



European Crime Prevention Network

European Crime Prevention Monitor

2013/2

Measuring and tackling domestic violence in the EU

**With the contributions of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
(FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)**

EUCPN Secretariat, March 2014, Brussels



With the financial support of the Prevention of and Fight against Crime Programme of the European Union
European Commission – Directorate-General Home Affairs

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Abstract

In this fourth European Crime Prevention Monitor report, the focus is put on the main theme of the Lithuanian Presidency "Prevention in Domestic Violence". Since this is an important topic, which is closely monitored by various organizations at the EU level, external contributions were made to this report by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). In their contributions they highlight their work and the recent efforts they have done to improve data collection and information exchange on domestic violence against women at the European level. Furthermore, based on the 2012 country report of Women against Violence Europe (WAVE), an overview is given on which type of data (survey data, national criminal and criminal justice data and healthcare system statistics) are collected and made publically available within the EU Member States. Also, some results of the 1999 and 2010 surveys of the Eurobarometer – and of the recently published FRA data – are discussed on the knowledge of European citizens on the existence of policy and legal measures to prevent and combat domestic violence against women in their country and at the EU level. In a final paragraph, some challenges related to the existing data and data collection on domestic violence are listed.

Citation

EUCPN (2014). European Crime Prevention Monitor 2013/2: Measuring and tackling domestic violence in the EU. Brussels: European Crime Prevention Network.

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Table of contents

Introduction.....	4
1. Data on domestic violence in the EU	5
2. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) – First survey data on the prevalence of violence against women across the EU	9
2.1. Background to the FRA survey	9
2.2. Obstacles to reliable comparisons between existing surveys	10
2.3. Measuring violence against women	10
2.4. FRA survey	11
3. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE): How do Member States tackle Domestic Violence?	13
3.1. Domestic Violence	13
3.2. Legislative and policy framework in the European Union.....	14
3.3. National Action Plans	17
3.4. Criminal laws	18
3.5. Protective orders	19
3.6. Policies and actions: focus on prevention.....	20
3.7. Training on prevention of domestic violence	21
3.8. Awareness-raising	22
3.9. Perpetrators programmes.....	23
3.10. Conclusions and references	24
4. Eurobarometer: citizens’ perceptions on domestic violence in Europe.....	26
4.1. Awareness of the existence of legal measures on domestic violence against women in the Member States	26
4.2. Perceptions on involvement of the EU in combating domestic violence against women	32
Challenges related to data on domestic violence.....	35
Conclusions	36
References and recommended further reading	38
Annex: Summary characteristics of the data used	42

Introduction

As shown in the most recently published EUCPN Toolbox, domestic violence and violence against women remain high priorities on the EU and Member States' policy agendas (EUCPN, 2013). Reports from, for example, the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE, 2012; 2013) and Women against Violence Europe (WAVE, 2013a) have shown that most EU Member States have implemented (at least some) policies and legislation, and established victims' support services, shelters, etc. to prevent and combat domestic violence (against women).

Available figures show the seriousness of (domestic) violence, especially against women. The first EU-wide survey on violence against women by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) shows that one in five women (22%) in the EU have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a partner. Overall, 43% of women indicated that they have experienced one or more forms of psychological violence by their current or previous partner, and one in ten women (9%) said that their previous partner had stalked them (FRA, 2014a). Most perpetrators of violence against women are men in the immediate environment, such as partners and ex-partners (WAVE, 2013b). This means that measures to prevent and combat this type of violence are far from trivial. In order for policymakers to take the right steps to protect victims of domestic violence, they need to be able to rely on data related to the prevalence of various types of domestic violence (e.g., physical, psychological, sexual), on police reporting, the number of convictions, etc.

As this fourth monitor report will show, there already exist various initiatives in the EU and its Member States to collect at least some basic data related to domestic or intimate partner violence. However, despite these efforts, a lot of gaps remain in the quality and reliability of these data. Moreover, there is also a lack of international comparable data on violence against women and domestic violence, due to differences in definitions and types of violence covered, differences in methodologies, in time frame, sample characteristics, etc. (see e.g. WAVE, 2013a).

On the other hand, various organisations at the EU level are doing serious efforts to overcome some of these issues. In this fourth monitor report, the work of some of these organisations is highlighted. The efforts done by WAVE in their 2012 Country Report, are briefly discussed in paragraph 2 of this report, since they have made a thorough study of which data are collected and available within each Member State. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) have written a (short) contribution for this monitor report themselves. Paragraphs 2 and 3 of this report, therefore, will highlight their specific work and the efforts they are doing to improve data collection and information exchange on domestic violence against women at the European level.

Finally, the results of two Eurobarometer surveys are discussed. The surveys, which were conducted in 1999 and 2010, concerned people's perceptions and knowledge on the existence of policy and legal measures to prevent and combat domestic violence against women in their country and at the EU level. Although many Member States have taken various measures, the general public does not always seem to be aware of this, which may mean that some people do not know where to go when they are confronted with cases of domestic violence, either as a victim, witness or perpetrator.

1. Data on domestic violence in the EU

Generally, data on domestic violence, violence against women or intimate partner violence in most EU Member States consist of prevalence rates from survey research, national crime statistics, i.e. police reports, and/or data from the criminal justice system, e.g. conviction rates. However, since definitions on domestic violence and methods of data collection vary widely across Member States, it is impossible to make any statement about, for example, the prevalence of domestic violence in the EU or to compare countries.

For their 2012 Country Report, WAVE conducted a study on the existence of prevalence and administrative data on domestic violence and intimate partner violence in 46 countries, including all the EU Member States. They also examined in more detail whether or not the data are collected on a regular basis, whether they are publically available and whether they are disaggregated by age, gender and relationship between victim and perpetrator. The Country Report with the results of this study and detailed country profiles is fully downloadable on the WAVE website¹.

The information collected by WAVE showed that, with the exception of Cyprus and Latvia, all other EU Member States have conducted at least one **prevalence survey** on (domestic) violence against women or intimate partner violence since 2000. Some countries, such as the Netherlands or the UK, are collecting these prevalence data even on a very regular basis. Luxembourg, which was included in the *European Crime and Safety Survey* (ICVS) in 2005, has prevalence rates of various crime types (including sexual crimes and assaults and threats committed by a known person), but no specific data collection on domestic violence or violence against women. The results of the ICVS have been shown to severely underestimate women's experiences of violence, compared to dedicated violence against women surveys.

National criminal statistics, or police records, on domestic violence and/or intimate partner violence are generally collected. Only in 8² of the 28 Member States (see table 1 below), there is a clear distinction between domestic violence – generally referring to violence in a domestic context, regardless of the type of relationship between victim and perpetrator – and intimate partner violence, which specifically refers to violence between current or former partners.

In most countries, police statistics on domestic violence are registered, without specifying the relationship between victim and perpetrator. In some countries, such as Finland, France or Italy, national crime statistics on domestic violence are very limited.

¹ To read the full report, see: <http://www.wave-network.org/sites/default/files/WAVE%20COUNTRY%20REPORT%202012.pdf>

² Belgium, Germany, Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Luxembourg, Latvia and Portugal.

MS*	Prevalence study	National criminal statistics (police)**	National criminal justice statistics (court)	Healthcare system statistics
AT	2011 - survey publically available; findings available in German.	On DV - publically available No data on IPV	Not publically available	On a small-scale, not on the national level
BE	1998 & 2010 - survey publically available; findings available in Flemish, French & English	On DV & IPV - publically available	Not publically available	No statistics collected
BG	2009 - not publically available	Not publically available	Not publically available	No statistics collected
CY	No	On DV - publically available No data on IPV	Not publically available	No statistics collected
CZ	2004 - survey publically available; findings available in Czech + German & English summaries	On DV - publically available No data on IPV	Publically available upon request	No info
DE	2003 - survey publically available + English summary of findings available	On DV & IPV - publically available	No info	Data on contact with health care services as due to violence inflicted to women
DK	2003 - survey publically available	On VAW - not publically available	No info	No info
EE	2001, 2003, 2005 & 2010 - survey publically available; findings available in Estonian + English summary	On DV - Not publically available No data on IPV	No info	Data in ambulances but not on the national level
EL	2003 - survey publically available; findings available in Greek + English summary	On DV - publically available upon request No data on IPV	Publically available upon request	No statistics collected
ES	2012 - survey publically available; findings available in Spanish only	On DV & IPV - publically available	Publically available	Data on type of violence and injuries. For 2008-2009 information on the national level; later not on the national level
FI	1998 & 2006 - English summary of findings available	Only data on call to the police related to DV available	No info	No info
FR	2000 - findings available in French	No data on DV or IPV collected on a regular basis; only on homicides in intimate partnerships	Publically available to a limited extent	No info
HR	2002, 2003, 2004, 2008 & 2009 - survey publically available; findings available in Croatian	On DV & IPV - publically available	Not publically available	No statistics collected
HU	2010 - not publically available yet	On DV & IPV - publically available upon formal request to the office of the Prosecutor General	Not publically available	No statistics collected
IE	2005 - survey publically available; findings available in English	No statistics on DV collected separately from other criminal statistics	No statistics on DV collected	No info
IT	2006 - findings available in Italian + short English summary	Data on DV only very limited	Not publically available	No statistics collected
LT	2008 - survey publically available; findings available in Lithuanian only	On DV - publically available No data on IPV	Not publically available	No statistics collected
LU	2005 - only survey on various crime types (ICVS), NOT specifically on VAW	On DV & IPV - publically available in published report	Publically available	No statistics collected

MS*	Prevalence study	National criminal statistics (police)**	National criminal justice statistics (court)	Healthcare system statistics
LV	No	On DV & IPV - publically available	Publically available upon request	Data on injuries and traumas but not at the national level
MT	2011 - survey publically available; findings available in English	On DV - publically available upon request No data on IPV	No statistics on DV collected	No info
NL	1997, 1998 & 2010 - survey publically available; findings available in Dutch + short English summary	Not publically available	Not publically available	No info
PL	2004 - survey publically available; findings available in Polish + key findings in English	On DV - publically available No data on IPV	Publically available	No info
PT	2008 - survey publically available; findings in Portuguese + summary in English	On DV & IPV - publically available	Publically available	No statistics collected
RO	2005 & 2008 - summary of findings publically available in Romanian only 2000 (new survey being conducted) - survey publically available; findings available in Swedish and English	On DV - publically available upon request No data on IPV	Publically available upon request	No statistics collected
SE	2010 - survey publically available; findings available in Slovenian + English summary	On DV - publically available No data on IPV	Publically available	No info
SI	2003 & 2008 - survey publically available; findings available in Slovak + short summary in English	On IPV - publically available upon request	No info	No info
SK	2013 (yearly) - survey publically available; findings available in English *Northern Ireland: 2004 - findings from the British crime survey *Scotland: 2013 (biannual) - survey publically available; findings available in English	On DV - publically available No data on IPV (except for Scotland)	Publically available (no information for Northern Ireland)	No info in England, Wales & Scotland. Northern Ireland: data on medical interventions related to DV or IPV but not at a national level or collected systematically
UK				

Table 1: Overview data collection & statistics on domestic violence in EU Member States.

Source: WAVE 2012 Country Report

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

** 'DV' = Domestic Violence - 'IPV' = Intimate Partner violence

Furthermore, the data are not always publically available either through online access, regularly published reports or even upon request. In case of Bulgaria and the Netherlands, it was not even clear to establish whether data on domestic violence cases reported to the police are collected on a regular basis and what type of data these would include.

Data from the **criminal justice system**, e.g. on conviction rates, may show to what extent perpetrators of domestic violence or violence against women are held accountable.

In 12 of the 28 Member States, court statistics are collected and publically available; in nine Member States, these data are collected but not made available to the general public; and in five Member States, no information is available on whether or not these data are collected and what type of data these would include. In Ireland and Malta, there is no collection of court statistics on domestic violence cases.

Finally, WAVE checked whether statistics were collected within the **healthcare systems**, for example, data on medical interventions due to domestic or intimate partner violence, on the type of violence and injury, and the severity of the injury. They also examined whether healthcare protocols exist to deal with domestic violence and whether undocumented migrant women, a vulnerable group in domestic violence which is often difficult to reach, have access to healthcare services³.

From table 1 above, it is clear that most countries do not collect data from their healthcare systems, or there is no information whether or not they do. Austria, Germany, Estonia, Spain, Latvia and Northern Ireland collect some healthcare statistics, but in most cases these are not collected at the national level or on a systematic basis.

³ Details on these can be read in the full report: <http://www.wave-network.org/sites/default/files/WAVE%20COUNTRY%20REPORT%202012.pdf>

2. European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)ⁱ – First survey data on the prevalence of violence against women across the EU

The survey on violence against women by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) provides, for the first time, comparable data on the prevalence, nature and consequences of various forms of violence against women, based on face-to-face interviews with 42,000 in the 28 European Union Member States. Lack of data and problems with comparability between existing national data sources – either surveys or police and criminal justice data – led to calls to develop methods for collecting comparable data on violence against women in the EU-28.

2.1. Background to the FRA survey

In November 2009⁴, a European Parliament resolution called for the FRA to collect comparable and reliable data on violence against women in the EU. This request was highlighted by the EU Member States in EPSCO Council Conclusions in March 2010⁵. The European Parliament resolution followed a number of similar calls for increased and improved data collection on violence against women, which have been reiterated over several years by the UN CEDAW Committee, the Council of Europe, and most recently the European Institute for Gender Equality.

General victimisation surveys have become a regular feature of criminal victimisation data collection in many EU Member States, and the results of these surveys have been recognised as providing an important evidence base for policies in the area of crime and victimisation. However, the surveys are often limited in the extent to which they are able to provide reliable estimates on violence against women – this is due to the sensitive nature of the forms of violence which disproportionately affect women, such as sexual violence, and the way in which questions about sexual violence have been asked within general crime surveys. International initiatives to measure the prevalence of violence against women – such as the International Violence Against Women Survey (IVAWS)⁶ and the World Health Organization's multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence⁷ – have covered only a few EU Member States. The proposal by Eurostat to establish the European Safety Survey – which would have included a module on intimate partner violence – was rejected by the European Parliament in December 2012⁸.

⁴ European Parliament (2009), [Resolution on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council – An area of freedom, security and justice serving the citizen – Stockholm programme](#), Brussels, P7_TA(2009)0090.

⁵ Council of the EU, [Council conclusions on the eradication of violence against women in the European Union](#), 3000th Employment and social policy meeting, Brussels, 8 March 2010.

⁶ See Johnson, H., Ollus, N., Nevala, S. (2008). Violence against Women – An International Perspective. Springer, New York, USA [<http://www.springer.com/social+sciences/criminology/book/978-0-387-73203-9>].

⁷ See http://www.who.int/gender/violence/who_multicountry_study/en/.

⁸ European Parliament (2012) [Legislative resolution of 12 December 2012 on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on European statistics on safety from crime](#), Strasbourg, P7_TA(2012)0494.

2.2. Obstacles to reliable comparisons between existing surveys

In most EU Member States – statistical offices, governmental research institutes and other research teams have carried out at least one specialised violence against women survey. In many cases, these surveys have remained a one-off exercise and as a result, the available data is already old for some Member States. At the same time, there are EU Member States where surveys focusing on violence against women have not been carried out, and therefore no prevalence data exist. However, there are also a number of other problems related to the use of the results of the existing national violence against women surveys for comparative purposes.

In 2006, the project 'Coordination action on human rights violations' (CAHRV)⁹ analysed five national prevalence studies on violence against women in order to establish to what extent the survey microdata could be re-analysed to provide comparable results. The authors referred to multiple obstacles for comparability, including the wording of the survey questions, sequence of questions in the questionnaire, differences in the way the target population has been defined, differences in the data collection methods used, and differences related to the way the data have been used to produce the published results. The five national prevalence surveys (from Finland, France, Germany, Lithuania and Sweden) were selected for re-analysis because they were considered to have, at the outset, a number of commonalities which should make comparisons easier. However, even though the surveys were pre-selected based on their shared characteristics, it was not possible to produce comparable estimates on many areas of violence, or comparisons were possible only between some surveys. This was due to the remaining differences in the way the survey questions were worded and how the questionnaires were structured. On top of this, the surveys in question used different data collection methods (postal self-report questionnaires, telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews), which is also an important consideration when comparing the results – as the data collection method has been shown in many cases to have an impact on the findings, while the size and direction of the method effect depend on the topic of the survey.

2.3. Measuring violence against women

Since the first national violence against women surveys in the mid-1990s, most surveys have measured violence using a modified Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) where violence is defined as concrete acts of violence; the CTS approach was adapted for use in the FRA's survey. The variations in the questions asked have been partly due to differences in national legislation – this concerns, in particular, the measurement of sexual violence, as criminal law definitions vary e.g. with regard to definitions for rape based on the use of force, as opposed to focusing on the lack of consent¹⁰. Differences between EU Member States concerning their legislation relevant to violence against women are also one of the major reasons why administrative statistics such as police recorded crimes are difficult to compare in this area. That is, the national data collection mechanisms reflect the national

⁹ <http://www.cahrv.uni-osnabrueck.de/reddot/index.html>

¹⁰ European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice (2010), *Feasibility study to assess the possibilities, opportunities and needs to standardise national legislation on violence against women, violence against children and sexual orientation*, Brussels, Directorate B – Criminal Justice.

legislation, and in the absence of agreed EU-level norms, the comparability of such data is generally absent.

Another important aspect that has led to differences between national surveys concerns the focus of these survey with respect to the type of violence against women, or rather the type of perpetrator of violence. In some Member States, the main focus of the debate concerning women as victims of violence was centred on 'domestic violence'. However, the scope of what is considered as 'domestic violence' differs between EU Member States, and while the explanatory report of the Istanbul Convention defines 'domestic violence' as involving both partner violence and inter-generational violence¹¹, some surveys have focused on domestic violence in the more narrow sense of partner violence. Whereas some surveys have also considered violence against women by perpetrators other than the current or previous partner, these surveys have addressed to a much lesser extent certain forms of violence that are covered by the Istanbul Convention – including sexual harassment and stalking. Given technological developments in relation to the Internet and social media, survey research on violence also needs to reflect these developments by asking questions about the use of new communication tools such as instant messages, social media as well as email and mobile phones, as means of sexual harassment and stalking, which can be termed 'cyber-harassment' or 'cyber-stalking'.

2.4.FRA survey

The survey by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) on violence against women was designed from the start to provide comparable data on women's experiences of violence in the EU based on interviews with a representative, random sample of respondents. The survey interviewed 42,000 women in the 28 EU Member States – that is, some 1,500 women in each country (with the exception of Luxembourg, where the sample size was 900 women). The survey questionnaire was developed following an extensive review of existing violence against women surveys in EU Member States and elsewhere, and consultations with specialists with recognised expertise in collecting and analysing data on violence against women at the national and international level. Furthermore, broad-based consultations at the beginning of the project development were carried out to ensure that the collected data are able to meet the needs of the various data users and – most importantly – the expectations of policymakers. One of the key aims of the survey is to finally provide policymakers with an overview of the prevalence, nature and consequences of violence against women in the EU, in order to support them in identifying policies at the EU and national level to prevent violence and protect victims. In particular, as many EU Member States are taking steps towards the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), the survey provides a benchmark against which progress and future policies can be measured. At the same time, the EU's Victims' Directive¹² – which is a general legal instrument for all victims of crime – recognises gender-based violence, and the need for

¹¹ Council of Europe (2011) *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence: Explanatory report*. Strasbourg, Council of Europe Committee of Ministers.

¹² [Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA](#), OJ 2012 L 315.

provision of targeted responses and support for certain groups of victims, such as victims of sexual assault and hate crime.

Given the above, the topics covered in the FRA survey go beyond those covered in existing international and national surveys on violence against women.

The results of the FRA survey, launched on 5 March 2014, present the first overview of the prevalence of violence against women in the EU – including physical and sexual violence, psychological partner violence, sexual harassment, stalking and victimisation in childhood. The survey questions covered incidents where the perpetrator was a partner, as well as incidents where other perpetrators were involved. Women were asked about their lifetime experiences (since the age of 15), and also about experiences in the last 12 months before the survey interview. Throughout the survey, the gender of perpetrators was clarified as being male or female. In this way, the results were able to show that violence against women is disproportionately committed by men¹³.

In addition to a comprehensive results report, the survey results can also be accessed at <http://fra.europa.eu> using an interactive data explorer, where the results can be visualised on maps and graphs according to the needs of the user. The data explorer allows for an in-depth look at the results at the Member State level, which is intended to assist policymakers and researchers alike in interpreting the findings and making relevant links to existing policies, in an effort to assess the extent to which they meet the needs of victims.

In sum – some 'headline' results from the survey¹⁴ show that:

- 1 in 3 women in the EU has experienced sexual and/or physical violence at least once since the age of 15; 8 % in the 12 months before the interview.
- 22 % of women have experienced physical or sexual violence by a partner.
- 11 % of women have experienced some form of sexual violence since the age of 15; with 5 % having been raped.
- 1 in 2 women has experienced sexual harassment since the age of 15; and as many as 1 in 5 women in the 12 months before the interview.
- 18 % of women have experienced stalking since the age of 15; 5 % in the 12 months before the interview.
- 35% of women have experienced physical, sexual or psychological violence before the age of 15 by an adult perpetrator; 12% of women have experienced sexual violence before the age of 15 by an adult.

¹³ The survey questionnaire as well as well as full details on the survey methodology are available at <http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/vaw-survey-technical-report>.

¹⁴ European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2014) *Violence against women: an EU-wide survey. Main results, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union*, available at <http://fra.europa.eu>.

3. The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)¹⁵: How do Member States tackle Domestic Violence?¹⁵

3.1. Domestic Violence

Gender-based violence remains one of the most pervasive human rights violations of our time. It is defined as violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender, and it reflects and reinforces inequalities between men and women. Gender-based violence harms women, families, communities and society. The EU is committed to combating violence against women. This commitment is affirmed in the European Commission's Women's Charter (2010), the European Commission's Strategy for Equality between Women and Men 2010-15 and the Stockholm Programme for 2010-14.

Gender-based violence affects women disproportionately because of gendered power relations: perpetrators are typically men well-known to the victims, including spouses and partners, parents, other family members, neighbours, and men in positions of power or influence. The private sphere and especially the domestic environment is the most common context of violence; most forms of violence are ongoing, and can even continue for decades. The main forms of gender-based violence (GBV) are: intimate partner violence (including sexual violence amongst current or former partners); sexual violence (outside intimate relationships), including sexual assault, rape, sexual harassment; stalking; female genital mutilation, trafficking in human beings, honour-based violence and forced marriage.

Domestic violence (DV) is the most widespread form of GBV. The definition of domestic violence used in this chapter is the definition from **the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011), i.e. all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.** Domestic violence against women remains a hidden, underreported and deeply traumatising violation of dignity. It is not always taken seriously by the community or the authorities, exposing women and girls to threats of violence and, in some cases, even to murder.

In spite of the growing body of research that documents the prevalence and seriousness of violence amongst the female population, reliable and comparable data on violence against women are still difficult to obtain.

One of the two main possible data sources are population-based surveys. In the last decade (2000-11), the majority of Member States have conducted at least one prevalence study on violence against women. However, the prevalence rates are not comparable as these surveys used different definitions, methodologies and reference

¹⁵ This chapter is based on the following EIGE studies:

EIGE (2012). *Review of the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the EU Member States: Violence against Women – Victim Support*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. [<http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Violence-against-Women-Victim-Support-Report.pdf>]

EIGE (2013). *From Practices with Potential to Good Practices– Gender Mainstreaming tools to prevent domestic violence*. Working Document.

EIGE (2013). *Feasibility Study on Mapping the Current Status and Potential of Administrative Sources of Data on Violence Against Women in the European Union and Croatia*. Working document.

periods. So far, no comparable survey data are available on the prevalence of GBV across the European Union.

The other main data source is administrative data collection. Member States collect information from police, justice, health and social protection services which represent the most important institutions interacting with victims and perpetrators and collecting information on the violent incidents. However, administrative data sources have their shortcomings. In nearly all Member States, crime statistics contain relevant information about different types of GBV, but these are not suitable for inter-country comparison. The registration of offences and classifications used are significantly different among the 28 Member States. Data are often incomplete or missing. In most Member States, health institutions do not systematically collect data on the victims they meet. Social security systems and the work of social services are also varied across Member States. Available statistics (both at the general level on violence against women and at the specific level on domestic violence) are incomplete or out-dated and different data collection methods are applied. Therefore, the available data are not always suitable for comparison across Member States.

Thus, a dedicated systematic and coordinated approach to join prevalence data, crime statistics and other administrative data needs to be developed. More detailed information on the victim-perpetrator relationship should be provided and the data collected should be systematically sex and age disaggregated for both the victim and the perpetrator. If the number of male and female victims of intentional homicide perpetrated by an intimate partner or by a family member would be separately identified and the total number of victims would be broken down by sex and age, the indicator on femicide could be obtained. The European Union and its institutions, such as EIGE, make efforts to reach a common understanding of the concepts of GBV and DV, and to develop a common approach for data collection and indicators on DV across Member States.

3.2.Legislative and policy framework in the European Union

Equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the EU, enshrined in its Treaties and in the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The European Union institutions such as the Council of the European Union, European Parliament and the European Commission have enacted this principle in several resolutions, directives and policy programmes to guide the work of the EU and Member States on GBV, examples of which can be seen in table 1.

Actor	Date	Commitment	Main point of action
Council of the European Union	2010	Conclusions on the eradication of violence against women in the EU ¹⁶	The European Commission is called upon to devise a European strategy for preventing and combating violence against women (VAW).

¹⁶ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/113226.pdf

Council of the European Union	2011	European Pact for Gender Equality (2011-2020) ¹⁷	The Member States are called upon to develop national strategies, devote resources to prevent and combat violence, prosecute perpetrators and provide assistance and support to victims, establish VAW as a priority of their programmes and clearly identify VAW as an issue of gender equality.
Council of the European Union	2012	Conclusions on combating VAW, and the provision of support services for victims of domestic violence ¹⁸	The European Commission, Member States, and the EEAS are called upon to monitor the situation with respect to violence against women, including support services for victims of domestic violence, on a regular basis, using the indicators established in 2002 and in line with the precedent established Beijing Platform for Action follow-up, and promote further research on other forms of VAW, with a view to further developing and improving these indicators so as to allow for efficient monitoring and comparability, making use of the work of the EIGE.
European Commission	2010	A Strengthened Commitment to Equality between Women and Men. A Women's Charter ¹⁹	The European Commission takes measures in order to combat VAW.
European Commission	2010-15	Strategy for equality between women and men ²⁰	GBV is one of the key problems to be addressed in order to achieve genuine gender equality within the EU.
European Commission	2010-14	Action Plan implementing the Stockholm programme ²¹	The Stockholm programme presents a need to improve legislation and other support measures necessary to protect victims of crime at the EU level. Women victims of violence, when exercising their rights to free movement within the EU, are now considered to be under protection of

¹⁷ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2011:155:0010:0013:EN:PDF>

¹⁸ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lsa/134081.pdf

¹⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/president/news/documents/pdf/20100305_1_en.pdf

²⁰ http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/equality_between_men_and_women/em0037_en.htm

²¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:115:0001:0038:en:PDF>

			the EU legislation. The action plan to implement the Stockholm programme sets out the EU's priorities in this field for the period 2010-14.
European Commission	2011	Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee of the Regions: Strengthening victims' rights in the EU ²²	The legislative package on victims' rights comes as a follow-up to the European Commission's action plan implementing the Stockholm programme. It has two main instruments: Directive 2010/99/EU ²³ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011, on the European protection order and Directive 2012/29/EU ²⁴ of the European Parliament and of The Council of 25 October 2012, establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA.

Table 2: EU resolutions, directives and policy programmes

The overall policy framework of zero tolerance towards violence has encouraged Member States to take action on this issue. The major forms used by the EU to influence the practices of Member States in this area have been through conferences, exchanges of good practices, support for cooperation (especially in the Daphne programme), and funding at an operational level for EU-wide networks, in particular the European Women's Lobby (EWL) and Women Against Violence Europe (WAVE). These paths of action are 'soft law' measures and have facilitated growing exchanges among civil society organisations across the European Union (including outreach before accession) as well as among researchers. They have also fostered dialogue with policymakers on the requirements for effective intervention and prevention, and created opportunities to define minimum standards for services.

The European institutions play a significant role in the development of a common perspective on combating DV across the EU, having a strong influence on the overall convergence of legal measures and services in the Member States. The recent European Union Directive 2011/99/EU on the European protection order and the 'victim's package' on protection against the threat of crime articulate a legal basis for a European policy on GBV.

²² <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/criminal/victims/>

²³ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/criminal/files/directive_2011_99_on_epo_en.pdf

²⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2012:315:0057:0073:EN:PDF>

3.3. National Action Plans

The development of legislation and policies in the 28 Member States has been significantly influenced by the dual frameworks of gender equality and human rights. The work carried out within the Council of Europe framework since 2003 has also facilitated a European-wide dialogue on the urgent need for effective measures and on sharing good practices. In 2005, a campaign to combat GBV including domestic violence was designed within the task force set up by the Council of Europe. Complexity of framing was introduced at the Council of Europe level by the involvement of the Directorate of Justice alongside that of Human Rights. The complexity is represented in the shift towards a two-pronged approach, currently codified in the Istanbul Convention that has characterised the developments in legal frameworks across the EU Member States as well as the Council of Europe since 2003.

At the national level, National Action Plans (NAPs) are the minimum requirement for developing policies targeting intimate partner violence, defining priorities and financing measures in health, housing, education, training and research. There is a near-total consensus amongst the 28 EU Member States on the need for such Action Plans and nearly all the Member States have adopted a NAP with measures intended to combat violence against women in general and domestic violence in particular.

However, there is significant variation in the main focus of NAPs, in both the way they are framed and how they are elaborated. Three broad approaches can be identified concerning the issue of GBV.

1. There are 14 NAPs in 10 Member States in which there is a focus on GBV (BE, DE, IE, EL, ES, FR, SK, FI, SE, UK)²⁵ that emphasise the interconnections among forms of violence and the links to discrimination and human rights.
2. 15 NAPs in 11 countries (also) target DV and/or violence within the family with different types of information related to the relationship context: nearly half of them target violence between adults within a close relationship, some with a gender emphasis and seven without (BE, DK, DE, IT, LV, PT, FI). The other eight define DV as any type of violence by one member of the family towards another, including child maltreatment, abuse by other relatives such as grandparents or siblings (BE, BG, CZ, CY, NL, PL, PT, SI). In these NAPs, the emphasis is on the overall harm to family life when any violence occurs.
3. Thirdly, there are two NAPs that more generally aim at reducing violence or securing human rights (EE, UK), in which gender may be mentioned as a risk factor.

The actual content of NAPs typically covers three main areas: (i) training key actors; (ii) preventing and changing violent behaviour; and (iii) supporting victims. Firstly, certain measures attempt to raise awareness and train professionals in social care, the healthcare system, education professionals and criminal justice actors, to both recognise DV and respond appropriately. Secondly, there is an emphasis on prevention, for

²⁵ The following abbreviations for the EU Member States are used throughout this paper: AT = Austria; BE = Belgium; BG = Bulgaria; CY = Cyprus; CZ = Czech Republic; DE = Germany; DK = Denmark; EE = Estonia; EL = Greece; ES = Spain; FR = France; FI = Finland; HR = Croatia; HU = Hungary; IE = Ireland; IT = Italy; LT = Lithuania; LU = Luxembourg; LV = Latvia; MT = Malta; NL = the Netherlands; PL = Poland; PT = Portugal; RO = Romania; SE = Sweden; SI = Slovenia; SK = Slovakia; UK = the United Kingdom

example through programmes for adolescents and changing the violent behaviour of perpetrators. Thirdly, the majority of NAPs underline the need to improve services and support to victims, including supportive and therapeutic measures for children exposed to DV as well as closer links between protection agencies for women and children.

The degree of elaboration of NAPs also varies widely, from half a page of broadly defined objectives to over 20 pages of specific measures. There are NAPs (e.g., in Ireland) that provide an in-depth analysis of the problem of domestic and gender-based violence and the different roles of institutions, prior to presenting the measures needed to progress forward. Others provide a brief sketch of the issue and focus on a pragmatic tabulation of actions foreseen and indicators for measuring success.

Evaluating the implementation of NAPs is rare. A positive example is Poland, where the Prevention of Domestic Violence Act mandates a yearly evaluation of the national action plan, which is then presented to parliament and the public each year. Some NAPs include research evaluating the implementation of legal reform (e.g. in Germany, Spain and Luxembourg). Publishing a government's commitment to move forward in a number of areas is effective in keeping the issue on the political agenda. One of the main obstacles to effectiveness continues to be the inadequate allocation of resources relative to the declared objectives. Another important obstacle is the lack of reliable prevalence data on GBV and also of the lack of systematic administrative data collection. Most NAPs contain neither a plan for regularly measuring the prevalence of GBV in the Member States nor for improving the level of data collection.

3.4.Criminal laws

While the majority of Member States have introduced legislation addressing acts of DV (physical, psychological and sexual), there are different interpretations of what it means to criminalise it. A variety of approaches have been taken to penalise DV, with three broad approaches.

- Using the existing general criminal law, which means the offender is sentenced under crimes as "physical damage", "threat", "harassment" etc. It is important to note that changes have been made in general criminal law in order to clarify that a crime is no less a crime if the victim is an intimate partner and, thus, the state has a duty to investigate and prosecute.
- Using general criminal law with the provision that if the violence occurs in the family/between family members, it is regarded as an aggravating feature. In 15 Member States (BE, BG, EE, EL, ES, FR, IT, CY, LV, LU, HU, MT, NL, HR, RO), unlawful acts of violence are regarded as a more serious offence if committed against an intimate partner or a family member. In most cases, the aggravating factor is kinship; however, as for example in France, it can be restricted to spousal or partner relationships only.
- Introducing a specific offence criminalising DV into the penal code. This approach is taken by ten Member States (CZ, ES, FR, IT, AT, PT, SI, SK, SE, HR). These additions were mostly made between 2003 and 2010. Only four of these Member States define the offence with reference to an intimate partner relationship (ES, FR, PT, SE). In others, the reference is to any person with whom there is a family

or household relationship. Another specific offence introduced is that of 'course of conduct', which criminalises repetitive behaviour (e.g. in Austria).

Regardless of the approach used, in five Member States (CZ, IT, LV, HU, RO), DV is still considered a private matter requiring the victim to make a private complaint or prosecution. This is particularly the case where the injury is considered 'less severe' and thus unlikely to result in prosecution as it puts unreasonable pressure on the victim and threatens her safety. This fails the principle of the right to life affirmed by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), reiterating the obligation of Member States to protect the right to life by putting in place an adequate legal framework.

3.5. Protective orders

Protective orders are distinct from criminal measures since, as the European protection order²⁶ states, they ought to prevent crime, not only react to it. There are three main aspects to protection orders: (i) the initial police ban and how it is implemented; (ii) the type of support given to the victim as part of the process of implementing the ban; and (iii) the granting and application of the protection order that may result.

Evidence suggests that all three are necessary in conjunction and are labelled 'three-pillar' laws. They were first introduced in Austria in 1997 and involved an immediate police ban; a notification of an intervention centre to provide advice and support; the right of the victim to apply for a civil protection order to provide an extension of the police ban if the court had not yet acted on a request for its continuation; and an obligation of the civil or family court to schedule a hearing on the civil protection order. The aim of this system is to ensure that there is no gap in protection and that the victim has the right to abstain from criminal proceedings. This system was adopted by the police and justice structures of other Member States, (CZ, DE, ES, NL, UK).

With the exception of Latvia, all EU Member States have introduced some kind of legal protection order that is either explicitly designed for cases of DV or has been modified to allow their issue against an intimate partner or ex-partner. Generally, they all apply to a range of physical, sexual and psychological violence and follow the principle that the victims should be safe in the space where they live. However, there is a wide range in the means of implementation and this can influence whether an order is effective in ensuring safety from further harm.

A ban can be imposed directly by the police on site (CZ, DK, DE, LU, HU, NL, AT, SI, SK, FI). While the laws in all cases provide for a civil injunction for longer protection following the emergency measure, the period of the police ban in Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia is so short that it makes a gap in protection likely. Rapid court injunctions that can be issued *ex parte* to expel the perpetrator and ensure non-contact, or interim protection orders issued by the prosecutor are possible in several Member States (IE, EL, FR, IT, LT, MT, PT, SE) and by fast-track DV courts in Spain and the United Kingdom. Thus, 19 Member States have regulated protective measures that ensure a period of safety and can take effect immediately or within a very short time.

²⁶ EPO, Directive 2011/99/ EU on the European protection order in criminal matters, Article 2(1).

The right to protection from potentially serious and criminal harm cannot hinge on whether or not there is sufficient prima facie evidence to convict the perpetrator of a criminal offence, or whether or not the victim is willing to press charges against a family member or former partner. In Denmark, the police can ban a perpetrator from the home at the request of the victim if there is probable cause that the perpetrator has committed one of the criminal offences listed in the 2004 Act. However, the police sometimes only do this when the woman is also willing to press criminal charges. Thus, the expulsion of the perpetrator is de facto dependent on criminal prosecution (European Commission, 2010). Another example is Poland, where the police have the right to apprehend offenders committing domestic violence in a family who cause direct threat to human life or health²⁷.

In some legal systems, such as in Belgium and France, judges or magistrates are available around the clock for emergency measures. In a few cases, for example in Italy and Sweden, the public prosecutor must be involved. Where this can be done within hours, or a day or two, it may give immediate protection. In some Member States, such as Poland, Spain and the United Kingdom, the power of police to arrest has been extended to protect victims until a court order can be issued.

Civil court protection orders, some of which explicitly allow for the granting of exclusive right to the residence to the victim, can be issued after a hearing (BE, BG, IE, ES, MT, AT, PL, PT, SI, FI, UK). In Estonia, Romania and Croatia, expulsion (and other restraining) orders requiring the perpetrator to vacate the home are only possible during, or even at the close of, criminal proceedings (linked to sentencing). In Greece, expulsion orders can be issued in both civil (safety measures) and criminal proceedings (restraining orders not linked to sentencing).

As can be seen, the legal framework for protective orders differs among the Member States. The distribution of the elements of legislation over time in the different Member States suggests that this apparent fragmentation is not only a matter of how European legal systems handle fields of law, but also the result of a process of learning from the experience of other Member States.

3.6.Policies and actions: focus on prevention

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for Equality, Development and Peace (BPfA) was officially adopted at the Fourth World Conference on women, held in Beijing in 1995. The BPfA is a programme for action to promote and protect the human rights of women and girls, reaffirming these rights as an inalienable, integral and invisible part of universal human rights. One of the 12 critical areas of concern in the BPfA is **violence against women** (VAW).

The Council of Europe (CoE) Recommendation Rec(2002)5²⁸ on the protection of women against violence provides a basis for national policies, describing necessary measures for support service, legislation, awareness-raising, perpetrator treatment, education, training and data collection related to all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence.

²⁷ Article 15a of the Act of 6 April 1990 on the police. Consolidated text: Dz.U. No 287, item 1687, as amended

²⁸ <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=280915>

The Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence²⁹ provides a comprehensive legal framework to prevent violence, protect victims and end the impunity of perpetrators. It establishes a comprehensive framework, based on policies and measures, to protect and assist victims of all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence. It also promotes substantive equality between women and men and international cooperation, providing support to organisations and law enforcement agencies to be able to cooperate within an integrated approach.

3.7. Training on prevention of domestic violence

Institutions focused on DV emphasise the necessity and importance of systematic mainstream training as part of the curriculum for professionals and volunteers who come into contact with the field of DV. The majority of Member States have taken on board the importance of training. However, only a minority of them apply systematic training both as part of the initial preparation of relevant professionals and as ongoing training to those in the field.

It is difficult to offer an overview of the mainstreaming of training professionals. National accounts suggest that problems are encountered in the implementation of planned activities. Portugal provides an example of the lack of implementation of this good practice, where 90 hours of training on DV is mandated by law and ministerial order for professionals working in the field, but reports indicate that only 30 hours are enforced.

The importance (and lack) of training that addresses attitudes towards DV – particularly those of professionals dealing with victims of domestic violence – can significantly affect the plight of women escaping DV in their quest for help and justice. This is emphasised by various Civil Society Organisations' (CSOs) reports to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee. For instance, the report submitted by the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation and The Advocates for Human Rights (2010) to the UN Human Rights Council points out that although judges throughout Bulgaria had participated in training, many had since then been replaced. Judicial practice revealed that the new judges carried many misperceptions about DV. The lack of expertise on the special nature of DV in the criminal justice system, including amongst judges, is very often a barrier to the implementation of applicable laws (European Commission, 2010). In its Concluding Observations on State Reports, the CEDAW Committee recommended to over half of the Member States (BE, CZ, IE, EL, ES, IT, CY, LV, HU, MT, NL, PT, SK, UK, HR) that they provide training for the judiciary as well as the police and other public officials to ensure a proper understanding of DV and its consequences.

A lack of funds can be part of the general reason for the inconsistency in the training of professionals. The majority of the training is done by CSOs, with little or no payment. Sometimes, European Union programmes such as Daphne, Grundtvig, Leonardo or the European Social Fund secure funding for such training for a short period of time. Whilst these projects promote inter-country cooperation and the sharing of good practices, by definition, project funding is often for one-off events. Some projects attempt to be

²⁹ See for full text of convention: <http://www.conventions.coe.int/Treaty/EN/treaties/html/210.htm>

sustainable, through 'train-the-trainers' or cascading training. However, this option does not guarantee a sustainable and mainstreamed training programme.

The lack of obligation to participate in training is also problematic; training provision is reported by a vast majority of Member States (BE, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, IT, CY, LT, LU, HU, NL, AT, PL, PT, SI, SK, FI, SE, UK), but training is only obligatory in a minority of cases (as for example the ones offered in CZ, DE, IE, EL, ES, HU, NL, AT, SI, FI) (European Commission, 2010). Not making the training mandatory has created difficulties, as many professionals in the field remain untrained and are less effective in their ability to assist victims of DV.

3.8.Awareness-raising

The Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence – the so-called Istanbul Convention – dedicates a full chapter to Prevention, stating in Article 12.1 that "*Parties shall take the necessary measures to promote changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour of women and men with a view to eradicating prejudices, customs, traditions and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority of women or on stereotyped roles for women and men*". The Convention specifies sub-strategies or measures of Primary Prevention such as Awareness-raising (Art. 13), Education (Art. 14), Training of professionals (Art. 15), Preventive intervention and treatment programmes (Art. 16) and Participation of the private sector and the media (Art. 17). Therefore, the Convention's specific focus on primary prevention implies strategies aimed at whole populations to transform attitudes, practices and behaviours that support discrimination and violence against women addressing the root and the underlying causes of VAW.

Although primary prevention of violence is relatively new in the field, it is increasingly recognized that while responding to violence is crucial, it is not sufficient to decrease the prevalence of violence. Rather, integration of prevention – or stopping violence before it starts – into programming is the key to reducing the burden of suffering, and to minimizing the long-term human, economic and public health costs of violence.

Within the Member States over time the importance of including preventive measures in legislation has been increasingly emphasized. Data from 2010 indicates that in the majority of National Action Plans, prevention is prioritised (AT, BE, DE, ES, IT, LT, LV, RO, SI, SK, SE, UK).

Nevertheless, the same study highlights that primary and long term prevention remains underdeveloped in Member States and in EU approaches³⁰.

Awareness-raising programmes and campaigns should be launched in all Member States to draw public attention to violence against women, and more specifically to its causes and damaging effects for both the victims and the community. In particular, it is

³⁰ European Commission/Directorate-General for Justice (2010). *Feasibility study to assess the possibilities, opportunities and needs to standardise national legislation on violence against women, violence against children and sexual orientation violence*, Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/funding/daphne3/daphne_feasibility_study_2010_en.pdf]

suggested that awareness-raising programmes and campaigns are required to emphasise the fact that violence against women is not a private matter, but a violation of human rights. Awareness-raising activities and programmes should, in the long term, pursue the aim of altering the ideas, attitudes and prejudices which persist and which constitute factors that may lead to violence.

Awareness-raising is a two-way street, fostering communication and information exchange in order to improve mutual understanding, mobilising communities and wider society to bring about necessary change in attitudes and behaviour. While situations are sometimes perpetuated by the attitude “this is how it has always been and nothing will or can change”, it is useful to underline the importance of awareness-raising efforts to convince target audiences that change is both desirable and possible. It is only by educating communities and providing them with knowledge, capacities, and motivation that the process of social change can start.

In most European Union countries, social awareness of the issue corresponds to the extent of the phenomenon itself - due primarily to the ingrained socio-cultural attitudes that make violent behaviour against women tolerated and considered a private matter.

3.9. Perpetrators programmes

Perpetrator programmes mostly emerged as a community response to domestic violence towards the end of the 1980s, when it became recognised that provision of safety and protection for a victim was not sufficient to eliminate domestic violence. A natural consequence of viewing male violence and male responsibility was that treatment should be devised for men in which their violence was combated. These programmes were designed as an alternative to ‘regular’ sanctioning of an offender in cases of DV. In most cases, it is very difficult to involve perpetrators in these programs, and high numbers of perpetrators quit the programme after a few sessions.

Providing an overview of state measures on perpetrator programmes in the 28 Member States is a challenge as there is a lack of reliable data related to the number of programmes, number of perpetrators participating, or results of the intervention (not reoffending for instance) available to compare. Evidence suggests that there are wide geographical variations in the implementation of perpetrator programmes, including great regional differences, throughout the EU, and within Member States.

Fifteen Member States (BE, BG, DK, EL, ES, FR, CY, NL, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SE, UK) have legal provisions to offer perpetrator programmes that address any form of DV (European Commission, 2010)³¹. In Spain, there are two types of programmes provided by prison service:

- As an alternative to prison. It is compulsory and it lasts around 6 months, it is based on a gender perspective, and work attitudes and the roots of DV plus provides tools for the perpetrators to control their violence.

³¹ Also see: The United Nations Secretary-General’s database on violence against women 2006-2011 – <http://sgdatabase.unwomen.org/home.action>.

- Inside prison, on a voluntary basis, the program is addressed by prison psychologists especially trained to implement group treatment programmes. The programme lasts one year, it includes a gender perspective, and is divided into 6 modules, where attitudes, values, and emotion control are addressed as well as behaviour.

The existence of legal provisions does not indicate by all means the approach that the programmes use or whether such programmes are actually offered. Bulgaria, for example, provides legal grounds for perpetrator programmes, but no information could be found to confirm the existence of such a programme. In 11 Member States (CZ, DE, EE, IE, CY, LU, AT, PL, SI, FI, UK), the majority of perpetrator programmes are offered by civil society organisations outnumbering those offered by state agencies³².

The range of programmes offered varies from psychological treatment (CZ, DK, EE, CY, SE, HR), counselling and therapy (BE, IE, LU, HU, PT, FI, UK) to counselling only (RO). Resocialisation programmes during imprisonment are implemented in three Member States (ES, LV, HU,) and during community sanctions over 18 months for offenders with low or moderate risk of spousal assault in Poland and in Portugal. In Estonia and Finland, male crisis centres support violent men to avoid reoffending. Two Member States (AT and ES) describe their perpetrator programmes as a rehabilitation measure.

Eight partner organisations from five Member States (DE, IE, ES, FR, LV) and Norway, and representatives of women's support services, have created guidelines to develop standards for programmes working with male perpetrators of DV³³. These guidelines entail the following principles: partner contact and support; child protection policy; approaches and attitudes in the direct work with perpetrators; risk assessment; staff qualification; quality assurance, documentation and evaluation. The objective of working with male perpetrators is reinsertion and rehabilitation into society, avoiding reoffending and stopping them from being DV perpetrators, which increases the safety of the victims of violence. Therefore, collaboration with victim support services is one of the prerequisites of perpetrator programmes³⁴. However, it is important to mention that when integrating perpetrator programmes with victims support programmes, a real danger emerges as women may become frightened, insecure and vulnerable.

The issue of how to formulate a perpetrator programme still remains unclear. The creation of a more uniform approach appears necessary and should be complemented by a systematic evaluation process to learn from the effectiveness of these programmes. Still, this needs to be implemented and harmonised at the European level.

3.10. Conclusions and references

- The European Union has been taking a strong stand on DV over the last 10 years. It has framed the issue in the context of gender equality and human rights. The

³² See the United Nations Secretary-General's database on violence against women 2006-2011 <http://sgdatabase.unwomen.org/home.action>.

³³ European Union (2008), 'Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Europe', Daphne II project, 2006-08, Brussels (<http://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/index.php?id=76>).

³⁴ European Union (2008), 'Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence in Europe', Daphne II project, 2006-08, Brussels (<http://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/index.php?id=76>).

majority of Member States have developed and implemented NAPs that recognise GBV as both a human right and a gender equality issue. However, prevalence of GBV, including DV, remains significant in the 28 Member States, despite the introduction of a range of policies and measures.

- Given the different legal systems within the EU, there is no uniform standard of criminalisation and protection. Addressing the existing gaps in criminalisation would require the removal of all criminal law exceptions in general or special laws, including ensuring that every prosecution is a public matter by removing the requirement for victims to make a complaint or start a private prosecution before criminal investigations take place. There is such a requirement in the Istanbul Convention³⁵.
- The importance of specialised services to assist women survivors of DV to recover and rebuild their lives has been set out in international legal standards, most recently in the Istanbul Convention. However, approaches to the provision of services vary significantly across the EU, and the lack of sustainable funding means that these services remain vulnerable. In some countries, services for women survivors of DV are not gender-specific but included as part of the services offered to all victims of DV.
- The basic statistical and administrative data collected by different agencies should include at least minimum information on the relationship between victim and perpetrator (current/former partner, marital status and cohabitation, dating partner), together with the sex of both victim and offender.
- Data that is related to DV should be documented separately and not mixed with all forms of violence within the family context and together with other forms of crimes in Member States where DV is not criminalised. These minimum requirements are not fulfilled by the majority of Member States as it makes it impossible to access sex-disaggregated data or separately recorded information on DV.
- Despite the emphasis placed by the EU on the importance of training professionals, this rarely happens systematically. Training is under-resourced, ad hoc and not mandatory. Furthermore, the attitudes of professionals continue to reflect the sexist attitudes in the general population. Training needs to be delivered by people who are able to reflect the gender-based and human rights approach in the fight against DV. Different understandings and definitions of DV hinder data gathering on this aspect.
- Specific programmes to address perpetrators' behaviour is one possible measure among several introduced to address DV. The approaches vary and are inconsistent within and between countries. The creation of a more uniform and integral (psychological, gender perspective) approach appears necessary and should be complemented by a systematic evaluation process to learn from what is effective.

³⁵ Art. 55: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/standardsetting/convention-violence/default_EN.asp.

4. Eurobarometer: citizens' perceptions on domestic violence in Europe

Since 1973, the European Commission has been monitoring the evolution of public opinion in the Member States by means of the Eurobarometer surveys³⁶. As mentioned on the website³⁷, several types of these surveys are conducted on various topics and themes:

- The Standard Eurobarometer addresses major topics concerning European citizenship – e.g. enlargement of European Union, social situation, health, culture, information technology, environment, the Euro, defence, etc. – and consists of approximately 1000 face-to-face interviews per country. Reports are published twice a year.
- Special Eurobarometer reports are based on in-depth thematic studies carried out for various services of the European Commission or for other EU Institutions and integrated in Standard Eurobarometer's polling waves.
- Flash Eurobarometers are ad hoc thematic telephone interviews conducted at the request of any service of the European Commission. Flash surveys enable the Commission to obtain results relatively quickly and to focus on specific target groups, as and when required.
- The qualitative studies investigate in-depth the motivations, the feelings, the reactions of selected social groups towards a given subject or concept, by listening and analysing their way of expressing themselves in discussion groups or with non-directive interviews.

The 1999 Eurobarometer 51.0³⁸ report and the 2010 Special Eurobarometer 344³⁹ report both approached the issue of domestic violence.

4.1. Awareness of the existence of legal measures on domestic violence against women in the Member States

One of the issues measured during the Eurobarometer surveys was EU citizens' knowledge and awareness of the existence of laws on domestic violence against women (DVAW). More specifically, the following question was asked:

"In your opinion, are there special laws in your country regarding...

- *The prevention of domestic violence against women*
- *Social support for victims*
- *Legal support for victims*
- *The punishment of perpetrators*
- *The rehabilitation of perpetrators"*

³⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

³⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/description_en.htm

³⁸ http://78.142.150.50/sites/wave.local/files/eu_eurobarometersurvey_1999.pdf

³⁹ Special Eurobarometer 344 (2010) http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_344_en.pdf

As shown in figure 1 below, in 2010 most citizens – men and women – across the 27 EU Member States⁴⁰ believed that the above mentioned laws related to domestic violence against women existed in their country. Especially on the punishment of perpetrators, a lot of people were convinced such laws existed. A large proportion of EU citizens thought the same for (legal and social) support for victims, although around 15 per cent of the respondents admitted they did not know whether or not they had such laws in their country.

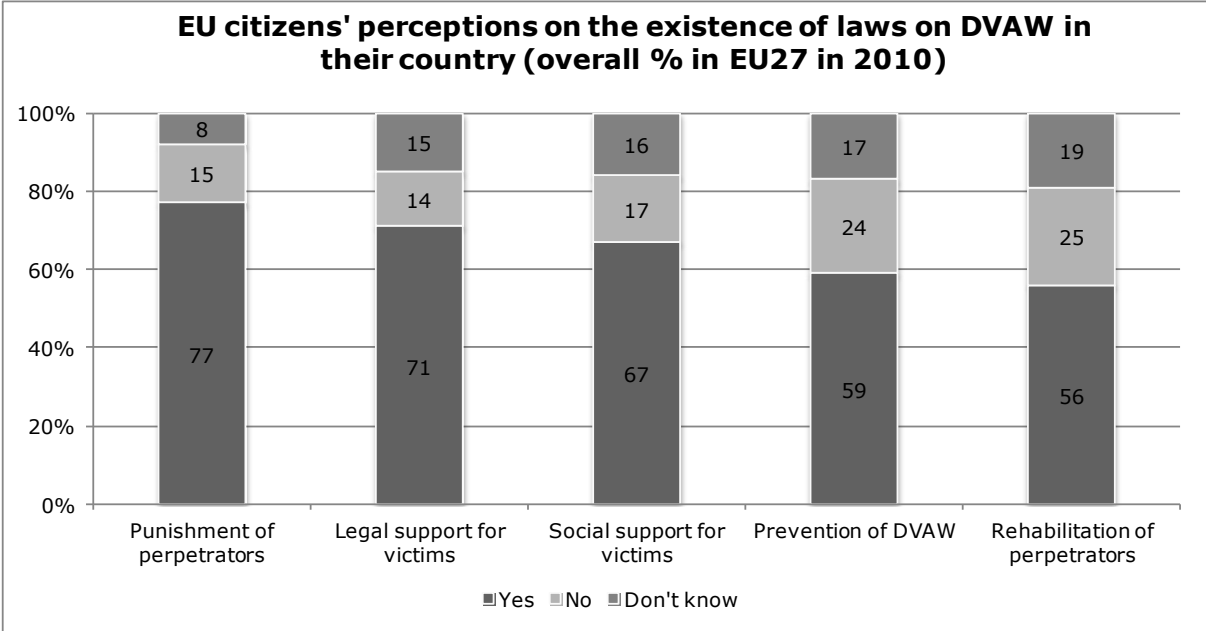


Figure 1: Awareness of laws on DVAW – EU citizens’ perceptions
 Source: Special Eurobarometer 344, based on figure p. 87

With regard to laws on the prevention of domestic violence against women and on the rehabilitation of perpetrators, almost 60 per cent of the EU citizens believed they were in place. However, around one fourth of the respondents indicated such laws did not exist in their country and almost one fifth did not know.

In the 15 EU Member States which participated both in the 1999 and 2010 Eurobarometer surveys, there is a remarkable increase in the proportion of people thinking that there are indeed laws on domestic violence in their country, and a remarkable decrease in the proportion of people who did not know whether such laws existed. Like the Eurobarometer report (2010) suggests, this indicates that the general awareness of legal measures to address domestic violence against women seems to have risen significantly during those 10 years.

Figure 2 below, shows EU15⁴¹ citizens’ perceptions on the existence of special laws governing domestic violence against women in 1999 and 2010.

⁴⁰ The EU27 consisted of: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom – in 2013 Croatia became the 28th EU Member State.

⁴¹ The EU15 consisted of: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

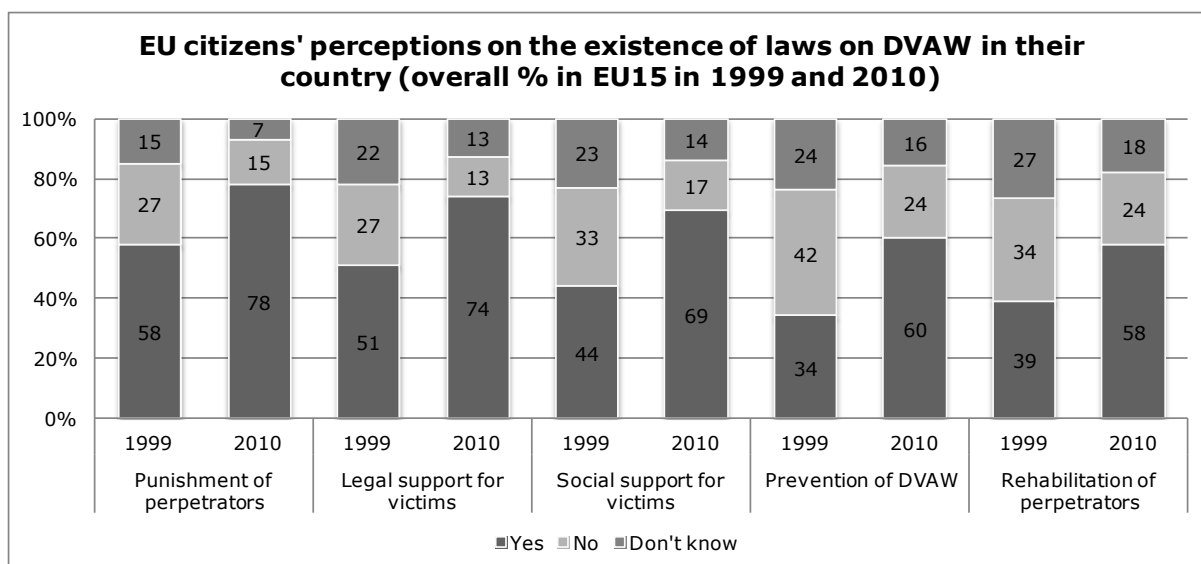


Figure 2: Awareness of laws on DVAW – EU citizens’ perceptions in 1999 compared to 2010
 Source: Special Eurobarometer 344, based on figure p. 89

In figure 3 on p.29⁴², EU citizens’ perceptions on the existence of laws on the prevention of domestic violence against women are shown in more detail for the 27 Member States which participated in the 2010 survey.

In Sweden, Slovenia and France, almost 70 per cent of citizens believed that laws on prevention exist. Although in France more than 16 per cent admitted not knowing whether such laws exist, compared to 12 and 9 per cent in Slovenia and Sweden respectively.

In seven Member States – Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Denmark, Latvia, Bulgaria and Estonia – less than half of the people believed that there are preventative laws in their country. In Estonia, for example, only 28 per cent of respondents thought such laws exist whereas 50 per cent of people believed the opposite. The right hand side of the figure show the proportions of people not knowing whether or not there is legislation on the prevention of domestic violence against women in their country. One can immediately see remarkable differences between countries. In Bulgaria, for example, almost 40 per cent of people indicated they did not know whether there are preventative laws on domestic violence against women in their country. Also in Romania, more than one third of the respondents could not answer the question. Even in Ireland and Luxembourg, where more than 60 per cent of people believed there are laws on prevention, also almost one fourth did not know whether this is the case. These high proportions of people not knowing whether or not there is legislation, or assuming there is no legislation when in fact there is, indicate that some countries still have work to do on awareness raising among the general public in this matter.

⁴² For all own calculations based on the Eurobarometer data, shown in the figures 3, 4 & 5, the appropriate weights have been applied.

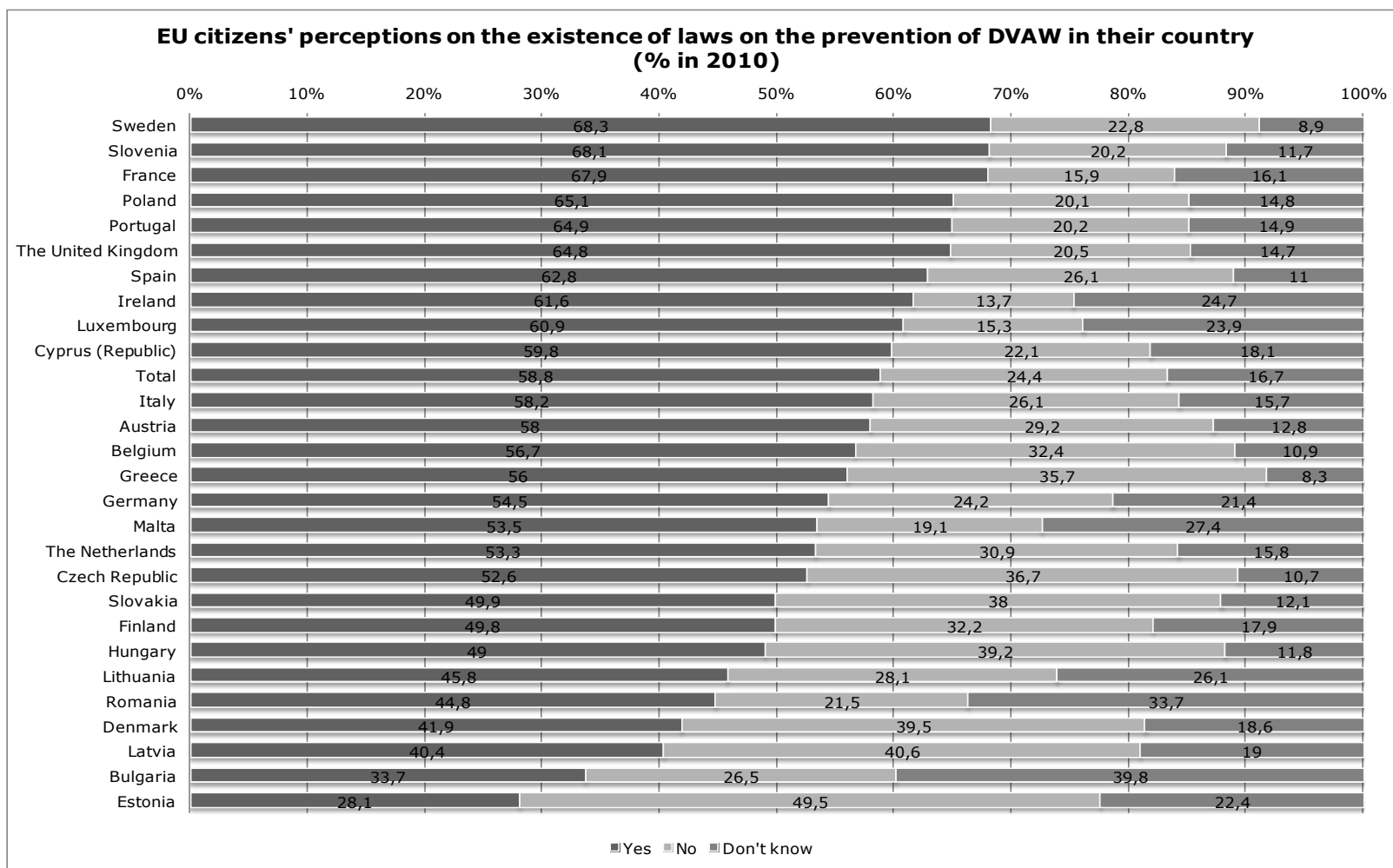


Figure 3: Awareness of laws on prevention of DVAW – EU citizens' perceptions in 2010, country details
Source: Special Eurobarometer 344 – own calculations⁴³

⁴³ Using ZACAT online analysis - GESIS data archive (European Commission, 2012) - <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/SDESC2.asp?no=5232&search=Special Eurobarometer 344&search2=&DB=e&tab=0¬abs=&nf=1&af=&ll=10>

Overall in 2010, there were hardly any differences between men’s and women’s perceptions on the existence of legislation regarding the prevention of domestic violence against women. 60 per cent of men and 58 per cent of women in the EU believed laws on prevention existed, compared to about one fourth of both men and women who believed such laws did not exist and around 16% who did not know (not in figure).

Looking at the individual Member States, however, it is noticeable that in some countries there were larger differences in men’s and women’s perceptions.

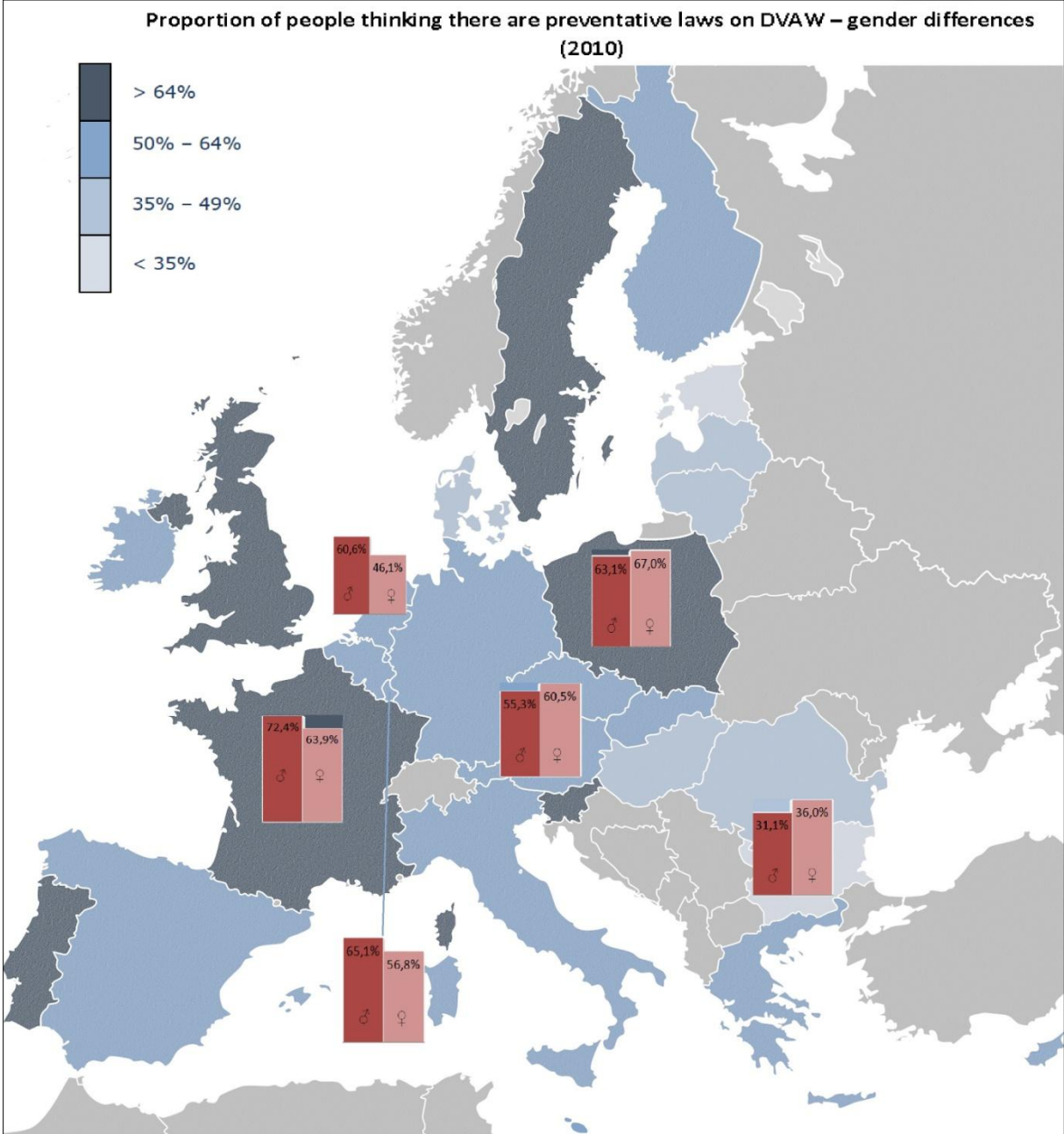


Figure 4: Awareness of laws on prevention of DVAW – EU citizens’ perceptions & individual country gender differences in 2010
 Source: Special Eurobarometer 344 – own calculations⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Using ZACAT online analysis - GESIS data archive (European Commission, 2012) - <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/SDESC2.asp?no=5232&search=SpecialEurobarometer344&search2=&DB=e&tab=0¬abs=&nf=1&af=&ll=10>

For example, as shown in figure 4, especially in the Netherlands, France and Luxembourg more men than women believed that legislation on prevention existed. In the Netherlands, this difference between men and women goes up to almost 15 per cent, with 61 per cent of Dutch men indicating they thought such laws existed, as opposed to 'only' 46 per cent of Dutch women. In France and Luxembourg, there are around 8,5 per cent more men than women who believed there were preventative laws.

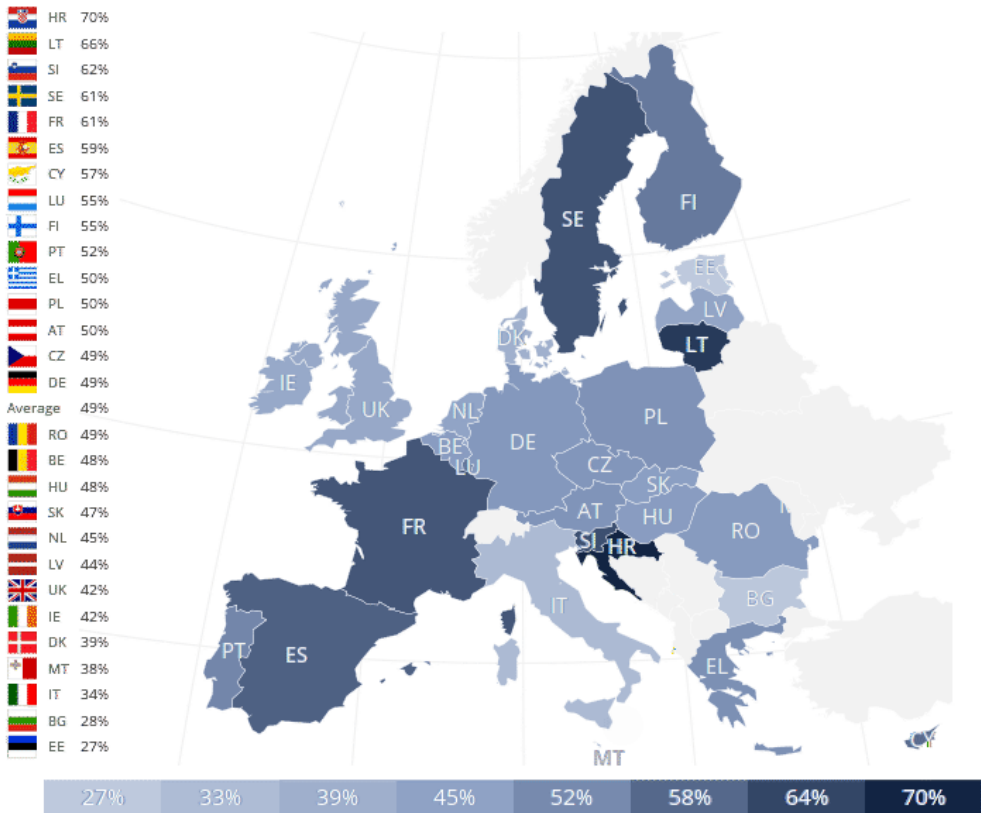
Also in countries such as Belgium, the United Kingdom, Finland, Portugal and Lithuania there are about 5-6% more men than women who believed that legislation on prevention of domestic violence against women existed. In other countries, the differences are even smaller or (almost) non-existent.

Austria, Bulgaria and Poland were the only countries where a slightly higher proportion of women, compared to men, believed that there existed such laws in their country.

Intermezzo – FRA Survey

As mentioned in chapter 2 of this report, on March 5th, FRA published the results of the first EU-wide survey on violence against women. In this survey, the respondents were also questioned about their awareness of any specific laws or political initiatives to prevent domestic violence against women in their country. Figure 5 below shows the results in more detail for all women across the 28 Member States who participated in the survey.

Proportion of women in 28 EU Member States thinking there are laws and political initiatives to prevent domestic violence against women



© FRA - All rights reserved - FRA gender-based violence against women survey dataset, 2012 | Yes | All : All

Figure 5: Awareness of laws on prevention of DVAW – EU women’s perceptions in 2012
 Source: FRA Survey – Data explorer: <http://fra.europa.eu/DVS/DVT/vaw.php>

Although the results of the FRA survey are not directly comparable with the Eurobarometer results, it is interesting to observe the differences between Member States in both surveys. Overall, when only looking at the response of female respondents, the results in the FRA survey are similar to those of the Eurobarometer survey: countries such as Estonia and Bulgaria have the lowest proportions of women thinking that there are legal measures or political initiatives in their country to prevent domestic violence against women, whereas Slovenia, Sweden and France are among the countries with the highest proportions of women thinking this.

Generally, the proportion of women who think that there are preventative laws in their countries is lower in the FRA survey, whereas the proportion of women indicating that they don't know whether or not this is the case is higher, compared to the proportions of women not knowing in the Eurobarometer. However, there are also some noticeable exceptions. For example, in the Eurobarometer survey, less than half of the Lithuanian women indicated they thought there were preventative laws in their country, one third of them thought there were not and more than one fourth did not know whether or not there existed any such laws. In the FRA survey, besides Croatia (which was not part of the EU27), Lithuania has the highest proportion of women thinking there are laws or political initiatives to prevent domestic violence against women, one fifth said they were not aware of any such laws or political initiatives and only 13 per cent of women did not know. Conversely, with 34 per cent of Italian women thinking that there are laws and political measures in the FRA survey, Italy is part of the lowest top three compared to the other EU Member States. Almost 60 per cent of women mentioned they do not think there are any measure and only 8 per cent said they don't know. In the Eurobarometer survey, almost 60 per cent of Italian women indicated they thought there existed preventative laws in their country, one fourth thought there were not and 17 per cent did not know.

Explanations for these differences are difficult and should be made with caution. In the case of Lithuania, for example, the difference between both surveys could be an indication that, since 2010, Lithuania has done a lot of efforts to raise awareness on the issue of domestic violence against women. This could, for example, (partly) be related to the installation and the work of EIGE in the capital, Vilnius, whose official launch of its activities took place on 16 June 2010⁴⁵. On the other hand, the (slight) difference in the wording of the question, the context of the survey (e.g. the Eurobarometer survey also included questions on completely other themes, such as humanitarian aid and mental well-being), and the methodology used (e.g. FRA used only specially trained female interviewers) may influence the results and, therefore, any conclusions would need to be drawn with caution.

4.2. Perceptions on involvement of the EU in combating domestic violence against women

On the question whether the European Union should get involved in combating violence against women, more than 90 per cent of respondents across the EU indicated it should (definitely or probably) get involved.

⁴⁵ For a brief overview of EIGE's history, see: <http://eige.europa.eu/content/brief-eige-history>

The map in figure 6 below shows the distribution across the EU of people strongly convinced that the EU should get involved in combating domestic violence against women.

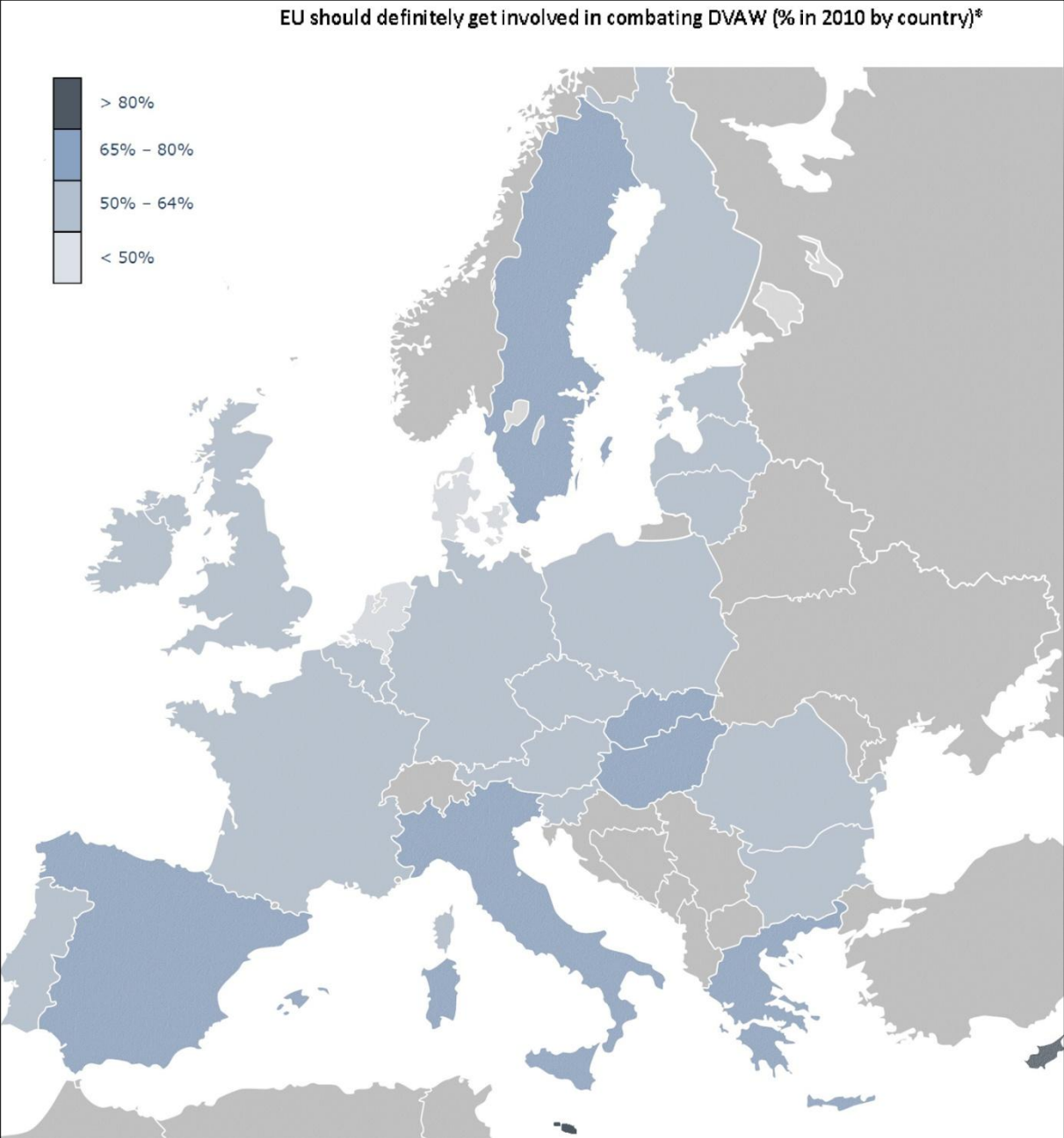


Figure 6: EU Involvement in DVAW – citizens’ perceptions in 2010
 Source: Special Eurobarometer 344 – own calculations based on percentages valid⁴⁶
 * Percentages “Yes, definitely”

In Cyprus, there seemed to be the strongest support for EU involvement, where 99 per cent of citizens were convinced that the EU should get involved, of which 95 per cent were *definitely* sure. Also, 97 per cent of Maltese citizens believed that the EU should get

⁴⁶ Using ZACAT online analysis - GESIS data archive (European Commission, 2012) - <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/SDESC2.asp?no=5232&search=Special Eurobarometer 344&search2=&DB=e&tab=0¬abs=&nf=1&af=&ll=10>

involved, although there were relatively more people who thought it should *probably* get involved (17% compared to 81% thinking it *definitely* should).

Danish and Dutch citizens, on the other hand, were the least convinced to get the EU involved in combating violence against women, although the proportions of people supporting this opinion was still pretty high. In Denmark, 42 per cent of the citizens indicated that the EU should *definitely* get involved and another 30 per cent thought it *probably* should. In the Netherlands, almost half (48%) of the respondents believed the EU should *definitely* get involved. Another fourth (24%) thought it *probably* should.

Beside people's opinion on the EU's involvement in combating domestic violence against women, the Eurobarometer survey also included a question on whether or not people were aware of already existing EU policies and measures regarding this issue.

Overall, only 13 per cent of EU citizens said to be aware, as opposed to 81 per cent who were not aware of such measures (not in figure). Especially in Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Greece, the levels of awareness were very low, with less than 10 per cent of people being aware of EU measures. In countries such as Luxembourg, Slovenia, Italy, Cyprus and Finland, however, about one fourth of respondents claimed to be aware of EU policies and measures to combat domestic violence against women. Almost one fifth of Maltese, Bulgarian and Romanian citizens admitted not knowing whether or not this was the case.

The 2010 Special Eurobarometer 344 report mentioned that, despite these low levels of awareness in 2010, they have risen since the 1999 survey in most countries.

Challenges related to data on domestic violence

Having reliable and comparable data on domestic violence, intimate partner violence and violence against women poses quite some challenges. The latest EUCPN toolbox on domestic violence showed that the theme of domestic violence also regularly reoccurs within the work of the EUCPN (EUCPN, 2013). During the Cyprus and the Irish Presidencies, in 2012-2013, some knowledge exchange sessions were organised and the Members were then asked to share their viewpoints on the major challenges their countries are faced with regard to the prevention of domestic violence. During these sessions, it was mentioned by various Member States that improved data collection and registration, which would support the development of more efficient policy measures, was considered to be a high priority, but a major challenge at the same time. Currently, all survey and administrative data in the EU and the EU Member States have their own specific limitations and challenges to overcome.

Although **survey data** may be a good way to overcome the problem of underestimation of the extent of violence against women based on police statistics, unadjusted standardised questions or definitions, especially on intimate and taboo subjects such as sexual violence, may lead to overall low response rates or a biased response. Therefore, it is crucial to recognise that measuring violence against women requires that surveys pay attention not only to the questions but to the training of the interviews, ensuring that the interviews are carried out in private and that female interviewers are used to interview women about their experiences – including sexual violence. The United Nations has recently made available guidelines for producing statistics on violence against women, which address many of these issues (United Nations 2013). Exclusion of certain types of violence or difficult to reach (but often vulnerable) groups of people, such as migrant women or women housed in victims shelters, may also generate underestimation of overall prevalence rates (WAVE, 2013a; 2013b).

Administrative data, such as **police and criminal justice data**, are known to underestimate the extent of the problem since not all victims are willing to report facts of violence to the authorities or to press charges. Moreover, police and criminal justice statistics often only reflect criminal offences, whereas to be able to effectively implement preventative measures for domestic violence, police data should include all domestic violence related contacts. Administrative data often lack the possibility to link variables, which is important to, for example, know the sex of both victim and perpetrator or the relationship between them (WAVE, 2013b). Furthermore, differences in the legal and criminal justice systems, in the definitions and registration, the lack of harmonisation at the EU level, etc. make it impossible to compare data across countries.

Also, **health service data** may suffer from 'underreporting', from the issue of incomparability and from gender bias (making the data gender neutral rather than gender sensitive). Medical professionals are often not sufficiently trained to detect cases of domestic violence and/or refer victims to victims assistance services.

As part of the PROTECT II project, co-financed by the DAPHNE Programme of the European Commission in 2011-12, WAVE published a *Guidance Report* with some recommendations on standards for administrative data on violence against women

(WAVE, 2013b)⁴⁷. According to this report, data standards for police and criminal justice data should include: sex and age of victim and perpetrator, information on the type of violence (according to criminal code/statute and criminal act respectively), information on the relationship between perpetrator and victim, on the geographical location, on repeat victimisation, information on the prosecutor's actions (dropped cases, court sanctions, out-of-court settlements) and on the number of women obtaining legal assistance through the process. The data standard for health services data should include (besides sex, age, relationship and geographical variables) information on the type of violence according to the International Classification of Diseases (version 10) and information on the severity of the injury (no injury, but fear, alarm, distress, minor/major injury, death).

Conclusions

Despite a lot of efforts being done in the EU and the EU Member States, collecting reliable and comparable survey and administrative data on domestic violence, intimate partner violence and violence against women is still a major challenge. Yet, having such data is important in order to gain insight into the extent of the problem across Europe and to guide policymakers in their decisions to prevent and combat domestic violence and support victims. The Gender Equality Index, which was launched by EIGE in June 2013, has also shown that violence represents an indispensable domain for the measurement of gender equality. However, due to a lack of harmonised and comparable gender indicators at the EU level, this domain remains empty⁴⁸.

This monitor report has highlighted the work of three European organisations, actively involved in trying to fill in some of the gaps related to data collection: Woman Against Violence Europe (WAVE), the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). Furthermore, data from the 1999 and 2010 Eurobarometer surveys were discussed and some challenges in the field of data collection listed.

With the launch of the first large-scale and EU-wide survey on violence against women, on 5 March 2014, FRA has taken a huge step forward in gaining in-depth knowledge on women's experiences of violence across Europe. These data can support policymakers and practitioners working in the field of (domestic) violence against women and intimate partner violence in their efforts to prevent and to tackle this issue.

At the same time, the work of EIGE and WAVE have shown that more efforts need to be done at the level of the Member States to install a clear legislative and policy framework, to regularly collect administrative data (e.g. police, criminal justice & health service data) according to a set of standards and to make them publically available.

Finally, the Eurobarometer – and just recently also the FRA – surveys have shown that, in a lot of EU Member States, there is still a lack of knowledge and awareness of the

⁴⁷ To read the full report, see: http://wave-network.org/sites/default/files/PROTECT%20II_Guidance%20Report%202012.pdf

⁴⁸ See full report: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/Gender-Equality-Index-Report.pdf>

general population on the existence of specific laws or political initiatives to prevent domestic violence against women. It means that some countries still have work to do on awareness raising among the general public in this matter.

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Annex: Summary characteristics of the data used

	Eurobarometer	FRA survey
Institution conducting the study	European Commission	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
Funding organisation	European Commission	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights/European Commission
Main focus	Surveys on public opinions and trends on a wide variety of issues related to the EU	Through the collection and analysis of data in the EU, provide expert advice to the institutions of the EU and the Member States on a range of <u>fundamental rights</u> issues
Methodology	Quantitative - Face to face interviews	Quantitative - Face to face interviews with 42.000 respondents in the EU28
Crime (prevention) topics measured	Humanitarian aid, domestic violence against women and mental well-being	Violence against women & intimate partner violence: physical, sexual and psychological violence, stalking, sexual harassment, violence in childhood, victimisation & attitudes towards and awareness about violence against women
Timing of data collection	On domestic violence against women: 1999 & 2010	2012
Geographical coverage	EU15 in 1999 & EU27 in 2010	EU28
Sample	26.800 respondents, men and women; ca. 1000 respondents/country - from 1.000 in Greece, Estonia & Poland to 1.573 in Germany - with the exception of Cyprus, Luxembourg & Malta, where about 500 respondents participated	42.000 respondents, only women; min. 1.500 women/country - from 1.500 in Estonia to 1.620 in the Czech Republic - with the exception of Luxembourg, where 908 women participated
Frequency	Standard & Special Eurobarometer are conducted twice a year; the Flash Eurobarometer and qualitative studies are conducted ad hoc	To be confirmed
Key publications	Eurobarometer 51.0: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_127_en.pdf	Reports, factsheet and technical report can be downloaded from: http://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/vaw-survey-main-results
	Special Eurobarometer 344: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_344_en.pdf	Online survey data explorer can be found on: http://fra.europa.eu/DVS/DVT/vaw.php
	Other Eurobarometer publications can be downloaded from: http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm	
Website (home page)	http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm	http://fra.europa.eu/en

ⁱ The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) is one of the EU's decentralised agencies. These agencies are set up to provide expert advice to the institutions of the EU and the Member States on a range of issues. FRA helps to ensure that the fundamental rights of people living in the EU are protected. Further information can be found on the FRA website (<http://fra.europa.eu/en>).

ii The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is an autonomous body of the European Union, established to contribute to and strengthen the promotion of gender equality, including gender mainstreaming in all EU policies and the resulting national policies, and the fight against discrimination based on sex, as well as to raise EU citizens' awareness of gender equality. Further information can be found on the EIGE website (<http://www.eige.europa.eu>).