

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



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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 of Member States to fight violence against women, as defined in Directive 2012/29/EU (the Victims' 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 judiciary?

Data collected by the justice sector is necessary for understanding how efficient and effective the criminal justice system is in dealing with perpetrators of intimate partner violence, and in protecting victims. Incidents reported to the police only provide partial information on the phenomenon, and this data becomes more concrete and reliable as cases progress through the criminal justice system. Data from the justice sector is also very important in addressing two main pillars of the Istanbul Convention, prevention and prosecution.

Main challenges for data collection

- Lack of a unified system to record data on intimate partner violence collected by the different institutions of the judiciary
- Different institutions of the judiciary often use different systems and procedures to record data on cases related to intimate partner violence. This hinders the collection of harmonised and reliable data on the phenomenon, both within and between Member States. The units of measurement used across justice sectors also greatly vary, leading to incompatibility.
- Severe lack of statistical data from the justice sector, especially on victims and their relationship with the perpetrator
- Data recorded by the justice sector is more detailed and thorough than data recorded by the police sector, which is mainly based on perpetrators and basic information on victims. There is also a greater lack of information recorded on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. This makes it difficult to track cases of intimate partner violence against women, and determine the number of women victims. Court records also tend to focus data collection on procedural information. This results in very general statistics which are only broken down by offence categories.
- Poor recording procedures, systems and training
- Often, case-related information recorded by hand undermines efforts to improve the statistical processing of justice data and resulting in little standardisation across data collection systems. Furthermore, staff in the justice sector often deal with complex cases on paper, and the amount of information recorded often depends on their level of awareness.
- Diversity of protection orders issued in cases of intimate partner violence
- Protection orders can be issued at different stages of the proceedings and by different bodies, limiting comparability of information within and between Member States. In some cases, protection orders are issued under a wider category of 'domestic violence' or under other categories which do not adequately cover the scope of intimate partner violence.
- Limited human, physical, and financial resources in the criminal justice sector
- In some Member States, relevant data is collected by the different justice services, yet they lack the human, physical, and financial resources to process and analyse it. There are large barriers to standardised and comparable statistical data on intimate partner violence. Comparing areas of interest also present obstacles for institutions that specifically focus on intimate partner violence.
- Limited cooperation and coordination between the police and justice sectors
- There is a lack of coordination in data collection across different pillars of the criminal justice process, which hinders the traceability of cases throughout the proceedings, and increases differences in recording practices.

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[Indicators on intimate partner violence and rape for the police and justice sectors](#)



[EIGE's work on data collection on violence against women](#)



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