

The role of the judiciary in administrative data collection on intimate partner violence

Why do we need administrative data on intimate partner violence?

Intimate partner violence is a recurrent form of violence affecting women in the European Union. Efforts to combat this form of violence require an understanding of its scale and nature, through reliable, systematic and comparable data.

Data is necessary to measure the prevalence and consequences of such violence, to monitor state responses to it and to evaluate policies combating it. The requirement for high quality administrative data is also in line with Member States' international commitments of Member States to fight violence against women, as defined in Directive 2012/29/EU (the Victims' Rights Directive) and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention).

What is the role of the judiciary?

Data collected by the justice sector is necessary for understanding how efficient and effective the criminal justice system is in dealing with perpetrators of intimate partner violence, and in protecting victims. Incidents reported to the police only provide partial information on the phenomenon, and this data becomes more concrete and reliable as cases progress through the criminal justice chain. Data from the justice sector is also very important in addressing two main pillars of the Istanbul Convention, protection and prosecution.

Main challenges for data collection

■ Lack of a unified system to record data on intimate partner violence collected by the different institutions of the judiciary

Different institutions of the judiciary often use different systems and procedures to record data on cases related to intimate partner violence. This hinders the collec-



tion of harmonised and reliable data on the phenomenon, both within and between Member States. The units of measurement used across justice sectors also greatly vary, limiting data comparability.

■ Severe lack of statistical data from the justice sector, especially on victims and their relationship with the perpetrator

Data recorded by the police is more detailed and thorough than data recorded by the justice sector, which is mainly focused on perpetrators and lacks information on victims. There is also a greater lack of information recorded on the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator. This makes it difficult to trace cases of intimate partner violence against women, and determine the number of women victims. Court services also tend to focus data collection on procedural information. This results in very general statistics which are only broken down by offence categories.

■ Poor recording procedures, systems and training

Often, case-related information is recorded by hand, undermining efforts to improve the statistical processing of justice data and resulting in little standardisation across data collection systems. Furthermore, staff in the justice sector often deal with complex cases on paper, and the amount of information recorded often depends on their level of awareness.

■ Diversity of protection orders issued in cases of intimate partner violence

Protection orders can be issued at different stages of the proceedings and by different bodies, limiting comparability of information within and between Member States. In some cases, protection orders are issued under a wider category of 'domestic violence', or under other categories which do not adequately cover the scope of intimate partner violence.

■ Limited human, physical, and financial resources in the criminal justice sector

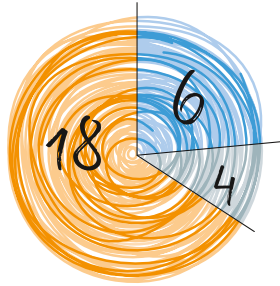
In some Member States, relevant data is collected by the different justice services, yet they lack the human, physical, and financial resources to process and analyse it. These are large barriers to standardised and comparable statistical data on intimate partner violence. Competing areas of interest also present obstacles for initiatives that specifically focus on intimate partner violence.

■ Limited cooperation and coordination between the police and justice sectors

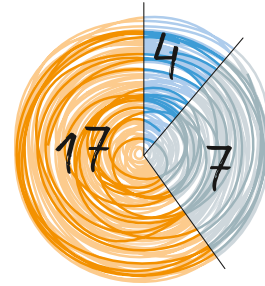
There is a lack of coordination in data collection across different phases of the criminal justice process, which limits the traceability of cases throughout the proceedings and increases differences in recording practices.

To support Member States in reporting on intimate partner violence under the Victims' Rights Directive and the Istanbul Convention, the European Institute for Gender Equality has developed four indicators based on uniform statistical definitions that should be populated with data collected by the judiciary.

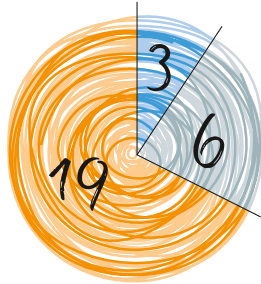
1. Annual number of protection orders applied for and granted in cases of intimate partner violence against women by type of court



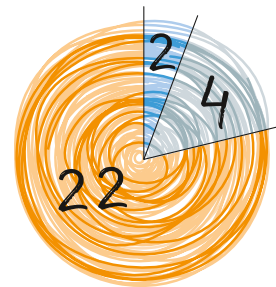
2. Annual number of men (aged 18 and over) prosecuted for intimate partner violence against women (1)



3. Annual number of men (aged 18 and over) sentenced for intimate partner violence against women (2)



4. Annual number of men (aged 18 and over) sentenced for intimate partner violence against women and held in prison or with a sanction involving a form of deprivation of liberty (2)



- Number of Member States that can populate with exact data
- Number of Member States that can partly populate the indicator using approximate data
- Number of Member States that cannot populate the indicator

(1) The UK has three different jurisdictions, each with their own data collection processes: England and Wales (EW), Northern Ireland (NI) and Scotland (SC). Approximate data is available for the UK: EW and SC can partly populate the indicator using approximate data, NI cannot populate the indicator.
 (2) Approximate data is available for the UK: EW and NI cannot populate the indicator, SC can partly populate the indicator using approximate data.

Step by step recommendations

STEP 1: Finding common ground

It is necessary to select the offences that would form the basis for administrative data collection on intimate partner violence. A full mapping of these offences in each country, in line with the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), is a vital first step for making data comparable across the EU.

STEP 2: Recording the necessary information

To increase data comparability, it is important for the judiciary to provide the same breakdowns, in particular the relationship between the victim and the

perpetrator as well as their sex. It is recommended that all Member States that cannot provide full data adapt their recording systems so as to provide information on all offences across their national legislation including all the necessary breakdowns. This would also provide data on the different forms of intimate partner violence, creating a more complete picture of this phenomenon.

STEP 3: Publishing data and metadata

Few countries make data publicly available with the breakdowns needed to monitor the response to intimate partner violence. It is recommended that Member States invest in the publication of data, ideally in the form of dynamic databases or detailed cross tabulations. Considering the diversity of crime statistics across the EU, this should be accom-

panied with metadata in order to make it usable. EIGE has proposed a reporting tool which will be useful in this regard, as it will inform stakeholders on the type of metadata to provide.

STEP 4: Creating synergies between the police and the justice sector

In order to fully assess initiatives to combat intimate partner violence, it is important that the police and justice sectors come together to provide reliable and complementary data. An efficient way of doing so is by integrating databases and recording systems throughout the criminal justice chain. This will create synergies, overcome comparability challenges and discrepancies in recording practices, and it will also eliminate the duplication of work for the justice sector.

European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is the EU knowledge centre on gender equality. EIGE supports policymakers and all relevant institutions in their efforts to make equality between women and men a reality for all Europeans by providing them with specific expertise and comparable and reliable data on gender equality in Europe.

Contact details