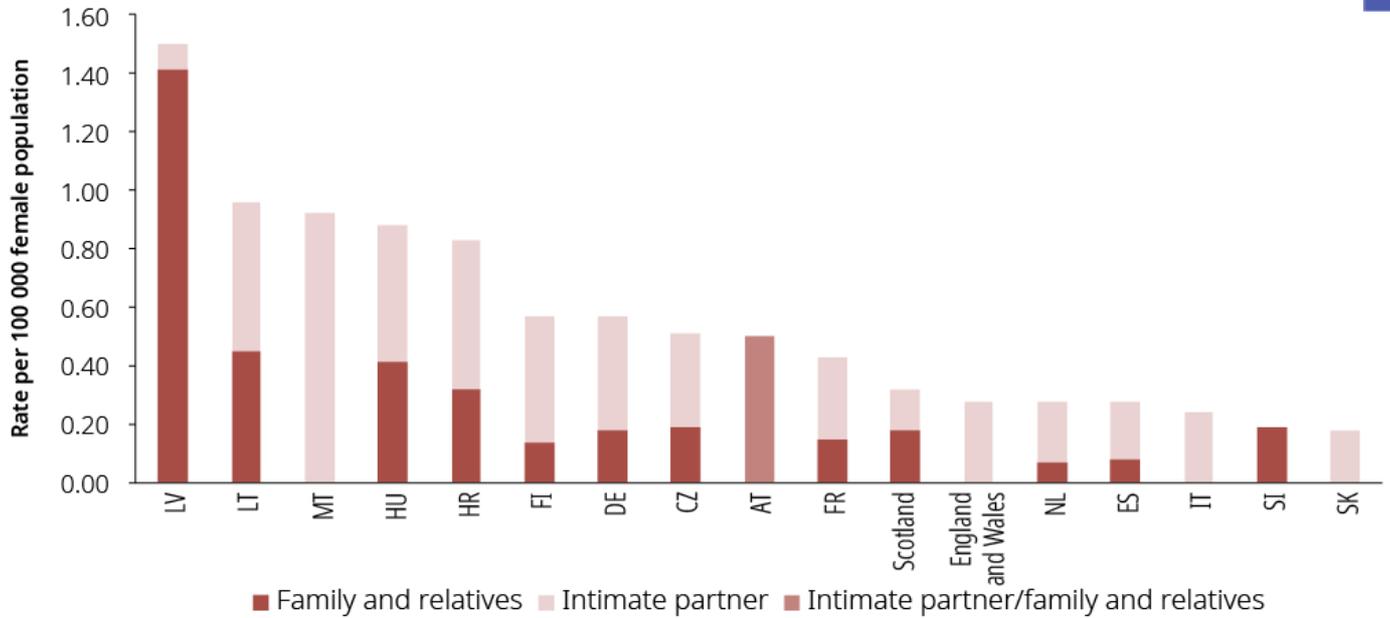
Figure 32: Women victims of intentional homicide by an intimate partner or family member, by 100 000 female population, 2016
Note: Data related to the number of women victims of intentional homicide by family and relatives was not available for Italy, Malta, Slovakia, England and Wales. The data on Austria is the sum of the intentional homicides of women committed by an intimate partner and family member or relatives. No data available for Northern Ireland.

Female genital mutilation (FGM)

FGM refers to 'all procedures involving the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for non-medical reasons' (WHO, 2008). As with some other forms of violence, FGM is particularly hard to measure in the EU. In 2015, EIGE developed a methodology to assist Member States in estimating the number of girls at risk of FGM, the aim of which is to develop better policies to prevent and combat FGM.
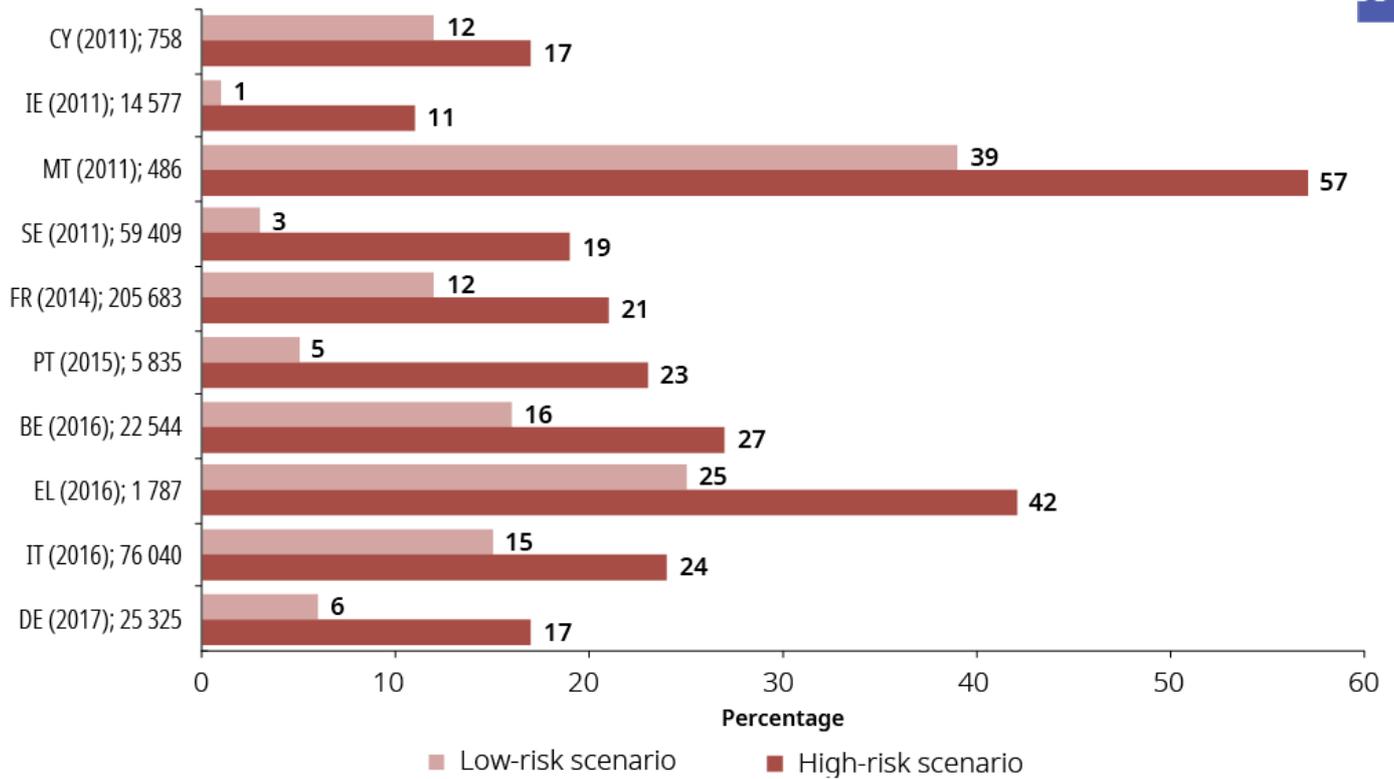
Figure 33: Estimated proportion of girls (aged 0-18) of the migrant resident population at risk of FGM (latest available year)

Since then, EIGE has carried out two studies in nine EU Member States (BE, CY, FR, EL, IE, IT, MT, PL, SE) (EIGE, 2015a, 2018a), which demonstrate that strong legal frameworks, anti-FGM campaigns and awareness-raising initiatives contribute effectively to preventing FGM in EU Member States. Drawing from EIGE's risk estimation methodology, Germany and Finland carried out their own research. In 2017, between 6 % and 17 % of 25 325 girls in Germany originating from countries where FGM is practised were considered to be at risk. In 2018, Finland[1] counted 3 000 girls likely to be at risk of FGM.

Trafficking in human beings

Trafficking in human beings is estimated from administrative records at the national level related to 'registered victims' (EIGE, 2017b). In 2016, the number of registered female victims of trafficking in the EU reached 7 007[2]. Overall, evidence shows that 68 % of registered victims of trafficking are women and girls. The most widespread form of exploitation experienced by women and girls is sexual exploitation, accounting for 95 % of the total number of registered victims of this form of trafficking in the EU. Although this data provides valuable information, the actual prevalence of trafficking in human beings is difficult to quantify due to its transnational, criminal and underground nature (FRA, 2009a).

Moreover, victims of trafficking face a vast range of obstacles generally preventing them from reporting to or being identified by a relevant formal authority. These include trauma, fear of/dependency on the trafficker, victimisation through stereotyping, lack of information about available resources and language barriers (EIGE, 2018b).

Many other severe forms of violence against women, such as psychological violence and forced marriage, are still inadequately measured in the EU due to a lack of consistent and comparable data. To support Member States in collecting administrative data on rape, femicide and intimate partner violence, EIGE proposed a set of 13 indicators based on uniform statistical definitions that should be populated with data collected by the police and justice sectors. Seven of these indicators are part of the measurement framework for the domain of violence. Administrative data is a particularly useful source of information. It shows how the police, justice, health and social services, as well as organisations dealing with the prevention, protection and prosecution of gender-based violence, respond to the phenomenon (EIGE, 2014a).

Footnotes

[1] For Finland, the calculation of the share of girls at a high and a low risk of FGM is not available.

[2] Based on the data provided by 27 Member States, including women and girls and men and boys. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-security/20181204_data-collection-study.pdf (accessed on 6 July 2019).