

## MSPY Database



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*A centralised and joint database on violence against women (Croatia)*

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### **Gain insights into the issue of domestic violence: a centralised and joint database on violence against women (VAW)**

There have been numerous policies, legislative and institutional changes concerning improvement of gender equality and combating violence against women in the last 15 years. Still, there exists a necessity for further improvement in combating various forms of violence and discrimination against women.

In Croatia all forms of violence against women are punishable, regardless of whether they are a component of intimate partner violence (IPV) or not, pursuant to the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence (misdemeanour) and the Criminal Code of the Republic of Croatia.

MSPY collects data on violence against women pursuant to the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence ([1]) (misdemeanour) and the Rulebook on the Content of Mandatory Records and Reports, Collection, Processing and Archiving Statistical Data is in the process of implementing the Law on the Protection from Domestic Violence ([2]).

In accordance with the mentioned Rulebook, relevant institutions keep records and submit conjoint semi-annual and annual reports to MSPY.

[1] Official Gazette 137/09, 14/10, 60/10.

[2] Official Gazette 105/11.

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## The legal framework

The Law on Protection from Domestic Violence (misdemeanour) was adopted in Croatia in 2003 ([3]) and later in 2009 ([3]) and includes:

- physical violence
- psychological violence, including stalking
- sexual violence, including sexual harassment and economic violence.

In Croatia all listed forms of violence against women (VAW) are punishable, regardless of whether they are a component of intimate partner violence (IPV) or not, pursuant to the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence (misdemeanour) and the Criminal Code of the Republic of Croatia. For these incidents charges are filed by ex officio, at the request of the authorised prosecutor, or by the victim. As of January 2013 Criminal Code introduced a new felony – female genital mutilation (Article 116) as: “Provisions concerning the prevention and suppression of forms of female genital mutilation” ([4]).

Despite the fact that significant positive changes in gender equality (GE) have been made in Croatia in the last 15 years, these changes were primarily made in the field of adopting legislative changes and developing central key structures for gender equality. Key legal framework documents which highlight gender equality as a fundamental societal value are:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia ([5]) (Article 3, Articles 14 and 15).
- Gender Equality Act ([6]).

- Labour Act ([7]) (Article 5).
  - Anti-discrimination Act ([8]).
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## The policy approach

Central structures for gender equality are:

- The Gender Equality Committee of the Croatian Parliament (2001),
- the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality (2003)
- the Government Office for Gender Equality (2004)

There are also GE coordinators in state administrative bodies.

There exist more general policies for introducing gender equality, such as the National Policy for Gender Equality (2011 – 2015) as a fundamental strategic document aiming to eliminate discrimination of women and to establish gender equality. In order to ensure the implementation of the National Policy for Gender Equality 2011 – 2015, the action plan contains key activities and measures, including elimination of violence against women (VAW). This chapter includes goals and measures which include activities such as raising public awareness about the phenomena, improving the status and protection of women victims of all forms of violence and improving the system of keeping statistical data, intersectoral cooperation, the coordination of competent state bodies, institutions and civil society organisations.

An integral part of the strategic framework for the promotion of gender equality and combating VAW is other goals and measures incorporated into numerous national plans, programmes and strategies for improving gender equality: the National Strategy for Protection Against Domestic Violence 2011 – 2016; the National Programme for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights 2013 – 2016; the National Plan for the Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings 2012 – 2015, the Strategic Development of Official Statistics of the Republic of Croatia 2013 – 2022, and the Programme of Statistical Activity of the Republic of Croatia 2013 – 2017. The strategic approach is also based on the international agreements, such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating VAW and domestic violence.

In Croatia all forms of VAW are punishable, regardless of whether they are a component of intimate partner violence (IPV) or not, pursuant to the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence (misdemeanour) and the Criminal Code of the Republic of Croatia. For these incidents charges are filed ex officio, at the request of the authorised prosecutor, or by the victim. The first Act on Protection from Domestic Violence was adopted in 2003. Due to the aligning the Croatian legislation with EU legislation, a new Act on Protection from Domestic Violence was adopted in 2009 and includes:

- physical violence
- psychological violence, including stalking
- sexual violence, including sexual harassment
- economic violence.

It does not criminalise these types of violence and concentrates on legal protection and assistance to victims of crime (6 protective measures aimed at prevention of violence and protection of family members).

The National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence for the period from 2011 to 2016 prescribes the collection of relevant statistical data on domestic violence and improving the methodology of the system of collecting data on cases of violence. MSPY is in charge of this measure.

In Croatia, there is neither a single law nor a single set of rules adopted by a specific institution for the collection of official statistical data on VAW. For this reason, the main source for VAW are official police reports developed on a yearly basis that include data about different forms of VAW (both as a part of intimate partner violence and not).

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## Data collection process

The current administrative system in Croatia can be characterised as 'centralised', as all data are collected by relevant governmental bodies for all of Croatia. Even though Croatia has 21 counties, data are rarely collected and analysed on a regional level. Croatia still does not have a coherent and coordinated information system on VAW; each ministry and institution is collecting data from different sources. The data are mostly not compared nor do they complement each other, but are kept separate within the relevant ministry.

The Ministry of Social Policy and Youth (MSPY) is authorised to collect, process and store statistical data in the field of domestic violence from other relevant institutions, under the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence. All competent authorities covered by the Protocol of Conduct in Cases of Domestic Violence (police, judicial bodies, social welfare centres, health institutions, educational institutions) are required to keep records on cases of domestic violence and to submit data to the ministry in semi-annual and annual reports. National Strategy for Protection against Domestic Violence 2011 – 2016 prescribes the collection of relevant statistical data on domestic violence and improving the methodology of the system for collecting data in cases of violence. MSPY is in charge of this measure. The respective data are not publicly available.

To this end, the MSPY runs a database, based on the Law on Protection from Domestic Violence and the Rulebook on the Content of Mandatory Records and Reports, Collection, Processing and Archiving Statistical Data and is in the process of implementing the Law on the Protection from Domestic Violence. The main aim of this database is to gain insight into the issue of domestic violence, the basic indicators, trend changes, the ratio of the women as victims or perpetrator, etc.

Data collected by relevant institutions jointly comprise 65 categories of basic information (57 categories defined by the Rulebook and 8 additional categories from the information from the welfare system), which keep a record of:

- the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator of the violent act
- a record of sex and age of both the victim and perpetrator
- measures undertaken
- judicial rulings
- information about recidivism in the case of the perpetrator.

The ministry in charge of domestic issues is authorised to collect, process and archive statistical data obtained in the implementation of the law.

Social welfare centres keep a record which contains data about:

- the total number of reported cases of domestic violence
- number of reports made to the police by the centre
- number of registered cases of domestic violence (classified according to type, duration, category of the victims)
- number of victims
- number of perpetrators

- number of actions taken
- number of families where violence was reported
- types of actions undertaken by the centre for the victim
- number of special guardians appointed to the child in court proceeding linked to domestic violence
- measures for legal and domestic protection applied
- types of recommendations made to the court aimed at protecting the rights and interests of the child in cases of domestic violence
- number of individuals placed in shelters (classified according to age and sex)
- number of notices about initiated criminal proceedings linked to domestic violence.

Centres keep a more detailed record than the one stipulated by the law and the Rulebook, and collect additional data on:

- total number of recorded acts of violence based on the moment the centre made contact with the victim
- number of verbal settlements in cases of domestic violence
- number of occurrences when material aid was provided to victims of domestic violence
- number of notices about initiated court proceedings linked to domestic violence
- number of reports on emergency placement in shelters
- number of families with reported cases of domestic violence
- economic background of the family
- kinship relations between the abuser
- the victim in reported cases of domestic violence.

In addition to this, records kept by health care institutions contain data on:

- number of reports received by the Croatian Healthcare Institute from doctors of medicine in cases where victims suffered injuries at the hand of a family member
- number of cases in which the victims of violence were referred to medical treatment
- costs of the treatment for the victim of domestic violence
- number of reported cases when the victim of domestic violence was referred to a psychiatric institution for treatment

- number of cases in which the perpetrator of domestic violence was referred to a psychiatric institution for treatment.

Data are connected to those collected by police and misdemeanour courts.

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## The MSPY database

Pursuant to the Act on the Right to Access Information ([\[9\]](#)) MSPY is obliged to provide access to statistical data collected on the basis of the Rulebook to every physical or legal entity that files a request for information.

MSPY publishes only a portion of information linked to domestic violence, which is collected in social welfare centres, in its annual statistical report available on the web page of the Ministry.

This database provides important insights into:

- the basic issues of domestic violence
- the most common types of perpetrators and the victims
- the most typical forms of violence committed against women in relationships
- the most common profile victims of violence based on age
- many other socio-demographic variables.

These indicators can make a significant contribution in the development of action plans for combating VAW and new national strategy against domestic violence.

A significant contribution made by this database lies in the fact that it is the first database of this kind in Croatia, in the sense that it does not only collect information about reported cases, like the one kept by the Ministry of Interior, but also includes data on measures undertaken, steps taken in the process of reporting and processing violence as well as information regarding the help provided to victims. Furthermore, the database connects data from all relevant institutions combating domestic violence, from the police and justice system to social welfare centres.

A main obstacle is related to the lack of published reports and/or publications, which would be easily accessible and that would have a stronger impact on the development and adoption of public policies in combating VAW.

[\[3\]](#) Official Gazette 116\*/03, 137/09, 14/10, 60/10.

[\[4\]](#) Official Gazette 125/11, 144/12, 56/15, 61/15.

[5] [Constitution of the Croatian Parliament](#) (GO, 85/10)

[6] [Gender Equality Act](#) (OG 82/08)

[7] [Labour Act](#) (OG 149/09, 61/11, 82/12)

[8] [Anti-discrimination Act](#) (OG 85/08, 112/12)

[9] Official Gazette 25/13, 85/15

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## Contacts/Further Information

### Contacts

Sabina Morosini Turčinović, psychologist

Senior Expert Advisor

Department for Children and Family

Sector for Social Policies and Policies for Children, Youth and Family

Ministry of Social Policy and Youth

Trg Nevenke Topalušić 1, 10 000 Zagreb

tel: +38515557331

e-mail: [sabina.morosini-turcinovic@mspm.hr](mailto:sabina.morosini-turcinovic@mspm.hr)

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## More on good practices

[Administrative data collection on violence against women: Good practices \(publication\)](#) →

[EIGE's collection of good practices](#) →

[EIGE's approach to good practices](#) →



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## Downloads



**MSPY Database Croatia**

EN (PDF, 1.36 MB)

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## Metadata

**TOOL:** Administrative dataset, Awareness-raising, Monitoring