

# Gender Equality Index 2020: Digitalisation and the future of work

## 8. Domain of violence

The domain of violence provides a set of indicators that can help the EU and its Member States to monitor the extent of the most common and documented forms of violence against women.

Unlike the other domains, the domain of violence does not measure differences between women and men; rather, it examines women's experiences of violence. The main objective is to eliminate violence against women, not to reduce gaps.

EIGE developed a three-tier structure of measurement to provide the most complete and reliable picture of violence against women in the EU.

- 1 A composite measure combines indicators on the extent of violence against women. The composite measure does not affect the final score of the Gender Equality Index. However, violence against women must be considered alongside the other domains, as it mirrors the rest of the enduring inequalities captured by the Index. In 2017, the EU composite measure score was 27.5 (EIGE, 2017d). This measure is calculated on a scale from 1 to 100, where the highest score indicates the highest prevalence of violence against women. The latest calculation of the composite measure score relied on data from a 2014 FRA survey (FRA, 2014b). Until the completion of the next EU-wide survey on violence against women, led by Eurostat<sup>[1]</sup>, scores for this domain cannot be updated.
- 2 Additional indicators cover the broader range of forms of violence against women described in the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011). These indicators may be included in the calculation of the single score if more reliable and comparable data becomes available. They includes EIGE's indicators on administrative data (EIGE, 2018a).
- 3 Contextual factors include some of the root causes of violence against women. Designed to monitor Member State compliance with the obligations set out in the Istanbul Convention, they cover six dimensions: policies, prevention, protection and support, substantive legislation, involvement of law enforcement agencies, and societal framework.

## Violence against women surged during the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic that hit the EU in early 2020 has had substantial health and economic implications, including for gender-based violence. The lockdowns imposed across all Member States heightened the threat to women victims of violence. According to WHO, violence against women increases during every type of emergency, including pandemics (WHO, 2020a). In France, for example, during the first 3 weeks of lockdown, the number of registered cases of domestic violence increased by over 30 % (Euronews, 2020).

Lockdown exacerbated the risk of domestic abuse by forcing women to remain at home for a prolonged period of time, while constant exposure to their abuser made it very difficult to contact helplines or other sources of help. It has also weakened women's ability to leave abusive partners after the crisis, owing to the ensuing financial insecurity (EIGE, 2020d).

Several countries adopted ad hoc measures to facilitate reporting of cases of violence in pharmacies, establishing a code system for women to signal that they were in danger, and arranged hotel accommodation to enable at-risk women to self-isolate in safety (Talmazan et al., 2020). Italy developed a smartphone app that allowed situations of abuse to be reported directly to the police without making a phone call (Ferrari, 2020).

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### Footnotes

[1] The data collection is planned to take place between 2020 and 2022.

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