

Administrative data collection on violence against women: issues at stake and main challenges

Violence against women (VAW) is a violation of human rights. Its very nature deprives women of their ability to enjoy fundamental freedoms.

In this context, European Union institutions have committed to the development of tools to measure the extent of VAW and to increase knowledge about its consequences ⁽¹⁾. Furthermore, the Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, the Directive 2011/99/EU on the European protection order, and the Istanbul Convention of the Council of Europe ⁽²⁾ require the collection of relevant data on VAW to monitor the implementation of these legal instruments in the Member States.

To make administrative data useful, researchers, policymakers and service providers must address the following gaps and challenges in the collection and analysis of administrative data:

- the need for harmonised definitions;
- the need for comparable data at EU level;
- the need to address all forms of VAW in administrative data collection;
- the need to address gaps and challenges with service-based data on VAW;
- the need to address under-reporting.

Furthermore, a number of elements can improve data collection processes and systems as follows:

- comprehensive legal framework on VAW;
- political commitment to combat VAW with sufficient allocation of financial resources;
- centralised body regulating administrative data collection to enable the coordination, control and supervision of data collection on VAW and to promote the production of harmonised and comparable data;
- multi-agency structures and procedures to support the production and dissemination of more reliable and comparable data on VAW, leading to the coordination of data collection among different systems, the agreement on common definitions and standardised and systematic methodologies;
- systematic consultation with women's services and civil society organisations (CSOs) allowing direct knowledge of the main issues that should be covered by administrative data collection based on the needs of the victims.

National systems for administrative data collection on violence against women

Administrative data collection can be used as a tool for policy formulation and evaluation and for developing effective strategies on preventing and combating VAW. The usefulness and relevance of this depends on the quality and reliability of the data collection system and the contents. For example, administrative data can be collected in order to address capacity issues: how many women engage with public and civil society agencies and their services?

Second, administrative data systems can be used for assessing the adequacy of existing provisions. What kind of help do survivors need and what kind of assistance can agencies offer? Third, administrative data can be used to assess the quality of victim support services. This can provide information needed to improve the adequacy and effectiveness of service provision. Also, data on service use can provide a basis for estimating the administrative cost of VAW.

The main sources for collecting data on VAW are administrative institutions that collect and deal with reported cases.

At national level, there is often a diversity of administrative organisations rather than one main national institution to regulate administrative data collection related to VAW. However, in most Member States, the responsibility lies with the government ministries and/or services, with indications specified in internal rules and/or national plans rather than in legislation.

In most cases regulations are focused on specific sectors. The lack of a centralised body regulating administrative data collection means that multiple institutions are collecting data on VAW using different definitions and methodologies.

Table 1 provides an overview of national regulatory frameworks for administrative data by Member State.

⁽¹⁾ Council conclusions adopted during the Greek Presidency (2014), the Cypriot Presidency (2012) and the Spanish Presidency (2010) of the Council of the European Union, and by the European Parliament resolutions (2009, 2011 and 2014).

⁽²⁾ Council of Europe, *Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence — Explanatory report*, 2011.



Table 1 — National regulatory framework and main institution regulating administrative data collection on gender-based violence in EU Member States

Country	Presence of national regulatory framework	Main institution regulating administrative data collection on gender-based violence					
		National gender-based violence strategy/action plan	Harmonised system	Government/relevant ministry	Police/prosecutor office	Statistical office	Data protection agency
AT				X	X		
BE		X		X	X		
BG				X			
CY		X		X	X		
CZ		X		X			
DE				X	X		
DK	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
EE					X		
EL		X		X			X
ES	X	X	X	X	X	X	
FI				X	X		
FR	X			X	X		
HR	X	X		X	X		
HU				X	X		
IE					X		
IT		X		X	X		
LT				X	X		
LU	X	X		X			
LV				X			
MT				X			
NL	X			X			
PL				X	X		
PT	X			X			
RO				X	X		
SE				X		X	
SI				X	X	X	X
SK	X	X		X			
UK				X			

Update: March 2016

National crime and criminal justice statistics

The police and justice systems in the various Member States collect better administrative data on VAW in terms of availability, quality and comparability.

However, there are significant differences in laws and legal definitions, data collection methodologies and methodologies for producing statistics, including those on VAW.

Tables 2 and 3 provide information on administrative data by different forms of violence collected by the police and justice systems.

In most Member States, both systems collect data on sexual assault and intimate partner violence (IPV); less attention is paid to other forms of violence such as sexual harassment or stalking.

In many Member States both systems are also likely to provide data on victim and perpetrator. This may include data on their relationship, data on the incident, data on the outcome of incidents and civil justice data, where applicable.

The police and/or public prosecution agencies have internal rules on data recording and data often feeds into national crime statistics.

Table 2 — Administrative data per type of VAW: police

Country	IPV ***	Sexual assault	Sexual harassment	Stalking	Femicide/homicide
AT	X*	X	X	X	F
BE	X	X		X	F
BG	X	X			F
CY	X	X			F
CZ	X	X		X	F
DE	X	X	X		F
DK	X	X	X	X	F
EE	X	X			F
EL	X**	X			H
ES	X	X	X		H
FI	X	X	X	X	F
FR	X	X	X		F
HR	X	X	X	X	H
HU	X	X	X		F
IE	X	X	X		F
IT	X	X	X	X	F
LT	X	X	X	X	F
LU	X	X	X		F
LV	X	X	X		F
MT	X	X	X	X	F
NL	X	X		X	H
PL	X	X		X	H
PT	X				F
RO	X	X	X	X	H
SE	X	X		X	F
SI	X	X	X		F
SK	X	X		X	F
UK	X	X		X	F

Update: March 2016

* Domestic violence only

** Domestic violence only (couples not cohabitating are not included)

*** Intimate partner violence

Table 3 — Administrative data per type of VAW: justice

Country	IPV ***	Sexual assault	Sexual harassment	Stalking	Femicide/homicide
AT		X	X	X	H
BE	X	X	X	X	H
BG		X	X		H
CY	X	X			H
CZ	X	X		X	H
DE	X	X		X	H
DK	X	X	X	X	F
EE	X	X			H
EL	X**	X			H
ES	X	X	X		H
FI		X	X		H
FR	X	X	X		H
HR	X	X	X	X	H
HU	X	X	X		F
IE	X	X	X		H
IT	X	X	X	X	H
LT	X	X	X	X	H
LU	X	X	X		H
LV	X	X	X		H
MT	X	X	X	X	F
NL	X	X		X	H
PL	X	X	X	X	F
PT	X				F
RO	X	X	X	X	H
SE	X	X		X	F
SI	X	X	X	X	H
SK	X	X		X	F
UK	X	X		X	F

Update: March 2016

* Domestic violence only

** Domestic violence only (couples not cohabitating are not included)

*** Intimate partner violence

General criteria for good practices with regard to administrative data collection

Within the context of the European Institute for Gender Equality's (EIGE) approach to identify good practices, the following general criteria related to administrative data sources on VAW have been identified.

- A political and institutional commitment and will to collect administrative data on VAW, supported by a legal framework, a strategy, institutional mechanisms and financial resources, are in place.
- A systematic, centralised and multidimensional approach to administrative data collection on VAW, combining different sources of data, is in place.
- A systematic engagement with CSOs and specialised women's services involved in VAW in all data collection phases, including feedback to the involved institutions, is in place.
- Collaboration with the designers of administrative systems and joint work with data suppliers is in place.
- A quality assessment and improvement of data and statistics through systematic monitoring and evaluation is in place.
- Data collection systems are rooted in and reflect the context under which each administrative organisation created its own administrative system.
- Definitions of different forms of VAW are harmonised with international/common definitions.
- There is an integration of data and information on the different forms of VAW.
- Data collected is reported both internally and externally, where appropriate.
- Data are made visible to increase awareness of VAW in the society and to feed policymaking.

Specific criteria for good practices with regard to crime and criminal justice

Specific criteria on crime and criminal justice statistics include administrative data from the police and justice systems on the following specific forms of violence: IPV, femicide, rape and sexual assault.

- The integration of data and information on VAW survivors and perpetrators and the relationship between them is present.
- The harmonisation of the definitions of different forms of VAW, on the basis of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes, is present.
- The integration of data and information on VAW from different sources to ensure comparability is considered.
- Ethics and confidentiality are carefully considered.
- An intra/intersectorial approach to data collection on VAW is present.
- The improvement of the quality and typology of data collection on VAW is taken into consideration.

Examples of good practices on administrative data collection on violence against women in criminal statistics

Finnish Homicide Monitor (Finland)

The Finnish homicide monitoring system was established in 2002 and since then is updated on an ongoing basis by the Finnish Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy.

This is mandatory and all police investigating officers have to fill it in.

It is also used to inform policy formulation by all the relevant institutional subjects (National Police Board and Police College Research Unit and Ministries).

The Finnish Homicide Monitor (FHM) uses victim-based data architecture. Each row in the data matrix corresponds to one homicide victim and for each case an offender is identified by the police. This allows in-depth information on the victim and the perpetrator to be detected, including the relationship between victim and offender, demographic data, prior criminal record of the perpetrator, motive and information on warning signs.

It adopts a standard electronic form for collecting data which is regularly published providing a high-quality source of data on femicide.

FHM was used as a basis for the European Homicide Monitor.

Police-reported cases of VAW (Denmark)

The Danish police collect nationwide comprehensive data on all police-related offences. The structure of the Danish national registers ensures access to nationwide and comprehensive data on VAW, including police-reported cases as well as hospital visits due to violence.

Each case recorded has a unique case number with reference to a penal code and linked to a personal ID number. This allows information to be drawn from other national registries (demographic and socioeconomic data) and to identify if different and several offences have been repeated.



Interministerial mission for women's protection against violence and for the fight against human trafficking (France)

The Interministerial Mission to Protect Women against Violence and the Fight against Trafficking (MIPROF) was established in 2005 with a mandate to collect, analyse and disseminate information and data on VAW coming from different sources: research surveys, police and justice data, and CSO data. This allows the monitoring of trends and progress.

The mission's working group is composed of different ministerial statistical services and national research institutes giving impetus to relevant ministries to update data regularly and respond to the need for better quality data as requested by MIPROF.

The mission responds to the recommendations of the European convention on preventing VAW and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention).

Police and judicial administrative data on intimate partner violence, femicide, rape and sexual assault (Sweden)

Sweden's official crime statistics developed indicators on gender equality policies — out of 88, 14 indicators are specifically related to VAW including rape, sexual coercion, sexual abuse, sexual molestation, gross violation of women's integrity and stalking.

Nationwide data are available since 1975 and are a basis for decision-makers within the judicial system, the parliament and the government showing a strong legislative and policy framework on gender mainstreaming and on combating VAW.

All data are sex disaggregated concerning both the victims and the offenders and include information on the number of processed offences.

The National Council for Crime Prevention, which is responsible for crime statistics, works closely with delivering authorities, ensuring high-quality data collection and coordination between several stakeholders.

Crime statistics conform to international and European statistical standards.

About the study

Within the framework of its strategy for combating gender-based violence and to support the institutions and experts engaged in preventing and combating gender-based violence in the EU and beyond, EIGE provides access to existing statistical data and information on gender-based violence. In this context, EIGE has commissioned the study 'Collection of good practices on administrative data collection on violence against women'. The objective of this study is to identify effective approaches and mechanisms implemented in EU Member States to collect administrative data on gender-based violence. Specific focus is on data from police, justice, health and social services and the 'other' administrative systems (e.g. related ministries). The study assesses those mechanisms that facilitate a systematic collection of comparable data. This enables reporting the number of reported cases and supporting the monitoring of actions taken to eradicate VAW. The project contributes to the establishment of a systematic collection of robust, reliable and comparable administrative data on VAW in the EU. It builds on previous work by EIGE on VAW, in particular the EIGE study 'Mapping the current status and potential of administrative data sources on gender-based violence in the EU' ⁽³⁾. The study was carried out by the Istituto per la ricerca sociale (IRS). Country information was collected by the IRS and its network of national experts.

More information about the study is available at: <http://eige.europa.eu>

⁽³⁾ <http://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/eiges-studies-gender-based-violence/mapping-current-status-and-potential-administrative-data-sources-gender-based-violence-eu>

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.

© European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016
Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

Contact details

<http://eige.europa.eu> 
facebook.com/eige.europa.eu 
twitter.com/eurogender 
youtube.com/user/eurogender 
eige.sec@eige.europa.eu 
+370 52157444 



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

Paper: MH-01-16-684-EN-C 978-92-9493-448-2 10.2839/031586
PDF: MH-01-16-684-EN-N 978-92-9493-447-5 10.2839/571284