



# Administrative data sources on gender-based violence in the EU

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## Current status and potential for the collection of comparable data

**Gender-based violence against women** is a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination. It not only undermines the integrity, dignity and freedom of women, but also reflects and reinforces inequalities between women and men. Tackling gender-based violence requires a specific approach that comprehensively covers prevention, protection, prosecution, integrated policies and monitoring.

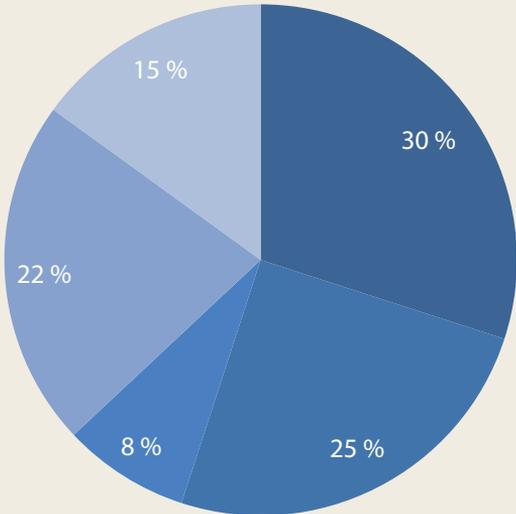
Eradication of violence against women is a declared goal of the European Commission and Member States. Evidence in the form of comparable and harmonised data on gender-based violence is essential for reasonable decision-making and for monitoring the effectiveness of both EU and national policies and actions taken to achieve this goal.

Consequently, data collection on gender-based violence is essential. It should include both data on prevalence, such as the 2014 EU-wide survey on violence against women carried out by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and information from administrative sources, including criminal statistics. Therefore it is necessary to map existing data sources, concepts and methodologies developed in the Member States.

The study carried out by the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the first EU-wide review and analysis of administrative data sources on gender-based violence in the EU-28. Administrative data provide detailed information on how justice, police, health and social services respond to incidents of gender-based violence. It reflects what is recorded by an organisation interacting with a victim or perpetrator, but cannot reflect the prevalence of gender-based violence due to under-reporting.

### Administrative data sources in the EU

■ Police ■ Justice ■ Health ■ Social services ■ Other



## About the study

In 2014, the EIGE commissioned a study on 'Administrative data sources on gender-based violence against women in the EU: Current status and potential for the collection of comparable data' and published two reports (available at <http://www.eige.europa.eu>). The first report provides an overview of the legal and policy framework that underpins administrative data at the EU and Member State levels. The second one presents a technical analysis of 144 administrative data sources and 90 related statistical

products available at national level, and includes guidelines and recommendations.

The two reports aim to assess the feasibility of compiling comparable administrative data on gender-based violence at EU level by providing a detailed analysis of the availability, accessibility, comparability and quality of data from administrative data sources and related statistical products.

The data provided in these publications were collected between March and June 2013 and reviewed in October 2013.

## RESEARCH SHOWS THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

- There is a need for a common understanding and for joint efforts at EU and Member State levels in order to collect harmonised and comparable data on gender-based violence from administrative institutions.
- Administrative data sources can be useful for collecting comparable data on gender-based violence. However, significant challenges need to be addressed at both EU and Member State levels.
- Differences in the legal terms and definitions of the forms of gender-based violence in Member States are a key gap for data collection and its comparative analysis in all sectors.
- Availability of administrative data is related to the legal approach and criminalisation of gender-based violence in Member States, especially in the police and justice sectors.
- Administrative data on gender-based violence in Member States are often not sex disaggregated.

# Police

## Type of information available

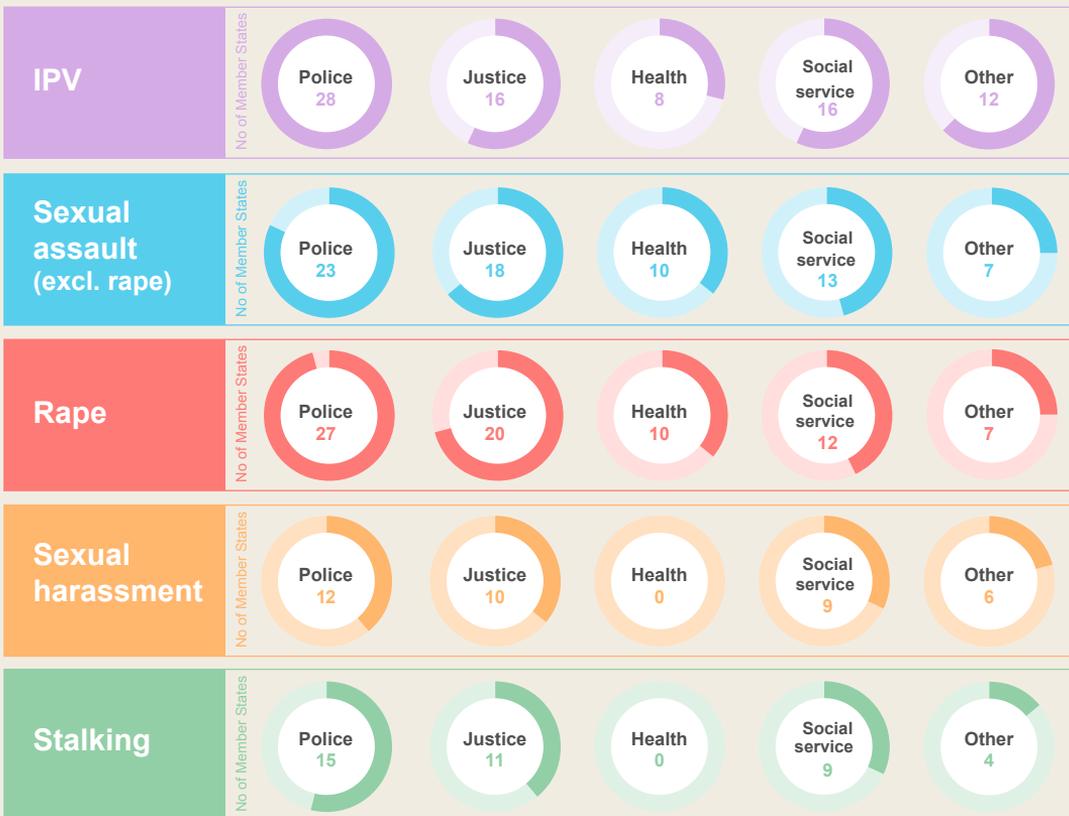
Police data sources include sources from municipal, regional and national police that are coordinated nationally. The police sector has the broadest coverage of data sources in the EU.

Most of the data available cover intimate partner violence (IPV), sexual assault and rape. Sexual harassment and stalking are not so systematically covered, partly due to the fact that they have not been considered as criminal offences in all Member States.

Even though data on victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence are not homogeneous across Member States, police services are the sector where more comprehensive background information is collected not only on the victims, but also on the perpetrators and witnesses.

A minimum set of information, such as the sex, age and nationality of victims and perpetrators and the victim–perpetrator relationship for incidents of gender-based violence, will be feasible for collection by police data sources with minor adjustments across Member States.

## Number of administrative data sources per type of gender-based violence and sector



There are 43 police data sources on gender-based violence with a national scope available across the EU-28, and at least one source per Member State on intimate partner violence.

## Characteristics and quality of data

Administrative data collected by the police are used for monitoring, providing information on and evaluating policies and ensuring victim protection. Most of the administrative data collected by the police (88.6 %) are stored electronically. The sources from the police (69 %) are recorded in a coded system, which is based on the offences or acts according to the national law, while 22 % of the sources are still without any code system which would categorise incidents, and the rest of the sources use code systems that are tailor-made for the institution.

Up to 77 % of police data sources are comparable both geographically and over time. Administrative data sources on gender-based violence in Member States are more likely to be comparable over time than geographically. Over-time comparability

is feasible in 21 Member States, while geographical comparability is only so in 18 Member States. One factor contributing to geographical comparability is the presence of harmonised guidelines at national level.

Most data from police sources are updated on an ongoing basis (within a week) and are applicable for 82 % of the sources.

Another limiting factor is timeliness. The length of time between when the incident occurred and when it is recorded should be as short as possible in order to allow for swift data compilation afterwards. Currently, 74 % of incidents are recorded immediately.

Most data sources from police services have some kind of quality assurance process in place (96 %).

Quality of police data sources in percentages				
Quality of data	Criteria	%	Number of sources	Number of EU Member States
Comparability	Geographical and over time	77	23	16
Good timeliness	Immediately	74	17	15
Frequency of updating	Ongoing (max. once a week)	82	27	22
Quality assurance process in place	Currently in place	96	24	18

### RESEARCH SHOWS THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

- The highest percentage of administrative data sources (30 %) on gender-based violence is collected and kept by the police.
- In 19 Member States there are police data sources which include data disaggregated by the sex and age of both the victim and the perpetrator, and also contain information on the relationship between them.
- In 15 Member States it is feasible to collect information from police services on the death of a victim as a result of an incident of gender-based violence.

**A common understanding of the concepts and the methodology for data collection and defined guidelines is needed to gather harmonised data on gender-based violence in the EU.**

**A minimum set of collected administrative data related to gender-based violence (such as sex-disaggregated information) should be mandatory at Member State level to ensure the availability and comparability of data on gender-based violence.**

**Efforts to store data electronically and to harmonise coding used across administrative data sources for each sector are needed to facilitate data collection in the EU.**

# Justice

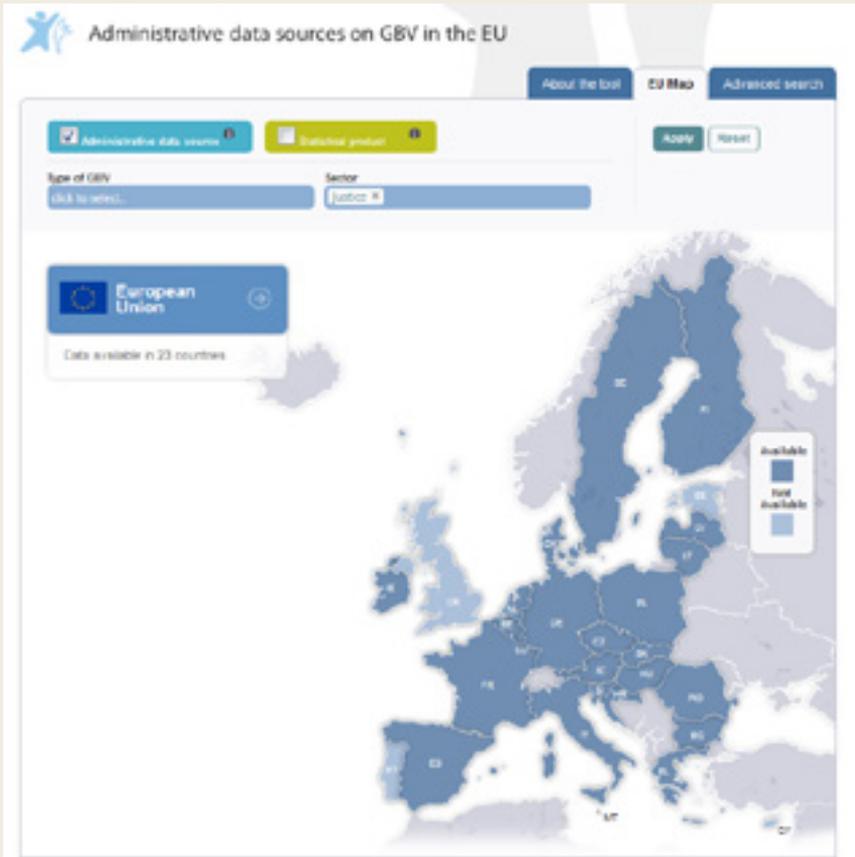
## Type of information available

Justice data sources are collected from such institutions as courts, prosecution offices, criminal and civil justice services and prisons. Up to 36 justice data sources have been identified in 23 Member States (except for EE, CY, MT, PT and UK). As in the case of the police, the majority of these data sources cover intimate partner violence, sexual assault and rape. Sexual harassment and stalking are not so systematically covered, due partly to the

fact that they are not considered as criminal offences in all Member States.

The justice system is not particularly suited to providing detailed information on victims. However, it is a good source to provide data on offenders and, in particular, on the outcome of court cases. In 12 Member States (BE, BG, CZ, DK, ES, LT, LU, AT, RO, SK, FI and SE), some justice data sources indicate whether the victim died as a consequence of an incident of gender-based violence.

## Administrative data sources on gender-based violence (GBV) in the justice sector in the EU



BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
HR	Croatia
IT	Italy
CY	Cyprus
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom

## Actions needed to improve criminal statistics on gender-based violence in the EU

- **Set minimum standards for recording information** on incidents of gender-based violence, such as data disaggregated by the sex, age and nationality of victims and perpetrators, the relationship type between the victim and the perpetrator and the type and setting of violence.
- **Use IT tools and standardised systems to record and process data**, ensuring compliance with confidentiality law and protection of victims' rights.
- **Agree on common definitions, a coding system and the methodology** of data collection to guarantee both geographical (national coordination) comparability and comparability over time (regular frequency of updating).
- **Ensure the quality, accuracy, reliability and timeliness** of data by complying with the European Statistics Code of Practice and implementing quality assurance processes for data collection.

In the justice system, background information on perpetrators is more detailed than that on victims. In 16 Member States, administrative data in the justice system provide information on the type of offences for which the perpetrator is prosecuted.

Improvements in the coordination between police and justice sectors at Member State level are needed to enable the monitoring of cases through these sectors and the prosecution process, including further information related to the court proceedings and their outcome.

**Thirty-six justice data sources on gender-based violence with a national scope are available across 23 Member States.**

### Characteristics and quality of data

The main purposes of justice data sources are monitoring, providing evaluation of policies and ensuring victim protection. Similar to the police data sources, the majority of data in the justice sector is kept electronically (93 %).

The use of a coding system enables easier and quicker access to and analysis of data. The coding system used by many sources from the justice sector is based on national criminal/ civil law in the Member State. However, there is room for improvement as this happens only in 59 % of the sources.

The comparability of administrative data from the justice sector at EU level is limited by the fact that in some Member States no administrative data sources with a national scope could be identified. Nevertheless, the percentage of data from justice sources comparable over time and geographically is 74 %. There are quality assurance processes in place for most administrative data sources in the justice sector (83 %).

**Characteristics and quality of justice data**

Quality of data	Criteria	%	Number of sources	Number of EU Member States
Comparability	Geographical and over time	74	17	15
Good timeliness	Immediately	71	3	3
Frequency of updating	Ongoing (max. once a week)	57	16	13
Quality assurance process in place	Currently in place	83	17	12

# Social services

## Type of information available

The social services sector includes support centres, shelters, legal and physical counselling and helplines.

The social services sector is highly important as many victims who do not report an incident of gender-based violence to the authorities request services from these institutions. Despite the complexity of the organisation and structure of this sector in many Member States,

the social services sector possesses a significant number of administrative data sources in the EU — 22 % of the administrative data sources related to gender-based violence. In 10 Member States (BG, CZ, DK, EL, IT, CY, LV, LU, NL and PL), there are social records on the type of violence used (physical, psychological, sexual and/or economic). This is relevant information for setting up a coding system to harmonise data collection.

Most sources in social services collect very detailed information on the victim. This is the main sector for the gathering of data on gender-based violence and revictimisation.

## RESEARCH SHOWS THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

- Intimate partner violence is the type of gender-based violence most widely covered by social services data sources.
- In Member States, social services are not as influenced as other systems (police and justice) by the criminalisation of the forms of gender-based violence.
- In only 12 Member States are there data sources collecting data disaggregated by the gender and age of the victim and their relationship with the perpetrator.

## Distribution of administrative data sources in social services in the EU



BE	Belgium	LU	Luxembourg
BG	Bulgaria	HU	Hungary
CZ	Czech Republic	MT	Malta
DK	Denmark	NL	Netherlands
DE	Germany	AT	Austria
EE	Estonia	PL	Poland
IE	Ireland	PT	Portugal
EL	Greece	RO	Romania
ES	Spain	SI	Slovenia
FR	France	SK	Slovakia
HR	Croatia	FI	Finland
IT	Italy	SE	Sweden
CY	Cyprus	UK	United Kingdom
LV	Latvia		
LT	Lithuania		

**There are 32 social services data sources on gender-based violence with a national scope available across 19 Member States, most of them covering intimate partner violence.**

## Characteristics and quality of data

A large proportion of administrative data from social services (73 %) is kept electronically, but there is room for improvement. Most of these institutions do not use any specific code for recording information on gender-based violence (80 %) and the remainder (20 %) use a coding tailored to that particular institution, making it difficult to compare the data between various institutions.

The main purposes of administrative data sources in social services are monitoring, ensuring victim protection and providing evaluation of policies. An important constraint relating to the use of social service data sources

at EU level is the fact that quality assurance processes are in place only in 70 % of the sources identified.

The comparability of data in this sector is better over time (in 16 Member States) than geographically (only in 13 Member States). Lack of harmonised definitions and/or lack of systematic methodology of data collection are some of the reasons which affect comparability.

Social services show a significant gap, where only in 28 % of the data sources is information recorded in a timely manner. Furthermore, data are not always updated on an ongoing basis.

Characteristics and quality of social services data				
Quality of data	Criteria	%	Number of sources	Number of EU Member States
Comparability	Geographical and over time	57	16	12
Good timeliness	Immediately	28	9	6
Frequency of updating	Ongoing (max. once a week)	60	18	13
Quality assurance process in place	Currently in place	70	16	11

# Health

## Type of information available

The health sector is the least represented with respect to the number of administrative data sources on gender-based violence with national coverage in Member States.

In health services, it is possible to find sources with national coverage only in 10 Member States (DK, ES, HR, LV, MT, AT, RO, SK, FI and SE), with 12 data sources in total. Most likely, this is influenced by the decentralisation of the health service provision in many Member States. Health services pay special attention to and

record serious physical and sexual incidents of gender-based violence. Sexual harassment and stalking are not covered by health services in any Member State. The data available from health services are strongly victim centred.

Health services could provide very relevant information on the severity of incidents of gender-based violence. Unfortunately, the number of health data sources mapped in Member States is very limited and hampers the collection of this information all across the EU.

## Characteristics and quality of data

The main purpose of data sources in the health sector is monitoring. In health services, sources from seven Member States (DK, ES, LV, MT, RO, FI and SE) collect data electronically (80 %). Up to 67 % of the administrative sources already use a health code system (the International Classification of Diseases), 22 % of them use no code and 11 % of the sources use a code specific to that organisation. Therefore there is still a possibility to harmonise the use of a relevant code sector in health services across the EU.

In terms of data quality, the comparability of data sources in the health sector is quite good, as many of them are defined to be comparable both geographically and over time (71 %). After the police sector (96 %), the health sector (90 %) is the system that makes the most effort to guarantee the quality of its data.

Characteristics and quality of health data				
Quality of data	Criteria	%	Number of sources	Number of EU Member States
Comparability	Geographical and over time	71	5	4
Good timeliness	Immediately	43	5	4
Frequency of updating	Ongoing (max. once a week)	70	7	7
Quality assurance process in place	Yes	90	10	9

## Other sectors

Finally, in 13 Member States (EE, IE, EL, FR, HR, CY, LV, HU, MT, PL, PT, SI and UK) administrative data sources have been identified that do not

fit into any of the above sectors, for example administrative sources from civil society organisations, the ombudsperson or other public administrations. They have been placed under the 'other' category, which includes 21 data sources.

# Good practices and main challenges in administrative data sources across the EU-28

Good practices	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intersectoral cooperation between organisations to harmonise data gathering, methodology and the systematic collection of data.</li> <li>• Existence of national guidelines that provide clear directions on how to register information on incidents of gender-based violence and minimum registration data.</li> <li>• Systematic collection of data and use of protocols within an organisation; standardised procedures for data collection in place.</li> <li>• Use of codified questionnaires and automated software systems to process data.</li> <li>• Ongoing recording; immediate processing of data.</li> <li>• Validation and consistency: checks by supervisors or other staff; ongoing training of staff and use of experienced staff; regular evaluation meetings.</li> <li>• Establishment of a quality assurance framework.</li> <li>• Setting procedures to guarantee data protection, complying with confidentiality law and ensuring the safety of the victim.</li> <li>• Making collection of data mandatory for institutions.</li> <li>• Intimate partner violence incidents to be flagged.</li> <li>• When coordinated between police and justice, it is possible to follow offenders' pathways and reveal patterns of such behaviour.</li> <li>• Use of a coding system based on criminal and civil law to record incidents of gender-based violence.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administrative data do not show prevalence, only reported cases.</li> <li>• Lack of common understanding in terminology, as different terms and definitions (victim, shelter, etc.) are used between institutions.</li> <li>• Over-reporting, as the same victim can ask for different types of support within social services, thus one incident may be recorded more than once.</li> <li>• Confidentiality laws and provisions for the safety of the victim vary between Member States.</li> <li>• Legal provisions on and criminalisation of gender-based violence vary between Member States and influence data collection.</li> <li>• Lack of human and economic resources and adequate training.</li> <li>• Not all recorded data are disaggregated by sex.</li> <li>• In many sources, data on the victim or perpetrator are not systematically recorded.</li> <li>• Difficulties in comparability within the same organisation and across organisations.</li> <li>• Frequency of updating is not always optimum.</li> <li>• Information on crimes under investigation is not shared until cases are closed.</li> <li>• Delays in the provision of information, as outcomes of court cases are recorded only when they conclude.</li> <li>• Access to data is limited, as for some sources not all data are publicly available and accessible even upon request.</li> </ul>

