



### 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.

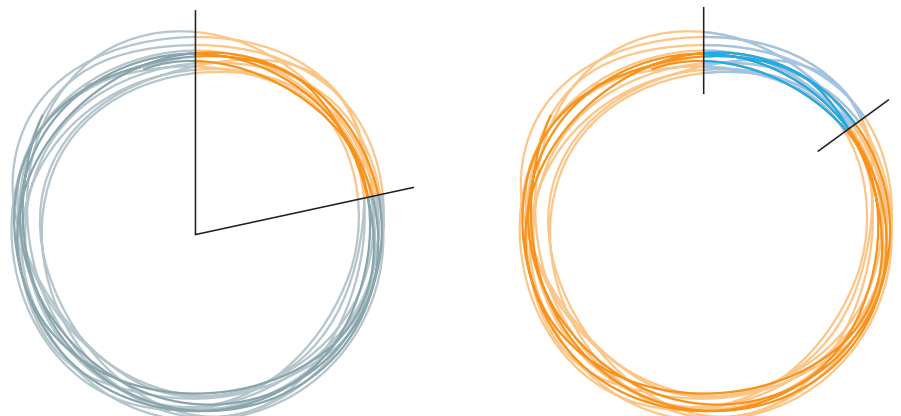
Improving data collection and providing comprehensive and reliable administrative data is crucial to monitor the police and justice sectors' response to violence against women. It also shows a state's willingness to monitor the effectiveness of its law. High-quality administrative data is in line with 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.*

23 % of women have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence since the age of 15.

Only 14 % 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 regulated by the law on protection from domestic violence which contains provisions for the protection and support of victims. Domestic violence is defined as 'physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or economic violence' between persons in an intimate relationship, a family relationship or against a child. As domestic violence is not specifically criminalised, intimate partner violence is criminalised under several offences in the Criminal Code. Bulgaria signed the Istanbul Convention in April 2016 and is currently in the process of harmonising domestic legislation with the Victims' Rights Directive.

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



### POLICE



- Data collected by the police sector includes the following breakdowns: the age and sex of both the victim and perpetrator; the relationship between them and their respective nationalities, names and ethnicities.
- Recording of the relationship is limited to general categories and it is not possible to identify cases in which the perpetrator and the victim have or have had an intimate partner relationship.
- Domestic violence and intimate partner violence are not separately criminalised in the Criminal Code.
- Consequently, the police sector does not collect data on intimate partner violence specifically.
- In 2015, police recorded 25 and 1 316 <sup>(2)</sup> victims (of serious and minor violence, respectively) of physical intimate partner violence.



- Data collected is recorded under the relevant article in the Criminal Code.
- The police register offences within 48 hours of the crime being reported ('INPUT' statistics) on the Regional Integrated Police System (RIPS).



- The Ministry of Interior publishes data collected by the police on its website <sup>(3)</sup>.
- The National Statistical Institute publishes yearly data on convicted persons, disaggregated by age, gender and type of crime, on its website <sup>(4)</sup>.
- These published statistics do not specifically relate to intimate partner violence.



### JUSTICE

- Data collected includes the following breakdowns: the age and sex of both the victim and perpetrator. There is no data available on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator.
- The justice sector does not collect data specifically on intimate partner violence because it is not included in the Criminal Code.
- Intimate partner violence crimes can be processed under articles in the Criminal Code relating to violent acts resulting in injuries.
- The Supreme Prosecutor's Office of Cassation maintains a Unified Information System for data collection.
- The Unified Information System collects information on all offences included in the Criminal Code, any case processed in the criminal justice system and its ultimate decisions.

- Data collected is recorded under the relevant article in the Criminal Code.

- The Prosecutor's Office of the Republic of Bulgaria publishes data collected at judicial level in annual reports available on its website <sup>(5)</sup>.

<sup>(2)</sup> Ministry of the Interior, data for 2015, based on Article 128 and Article 131(a) of the Penal Code.

<sup>(3)</sup> <https://www.mvr.bg/министерството/programni-dokumenti-otcheti-analizi/статистика/годишен-бюлетин-полицейска-статистика>

<sup>(4)</sup> <http://www.nsi.bg/en>

<sup>(5)</sup> <https://www.prb.bg/en>

# 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



## Introduce the definition of intimate partner violence as a non-private criminal offence

There is a need to adopt a clear, regulatory framework for the collection of administrative data on violence against women. To facilitate this, domestic violence — and specifically intimate partner violence — should be distinctly criminalised in the Criminal Code. This will allow accurate statistical data to be obtained. Currently, Article 4 of the Criminal Code distinguishes between bodily injuries for public prosecution and those for private prosecution. 'Medium' and 'light' injuries between spouses comprise private crimes and thus the victim is required to make the complaint. It is recommended that intimate partner violence is recognised as a stand-alone, non-private criminal offence that is criminalised in the Criminal Code. This will enable state prosecutions for all intimate partner violence offences which do not require the victim to make a complaint.

## Ratify the Istanbul Convention

Bulgaria signed the Istanbul Convention in 2016; it is recommended that it now be ratified. This would oblige Bulgaria 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.



## Improve recording of data in judiciary

Information on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator is collected at police level, though this is not done at judicial level. At judicial level, information recorded under specific crimes in the Criminal Code are not sex disaggregated and do not reveal the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. It is recommended that criminal offences recorded at judicial level include information on the sex of the victim and the perpetrator and on their relationship. This would enable more accurate information on intimate partner violence to be recorded and allow for easier cooperation with the police sector due to shared breakdowns of data.

## Ensure all information is submitted at police level

At present, police officials fill in two forms for RIPS: one on the offence and one on the victim. As this data is submitted on paper and there is no means of ensuring that all information required is filled in, it is recommended that it be made mandatory that all information be filled out on both the victim and the crime at this stage.



## Synchronise existing databases

The police and justice sectors use separate databases for data collection and employ different methodologies. It is recommended that all institutions involved in the process of administrative data collection of all criminal offences synchronise their existing databases and adopt a collective methodology for the purposes of improving the gathering and sharing of standardised data on intimate partner violence.

## Publish data on victims of crime

The National Statistical Institute publishes annual data on convicted persons that is disaggregated by sex, age and the type of crime committed on its website. However, no official statistics are published on the victims of crime. It is recommended that the National Statistical Institute undertake the necessary measures to publish statistics that include information on the victims of crime disaggregated by sex.

### 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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