

# Measuring femicide in Latvia

## Femicide

Femicide can be understood as the extreme end of a continuum of violence against women that happens in all European Union Member States <sup>(1)</sup>. There is no standard agreed definition of femicide among EU Member States or around the world. The lack of a uniform definition hampers the measurement of femicide, which becomes invisible among general homicide data <sup>(2)</sup>. The general concept of femicide refers to the killing of a woman or girl because of her gender. The United Nations Vienna Declaration on Femicide <sup>(3)</sup> was the first to identify different types of femicide, including:

- murder of women as a result of intimate partner violence;
- torture and misogynistic slaying of women;
- killing of women and girls in the name of honour;
- targeted killing of women and girls in the context of armed conflict;
- dowry-related killing of women;
- killing of women and girls because of their sexual orientation and gender identity;
- killing of aboriginal and indigenous women and girls because of their gender;
- female infanticide and gender-based sex selection foeticide;
- genital mutilation-related deaths;
- accusations of witchcraft;
- other types of femicide connected with gangs, organised crime, drug dealers, human trafficking and the proliferation of small arms.

## Femicide in Latvia

There is no definition of femicide in the Latvian Criminal Code. However, this type of offence may fall under other provisions of Latvian criminal law. The relevant sections for identifying femicide cases are, inter alia, Sections 116, 117, 118, 120, 121, 122, 123 and 124 <sup>(4)</sup>.

### Section 116 – Murder

For a person who commits intentional unlawful homicide (murder) of another person, the applicable punishment is a life imprisonment or deprivation of liberty for a period of 5 years and up to 20 years and with probationary supervision for a period up to 3 years.

### Section 117 – Murder committed in aggravating circumstances

For a person who commits murder, if:

(1) a woman is murdered, the offender knowing her to be pregnant;

[...]

(7) it is related to rape;

[...]

the applicable punishment is life imprisonment, or deprivation of liberty for a period of 10 years and up to 20 years and probationary supervision for a period up to 3 years, with or without confiscation of property.

### Section 118 – Murder committed in especially aggravating circumstances

### Section 120 – Murder committed in a state of extreme mental agitation

### Section 121 – Murder committed exceeding the limits of necessary self-defence

### Section 122 – Murder committed violating provisions regarding detention of a person

### Section 123 – Unlawful homicide through negligence

### Section 124 – Leading to suicide

Latvia has conducted a full mapping study to collect data according to the ICSS (ICSS 0101 – intentional homicide; ICSS 0102 – attempted intentional homicide). The data also includes intentional infliction of serious bodily injury which, as a result of the negligence of the offender, was the cause of the death of the victim.

## About the study

Data collection systems vary widely across EU Member States, as they draw on various sources. To improve the collection of administrative data on femicide, EIGE has been working to establish indicators that can harmonise data collection processes across Member States' jurisdictions.

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. The ultimate goal is to identify a classification system of femicide with mutually agreed variables that can be used by all EU Member States.

## Methodology for data collection

To address the lack of comparable data on violence against women, EIGE developed 13 indicators with uniform definitions of the multiple forms of intimate partner violence, femicide and rape <sup>(5)</sup>. A detailed report regarding the methodology for the collection, reporting and validation of data, along with detailed metadata per country, has been published <sup>(6)</sup>. The data presented in this factsheet refers to indicator 9 on intimate partner violence: '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'. The data can be accessed through EIGE's Gender Statistics Database ([https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/browse/genvio/genvio\\_int](https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/browse/genvio/genvio_int)).

<sup>(1)</sup> This factsheet includes data collected before the United Kingdom left the EU, so the reference to EU Member States includes the United Kingdom.

<sup>(2)</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017), *Glossary of definitions of rape, femicide and intimate partner violence*, EIGE, Vilnius.

<sup>(3)</sup> UN Economic and Social Council (2012), *Vienna Declaration on Femicide*, UN, New York ([https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/CCPCJ\\_Sessions/CCPCJ\\_22/E-CN15-2013-NGO1/E-CN15-2013-NGO1\\_E.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/CCPCJ_Sessions/CCPCJ_22/E-CN15-2013-NGO1/E-CN15-2013-NGO1_E.pdf)).

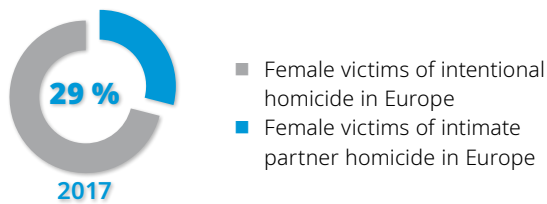
<sup>(4)</sup> For more information, see indicator 9 of the Gender Statistics Database ([https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio\\_int\\_adm\\_ipv\\_\\_ipv\\_indic\\_9/metadata](https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv__ipv_indic_9/metadata)) and the Latvian Criminal Code (<https://likumi.lv/ta/en/en/id/88966>).

<sup>(5)</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017), *Terminology and Indicators for Data Collection: Rape, femicide and intimate partner violence*, EIGE, Vilnius.

<sup>(6)</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2020), *Intimate Partner Violence: Data collection methodology*, EIGE, Vilnius.

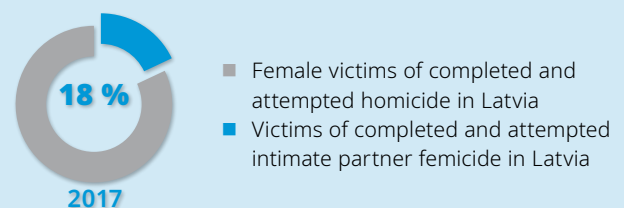
### Intimate partner femicide in Europe

From a statistical perspective, and based on the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) highlights that intentional homicide of female victims perpetrated by intimate partners or family members is the most prevalent form of femicide (7). UNODC estimates that, in Europe (8), about 29 % of female victims of homicide (9) are killed intentionally by an intimate partner.



### Intimate partner femicide in Latvia

From a statistical perspective, the working definition that the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) uses for femicide is 'killing of a woman by an intimate partner and the death of a woman as a consequence of a practice that is harmful to women. Intimate partner is understood as a former or current spouse or partner, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim'. In Latvia, most femicides would be covered by the sections of the Criminal Code identified above. According to data from the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia, in 2017 there were 40 female (10) victims of completed and attempted homicide (11), of whom 18 % were victims of completed and attempted intimate partner femicide ( $n = 7$ ) (12).



## Female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide in Latvia

The official administrative data used in Figure 1 is collected by the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia. EIGE has gathered data on homicide and intimate partner femicide for 2014 to 2018.

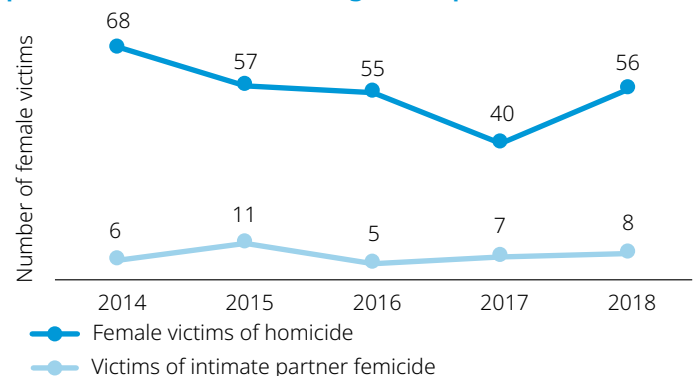
Figure 1 includes data regarding female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide, including attempted crimes and intentional infliction of serious bodily injury which, as a result of the negligence of the offender, has been the cause of the death of the victim. After a downward trend between 2014 and 2017, the number of female victims of homicide rose sharply in 2018. Intimate partner femicide did not follow this trend and remained stable.

### Type of relationship between the victim and the perpetrator

The Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia collects data about the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator according to the following classifications (among others): (i) wife, ex-wife, husband, ex-husband, partner or ex-partner; (ii) mother, father, son, daughter, foster parent, foster child, grandson, granddaughter, grandmother, grandfather, brother, sister or other relative; and (iii) neighbour.

granddaughter, grandmother, grandfather, brother, sister or other relative; and (iii) neighbour.

Figure 1: Female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide (including attempts) in Latvia



Source: EIGE's Gender Statistics Database.

## Collecting administrative data on femicide



**What is administrative data?** Administrative data is collected for recording, organising and monitoring purposes (13). Administrative data on femicide can be obtained from different institutions, namely those that are involved in criminal investigations, prosecutions, the punishment of perpetrators and victim support – that is, institutions in the **police and justice sectors**. Administrative data might include information about the prevalence and types of femicide, the characteristics of the victim, the perpetrator and their relationship, the characteristics of and motive for the crime, and data about the criminal process.

(7) UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2019), *Global Study on Homicide – Gender-related killing of women and girls*, UNODC, Vienna.

(8) Data from UNODC includes European jurisdictions other than the EU Member States. There is no estimation of the percentage of female victims of homicide who were victims of intimate partner femicide limited to EU Member States.

(9) The term 'homicide' is used when reporting UNODC data given that it is the term used in the original source (p. 17). The gender-related motivation is not recorded, because of the lack of a standardised definition. However, it is clear from the report that this data quantifies a significant share of all gender-related killings of women and girls.

(10) The term 'female' is used instead of 'woman', as it is not always possible to disaggregate data by the victim's age, meaning that the victim could be either a woman or a girl aged under 18 years.

(11) The term 'homicide' is used given that the gender-related motivation for the intentional homicides is not recorded, and therefore it is not possible to classify all the killings as femicides.

(12) Data is available at: [https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio\\_int\\_adm\\_ipv\\_ipv\\_indic\\_9/meta](https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv_ipv_indic_9/meta)

(13) UN Women (2020), *A synthesis of evidence on the collection and use of administrative data on violence against women*, UN Women, New York.

In order to help policymakers design effective policies to combat femicide, it is necessary to understand the nature and prevalence of the issue. The collection of comparable administrative data on femicide across Member States is key to gaining this understanding<sup>(14)</sup>. It is particularly important that the motive for the killing is established by the police or judiciary and that this is then translated into standardised statistical data. The ICCS is a standardised tool for obtaining comparable

administrative data. However, it lacks a gender-related motive variable. This means that the concept of femicide cannot be properly operationalised, which prevents the collection of data that fully captures the phenomenon. The collection of data on femicide would make the issue more visible, which would strengthen the political will to eradicate it. Administrative data on femicide also enables countries to monitor trends over time and evaluate the effectiveness of measures.

## What administrative data on femicide is available in Latvia?

Definition of femicide and availability of data	
Definition of femicide used for statistical purposes	The country is in the process of establishing a definition (*)
Collection of data on femicide	Yes, official data

(\*) Until 2019, administrative data on gender-based and domestic violence was collected from different sources in Latvia, without any comprehensive methodology, and was not comparable. In 2019, the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia in cooperation with the Information Centre of the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Welfare agreed to use the ICCS to better reflect gender-related killings of women.

Two institutions collect or analyse data regarding femicide in Latvia: the Information Centre of the Ministry of the Interior<sup>(15)</sup> and the Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia<sup>(16)</sup>. Where data on femicide in this factsheet is drawn from these institutions, this

is indicated by <sup>(a)</sup> and <sup>(b)</sup>, respectively. Other institutions and researchers also collect and analyse data on femicide in Latvia<sup>(17)</sup>.

	Institution <sup>(a)</sup> Information Centre of the Ministry of the Interior	Institution <sup>(b)</sup> Central Statistical Bureau of Latvia
Type of data collection	Official	Official
Sources of data	Police records	Police records
Stage at which the homicide is established as a femicide	During the criminal or court investigation	Information not available
Stage at which the homicide is registered as a femicide	Not registered	Information not available
Parameters for establishing the killing as a femicide	Women (18 years and over) killed by their male intimate partner (18 years and over)	Information not available
Regularity of data collection	Annual	Information not available
Network(s) with which information is shared	Law enforcement institutions, judicial authority, ministries, Department of Equal Opportunities or another gender equality body, statistics authorities, non-governmental organisation(s), the media, other institutions on request	Information not available
Availability of data to the public	Data publicly available	Information not available

Official sources inform administrative data collection in Latvia. In line with EIGE's data collection, official administrative data on the total number of female victims of homicide and intimate

partner femicide is displayed for 2014 to 2018. However, data may be available in Latvia for other years.

<sup>(14)</sup> It is important to note that data and statistics should be produced, developed and disseminated in compliance with the principles in the *European Statistics Code of Practice*: Eurostat (2018), *European Statistics Code of Practice*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4031688/8971242/KS-02-18-142-EN-N.pdf/e7f85f07-91db-4312-8118-f729c75878c7?t=1528447068000>).

<sup>(15)</sup> <https://www.ic.iem.gov.lv/lv>

<sup>(16)</sup> <https://www.csb.gov.lv/en/gender-equality-indicators/Violence>

<sup>(17)</sup> For example, the Ministry of Welfare (<https://www.lm.gov.lv/lv/vadlinijas-0>).

● Official data available   ● Non-official data available   ○ No data available

Data availability	2014 <sup>(b)</sup>	2015 <sup>(a) (b)</sup>	2016 <sup>(a) (b)</sup>	2017 <sup>(a) (b)</sup>	2018 <sup>(a) (b)</sup>	2019
Female victims of homicide	●	●	●	●	●	○
Victims of intimate partner femicide	●	●	●	●	●	○

Official sources collect data on intimate partner femicide, but also on other types of femicide, such as family-related femicide and non-intimate partner femicide. The latest available

data from the Information Centre of the Ministry of the Interior shows that, in 2018, there were 48 victims of non-intimate partner femicide in Latvia.

Types of femicide	
Intimate partner femicide <sup>(a) (b)</sup>	●
Family-related femicide <sup>(a)</sup>	●
Child femicide	○
Prostitution-related femicide	○
Robbery-related femicide	○
Other types of femicide <sup>(a)</sup>	●
Non-intimate partner femicide <sup>(a)</sup>	

Characteristics of the victim and the perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator
Age <sup>(a) (b)</sup>	●	●
Sex <sup>(a) (b)</sup>	●	●
Gender identity	○	○
Sexual orientation	○	○
Nationality	○	○
Education	○	○
Occupation	○	○
Applied for protection order	○	n/a
Active protection order	n/a	○
Socioeconomic profile	○	○
Recidivist status	n/a	○
Alcohol/drug abuse	○	○
Victim–perpetrator relationship <sup>(a) (b)</sup>	●	●
Other	○	○

Motive for femicide		Analysing femicide	
Context of sexual violence <sup>(a)</sup>	●	Homicide reviews / domestic homicide reviews	○
Prior intimate partner violence	○	Analysis of court cases	○
Prior harassment and/or stalking by the perpetrator	○	Administrative data from police <sup>(a)</sup>	●
Prior genital mutilation	○	Administrative data on cause of death	○
Prior complaints or requests for protection measures	○	Media information	○
Recent separation	○	Other	○
'Shame or dishonour' brought on the family	○	<b>Investigating femicide</b>	
Dowry-related problems	○	Protocol for investigating femicide cases	○
Refusal to enter into an arranged marriage	○	<b>Contextual variables</b>	
Political role / feminism / activism of the woman who was killed	○	Variables related to the context of femicide	○
Context of prostitution / pornography			
Human trafficking context	○		
Targeted killing of a woman in an armed conflict	○		
Sexual orientation and gender identity	○		
Disfigurement/mutilation of the body	○		
Other <sup>(a)</sup>			
Jealousy; conflict; revenge <sup>(a)</sup>	●		

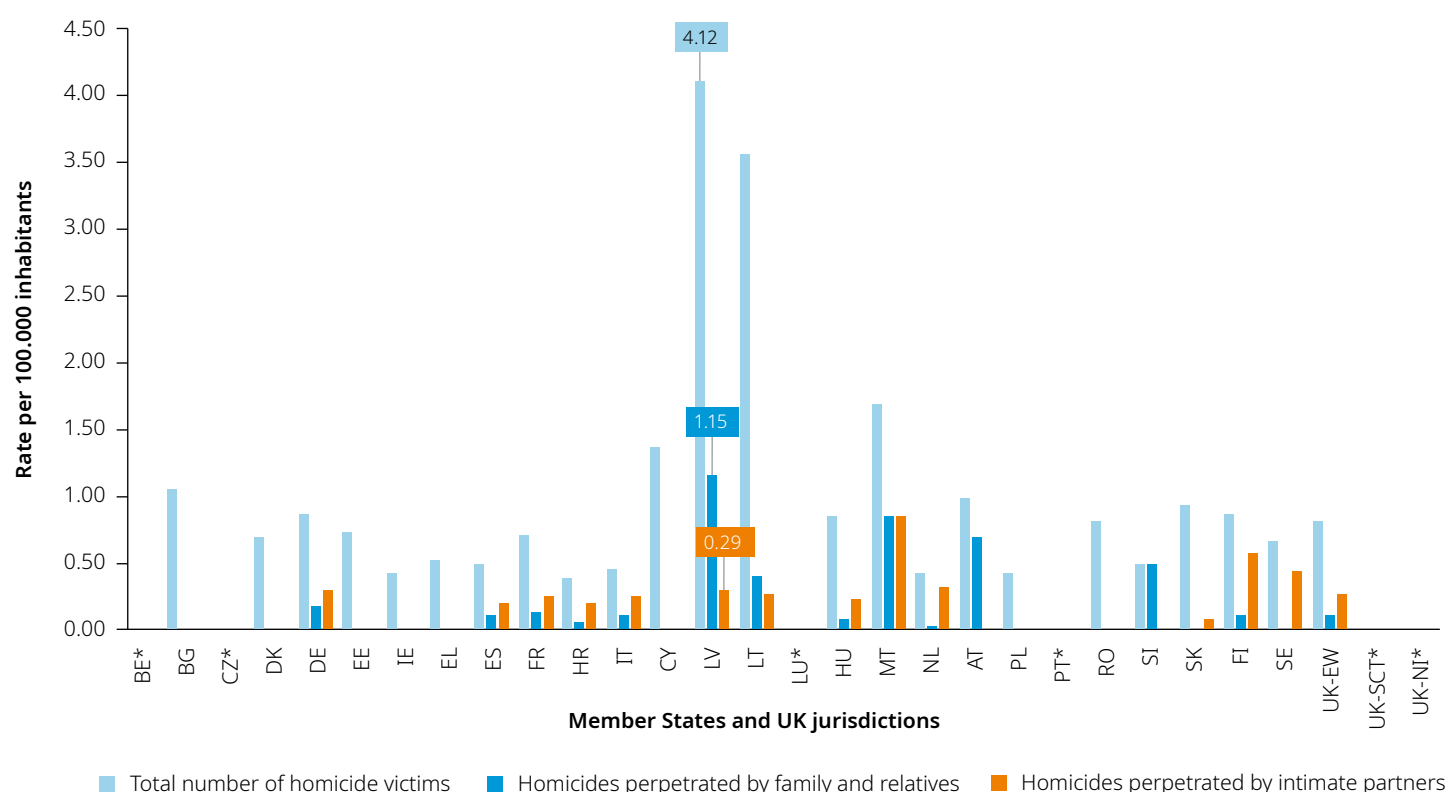
NB: n/a, not applicable.

## Female homicide in EU Member States and the United Kingdom (Eurostat)

At the EU level, based on ICCS, Eurostat compiles data on intentional female homicides, focusing on intimate partner and family-related homicides, disaggregated by age, gender and relationship with the perpetrator. The data from Eurostat presented in Figure 2 reveals that, in 2018, the rate of female victims of homicide in Latvia was 4.12 per 100 000 inhabitants,

the highest rate among the 24 Member States for which information is available and the United Kingdom. Latvia also has the highest rate (1.15) of female victims of homicide perpetrated by family and relatives (out of 14 jurisdictions) and the sixth highest rate (0.29) of female victims of intentional homicide perpetrated by intimate partners (out of 15 jurisdictions) <sup>(18)</sup>.

Figure 2: Rate of female victims of intentional homicide in EU Member States and the United Kingdom (2018)



(\*) No data available.

NB: UK-EW, England and Wales, United Kingdom; UK-NI, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom; UK-SCT, Scotland, United Kingdom.

Source: Eurostat.

## Data information

Eurostat regularly publishes figures on crime and criminal justice. Intentional homicides are recorded by the police in each of the Member States and the United Kingdom. It is not possible to collect information about the gender-related motivation for homicide, the sex of the perpetrator or the age of the perpetrator using this database. Therefore, it is not possible to provide precise data on femicide.

Figures for 2008 onwards are based on the joint Eurostat-UNODC data collection. In this database, homicide is classified by the ICCS.

Data is available on Eurostat’s website (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>).

(18) In Latvia the number of homicide for the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS) includes attempts and intentional infliction of serious bodily injury which, as a result of the negligence of the offender, has been the cause of the death of the victim. To calculate Figure 2 Eurostat uses numbers of female victims per 100,000 inhabitants where inhabitants means the number of particular group of inhabitants (female), not an entire number of inhabitants of the particular country.

## Key findings

- Latvia does not have a legal definition of femicide. However, the perpetrator may be liable for murder, aggravated murder, murder committed under specific circumstances or unlawful homicide through negligence.
- There are two main institutions that collect or analyse data for the identification of femicide. Data on intimate partner femicide and other types of femicide is available.
- EIGE has gathered data on homicide and intimate partner femicide for 2014 to 2018; however, data may be available in Latvia for other years. Available data includes information about the characteristics of the victim and the perpetrator, the victim–perpetrator relationship and the motive for the femicide.
- Femicide is analysed on the basis of official sources, such as data from police.

## Recommendations

The collection of accurate and comparable data on femicide by the police and justice sectors across Member States helps to increase knowledge and improve responses to prevent femicide<sup>(19)</sup>. It is therefore important to:

- develop a femicide definition for statistical data collection, in order to reflect the specific circumstances relating to the killing of women;
- implement a process of continuous data collection;
- establish comprehensive data collection, adding variables that are important for detecting key aspects of femicide,
- such as those describing the context and the circumstances of the killing, the gender-related motivation, and the victim and perpetrator characteristics, in order to systematise and harmonise the collection of data for statistical use;
- cross-reference the variables of the victim and those of the perpetrator, and analyse them using an intersectional approach;
- ensure that the gender dimension of homicide data is made visible.

This factsheet is based on information from EIGE's study 'Advancing administrative data collection on intimate partner violence and gender-related killings of women' (2021) and has been prepared by the Alternative and Response Women's Association (UMAR). For more information, visit <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/femicide>.

<sup>(19)</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2018), *Recommendations to improve data collection on intimate partner violence by the police and justice sectors – Latvia*, EIGE, Vilnius; European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017), *Recommendations for the EU to improve data collection on violence against women*, EIGE, Vilnius; European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2021), *EIGE's indicators on intimate partner violence, rape and femicide: Recommendations to improve data quality, availability and comparability*, EIGE, Vilnius.

### 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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European Institute for Gender Equality  
Gedimino pr. 16  
LT-01103 Vilnius  
Lithuania

### Contact details

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