



### Why do we need administrative data on intimate partner violence?

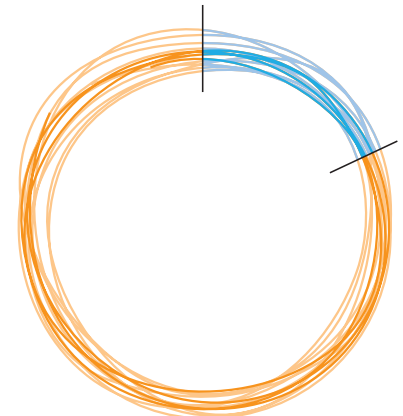
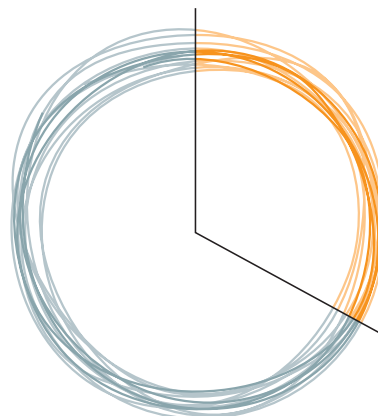
Many women victims of intimate partner violence in the EU Member States remain unprotected. Perpetrators often go unpunished due to inadequate law enforcement approaches, which do not align with international human rights treaties. A gender-neutral approach to the law, coupled with the unavailability of data and existing stereotypes result in the denial of violence against women and its tolerance or normalisation <sup>(1)</sup>. States must ensure that they carry out the due diligence principle to investigate and punish acts of violence and provide compensation to victims. Improving data collection and providing comprehensive and reliable administrative data is crucial to monitor the police and justice sectors' response to violence against women. It also shows a state's willingness to monitor the effectiveness of its law. High-quality administrative data is in line with the international commitments of Member States to combat violence against women as defined in Directive 2012/29/EU (the Victims' Rights Directive) and the Istanbul Convention.

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. It constitutes a form of violence which affects women disproportionately and which is therefore distinctly gendered.

*EIGE's definition of intimate partner violence is in line with the definition of domestic violence of the Istanbul Convention.*

In Latvia, 32 % of women have been victims of physical and/or sexual violence by a partner since the age of 15.

Only 17 % of those women contacted the police.



<sup>(1)</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences*, 2017.

## What does the law say?

Intimate partner violence is an aggravating circumstance for a number of criminal offences (such as physical and sexual assault). At present, intimate partner violence is not a distinct criminal offence. Amendments to criminal law and criminal and civil processes have been introduced to provide better protection for victims of intimate partner violence, including the definition of who constitutes a victim and the extension of the law to include former and unregistered partners. Latvia signed the Istanbul Convention in 2016 with ratification planned for the future.

## Process of administrative data collection by police and justice sectors



### POLICE



- Data collection is managed under the regulation on the criminal process information system.
- Variables include the sex and age of the victim and the perpetrator and the relationship between them.
- In the case of intimate partner violence, the relationship categories are: current partner; current husband/wife; ex-partner; and ex-husband/wife.
- Information on economic and psychological violence is not recorded.
- In 2015, the police recorded 62 women victims of intimate partner violence aged 18 or over.



- Offences are recorded by the corresponding articles in the Criminal Code.
- Data is collected through the KRASS system, which is not linked to the justice system.
- Data on intimate partner violence is available but its reliability is dependent on input quality.
- Many information categories are not mandatory, meaning optional variables are often not populated.
- Although sex and relationship information is recorded, it is done unsystematically, meaning information on specific variables can be absent.
- The available data reflects the situation at the time the criminal offence was recorded. It does not include further qualifications.



- The State police publishes data on violence on its website. Data provided by the police is also published by the Ministry of Welfare (information sheets) as well as by the Central Bureau of Statistics of the National Statistics Office (NSO).
- These include no breakdown for intimate partner violence — only a general breakdown of victims.
- Raw data from the police sector can be requested by specifying the relevant code.



### JUSTICE

- Data collection is managed under the regulation on the courts' information system.
- Variables include the sex and age of the victim and the perpetrator.
- Consequently, it is not possible to identify intimate partner violence offences, as information on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is not recorded.
- In 2015, 684 cases involving temporary restriction orders were initiated; in 79 cases the order was breached.

- Offences are recorded by the corresponding articles in the Criminal Code.
- Data is collected through the court information system (TIS), which is not linked to the police system.
- The TIS database contains good quality, up-to-date data that is available in aggregated form.
- For breached restriction orders, there is no data available disaggregated by the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.
- However, the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is collected through the application form.

- Data is published by the Ministry of Welfare (information sheets) as well as by the NSO's Central Bureau of Statistics.
- It includes no breakdown for intimate partner violence — only a general breakdown of victims.
- TIS data is available publicly online in aggregated form.

# Indicators on intimate partner violence

To support Member States in reporting on intimate partner violence under the Victims' Rights Directive and the Istanbul Convention, EIGE has developed 13 indicators based on uniform statistical definitions. These relate to administrative data from the police and justice sectors. By populating the indicators Member States will be able to meet the minimum requirements for data provision outlined in the Victims' Rights Directive and the Istanbul Convention.

## What data is available?



### POLICE

- 1. Annual number of women (aged 18 and over) victims of intimate partner violence committed by men (aged 18 and over), as recorded by police.
- 2. Annual number of reported offences related to intimate partner violence against women committed by men (aged 18 and over).
- 3. Annual number of men (aged 18 and over) perpetrators of intimate partner violence against women (and percentage of male population that are perpetrators).
- 4. Annual number of women (aged 18 and over) victims of physical intimate partner violence committed by men (aged 18 and over), as recorded by police.
- 5. Annual number of women (aged 18 and over) victims of psychological intimate partner violence committed by men (aged 18 and over), as recorded by police.
- 6. Annual number of women (aged 18 and over) victims of sexual intimate partner violence committed by men (aged 18 and over), as recorded by police.
- 7. Annual number of women (aged 18 and over) victims of economic intimate partner violence committed by men (aged 18 and over), as recorded by police.
- 8. Annual number of women (aged 18 and over) victims reporting rape committed by men (aged 18 and over), as recorded by police.
- 9. Women victims of intimate femicide (aged 18 and over) committed by a male intimate partner (aged 18 and over), as a share of the women victims of homicide (aged 18 and over).



### JUSTICE

- 10. Annual number of protection orders applied for and granted in cases of intimate partner violence against women by type of court.
- 11. Annual number of men (aged 18 and over) prosecuted for intimate partner violence against women.
- 12. Annual number of men (aged 18 and over) sentenced for intimate partner violence against women.
- 13. Annual number of men (aged 18 and over) sentenced for intimate partner violence against women and held in prison or with a sanction involving a form of deprivation of liberty.

**Low availability.** No data is available or existing data is not sufficient to populate the indicator due to considerable lack of detail and necessary breakdowns, such as no information on the sex of the victim.

**Medium availability.** Some data is available but it lacks important breakdowns, such as the exact relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.

**High availability.** Data is available with necessary breakdowns.

# Key recommendations for improving data collection on intimate partner violence



## Ratify the Istanbul Convention

Latvia signed the Istanbul Convention in April 2015. Steps should now be taken to ratify it. This would oblige Latvia to meet minimum data collection requirements, and enable EU data comparison on intimate partner violence. Having comparable data as a result of ratifying the convention would assist policymakers and practitioners in their efforts to counter intimate partner violence. It is recommended to begin the Istanbul Convention ratification process.

## Recognise intimate partner violence as a distinct offence

Domestic violence and intimate partner violence are not distinctly criminalised in domestic legislation. Some amendments to criminal law and criminal and civil processes have been introduced to provide better protection for victims of intimate partner violence, including a definition of what constitutes a victim and expansion to include former and unregistered partners. However, criminalising intimate partner violence would enable the phenomenon to be adequately tackled. It is recommended to recognise intimate partner violence as a criminal offence in domestic legislation and to include all forms of violence: physical, psychological, sexual and economic, as outlined in the Istanbul Convention.

## Introduce legislation to improve recording of the relationship in the judiciary

The TIS does not make the recording of cases of domestic violence possible. A field with 'aggravating circumstances' is available in which domestic violence can be recorded. Recording relationship information between the victim and perpetrator improves data quality on intimate partner violence. It is recommended to make legislative changes to Cabinet Regulation No 618 to make the TIS capable of recording the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.



## Improve police and justice database quality

At present, the police database provides unprocessed raw data on demand; a fee is required for non-public bodies. The court system database is more user-friendly but information on the relationship between victim and perpetrator is not provided. It is recommended to make both police and judicial databases more user friendly by facilitating easy public access and providing necessary breakdowns including relationship information.



## Increase collaboration between sectors

Data collection on intimate partner violence requires cross-sectoral collaboration. Presently, data is collected across the police and justice sectors but is interpreted by a third. The Ministry of Welfare has the largest capacity to work on gender equality issues. However, it has little influence upon developments in the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice. It is recommended to increase collaboration between the police and justice sectors and the Ministry of Welfare.

## Increase the role of the Central Bureau of Statistics

The CBS receives data from justice sector and police sector databases (TIS and KRASS), but does not have the capacity to process information on intimate partner violence. The CBS regularly publishes criminal statistics with sex disaggregation. However, additional relevant breakdowns for identifying intimate partner violence should be made available to the CBS for analysis and publication. It is recommended to increase the capacity and role of the CBS to allow it to collect, analyse and publish statistics on intimate partner violence.

### European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.



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