

Femicide

Femicide is the most severe manifestation of gender-based violence.

It is deeply rooted in and a manifestation of power imbalances in society, which promotes an unequal status for men and women. Femicide is broadly defined as the killing of a woman or girl because of her gender, and can take different forms, such as the murder of women as a result of intimate partner violence; the torture and misogynist slaying of women; killing of women and girls in the name of “honour”; etc.

EIGE has carried out [four studies](#) on administrative data collection and developed 13 indicators on intimate partner violence, rape and femicide for the police and justice sectors. The necessity to better understand and measure the phenomenon of femicide has led EIGE to develop a definition of femicide:

The killing of a woman by an intimate partner and death of a woman as a result of a practice that is harmful to women. Intimate partner is understood as former or current spouse or partner, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim

EIGE has also developed a corresponding indicator for the definition:

Women victims of intimate femicide aged 18 and over committed by an intimate partner, as a share of women victims of homicide aged 18 and over

We name femicide because the gender-neutral term of homicide overlooks the realities of inequality, oppression and systematic violence against women.

We need to count femicide because consistent and publicly available collection of data is the first step towards preventing femicide and protecting victims of gender-based violence more generally.

EIGE aims at supporting EU Member States in their efforts to collect administrative data on intimate partner violence and gender-related killings of women and girls (femicide), in order to prevent and combat it.

Sound and comparable data is essential to understanding the prevalence of femicide.

Unfortunately, data is, at present, rather fragmented.

Publications

Measuring femicide in the EU and internationally: an assessment

[Go to the report](#)



This report gives a comprehensive overview of definitions, data collection systems, methodologies and variables in gathering data on femicide. It outlines whether and how different global and national actors are moving towards:

- a legal definition of femicide;

- construction of indicators / measurement framework based on common (agreed) variables to identify femicide.

The EU-27 have no definitions of femicide in the legal context, but killings of women are classified in several ways, including intentional homicide, non-intentional homicide and manslaughter. Some Member States introduced aggravated circumstances to better identify femicide, such as hatred, contempt or hostility towards a person on the grounds of sex; the gender-based violence connotation; or sexism, homicide of an intimate partner and sexual violence.

EIGE suggests some recommendations to enable Member States' law enforcement institutions, judiciary and health organisations to gather sound and comparable data that can be translated into statistical data in a standardised way, that unveils the gender dimension of the killing of women and girls:

A comparable working definition of femicide
A minimum dataset
Data governance and coordination
A protocol for femicide

Defining and identifying femicide: a literature review

[Go to the literature review](#)



This literature review provides a comparative analysis of definitions of, types of, indicators of and data collection systems on femicide in the EU and at international level.

This literature review:

Detects descriptive variables or factors in a murder case to assess the demographic characteristics of the victim and perpetrators, the crime scene and the motivation for the killing.

Offers an overview of the themes and challenges raised in the literature;

Presents definitions of femicide, defines different types of femicide and reports variables used to identify femicide;

Suggests administrative data that, if collected, might be used to establish a measurement framework for femicide.

The report sheds light on key problems in defining femicide, including poor data-collection systems, the invisibility of femicide as a result of underreporting, biases in data gathering and poor data governance.

The main types of femicide discussed in the literature are intimate partner femicide, sexual murder, femicide of women older than 65 and racist and homophobic femicide.

Based on the review, major descriptive variables for identifying femicide for statistical purposes have been identified.

Femicide: a classification system

[Go to the report](#)



The general concept of femicide can be articulated as gender-related killing (killing of a woman because she is a woman) in political, societal, criminal, sexual and interpersonal contexts:

Click to view a full table presenting the contexts and the types of femicide that occur within them

Context	Definition	Types of femicide
1. Political context	Killing linked to State opposition or of other political groups against women's empowerment; State violence or based on the complicity of the authorities or care providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Death of women by police persecution and police harassment• Unsafe abortion-related death• Killing due to insecure/risky working conditions• Unnecessary lethal surgery (hysterectomies, FGM)• Femicide related to witchcraft• Killing tolerated by the State• Killing in armed conflict• Denial of healthcare for reproductive reasons

2. Societal (norms) and cultural context

Killing linked to disobedience/transgression of norms and cultural beliefs (also killing for discrimination, disobedience/transgression of traditional gender roles and sexual norms). It includes killings aimed to override and nullify the enjoyment and exercise of political rights and to prevent women's empowerment

- Honour killing
- Dowry-related Killing
- FGM-related death
- Female infanticide
- Female foeticide
- Killings related to sexual orientation and gender identity
- Racist femicide
- Socio-political femicide
- Killing as result of misogynist attitudes/social practices

3. Criminal context

Killing committed in relation to other organised crimes, for instance trafficking of human beings, sexual exploitation and other organised crimes

- Trafficking related killing
- Killing in the context of smuggling migrants
- Organised crime
- Drug trafficking
- Gang killing

4. Sexual context

Killing of women due to sexual violence or linked to acts that might be defined as sexual in nature (with the exclusion of those perpetrated by a partner)

- Non-intimate sexual killing
- Killing of women involving sexual violence

5. Interpersonal context

Killing linked to an unequal power relation with the perpetrator, within intimate partnership, family and outside the family

- Killing of women by (ex-) partner or spouse/result of intimate partner violence
- Killing of women by family members
- Killing of pregnant women
- Continuum of violence in the interpersonal context
- Position of subordination, marginalisation and risk (included authority, control and care relationship)
- Femicide 65+

EIGE presents a proposal of variables for a classification system that will help to standardise data gathering and contribute to a European Union-wide definition of femicide for statistical purposes:

Click to view a full table of the proposed variable categories and individual variables

Category of variables

Variables

Victim characteristics

- Socio-demographic data (age/date of birth, marital status, education, occupation, employment status, income, ethnicity, migration, country of birth, citizenship/nationality, birth country of parents, country of residence, children, disability)
- Intoxication status
- Non-conforming sexual behaviour, sexual orientation or gender identity
- Victim of sexual(ised) abuse/violence
- Women in prostitution, victim of sexual exploitation
- Pregnancy
- Having child who is not the offspring of the perpetrator
- Political activism, membership of political group, women/human rights' defenders

Perpetrator characteristics

- Sex and gender
- Socio-demographic data (age/date of birth, marital status, education, occupation, employment status, income, ethnicity, migration, country of birth, citizenship/nationality, birth country of parents, country of residence, children, disability)
- Prior history of violence against women
- Intoxication status
- Prior violence record (in public and/or private)

Victim-perpetrator relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Intimate or sexual partners (cohabiting or not cohabiting, cohabiting in the past, current partner or past partner) (Current spouse, current cohabitating partner, current non-cohabitating partner, former spouse, former cohabitating partner, former non-cohabitating partner) - Family members or relatives (cohabiting or not cohabiting, cohabiting in the past) - Friends or acquaintances of the family - Friends or acquaintances of the victim - Care relationship (carer, doctor, nurse, etc.) - Colleague/business or work relationship - Authority figures (supervisor, employer, teacher, police, public official, clergy, etc.) - Members of paramilitary or armed groups - Members of armed governmental forces - Unknown
Circumstances surrounding the killing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Crime scene and location of the murder - Prior domestic violence, Protection Orders, services used (by victim) - Sexual exploitation - Sexual(ised) abuse/violence - Degrading injuries of victim's body - Mutilation of victim's body - Harmful practices (FGM, (illegal) abortion) - Part of activities of organised criminal group - Victim in line of fire (when aggressor wanted to kill a woman)
Modus operandi/killing situation characteristics/incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Availability/use of weapons - Ligation, strangulation - Position of the victim's body - Disappearance/missing person - Sexual abuse - Overkilling - Incitement or pressure on the victim to commit suicide
Gender motives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Background/risk factors, such as gender inequalities and dependencies, economic situation/deprivation, prior domestic violence - Victim's intent to break-up the relationship - Pregnancy - Conflict of custody of children - Child who is not the offspring of the perpetrator - Economic problems - Jealousy - Possessiveness - Controlling behaviour - Prior history of violence against women - Hate motivated (lesbian, transgender victim) - Alleged reasons of honour, family reputation, religious beliefs - Other criminal activity involved - Interfering with the enjoyment and exercise of women's/human rights

Good policies need high-quality data that is based on agreed and clear definitions, recognised variables and common units of measurement and indicators.

EIGE is proposing to start a uniform data collection based on a shorter and more feasible classification of 12 types of intentional and unintentional femicide.

28 factsheets on the femicide framework in Member States

EIGE has developed 28 factsheets on the femicide framework in Member States.

Data collection systems vary widely across EU Member States, as they draw on various sources.

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. Based on these EIGE is presenting country-factsheets with detailed information on the data gathering at national level.





Croatia



Italy



Cyprus



Latvia



Lithuania



Luxembourg



Hungary



Malta



Netherlands



Austria



Poland



Portugal



Romania



Slovenia



Slovakia



Finland



Sweden



United Kingdom

In a picture: Femicide - name it, count it, end it



FEMICIDE: Name it, count it, end it.
Femicide is the killing of women and girls because of their gender. It can be:

1. Political

- Death of women by police persecution
- Unsafe abortion-related death
- Killing due to risky working conditions
- Denial of healthcare for reproductive reasons



2. Cultural

- So-called honour killing
- Dowry-related killing
- FGM-related death
- Female foeticide or infanticide
- Killings related to sexual orientation and gender identity
- Racist femicide
- Killing as result of misogynist attitudes/social practices



3. Criminal

- Trafficking related killing
- Organised crime
- Gang killing



4. Sexual

- Non-intimate sexual killing
- Killing of women involving sexual violence



5. Interpersonal

- Killing of women by (ex-) partner or spouse/result of intimate partner violence
- Killing of women by family members
- Femicide 65+



What does 'the killing of women and girls because of their gender' mean?

It means that some women are killed because of sexist attitudes and practices in our societies.

#EIGEFMeasuringFemicide



Next steps

EIGE is currently working in a project entitled "Improving legal responses to counter Femicide" (2021).

The overall aim of the study is to improve the institutional responses by identifying the gaps within and between law and in practice when providing justice to victims of femicide.

The report will be published in 2022.