

Gender-based violence

Intimate partner violence and witness intervention: what are the deciding factors?

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The European Institute for Gender Equality

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

Tel. +370 52157444

Email: eige.sec@eige.europa.eu

 <http://www.eige.europa.eu>

 www.twitter.com/eurogender

 www.facebook.com/eige.europa.eu

 www.youtube.com/eurogender

 <http://eurogender.eige.europa.eu>

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Intimate partner violence and witness intervention: what are the deciding factors?

Foreword

Women face the greatest danger from people they know. In the EU, more than a fifth of women have been physically or sexually abused by a current or former partner. This report provides new evidence on factors which encourage witnesses of intimate partner violence to intervene and provides recommendations on what the EU and Member States can do to better protect victims.

Many witnesses to intimate partner violence want to help. In some Member States, up to 30 % of calls to domestic violence helplines come from witnesses. Yet negative perceptions of the authorities, fear for their own safety, a lack of access to support services and a common misconception that intimate partner violence is a private matter can prevent witnesses from acting.

EU Member States need to raise awareness on intimate partner violence and provide information on how witnesses can best assist victims. Professionals working in the health and social sector need clear guidance on their obligation to report violence. Police and justice authorities need to protect both victims and witnesses.

The EU Victims' Rights Directive is a legal obligation for EU Member States and outlines standard requirements to support victims and witnesses of crime. The Istanbul Convention is the gold standard for protecting victims and witnesses of intimate partner violence and should be ratified by all Member States. The EU must adopt equivalent measures should EU-wide accession continue to face challenges.

The private sphere, and in particular the home, cannot continue to be the most dangerous place for a woman. Spikes in domestic violence reports during the COVID-19 pandemic have increased the urgency for action: further lockdowns could put many at risk. Friends, family, neighbours, co-workers and professionals can help victims of intimate partner violence. This report shows how the EU and its Member States can ensure witnesses have the right information and resources to do so.

Carlien Scheele,
Director,

European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)

Abbreviations

Member State abbreviations

BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czechia
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

Frequently used abbreviations

EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EU	European Union (also EU-28)
EU-28	the 27 countries of the EU, plus the United Kingdom
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
NGO	non-governmental organisation

Contents

Foreword	3
Abbreviations	4
Glossary	8
Executive summary	9
1. Policy recommendations	11
1.1. Report approach: objectives, research questions and methodology	13
2. Overview of existing evidence from all EU Member States	15
2.1. Relevant EU provisions, policies and legislation	15
2.2. Comparative and international evidence on witness intervention	16
2.2.1. Witnesses' willingness to intervene	17
2.2.2. Data on related or relevant issues: domestic violence and confidence in the police	19
2.3. Evidence on witness intervention in specific Member States	21
2.3.1. National policies and legislation	21
2.3.2. Evidence at the Member State level on witness intervention	23
2.3.3. Measures to facilitate witness support	29
3. Qualitative research in four Member States	33
3.1. Environments in which witnesses report intimate partner violence	33
3.2. Factors that enable witnesses to support victims of intimate partner violence	34
3.2.1. Victim cooperation and consent	34
3.2.2. Evidence	35
3.2.3. Understanding and awareness	37
3.2.4. Anonymous reporting to the authorities	38
3.2.5. Civic obligation and duty	40
3.2.6. Professional obligation	41
3.3. Factors that may either enable or act as a barrier to witnesses supporting victims of intimate partner violence	41
3.3.1. Relationship between the victim and the witness	41
3.3.2. The involvement of children	43
3.3.3. The gravity and type of violence	44
3.3.4. Fear of escalation of violence	46
3.3.4. Characteristics of the victim	47
3.3.5. Characteristics of the witness	48
3.4. Factors that act as a barrier to witnesses supporting victims of intimate partner violence	48
3.4.1. Fear of repercussions	48
3.4.2. Perceptions of the police and/or judicial system	50
3.4.3. The perception of intimate partner violence as being a private matter	52

3.4.4. Cultural beliefs and social attitudes	52
3.4.5. Limited access to support services	54
4. Conclusions	55
References	58
Annex: Methodology	63
Methodology for the desk research	63
Selection of Member States for the qualitative research	65
Definition of reporting	65
Methodology for the interviews with witnesses and professionals	65
Methodology for the focus groups with the general public	73
Scenarios for focus groups	77
Analysis of qualitative data	78
Strengths and limitations of the qualitative research	81

List of figures

Figure 1. The process that occurs before a witness acts	17
Figure 2. Categories of witness responses	19
Figure 3. Examples of barriers to witnesses supporting victims identified in surveys in Czechia, Ireland and the United Kingdom	25
Figure 4. Proportion of professionals and other individuals contacting women's shelters (Sweden), calling helplines (Belgium, Denmark), reporting domestic violence (Portugal) and in whom victims confide (United Kingdom)	28
Figure 5. Example of material from the campaign 'Reacting Can Change Everything' in France	31
Figure 6. Example of material from the campaign 'Active Community against Violence' in Portugal	31

List of tables

Table 1. Selected indicators related to gender-based violence in EU Member States and relevant in the context of this report	20
Table 2. Protection measures for witnesses who report intimate partner violence in EU Member States	22
Table A.1. List of sources	64
Table A.2. Suggested search terms	64
Table A.3. Recruitment criteria for interviews with professionals and witnesses	66
Table A.4. Number of interviews per Member State	66
Table A.5. Detailed breakdown of interviews with professionals	67
Table A.6. Detailed breakdown of interviews with witnesses	67
Table A.7. Topic guide for interviews with professionals	67
Table A.8. Topic guidance for interviews with witnesses	70
Table A.9. Recruitment criteria for focus groups	73
Table A.10. Focus-group participants by gender, age and whether they have witnessed but not reported intimate partner violence	73
Table A.11. Topic guide for focus groups	74
Table A.12. Characteristics of three scenarios	77
Table A.13. Codes used in the analysis	79
Table A.14. Distribution of codes across environments and Member States for the interviews and focus groups	80

Glossary

The following definitions are used in the report.

- **Gender-based violence** refers to any act of violence directed against a person because of their gender. Because women are exposed to this violence to a greater extent, gender-based violence is used interchangeably with **violence against women** from this point onwards in this report.
- **Intimate partner violence** is '[a]ny act of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occurs between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim' (EIGE, 2017b). This definition includes all forms of intimate partner violence. This violence 'constitutes a form of violence which affects women disproportionately and which is therefore distinctly gendered' (EIGE, Glossary and Thesaurus).
- **Domestic violence** (also referred to as **domestic abuse**) is 'all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit, irrespective of biological or legal family ties, or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence as the victim' (EIGE (Glossary and Thesaurus), based on Council of Europe (2011)).
- A **witness** is an adult who observes or is otherwise made aware of intimate partner violence (or suspects intimate partner violence).
- **Witnesses' support for victims** (also referred to as **intervening**) encompasses a range of actions including talking to the victim, helping them to access support and accompanying them to support services, as well as **reporting** the case to the police or relevant authorities or helping the victim to do so.
- A **professional** is someone who works at a relevant competent authority (such as the police or judiciary, a national or local authority or a support service) and works with witnesses.
- An **environment** is to be understood as the setting in which reporting of intimate partner violence often occurs.
- A **victim** is a 'natural person who has suffered harm, including physical, mental or emotional harm or economic loss which was directly caused by a criminal offence' (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2012).

Executive summary

The EU has long recognised that violence against women is a violation of human rights and a form of gender-based discrimination that has a major negative impact on victims and significant costs for society (European Parliament, 2019). Women are most likely to face violence at the hands of someone they know, with one in five having experienced violence at the hands of an intimate partner (FRA, 2014). As women are disproportionately affected by intimate partner violence, this report will focus on women victims. While the principal duty to protect women from violence lies with the state, the perception that intimate partner violence is ‘a private matter’ needs to change across society, on an individual level as well as in the private, professional and public spheres.

This report examines the **factors that encourage witnesses of intimate partner violence to intervene** (including reporting the violence to the relevant authorities). It draws on EU-wide desk research and in-depth qualitative research in Denmark, Germany, France and Portugal. As the desk research found a lack of data and evidence examining witnesses’ support for victims of intimate partner violence, this report provides **new evidence** on when witnesses intervene and in which types of environment.

Factors that enable witness intervention

- Witnesses have a **strong desire to intervene, but not necessarily to report** violence to the police.
- **Friends and family are a key group** for supporting victims of intimate partner violence through intervention. **Neighbours** and others in the local community also show a strong desire to intervene. **Co-workers** are less likely to intervene.
- **Securing the cooperation and consent of the victim** is a key enabler of witness intervention. Witness intervention can include talking to the victim, helping them access support services, or assisting in reporting the issue to the authorities.
- **Understanding intimate partner violence and knowing how to support victims** motivates witnesses to intervene. This highlights the importance of awareness-raising campaigns that build understanding, enable witnesses to spot the signs of intimate partner violence (in particular non-physical violence), and provide guidance on how to assist victims.
- The **ability to report and give evidence on intimate partner violence anonymously** encourages witnesses to report it to the authorities, particularly neighbours and co-workers, who tend to have a less close relationship with the victim and perpetrator.
- In healthcare and social-care settings, **professional obligation** is a factor requiring witnesses to report intimate partner violence to the authorities. However, these obligations vary across countries and the perceived conflict between the obligation to report the issue and patient–client confidentiality can deter witnesses from reporting.

Some factors can act as **both enablers of and barriers to witness intervention**. For example, witnesses are generally more likely to report intimate partner violence to the authorities if **dependent children** are involved. However, this is not always the case as some witnesses are concerned about children being separated from their parents, or experiencing trauma as a result of a police investigation.

Negative perceptions of the police and judicial system, fears for their own safety and the misconception that this type of violence is a private matter are all factors that act as **barriers** to witness intervention.

There is a great need to **raise awareness** and implement measures aimed at **encouraging witnesses to act**. More information and **guidance is necessary for professionals who are under the obligation to report** intimate partner violence.

It is crucial for police and justice authorities to reinforce their efforts to **handle reports of intimate partner violence in a manner that protects both victims and witnesses**.

Further research is needed to ensure relevant measures and policies are evidence based. Measures to encourage and enable witness intervention, such as awareness-raising campaigns and helplines/hotlines, must be **funded and their impact monitored and evaluated** to maximise their effectiveness.

1. Policy recommendations

The EU and Member States should raise awareness on intimate partner violence in all its forms

- The EU could support both civil society and national efforts by:
 - providing funding for organisations that support witnesses and victims of intimate partner violence through education and awareness raising;
 - building on existing information material⁽¹⁾ to create new resources;
 - facilitating the exchange of experience and good practice; and
 - building evidence on effective methods to raise awareness across all Member States.
- Learning materials for witnesses could help them recognise intimate partner violence in all its forms, explain how to initiate a conversation with the victim if they are concerned about someone they know, and provide guidance on who to contact for further information. Member States could develop resources specifically for witnesses of intimate partner violence; expand existing materials aimed solely at victims to include witnesses among the intended audience; examine the effectiveness of these measures to identify areas for improvement; and highlight that intimate partner violence takes many forms, of which physical violence is just one.

The EU and Member States should encourage witnesses to act even when they are unsure about the situation, and provide advice on possible courses of action

- In collaboration with Member States and EU-level organisations supporting victims of intimate partner violence, the EU could develop or collate materials that outline the range of courses of action available to witnesses. Such materials would help witnesses make an informed choice about which course of action to follow. The EU could promote and disseminate such material, or provide support to Member States and civil society organisations to do so.
- Resources and public campaigns should:
 - emphasise that it is difficult to be certain about intimate partner violence;
 - encourage witnesses to act even when they are unsure what to do and advise them on the possible courses of action and issues to consider when talking to the victim;
 - advise on how to reach out to support services, how to accompany the victim to support services and how to report the issue to the authorities;
 - emphasise that all action can be helpful and the most appropriate course of action depends on the circumstances; and
 - direct witnesses to where they can seek further specialist advice.

⁽¹⁾ For instance, the campaign 'Non.No.Nein. Say no! Stop violence against women' (see: <https://ec.europa.eu/justice/saynostopvaw/index.html>).

The EU and Member States should provide guidance on the obligation of professionals to report intimate partner violence

- The EU could support Member States by:
 - facilitating the exchange of experience and good practice through EU-level platforms, e.g. Social Services Europe ⁽²⁾ and the forthcoming EU network on the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence;
 - using the relevant EU instruments to fund specialist training or the development of guidelines, e.g. the EU health programme ⁽³⁾ and justice programme ⁽⁴⁾; and
 - task the relevant EU agencies, e.g. EIGE and the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training ⁽⁵⁾, with implementing activities which give more prominence to the obligation to report intimate partner violence in professional development programmes for those working with victims and witnesses.
- Professionals in Member States would benefit from training and guidance about the obligation to report, specifically when this obligation transcends patient–client confidentiality. Guidance could be targeted at different groups of professionals to be more effective, as the police and judiciary, nurses, doctors and social workers may have different considerations. Training and guidance should be developed and disseminated in collaboration with the relevant professional bodies.

Authorities in Member States should handle reports of intimate partner violence sensitively and take action to improve public trust

- National protocols could help the authorities to respond to reports of intimate partner violence from witnesses and victims. Such a

protocol should emphasise the importance of offering reassurance and protection for both the witness and the victim and make it possible to take a statement from the victim and witness in a comfortable setting, e.g. at a women’s shelter or in the home. Such a protocol should be publicised through campaigns to send a clear message to the public that all reports will be fully investigated and dealt with in a sensitive manner. Any protocol should be developed in collaboration with specialist victim-support agencies and be assessed to identify lessons learned and improve the experiences of witness and victims.

The EU and Member States should strengthen protection for witnesses of intimate partner violence and consider anonymous reporting

- The EU should work with Member States to establish and disseminate good practice in protecting witnesses of intimate partner violence, e.g. through the forthcoming EU network on the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence. The EU should also revise the ‘EU guidelines on violence against women and girls and combating all forms of discrimination against them’ ⁽⁶⁾ to further emphasise the necessary protection of witnesses.
- Witnesses (who can to some extent also be considered victims) should be able to report intimate partner violence anonymously in all Member States using a national hotline and online platforms. Protection for witnesses of intimate partner violence can be further improved by giving witnesses the opportunity to testify just once in order to avoid the secondary victimisation of witnesses who might be close to the victim, by recording the testimony, by allowing witnesses to testify at a date and time that suit them, and by providing police protection if necessary.

⁽²⁾ <https://www.socialserviceseurope.eu>

⁽³⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/health/funding/programme_en

⁽⁴⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants1/programmes-2014-2020/justice/index_en.htm

⁽⁵⁾ <https://www.cepol.europa.eu>

⁽⁶⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/sites/antitrafficking/files/eu_guidelines_on_violence_against_women_and_girls_1.pdf

The EU and Member States should collect evidence on what types of witnesses most frequently support victims of intimate partner violence and in what types of environment

- Setting harmonised indicators relating to the prevalence of witness reporting and regularly collecting and publishing data on who reports intimate partner violence could help Member States compare and improve their performance. This could be done through EU-wide surveys by Eurostat or Eurobarometer or through administrative data at national level.
- The EU and Member States should carry out research into the different factors that help witnesses support victims of intimate partner violence in all EU Member States. This would help inform measures taken to help witnesses support victims.

The EU and Member States should implement, monitor and evaluate measures to encourage witness intervention

- To ensure effectiveness, new and existing measures, including public-awareness campaigns, should be designed based on available research, including this report. Funding should be allocated specifically for implementing, monitoring and evaluating new and existing measures to enable improvement.
- The implementation of effective measures would encourage or enable witnesses to better support victims of intimate partner violence. The measures should be monitored and evaluated to assess their impact and to improve future policy and practice.

1.1. Report approach: objectives, research questions and methodology

The overall objective of this report is to contribute to current knowledge among decision-makers on **viable and effective approaches in EU Member States that help witnesses intervene**. This knowledge can be used to improve Member State and EU responses to intimate partner violence. The specific objective of the report is to **propose ways in which Member States can improve witness engagement** in their efforts to tackle violence against women, specifically intimate partner violence.

Initially, the scope of the report was restricted to **factors that facilitate witness reporting of intimate partner violence to the police or other authorities** (e.g. social services, the judicial system). However, through the course of conducting the research it became evident that witnesses support victims in a variety of ways and that some of these actions (e.g. talking to the victim, helping them access support, accompanying them to support services) may lead to the case being reported to the authorities (by the witness or by the victim). Therefore we decided to broaden the scope of the report to look at **factors enabling witnesses to support victims of intimate partner violence** (including reporting it to the authorities).

In exploring the role and influence of witnesses in tackling intimate partner violence, this report answers three questions.

1. Who are the witnesses who support victims of intimate partner violence (in any way, including reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities) and what are their motivations?

2. What are the environments where witnesses are most likely to support victims of intimate partner violence (including reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities)?
3. What factors facilitate and hinder witnesses from supporting victims of intimate partner violence (including reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities)?

In order to respond to the research questions, this report maps out the state of play as regards witnesses' support for victims of intimate partner violence across the EU. Detailed **desk research** was used to explore the role of witnesses across EU Member States and the factors affecting this,

including identifying four environments in which witnesses support victims of intimate partner violence. The report also draws on **in-depth qualitative research** to explore the three research questions. Findings from interviews with 20 witnesses and 36 professionals working with witnesses, as well as 12 focus groups with a total of 86 members of the general public, are used to delve deeper into factors (enablers and barriers) affecting witnesses' support for victims of intimate partner violence and the environments in which this occurs in four selected Member States (Denmark, Germany, France and Portugal). For a more detailed overview of the methodology, see the annex.

2. Overview of existing evidence from all EU Member States

Findings in this chapter are based on desk research conducted by a network of national experts across all EU Member States ⁽⁷⁾.

2.1. Relevant EU provisions, policies and legislation

The EU has in the last decade increased its efforts to tackle gender-based violence of all sorts. Notably, building on the commitments to address gender-based violence established by the European Commission's Women's Charter (European Commission, 2010) and the European Pact for Gender Equality 2011–2020 (Council of the European Union, 2011), the Commission's gender equality strategy 2020–2025 (European Commission, 2020) highlights ending gender-based violence as a key strategic goal. The strategy calls on Member States to implement Directive 2012/29/EU establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime (Victims' Rights Directive) and other relevant EU law protecting victims of gender-based violence.

As a major landmark, the Victims' Rights Directive provides a definition of gender-based violence, recognises that violence often take place in close relationships and requires special forms of support and protection (European Parliament and Council of the European Union, 2012). The directive provides minimum standards for victims, including the right to specialist support for victims with specific needs, such as victims of sexual violence, victims of gender-based violence and victims of violence in intimate relationships, including trauma support and counselling. Although the Victims' Rights Directive does not specifically cover witness protection, the Commission's guidance document (European

Commission, 2013) does encourage Member States to organise the courtrooms so that neither victims nor witnesses have to walk in front of either the defendant or any of the defendant's friends or family in order to testify, as this may increase their sense of feeling threatened or intimidated. Furthermore, those guidelines suggested that Member States establish procedures to make a victim- or witness-contacting support service available, to provide information and support, prepare them for the trial, or meet them on arrival in court and wait with them to provide moral support during the trial, if required.

As signatories of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) (Council of Europe, 2011), the EU and its Member States ⁽⁸⁾ are expected to offer appropriate witness-support mechanisms and protection. Article 18(2) of the convention calls on the signatory countries to ensure that there are appropriate mechanisms to provide for effective cooperation between relevant agencies and organisations in protecting and supporting victims and witnesses of all forms of violence covered by the scope of the convention (Council of Europe, 2011). The Istanbul Convention calls for the protection of victims, their families and witnesses from intimidation, retaliation and repeat victimisation. Particular protection and support are envisaged for child witnesses. Free 24-hour (24/7) telephone helplines set up state-wide are expected across Member States as a form of general support service (Article 24). Article 27, on reporting, is particularly relevant for this report, as it calls on countries to 'take the necessary measures to encourage any person witness to the commission of acts of violence covered by the scope of this Convention or who has reasonable grounds to believe that such an act may be

⁽⁷⁾ This includes the United Kingdom. At the time of writing, the United Kingdom was in a transition period and had not yet fully exited the European Union.

⁽⁸⁾ Among the EU Member States, ratification of the convention is pending in Bulgaria, Czechia, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Slovakia and the United Kingdom (Council of Europe, 2020).

committed, or that further acts of violence are to be expected, to report this to the competent organisations or authorities' (Council of Europe, 2011). Article 28 focuses on professionals' reporting of violence and requests that Member States take the necessary measures to ensure that the confidentiality rules do not constitute an obstacle to this reporting. In 2019 all Member States either adopted national action plans to address gender-based violence or incorporated such measures into related action plans, although Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE) states that not all of these Member State measures are considered sufficient to meet Istanbul Convention standards (WAVE, 2018). The Member State national action plans tend to cover three key areas: the training of key players ('actors'); preventing and changing violent behaviour; and support for victims (EIGE, 2012). As a key line of analysis, the present report offers a first overview of Member State measures to encourage witness reporting, exploring how national legislation and national action plans support the involvement of witnesses in official reporting procedures.

The available evidence on reporting of intimate partner violence at EU level suggests that many of the most serious incidents of violence against women are not reported to the authorities. A study carried out by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) ('Fundamental Rights Agency') gauges the full scale of under-reporting, showing that only about 14 % of women reported the most serious incident of violence they had experienced since the age of 15 to police authorities, while about one quarter to one third reported it to at least one organisation offering support to victims (including the police). This study suggests that less serious incidents are even less likely to be reported, so the true severity of the problem of gender-based violence is not accounted for by official reporting (FRA, 2014).

Reporting by witnesses is equally low. Despite the central role witnesses can play in supporting the victim, whether by contacting the authorities

themselves or by encouraging and/or accompanying the victims to make a report, a Eurobarometer survey showed that only 12 % of respondents who knew about instances of domestic violence – whether a friend or family member, a neighbour or a colleague at work – spoke to the police (European Commission, 2016). There is consequently a need to better understand the role of witnesses in supporting victims of intimate partner violence and factors that affect their involvement, including their reporting of intimate partner violence to the relevant authorities.

2.2. Comparative and international evidence on witness intervention

There is a lack of comparative or EU-level evidence about how witnesses support victims of intimate partner violence, including reporting it to the authorities, a gap this report starts to fill by conducting research across Member States. The existing evidence suggests that a number of factors influence witnesses' willingness to intervene, including demographic characteristics, social attitudes, the context in which the crime occurs and whether the victim knows the perpetrator. Witnesses may be reluctant to report the issue directly to the police or other authorities, preferring to intervene in other ways such as by supporting the victim.

Intimate partner violence against women is considered **one of the most prevalent forms of violence against women** (Stöckl et al., 2013). According to FRA, about 22 % of women have been victims of physical and/or sexual violence by their partners since the age of 15 (FRA, 2014). Violence in intimate relationships can end in intimate partner femicide⁽⁹⁾; in contrast to the declining trajectory of homicide rates in general, femicide rates are relatively stable (Weil et al., 2018).

⁽⁹⁾ EIGE defines femicide as killing of women and girls on account of their gender, perpetrated or tolerated by both private and public actors. It covers, inter alia, the murder of a woman as a result of intimate partner violence, the torture and misogynistic slaying of women, the killing of women and girls in the name of so-called honour and other harmful-practice-related killings, the targeted killing of women and girls in the context of armed conflict, and cases of femicide connected with gangs, organised crime, drug dealers and trafficking in women and girls (see: <https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1128>).

This report makes a novel contribution in collating existing evidence and presenting new evidence on witnesses' support for victims of intimate partner violence in EU Member States. This chapter draws on evidence regarding witnesses' ⁽¹⁰⁾ willingness to intervene and reporting behaviour in relation to intimate partner violence.

2.2.1. Witnesses' willingness to intervene

When a witness observes a crime, an unconscious five-step process occurs (Cismaru et al., 2010).

1. The witness notices the incident.
2. The witness interprets the incident as wrongdoing and recognises that a person (or people) needs help. Attitudes towards the acceptability of domestic violence are important here.
3. The witness decides whether it is their responsibility to intervene. This decision can be influenced by various factors, for example, the number of people present (the presence of other witnesses may dilute the feeling of responsibility) or the relationship with the victim.
4. After deciding to help, the witness must choose how to intervene. Action can be direct (e.g. separating the perpetrator from the victim) or indirect (such as calling the police). The perceived cost (or negative consequences) of not intervening needs to be higher than the perceived cost of taking action by the witness.
5. The witness acts.

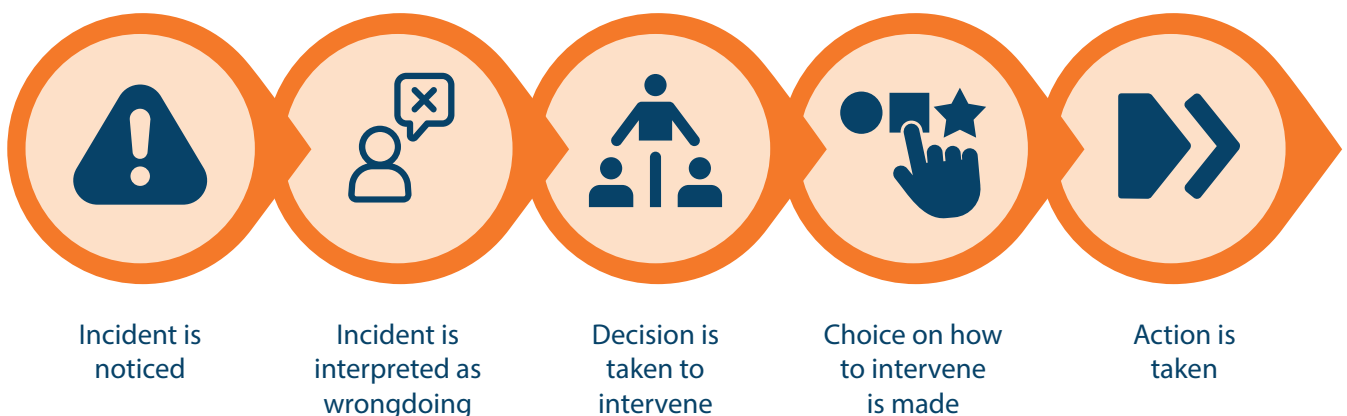
When any one of these steps presents difficulty, the easiest and most common response is not to act.

In Spain, a scale to evaluate willingness to intervene in cases of intimate partner violence (Gracia et al., 2018) revealed that circumstantial factors such as **the context in which the crime happens** are relevant. A study in Italy found that people were less willing to intervene if the violent situation was associated with infidelity or if the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol (Cinquegrana et al., 2018).

Some studies focused on factors, such as the following, that influence witnesses' actions.

- **Sexism** and **attitudes towards violence** in general are correlated with the acceptability of intimate partner violence (Herrero et al., 2017).

Figure 1. The process that occurs before a witness acts



Source: Based on Cismaru et al. (2010).

⁽¹⁰⁾ In some cases, sources included in the overview refer to bystanders rather than witnesses. There is no legal distinction between witnesses and bystanders in EU Member States and no universally accepted definition of the two terms. The term witness is used throughout this report except when referring to sources that use the term bystander.

- **Neighbourhood characteristics**, including rates of intimate partner violence and reporting opportunities can influence witness reporting (Herrero et al., 2017).
- **Victim-blaming attitudes** are barriers to intervention (Gracia, 2004).
- **Social disorder in certain neighbourhoods** contributes to a lack of safety for victims of intimate partner violence (Gracia and Herrero, 2007; Gracia et al., 2015).
- **Knowing the perpetrator** reduces chances of witnesses reporting and increases levels of acceptability of violence (Gracia and Herrero, 2006a).
- Willingness to help others at risk was higher among college students exposed to posters with **familiar people and situations** (Katz et al., 2013).
- One week of campaigns on campus to **raise awareness** of dating violence showed witnesses encouraged their friends to get help, but no changes in witnesses' intentions (to intervene), or their attitudes related to dating violence from pre- to post-intervention (Borsky et al., 2018).
- In Germany, through **media coverage** of witness intervention, risk perception, rejection of responsibility, motivation by social approval and moral motivation were highly associated with the intention to intervene and with projected behaviour of witnesses (Krämer and Schindler, 2018).

In Australia a study concluded that **witnesses' intention, perception of their ability to solve** the violent situation and **gender** were significantly associated with willingness to intervene, while respondents' attitudes towards violence against women were not (Lazarus and Signal, 2013).

In the United States, a study showed that witnesses' willingness to intervene depended on gender (of both victim and witness); settings (public v private); closeness to the victim (friend, acquaintance or stranger); witnesses' level of awareness (based on disclosure by the victim or the witness's own suspicion or observation); level of involvement (direct v indirect); and intervention response (direct v emotional support) (Otañez, 2018). Ethnic identity and victim-blaming rape-myth acceptance emerged as significant predictors of willingness to intervene in sexual intimate partner violence situations (Lee, 2014). Demographic characteristics (e.g. gender and age) and previous experience are also determinants: young women and people who have previously witnessed intimate partner violence or who suffered from domestic violence in the past are more willing to help (Beeble et al., 2008).

Some studies conducted experiments to stimulate the behaviour of witnesses, evaluating different factors as follows to assess which ones help to achieve desired outcomes (i.e. witness intervention).

- **Programmes on intimate partner violence that took a comprehensive approach** (i.e. that incorporated multiple components, including institutional support) were found to be successful in increasing intimate partner violence screening and disclosure or identification rates (O'Campo et al., 2011).

Witnesses respond to instances of intimate partner violence in a variety of ways. The witnesses' responses are classified into two broad categories (see Gracia and Herrero 2006a; Gracia et al., 2009):

- mediating responses (e.g. offering the victim moral support and understanding, intervening in the dispute between the victim and the perpetrator, helping the victim to decide what to do);
- reporting responses (e.g. reporting the intimate partner violence to relevant authorities).

Reporting responses have consistently been identified as the last solution witnesses use, most commonly associated with cases of intimate partner violence perceived to be severe (Gracia and Herrero, 2006b; Gracia et al., 2009). Witnesses prefer mediating responses such as reaching out to the victim or perpetrator and offering to help.

Figure 2. Categories of witness responses



Source: Based on Gracia and Herrero (2006a); Gracia et al. (2009).

2.2.2. Data on related or relevant issues: domestic violence and confidence in the police

Comparative data on related concepts such as domestic violence ⁽¹¹⁾ provide some indication of the prevalence of the issue and witnesses' willingness to report it to the authorities. **The perceived prevalence of domestic violence in the EU is quite high.** Data from the European Commission show that 74 % of people say domestic violence is common, with 25 % saying it is very common and a further 49 % saying it is common in their country (European Commission, 2016). Portugal, Italy and Spain have higher prevalence-perception rates, while Bulgaria, Czechia and Poland have lower prevalence-perception rates. Women are more likely than men to view domestic violence as common.

Across EU Member States, in 2016 some 96 % of respondents considered domestic violence against women to be unacceptable (European Commission, 2016). However, in a few countries 1 in 20 participants believed domestic violence against women to be acceptable in certain circumstances, for example Poland (6 %) and Slovakia (5 %).

People increasingly see domestic violence as an issue to be dealt with by the law. For example, since 2005, the number of people who agree that domestic violence should be punished by the law has increased by 13 percentage points in Finland and 11 percentage points in Luxembourg. Older women are more likely to say that in some circumstances domestic violence against women should not be punished by law (Cinquegrana et al., 2018; Gracia et al., 2009).

Across the EU, **almost one quarter (24 %) of respondents knew of a friend or family member who had been a victim of domestic violence**, while 18 % knew of someone in their immediate area or neighbourhood and 10 % knew of someone where they work or study (European Commission, 2016). Respondents from Sweden, the United Kingdom and Finland were most likely to know a friend or a family member who had been the victim of intimate partner violence (44 %, 36 % and 35 %, respectively). Residents from Latvia and Sweden were most likely to know victims of intimate partner violence who were their neighbours (both with 23 % of respondents). Respondents in Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands had the greatest knowledge of workplace

⁽¹¹⁾ This present report focuses on intimate partner violence but, because of a lack of evidence on the witness reporting of intimate partner violence, it also drew on data relating to domestic violence (<https://eige.europa.eu/thesaurus/terms/1089>) (also referred to as domestic abuse). This reflects the close relationship between the concepts: domestic violence may often be perpetrated by a current or former partner. For the purposes of transparency, language used in this chapter mirrors the language used in the original source.

colleagues being victims of intimate partner violence (23 %, 19 % and 17 %, respectively).

Despite the relatively high levels of awareness of domestic violence, on average only 12 % of witnesses spoke to the police, with this figure varying from a value of 3 % in Bulgaria to 17 % in Luxembourg. If people have to speak to somebody about it, the **preferred response was to talk to a friend or a family member** (39 %) (European Commission, 2016). Across the EU-28, just over a quarter (28 %) of witnesses did not speak to anybody. The most common reasons witnesses to domestic violence gave for not speaking to anyone about it were ‘it is or was none of my business’ (26 %), followed by ‘had no proof’ (18 %).

Low levels of confidence in the police and other authorities may deter witnesses from reporting intimate partner violence (along with other crimes). According to the Sustainable

Governance Indicators ⁽¹²⁾, confidence in the police varies across EU Member States, on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, from 3.0 (in Slovenia) to 7.6 (in Finland), with a mean score of 5.4 out of 10. This indicates that in some Member States distrust of the police is quite widespread. However, high levels of trust in the police do not necessarily translate into higher rates of witness reporting of domestic violence. Spain is one of the countries with a high level of trust in police (European Social Survey, 2011) but 71.5 % of people who knew about cases of intimate partner violence did not report it to the police (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2004). According to the Spanish Observatory against Domestic and Gender-based Violence, factors such as a normalised perception of the submissive roles women should play in intimate relations or the belief that domestic violence is a problem whose solution only pertains to the couple account for the low levels of witness reporting (Carpio, 2013). See Table 1.

Table 1. Selected indicators related to gender-based violence in EU Member States and relevant in the context of this report

Member State	People who consider domestic violence unacceptable (%)	Total who 'have talked about it' (%)	People who spoke to the police (%)	National helpline (*)	Women's shelter coverage (**)	Awareness of support services (%)	Confidence in police (score 1–10)
Belgium	77	72	13	Yes (***)		80.7	6.0
Bulgaria	80	65	3	Yes		43.3	3.4
Czechia	87	81	9	Yes (***)		24.9	5.1
Denmark	88	81	11	Yes	Yes	92.7	6.0
Germany	80	77	10	Yes		95.8	5.6
Estonia	78	64	12	Yes		87.5	6.5
Ireland	89	58	12	Yes		91.3	6.1
Greece	89	60	4	Yes (***)		38.1	4.1
Spain	94	73	15	Yes	n/a	85.5	6.7
France	88	75	16		n/a	70.4	6.1
Croatia	82	79	10			73.2	4.4
Italy	88	70	9	Yes		67.1	4.7
Cyprus	87	54	5	Yes (***)		79.9	5.1
Latvia	64	72	10			54	4.5
Lithuania	78	68	15	Yes		70.4	5.2

⁽¹²⁾ See: https://www.sgi-network.org/2019/Policy_Performance/Social_Policies/Safe_Living/Confidence_in_Police

Member State	People who consider domestic violence unacceptable (%)	Total who 'have talked about it' (%)	People who spoke to the police (%)	National helpline (*)	Women's shelter coverage (**)	Awareness of support services (%)	Confidence in police (score 1–10)
Luxembourg	86	68	17		Yes	83.6	6.7
Hungary	81	69	8			49.5	4.4
Malta	82	57	13		Yes	96.2	4.3
Netherlands	76	82	16	Yes (***)		90.7	6.5
Austria	75	79	14	Yes		88.1	6.7
Poland	75	62	10	Yes (***)		66	3.5
Portugal	96	69	15	Yes (***)		84.2	6.3
Romania	74	72	10	Yes		21.6	4.9
Slovenia	87	62	10		Yes	88.8	3.0
Slovakia	67	63	7	Yes		43.7	5.7
Finland	80	81	10	Yes		84	7.6
Sweden	94	83	17	Yes		97.4	5.5
United Kingdom	83	60	15	Yes		81	6.5

(*) National helpline that meets the standards of the Istanbul Convention. (**) Country coverage of women's shelters meeting the standards of the Istanbul Convention (the data reflect the situation in Member States up to and including 2016). (***) A national helpline meeting the requirements of the Istanbul Convention has since been established (confirmed by national experts or EIGE).

Sources: Special Eurobarometer 449 (domestic violence not acceptable, total 'have talked about it', spoke to the police and awareness of support services) (13); EIGE (2016) (support services – national helpline and women's shelter coverage); Sustainable Governance Indicators (2019) (confidence in police) (14).

2.3. Evidence on witness intervention in specific Member States

2.3.1. National policies and legislation

In all EU Member States, witnesses can report intimate partner violence to the authorities or participate in criminal proceedings. The review identified 21 Member States (15) in which **specific measures have been put in place to protect witnesses who report intimate partner violence or give evidence in court** (Table 2). Measures relate to witnesses in the legal sense (any

individual giving evidence to the police and/or in court), so they also apply to victims.

In Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland and Portugal it is **mandatory for professionals to report** instances of intimate partner violence to the authorities. Since July 2013, in the Netherlands it is mandatory for professionals in healthcare, education, childcare, social support, youth care and the criminal justice system who suspect a case of domestic violence to follow a special protocol (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn en Sport (health, welfare and sport) (VWS), 2016) in the mandatory protocol (domestic violence and child abuse) act. This requirement does not apply to volunteer organisations.

(13) Available at: https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2115_85_3_449_ENG

(14) Available at: https://www.sgi-network.org/2019/Policy_Performance/Social_Policies/Safe_Living/Confidence_in_Police

(15) BE, CZ, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, CY, LT, HU, MT, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK, FI, UK.

Table 2. Protection measures for witnesses who report intimate partner violence in EU Member States

Member State	Measure
BE	Measures include audio or video recording of witness testimony, anonymous witness testimony and separate waiting areas in police stations and courts for the alleged perpetrator and witnesses.
CZ	Witnesses may be granted one or more of the following measures: testimony without the presence of the alleged perpetrator, trial closed to the public, concealment and anonymity of witness, video evidence and cost reimbursement.
DE	Witnesses can limit the personal information shared during the trial if there is a threat to their safety.
EE	It is possible for witnesses to provide testimony via telephone in order to protect their safety.
IE	Witnesses are offered protection against cross-examination conducted in person by the victim or alleged perpetrator or a dependant.
EL	In cases of domestic violence police are obliged to ensure confidentiality and not to disclose, in any way, information about the witnesses' identity, residence or other information which may lead to identification.
ES	The following measures can be taken to protect the witness: not mentioning the name, last names, address, workplace, profession or any other piece of information that could help identify the individual; the decision to use any method to preclude the visual identification of the individual witness and informing the individual of the place of the proceedings in confidence.
FR	Witnesses can report intimate partner violence anonymously or write down the police station's address instead of their own when reporting crimes relating to intimate partner violence.
IT	A judge can order a perpetrator to stay away from the homes or places frequented by friends and family of the victim, as well as the victim themselves.
CY	Measures to protect witnesses include closed hearings, absence of the alleged perpetrator, witness concealment and video evidence. There are plans to create a waiting room in the court for witnesses who need protection, including professionals.
LT	Witnesses are allowed anonymity, as well as protection measures such as physical protection and transfer to a safe place.
HU	The investigating authority (police), the prosecutor's office and the court determine the special treatment status of the victims or witnesses based on individual assessment and may apply specific measures. Several measures are listed in law that can be applied for victims and witnesses who have special treatment status, e.g. higher protection of personal data, ordering a closed hearing, avoiding unnecessary meetings with other persons participating in the procedure, video recording and ensuring presence through telecommunications technology.
MT	Measures include video testimonies, closed hearings to protect the witness's identity, privacy and dignity; witness concealment or anonymity.
AT	Witnesses (other than the victim) should receive the same support as victims during court proceedings. Witnesses can have a person they trust with them during court proceedings (Bundesministerium für Soziale Sicherheit und Generationen, 2001).
PL	Measures include the right to conduct evidence proceedings out of the courtroom, the right to police protection and psychological assistance.
PT	Measures include witnesses having the possibility of giving an address which is different from their real home address.

Member State	Measure
RO	Judges may forbid offenders from communicating with the victim and their family members for a period of 1–5 years.
SI	If a witness is in serious danger the court may order one or more protective measures such as: the deletion of all or individual data from the criminal file or the classification of these data as secret; an order for the defendant, the advocate, the injured party (the victim), or their legal representatives and proxies to keep certain facts or information confidential; identification of any witness by means of a pseudonym and providing testimony using a voice distortion device, sound transmission from a special room or similar technical protective equipment.
SK	Witnesses who face danger in connection with the release (either pre-trial or post-trial) of an alleged perpetrator or a convicted individual can request information on the person's release or escape from detention, suspension of sentence, or release or escape from a medical detention facility. Witnesses can refuse to testify if the person charged with the offence is their close relative or if they themselves broke confessional privilege. Witnesses are entitled to be reimbursed for the costs incurred in the process of providing their testimony.
FI	Protection measures include the opportunity to give video testimony, anonymity and restraining orders against perpetrators.
UK	Measures include giving evidence from behind screens or from another room or location using a video link.

In Belgium, guidelines on mandatory reporting of all forms of gender-based violence for professionals bound by professional confidentiality are being developed as part of the national action plan for Belgium. In 2012 the Belgian criminal code was amended to protect professionals with a duty of professional confidentiality, who were given the limited and conditional right to speak and report acts of domestic violence to the public prosecutor.

In Poland, 'blue card' legislation specifies that a professional who suspects domestic violence has a duty to report it immediately to the police or the prosecutor. In Denmark, both the general public and professionals have a duty to report intimate partner violence in families where there are minors. In Portugal all professionals (e.g. teachers, nurses and doctors) who become aware of the violent situation within their professional roles have a duty to report it.

2.3.2. Evidence at the Member State level on witness intervention

Evidence from most Member States relating to intimate partner violence was skewed towards victims and perpetrators rather than witnesses (other than professionals who have an obligation to report). In several Member States⁽¹⁶⁾, no evidence was found relating to witnesses and their role in supporting victims, particularly in reporting it to the authorities. In specific Member States, information was identified relating to witnesses' willingness to report intimate partner violence to the police or support services⁽¹⁷⁾, barriers to and enablers of witness intervention⁽¹⁸⁾ and the environments in which this most often occurs⁽¹⁹⁾. Information about the impact of witness reporting on conviction rates for intimate partner violence (or related offences) has been published in Portugal and Sweden (Ekström and Lindström, 2016; Gomes et al., 2016; Scheffer Lindgren et al., 2012; Sousa, 2015).

⁽¹⁶⁾ BG, EE, HR, IT, CY, LU, MT, NL, AT.

⁽¹⁷⁾ CZ, DK, IE, EL, FR, PT, RO.

⁽¹⁸⁾ CZ, DK, IE, LV, LT, SI, UK.

⁽¹⁹⁾ BE, DK, DE, IE, EL, ES, HU, PT, FI, SE, UK.

The prevalence of witness reporting of intimate partner violence to the authorities

Survey responses in Czechia **indicated that witnesses were more likely to threaten to report intimate partner violence to the authorities** (in order to deter the perpetrator) **than to actually report it** (Topinka, 2016). If the intimate partner violence concerned a family member, 60 % of respondents said they would talk to the victim, 46 % threaten the aggressor with reporting them if they do not stop, 38 % consult another family member or a friend, 38 % report it to the police and 26 % contact specialist institutions dealing with cases of intimate partner violence.

An opinion survey in Ireland (National Office for the Prevention of Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (Cosc), 2008) showed there was a **strong desire among witnesses to report intimate partner violence to the police**: 94 % of people said they would help a friend who was experiencing domestic abuse. However, in the same survey 74 % of people said that other people would be unlikely to report domestic abuse incidents to the police. This discrepancy may suggest a lack of confidence in the motivations and behaviour of others (a belief that others may be less engaged or willing to take action than oneself), but it may also reflect a chasm between what people say they will do and what they actually do in practice.

In Greece, **70 % of calls to the national helpline in 2018 were from abused women, while 30 % were from third parties**. According to the information sheet in the 2014 Letter from the National Observatory of Violence against Women, a similar split is observed in France: 70 % of calls reporting crimes of domestic violence to the official hotline were made by the victims themselves, so (although this is not explicitly reported) 30 % of calls reporting crimes of domestic violence to the official hotline were made by witnesses (Mission interministérielle pour la protection des femmes contre les violences et la lutte contre la traite des êtres humains, 2014). Administrative data for Portugal show that nearly 21 % of domestic violence reports were made by witnesses (Ministério da

Administração Interna, 2019). In Romania government data show that the proportion of calls to the national helpline made by witnesses has increased over the years, from 8.7 % in 2016, up to 32 % in 2018, but no information was available to explain this increase. In Sweden witness reporting to the authorities remained stable over the period 2004–2016 (Brå, 2019).

In Denmark, a study investigating the victim's first meeting with the police in connection with the report of sexual assault showed that 10 % of all reports of sexual abuse to the police stemmed from witnesses at the place of the crime (however, this statistic relates to all cases of sexual abuse and is not specific to intimate partner violence) (Justitsministeriets Forskningskontor, 2017).

This summarised evidence from specific Member States demonstrates how willing witnesses are to intervene and report intimate partner violence and the prevalence and channels of witness reporting.

Enablers of and barriers to witness intervention

There is a scarcity of evidence on factors motivating or enabling witness intervention. **Knowing the victim personally** was a motivating factor for witnesses in Denmark (Plauborg et al., 2012). **Seeing violence as a problem for society rather than for the individual** was also a motivating factor for witnesses in Ireland (Cosc, 2008).

One set of barriers to witness intervention relates to cultural beliefs and social attitudes. One of the main barriers to witness reporting is the **perception that intimate partner violence is a private matter**, noted in Czechia (Zlatušková, 2008), Denmark (Plauborg et al., 2012), Ireland (Cosc, 2008), Latvia (Sabiedrības Integrācijas Fonds (SIF), 2014) and Slovenia⁽²⁰⁾. There was a link to cultural attitudes concerning the appropriate level of involvement in personal or emotionally charged issues, particularly those relating to the family; intervention was often considered to be 'none of my business' in Czechia (Topinka, 2016) and Ireland (Cosc, 2008).

⁽²⁰⁾ Personal correspondence between the national expert and the representative from the helpline.

Attitudes towards intimate partner violence and gender-based violence more broadly are also relevant. Some of the barriers related to **issues around the provability of claims made about intimate partner violence**. A broader denial of violence against women in Poland (Grzyb, 2019) or victim blaming in the context of intimate partner violence in Ireland (Cosc, 2015), Latvia (SIF, 2014) and Lithuania⁽²¹⁾ were identified as barriers to witness intervention. In the United Kingdom it was sometimes assumed that **if there was abuse then the victim would always leave the perpetrator** (Latta and Goodman, 2011). In other contexts, difficulty identifying or being certain about intimate partner violence was identified as a barrier in Czechia (Topinka, 2016) and the United Kingdom (Citizens Advice, 2015). This could apply to professionals as well as friends, family or social contacts, since those working in a professional capacity may not always have enough information to confirm or at least strongly suspect abuse.

A second set of barriers relates to the response of the perpetrator. **Concern about making the situation worse** was mentioned as a barrier to witness intervention, particularly to reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities, in Ireland (Cosc, 2008) and the United Kingdom (Citizens Advice, 2015). This related to a perception that the perpetrator may hurt or threaten the victim in

response to allegations of abuse, even if these originated from a third party (witness or bystander). **Concern about the response or reaction of the perpetrator** was also identified as a barrier from the perspective of the witness themselves in Czechia (Topinka, 2016), Slovenia⁽²²⁾ and the United Kingdom (Citizens Advice, 2015; Latta and Goodman, 2011). Perpetrators who are known to be violent may also present a threat to the witness and this may discourage them from intervening. A survey in the United Kingdom showed that 17 % of the general public identified 'being scared of the abuser' as a reason not to report domestic violence to the authorities (Citizens Advice, 2015).

A third set of barriers relates to awareness of how to report intimate partner violence to the authorities and attitudes towards reporting it. For example, **uncertainty or lack of knowledge about who to contact and where to report** the matter was a barrier to witness reporting in Czechia (Topinka, 2016), Latvia (SIF, 2014) and the United Kingdom (Citizens Advice, 2015; Latta and Goodman, 2011). **Belief that the police would not take the matter seriously enough or deal with it well** was also a barrier in Ireland (Cosc, 2008).

Information from Czechia, Ireland and the United Kingdom demonstrated the relative importance of different barriers (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Examples of barriers to witnesses supporting victims identified in surveys in Czechia, Ireland and the United Kingdom

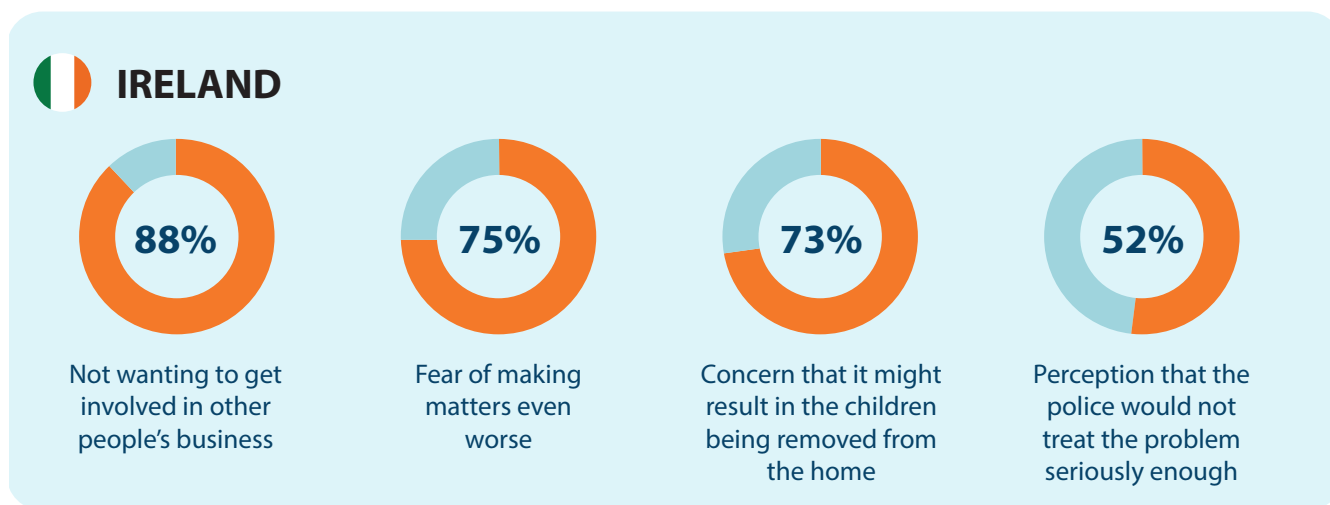


Source: Topinka (2016).

⁽²¹⁾ 'Stay with my friend! Helping a friend who suffers violence' (available at: <https://www.visureikalas.lt/en/naujienos/i-want-to-help/2018/05/helping-a-friend-who-suffers-violence>).

⁽²²⁾ Personal correspondence between the national expert and the representative from the helpline.

Figure 3. (Continued)



Source: Cosc (2008).



Source: Citizens Advice (2015).

NB: Decimals were rounded to the nearest whole number. The data between the countries are not comparable.

Environments where witness intervention most often occurs

No sources were identified that focused specifically on the environments in which witnesses intervene (or do not intervene) in situations relating to intimate partner violence (family, social, professional, etc.); however, data on related topics (e.g. the profile of witnesses and the type of witnesses who intervene) offer some insight into this topic.

In the United Kingdom, victims of intimate partner violence are **more likely to disclose it to a friend or family member** (48 %) or a neighbour (14 %) than a professional (14 % had disclosed intimate partner violence to police, 8 % to a healthcare professional, 6 % to a lawyer, 4 % to a housing officer or provider and 2 % to a specialist domestic abuse worker) (Citizens Advice, 2015). A piece of research by the National Institute of Criminology in Hungary (Országos Kriminológiai Intézet, 2019) found that in 55 % of the cases the victim reported the intimate partner violence to the authorities, followed by a relative (13 %), a government official or child-protection institution (12 %) and a neighbour (9 %). In Greece, calls to a helpline made by third parties were from a friend (26 %), a parent (11 %), a sibling (12 %), another relative (10 %) or a neighbour (15 %) (EIGE, 2018a).

In Denmark, knowing the victim was identified as a motivating factor, which suggests that settings such as family and friendship may be important. Plauborg et al. (2012) show that witnesses are less likely to interfere in public settings when there are other people present, as the witnesses believe that one of the others in the group is likely to be closer to the person or people involved than they are, and therefore better placed to intervene. This suggests that **private or domestic environments might be more common than public spaces** as environments in which witnesses intervene.

Sometimes witnesses may be more inclined to help a stranger than a neighbour. In some

contexts, neighbourhoods were identified as important environments where witness intervention might occur. In Sweden, an initiative called 'Huskurage' targets the general public with the aim of encouraging neighbours to act when they suspect violence⁽²³⁾. There is also an initiative targeting neighbours and others in the local area in Latvia⁽²⁴⁾. However, in Ireland a survey of the general population in 2008 found that 94 % of people said they would help a friend who was experiencing domestic abuse, 65 % would help a stranger and 38 % would help a neighbour (Cosc, 2008).

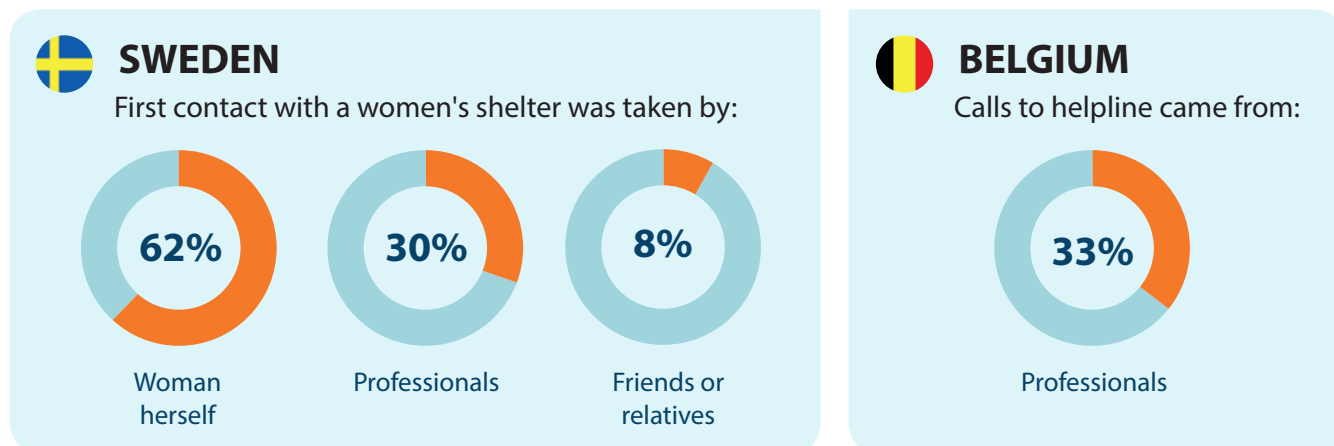
Other sources suggested **professionals play an important role in the reporting of intimate partner violence** (Figure 4). Sources generally did not distinguish between different types of professionals, except in the United Kingdom (Citizens Advice, 2015). In Germany, doctors are one group of professionals who often become witnesses to domestic violence (Banaschak and Rothschild, 2012). In Finland evidence suggests that social-care and healthcare providers are in a key position to respond to cases of intimate partner violence (Leppäkoski et al., 2014).

Measures and initiatives enacted to facilitate witness reporting (discussed in more detail below) may also point to the importance of specific environments. In Ireland and the United Kingdom, initiatives have been implemented in universities along the lines of the bystander model developed in United States colleges (Fenton et al., 2014). This suggests that **universities may be important contexts for witnesses supporting victims of intimate partner violence**. Likewise, initiatives from Denmark and Ireland have focused on employers or co-workers, suggesting that **the workplace may be another important environment**. A caveat is required as in many cases measures implemented to facilitate witness reporting lack a clear evidence base and/or have not been monitored or evaluated. The presence of initiatives does not necessarily stem from an awareness of witness behaviour in specific environments.

⁽²³⁾ NGO campaign (available at: <http://huskurage.se>).

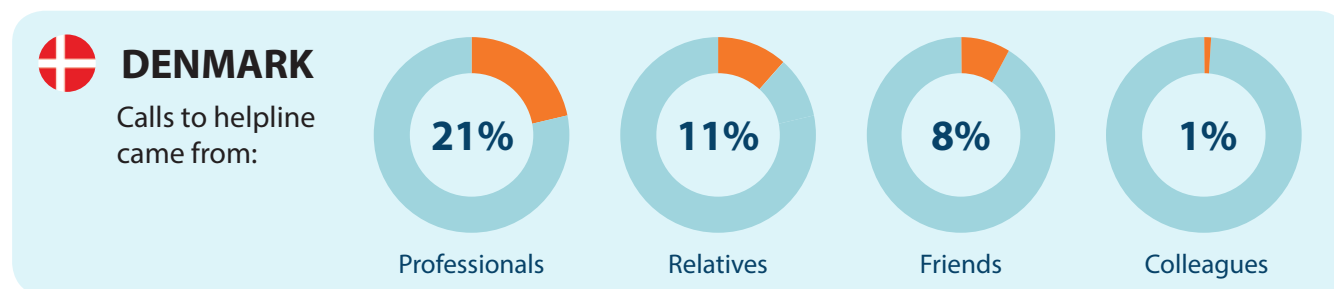
⁽²⁴⁾ Sociālā Dizaina Perspektīva (2017), *Izpratnes veidošanas kampaņa par nulles toleranci attiecībā uz vardarbību pret sievietēm* (available at: http://petijumi.mk.gov.lv/sites/default/files/title_file/Dizaina-izpete-FINAL%20%281%29.pdf).

Figure 4. Proportion of professionals and other individuals contacting women’s shelters (Sweden), calling helplines (Belgium, Denmark), reporting domestic violence (Portugal) and in whom victims confide (United Kingdom)

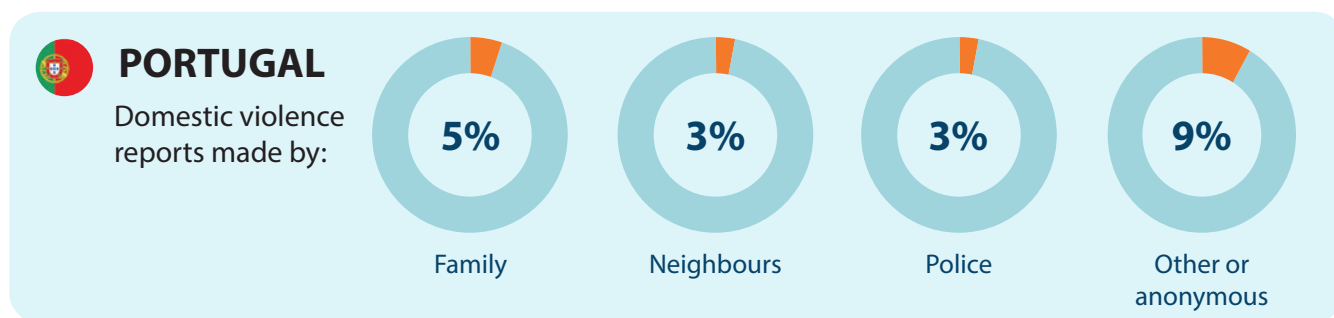


Source: Riksorganisationen för kvinnojourer och tjejjourer i Sverige (Roks) (2017).

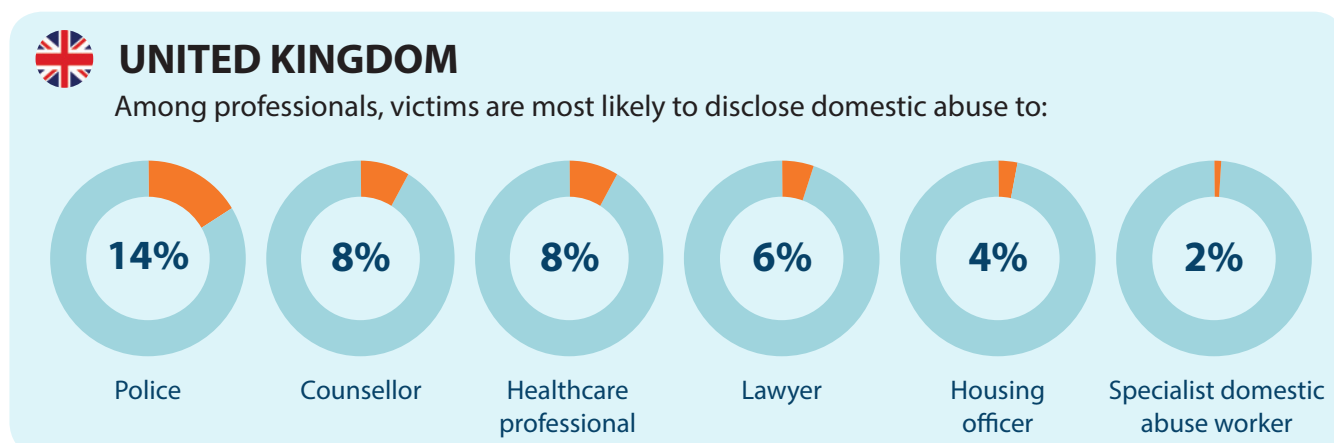
Source: Flemish helpline annual report (2018) (25).



Source: Lev Uden Vold (2019).



Source: Ministério da Administração Interna (2019).



Source: Citizens Advice (2015).

NB: Decimals were rounded to the nearest whole number. The data between the countries are not comparable.

Information reviewed as part of the study suggested that witnesses support victims of intimate partner violence (including by reporting to the authorities) in the following environments:

- social networks, particularly of friends and family,
- private or domestic environments (rather than public spaces),
- neighbourhoods or local communities,
- universities,
- the workplace,
- healthcare and social-work settings.

This needs to be interpreted with caution as it does not directly relate to evidence on witness behaviour. The environments identified above are all spaces in which witnesses are known to support victims of intimate partner violence in Member States. In light of these findings the following environments were further researched as part of the in-depth qualitative research (Chapter 3): **friends and family, neighbours, the workplace** and **healthcare and social-work settings**.

The impact of witness reporting to the authorities

Studies suggest that the **presence and intervention of witnesses in the criminal justice system** in Portugal and Sweden testifying about the case dramatically **increases the likelihood of the perpetrator's conviction** (Ekström and Lindström, 2016; Gomes et al., 2016; Scheffer Lindgren et al., 2012; Sousa, 2015).

2.3.3. Measures to facilitate witness support

There is substantial variation across Member States in the level of focus on witnesses to intimate partner violence and measures that have been implemented with the aim of encouraging witnesses to intervene (including reporting to the

authorities). While in several Member States ⁽²⁵⁾ a number of different policies or initiatives were identified in this area, in others, no specific measures were found. A broad range of measures are in place across EU Member States, including some that focus on the reporting process (e.g. **national helplines** and **online platforms**) as well as public campaigns and other awareness-raising initiatives. Relatively few measures, particularly public campaigns, have been evaluated to assess their impact, so policy in this area lacks a strong evidence base.

Measures focused on the reporting process

The Istanbul Convention highlights the importance of Member States offering a 24/7, free-of-charge **national helpline** for gender-based violence (including intimate partner violence). The primary purpose of national helplines is to provide support for victims (including but not limited to providing information about reporting incidents of violence to the authorities), but these services are also used by witnesses to support victims of intimate partner violence. In 2016, 14 Member States had a national helpline that met the standards of the Istanbul Convention (EIGE, 2016). In the Flemish region of Belgium, the 1712 telephone helpline was set up to enable the reporting of intimate partner violence by both witnesses and victims. In France in 2018, there was an increase in funding to the national hotline in charge of reporting of intimate partner violence. The increase was dictated by statistics that showed that the telephone hotline could only answer 75–80 % of received calls (Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les Femmes et les Hommes, 2018). In several Member States (Belgium, France, Latvia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) part of the goal of public-awareness campaigns (see below) was to publicise the national helpline.

Some Member States provide other reporting channels alongside the national helpline. In France in 2018, the government established a free and anonymous **online platform** available 24/7 to facilitate witness reporting (Ministère de l'Intérieur, 2019). An online platform for reporting

⁽²⁵⁾ Available at: https://1712.be/Portals/1712volw/Files/Documents/Jaarverslag1712_2018.pdf

⁽²⁶⁾ BE, DK, IE, FR, LV, LT, NL, PT, SI, FI, SE.

is also available in the Netherlands (Safe Home) to professionals and members of the public.

Some policies and resources aim to **make it easier for witnesses to contact the police**, for example by distributing leaflets or other materials with information designed to encourage and enable reporting of intimate partner violence (in Czechia and Slovakia). In the United Kingdom (England and Wales, with similar schemes in place in Scotland and Northern Ireland), the domestic violence disclosure scheme allows individuals to **request information from the police** if they are concerned that someone's partner may pose a risk to them. If information is shared, this is with the (potential) victim rather than the witness, but this initiative encourages witnesses to speak out and be proactive in recognising and responding to domestic violence (including intimate partner violence).

Measures focused on raising awareness and changing behaviours

Public-awareness campaigns were the most common type of measure implemented in Member States⁽²⁷⁾ with the aim of encouraging witnesses to intervene (including by reporting the issue to the authorities). Most campaigns focused specifically on witnesses, or included a component targeted at witnesses. In Belgium, the 2016 campaign 'Don't Look Away' included three separate ways of reporting intimate partner violence and targeted witnesses, victims and perpetrators respectively. The campaign 'Violence May Occur' in Denmark (2017–2018) was targeted primarily at victims, but secondary target groups included witnesses such as parents, teachers and caseworkers (professionals). The campaign 'Violence loves silence' in Latvia (2017–2018) positioned witnesses as indirect or secondary victims, blurring the distinction between victim and witness.

Some campaigns⁽²⁸⁾ focused on the public in general, treating all individuals as potential witnesses. In France, the campaign 'Reacting Can Change

Everything' (Secrétariat d'État chargé de l'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes, 2019) aimed to engage everyone in France: family members, friends, colleagues and anyone exposed to a situation of violence. Four TV adverts representing different instances of violence against women (one focused on domestic violence) were created to raise witnesses' awareness. The adverts were designed to show how witnesses in each of these cases play a key role in fighting violence against women, by defusing a dangerous situation, openly supporting the victim, inviting the victim to confide in them, or encouraging the victim to press charges. Additional campaign videos online interviewing victims, witnesses and professionals faced with instances of gender-based or sexual violence against women supplemented the TV campaign (Figure 5).

Campaigns in certain Member States⁽²⁹⁾ focused on specific population groups as well as or instead of the general population. In Denmark, the campaign 'Violence May Occur' was targeted at young people (16–24 years old) in relationships, with a particular focus on minority ethnic groups, and also professionals working with this group (e.g. teachers and caseworkers). In Lithuania, the campaign 'Stop violence against women: from (A)wareness to (Z)ero victim blaming' (supported by the European Commission) aimed to prompt healthcare professionals, social workers and children's rights specialists as well as the general public to question their attitudes, stereotypes and behaviours towards violence against women (including intimate partner violence). In the United Kingdom, the campaign '16 days of action against domestic violence' (launched in 2013) aimed to improve awareness and encourage reporting by employers and colleagues. A government campaign in Portugal, 'Active community against violence' (2016), targeted neighbours and the local community. The image of a dripping tap serves as a symbol of a common occurrence that bothers a lot of people, contrasting with the problem of domestic violence ('The dripping tap is bothersome. What about the violence next door? When are you going to stop ignoring it?') (see Figure 6).

⁽²⁷⁾ BE, CZ, DK, DE, IE, FR, CY, LV, LT, MT, NL, PL, PT, SI, SE, UK.

⁽²⁸⁾ BE, CZ, DE, IE, FR, MT, NL, PL, PT, SI.

⁽²⁹⁾ DK, CY, LV, LT, PT, FI, SE, UK.

Figure 5. Example of material from the campaign 'Reacting Can Change Everything' in France



Source: Reacting Can Change Everything (government campaign, France, 2019).

In a number of Member States (e.g. Czechia, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden), campaigns to encourage witness reporting were implemented by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In Sweden, the NGO campaign 'Huskurage' (created by criminologist Nina Rung) targets neighbours and people in the local area, encouraging them to act when they suspect intimate partner violence.

Many of these campaigns have not been (or were not being) monitored or evaluated to assess their impact, although there were exceptions. In Latvia, the campaign 'Violence Loves Silence' (supported by the European Commission) was evaluated. A survey conducted with the general public found that 40 % of respondents had noticed in the last 12 months that information on domestic violence had been more widely reported and 18.9 % had become more convinced that they should intervene when they see domestic violence ⁽³⁰⁾. An evaluation of the campaign 'A Safe Home, Give It Your All' in the Netherlands showed that, in 2017, approximately three quarters of the Dutch population believed it is self-evident that action should be taken when there is a suspicion of domestic violence. These results suggest that public-awareness campaigns can be effective in changing social attitudes and promoting greater awareness of intimate partner violence.

⁽³⁰⁾ Available at: <http://www.lm.gov.lv/es-finansejums/lm-istenotie-projekti/aktualie-projekti/projekts-izpratnes-veidosanas-kampana-par-nulles-tolerancii-attieciba-uz-vardarbibu-pret-sievietem-vardarbibai-patik-klusums>

Figure 6. Example of material from the campaign 'Active Community against Violence' in Portugal



Source: Active Community against Violence (government campaign in Portugal, 2016).

However, the impact of campaigns such as these on rates of witness reporting of intimate partner violence are unclear and there is a lack of information about which are effective (or not) in this area. In Ireland, the government has published guidelines for awareness-raising activities relating to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence (Cosc, 2015), outlined in Box 1. These guidelines, targeted at organisations and professionals, formed part of the implementation of the national strategy on domestic, sexual and gender-based violence 2010–2014 (Cosc, 2010).

Several Member States have implemented measures designed to provide information, **training or guidance for (non-professional) witnesses**. In Slovenia, the government, in collaboration with NGOs, produced a booklet with practical information about how to report intimate partner violence to the police or other support services. In Germany and Austria, the initiative 'neighbourhoods free from intimate partner violence' (Stadtteile ohne Partnergewalt (SToP)) (Stövesand, 2014) is neighbourhood based and provides training for people in local communities, helping neighbours to spot and respond to the signs of abuse. SToP was based on the understanding that 'ordinary people', who are often neighbours, and not just professionals should know what to do or say in cases of domestic violence as victims usually turn to their personal networks first.

Box 1. Example of guidelines for awareness-raising activities relating to domestic, sexual and gender-based violence in Ireland

The aim of these guidelines is to encourage a shift from a focus of public-awareness activities on the victim to an inclusion of a focus on the perpetrator and witness while also ensuring that information on support services is available to victims. The guiding principles for communicating with the general public are:

- name domestic, sexual and gender-based violence appropriately;
- focus on perpetrator behaviour, choices and actions and their accountability;
- promote a culture of responsibility, challenge minimisation and denial;
- promote respectful human interactions where negotiations are active and positive (as opposed to passive and assumed);
- promote equality, support and empower survivors and emphasise domestic, sexual and gender-based violence as criminal behaviour.

Source: Cosc (2015).

In the United Kingdom (England), the 'intervention initiative' (2014) offered **bystander training** to university students. Fenton and Mott (2018) found that students who participated in the programme showed improvement in their readiness to help. This intervention inspired the bystander intervention programme at University College Cork, Ireland (Fenton et al., 2014).

In Denmark, the initiative 'tell someone' (2018) offers **guidance for employers and colleagues** to help them respond to situations in which they know of or suspect intimate partner violence. This initiative focuses on how witnesses can help the victim, including encouraging them to seek professional support (which may or may not lead to reporting of the incident(s)). In Ireland, the health services executive produced guidelines for employers on responding to domestic abuse, which focus on the signs of abuse, how to speak to employees about abuse and how to direct them to relevant services.

The Istanbul Convention (Article 15) states that Member States should provide appropriate **training for professionals** dealing with victims or perpetrators of gender-based violence (including intimate partner violence). In Finland, the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare provides guidance materials for professionals dealing with intimate partner violence. In Germany, the initiative 'intervention in healthcare against domestic and sexual violence' provides guidance and resources (posters, instruction manuals, etc.) to healthcare professionals, on the grounds that these issues are often encountered in healthcare settings. In the Netherlands, a government protocol for responding to domestic violence is targeted at professionals such as doctors and teachers (Ministerie van VWS, 2013). In Cyprus, a 2-year (EU-funded) project (2014–2015), 'no violence against women Cyprus', included a series of training seminars for professionals as well as a public-awareness campaign. Professionals benefiting from this training included police officers, healthcare professionals, educators, social workers, lawyers, immigration and labour officers and journalists.

3. Qualitative research in four Member States

This chapter draws on the in-depth qualitative research in four Member States – Denmark, Germany, France and Portugal – to explore factors (enablers and barriers) that affect witnesses' support of victims of intimate partner violence (including reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities) and the environments in which this occurs.

The findings presented below are based on 20 interviews with witnesses who have reported intimate partner violence, 30 interviews with professionals who work with witnesses, and 12 focus groups with members of the general public (three focus groups in each Member State). For further information about the methodology for the qualitative research, see the annex.

3.1. Environments in which witnesses report intimate partner violence

Friends and family members are viewed as a key group for witnesses supporting victims of intimate partner violence (although family members may face particular barriers), as are neighbours and others in the local community. Co-workers are generally viewed as less likely to intervene (including by reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities) than friends, family members and neighbours. For workers in healthcare and social-care settings, reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities is shaped by professional obligations.

Friends and family are often witness to intimate partner violence and do report it to the authorities ⁽³¹⁾; in Portugal, this group is identified as the most likely to report. However, family members may face particular barriers to reporting intimate partner violence. They may be deterred from reporting by feelings of embarrassment or shame (reported by professionals in Germany) ⁽³²⁾ or because the victim hides the violence from family members (reported by professionals in France) ⁽³³⁾.

The neighbourhood is also identified as an important reporting environment ⁽³⁴⁾, particularly in Denmark and Germany. In France, some professionals observe that neighbours report intimate partner violence less commonly than friends and family members ⁽³⁵⁾. Neighbours tend to lack close emotional ties to the victim and are motivated by factors such as a desire to reduce noise as well as an instinct to help the victim, whereas for friends and family members the desire to help and protect the victim is paramount ⁽³⁶⁾.

Co-workers are generally viewed as less likely to intervene (including by reporting the violence to the authorities) than friends, family members and neighbours ⁽³⁷⁾. This is sometimes attributed to co-workers having a less close relationship to the victim ⁽³⁸⁾.

For workers in healthcare and social-care settings, reporting is shaped by professional obligations, which differ across Member States. In Denmark, there are strict reporting requirements when children are involved, so professionals in the social care and educational system are

⁽³¹⁾ Mentioned by 18 professionals in all Member States: three local/national authority, 10 support service, five police/prosecution.

⁽³²⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: police.

⁽³³⁾ Mentioned by one professional in France: support service.

⁽³⁴⁾ Mentioned by 12 professionals in all Member States: four police/prosecution, six support organisation, two local/national authority and one witness.

⁽³⁵⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France: support organisations.

⁽³⁶⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France and Germany: one police, one service.

⁽³⁷⁾ Mentioned by eight professionals in Denmark, Germany and France: two police/prosecution, one local/national authority, five support service.

⁽³⁸⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: support organisation.

more likely to notify the relevant authorities than professionals in healthcare ⁽³⁹⁾.

3.2. Factors that enable witnesses to support victims of intimate partner violence

3.2.1. Victim cooperation and consent

The cooperation and consent of the victim is a key factor enabling witness support, as discussed by professionals, witnesses and focus-group participants in Denmark, France, Germany and Portugal. Conversely, the absence of victim cooperation and consent is a barrier to witness intervention. This factor is identified as particularly important in relation to the friendship and family environment.

A key aspect for witnesses in relation to the friendship and family environment is the victim's consent and agreement. This was mentioned in the interviews with witnesses and professionals and was discussed in focus groups conducted across Denmark, France, Germany and Portugal ⁽⁴⁰⁾.

A lack of victim cooperation and consent was considered a barrier to witness support (particularly in reporting to the authorities). Some professionals observed that friends and family members do not tend to report intimate partner violence (whether to the police or support organisations) unless the victim has given explicit agreement, or commented that they would advise against doing so ⁽⁴¹⁾:

'It does not actually happen that someone from family or friends reports it [intimate partner violence] if the victim does not

agree (local/national authority professional, Germany).'

One focus-group participant in Germany commented that they would go the police, but only with the friend (in the friendship scenario) and not against that person's will ⁽⁴²⁾. This sentiment was also expressed by focus-group participants in France ⁽⁴³⁾:

'I would not do it [report it to the authorities] if ... [the victim] didn't want it. Not against her will (male focus-group participant, Germany).'

In Denmark, focus-group participants discussed how no one should push a friend too hard to report intimate partner violence ⁽⁴⁴⁾. In Portugal, one professional ⁽⁴⁵⁾ and one witness ⁽⁴⁶⁾ stated that friends and family members do not report intimate partner violence without the victim's consent because they may feel emotionally weary, hurt and betrayed by the victim's previous (unfulfilled) promises to report incidents.

The importance of securing the cooperation and consent of the victim was not as strong in the neighbourhood and local community environment. While it was mentioned by several focus-group participants, it was only brought up by a few witnesses and not by any professionals in interviews ⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Several participants said they would be more inclined to intervene if the victim came to them and asked for help or gave consent for the case to be reported to the authorities ⁽⁴⁸⁾, who are perceived to be unlikely to investigate the case without the victim's involvement ⁽⁴⁹⁾:

'The police may say, 'No, listen, you're not the person involved subjected to this violence. The person ought to come and see

⁽³⁹⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Denmark: one police and one support service.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Mentioned by 13 professionals and nine witnesses from across all four Member States. Mentioned by 17 focus-group participants from across all four Member States.

⁽⁴¹⁾ Mentioned by four professionals in Germany and France: one local/national authority and three support service.

⁽⁴²⁾ Mentioned by one male witness in Germany.

⁽⁴³⁾ Mentioned by two male focus-group participants.

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Mentioned by three female focus-group participants.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: support service.

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in Portugal.

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Mentioned by three witnesses in Denmark and Germany: two women and one man; and by 11 focus-group participants in Germany, France and Portugal: four men and seven women.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ Mentioned by eight focus-group participants in France and Portugal: five women and three men.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ Mentioned by five focus-group participants in France and Portugal: three women and two men.

us. She ought to talk to us and tell us what is going on in her house' (female focus-group participant, France).

In the workplace environment it was focus-group participants rather than witnesses and professionals who spoke about the need to secure the victim's consent⁽⁵⁰⁾. This may be because the victim and witness in the workplace scenario presented to focus-group participants had a close friendship, drawing it closer to the friendship and family scenario.

If the victim chose not to disclose the violence, some focus-group participants said they would be less inclined to intervene in the situation⁽⁵¹⁾. Some participants argued that the police are not a good option because they would not be able to make a case without the victim's cooperation⁽⁵²⁾.

This factor was rarely mentioned by interviewees in relation to the healthcare and social-care environment (which is not included in the focus-group scenarios). One professional emphasised the importance of professionals in health and social care considering the consent of the victim⁽⁵³⁾.

3.2.2. Evidence

Witnesses often seek evidence to confirm their suspicions that intimate partner violence is taking place. A perceived lack of evidence can act as a barrier to witnesses intervening, particularly to reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities. Physical signs of violence, confirmation from the victim that violence is taking place, noises in the victim's residence, as well as direct witnessing of the violence can be considered sufficient evidence.

Availability of evidence to support and confirm suspicions was identified as an important enabler of witness support (particularly for reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities) in relation to the friendship and family environment⁽⁵⁴⁾.

Physical signs of violence can be seen as corroborating evidence. One witness described how she knew for certain that a friend was a victim of intimate partner violence only after seeing signs of physical violence⁽⁵⁵⁾. Another witness said he was hesitant to ask a friend about the presence of intimate partner violence as he could not see any physical marks, despite having had suspicions aroused by other signs of violence, such as social withdrawal⁽⁵⁶⁾.

Some witnesses and focus-group participants said they would seek confirmation of the violence from the victim themselves, if that person were a friend or family member⁽⁵⁷⁾.

In the neighbourhood and local community environment, the availability of evidence was a crucial element to spur witnesses to intervene⁽⁵⁸⁾. An often-cited trigger was hearing noises in the house of the suspected victim⁽⁵⁹⁾. Intervening was more imperative if the witness heard a child screaming and asking for help⁽⁶⁰⁾. One professional mentioned that the existence of noise can sometimes be used by neighbours as an excuse to report incidents while protecting themselves from potential backlash from the perpetrator by saying that they have called the police only because of the noise, not the violence⁽⁶¹⁾. A witness (a neighbour) who reported intimate partner violence to the authorities after overhearing a series of noises from a neighbouring apartment over a sustained period

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Mentioned by 27 focus-group participants in all four Member States: 16 women and 11 men.

⁽⁵¹⁾ Mentioned by three focus-group participants in France and Portugal: two women and one man.

⁽⁵²⁾ Mentioned by 18 focus-group participants: 10 women and eight men.

⁽⁵³⁾ Mentioned by one professional in France: support service.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ Mentioned by five witnesses in Denmark, Germany and France: two women, three men; five professionals in Denmark and France: four support service and one police; 15 focus-group participants in Denmark, Germany and France: eight women and seven men.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ Mentioned by one male witness in France.

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Mentioned by one male witness in Germany.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ Mentioned by three witnesses in Denmark and Germany: two women and one man; seven focus-group participants in Denmark: six women and one man.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Mentioned by seven professionals in Denmark, France and Portugal: five support service, one local/national authority and one police; four witnesses in Denmark, France and Portugal: three women and one man; 27 focus-group participants: 12 women and 15 men.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Portugal: one local/national authority and one support service; three female witnesses in France and Portugal.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in Portugal.

⁽⁶¹⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: support service.

commented that what spurred her into action was hearing the victim ask the perpetrator to stop hitting her ⁽⁶²⁾:

‘I was leaving my home, I heard real blows and I heard her asking him to stop hitting her and at that point I called the police (female witness, France)’.

Some focus-group participants did not consider hearing noises to be sufficient evidence to intervene; they needed to see the violence themselves ⁽⁶³⁾:

‘In this case I didn’t see it with my own eyes so it’s still an assumption and it is possible that I misinterpret what I heard. That is why I feel too insecure to report something that in the end might not correspond to the facts. So, I’d be rather reluctant (female focus-group participant, Germany)’.

Evidence was also mentioned as an enabling factor in relation to the workplace environment ⁽⁶⁴⁾. Some research participants would report suspicions to the police after seeing worrying signs or behaviour, such as a colleague not going to work for a day or a couple of days ⁽⁶⁵⁾, crying in the workplace ⁽⁶⁶⁾ or having bruises or sudden changes in mood ⁽⁶⁷⁾:

‘At work, I could see that she was suffering. Because I was in the office and she ... I saw her crying, twice ... And then she went outside ... and she was ... she showed me her body, and she was bruised all over. [...] But I saw her unhappiness ... and, one day, she arrived at work with a black eye, and on the other day with the bruised mouth, and the other ... this

got me really worried ... and then I tried to help her (female witness, Portugal)’.

According to some professionals in Portugal, when offences happen at the victim’s workplace (if the perpetrator stalks the victim of intimate partner violence to her work environment and assaults her there), it is easier for witnesses who are co-workers to intervene or report the case to the authorities ⁽⁶⁸⁾. However, others looked for confirmation from the victim herself ⁽⁶⁹⁾.

Male and female participants both observed that a major barrier to reporting intimate partner violence was the perceived lack of direct evidence (not seeing the violence taking place), which can be reinforced by the victim’s refusal to acknowledge the facts ⁽⁷⁰⁾. Participants were mindful that their assumptions could be wrong, and this weakened their resolve to intervene. However, one focus-group participant was inclined to act despite possible doubts ⁽⁷¹⁾:

‘The thing is about domestic violence, you will never be 100 % sure. Therefore, one must react, otherwise the perpetrator will have free play. After all, you will never stand inside the home and see him hit. So, you can never be 100 % sure (female focus-group participant, Denmark)’.

The need for evidence was rarely mentioned in relation to the healthcare and social-care environment. One professional stated that the lack of visible bruises on victims, as well as the difficulty of approaching the topic if victims are silent, were barriers in deciding whether to report suspicions or not for professionals working in healthcare and social care ⁽⁷²⁾.

⁽⁶²⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in France.

⁽⁶³⁾ Mentioned by five focus-group participants in Denmark: three women and two men.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ Mentioned by four professionals in Denmark and Portugal: four support service; two female witnesses in Denmark and Portugal; 24 focus-group participants: 13 women and 11 men.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Portugal: two support service; one female witness in Portugal.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: support service.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in Portugal.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Portugal: police/prosecution.

⁽⁶⁹⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Denmark: support service; one female witness in Denmark.

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Mentioned by 19 focus-group participants in Denmark, Germany and Portugal: 11 women and eight men.

⁽⁷¹⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Denmark.

⁽⁷²⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: support service.

3.2.3. Understanding and awareness

Understanding and awareness of intimate partner violence was discussed as a factor enabling witness support of victims. Conversely, a lack of awareness or understanding of intimate partner violence can be a barrier to witnesses intervening in the situation.

Research participants in Denmark, France, Germany and Portugal identified understanding and awareness as a factor enabling witness support in relation to the friendship and family environment ⁽⁷³⁾. A greater understanding of this topic not only provides people with tools to recognise violence more easily, but might also lessen feelings of frustration, hurt and betrayal that are experienced by some witnesses when the victim does not break the cycle, despite earlier claims of wanting to report the issue or seek help.

Some professionals highlighted news coverage about intimate partner violence as a factor raising awareness of intimate partner violence among friends and family members ⁽⁷⁴⁾. Knowing how to act, how to talk to the victim and where to go to report intimate partner violence were raised as enabling factors by professionals and witnesses interviewed as part of the study ⁽⁷⁵⁾:

‘When they [witnesses] realise that the inaction from the victim is high ... That suddenly, the relationship might end in a great tragedy ... when the media releases news about murdered women, and about offenders being arrested for domestic violence [witnesses are more likely to intervene] (support-service professional, Portugal)’.

Although not frequently discussed in the focus groups, in the quotation below one participant expressed uncertainty about how to respond

to psychological violence (a key component of the friendship scenario shown to focus-group participants) ⁽⁷⁶⁾:

‘In such a situation I wouldn’t know on my own what to say to talk about psychological abuse. I especially wouldn’t know what to say in the event that she refuses to talk to the police or to a social worker or to anyone else. I don’t know how I could express these concerns, so they are taken seriously (male focus-group participant, France)’.

Awareness and understanding of intimate partner violence was also identified as a factor enabling witness support in relation to the neighbourhood and local community environment ⁽⁷⁷⁾. The media was highlighted as an important factor influencing neighbours and others in the local community by raising awareness of intimate partner violence ⁽⁷⁸⁾, as illustrated by this quotation from a professional ⁽⁷⁹⁾:

‘Regarding the neighbours, I believe that on the contrary, all the media, the TV and social media are key because the neighbours, and I am talking about the neighbour who is not necessarily a friend, but a neighbour we wave hello to and that’s it. So this person is not connected to our relationship, he/she does not know what is happening in the apartment or house, but he/she hears screaming and thinks, ‘I have seen this publicity on TV, I have heard this ad on the radio, I have seen that poster ... I am worried that it may be happening next door, so I won’t take any chances, I am calling the police’ (police professional, France)’.

One witness (a neighbour) spoke about how knowledge and experience gained in her professional life made her inclined to report instances

⁽⁷³⁾ Mentioned by seven professionals from all Member States: five support services and two police; four witnesses from all Member States: three women and one man. Mentioned by 11 focus-group participants in Denmark, France and Portugal: eight women and three men.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France and Portugal: one support service and one police.

⁽⁷⁵⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Denmark: support service; two witnesses from Denmark and Germany: one man and one woman. Mentioned by one male focus-group participant, in France.

⁽⁷⁶⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in France.

⁽⁷⁷⁾ Mentioned by two female witnesses in Denmark and Germany. Mentioned by four focus-group participants in France: two women and two men.

⁽⁷⁸⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France: police.

⁽⁷⁹⁾ Mentioned by one professional in France: police officer.

of intimate partner violence in the neighbourhood to the authorities ⁽⁸⁰⁾:

'I live in [name of a city] in a rented house and domestic violence happens repeatedly. I seem to be the only one who calls the police. And that has something to do with my work in the women's shelter. This also has something to do with the fact that I have an idea what is happening behind these doors (female witness, Germany)'.

The importance of awareness and understanding was also highlighted by interviewees (but not focus-group participants) in relation to the workplace environment ⁽⁸¹⁾. While the knowledge of intimate partner violence in a workplace environment was an important enabling factor for one witness ⁽⁸²⁾, the absence of this information was identified as a barrier by professionals ⁽⁸³⁾. In the view of one professional, not having enough information on the many different actions available is a possible enabler of the reporting of intimate partner violence to the police, since such reporting might be the only possible action witnesses know about when they want to help the victim ⁽⁸⁴⁾.

Interviewees commented on the importance of understanding and awareness in relation to the healthcare and social-care environment (this was not discussed in focus groups). One interviewee argued that professionals are more likely to report instances of intimate partner violence than other groups because they are better informed about the issue and how to respond to it ⁽⁸⁵⁾, while a French professional stressed the importance of providing more training for professionals, as it was still not enough ⁽⁸⁶⁾. On the other hand, some professionals highlighted a lack of knowledge about intimate partner violence among

witnesses working in the healthcare and social-care sector ⁽⁸⁷⁾.

Some research participants claimed that understanding and awareness is a cross-cutting factor that is important across all environments ⁽⁸⁸⁾. Some focus-group participants were not sure what constitutes economic and psychological violence (discussed as part of the friendship scenario and the workplace scenario), making it harder to identify the signs that pertain to these forms of violence ⁽⁸⁹⁾. Some did not seem to understand the complex situation and dynamics within an abusive relationship and therefore assumed that victims can easily leave relationships if that is what they want ⁽⁹⁰⁾. Another barrier to reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities or helping the victim in other ways was poor knowledge of where to go for professional help ⁽⁹¹⁾. In France there appeared to be low awareness about support services, such as the national hotline and the online reporting system ⁽⁹²⁾. In Portugal, some focus-group participants admitted that witnesses believe their testimony would be insufficient to help the victim or they could not help simply because they did not know how to act or what to do in a serious situation such as this one ⁽⁹³⁾.

3.2.4. Anonymous reporting to the authorities

Anonymous incident reporting to the authorities was identified as a factor enabling witness reporting of intimate partner violence in France, Germany and Portugal. Conversely, a lack of anonymity in the reporting process can be a barrier to reporting intimate partner violence, most notably in Germany where the name of the witness is shared with the perpetrator.

⁽⁸⁰⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in Germany.

⁽⁸¹⁾ Mentioned by four professionals in France and Portugal: three support service and one police; one female witness in Denmark.

⁽⁸²⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in Denmark.

⁽⁸³⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France and Portugal: one police and one support service.

⁽⁸⁴⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: support service.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ Mentioned by one professional in France: support service.

⁽⁸⁶⁾ Mentioned by one professional in France: support service.

⁽⁸⁷⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Denmark: two support service; one female witness in Denmark.

⁽⁸⁸⁾ Mentioned by four professionals in Denmark and Portugal: three support service and one police; one female witness in Portugal. Mentioned by 11 focus-group participants in Denmark: one woman and 10 men.

⁽⁸⁹⁾ Mentioned by 11 focus-group participants in Denmark, France and Portugal: eight women and three men.

⁽⁹⁰⁾ Mentioned by 11 focus-group participants in Denmark: one woman and 10 men.

⁽⁹¹⁾ Mentioned by 15 focus-group participants in Denmark, France and Portugal: nine women and six men.

⁽⁹²⁾ Mentioned by three male focus-group participants in France.

⁽⁹³⁾ Mentioned by four focus-group participants in Portugal: three women and one man.

Anonymous reporting to the authorities was generally not discussed in relation to **the friendship or family environment**. One focus-group participant commented that she would *not* want to report a friend anonymously to the authorities (contrary to the view of most research participants) because she would want the victim to be reassured by knowing that the report came from a friend⁽⁹⁴⁾. This comment, and the lack of discussion of anonymity in relation to the friendship and family environment, suggests that anonymity is less important for friends and family members than for other witnesses.

Professionals and focus-group participants discussed anonymous reporting as a factor affecting witness reporting of intimate partner violence to the authorities in relation to the neighbourhood environment⁽⁹⁵⁾. According to one professional, neighbours, more than other types of witnesses, value anonymity, not wanting to adversely affect the atmosphere of the neighbourhood or get drawn into a situation that does not involve them personally⁽⁹⁶⁾. Other professionals commented that neighbours prefer to remain anonymous and keep a distance from the case because they tend not to be close to the victim⁽⁹⁷⁾. Here a professional commented that neighbours are ‘outsiders’ and seek to remain so⁽⁹⁸⁾:

‘Neighbours want to remain anonymous and they don’t want to be involved. They consider themselves as outsiders from the household, from the family, from the friends. They feel like they did their duty in calling the police but then they are discouraged because they feel like it is a constraint having to come to the police station. They don’t want their name to show up, they don’t want people to know they testified (police professional, France)’.

Focus-group participants also discussed the possibility of anonymous reporting in relation to the workplace environment⁽⁹⁹⁾. They suggested that the workplace setting provides some degree of anonymity because it is possible to report intimate partner violence together with other colleagues⁽¹⁰⁰⁾, or to ask the human resources representative or the victim’s line manager to speak to the victim⁽¹⁰¹⁾. This ability to intervene without being personally identified is a factor enabling witness reporting of intimate partner violence, but was not discussed in relation to the healthcare and social-care environment.

Professionals suggested that anonymous reporting is a cross-cutting factor, not specific to any environment⁽¹⁰²⁾. In Germany, it is not possible to report intimate partner violence to the police or participate in the judicial process anonymously, and this is identified as a barrier to the reporting of intimate partner violence⁽¹⁰³⁾. Witnesses’ names are shared with the perpetrator⁽¹⁰⁴⁾, and this exacerbates fear of retaliation⁽¹⁰⁵⁾. One police officer interviewed in Germany stressed however that the police will not discard information from someone who refuses to share their name or other identifying information⁽¹⁰⁶⁾. Another police officer explained how members of the public or professionals can ask the police anonymously for advice without making an official report⁽¹⁰⁷⁾. There may be exceptional cases in Germany where anonymity is granted (for instance for a alleged perpetrator who is associated with organised crime), where the state prosecutor may decide not to share witness details with the perpetrator, but this is rare⁽¹⁰⁸⁾. Once they have made a report to the police, witnesses also have no choice about whether to appear as a witness in court⁽¹⁰⁹⁾. There was no reference to the lack of witness anonymity in Germany in the interviews with

⁽⁹⁴⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in France.

⁽⁹⁵⁾ Mentioned by three professionals in Germany and France: police; six female focus-group participants in Germany, France and Portugal.

⁽⁹⁶⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: police officer.

⁽⁹⁷⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France: police.

⁽⁹⁸⁾ Mentioned by one professional in France: police officer.

⁽⁹⁹⁾ Mentioned by three focus-group participants in Germany and France: two women, one man.

⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Germany.

⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Mentioned two focus-group participants in Germany and France: one woman, one man.

⁽¹⁰²⁾ Mentioned by 11 professionals in Germany, France and Portugal: two local/national authority, five support service, four police.

⁽¹⁰³⁾ Mentioned by five professionals in Germany: one local/national authority, three support service and one police.

⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: local/national authority.

⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Germany: one local/national authority and one support service.

⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: police officer.

⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: police officer.

⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: police officer.

⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: local/national authority.

witnesses in Germany and it was mentioned infrequently in the focus groups. This suggests there may be low awareness of the issue among the general public, as implied here ⁽¹¹⁰⁾:

'What they [witnesses] also do not know [when they make the report] is that their name and address is in the file ⁽¹¹¹⁾ and that the defendant finds out the names relatively early in the proceedings. Many are horrified because they think everything is anonymous. But that is not the case (local/national authority professional, Germany).'

In France, a secure website ⁽¹¹²⁾ and a hotline ⁽¹¹³⁾ exist through which witnesses and victims can report intimate partner violence directly to the police ⁽¹¹⁴⁾. Police can offer anonymity to witnesses reporting intimate partner violence, and this was identified as an enabler of such reporting ⁽¹¹⁵⁾. However, according to one police officer, this requires extra time and resources, which are not always available ⁽¹¹⁶⁾. Witnesses (or victims) are also able to report intimate partner violence to the police without pressing charges (by giving a *main courante* (entry in police log)) ⁽¹¹⁷⁾, which one interviewed witness did alongside the victim, who later went on to press charges ⁽¹¹⁸⁾. Although anonymous reporting is possible in France, not all professionals working in this area appear to be aware of this policy ⁽¹¹⁹⁾.

In Portugal, it is possible to make an anonymous report as long as the crime has 'public status', i.e. it can be reported without the victim's consent or approval. One professional

said this facilitated witness intimate partner violence reporting ⁽¹²⁰⁾. This sort of anonymous report to the police or prosecution service triggers an investigation in a similar way to any other report. However, it is not possible to participate in any capacity in the legal process anonymously; it is only possible for the state to withhold the witnesses' personal details, such as their address, for safety purposes. Police protection already exists in Portuguese law, but not all witnesses have their request for protection approved. Witnesses may not be aware of the possibility of police protection ⁽¹²¹⁾:

'Then someone told me that if I had gone to the police ... They would have protected me [as a witness] ... I don't know ... I don't know if it is true or not because I never experienced a similar situation ... It was the first time this happened ... (female witness, Portugal).'

3.2.5. Civic obligation and duty

The Portuguese domestic violence law was given public-crime status in 2000. Since then every member of the public has a duty to report domestic violence to the authorities and can do so without the victim's consent or approval. Some participants from the Portuguese focus groups ⁽¹²²⁾, as well as witnesses and professionals in Portugal ⁽¹²³⁾, thought that this legal requirement encouraged the reporting of domestic violence in all environments.

⁽¹¹⁰⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: local/national authority.

⁽¹¹¹⁾ The respondent later clarified that only the name will be communicated to the alleged perpetrator, not the address. However, they speak to witnesses who are concerned that their home or work address will be easily identifiable from their name.

⁽¹¹²⁾ See <https://www.interieur.gouv.fr/Actualites/Infos-pratiques/Signalement-des-violences-sexuelles-et-sexistes>

⁽¹¹³⁾ There is also a separate hotline for children.

⁽¹¹⁴⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France: police officers.

⁽¹¹⁵⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France: police officers.

⁽¹¹⁶⁾ Mentioned by one professional in France: police officer.

⁽¹¹⁷⁾ Only the victim can press charges, as confirmed by one professional: police officer.

⁽¹¹⁸⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in France.

⁽¹¹⁹⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France: support service.

⁽¹²⁰⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: local/national authority.

⁽¹²¹⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in Portugal.

⁽¹²²⁾ Mentioned by three female focus-group participants in Portugal.

⁽¹²³⁾ Mentioned by four professionals in Portugal: two support service, one police/prosecution and one local/national authority; two witnesses in Portugal: one man and one woman.

3.2.6. Professional obligation

All four Member States – Denmark, Germany, France and Portugal – have ratified the Istanbul Convention – which states that professionals in health and social care have a legal obligation to report intimate partner violence to the authorities, particularly when children are involved. Professional obligation is important in the healthcare and social-care environment. Although it can act as an enabler of reporting of intimate partner violence, some professionals voice concerns about respecting confidentiality, which can act as a barrier.

Professional obligation was not discussed in relation to the friendship and family environment or the neighbourhood and local community environment. One professional mentioned it in relation to the workplace environment, commenting that co-workers (in particular managers) may feel a duty of care and responsibility to report intimate partner violence to the authorities (other forms of support for victims are rarely discussed in relation to professional witnesses) ⁽¹²⁴⁾.

Professional obligation was identified as a factor enabling witness reporting of intimate partner violence in relation to the health and social environment ⁽¹²⁵⁾. Healthcare and social-care professionals are less likely than other witnesses to view intimate partner violence as ‘none of their business’ since recognising and responding to violence forms part of their professional role ⁽¹²⁶⁾:

‘That’s the motivation of social services in health care. They have a duty to report when something is wrong, something that is not lawful. Neighbours don’t really see it that way. They can say that it is none of their business. But if the people work in an institution, then they have the duty to

report violence (support-service professional, Germany)’.

Denmark, Germany, France and Portugal have all ratified the Istanbul Convention ⁽¹²⁷⁾, which states that professionals in health and social care have a legal obligation to report domestic violence, particularly when children are involved.

However, some professionals in France and Portugal noted that this duty conflicts with the perception of some witnesses in health and social care that they are obliged to maintain the confidentiality of their clients ⁽¹²⁸⁾. One interviewee thought service providers lacked knowledge or awareness about their obligation to report domestic violence ⁽¹²⁹⁾.

3.3. Factors that may either enable or act as a barrier to witnesses supporting victims of intimate partner violence

3.3.1. Relationship between the victim and the witness

Intervening (but not necessarily reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities) was generally described as easier if there is a close relationship with the victim. However, a lack of emotional closeness may be an enabling factor for reporting the intimate partner violence directly to the police. The relationship between the victim and witness was generally assumed to be closer in the friendship and family environment than in other environments.

A close relationship between victim and witness is the main way in which the friendship and family

⁽¹²⁴⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: police officer.

⁽¹²⁵⁾ Mentioned by 10 professionals from all four Member States: six support service, two local/national authority, one other (health), one police/prosecution.

⁽¹²⁶⁾ Mentioned by 10 professionals from all four Member States: six support service, two local/national authority, one other (health), one police/prosecution.
⁽¹²⁷⁾ Article 28 of the Istanbul Convention (‘Reporting by professionals’) states: ‘Parties shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the confidentiality rules imposed by internal law on certain professionals do not constitute an obstacle to the possibility, under appropriate conditions, of their reporting to the competent organisations or authorities if they have reasonable grounds to believe that a serious act of violence covered by the scope of this Convention has been committed and further serious acts of violence are to be expected.’

⁽¹²⁸⁾ Mentioned by six professionals in France and Portugal: two police, two support service, one local/national authority and one other (health).

⁽¹²⁹⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: local/national authority.

setting was seen to differ from the other three environments; this relationship can be both an enabler of witness support⁽¹³⁰⁾ and a barrier⁽¹³¹⁾. Witnesses may be more likely to discover and be more motivated to intervene in a situation if the victim is someone close to them. Several interviewees (witnesses) emphasised that the victim was someone close to them. Some admitted that they would not have become so heavily involved if the victim were someone more distant from them⁽¹³²⁾:

‘I ... would not have got involved so much [if I was not as close to the victim] but would have tried to inform and involve other people close to this person if they had not noticed it or known about it (male witness, Germany)’.

However, witnesses were not necessarily more inclined to report the case to the authorities⁽¹³³⁾ – sometimes the emotional closeness of the relationship represents a barrier. Witnesses can often be concerned about damaging their relationship with the victim or pushing them away by reporting intimate partner violence⁽¹³⁴⁾. The issue for friends and family is often how to help the victim without risking antagonising or alienating them⁽¹³⁵⁾:

‘Pushing the victim away is something that people consider. I should probably report it, or get the police involved, but I know it may lead to the consequence of me not being in her life anymore, and I don’t want to risk that (support-service professional, Denmark)’.

If a witness is a member of the victim’s family, or closely involved with it, they may also have

a relationship with the perpetrator, which may make them less inclined to report him⁽¹³⁶⁾.

The nature of the relationship between the victim and the witness was also highlighted as a factor in relation to the neighbourhood and local community environment. As in the friendship and family settings, this can be viewed as both an enabling factor and a barrier. Neighbours were generally assumed to be less close to the victim than friends or family members⁽¹³⁷⁾. The lack of emotional closeness can be an enabling factor for reporting directly to the police since witnesses in the local community may not feel comfortable intervening in other ways such as talking to the victim (or perpetrator) or helping the victim to access support⁽¹³⁸⁾. One witness from Germany described how she felt comfortable reporting suspected violence (based on overheard noises) to the police without speaking to the individual(s) involved first because there had been no direct contact⁽¹³⁹⁾. However, neighbours may also be more likely to report intimate partner violence if they know the victim personally, thus some are less likely to intervene as a neighbour because they do not know their neighbours well⁽¹⁴⁰⁾.

The nature of the relationship between the victim and the witness is also important when considering a workplace environment. In general, colleagues were assumed to be less close than friends and family members⁽¹⁴¹⁾ (although the scenario presented to focus-group participants presented two colleagues who were close friends). Some focus-group participants suggested that when the relationship is more like a friendship it can be seen as an enabling factor for reporting intimate partner violence⁽¹⁴²⁾. However, others thought it would be

⁽¹³⁰⁾ Mentioned by five witnesses in Denmark and Germany: three women, two men; 15 focus-group participants in all four Member States: 10 women and five men.

⁽¹³¹⁾ Mentioned by nine professionals in Denmark, Germany and Portugal: four support service, three police/prosecution, two local/national authority; 22 focus-group participants in Denmark, Germany and Portugal: 11 women and 11 men.

⁽¹³²⁾ Mentioned by two male witnesses in Germany.

⁽¹³³⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: support service; 11 focus-group participants in Germany and Portugal: three women and eight men.

⁽¹³⁴⁾ Mentioned by eight professionals in Denmark and Portugal: one police, two authority and four support services, one prosecution.

⁽¹³⁵⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Denmark: support service.

⁽¹³⁶⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Portugal: one prosecution, one police.

⁽¹³⁷⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Germany: one support service, one police.

⁽¹³⁸⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany; one female witness in Germany; 11 focus-group participants in Denmark and Germany: three women and eight men.

⁽¹³⁹⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in Germany.

⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Portugal one support service, one other (health); one female witness in Portugal; four focus-group participants in Germany and France: one woman and three men.

⁽¹⁴¹⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Germany and France: support service.

⁽¹⁴²⁾ Mentioned by six focus-group participants in Germany, France and Portugal: two women and four men.

difficult to talk to a close friend about such a difficult, complex matter ⁽¹⁴³⁾, hence the friendship might also be a barrier. Others considered some degree of distance to be inevitable in a relationship between colleagues, and argued that the victim would be less likely to disclose intimate partner violence to co-workers than to friends or family members ⁽¹⁴⁴⁾.

Just one professional from Denmark ⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ raised the issue of the relationship between the victim and witness as a factor in relation to the healthcare and social-care environment. Professionals working in women's shelters sometimes come across cases there that have not been reported to local authorities by potential witnesses (including professionals), even though there are children in the household (it is a legal obligation to report intimate partner violence in Denmark if a child is involved). The reason for this may be that the professional, for example a teacher, is afraid of alienation from the family.

3.3.2. The involvement of children

Witnesses were generally seen as more likely to intervene if children are involved (and particularly to report the issue to the authorities).

The involvement of children is generally positioned as a factor enabling witness reporting of intimate partner violence in relation to the friendship and family environment. Interviewees (witnesses and professionals) observed that friends and family members feel greater urgency in intervening (particularly in reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities) if there are young children in the household ⁽¹⁴⁶⁾:

'He [the perpetrator] said I should stay out of it. But I said I will interfere, also because there is a 4-year-old child involved (female witness, Germany).'

One witness in Germany commented that the police respond more speedily and effectively if there are children involved ⁽¹⁴⁷⁾.

In Denmark, it is a legal obligation for professionals and members of the public to notify authorities when they are aware of a violent situation in which a child is present, or if they believe a child or young person needs professional support to handle circumstances that threaten their general well-being and development, e.g. violence in the home.

The involvement of children can be a barrier to witness reporting in relation to the friendship and family environment. Professional and witness interviewees commented that witnesses may be concerned about the welfare of children ⁽¹⁴⁸⁾, for instance the possibility of children being taken from their mother and put into foster care ⁽¹⁴⁹⁾, or being separated from their relatives altogether ⁽¹⁵⁰⁾. Friends and family members may be deterred from intervening in domestic violence if they believe the perpetrator to be a good father or a 'family man' ⁽¹⁵¹⁾. The involvement of children was not discussed by focus-group participants in relation to the friendship and family environment, save for one male participant, in Germany, and only when prompted, who said that the involvement of children would not make a difference to him ⁽¹⁵²⁾.

The involvement of children was generally identified as an enabler of witness support (particularly in reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities) in relation to the neighbourhood and local community environment ⁽¹⁵³⁾. One

⁽¹⁴³⁾ Mentioned by two female focus-group participants in France.

⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ Mentioned by six professionals in Germany and France: one local/national authority, four support service, one police/prosecution; five focus-group participants in all Member States: three women, two men.

⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Denmark: support service.

⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ Mentioned by five professionals in all Denmark, France and Portugal: four support service and one police/prosecution; five witnesses in all, Germany and Denmark: four women and one man.

⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ Mentioned by one male witness in Germany.

⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France and Portugal: two support service; two witnesses in France and Portugal: two men.

⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ Mentioned by one professional in France: support service.

⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Denmark: support service.

⁽¹⁵¹⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: police officer.

⁽¹⁵²⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in Germany.

⁽¹⁵³⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Denmark: one police/prosecution and one local/national authority; four female witnesses in Denmark, Germany and Portugal; 23 focus-group participants from across all Member States: 13 women and 10 men.

focus-group participant ⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ commented that if there is a child involved the need for concrete evidence and proof is less pronounced in the neighbourhood setting, and another argued that the police and social services would possibly be more responsive ⁽¹⁵⁵⁾. Here a focus-group participant commented that reporting the case may flag other child welfare issues, even if the situation did not turn out to be one of intimate partner violence ⁽¹⁵⁶⁾:

'The suspicion has to benefit the child. It may well be a misconception, and it may just be someone who's wobbling around being drunk. But it is still not good for the child. If it is the mother who rolls around drunk, it is the social authorities who have to take over. Something's wrong in the apartment that should not be going on (male focus-group participant, Denmark).'

Conversely, the involvement of children can also deter witnesses from reporting intimate partner violence in relation to the neighbourhood environment. Some focus-group participants commented that police involvement could traumatise children ⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ and even result in them being separated from their mother ⁽¹⁵⁸⁾. One female focus-group participant from Germany admitted that she would respect the mother's wishes not to report intimate partner violence if the victim were to guarantee the child's safety ⁽¹⁵⁹⁾. Four Portuguese women participating in the focus groups agreed that the involvement of children would not make any difference, since the victim is already suffering ⁽¹⁶⁰⁾.

This factor was not discussed by interviewees in relation to the workplace environment, but was touched on in the focus-group discussions. In these instances, participants generally thought the involvement of a child was an enabling factor

in reporting intimate partner violence, given their fragility and how witnessing these forms of violence can damage children's mental health ⁽¹⁶¹⁾. A focus-group participant from Germany would be motivated to intervene if the child was a victim of violence ⁽¹⁶²⁾:

'If you ask yourself: 'Does the man hit the child?' and the answer is 'Yes', then I would act myself. If the answer is 'No', then I would advise her [the victim] to call the police. But when a child is involved it's a different matter (female focus-group participant, Germany).'

However, some focus-group participants disagreed that the involvement of a child is important in this scenario ⁽¹⁶³⁾.

Professionals and witnesses in Denmark considered the presence of children in the home where intimate partner violence is taking place to be a factor enabling witnesses reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities in the healthcare and social-care environment ⁽¹⁶⁴⁾.

3.3.3. The gravity and type of violence

The perceived gravity and type of violence can represent a barrier or an enabler, depending on the type of violence.

The gravity and type of violence is discussed as a factor affecting witness support ⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ in relation to the friendship and family environment, the neighbourhood environment and the workplace environment. Comments are generally not linked to the specific environment and therefore findings relating to this factor are presented at an overall level.

⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in Denmark.

⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in France.

⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in Denmark.

⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in Germany.

⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in France.

⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Germany.

⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ Mentioned by four female focus-group participants in Portugal.

⁽¹⁶¹⁾ Mentioned by eight focus-group participants, in Germany and Portugal: three women and five men.

⁽¹⁶²⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Germany.

⁽¹⁶³⁾ Mentioned by two female focus-group participants in Germany.

⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ Mentioned by four professionals in Denmark: two support services, one police and one national/local authority; two female witnesses in Denmark.

⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ Mentioned by five professionals in Denmark: four support service, one police; four witnesses in Denmark: three women and two men; 40 focus-group participants in all four Member States: 17 women and 23 men.

The dominant view among professionals and focus-group participants was that if the violence is physical, the witnesses are more likely to intervene, particularly to report it to the authorities. In general, signs of psychological violence were considered more difficult to interpret and more challenging to respond to ⁽¹⁶⁶⁾. This pattern was evident across all sources, countries and environments, except from health and social care, in which this factor was not mentioned at all.

In all four Member States (Denmark, France, Germany and Portugal) focus-group participants were more likely to respond when shown scenarios describing signs of physical violence (e.g. bruises) than if they witnessed other forms of violence (e.g. psychological, economic) ⁽¹⁶⁷⁾, making evidence of physical violence an enabler of witness support ⁽¹⁶⁸⁾. Older participants mentioned this more frequently than younger participants (over half of those aged 50 years or over comment on this). This links to a perception that the signs of physical violence are easier to spot and interpret than psychological violence ⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ and offer stronger evidence to corroborate suspicions than signs and signals of others forms of intimate partner violence ⁽¹⁷⁰⁾. This aligns with findings from the interviews with witnesses and professionals, where interviewees commented that the more physical the violence is or becomes (or is perceived to be), the more likely witnesses are to act ⁽¹⁷¹⁾. One example from the friends and family setting in Denmark was a witness who did not intervene in intimate partner violence until there were signs of physical violence ⁽¹⁷²⁾:

‘He has not been [physically] violent, just strange; if you invited him to a party, then he cancelled 5 minutes before or he came and was over the top. Or he would take off in the middle of it all, they were always

arguing. He hit her and it was enough to report him (female witness, Denmark)’.

As the quotation above demonstrates, the understanding of different types of violence is central. Some participants expressed the view that psychological violence is less serious than physical violence ⁽¹⁷³⁾. When introduced to scenarios of psychological or economic violence, a small number of participants questioned whether these forms of violence are violence at all ⁽¹⁷⁴⁾, and some did not see the psychological violence described in a scenario as sufficiently ‘serious’ to warrant reporting it to the authorities ⁽¹⁷⁵⁾. Some perceived the police to be less responsive to cases involving psychological violence than those where physical violence is involved ⁽¹⁷⁶⁾. Focus-group participants tended to interpret the scenario depicting economic violence as relating to other crimes such as fraud or theft (also part of this scenario) rather than intimate partner violence ⁽¹⁷⁷⁾:

‘I wouldn’t call the police because he didn’t allow her to eat more but I would encourage her to do something about this dodgy loan and the purse. That is not violence but it’s stealing. I’d report that to a lawyer (female focus-group participant, Germany)’.

The perception and recognition of other forms of violence such as psychological or economic violence may be linked to current legislation. In Denmark, psychological violence has only recently been explicitly criminalised in Section 243 of the Criminal Code of 30 March 2019. In France, Act No 2010-769 of 9 July 2010 on violence committed against women, violence within the couple and the consequences of such violence for children does not define intimate partner violence.

⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ Mentioned by five professionals in Denmark: four support service, one police; four witnesses in Denmark: three women and one man; 40 focus-group participants in all four Member States: 17 women and 23 men.

⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ Mentioned by 29 focus-group participants in all four Member States: 14 women and 15 men.

⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ Mentioned by four professionals in Denmark: three support service and one police/prosecution; three female witnesses in Denmark; 15 focus-group participants in Germany, France and Portugal: five women and 10 men.

⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ Mentioned by five focus-group participants in Denmark, Germany and Portugal: three women and two men.

⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ Mentioned by six focus-group participants in France and Portugal: one woman and five men.

⁽¹⁷¹⁾ Mentioned by four professionals in Denmark: three support service and one police/prosecution; one male witness in Denmark.

⁽¹⁷²⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in Denmark.

⁽¹⁷³⁾ Mentioned by six focus-group participants in Denmark: two women and four men.

⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ Mentioned by five focus-group participants in Germany and France: three women and two men.

⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ Mentioned by six focus-group participants in Germany and France: two women and four men.

⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ Mentioned by four focus-group participants in Portugal: one woman and three men.

⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ Mentioned by 13 focus-group participants: eight women and five men.

Thus psychological (or sexual and economic violence) is not explicitly mentioned (EIGE, 2018b).

3.3.4. Fear of escalation of violence

Fear of escalation of violence can be both an enabler of and a barrier to reporting intimate partner violence, in the sense that witnesses may be concerned about the violence escalating if they do not intervene or report the issue to the authorities (more common), but also that the same thing might happen if they do intervene.

Research participants voiced concerns about the potential for violence against the victim to escalate, a factor that can act as both an enabler and a barrier. In Germany and Portugal, this was discussed in interviews with witnesses and professionals as well as in focus groups in relation to the friendship and family environment⁽¹⁷⁸⁾. In Portugal, some interviewees spoke about how an escalation of violence can be a trigger that motivates witnesses to intervene⁽¹⁷⁹⁾. They suggested that family and friends might know about a violent situation for years, but only when a trigger happens do they feel compelled to intervene, and this ‘click’ has to do with the escalation of violence.

Some research participants were concerned about the potential for violence to escalate if the violence is *not* reported to the authorities⁽¹⁸⁰⁾. Friends and family members may be motivated to report out of fear that something even more serious may befall the victim. In a mixed focus group in Portugal, a female participant observed that reporting the case to the police might avoid a tragic ending⁽¹⁸¹⁾. And a professional from a support service in Portugal pointed out that, first and foremost, witnesses report intimate partner violence when they become aware of the risk of death the victim is facing⁽¹⁸²⁾:

‘The risk of death of the victim. When friends realise that things are barely holding up. That something very serious might happen. When they realise that the inaction from the victim is high ... That suddenly the relationship might end in a great tragedy (support-service professional, Portugal)’.

However, other research participants commented that friends and family members may be concerned about an escalation of violence against the victim if the case *is* reported to the authorities⁽¹⁸³⁾. One professional observed that if a perpetrator finds out that he has been reported, he may suspect his partner first and therefore retaliate against her⁽¹⁸⁴⁾. The possibility of the perpetrator seeking ‘revenge’ against the victim in response to the case being reported was discussed by a focus-group participant in France⁽¹⁸⁵⁾:

‘We may also escalate the situation by intervening, and the abusive person may seek some sort of revenge or increase the violence because he or she takes the intervention, the external perspective badly. This is another risk (female focus-group participant, France)’.

Focus-group participants discussed these issues in relation to the neighbourhood environment⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ and the workplace environment⁽¹⁸⁷⁾. This issue is more often approached from the perspective of violence escalating if the case is *not* reported to the authorities (as an enabling factor), as exemplified here⁽¹⁸⁸⁾:

‘The opposite may happen. For example, in this case here is a person with bruises and bruises ... But, maybe, next time she could be dead (female focus-group participant, Portugal)’.

⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ Mentioned by two witnesses, five professionals and four focus-group participants in Germany and Portugal.

⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Portugal: one support service, one public authority; one male witness in Portugal.

⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ Mentioned by three professionals in Portugal: one local/national authority, one support service, one other; one male witness in Portugal; three female focus-group participants in Germany and Portugal.

⁽¹⁸¹⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Portugal.

⁽¹⁸²⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: support service.

⁽¹⁸³⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Germany and Portugal: one local/national authority and one support service; two male focus-group participants in Germany and Portugal.

⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: local/national authority.

⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in France.

⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ Mentioned by five focus-group participants in Germany and Portugal: three women and two men.

⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ Mentioned by seven focus-group participants in France and Portugal: four women and three men.

⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Portugal.

This factor was not discussed in relation to **the healthcare and social-care environment**.

3.3.4. Characteristics of the victim

The characteristics of the victim as well as those of the witness can be an enabler or a barrier depending on the characteristic and how it is perceived to affect witness behaviour.

Some research participants considered the age of victim to be a relevant factor: for the most part, they thought the younger the victim the more likely some witnesses are to act⁽¹⁸⁹⁾. One witness (from the workplace environment) observed that she was motivated to act in part because the victim was rather young and it was her first job⁽¹⁹⁰⁾. One focus-group participant suggested that it would be fairly easy for a young victim to leave the perpetrator⁽¹⁹¹⁾:

‘The 20-year-old kid can just send him packing. She can get her life back on track. She has her whole life in front of her to meet a boy (female focus-group participant, France)’.

In contrast, some focus-group participants commented in relation to the workplace scenario (where the victim was a 55-year-old woman with a good job), that the victim would be more likely to act herself if something was wrong because of her age⁽¹⁹²⁾. This may make the focus-group participants less likely to report intimate partner violence, as suggested in this citation, where the participant emphasised that this type of victim should be able to say ‘stop!’ and reach out for help herself⁽¹⁹³⁾:

‘The thing about how old she is. One must also assume that she is old and mature

enough to be able to tell us more if there was more to it. That she can say, now I need help. Especially if they [the victim and the perpetrator] have been as close as before, then she should be able to say stop (male focus-group participant, Denmark)’.

Contrary to the above, according to one professional the opposite is the case: the older the victim, the more likely family members are to intervene and report intimate partner violence⁽¹⁹⁴⁾.

Other characteristics of the victim presented in the focus-group scenario(s) identified as relevant are having a learning difficulty and being unemployed⁽¹⁹⁵⁾. Some participants argued that such characteristics might place a victim in a more fragile and vulnerable position and so they would be more likely to report⁽¹⁹⁶⁾. One participant commented that a learning difficulty may influence the victim’s awareness about what is happening to her and her decision-making⁽¹⁹⁷⁾. In one focus group, a participant commented that the victim may not fully understand the situation or her rights⁽¹⁹⁸⁾:

‘Seeing the terms, we can see this is someone in precariousness. She has a hard time expressing herself, so she might not be aware of her rights, she might not be aware she is a victim (male focus-group participant, France)’.

Another focus-group participant expressed concerns about acting in a situation if the victim was sensitive or ‘weak’ since this may place the victim under too much pressure⁽¹⁹⁹⁾. However, in one focus group, participants discussed how intimate partner violence is harder to spot when the victim does not fit a stereotype (e.g. weak, uneducated, financially dependent)⁽²⁰⁰⁾. They thought that ‘un-victim-like’ characteristics in a victim could act as a barrier to witnesses intervening or

⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ Mentioned by six focus-group participants in Denmark and France: two women and four men.

⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in Denmark.

⁽¹⁹¹⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in France.

⁽¹⁹²⁾ Mentioned by four male focus-group participants in Denmark.

⁽¹⁹³⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in Denmark.

⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: police/prosecution.

⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ Mentioned by seven focus-group participants in Denmark, France and Portugal: four women and three men.

⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ Mentioned by three female focus-group participants in Portugal.

⁽¹⁹⁷⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Portugal.

⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in France.

⁽¹⁹⁹⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Germany.

⁽²⁰⁰⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in France.

reporting the case to the authorities since witnesses may be less likely to recognise and respond to the violence.

However, not all focus groups agreed that their response would differ according to the characteristics of the victim. When prompted, several focus-group participants concluded that the characteristics of the victim are not important ⁽²⁰¹⁾.

3.3.5. Characteristics of the witness

According to some professionals, witnesses might be more likely to intervene if they are older, more educated or have been through a similar situation themselves ⁽²⁰²⁾. The gender of the witness is also highlighted as a potential enabler or barrier. According to one focus-group participant, a male witness could probably have a more positive effect on the victim, as a man would tell her that violence is not an expected or a normal behaviour in men ⁽²⁰³⁾:

‘Actually, I’m not sure if the fact that there’s a man – I’m not sure, I mean, I’m just saying – telling her, ‘Look, it’s not normal that your boyfriend does that, because I’m a man and I don’t do it’ (female focus-group participant, Portugal)’.

In contrast, some focus-group participants spoke about how it would be better for a female witness rather than a male witness to speak to the victim ⁽²⁰⁴⁾, as sometimes there is an expectation that the dynamic between a female victim and the male witness may cause jealousy and provoke an aggressive response from the male perpetrator ⁽²⁰⁵⁾. For example, an older male participant argued that a male witness cannot support a female victim in a workplace environment in the same way as a female witness ⁽²⁰⁶⁾:

‘The difficulty is also that I am a man, so we can’t talk woman to woman ... if he [the perpetrator] is jealous it can be hard to manage. So, I think I would go see the manager for lack of being able to talk with ... [the victim] and I would see what we could do (male focus-group participant, France)’.

Other focus-group participants believed that women are best placed to approach a victim because a safe space needs to be created and the perpetrator is male, or because another woman could be more empathetic ⁽²⁰⁷⁾. However, some focus-group participants argued that what matters is that a victim is comfortable with a witness regardless of gender ⁽²⁰⁸⁾.

3.4. Factors that act as a barrier to witnesses supporting victims of intimate partner violence

3.4.1. Fear of repercussions

Witnesses’ fear of the repercussions of reporting for themselves and their family is identified as a barrier to witness support, particularly in reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities.

Fear of retaliation from the perpetrator was identified as a barrier to witness support, particularly in reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities, by witnesses and professionals in relation to the friendship and family environment ⁽²⁰⁹⁾. One professional ⁽²¹⁰⁾ commented that retaliation against a witness is perhaps more likely to occur among family members than for other types of witnesses since the family tends

⁽²⁰¹⁾ Mentioned by three focus-group participants in Germany: one woman and two men.

⁽²⁰²⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Portugal: one support service, one police/prosecution.

⁽²⁰³⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Portugal.

⁽²⁰⁴⁾ Mentioned by seven male focus-group participants in France and Portugal.

⁽²⁰⁵⁾ Mentioned by four male focus-group participants in France.

⁽²⁰⁶⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in France.

⁽²⁰⁷⁾ Mentioned by three male focus-group participants in Portugal.

⁽²⁰⁸⁾ Mentioned by three focus-group participants in Portugal: two women and one man.

⁽²⁰⁹⁾ Mentioned by 11 professionals in Germany France and Portugal: one local/national authority, six support service, four police/prosecution; five witnesses in Germany, France and Portugal: three women, two men.

⁽²¹⁰⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: local/national authority.

to have a closer relationship to the perpetrator. Family-member witnesses may be concerned about the safety of other family members as well as themselves ⁽²¹¹⁾:

‘What stops people from going to aid organisations is that they are afraid, for example because they are threatened. And generally, people are more afraid for their loved ones than for themselves (support-service professional, Germany)’.

In Portugal, one witness, a family member, described a situation where the victim did not want them to report the violence to the authorities because they did not want their family members to come to harm ⁽²¹²⁾.

Some professionals in Germany commented that certain aspects of the reporting system may exacerbate the fear of retaliation from the perpetrator for friends and family members. Fear of retaliation is aggravated by the fact that witnesses cannot report an incident to the police anonymously in Germany ⁽²¹³⁾. Fear is also linked to the lack of legal protection for witnesses, which is decided on a case-by-case basis and is not always available in the German legal system ⁽²¹⁴⁾. In France, a similar point was made by a representative from the police, who suggested that greater protection measures could help to facilitate witness reporting of intimate partner violence ⁽²¹⁵⁾.

Fear of retaliation from the perpetrator emerged as a key barrier in relation to the neighbourhood and local community environment, mentioned across Denmark, France, Germany and Portugal in interviews with witnesses and professionals ⁽²¹⁶⁾. A representative from the police explained that

neighbours may be frightened of retaliation from the perpetrator because that person is likely to stay in the home and therefore the local neighbourhood after the report has been made ⁽²¹⁷⁾:

‘Neighbours are afraid. Because even if this happens, the offender does not stay in prison. They are detained for a few hours but then (given that the crime has a sentence lower than 5 years), he is notified to be present at court a few days later and he returns to the house. Usually, the neighbour and the victim are still in the house at this point. There are some mechanisms to protect the woman and take her out of that house, but only for the women. Nothing for the neighbour (police professional, Portugal)’.

Focus-group participants mentioned that perpetrators are likely to know where witnesses who are neighbours live ⁽²¹⁸⁾. Several thought the physical appearance of the perpetrator could make them feel more or less safe to intervene ⁽²¹⁹⁾. One participant commented that the perpetrator may drink or use drugs, which may make him more likely to respond aggressively ⁽²²⁰⁾. However, another commented that concern about safety should not stop neighbours from intervening ⁽²²¹⁾.

Fear of retaliation from the perpetrator is less commonly mentioned in relation to the workplace environment ⁽²²²⁾. Some professionals observed that co-workers are less fearful than friends and family members because they often do not know the perpetrator, whereas family or friends might do ⁽²²³⁾. This factor was not discussed in relation to the healthcare and social-care environment.

⁽²¹¹⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: support service.

⁽²¹²⁾ Mentioned by one male witness in Portugal.

⁽²¹³⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Germany: one local/national authority and one support service.

⁽²¹⁴⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: police officer.

⁽²¹⁵⁾ Mentioned by one professional in France: police officer.

⁽²¹⁶⁾ Mentioned by 12 professionals in all four Member States: one local/national authority, five support service, five police/prosecution and one other; three witnesses in Denmark and Portugal: two women and one man; 28 focus-group participants in all four Member States: 16 women and 12 men.

⁽²¹⁷⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: police officer.

⁽²¹⁸⁾ Mentioned by three focus-group participants in Denmark: two women, one man.

⁽²¹⁹⁾ Mentioned by eight focus-group participants in Denmark: two women and six men.

⁽²²⁰⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in Germany.

⁽²²¹⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Portugal.

⁽²²²⁾ Mentioned by three professionals in Portugal: one support service, two police/prosecution; one female witness in Portugal.

⁽²²³⁾ Mentioned by three professionals in Portugal: one support service, two police/prosecution.

3.4.2. Perceptions of the police and/or judicial system

Perceptions of the police and/or judicial system were identified as a barrier to witnesses reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities. This was generally viewed as a cross-cutting barrier, not specific to any environment, and emerged more strongly in **France, Germany and Portugal** than in Denmark.

Perceptions of the police and/or judicial system were discussed as a factor affecting witness reporting of intimate partner violence to the authorities in relation to the friendship and family environment, the neighbourhood environment, the workplace environment and the healthcare and social-care environment. However, comments were generally not linked to the specific environment and therefore findings in relation to this factor are presented at an overall level. In general, perceptions of the police or judicial system were identified as a factor dissuading witnesses from reporting intimate partner violence ⁽²²⁴⁾.

Some professionals expressed concern about the capacity of the police to respond to reports of intimate partner violence. For example, some believed the police may not act in response to a report from a witness ⁽²²⁵⁾ or may not be welcoming or supportive to witnesses ⁽²²⁶⁾. This perception was based on the belief that there is no established protocol for responding to instances of intimate partner violence reported by witnesses ⁽²²⁷⁾, or that there is a lack of resources ⁽²²⁸⁾ and training for police personnel ⁽²²⁹⁾, rather than a dearth of compassion or empathy:

‘Training at the level of police stations and gendarmeries [is needed] because, even there, victims are still not well welcomed sometimes by the police or gendarmes. This is still commonplace. So training, training, training (**support-service professional, France**)’.

Professionals described how witnesses are afraid of the police ⁽²³⁰⁾, that the witnesses often believe they will not be taken seriously by the police ⁽²³¹⁾ or that the police do little to address the violence ⁽²³²⁾:

‘I believe many people are afraid of the police. And the step of calling the police is not so easy. Witnesses cannot remain anonymous and they are afraid of that. They get caught in the police machinery, they sit in the police station, they are not taken seriously. These factors make it difficult to report violence to the police (**support-service professional, Germany**)’.

The fact that professionals have negative perceptions of the police might in turn deter them from encouraging witnesses to report. Even where professionals do not hold negative views, they may not believe the police are the best way forward for reporting intimate partner violence ⁽²³³⁾. Interviewees from the authorities admitted that there is a lack of confidence in the support system and in police action to protect witnesses ⁽²³⁴⁾.

Witnesses and focus-group participants also expressed negative views of the police and judicial system ⁽²³⁵⁾. Witnesses may be reluctant to report because of a belief that the perpetrator is unlikely to receive a prison sentence and the victim and witness may not be offered

⁽²²⁴⁾ Mentioned by 20 professionals in all four Member States: six police/prosecution, three local/national authority, 11 support service; 10 witnesses in Germany and France: six women and four men.

⁽²²⁵⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France: support service.

⁽²²⁶⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France: support service.

⁽²²⁷⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France: support service.

⁽²²⁸⁾ Mentioned by one professional in France: support service.

⁽²²⁹⁾ Mentioned by three professionals in France: support service.

⁽²³⁰⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: support service.

⁽²³¹⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: support service.

⁽²³²⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: support service.

⁽²³³⁾ Mentioned by seven professionals in Denmark: one police, one authority, one prosecution, four support services.

⁽²³⁴⁾ Mentioned by four professionals in Portugal: two local/national authority and two police.

⁽²³⁵⁾ Mentioned by three witnesses in Germany: two women and one man.

protection⁽²³⁶⁾, linking to concerns about retaliation against the victim or witness. In France, some witnesses distrusted the judicial system, believing there could be repercussions for the victim. Two witnesses described situations where the victim rather than the perpetrator was forced to leave the family home⁽²³⁷⁾, even where the perpetrator was in a stronger financial position than the victim⁽²³⁸⁾. In one case the whole family, including children, effectively became homeless⁽²³⁹⁾. The most common sentiment expressed by witnesses and focus-group participants was that the police are unlikely to act in response to reports from witnesses⁽²⁴⁰⁾, particularly if the violence is not physical⁽²⁴¹⁾, if there is a lack of concrete evidence⁽²⁴²⁾ or if the victim does not confirm the violence and support the investigation⁽²⁴³⁾. One focus-group participant spoke about how if the witness reports intimate partner violence to the police and nothing happens then the victim might become disillusioned and less inclined to take action herself⁽²⁴⁴⁾. A focus-group participant commented in response to a scenario describing psychological and economic violence that the police would 'laugh at you' if you tried to report this⁽²⁴⁵⁾:

'Because it [the situation described in the scenario] is not violence. The police would laugh at you if you told them the boyfriend of my friend is controlling her and her text messages. But when you tell them: 'I saw how he beat her' that's different. I have to do something in that case (female focus-group participant, Germany)'.

Some focus-group participants thought the police could take several hours to arrive at the scene⁽²⁴⁶⁾ and several reports (from different people) might be needed to stimulate a response from the police⁽²⁴⁷⁾. One focus-group participant voiced concern that the perpetrator may just continue with the same behaviour as soon as the police have left⁽²⁴⁸⁾. Some focus-group participants did not believe the consequences would be severe enough for the perpetrator⁽²⁴⁹⁾, viewing judicial sentences as insufficient to deter him from future violence⁽²⁵⁰⁾. In Portugal, another barrier for focus-group participants is the long time that it takes from the reporting stage until the case is solved, with hearings often only taking place 3–4 months after the violence being reported⁽²⁵¹⁾.

Some witnesses and focus-group participants were more positive about the police and judicial system or argued that witnesses should not be deterred from reporting intimate partner violence because they have negative perceptions of the authorities. One witness described how he was initially concerned that the police would not take action, but in fact they responded swiftly, something the interviewee attributed to the involvement of children in the case⁽²⁵²⁾. Another witness accompanied her friend to the police station and recalled how the officers were approachable and good at listening⁽²⁵³⁾. Some participants argued that it is important to report intimate partner violence because this at least generates a record of the violence, which could help the victim in the future if she decides not to report this instance of intimate partner violence but does take action at a later date⁽²⁵⁴⁾. Some focus-group participants argued that negative perceptions of the judicial system should not be generalised⁽²⁵⁵⁾, that

⁽²³⁶⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France and Germany: one support service, one police.

⁽²³⁷⁾ Mentioned by two female witnesses in France.

⁽²³⁸⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in France.

⁽²³⁹⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in France.

⁽²⁴⁰⁾ Mentioned by four witnesses in Germany and France: two women and two men.

⁽²⁴¹⁾ Mentioned by 13 focus-group participants in Germany, France and Portugal: nine women and four men.

⁽²⁴²⁾ Mentioned by two male focus-group participants in Germany.

⁽²⁴³⁾ Mentioned by two female witnesses in France; seven focus-group participants in Germany and Portugal: three women and four men.

⁽²⁴⁴⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in France.

⁽²⁴⁵⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Germany.

⁽²⁴⁶⁾ Mentioned by three male focus-group participants in Germany.

⁽²⁴⁷⁾ Mentioned by two focus-group participants in France: one woman and one man.

⁽²⁴⁸⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in Germany.

⁽²⁴⁹⁾ Mentioned by three focus-group participants in Germany and France: one woman and two men.

⁽²⁵⁰⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in Portugal.

⁽²⁵¹⁾ Mentioned by two female focus-group participants in Portugal.

⁽²⁵²⁾ Mentioned by one male witness in Germany.

⁽²⁵³⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in France.

⁽²⁵⁴⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in France; three focus-group participants in Portugal: one woman and two men.

⁽²⁵⁵⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Portugal.

choosing not to report intimate partner violence only prevents the system from improving ⁽²⁵⁶⁾, or that reporting should be driven by a sense of duty or citizenship ⁽²⁵⁷⁾.

3.4.3. The perception of intimate partner violence as being a private matter

Research participants in Germany, France and Portugal identified that the perception that intimate partner violence is a private matter can be a barrier to witnesses reporting it. This factor is discussed most often in relation to the neighbourhood environment, but also in relation to the friendship and family environment and the workplace environment.

The perception that intimate partner violence is a private matter is rarely mentioned in relation to the friendship and family environment ⁽²⁵⁸⁾. One focus-group participant commented that a romantic relationship of a friend is that friend's 'business' and not something the participant would get involved in ⁽²⁵⁹⁾:

'This is her business, personally I would advise her. 'Listen, he is subduing you, he takes away your wallet and everything, leave him. Leave him and that's all.' Now if he won't let her go, then we can go with her to file a complaint if it goes further. But for me this is very difficult. I would not intervene personally (male focus-group participant, France).'

However, this is not a widely held view.

The perception that intimate partner violence is a private matter emerges most prominently in relation to the neighbourhood environment ⁽²⁶⁰⁾. One

professional said that this barrier is particularly important for neighbours because they are less likely than friends and family members to have a close relationship with the victim ⁽²⁶¹⁾. According to some professionals, this is linked to the perception of the home as being a private space ⁽²⁶²⁾, a view that is widespread ⁽²⁶³⁾:

'Almost everyone thinks [that intimate partner] violence is a private matter (support-service professional, Germany).'

However, one professional thought this attitude is becoming less prevalent and neighbours are increasingly inclined to intervene:

'I would say that people get more and more involved. Some people will always say nothing because they think that 'it's none of my business' but it's getting rare. People feel more and more concerned by what is happening at their neighbours' house. And this is a godsend for us as well (police professional, France).'

One police officer commented that colleagues in the workplace environment may be reluctant to intervene if they think of intimate partner violence as being a private matter ⁽²⁶⁴⁾. This factor is not discussed in relation to the healthcare and social-care environment. Some focus-group participants described not wanting to intervene in the private sphere as a general barrier not linked to any specific environment ⁽²⁶⁵⁾.

3.4.4. Cultural beliefs and social attitudes

Witnesses and professionals in Portugal mentioned that cultural beliefs about gender roles ⁽²⁶⁶⁾, stereotypes about intimate relationships and a lack of

⁽²⁵⁶⁾ Mentioned by two female focus-group participants in Portugal.

⁽²⁵⁷⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Portugal.

⁽²⁵⁸⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in France.

⁽²⁵⁹⁾ Mentioned by one male focus-group participant in France.

⁽²⁶⁰⁾ Mentioned by eight professionals in Germany and France: one local/national authority, five support service and two police; one witness in Germany: female; two focus-group participants in Germany and France: one man and one woman.

⁽²⁶¹⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: support service.

⁽²⁶²⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in France: one support service and one police officer.

⁽²⁶³⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: support service.

⁽²⁶⁴⁾ Mentioned by one professional in France: police officer.

⁽²⁶⁵⁾ Mentioned by two female focus-group participants in Portugal.

⁽²⁶⁶⁾ Mentioned by five professionals in Portugal: two support service, one police/prosecution, one local/national authority and one other; two witnesses in Portugal: one man and one woman.

recognition of what constitutes violence⁽²⁶⁷⁾ all work against witness support in relation to the friendship and family environment, particularly in reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities⁽²⁶⁸⁾.

In France, witnesses and professionals noted that social pressure can be exerted on the witness by other friends and family members⁽²⁶⁹⁾. One witness spoke about how attitudes of other family members had made it more difficult for her (as an adult) to help her mother to leave her father and report the violence⁽²⁷⁰⁾. This witness described other family members trivialising the violence, blaming the victim for leaving the perpetrator and trying to persuade her to stay. In some circumstances, witnesses may find themselves pitted against other friends and family members who advise the victim to take a different path, putting them in a difficult situation. One professional pointed to traditional or outdated values that may be held by friends or family members, where it is seen as shameful to admit to problems within a marriage⁽²⁷¹⁾.

In Germany, professionals interviewed referred to shame and stigma as a barrier in relation to the friendship and family environment⁽²⁷²⁾. Intimate partner violence can be considered a taboo subject, with victims feeling shame for choosing to enter a relationship with a violent person, or for staying in or returning to that relationship⁽²⁷³⁾. Family members may want to protect the image of the family and therefore not speak up about intimate partner violence⁽²⁷⁴⁾. When they have a personal connection to the violence, family members may be more likely to experience shame than friends, neighbours, co-workers and professionals⁽²⁷⁵⁾:

‘It is shame ... it is too much of a taboo subject. So, they do not admit that it takes places in their family and that they want to act. And the offender is also a family member.

And they would stab him in the back if they reported the violence. And friends and neighbours are not so involved. They don’t have this close relationship and they are more likely to report violence (support-service professional, Germany)‘.

Some focus-group participants in Portugal argued that lack of courage⁽²⁷⁶⁾, but also individualism, deters witnesses from intervening in relation to the neighbourhood environment. This barrier might be overcome if there was a strong community in the neighbourhood and people knew each other, which may be more common in rural areas⁽²⁷⁷⁾. This barrier is not discussed in relation to the workplace environment. One professional in Portugal argued that outdated cultural beliefs around gender roles and violence against women may also influence professionals in the healthcare and social-care environment⁽²⁷⁸⁾.

Participants from France and Portugal discussed how the word ‘reporting’ has negative connotations and might raise questions of negative cultural associations⁽²⁷⁹⁾. French focus-group participants commented on how they could be called ‘snitches’ after reporting intimate partner violence to authorities, a feeling that is shared by one Portuguese professional, who observed the lasting impact that a long-overthrown fascist government has on cultural beliefs⁽²⁸⁰⁾:

‘We cannot forget that we have [only] been living in a democracy for the last 45 years. And, until then, a person who reported was considered a ‘rat’, or a ‘snitch’, to the police. In a sociological perspective, we cannot expect this to change in 2 or 3 days. It might take two or three generations (support-service professional, Portugal)‘.

⁽²⁶⁷⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: other (university); one female witness in Portugal.

⁽²⁶⁸⁾ Mentioned by one other professional (university) in Portugal.

⁽²⁶⁹⁾ Mentioned by one female witnesses in France; one support-service professional in France.

⁽²⁷⁰⁾ Mentioned by one female witness in France.

⁽²⁷¹⁾ Mentioned by one professional in France: support service.

⁽²⁷²⁾ Mentioned by four professionals in Germany: two support service, two police officers.

⁽²⁷³⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: support service.

⁽²⁷⁴⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Germany: police officer.

⁽²⁷⁵⁾ Mentioned by two professionals in Germany: support service.

⁽²⁷⁶⁾ Mentioned by one female focus-group participant in Portugal.

⁽²⁷⁷⁾ Mentioned by four male focus-group participants in Portugal.

⁽²⁷⁸⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: local/national authority.

⁽²⁷⁹⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: support service. Mentioned by three male focus-group participants in France.

⁽²⁸⁰⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: support service.

3.4.5. Limited access to support services

Limited access to or a lack of awareness of how to access support services was identified as a general barrier in France and Portugal.

Access to support services was not discussed by research participants in relation to the friendship and family environment, the workplace environment or the healthcare and social-care environment. This factor was discussed by interviewees in relation to the neighbourhood and local community environment. Some interviewees mentioned the geographical proximity of the support services and, in one situation, having the police pass by at the time violence occurred as being relevant⁽²⁸¹⁾.

Access to support services was generally identified as a cross-cutting barrier not specific to any environment. In Portugal, professionals and focus-group participants highlighted the importance of raising awareness about support services, their availability and accessibility⁽²⁸²⁾. In focus groups in France, participants expressed a desire for a hotline and an online reporting platform, both of which already exist⁽²⁸³⁾, demonstrating low awareness of the existence of services⁽²⁸⁴⁾. In Portugal, some professionals and focus-group participants believed there are not enough support services, especially covering night-time availability or in their geographical location, where the eastern-most parts of the country are often neglected⁽²⁸⁵⁾. These participants thought such factors have a significant influence on the availability and willingness of witnesses to help the victim by reporting violence they observe⁽²⁸⁶⁾.

⁽²⁸¹⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: national/local authority; two female witnesses in Portugal.

⁽²⁸²⁾ Mentioned by one professional in Portugal: national/local authority; one female witness in Portugal.

⁽²⁸³⁾ Mentioned by three focus-group participants in France: two women and one man.

⁽²⁸⁴⁾ Mentioned by two female focus-group participants in France.

⁽²⁸⁵⁾ According to the last available data, Portugal has 133 support services and 39 shelters, most of them located in the littoral, often coinciding with the country's largest and better-developed cities. The uneven distribution of support services is another aspect that has been previously pointed out by the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GreVio) (2019) and must be addressed as soon as possible, in order to meet the Istanbul Convention requirements.

⁽²⁸⁶⁾ Mentioned by three professionals in Portugal: two support service and one local/national authority; two focus-group participants in Portugal: one woman and one man.

4. Conclusions

Witnesses need greater knowledge about intimate partner violence, in particular about non-physical violence. They also need the skills to discuss the subject with the victim

Across all environments explored in this report, public awareness of psychological, economic and sexual violence in relationships is lower than public awareness of physical violence. Witnesses are often deterred from supporting victims of psychological, economic and sexual violence because they are not sure what counts as abuse, do not realise that these are criminal offences, or do not believe the police will take their reports seriously.

Witnesses are often reluctant to intervene without the explicit agreement of the victim; this is particularly important for witnesses who are friends and family members. It may therefore be unrealistic to expect witnesses to report intimate partner violence to the authorities without speaking to the victim first to gain their approval, so helping witnesses to have these conversations in a sensitive and constructive way is crucial to help the victim find a way to proceed.

Lack of awareness of support services, as well as a lack of access, hinders reporting of intimate partner violence and support for victims

To be effective, support services need to be accessible and widely known. The research highlighted low awareness of support services for witnesses of intimate partner violence, as well as a lack of access in some Member States. Uneven geographical coverage and restricted opening times made seeking support difficult – for both victims and witnesses.

Witnesses are hesitant to intervene if the victim has not disclosed the violence

The signs of intimate partner violence can be subtle. Witnesses are often uncomfortable with the idea of basing a report to authorities on suspicions alone and seek confirmation. This can include specific signs such as bruises or witnessing the violence with their own eyes, as well as disclosure from the victim. However, there are a wide range of responses witnesses to domestic violence can opt to:

- seek specialist advice on what to do,
- talk to the victim and/or the perpetrator,
- help the victim seek professional support,
- accompany the victim to support services or relevant authorities,
- help the victim report the crime herself,
- report the violence to the police or relevant authorities.

Professionals need clarity on their obligation to report intimate partner violence

Failure to report intimate partner violence where it is mandatory undermines the rule of law. There needs to be greater clarity about how to navigate the tension between the obligation to report intimate partner violence and the obligation to maintain confidentiality. The research highlighted professional obligation as a factor enabling witness reporting of intimate partner violence for those working in health and social care. However, it found that in some Member States professionals in these sectors are deterred from reporting

owing to concerns about patient–client confidentiality and are unaware of their obligation to report.

Victims and witnesses need to be confident that reports of intimate partner violence will be handled with care and that their safety will be ensured

If public campaigns encourage reporting to the police or relevant authorities, steps must be taken to ensure that reports are handled effectively and sensitively. If they are not, campaigns may prove ineffective or even counterproductive. In order to enable witness reporting, witnesses and victims must be confident that witness statements are taken seriously and investigated fully.

The research highlighted the reluctance of witnesses to engage with the police and a perception that reporting is pointless, particularly if the victim does not want the case to be reported to the authorities. Witnesses may be more inclined to help the victim if she reports the violence herself or gives explicit permission for it to be reported (rather than the witnesses reporting it themselves without the victim’s cooperation). Initiatives to make the reporting system easier and less traumatic for victims could have a knock-on effect on witnesses’ willingness to intervene.

Witnesses (particularly when they are friends and family members) are often concerned about the potential for violence to escalate as a result of reporting intimate partner violence to the authorities. Ensuring the safety of the victim in handling the case is therefore key to encouraging witnesses to report intimate partner violence to the authorities.

Witnesses are more likely to support victims if they feel safe and protected

The research highlighted anonymous intimate partner violence reporting as a factor enabling witness reporting of intimate partner violence,

particularly in environments where the witness and victim do not know each other well (e.g. neighbourhood or workplace). Witnesses prefer to report intimate partner violence anonymously partly because they are concerned for their own safety or that of their family. However, at some or all stages of the reporting process in certain Member States, the name and other personal information of the witness may be shared with the perpetrator or victim. A related issue is a lack of clarity and awareness about whether anonymous reporting is an option in a given Member State.

The judicial system should treat all witnesses to intimate partner violence as at risk of violence or intimidation because this is how witnesses see themselves and this perception shapes their behaviour. In 21 Member States, specific measures have been put in place to protect witnesses who report intimate partner violence or give evidence in court. However, the presence of such measures does not cover the entire EU and it is uneven across Member States. In some Member States, protection for witnesses is decided on a case-by-case basis, or is available only when the danger is judged to be severe.

There is a lack of data and evidence about witnesses supporting victims of intimate partner violence

A lack of data and evidence about who supports victims of intimate partner violence and the environments in which this occurs makes it difficult to target initiatives designed to facilitate witness interventions.

The evidence on the environments in which witnesses support victims is anecdotal and points to the following settings: friendship and family, neighbourhood, the workplace and health and social care. This report explores four of these environments in Denmark, Germany, France and Portugal. Consideration needs to be given to the applicability of these environments to other Member States when applying the recommendations of this report.

At the time of writing (summer, 2020), EU-level data on the prevalence of witness reporting of intimate partner violence can only be found in the report entitled 'Special Eurobarometer 449: gender-based violence' ⁽²⁸⁷⁾ and relate to the situation in 2016 (and gender-based violence, rather than specifically intimate partner violence); this information is now outdated. Data on witness reporting of intimate partner violence provided at Member State level are not comprehensive and not comparable because of the different methodologies and definitions used. This makes it difficult for Member States to compare and benchmark their performance.

There is a need for evidence-based measures to enable witnesses to support victims of intimate partner violence

National authorities have put a range of measures in place to make it easier for witnesses to support victims (including by reporting the violence to the authorities), but these measures, particularly public-awareness campaigns, often

lack a clear evidence base and are generally not evaluated.

A lack of robust evaluation of measures limits the understanding of what works, for what groups of witnesses and in what settings, thus restricting opportunities to build on experience, improve and learn from others.

The effectiveness of interventions designed to help witnesses support victims of intimate partner violence would likely be improved by a stronger evidence base to inform their design and implementation. For example, campaigns that strive to change the behaviour of witnesses so that they help the victim could draw on existing research to identify a potential target audience and factors or arguments to which witnesses may be more receptive in particular contexts. They should then design specific messages, highlight negative or positive consequences of their behaviour, and plan how to reach the intended audiences. The implementation and results of these measures should be evaluated to inform their future iterations or new practice.

⁽²⁸⁷⁾ Available at: https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en/data/dataset/S2115_85_3_449_ENG

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Annex: Methodology

Methodology for the desk research

The review of evidence (carried out at the level of the EU and the Member States) was a scoping exercise rather than a systematic review or a rapid evidence assessment. Given the expected uneven evidence base on witness reporting of intimate partner violence across Member States and at the EU level, instead of adopting a fixed procedure, the report relied on the knowledge of national experts guided by a search protocol and data-extraction template. While these tools helped to ensure consistency between outputs, they allowed for flexibility in choosing the search terms and databases most appropriate in the national context. National experts adapted the databases and search terms outlined in the search protocol to the national language or context (see Table A.2). References to resources within the most relevant studies identified through the database search were used to look for other and more recent publications on the subject.

To ensure the search was restricted to relevant studies, exclusion criteria were specified in the search protocol (see Box A.1). National experts were instructed to restrict the search to sources:

- relating to witness reporting of intimate partner violence against women (not reporting by victims, or intimate partner violence more generally);
- relating to intimate partner violence against women;
- relating to adult witnesses of intimate partner violence against women (excluding minor witnesses);
- published in the last 10 years (since 2009).

Initially, the desk research at the EU level was restricted to items published in the last 10 years. However, given the scarcity of evidence, highly relevant work on the subject was included even if the publication date was before 2009. The geographical scope being restricted to the EU, studies from outside the EU (mostly Australia and the United States) were only included if they were highly relevant and filled a gap in the literature identified at the EU and Member State level. Restricting the scope of the desk research to sources utilising the exact definition of intimate partner violence used in this report would have resulted in a prohibitively small number of sources. The review also included sources relating to witness reporting of domestic violence or domestic abuse if it was clear that intimate partner violence fell within the definition of domestic violence or abuse used in these studies (Table A.1).

One of the objectives of the desk research was to map and identify the types of environments in which reporting of intimate partner violence by witnesses most often occurs. An environment in this context was taken to include spaces in which a witness learns about or comes to suspect intimate partner violence (e.g. at home, in the local neighbourhood, at work, at the doctor's surgery), as well as the location of the authorities to whom a report is made (e.g. police station).

Box A.1. Search protocol

Exclusions and restrictions

Evidence on the following topics falls outside the scope of this review.

- Victim reporting of intimate partner violence. Please exclude such studies. There may be some instances where sources relating to intimate partner violence in general (including victims) are relevant, e.g. the legal definition of intimate partner violence and changes in legislation. However, evidence on and approaches to encourage reporting of intimate partner violence should relate to witnesses specifically.
- Studies published before 2009. Please exclude studies published more than 10 years ago, although you may wish to include references to historical change predating this, e.g. changes in legislation.
- Studies relating to children/minors as witnesses of intimate partner violence. The focus is exclusively on adults (18 years of age or older) who report intimate partner violence.
- Studies relating to male victims of intimate partner violence.

Search methodology

This is a scoping exercise rather than a systematic review or a rapid evidence assessment. Sources listed in Table A.1 are indicative only.

Table A.1. List of sources

	Academic literature	Grey literature	Other sources
Database	Lexis/Nexis Academic Web of Knowledge JSTOR	Google Scholar OpenGrey	Google government websites national statistics repositories
Type of source	journal articles books	reports	official statistics policy documents legislative documents

Table A.2. Suggested search terms

Intimate partner violence		Witness reporting		Member State
('violence' OR 'abuse') AND ('partner' OR 'spouse' OR 'husband' OR 'wife' OR 'boyfriend' OR 'girlfriend' OR 'family') AND ('home' OR 'domestic' OR 'intimate' OR 'relationship' OR 'physical' OR 'sexual' OR 'psychological' OR 'economic')	AND	('witness*' OR 'suspect*' OR 'bystand*' OR 'aware' OR 'disclose' OR 'observe' OR 'know' OR 'find out') AND ('report' OR 'tell' OR 'authorit*' OR 'profession*' OR 'case')	AND	('country identifier')

Selection of Member States for the qualitative research

The selection of Member States for the qualitative research was informed by the analysis of existing data, as well as findings from the desk research. The report team compiled a data set of indicators on factors that might influence witness reporting: domestic violence ⁽²⁸⁸⁾ (attitudes towards, knowledge of and willingness to speak up about), support services, gender equality, gender-based violence, confidence in the police, recommendations for changes to national legislation and the presence of measures to facilitate witness reporting of intimate partner violence ⁽²⁸⁹⁾.

Member States were ranked from 1 to 28 on each quantitative indicator (28 being the best performing). For qualitative indicators, 20 points were added for performing well (not having recommendations to improve legislation and having measures in place to facilitate witness reporting of intimate partner violence). A composite score was calculated based on all 12 indicators and an overall rank allocated to each Member State. This composite score was assessed in tandem with other indicators to ensure that a broad mix of Member States was selected for the qualitative research. The report team aimed to include a mix of Member States with different population sizes, geographical regions and dates of accession to the EU.

A shortlist of eight Member States was identified (Denmark, Germany, Ireland, France, Malta, Austria, Portugal and Finland); the choice of the final four (Denmark, Germany, France and Portugal) was based on desk research (a short summary was produced for each shortlisted Member State) and the expertise of the core team.

Definition of reporting

The definition of reporting has evolved over the course of the report. For the first phase of the project (desk research), reporting was defined as ‘informing relevant and competent authorities about the witnesses’ knowledge (or suspicion) of intimate partner violence’. In light of the findings from the desk

research, the report team proposed broadening the definition in recognition of the fact that other actions may lead to the case being reported to the authorities. Five behaviours were identified:

1. doing nothing;
2. talking to the victim and/or the perpetrator;
3. helping the victim in seeking professional support – which could lead to intimate partner violence reporting by the victim, witness or the professionals involved;
4. accompanying the victim to support services or relevant authorities – which could lead to intimate partner violence reporting by the victim, witness or the professionals involved;
5. reporting intimate partner violence to the police or relevant authorities.

Of the spectrum of behaviours outlined above, it was agreed to count 4 and 5 as intimate partner violence reporting.

Methodology for the interviews with witnesses and professionals

A minimum of five professionals and five witnesses meeting the profile described in Table A.3 were interviewed in each Member State. Professionals were recruited from a list of relevant organisations developed as part of the desk research. A two-step approach was followed for the recruitment of witnesses: first, approaching professionals who work with witnesses and other contacts developed in the process of arranging interviews with professionals, wider networks and contacts identified as part of the desk research, and second, using these contacts to invite witnesses who have reported intimate partner violence to step forward and take part in the interviews. A leaflet informing people about the report and encouraging witnesses to step forward was disseminated via contacts in each Member State. In countries where recruitment proved more challenging (France and Germany),

⁽²⁸⁸⁾ Used as a proxy for intimate partner violence.

⁽²⁸⁹⁾ Identified from the desk research.

Table A.3. Recruitment criteria for interviews with professionals and witnesses

Professionals	Witnesses
All interviewees should:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reside and work in the Member State in question work with witnesses reporting intimate partner violence as part of their day-to-day work be knowledgeable about at least one of the environments in which intimate partner violence reporting occurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reside in the Member State in question be aged 18 or over ⁽²⁹¹⁾ have witnessed intimate partner violence have reported (*) intimate partner violence to the relevant authorities in the past 5 years
In each Member State the interviews aimed to include:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least one representative from the police or prosecution service at least one representative from public authorities at least one representative from a support service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least one male witness witnesses from a range of environments

(*) See definition of reporting on p. 67.

national researchers also worked with recruitment agencies ⁽²⁹⁰⁾ to recruit witnesses.

A total of 50 interviews were conducted with witnesses and professionals across the four Member States (Table A.4). Interviews with professionals lasted approximately 45 minutes and interviews with witnesses approximately 60 minutes, although there was some variation according to the nature of the discussion. Interviews were either conducted face to face or over the phone, according to the preference of the interviewee. All interviews were semi-structured according to the topic guides presented in Tables A.7 and A.8. Tables A.5 and A.6 show a detailed breakdown of the interviews with professionals and witnesses.

Table A.4. Number of interviews per Member State

Member State	Interviews of professionals (*)	Interviews of witnesses
Denmark	7	5
Germany	8	5
France	6	5
Portugal	9	5
Total	30	20

(*) Some interviews were conducted with multiple professionals (dyadic or triad interviews); 36 professionals were interviewed in total.

⁽²⁹⁰⁾ Recruitment agencies were screened for those specialising in social research and evaluations in order to ensure that they offered the services most appropriate to the nature of this report.

⁽²⁹¹⁾ The specific group of witnesses who are minors has been intentionally left out of the witness definition by the research team for various reasons. Firstly, the circumstances in which a person under 18 can be considered a witness of intimate partner violence are specific and distinctive, as they are most likely to witness violence experienced and/or perpetrated by their parents/guardians. As a result, the environment/circumstances in which a minor witness reports intimate partner violence and the factors that facilitate their reporting of such violence will likely also be specific and distinctive compared to those faced by other (adult) witnesses. Secondly, recruitment of and conducting research with minor witnesses would require particular considerations and distinctive safeguarding and ethical measures (particularly around obtaining consent and the minor's own ongoing safety and well-being) which it was not feasible to incorporate in this report.

Table A.5. Detailed breakdown of interviews with professionals

	Number of interviews (*)
Police or prosecution service	8
Police	6
Prosecution	2
Support service	16
Shelter	3
Helpline	2
Other NGO or support service	11
National or regional authority	4
National equality body	1
National body for supporting witnesses	1
Municipality or local authority	2
Other	2
Health service	1
University	1
Total	30

(*) Some interviews were conducted with multiple professionals (dyadic or triad interviews); there were 36 interviewees in total.

Table A.6. Detailed breakdown of interviews with witnesses

	Number of interviews
Gender	
Female	15
Male	5
Age	
18-29	2
30-49	10
50+	8
Environment	
Friendship and family	13 (*)
Neighbourhood or local community	6 (*)
Workplace	2
Health and social care	0
Total	20

(*) One interview with a witness covered both the friendship and family environment and the neighbourhood environment.

Table A.7. Topic guide for interviews with professionals

Theme	Main question	Interview questions
Introduction	(The purpose is to introduce the report and find out about the interviewee's role)	<i>Introduce the report and establish consent; explain the discussion should last around 45 minutes and that there are no right or wrong answers: we are just interested in their opinions; emphasise that we will not ask them to comment on specific cases of intimate partner violence, but on the reporting process in general.</i> Can you tell me a bit about yourself and your role in the organisation?
Involvement with witnesses	How does the interviewee work with witnesses of intimate partner violence?	How are you involved in working with witnesses of intimate partner violence in your role? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often do you work with witnesses of intimate partner violence? • In what capacity do you work with witnesses?

Theme	Main question	Interview questions
Involvement with witnesses (continued)	How does the interviewee work with witnesses of intimate partner violence? (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you tell me what types of witnesses you have been working with? • What kinds of settings have generated most of the witnesses you have been working with? <i>Interviewer to prompt, if needed, using environments from the list below:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>friendship and family (a group of people who are related to each other, for example by affinity or emotional connection);</i> ▪ <i>neighbourhood and local community (a group of people who are acquainted with or know each other, for example by living in the same area or sharing similar interests and activities, but who are not a family or friends and who do not share close emotional connection);</i> ▪ <i>workplace (a place where people work, including non-standard forms of employment, such as platform work, and which includes employers, managers and co-workers);</i> ▪ <i>healthcare and social care.</i> • In your experience, what are the motivations of the witnesses you have been working with? <p>What challenges do you face in working with witnesses of intimate partner violence?</p> <p>What helps you overcome these challenges?</p>
The reporting process	What is the intimate partner violence reporting process for witnesses?	<p>Can you talk me through the process by which someone who witnesses intimate partner violence might make a report to the authorities or help the victim to report it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the different steps? • Who is involved, how, and when? • How easy or difficult was the reporting process? <i>Interviewer to probe why.</i> <p>A range of different people might witness intimate partner violence in various settings e.g. friends, family, neighbours and co-workers as well as professionals such as doctors or social workers.</p> <p>In your experience, who would be more or less likely to react (including by reporting the violence to authorities) and why?</p> <p>In your experience, in what settings are witnesses more likely to react (including by reporting the violence to authorities)? <i>Interviewer to wait for a spontaneous answer and prompt, only if needed, using the list below:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>friendship and family,</i> • <i>neighbourhood and local community,</i>

Theme	Main question	Interview questions
The reporting process (continued)	What is the intimate partner violence reporting process for witnesses? (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>workplace,</i> • <i>healthcare and social care,</i> • <i>other (interviewer to probe).</i>
Drivers of and barriers to reporting	What are the drivers of and barriers to witness reporting of intimate partner violence?	<p>Now, I would like you to tell me more about the settings in which reporting occurs. <i>Interviewer to ask about each of the following environments familiar to the interviewee:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>friendship and family,</i> • <i>neighbourhood and local community,</i> • <i>workplace,</i> • <i>healthcare and social care.</i> <p>What are the factors that encourage or enable witnesses to report (or react to) intimate partner violence in [setting]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you please explain how [facilitator] encourages or enables witness reporting of intimate partner violence? • How, if at all, do these factors vary for different groups of witnesses (such as friends, family, neighbours, co-workers, doctors, social workers)? <p>What are the factors that discourage or stop witnesses from reporting (or reacting to) intimate partner violence in [setting]?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you please explain how [barrier] discourages or stops witnesses from reporting? • How, if at all, do these factors vary for different groups of witnesses (such as friends, family, neighbours, co-workers, doctors, social workers)? <p><i>Interviewer to repeat for each relevant environment.</i></p> <p>What, if anything, has been done to address the barriers we discussed by your organisation and more widely in [Member State]?</p> <p>In your opinion, what else might be done to eliminate these barriers and make it easier for witnesses to report (or react to) intimate partner violence?</p> <p><i>If not discussed, probe:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>changes to national policy or legislation,</i> • <i>changes to the police and/or judicial process,</i> • <i>awareness raising / changing social attitudes.</i>

Theme	Main question	Interview questions
Ending	What would the interviewee change and recommend?	<p>What, if anything, would you change about the reporting process in [Member State], if you could?</p> <p>Could you please explain why, and how this could be done?</p> <p>Some people who witness or suspect intimate partner violence may not know what to do. What would you recommend that they do?</p> <p>Do you have anything else to add before we finish the interview?</p> <p><i>Thank interviewee.</i></p>

Table A.8. Topic guidance for interviews with witnesses

Theme	Main question	Interview questions
Introduction, consent	(The purpose is to remind the interviewee of the background to the report and confirm their consent to participate)	<i>Remind witness of the purpose of the report and re-establish consent; explain the interview will take 60 minutes and that there are no right or wrong answers: we are just interested in their opinions; emphasise that we will not ask them to comment on specific cases of violence against women from a current or former partner, but on the reporting process in general.</i>
Relationship with the victim	What was the environment in which the reporting occurred?	<p><i>Interviewer to make small talk to develop a rapport, if not established already.</i></p> <p>Could you tell me your age and about what do you do professionally? Something more about yourself?</p> <p><i>Remind the participant that this interview might involve sensitive topics and that they can stop the interview and leave at any point.</i></p> <p>Could you please tell me what your relationship with the victim was?</p> <p>How did you find out about the violent situation (e.g. the victim disclosed it to you or an incident happened in front of you)?</p> <p>Can you please tell me about the situation, without providing any personal details (such as names, addresses, etc.)?</p> <p>Could you tell me a bit more about the victim's characteristics I mean her age group, whether she was employed or not, whether she had any sort of disability ... (<i>Interviewer to remind the participant that name and other identifiable information are not needed.</i>)</p>
Witnesses' actions and motivations	What were the witnesses' reactions and motivations and the factors affecting their behaviour?	<p>What was your initial reaction once you found out about the situation?</p> <p>Can you please explain what in particular made you feel that way?</p>

Theme	Main question	Interview questions
Witnesses' actions and motivations (continued)	What were the witnesses' reactions and motivations and the factors affecting their behaviour? (Continued)	<p><i>Interviewer to wait for a spontaneous answer and prompt, only if needed, using relevant factors from the list below:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>characteristics of the victim (probe what, if not clear),</i> • <i>clear signs of violence,</i> • <i>relationship with the victim or perpetrator (probe, if not clear),</i> • <i>children involved,</i> • <i>the settings (public v private space),</i> • <i>the type of violence,</i> • <i>the gravity of the violence,</i> • <i>certainty that taking action would (not) make a difference,</i> • <i>(not) knowing where to go or who to contact.</i> <p>What steps, if any, have you taken? Why did you decide to do that?</p> <p><i>Interviewer to wait for a spontaneous answer and prompt, only if needed, using relevant factors from the list below:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>clear signs of violence,</i> • <i>relationship with the victim or perpetrator,</i> • <i>children involved,</i> • <i>the settings (public v private space),</i> • <i>the type of violence,</i> • <i>the gravity of the violence,</i> • <i>certainty that taking action would (not) make a difference,</i> • <i>(not) knowing where to go or who to contact.</i> <p>If not reported: Why did you decide not to report the violence to the police?</p> <p>Would you act similarly if the circumstances were different?</p> <p>Could you please give us some examples of what would make you act differently and how?</p> <p>How do you feel today about not reporting the situation?</p> <p>If reported: Could you please talk me through the process you went through to report this case to the authorities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How easy or difficult was the reporting process? <i>Interviewer to probe why.</i> • How did you feel when reporting the situation?

Theme	Main question	Interview questions
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel today about having reported the situation? • In your opinion, has the fact that you reported the case to authorities made any difference to the victim? Can you please explain how, and why you think so?
Barriers to and facilitators of reporting/ acting	What (if any) barriers and facilitators have they encountered?	<p>Looking back at the reporting process you described [or] actions you took, what, if anything, made it easy/easier for you to act? <i>Interviewer to wait for a spontaneous answer and probe about each factor.</i></p> <p>What were the barriers you encountered when reporting this case [or] taking these actions? <i>Interviewer to wait for a spontaneous answer and probe about each factor.</i></p> <p>Have you been aware of other cases of violence against women from a current or former partner which you have not reported to the authorities?</p> <p>What was different about this case?</p> <p>It would be very helpful for us to understand why you did not decide to report this case – could you tell me more about your reasons, please?</p>
Change	What would they change about the experience, if they could, to make it easier?	<p>If you could change something about the situation(s) that you faced, what would you have done differently?</p> <p>In your experience, what would make it easier for witnesses to report violence against women from a current or former partner to the relevant authorities?</p> <p>Do you have anything else to add before we finish the interview?</p> <p><i>Thank interviewee.</i></p>

Methodology for the focus groups with the general public

Members of the public were recruited to focus groups according to the criteria outlined in Table A.9. Focus groups were structured by gender, with one mixed group, one female-only group and one male-only group in each Member State, reflecting the fact that intimate partner violence is a gendered issue and female and male participants may feel more comfortable in a same-gender group. Witnesses who had not reported intimate partner violence were included in the groups because their perspective was important for us to understand barriers to reporting intimate partner violence. National researchers worked with recruitment agencies and/or civil society organisations in each of the four Member States to recruit focus-group participants.

Three 90-minute focus groups were conducted with members of the general public in each of the

Table A.9. Recruitment criteria for focus groups

All participants should:
reside in the Member State in question
be aged 18 or over
In each focus group there should be:
an approximately equal split according to gender (in the mixed focus group only)
an age mix among participants
at least two participants who have witnessed but not reported (*) intimate partner violence

(*) See definition of reporting on p. 67.

four Member States (12 focus groups in total). A total of 86 participants took part, with an approximately equal split between men and women (Table A.10).

Table A.10. Focus-group participants by gender, age and whether they have witnessed but not reported intimate partner violence

	DK			DE			FR			PT		
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	3
Gender												
Female	n/a	5	8	n/a	3	6	n/a	4	4	n/a	5	7
Male	10	3	n/a	6	3	n/a	7	4	n/a	8	3	n/a
Total	10	8	8	6	6	6	7	8	4	8	8	7
Age												
18-29	0	1	1	1	1	0	2	3	1	5	2	2
30-49	5	3	3	2	3	2	2	5	1	2	5	5
50+	5	4	4	3	2	4	3	0	2	1	1	0
Total	10	8	8	6	6	6	7	8	4	8	8	7
Witness (*)												
Yes	3	3	2	1	2	0	0	2	1	8	6	6
No	7	5	6	5	4	6	7	6	3	0	2	1
Total	10	8	8	6	6	6	7	8	4	8	8	7

(*) Indicates individuals who have witnessed and not reported intimate partner violence.

NB: 1 = male-only focus group; 2 = mixed focus group; 3 = female-only focus group.

Focus-group discussions were semi-structured according to the topic guide presented in Table A.11. The discussion was structured around hypothetical scenarios to tease out attitudes and likely behaviours, as well as the enablers of and

barriers to witness reporting. This approach was selected to enable participants to discuss these issues without drawing on personal experiences, which could be distressing, identifying or introduce a social desirability bias.

Table A.11. Topic guide for focus groups

Theme	Main question	Interview questions
Introduction	<p>(The purpose is to explain how the group will work and to get everyone to say something in a safe way)</p> <p><i>Moderators to keep reminding and stopping people from sharing personal information or experiences</i></p>	<p><i>Introduce yourself/yourself and the report and remind participants about anonymity/confidentiality and audio recording; explain the discussion should last around 90 minutes and that there are no right or wrong answers: we are just interested in their opinions; encourage them to debate, discuss, and feel free to agree and disagree with what others say but be respectful and do not interrupt others; ask participants:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>not to comment on specific cases of intimate partner violence or their personal experiences;</i> <i>not to share any information that is private or would cause harm if disclosed;</i> <i>not to talk about what happened in the group discussion.</i> <p>We'll just do some quick introductions around the table. I would like you to say your name, your age and what you like to do to relax [or] your plans for next weekend so we get to know each other better. <i>Moderator(s) to start off.</i></p> <p>As you are already aware this report is about violence against women from a current or former partner. Can you tell me what first springs to mind when you hear this topic?</p>
Barriers and driving factors	<p>How much is needed for participants to respond to suspected intimate partner violence?</p> <p>What are the reasons why they choose to intervene or not?</p>	<p>I have some different scenarios about which I would like to hear your opinion and what you might do (or not do) if you found yourself in a similar situation. Here is the first one – I will read it out loud.</p> <p><i>(Everyone gets a printed copy of the scenario; moderator reads out loud.)</i></p> <p>We would like to understand how difficult it would be for you to report this situation to the police or relevant authorities. Please raise your hands with one or more fingers: one finger means very easy and five means almost impossible. We will discuss it in a moment but we just want first impressions. There are no right answers! We will add up the fingers now.</p> <p>How would you react in this situation and why?</p>

Theme	Main question	Interview questions
Barriers and driving factors (continued)	<p>How much is needed for participants to respond to suspected intimate partner violence?</p> <p>What are the reasons why they choose to intervene or not? (Continued)</p>	<p><i>Moderators to prompt from the list below, if some factors do not come up spontaneously:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>clear signs of violence,</i> • <i>relationship with the involved victim or perpetrator,</i> • <i>children involved,</i> • <i>the settings (public v private space),</i> • <i>the type of violence,</i> • <i>the gravity of the violence,</i> • <i>characteristics of the victim (probe what, if not clear),</i> • <i>certainty that taking action would (not) make a difference,</i> • <i>(not) knowing where to go or who to contact.</i> <p>We can change some elements in this scenario. In what circumstances, if any, would you take action [or] report intimate partner violence to the police or relevant authorities if one of these factors was different:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clearer signs of violence, • relationship with the victim or perpetrator, • children involved, • another type of setting (specify which one), • the type of violence, • the gravity of the violence, • characteristics of the victim (probe what, if not clear), • certainty that taking action would make a difference, • knowing where to go or who to contact? <p><i>If some participants would still not report the violence:</i></p> <p>Can you tell me why you don't necessarily think that one should report intimate partner violence in this situation?</p> <p>What specifically would be challenging in the situation?</p> <p><i>Moderator to probe why.</i> <i>(This is repeated three times – once for each scenario)</i></p>

Theme	Main question	Interview questions
	<p>In what situations and environments are people most likely to react?</p> <p>In what situations and environments are people most likely to report intimate partner violence to authorities?</p>	<p>Now I would like to ask you to rate the three scenarios on a scale.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do nothing. 2. Talk to the victim and/or the perpetrator. 3. Help the victim in seeking professional support (e.g. supply information about a hotline, women's shelter, healthcare services), which could lead to reporting by the victim, witness or the professionals involved. 4. Accompany the victim to support services or relevant authorities (women's shelter, the police, healthcare service), which could lead to reporting by the victim, witness or the professionals involved. 5. Report it to the police or relevant authorities. <p><i>(The scale is provided beforehand and the scenarios are printed so each participant can rate them on the scale independently.)</i></p> <p>Now, I would like you all to work together in order to place the three situations on one scale – can you agree on where the different scenarios should be placed? Discuss it together and see if you can agree on a common version.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the main points of agreement and disagreement? • You indicated that you would react to xx, but not to yy. What made the difference? <i>Moderator to wait for spontaneous answers.</i> • Does anyone have a different opinion? <i>Moderator to probe how different and why.</i>
Ending	<p>What do the participants themselves have to say about what can be done?</p>	<p>Do you have any suggestions on what could make it easier for you to respond/react when you find out about or suspect violence against women from a current or former partner? <i>Moderator to wait for spontaneous answers.</i></p> <p>Could you please explain how this could make a difference?</p> <p>Do you have anything else to add before we terminate the discussions?</p> <p><i>Remind participants not to talk about what happened in the group discussion, except if they are distressed and look for support.</i></p> <p><i>Distribute information about support services, if needed.</i></p> <p><i>Thank participants.</i></p>

Scenarios for focus groups

Table A.12. Characteristics of three scenarios

Environment	Relationship		Setting		Severity of violence		Type of violence	
	Close	Not close	Public	Private	High	Medium	Physical	Psychological
Friends and family	yes			yes		yes		yes
Neighbourhood and local community		yes	yes	yes	yes		yes	
Workplace	yes			yes	yes		yes	yes

1. Friends and family

Emma and Louise are in their mid 20s and have been best friends since high school. Boys and relationships have always been a natural part of their conversations. About a year ago Emma started going out with Peter. Louise hasn't met him yet, but Emma has been more distracted and cancelled a few appointments lately. Last time they saw each other Emma mentioned that Peter is a bit jealous and likes to know where she is whenever she is not with him. She also asked Louise to pay for the drinks, as she apparently forgot her wallet.

One evening Louise and her boyfriend come to Emma's place for dinner and to finally meet Peter. The conversation flows naturally across the table. After a while Emma asks Peter for a second helping. To this, he replies: 'You don't need more.' The situation gets tense and awkward, and Emma just sits and looks down at the table. Louise's boyfriend tries to lift the mood again and tells a story that shifts the focus from the situation.

Later in the evening, Louise and Emma talk about a trip they took together many years ago. Their boyfriends (who have had their own conversation running) hear that they have agreed to arrange a new trip. Louise's boyfriend immediately seems supportive, while Emma's boyfriend instantly says that this trip is not a good idea and does not seem open to any further discussion about the matter.

Later that same month Emma turns up at Louise's work out of nowhere and when Louise says hi Emma starts crying and slowly begins to talk. 'He took out a bank loan in my name – how can he do this?' This is just the beginning of Emma confiding in Louise about how Peter is constantly controlling her by reading all her text messages, wanting her to stay at home and update him about every move she makes, telling her what to wear and eat and what not to wear and eat. And finally, about how he often keeps her wallet as one way of making her stay at home – like that one time at the bar when Louise paid for their drinks.

2. Neighbourhood

Maria moved to a new apartment a month ago. There is a couple, a man and a woman, living in a flat upstairs. They are in their 30s and have a small child. They meet Maria on the stairs and greet her when they see her. They both seem nice, but Maria doesn't know them well. One day the woman comes to Maria's apartment to borrow some sugar and while having a small talk it turns out the woman has learning difficulties and has been without a job for a while now.

One Saturday afternoon Maria and her friends are sitting in the park across from her apartment enjoying the good weather. They have found a spot by a tree that is somewhat shielded from other people in the park. By the tree, there

are only Maria's friends and suddenly she realises that a man and woman sitting nearby are her neighbours.

As Maria and her friends sit and talk for some time, she notices that her neighbours have started a heated discussion. She picks up small snippets from the conversation that suggest the man is jealous. Maria can't help but notice that the man is yelling disrespectfully at the woman. The woman, however, seems very ashamed and apologetic towards Maria's company in the park.

Maria keeps an eye on her neighbours, while the man's temper has intensified as he is yelling even more. The man begins to hold the woman's arm tight, which is clearly against the woman's will. Her face no longer exhibits shamefulness but rather anxiety and frustration. The woman begins to twist her hand to free it but to no avail. The man pushes the woman hard and she falls to the ground. Afterwards, the woman makes a quick exit from the park leaving the man behind.

Time passes and Maria tries to forget the day at the park, but occasionally she hears sounds from the flat above, which makes her wonder. It sounds as if something violent is going on, something is knocked over, and there might be hitting involved. She can hear a low-pitched cry among the violent sounds and sometimes she even hears screams. Maria is worried that the woman is being subjected to violence.

3. Workplace

Michael is working in an office. One of his close colleagues is Caroline (a 55-year-old woman) who he worked with for many years. She is usually a sociable and fun woman and they often talk about everyday stuff. Caroline got divorced 10 years ago and a few years ago she met someone and now has a new partner, Johannes. Michael has noticed that Caroline has somewhat changed behaviour since she met him. She seems less focused on work and distances herself from her colleagues. Somehow, she is also always really tired.

One afternoon Caroline seems distracted and her phone rings twice. Later everyone gathers for a social event, but Michael notices that Caroline is talking on the phone instead. She leaves without saying goodbye and Michael sees that Johannes picks her up. The day after Michael asks Caroline what happened, to which Caroline answers, 'It's just Johannes.' This same situation seems to happen more and more often. Whenever they have social events Caroline's phone rings all the time during the day, and it's been a while since Caroline actually attended one of these events (having previously been the first to organise and attend them).

Michael has also noticed that it is more or less a standard procedure that Johannes picks her up from work. More than once Michael noticed bruises on Caroline's arm. The first time he didn't ask about it, but the second time he did, and she seemed embarrassed and explained that she tripped on the stairs. For the launch of one of her important projects Caroline showed up to work with a black eye laughing and talking about how clumsy she is sometimes.

Analysis of qualitative data

Qualitative analysis (and specifically cross-sectional and thematic analysis ⁽²⁹²⁾) was used to identify recurring factors that affect witness reporting of intimate partner violence. Codes emerged from the interview transcripts rather than being defined in advance based on the topic guide or prior assumptions: national researchers carefully read the transcripts, identified text segments that related to specific environments and assigned appropriate codes to each relevant segment (e.g. presence of children, type of violence). Codes were then used to structure the analysis within each and across all four Member States (Table A.13). Table A.14 shows the distribution of codes across environments and Member States for the interviews and focus groups.

⁽²⁹²⁾ In cross-sectional analysis all interviews are analysed together providing common sets of codes that are identified and compared across the whole data set. Thematic analysis examines themes or patterns of meaning within data.

Table A.13. Codes used in the analysis

Code	Description
Evidence	Comments about the degree of confidence or certainty about the situation being a case of intimate partner violence; discussion of signs and signals or other ways in which intimate partner violence was or could be confirmed
Victim cooperation and consent	Comments about the views, wishes and behaviour of the victim
Relationship between the victim and the witness	Comments about the nature of the relationship between the victim and the witness and the degree of closeness between the two
The involvement of children	Comments on the presence of children in the household
Fear of repercussions	Comments about the potential negative implications of reporting for the witness or their family, often concerns about safety
Fear of escalation of violence	Comments about the potential for violence against the victim to escalate
Understanding and awareness	Comments about the extent to which people are aware of and knowledgeable about intimate partner violence at both the individual and/or societal level and/or how to raise awareness and improve knowledge and understanding
Characteristics of the victim	Comments on the personal or demographic characteristics of the victim, e.g. age, gender, personality
Characteristics of the witness	Comments on the personal or demographic characteristics of the witness, e.g. age, gender, personality
Perceptions of the police and/or judicial system	Comments on the process of reporting intimate partner violence to the police or the case being investigated or prosecuted
The gravity and type of violence	Comments about the type of intimate partner violence (physical, psychological, economic, sexual, etc.) and/or the perceived gravity or seriousness of the violence
Perception of intimate partner violence as a private matter	Comments on the perception of intimate partner violence as a private matter
Professional obligation	Comments about the obligation of professionals to report intimate partner violence
Anonymous reporting	Comments about the degree to which reporting is anonymous and the method(s) through which anonymous reporting might be achieved
Cultural beliefs and social attitudes	Comments about the influence of cultural beliefs and social attitudes surrounding intimate partner violence and gender-based violence more broadly
Limited access to support services	Comments about the availability of support services, whether at national or local level
Civic duty and obligation	Comments about the obligation of members of the public to report intimate partner violence, whether formally (based on legislation) or informally (based on social norms and cultural attitudes)

Table A.14. Distribution of codes across environments and Member States for the interviews and focus groups

	Friendship and family			Neighbourhood			Workplace			Healthcare and social care			General		
	W	P	FG	W	P	FG	W	P	FG	W	P	FG	W	P	FG
Evidence	DK DE FR	DK FR	DK DE FR	DK DE FR PT	DK FR PT	DK DE FR PT	DK PT	DK PT	DK DE PT						
Victim cooperation and consent	DK DE FR PT	DK DE FR PT	DK DE FR PT	DK DE PT		DE FR PT		DK	DK DE FR PT			FR		FR	
Relationship between the victim and the witness	DK DE PT	DK DE PT	DK DE FR PT	DE PT	DE PT	DK DE FR		DE FR	DK PT		DK				
The involvement of children	DK DE FR PT	DK DE FR PT		DK DE PT	DK	DK DE FR			DE PT	DK	DK				
Fear of repercussions	DE FR PT	DE FR PT		DK PT	DK DE FR PT	DK DE FR PT	PT	PT							
Fear of escalation of violence	DE PT	DE PT	DE PT			DE PT			FR PT						
Understanding and awareness	DK DE FR	DK DE FR PT	FR	DE FR	FR	FR	DK	FR PT		DK	DK FR			PT	PT
Characteristics of the victim													DK		DK DE FR PT
Characteristics of the witness														PT	FR PT
Perceptions of the police and/or judicial system													DE FR	DK DE FR PT	DE FR PT

	Friendship and family			Neighbourhood			Workplace			Healthcare and social care			General		
	W	P	FG	W	P	FG	W	P	FG	W	P	FG	W	P	FG
The gravity and type of violence													DK	DK	DK DE FR PT
Perception of intimate partner violence as a private matter			FR	DE	DE FR	DE FR		FR							PT
Professional obligation							DE			DK	DK DE FR PT				
Anonymous reporting					DE FR	FR PT			DE FR				FR PT	DE FR PT	DE PT
Cultural beliefs and social attitudes	FR PT	DE FR PT				PT						PT		PT	FR PT
Limited access to support services				PT	PT								PT	PT	FR PT
Civic duty and obligation													PT	PT	PT

Strengths and limitations of the qualitative research

The findings outlined in this report are based on a small number of interviews and focus groups; they are not intended to offer a representative or exhaustive picture of the views of witnesses, professionals and members of the general public in each Member State. If a factor (enabler or barrier)

is not mentioned in relation to an environment or Member State this does not necessarily mean it is not relevant to that context, only that it was not a factor highlighted by participants.

Although interviewees (witnesses and professionals) were recruited from a range of environments and witnesses and focus-group participants were mixed in gender and age, it is important to recognise that the report is blind to participants'

other characteristics such as ethnicity or religion, which may also affect perceptions and experiences of reporting intimate partner violence.

Focus-group discussions offer the advantage of allowing participants to debate, discuss and challenge one another. However, this can also introduce a source of social desirability bias if participants feel that others in the group, including the moderator, may expect or prefer a certain type of response, and this influences the nature of their contribution to the discussion. We

attempted to mitigate this challenge by reassuring participants upfront that there was no 'right' or 'wrong' answer and that they were welcome to disagree with one another. The possibility of social desirability bias was also addressed by asking participants to discuss hypothetical scenarios rather than recount personal experiences. The principle behind this is that participants may be less concerned about social judgement when answering hypothetically than when commenting on their own behaviour.

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