

# Reported cases of violence against women reveal only the tip of the iceberg

---



**Most women in the European Union who are abused by their partner do not call the police. Only one in three women (33 %) who are physically or sexually abused by their partner contact the authorities. Reported figures of intimate partner violence conceal how widespread it really is. In the lead up to the international day for the elimination of violence against women on 25 November, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is launching its new study to improve data collection by the police and justice sectors on intimate partner violence.**

“Data from police and the judiciary is a valuable source of information on violence against women. It can help Member States check if their actions to prevent violence, protect victims and punish perpetrators are working and help them design more effective measures in the future. However, it is crucial that trust in police is raised to encourage more women to come forward and report cases of violence,” said Virginia Langhakk, EIGE’s director

OF VIOLENCE, SAID VIRGINIJA LANGBARK, EIGE'S DIRECTOR.

"The EU is one of the best places for women to thrive, but still too many are victims of violence and discrimination. We can't and we won't stay idle. That's why the EU is acting to improve support and protection for victims. Together with EU governments and assistance from EIGE, we must work hard to end violence against women. It does not belong in the 21st century," said Věra Jourová, Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality.

As it currently stands in the EU, there are several factors restricting the collection of comparable, high quality data on intimate partner violence, underreporting being just one of them. Different legal definitions of violence related crimes make it impossible to compare data across Member States. In addition, some forms of violence do not get registered as crimes and not all complaints are recorded electronically or in a way that helps to understand the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

There is room to improve data collection processes in all Member States. A strong commitment from law enforcement agencies to collect more comparable data on intimate partner violence and make it available is essential for such a change to happen. In terms of legal improvements, intimate partner violence should be recognised as a specific crime, separate from domestic violence. Having a specific offence for intimate partner violence means that women who do not live with their partner and/or are not married or in a formal partnership would also be protected under this offence.

From this evening, Europe House, the President's Palace, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the French embassy and the White Bridge in Vilnius will be lit up in orange in support of the '16 days of activism against gender-based violence' campaign. The European Commission's headquarters in Brussels will also be lit in orange this Saturday and Sunday evening.

The official campaign begins on 25 November and runs until 10 December.

---

## Background information

To help Member States improve the quality, availability and comparability of data on intimate partner violence collected by the police and justice sectors, EIGE has developed country-specific recommendations. These are based on an analysis of the situation in each EU Member State. In addition country factsheets were also prepared for each country. Find them [here](#).

Two factsheets explaining the role of the [police](#) and the [judiciary](#) in collecting administrative data have also been developed.

[Thirteen indicators](#) have been proposed for the police and justice sectors to uniform data collection across the EU and assist Member States with their reporting obligations under the Victims' Rights Directive and Istanbul Convention.

To strengthen the efforts at the European level, [policy and technical recommendations for Eurostat](#) have been proposed.

The main and technical reports will be published in 2019.

Read more about EIGE's work on [administrative data collection](#).

For media enquiries, please contact Veronica Collins, +370 5215 7449 ,  
[veronica.collins@eige.europa.eu](mailto:veronica.collins@eige.europa.eu)

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) defines intimate partner violence as all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim. Find more definitions on rape, femicide and intimate partner violence [here](#). You can also find more information on measuring rape, femicide and intimate partner violence through administrative data in [EIGE's report](#) on terminology and indicators for data collection.