



**FEM-UNITED**

united to prevent femicide in europe

**Comparative report on femicide research and  
data in five countries  
(Cyprus, Germany, Malta, Portugal, Spain)**

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## The FEM-UnitED Project

Femicide – the gender-motivated intentional killing of women – is not only the most extreme manifestation of gender-based violence against women but also the most violent manifestation of discrimination and gender inequality.

Despite the magnitude of the problem, and calls by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, data on femicide is not systematically collected in the EU and there is a lack of transnational tools for the study of Femicide (EIGE, 2021<sup>1</sup>). It is a notably under-researched subject and a common definition of femicide does not exist<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, harmful attitudes, behaviours and stereotypes, as well as a lack of understanding of the gendered dynamics of intimate partner femicides (IPF), impede prevention measures, including early and effective intervention.

The FEM-UnitED project aims to improve responses to intimate partner violence (IPV) and domestic violence (DV) in order to reduce harm to women and children, and prevent femicides. The project aims to develop system-wide responses to IPV by creating an evidence base for raised public awareness and fostering multi-disciplinary cooperation and capacity building, adopting a gender-specific victim-centred approach. In other words, FEM-UnitED is about creating evidence for collaborative policy change.

FEM-UnitED will reinforce and contribute to international efforts – such as the [European Observatory on Femicide](#) as well as the [Femicide Watch Platform](#) – by a) further developing quantitative and qualitative tools dealing with transnational and applied femicide data that measure the prevalence of femicide and related risk factors, b) identifying gaps in system responses to IPV/DV across partner countries, and c) initiating change through systematic stakeholder engagement that will result in specific commitments for action for femicide prevention based on the project's findings and results.

The FEM-UnitED partnership spans five EU countries and includes the University of Malta; the Cyprus University of Technology; the Institute for Empirical Sociological Research at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg; the University of Zaragoza; and the University of Porto. The project team also includes advocacy NGOs and women's specialist services such as the Mediterranean Institute of Gender studies (Cyprus), the Women's Rights Foundation (Malta), and the UMAR – União de Mulheres Alternativa e Resposta (Portugal).

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<sup>1</sup> EIGE (2021), *Measuring Femicide in the EU and Internationally: An assessment*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

<sup>2</sup> EIGE (2021), *Defining and Identifying Femicide: A literature review*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg

The FEM-UnitED team also includes advisory board members of the [European Observatory on Femicide \(EOF\)](#), the first European-wide network established with the aim of monitoring cases of femicide and contributing to the prevention of femicide. The EOF has been systematically collecting data on femicide in Europe since 2020. In this report, a comparative analysis of the findings of the five participating countries was carried out. It is based on previously prepared national reports of the FEM-UnitED project.

## **1. Femicide definition and methodology for data collection**

### **1.1 Femicide definition**

In national and international contexts, the term femicide is and was used to politicise the killing of women and girls by men on the basis of patriarchal beliefs, practices and power structures. Several definitions have been used, but all of them describe femicide similarly as the murder or killing of women because of their gender. The overall motive is to express the subordination of women and girls and to gain power and control over them.

The term femicide was first used by Diana H. Russell in 1976 at the first International Tribunal on Crimes against Women. Later, the concept of *feminicidio* was developed by the Mexican anthropologist and feminist Marcela Lagarde and has been used in Latin America since the 1990s in regard to the rise in extreme violence against women and killings of women in Mexico, and the failure of State authorities to prosecute and punish perpetrators. In United Nations documents femicide/feminicide appear since the early 2010s and are described as gender related killings of women that can take many forms (e.g. intimate partner killings, honour killings, killings as a result of sexual orientation or gender identity). In 2021, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime published a briefing on killings of women and girls by their intimate partner or other family members where the statistical framework used to measure gender-related killings of women and girls is explained<sup>3</sup>. In this brief it is recognised that while femicides have a clear conceptual meaning, it is challenging to operationalise it in statistical terms and even more in a comparable way. In this report, a list of characteristics of the killings, including motives, modus operandi and relationship between victim and perpetrator has been identified as indicative of femicides. Such non-exhaustive lists include the fact that women are killed by intimate partners and other family members, indication of previous record of harassment or violence against the victim, indication of illegal deprivation of victim's liberty, use of force and/or mutilation, body disposed of in a public space, indication of hate crime or sexual violence

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<sup>3</sup> UNDOC (2021). Data Matters 3: Killings of women and girls by their intimate partner or other family members. UNODC Research.

committed before the crime, victim working in the sex industry and victim of forms of illegal exploitation.

In Europe, the term Femicide, and the scientific work on definitions, data collection, cultural background and prevention, was broadly brought to the fore by the Cost Action on Femicide since 2014<sup>4</sup> and carried forward by the European Observatory on Femicide (EOF) and the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) since 2017/18. In 2021 EIGE has proposed a classification system for femicide based in their contexts and dividing them into: interpersonal femicide (e.g. intimate partner femicide), sexual (e.g. non-intimate sexual femicides), criminal (e.g. femicides in context of organised crime), cultural (e.g. femicides related to sexual orientation and gender identity) and political context (denial of healthcare for reproductive reasons leading to death)<sup>5</sup>.

The FEM-UnitED project that was developed within the European research context, uses the term femicide to refer to the intentional killings of women because they are women. Femicides are seen against the background of gender-specific power and hierarchy relations and patterns of control. As killings of women are most often committed by male partners or ex-partners, the project focuses mainly on intimate partner killings of women, i.e. intimate partner femicides (IPF). Broader definitions include all killings of women or girls, or killings of women and girls by family members and in the context of sexual violence, prostitution, honour killing or other gendered forms of violence against women.

For the data collection of FEM-UnitED, cases of women who had been killed in the country are first collected and then the killings by partners or ex-partners are analysed more in-depth. In the EOF, in addition to intimate partner femicides, further forms are investigated, such as killings in the context of sexual violence, hate crimes against women and killings by other family members.

## 1.2 Developing and measuring tools

Within the work of the COST Action on Femicide, the existing data and information on femicide across Europe was selected and analysed.<sup>6</sup> The official national data of the police and courts is not comparable between countries due to different legal definitions and/or different statistical frameworks for counting the cases.<sup>7</sup> Thus, more comparable and more in-depth-information

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<sup>4</sup> Weil S, Corradi C. & Naudi M. (eds.), 2018, *Femicide across Europe: Theory, research and prevention*, p. 17ff.

<sup>5</sup> EIGE (2021), *Femicide: A classification system*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Schröttle, M & Meshkova, K, 2018, 'Data collection: Challenges and opportunities' in S Weil, C Corradi & M Naudi (eds.), 2018, *Femicide across Europe: Theory, research and prevention*, pp.33-52.



on the cases was collected through the EOF focal points to further explore the roots and backgrounds of femicide and to get important information for effective prevention across Europe.<sup>8</sup>

A priority action of the EOF since 2019 was the development of two data collection tools - one for quantitative and one for qualitative data collection. These provided a commonly agreed variable selection and comparable data for Europe. These tools were piloted, with the support of the EOF's focal points, initially in seven European countries, and have been further developed since then. Currently, the EOF is using the tools in 23 EU countries and plans to expand it to all European countries. The final version of the data collection tool was tested and modified and is now used within the project FEM-UnitED as a base for the national and international reports of the five project countries who are preparing awareness raising campaigns and multi-professional training for the media, police, social workers and other stakeholders.

In the following section, the method of the quantitative and qualitative tools is described.

#### **a) Quantitative data collection tools**

Quantitative data collection is based on seven main categories (see Box 1) that include information about victims, perpetrators, characteristics of the crime and relevant background information. An excel database was used to gather information collected, and a detailed instructions sheet was provided for the national researchers to guide the data collection process. In-depth information on all cases of women killed, aged 16 years and over, was inserted in the database. Information sources used are media or police press release or other available sources.

In a later stage, data collected is verified through additional information from the police and justice system. Thus, the information gathered is periodically updated and verified by the research team.

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<sup>8</sup> [European Observatory on Femicide \(EOF\) \(cut.ac.cy\)](http://cut.ac.cy)

## **Box 1: Main categories of the quantitative data collection tool**

### **1. Basic Data**

Date and time of killing, as well as the city or region of killing.

### **2. Characteristics of victim(s)**

Age group, marital status, occupation, employment, minority ethnic background, country of origin and possible disabilities.

### **3. Additional victims**

Number and relationship of additional victims killed during the femicide.

### **4. Characteristics of perpetrator(s)**

Number of perpetrators, age-group, gender, marital status, occupation, minority ethnic background, country of origin, mental health problems and prior perpetration of violent crimes.

### **5. Victim-Perpetrator-Relationship**

Current/former intimate partner, marital status, other family member, other relationship specified.

### **6. Situational Factors**

Area of femicide, crime scene, method of killing, witnesses, pregnancy of the victim, context of sexual violence/rape, suicide of the perpetrator after the murder, prior domestic violence or abuse by same perpetrator, specified description on forms/intensity of violence, context of elder/ill/suicidal victim, prior stalking, other situational factors (e.g. alcohol, revenge, jealousy) or any other factors which are important to mention.

### **7. Background information on cases**

Incident after/during separation and weeks after separation, perpetrator threatened to kill victim prior to femicide (with threats specified), prior violence or threat known to the police, protection orders, previous convictions of the perpetrator for assaults/criminal codes, case known to the support system, case known to others, outcome of the trial, type of femicide and further comments.

The quantitative data collection tools functioned quite well in all countries that have tested and used them, though a lot of in-depth information is not available or only available after the trial and further investigations. In the next steps, the project should try to get more information on the cases through the support system, the trials and other sources with support of the State and multi-professional systems.

As through the EOF data collection, the number of cases to be analysed is growing from year to year, a higher case basis will be available for further in-depth statistical analysis on background, motives and institutional reactions in the next few years. For FEM-UnitED, data from 2019 and 2020 was collected in the five contributing countries (Cyprus, Germany, Malta, Portugal, and Spain).

## **b) Qualitative tools for the analysis of femicides**

Within the EOF and the FEM-UnitED project, further methods have been developed to obtain in-depth information and qualitative data regarding the cases and the societal and political background factors of femicides in the European countries.

Therefore, for each country the background situation is considered, collecting indicators and information regarding:

- Multi-professional network on preventing gender-based violence and the social responses to victims;
- Legal framework on gender-based violence;
- Effective measures for gender-based violence prevention;
- Institutional protocols on identifying and/or reporting gender-based violence;
- Gender values and data on gender (in)equality;
- Social and cultural norms around “the family” and around domestic and gender-based violence;
- Published studies on the prevalence of domestic violence in the countries;
- Published studies on the media portrayals of femicide and gender-based violence;
- Data on gender parity and differentials in politics/media/public figures at national level;
- Impact of COVID-19 in legislation, service provision, measures and prevalence of femicide;
- Other relevant background information.

Additionally, for a qualitative in-depth analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), specific case files have been studied in the countries to better explore the environmental social, legal and policy backgrounds that contribute to the femicides. More in-depth information on single cases was analysed considering four main dimensions or levels of analysis: individual, proximate, institutional and societal levels (see Box 2).<sup>9</sup> The main aim was to achieve an ecological understanding of femicide, and paving the way to propose relevant recommendations for prevention at these various levels.

The findings are presented in four levels, outlined in the following Box 2.

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<sup>9</sup> The dimensions of analysis are an adaptation of Bronfenbrenner’s (1974) ecological model.

## **Box 2: Main categories of the qualitative data collection tool**

### **1. Individual level**

At the Individual level, the data was collected with regard to the victim, the perpetrator and their relationship, and main characteristics and risk factors were analysed (e.g. previous separation or divorce, previous history of domestic violence, coercive control, victim's strategies of survival).

### **2. Proximate level**

The Proximate level includes people (family and friends) and social contexts (community, work, school) with which the victim and perpetrator have a daily and close association. Here, an analysis was carried out as to whether the social relations play an active or passive role regarding support to the victims. Furthermore, stereotypes and victim blaming discourses were explored.

### **3. Institutional level**

At the Institutional level, information was collected on the institutional responses (through police, the support system, youth protection officers and the judiciary systems) that were available and how these responses and institutions performed in the specific case in relation to reducing risks, ensuring the victims' safety and punishing the offender.

### **4. Societal level**

The Societal level contains those cultural, social and economic indicators that are perceptibly reflected in the specific cases. Here, different aspects of the patriarchal systems were analysed with regard to gender roles and gender equality, the social and economic situation of women, gender stereotypes and values. Furthermore, media reporting was included in the analysis as well.

## 2. The national legal and political backgrounds

### 2.1 The legal framework on gender-based violence and femicide

Although the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention, has been signed and ratified by all countries, the implementation of the legal provisions to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women and domestic violence at national level varies between them.

The legal frameworks on gender-based violence and femicide across Cyprus, Germany, Malta, Portugal and Spain seem to have both common features and some differences.

A notable and common fact in the five countries is that **there is no explicit legal definition for femicide or the killing of women on the basis of their gender**. Most forms of violence against women (including femicide cases) tend to be regulated by other legal provisions, and differently in each country. In **Cyprus**, a recent passage of the Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Law (2021) has extended the legal framework to all forms of gender-based violence against women, in line with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. However, there is no legal definition of the crime of the killing of women due to gender and cases of femicide may fall under other provisions of Cypriot criminal law, such as murder with intent and manslaughter. Additionally, the gender motivation of the killing does not constitute an aggravating factor when sentencing is imposed. In **Germany**, the killings of women fall under the general – gender neutral – provisions for murder, manslaughter and other offences against bodily integrity such as bodily harm resulting in death – with the exception of the offence of female genital mutilation. When applying the legal provisions, killings of women by intimate partners during or after separation are more often than other killings not classified as murder, but as manslaughter or crimes resulting in death. The law does not require an aggravation of punishment of the killing of women due to gender-based violence; base motives leading to higher penalties are recognized for crimes that, according to general moral evaluation, are on the lowest level.<sup>10</sup> In **Malta** the law does not provide an aggravation of punishment due to gender-based violence either. However, the Maltese law recognises aggravating circumstances in certain cases where the offence is related to gender, e.g. cases resulting in grievous bodily harm. In **Portugal**, unlike the other countries, if the killing is determined by hate due to sex or gender identity, as well as sexual orientation<sup>11</sup>, it can be

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<sup>10</sup> That was partly recognized for honour killings, or for killings in the context of extreme but unfounded jealousy, but not for gender-based killings and intimate partner killings in general. See also <https://www.bundestag.de/resource/blob/825404/7fae4ea94396d41013e650348a8fe7af/19-13-121f-data.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> As per number 2 of article 132, paragraph f, of the Criminal Code

qualified and thus classified as qualified homicide, which is the most serious type of homicide. **Spain** is the only country where femicide, although not explicitly defined in national law, is recognised as a form of gender based violence. **In Spain**, contrary to the other four countries, there are laws with a legal definition of femicide but only at regional levels.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Spain also has special courts dealing with Intimate Partner Violence cases. Since 2015, aggravating factors are considered, in cases of intimate and non-intimate femicide. Finally, **Portugal and Spain** are among the countries with clear legal definitions that classify a homicide by an (ex-) spouse or an (ex-) partner as an aggravating circumstance that leads to higher sanctions.

## 2.2 Former and current policies to prevent gender-based violence and femicide

**For all five countries**, former and current policies against gender-based exist, but **not specifically in relation to Femicide**. The relevant EU-policies are implemented differently from country to country at the national levels – in terms of prevention programmes, support and counselling centres, awareness raising and further measures.<sup>13</sup> In **Cyprus**, although there is currently no national action plan for the prevention of domestic violence, nor a national action plan on the prevention of gender-based violence / violence against women in general, the national action plan for equality between both women and men from 2019 to 2023 includes “Combating gender-based violence / Full respect for the provisions of the Istanbul Convention” as a key priority. However, it is not accompanied by clear quantitative and qualitative indicators for monitoring impact, nor by sufficient allocation of resources. **In Germany, the Federal Government** has developed and partly implemented two Action Plans in the past (1<sup>st</sup> Action Plan, 1999 & 2<sup>nd</sup> Action Plan, 2007)<sup>14</sup> and the new government is planning to prepare a third

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<sup>12</sup> A Number of regions such as Navarre, the Canary Islands, Andalusia and Castilla-La Mancha have included a definition of femicide in their regional laws. All four regions use similar definitions of femicide without limiting it to the context of intimate partnership.

<sup>13</sup>See for example:a) Council of Europe (2011a), Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention), *Council of Europe Treaty Series*, No 210, Istanbul; b) European Commission (2016), Proposal for a Council decision on the signing, on behalf of the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, Brussels, 4.3.2016 COM (2016) 111 final 2016/0063 (NLE); c) European Parliament and Council of the European Union (2012), Directive (2012/29/EU) establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, pp.57-73, European Union; d) European Commission (2020), *A Union of Equality: Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025*, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>

<sup>14</sup> a. The 1st strategic Action Plan was published in 1999 with the aim to combat violence against women; stakeholders were brought together at the federal level by the establishment of the Federal-State working group on «Domestic Violence»; b. The 2nd Action Plan was published in 2007 and contains a conception for implementing 135 measures to fight violence against women on all relevant areas in the fields of prevention, legislation, cooperation between institutions and projects, networking of support services, work with perpetrators, awareness raising among professionals and the general public, as well as international cooperation.

Action Plan in 2022. Furthermore, the Federal States have taken a number of preventive measures within the last 20 years to support victims of intimate partner violence and of sexual violence and to prevent violence against women. While some State and Federal State action plans address the full spectrum of violence against women and domestic violence, other strategies address only specific aspects within the scope of the Istanbul Convention. However, a comprehensive strategic and effective primary prevention policy on violence against women and domestic violence has not yet been developed at the national and regional levels. In theory, the action plans to combat violence against women, including working with perpetrators and risk management, work well. In practice, however, these measures seem to be only moderately effective. Nonetheless, it is worth pointing out that two important steps for the protection of women victims of domestic violence and stalking as well as victims of violence in general have been already taken: the Civil Protection Against Violence Act (2002) and the National Violence Against Women Helpline (2013).<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the government is now planning to improve the underfunding situation of women's shelters and to expand the perpetrator work in Germany; the lack of resources and funding for the counselling centres is still not sufficiently addressed. Recently, the NGO Network Istanbul Alliance (Bündnis Istanbul Konvention – BIK) documented several problem areas that need to be improved in order to meet the requirements of the convention in Germany.<sup>16</sup>

As for **the Maltese Law, it does not specifically deal with the prevention of gender-based violence**, but the relevant standards of the Istanbul Convention are enforceable as part of it.<sup>17</sup> Malta had a Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence Strategy and Action Plan - Vision for 2018 to 2020 focusing on legal and policy measures, data collection, research and training, awareness raising, protection and support for victims and children. A second strategy (2021 - 2022) was launched and is currently underway, focusing on raising awareness and streamlining measures to achieve faster processing of criminal proceedings.<sup>18</sup>

**In Portugal**, important steps have been taken to prevent gender-based violence since 1999 by the development of a National Plan against Domestic Violence in a four-year cycle up to the fifth National Plan 2014-2017. However, since 2018 a **National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030** (ENIND) provides a more comprehensive and strategic approach that promotes cooperation and coordination between all actors and sectors. It provides a basis for **three action plans** with objectives such as non-discrimination based on gender and gender equality, preventing and combating all forms of violence against women,

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/hilfetelefon/1.html>; [www.hilfetelefon.de](http://www.hilfetelefon.de)

<sup>16</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/alternative-report-2021-german-istanbul-convention-alliance/1680a1f12b>

<sup>17</sup> See: Article 22 of the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act, Chapter 58

<sup>18</sup> The strategy lays out avenues where further research into domestic violence is planned to ensure that current policies are safeguarding victims and not preventing them from coming forward; expanding services available to the victims and increasing training and efficiency when it comes to the investigation and prosecution of such cases.

gender-based violence (also relevant to femicide, even if it is not specifically addressed), domestic violence and female genital mutilation and combating discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sexual characteristics.

While **in Spain** there is no specific national action plan against femicide, there are current policies that outline a set of tools for prevention, awareness-raising and a multidisciplinary approach to violence against women. Depending on the political territorial organisation of Spain, there are Autonomous Communities (regions) with different competences / degrees of autonomy, for example in the areas of justice, education, tax collection or gender-based violence.<sup>19</sup> This creates a broader legal framework in addition to the National Law Against Gender-Based Violence.<sup>20</sup>

All national plans and strategies should specifically address the killing of women because of their gender. The State Pact Against Gender-Based Violence (ratified in 2017), called for the development of 212 actions over a five-year period, focusing on improving awareness and prevention, education and institutional response.

The comparable analysis indicates that, on a legal and state level, the Spanish government is significantly more proactive in addressing femicide than the other states.

### 2.3 Official reports on VAW and femicides and institutional protocols

According to the findings, there is **no holistic data collection on femicides published by the states in any of the five project countries. The information collected on violence against women and femicides varies from country to country** in terms of the **quality, completeness, registered data** by State or local police and the judiciary system or other authorities and their **availability to the public**.

**In Cyprus**, relevant statistical data with information (e.g. on characteristics of the victim and of the perpetrator, as well as contextual variables) for identifying femicides are collected by the

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<sup>19</sup> The autonomous community is a territorial entity that, within the Spanish constitutional legal system, is endowed with autonomy, with its own institutions and representatives and certain legislative, executive and administrative powers. Spain is organized into 17 Autonomous Communities and 2 cities with autonomy status, Ceuta and Melilla, Spanish exclaves bordered by the Mediterranean and Morocco 14 and 130 kilometers from the Iberian Peninsula. The complexity of the territorial organization requires significant effort to coordinate and exchange information between the different public administrations responsible for protecting and guaranteeing the human rights of women victims of gender-based violence, as well as their children.

<sup>20</sup> The delegation of competence made by the central state allows the regions to develop their own laws on gender violence where, for example, femicide is typified or the status of victim of violence is accredited by other means (such as a report from the Women's Institutes) without the need for a complaint.



police but are not available to the public; an official register or judicial data for monitoring cases of gender-based violence throughout the criminal proceedings is also not available. However, it is mandatory to report all cases (in addition to domestic violence) of child abuse to the Attorney General's Office<sup>21</sup> (all involved agencies must report every case within seven days). As for **Germany and Malta**, official police crime statistics are important baseline sources for homicides, as they provide gender-specific information (female victims in homicides perpetrated in the domestic context and/or by intimate partners). The **Maltese** Police as well as the State social work service, Agenzija Appogg (Domestic Violence Services), publishes figures on domestic violence annually. In **Germany**, an annual report "**Intimate Partner Violence – Crime Statistics Analysis**", published since 2016, documents all forms of violence against women (and men) committed by current and former partners, including homicides. Beyond the prevalence, the report does not include specific in-depth information on femicide cases. Another source of data in Germany is the court statistics on convicted offenders, but these are not compatible with police data and are also not specified for (intimate partner) killings of women by men. In **Portugal**, a number of reports are available, for example the government regularly publishes the Annual Report on Internal Security which includes statistics on domestic violence and homicides.<sup>22</sup> In addition, the State publishes quarterly reports on domestic violence,<sup>23</sup> including homicide in the context of domestic violence (reporting adult male and female victims as well as children). A report analysing Intimate Partner Homicides from 2014 to 2019 by the Judicial Police (2019) is also available. In addition, the Directorate General for Justice Policy regularly publishes data on court cases concerning offenders convicted of all types of intimate partner homicides. Another relevant contribution is regularly made by the Team for the Retrospective Analysis of Homicides in the Context of Domestic Violence (EARHVD), which performs an integrated and in-depth analysis of some homicides that occurred in the context of domestic violence and proposes recommendations for improving the system's responses to this form of violence.<sup>24</sup> In **Spain**, the General Council of Judicial Power (CGPJ) publishes annual data on violence against women in the judicial statistics which include homicide. The CGPJ's Observatory for Domestic Violence and GBV established in 2007 publishes an annual "Report on Dead Victims due to Domestic Violence and GBV within intimate relationships". This also includes homicides/killings of women aged over 15 years.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Law Services of the Republic of Cyprus, 1998, Circular on Mandatory Reporting. Available at: <http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/20131105/1383637995-24986.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Last report available at: <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc22/comunicacao/documento?i=relatorio-anual-de-seguranca-interna-2021>

<sup>23</sup> Last report available at: <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc22/comunicacao/documento?i=dados-trimestrais-de-crimes-de-violencia-domestica-1-trimestre-de-2021>

<sup>24</sup> Reports can be found at: <https://earhvd.sg.mai.gov.pt/RelatoriosRecomendacoes/Pages/default.aspx>

<sup>25</sup> For further information: <http://www.poderjudicial.es/cgpj/es/Temas/Violencia-domestica-y-de-genero/Actividad-del-Observatorio/Informes-de-violencia-domestica/>.

**A response to violence against women (but not specifically to femicides)** that requires the development of **protocols** – to achieve a comprehensive approach by the different public institutions and services involved (and to ensure better multi-institutional cooperation in prevention, protection and even evidence in proceedings) – **is (partly) provided** in all five countries. In some countries **the focus is more on violence within the family, while in others the focus is on intimate partner violence. Spain clearly focuses on gender-based violence.** However, **in all five countries** there are legally required protocols as well as guidelines or manuals. These are aimed at different sectors such as health, police or social services, schools etc. (e.g. in Cyprus and Portugal) or only some institutions or some federal States/regions at investigation level (Germany).

In order to draw attention to some specific aspects in the respective countries, the following information was found. In **Germany, protocols** are developed **at the federal State level** as framework concepts for the police investigation **to identify high-risk cases of domestic violence and stalking.** In several regions **multi-professional procedures are applied in high-risk cases** to stop the violence, protect the victims and contact the perpetrators in order to prevent further victimisation; nevertheless, this good practice is not implemented nationwide and the risk assessment has, until now, not included specific warning signs and risk factors to prevent femicides.

Currently, **Malta** has a number of **institutional protocols** in place. There is a protocol that regulates the procedures between the Malta Police Force, the Legal Aid Agency and Agenzija Appogg (Social Welfare Service) in cases of domestic violence. Another is a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between primary health care and Agenzija Appogg, which although apparently terminated, continues to be maintained unofficially as Agenzija Appogg, still receives referrals from primary health care. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was also signed between the Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) and the Directorate of Educational Services to address the protection and support of children affected by domestic violence.

**In Portugal,** there are **protocols for the implementation of training sessions with professionals** for the support of victims of domestic violence (including guidelines for police and judicial officers) as well as protocols between the Government, Municipalities and NGOs – for the **territorial expansion** of the National Support Network for Victims of Domestic Violence to extend specialised measures for victims of domestic violence living in small cities.<sup>26</sup>

**In all five countries of this project, risk assessment tools** are used (e.g. the DASH or currently the SARA tool in Malta or ‘VioGén’ in Spain), but only applied by specialised units of

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<sup>26</sup> Information available at: <https://www.cig.gov.pt/2020/07/assinados-protocolos-territorializacao-da-rede-nacional-apoio-as-vitimas-violencia-domestica/>

the criminal police (Cyprus), or by well-trained police officers (Germany and Portugal), or by trained social welfare staff (Malta). In **Cyprus**, however, there is no evaluation on the effectiveness of the risk assessment tools and also no specifications for femicides. In **Germany**, police officers (for example in Baden-Württemberg) use the ODARA (Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment) forecasting tool that calculates how the risk of a man who has already assaulted his partner once compares to similar offenders.<sup>27</sup> It calculates the probability that he will assault his partner again in the future. The ODARA tool includes items on previous domestic and non-domestic violence, threats and incarceration, on presence of children in the relationship, substance abuse and barriers to victim support. However, the tool is not sufficiently suitable for risk assessment for femicides, as femicides are often not accompanied by prior violence. In **Malta**, official risk assessments are carried out by trained social welfare staff who are called in by the police once a report on DV has been made. In **Portugal** there is a standard form for the risk assessment that is used by all police forces; in 2021, a single report form was also created to decrease the number of times that the victim has to speak about the violent situation, and therefore contributing to the minimisation of re-victimisation. **Spain** has created the 'VioGén' risk assessment tool – **to assess the risk faced by victims of gender-based violence** – that is carried out at police stations as soon as a complaint is filed. This current tool contains 35 questions that assess the risk in five levels. Each level is assigned protective measures and a timeframe for re-assessment. The scale for predicting the **Risk of Serious Violence against a Partner** (EPV-R) is used by the Ertzaintza agents in the Basque Country. Other examples include the Mossos d'Esquadra, who have created a special intervention protocol developed exclusively by them. **A forensic protocol** for the urgent assessment of the risk of gender-based violence by the judicial authority has also been reformulated. Currently, the Secretary of State for Security of the Ministry of the Interior is working on the development of a specific tool to predict the risk of homicide in intimate partner violence. Non-governmental organisations also use (their own) risk assessment tools and often work closely with specialised investigation teams (as is partly the case in Cyprus, Germany and Malta).

## 2.4 Research on femicides in the countries

**Femicide is the subject of empirical studies** to a greater or lesser extent **in nearly all the five countries**. These include quantitative, as well as qualitative, studies on femicides. Recent studies from **Cyprus** that have examined femicides in the context of intimate partner violence

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<sup>27</sup> Information available at: <https://rm.coe.int/state-report-from-germany/pdfa/16809f59c6> publication from 2020

have found that patriarchal gender roles form the basis for femicides.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the male perspective has prevailed in the media reporting of these cases. According to the findings, a prevention and intervention strategy is needed to reduce the number of women killed by men in Cyprus.<sup>29</sup> Although quantitative and qualitative research on violence against women has been conducted **in Germany** for many decades, there are only few studies and publications dealing with femicides or killings of women. The only systematic scientific analysis of intimate partner killings of women in Germany was conducted in 2009 by the criminologist Luise Greuel (2009)<sup>30</sup> on the basis of 69 cases through court protocols. It showed that the risk factors and warning signs were partly different from those of domestic violence (e.g. depressive and suicidal tendencies of the perpetrators, especially in the separation phase, extreme fixation on the partner, accompanied by stalking and/or threats of killing or suicide, also towards third parties, extreme retreat from the social and professional life). Furthermore, in half of the cases no prior domestic violence was reported or known to the police. Therefore, Greuel states that differentiated and integrated assessments of complex conflict and behaviour patterns are necessary for the prediction and prevention of femicides by intimate partners. In addition to scientific studies, in Germany several publications are currently published by journalists and activists containing information on motives and backgrounds of femicide cases, as well as on support and interventions prior to the crimes. As these case studies are not scientifically based, they still must be reviewed for validity.

**As for Malta**, although there is no specific research on femicide but on violence against women, the Commission on Domestic Violence had conducted a "nationwide survey on the prevalence of domestic violence against women in Malta and its impact on their employment prospects" (2011, p.1).<sup>31</sup> However, in 2016, an undergraduate criminology student was exploring the risk factors for femicide in Malta and found that controlling behaviour, jealousy, alienation and the end of a relationship are the most common risk factors for intimate partner femicide. The results further suggest that the courts' attitude towards domestic violence differs significantly from the national prevention policy at the time.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Kapardis, A., Costanza Baldry, A. and Konstantinou, M., 2017, "A Qualitative Study of Intimate Partner Femicide and Orphans in Cyprus", *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 13(3):80-100. Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/34479718/A\\_Qualitative\\_Study\\_of\\_Intimate\\_Partner\\_Femicide\\_and\\_Orphans\\_in\\_Cyprus](https://www.academia.edu/34479718/A_Qualitative_Study_of_Intimate_Partner_Femicide_and_Orphans_in_Cyprus).

<sup>29</sup> Kouta, C., Kofou, E. & Zorba, A.. (2019). Femicide in Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities in Cyprus: A pilot study, *Women's Studies International Forum*, Volume 77. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0277539519302444>.

<sup>30</sup> Information available at: [https://polizei.nrw/sites/default/files/2016-11/Gewaltesk\\_Forschungsproj\\_lang.pdf](https://polizei.nrw/sites/default/files/2016-11/Gewaltesk_Forschungsproj_lang.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Information available at: [https://fsws.gov.mt/en/fsws/Documents/Research/National%20Reports%20-%20Others/commission\\_dv\\_nationwide\\_research\\_study\\_prevalance\\_impact\\_employment\\_prospects.pdf](https://fsws.gov.mt/en/fsws/Documents/Research/National%20Reports%20-%20Others/commission_dv_nationwide_research_study_prevalance_impact_employment_prospects.pdf)

<sup>32</sup> Information available at: <https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/19132>

Research on homicide in intimate relationships and femicides **is fully in focus in recent years in Portugal** (Potendeira & Iglesias, 2019)<sup>33</sup>: There are a number of publications including on the predictors of homicide in intimate relationships<sup>34</sup> and on symmetries between homicides in intimate relationships committed by men and women (Cunha & Concalves, 2019).<sup>35</sup> A national forensic study on fatal intimate partner violence against women concluded that identifying early violence and conducting a risk assessment are essential for intervention (Pereira et al., 2013).<sup>36</sup> In addition, other important studies on intimate partner sentencing have been conducted by Portuguese courts (Agra et al., 2015).<sup>37</sup>

**In Spain**, important information is provided **at the research level on femicide** by the institution **Feminicidio.net**.<sup>38</sup> Studies which were collected by the Government Delegation against gender-based violence refer **to partial aspects and specific groups of women suffering violence**.<sup>39</sup> The Observatory against Domestic and Gender Violence of the General Council of the Judiciary produces annual reports in which it analysis the cases of fatal victims in the domestic sphere since 2001 in order to know whether the victims had received an adequate judicial response in the event that they had previously denounced the perpetrator. From 2009 onwards, the reports focus on the analysis of fatal victims in the intimate partner or ex-partner environment and include a specific study of the judicial proceedings when complaints had been filed or proceedings had been carried out ex-officio prior to the result of the death. Specific

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<sup>33</sup> See, for example: Pontedeira, C. & Iglesias, C. (2019). Fear of crime and intimate femicide: theoretical considerations. *Psiquiatria, Psicologia e Justiça*, n 16, 93-120. Available at: [http://www.spppj.com/uploads/nue769\\_mero\\_.6.pdf](http://www.spppj.com/uploads/nue769_mero_.6.pdf)

<sup>34</sup> Cunha, O. S., & Gonçalves, R. A. (2019). Predictors of intimate partner homicide in a sample of Portuguese male domestic offenders. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 34(12), 2573-2598. Available at:

[https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0886260516662304?casa\\_token=A8dGBHf9pO8AAAAA%3AcNAUN4pQ2EUjhhDzRj\\_ie\\_qSXb3RoHCIfZdWtjuvj5jwQ\\_mnQRI5fY-tuisM8d2saPYmq5BMpLD](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0886260516662304?casa_token=A8dGBHf9pO8AAAAA%3AcNAUN4pQ2EUjhhDzRj_ie_qSXb3RoHCIfZdWtjuvj5jwQ_mnQRI5fY-tuisM8d2saPYmq5BMpLD)

<sup>35</sup> Matias, A., Gonçalves, M., Soeiro, C., & Matos, M. (2020). Intimate Partner Homicide in Portugal: What Are the (As) Symmetries Between Men and Women?. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, 1-24. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-020-09469-w>

<sup>36</sup> Pereira, A. R., Vieira, D. N., & Magalhães, T. (2013). Fatal intimate partner violence against women in Portugal: a forensic medical national study. *Journal of forensic and legal medicine*, 20(8), 1099-1107. Available at:

[https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1752928X13002540?casa\\_token=lvxbT9X3yF8AAA:1KbKEVRvGIAG0fNfRN-pGc1QwlCid0zwA1WGRf8L4cpEawkW0p\\_4SxvGLZ0CaFIABApePjw6g](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1752928X13002540?casa_token=lvxbT9X3yF8AAA:1KbKEVRvGIAG0fNfRN-pGc1QwlCid0zwA1WGRf8L4cpEawkW0p_4SxvGLZ0CaFIABApePjw6g)

<sup>37</sup> Agra, C., Quintas, J. Sousa, P., & Leite, A. (2015). Homicídios conjugais: estudo avaliativo das decisões judiciais. *CIG: Coleção estudos de género*, nº11. Available at: <https://repositorio-aberto.up.pt/bitstream/10216/83304/2/125824.pdf>

<sup>38</sup> Feminicidio.net is an observatory of organised civil society that was created with the aim of documenting and making femicide visible, through a methodology designed specifically for this purpose and thanks to the work of professional experts in the field. <https://feminicidio.net/category/informes-y-cifras/>

<sup>39</sup> However, reports for more than a decade are available on the Delegation's website as well as studies on femicide from 2019 to 2021.

Available in:

[https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/estudios/investigaciones/home\\_Copy.htm](https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/estudios/investigaciones/home_Copy.htm)

data on a case-by-case basis, as well as general patterns and judicial responses in each case, are included in these reports.

**Each of the five project countries form part of the EOF network research group since 2018** which collects statistical data and in-depth case information on the extent of femicide or killing of women because of their gender in order to analyse evidence on ways to prevent femicides. The EOF, until now, has conducted national and regional studies, but is planning to publish a comparable study based on all country data from 2019 – 2021 in the next year.

## 2.5 The support and intervention systems

**All five countries have established support and intervention systems** mainly related to the **prevention of violence against women** (and not specifically to the prevention of femicide), but the **integrated strategies are still often insufficient to address the needs of victims** in three of the five countries (Cyprus, Germany and Malta).

To start with, **all five countries have established several women's shelters** (e.g. in Germany with varying regional densities)<sup>40</sup> **and counselling centres** (mostly non-governmental organisations) for women affected by violence and their children. In parallel, **each country has several institutions providing the relevant contact information as well as national telephone-helplines** that are supported by psychologists and social workers, are available free of charge around the clock, 365 days a year. They provide, in each country, counselling support for domestic violence victims or others, information about other or regional services dealing with domestic violence, and information about the victim's legal rights and choices.

**Nevertheless, there are also some differences pertaining to each country: in Cyprus,** while there is a lack of systematic training of frontline professionals, inadequate inter-agency cooperation and coordination between services and the absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, there have also been good developments in recent years (in response to the Istanbul Convention). Recently, specialised teams have been set up in the Criminal Investigations Department of the Police in each district that work in close collaboration with the Woman's House.<sup>41</sup> The Woman's House is a multiagency and multi-professional crisis centre for victims of VAW and their children, providing integrated specialised services to women and

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<sup>40</sup> Support centres are run by welfare organisations and registered autonomous women's associations, or by local authorities; Information available at:

<https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/gleichstellung/frauen-vor-gewalt-schuetzen/hilfe-und-vernetzung/hilfesystem-und-vernetzungsstellen-80640>

<sup>41</sup> Information available at:

<http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/cgibin/hweb?-V=womanshouse& FSECTION=10200&-dwomanshouse.html&-Sr& VSECTION=10200& VCATEGORY=0000& VCATEGORY=0000>.

girls who are victims of violence against women.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, the Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Office of the Police is responsible for monitoring cases of domestic violence/violence in the family reported to police stations throughout Cyprus and or promoting cooperation with other relevant government stakeholders and NGOs for the effective and comprehensive management of specific incidents.<sup>43</sup> **Germany** provides **specialised police units** for dealing with gender-based and/or domestic violence in several cities or regions, but not nationwide. With the help of questionnaires or checklists for measures against domestic violence, the police officers assess the risk situation. This is crucial for further police intervention (in case of an escalation of violence that can lead to femicide) as well as for the victim's further support in cooperation with counselling and intervention centres.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, the scope of the existing risk assessment tools is limited and they are not infallible instruments to effectively prevent femicides. Compared to the other four countries, Germany seems to have a differentiated support and intervention system established at the State, federal and local levels in response to the issue. Even though there is great variety in the support offered to women affected by violence, many women are not able to access immediate support and protection because the system does not have sufficient resources with regard to place in women's shelters and capacities in the support centres. Furthermore, there is no long-term state funding for the facilities.<sup>45</sup> In **Malta and Portugal**, a number of **support and intervention systems** are in place, with services provided by both the State and NGOs. Besides national telephone helplines and counselling centres, these also include social work facilities (Malta) and residential facilities (shelters), the latter also providing continuous support and aftercare for the women and children who use their services in Malta. However, telephone helpline services in Malta do not meet the requirements of the Istanbul Convention. In **Portugal**, it has to be mentioned, that the National Support Network for Domestic Violence Victims (RNAVVD) offers various types of support and accommodation to victims nationwide<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Advisory Committee on Preventing and Combating Violence in the Family;  
<http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/cgibin/hweb?-A=1&-V=profile>.

<sup>43</sup> It is more of a coordinating body. Their main responsibilities are: 1. Monitoring cases / incidents of domestic violence and child abuse reported to police stations throughout Cyprus; 2. Cooperation with other relevant government stakeholders and NGOs for the effective and comprehensive management of specific incidents; 3. Investigation of cases of sexual abuse of children (under 18 years old) reported on a nationwide scale, by the Special Investigation Team under the Office; 4. Data collection of incidents of domestic violence, for which reports / complaints are submitted to police stations all over Cyprus.

<sup>44</sup><https://www.buendnis-istanbul-konvention.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Alternativbericht-BIK-2021.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Information available at:

<https://www.buendnis-istanbul-konvention.de/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Alternativbericht-BIK-2021.pdf> and <https://rm.coe.int/shadow-report-germany-solwodi/16809f7cfd>

<sup>46</sup> The most relevant services at national level are: *Atención telefónica* 016 (Telephone service for information, legal advice and immediate psychosocial care by specialised staff for all forms of violence against women), *ATEMPRO* (Telephone Service of Attention and Protection for victims of gender violence, a type of service that offers victims of gender violence immediate attention, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year and wherever they are. *Monitoring System by Telematic Means of the Measures and Sentences of Distancing in the field of Gender Violence* (the System is articulated in accordance with

which address all victims, as well as a few centres to support victims with a migrant background. Support centres, specifically for LGBTI victims of domestic and gender-based violence, are also run by NGOs. As for **Spain**, the support system at State level for the comprehensive monitoring of cases of gender-based violence sets out the following measures for support and intervention: bringing together the different public institutions, integrating all the information considered necessary, risk forecasting taking into account the level of risk, national territorial monitoring and protection, implementing prevention measures and building a dense network that makes it possible to monitor and protect abused women and their children in every part of the national territory in a rapid, comprehensive and effective manner.<sup>47</sup> Also in this regard it seems that Spain is the most active in implementing effective intervention, support and prevention measures to safeguard women (and children) from extreme violence and femicide.

Regarding the budget dedicated to support services, there is currently no information available for all project countries that would allow a comparison to be made, but it seems that Spain spends the highest amount of money, more than 200 million euros, just for prevention.<sup>48</sup>

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the guidelines and rules that, where appropriate, have been established by the Judicial Authority that agrees to its use and in accordance with the provisions of two Protocols of Action. *On-call service* and *permanent legal advice*. *Psychological assistance* and *care* for victims and the minors accompanying them. *Crisis care* (after a femicide). *Employment counselling*. *Accommodation resources*: at the level of the autonomous communities: a network of alternative accommodation for women victims of violence who, for various reasons, have to leave their homes. There are three types of accommodation: Emergency Centres, shelters and supervised flats. Economic aid for the social integration of victims of violence. See detailed information on support centres at: <https://www.cig.gov.pt/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Rede-Nacional-de-Apoio-%C3%A0s-Vitimas-de-violencia-dom%C3%A9stica.pdf>

<sup>47</sup> Access to the exclusive website "Sistema del Seguimiento Integral en los casos de Violencia de Género (Sistema Viogen)" of the Secretaría de Estado de Seguridad del Ministerio del Interior; <http://www.interior.gob.es/web/servicios-al-ciudadano/violencia-contra-la-mujer/sistema-viogen>

<sup>48</sup> As for **Spain**, the budget of the Ministry of Equality is 459 million euros in 2021 and 525 million euros in 2022. Of this amount, 209 million euros in 2022 is earmarked for the prevention of gender-based violence as a direct item, a change of 16.1 % compared to the previous year; there is no specific information on support centres. The rest of the budget is earmarked for Equal Opportunities, Equality and Diversity, Recovery and Resilience Mechanisms, and Directorate and General Equality Services. As for **Germany**, under the Federal Government's programme - "Together against Violence against Women" - the Federal Ministry for Women's Affairs intends to make 135 million euros available from 2020 up to and including 2023 for the expansion of the capacities of women's shelters, barrier-free access to the existing women's and counselling centres, support of the development of transitional services, and the promotion of model projects. See <http://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/themen/gleichstellung/frauen-vor-gewalt-schuetzen/hilfe-und-vernetzung/hilfesystem-und-vernetzungsstellen-80640>

In **Cyprus**, based on the government's report to GREVIO, in 2020 the government provided financing of EUR 762,069 to the support system, which includes the budget for the Woman's House. SPAVO, an NGO providing shelter and counselling services to victims, received an additional EUR 25,000 from the government (Report 2021, p.58; information available at: <http://www.familyviolence.gov.cy/upload/20211004/1633345154-06580.pdf>).

In **Portugal**, the Government allocated 6.7 millions on domestic violence prevention and intervention



## 2.6 Multi-professional networks for the prevention of gender-based violence and femicides

**A more coordinated and specialised response to violence against women and domestic violence** (but not specifically to femicides) **in terms of multiprofessional networks is provided in all compared countries. A point of difference between the countries**, however – according to the desk research findings – **is the level of cooperation or the degree of working together** among professionals (e.g. in the investigation stage) in multiprofessional networks. There are countries that have already achieved quite good levels of cooperation and coordination of professionals in high-level meetings (such as roundtables, workshops, conferences etc.) between representatives of institutions from different sectors with remarkable impact in the past years (Cyprus, Germany, Spain). **In Cyprus**, the Woman's House was established in 2020 as a result of the efforts of the Advisory Committee on Preventing and Combating Violence in the Family. **In Germany**, with a long tradition regarding roundtables, there are already multiprofessional networks at regional and municipal levels for dealing generally with gender-based violence and violence against women, but a nationwide systematic procedure for improved multiprofessional interventions **in high-risk cases** to prevent femicides is still missing. Various framework conceptions have been developed by the police on the federal state and regional levels to identify and prevent high-risk cases of domestic violence and stalking, and to implement effective multidisciplinary intervention measures (including NGOs support services and perpetrator work), but they are not dealing with specific risk assessments of femicides, nor are they implemented nationwide. The nationwide networking of women's counselling centres and women's shelters in Germany is also noteworthy due to the funding for their cooperation and networking centres by the State. Furthermore, the new government has plans announced to set up a national coordination group with representatives of the states, the federal states and the municipalities in order to implement the Istanbul Convention and network important policy makers from 2022 on.

Other countries have more recently established inter-agency networks to address the challenges of domestic violence and gender-based violence (Malta, Portugal). Such cases are dealt with in Malta within a multi-professional network consisting of a specialised police force, Legal Aid Malta (Ministry of Justice) and Agenzija Appogg (Social Welfare Service) to support victims of domestic violence. Furthermore, a new strategy issued by the Commission on

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in 2020; information available at: [https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/pais/orcamento-disponibiliza-67-milhoes-de-euros-para-combater-a-violencia-domestica\\_a1200136](https://www.rtp.pt/noticias/pais/orcamento-disponibiliza-67-milhoes-de-euros-para-combater-a-violencia-domestica_a1200136)

Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence (CGBDV) for the period 2021-2022 will seek multidisciplinary cooperation and coordination between different institutions, including civil society. **In Portugal**, many improvements in police and judicial measures to support victims of domestic violence have been achieved in recent years, as evidenced by documents, protocols and initiatives at national and local levels (e.g., Manual for the intervention in domestic violence in the 72 hours following a report).

**In Spain**, there are also representatives of Associations in cooperation with the Government Delegation for Gender Violence (including Femicide), and a broad support multiprofessional counselling network at psychological, social, legal and work levels (which includes a large number of organisations within the care and intervention network). It is also worth mentioning the importance of local institutions and social services at the local level. In some municipalities, interagency prevention concepts have already been implemented.

## 2.7 Femicide and VAW in the media

**In nearly all countries** – except for Malta – **studies on the portrayal of violence against women or Femicide in the media have been conducted**. There is increasing discussion with regard to the way the media reports on such cases, also in the context of ethical considerations, in all the project countries. In the media coverage of femicides in **Cyprus**, according to a study<sup>49</sup>, there is a lack of understanding of its gender-specific dimensions and the link with violence against women and domestic violence. Furthermore, the Cypriot media often adopt and project a male perspective and the perpetrator's point of view, and usually employ a sexist, victim blaming language, normalising the violence against women committed by men.<sup>50</sup> Lately, in Cyprus an increased attention to femicide and more frequent use of the term is noted, particularly when reporting on international news.<sup>51</sup>

As for **Germany**, killings of women have for a long time been sensationalised by the media and partly romanticised when phrases such as "crimes of passion", "love tragedies" or "family tragedies" were used. They were perceived as a private matter or an individual case rather than as part of a general social and gender-based problem.<sup>52</sup> This has improved in the last two

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<sup>49</sup> A study of media portrayals of femicides committed in the Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities in Cyprus during the period 2010-2016; the analysis of the articles was based on the main newspapers of the two communities for the period between 2010 and 2017.

<sup>50</sup> Kouta, C., Kofou, E. and Zorba, A., 2019, Femicide in Greek-Cypriot and Turkish-Cypriot communities in Cyprus: A pilot study, Women's Studies International Forum, Volume 77. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0277539519302444>.

<sup>51</sup> For example, during coverage of International Women's Day: Sigmalive News, "Διαδηλώσεις στην Κωνσταντινούπολη για τη βία σε βάρος των γυναικών", 08.03.2021; ANT1.com.cy, "Μεξικό: 19 τραυματισμοί σε επεισόδια κατά την κινητοποίηση για την Ημέρα της Γυναίκας", 09.03.2021; increased media attention is also a result of NGO action and activist pressure.

<sup>52</sup> (Goldenberg, 2020): [https://www.djb.de/fileadmin/user\\_upload/presse/stellungnahmen/st19-24\\_IK1\\_Femizide.pdf](https://www.djb.de/fileadmin/user_upload/presse/stellungnahmen/st19-24_IK1_Femizide.pdf)

years with more and more female journalists politicising the murder of women by their partners, using the term Femicide and reporting on the patriarchal and gendered backgrounds of the crimes, which is also a result of the women's movement and of the sensitisation work of the EOF. Nevertheless, the findings of a current study on media reporting on violence against women<sup>53</sup> show that reporting on individual cases is still dominant, instead of reporting on violence against women as a structural problem. Most media coverage is on extreme cases such as femicides and severe physical violence, while issues such as stalking and sexual harassment receive less attention, even though the latter are more common in society. This too is currently changing due to the intensified awareness raising by the women's movement and gender violence research on sexual harassment in the last two to three years. It seems that various actions and campaigns of NGOs and activist researchers had a positive effect on this.<sup>54</sup>

At State level, both **Malta** (since 2017)<sup>55</sup> and **Portugal** (since 2019)<sup>56</sup> have already developed guidelines with relevant and practical information for journalists and media content producers on reporting on domestic violence to ensure that reporting does not promote violence (by portraying it in an irresponsible manner), that protects victims and highlights available positive action and protection measures.

**A Portuguese study** on the portrayal of domestic violence in prime time news found that media discourse can impact the perpetuation of stereotypes about gender-based violence and intimate partner violence. In this context, important guidelines have been developed for professionals reporting on domestic violence cases (Portuguese Regulatory Authority for the Media).<sup>57</sup>

In **Spain**, on the other hand, the media themselves have produced guidelines for their actions (e.g. Diario Público, La Marea, eldiario.es, etc.) dealing with gender-based violence. At State level, agreements have been signed with the main audiovisual groups to improve the

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<sup>53</sup> Christine Meltzer (2021): [https://www.otto-brenner-stiftung.de/fileadmin/user\\_data/stiftung/02\\_Wissenschaftsportal/03\\_Publikationen/AP47\\_Tragische\\_Einzelfaelle.pdf](https://www.otto-brenner-stiftung.de/fileadmin/user_data/stiftung/02_Wissenschaftsportal/03_Publikationen/AP47_Tragische_Einzelfaelle.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> 2020 and 2021 there has been an increased attention to femicide as a consequence of NGO pressure and public relations of projects directed to the prevention of femicide like the EOF, the "one billion raising" campaign and the NGO campaign "Keine mehr" (no more, ni uno más in Spanish). These actions lead to more critical media reporting on the gender dimensions and patriarchal backgrounds of femicides.

<sup>55</sup> Published by the Commission on Domestic violence, in collaboration with the Malta Broadcasting Authority; <https://stopviolence.gov.mt/en/Documents/Docs/Reporting%20Domestic%20Violence%20-%20consultation%20document.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> Published by State Secretariat for Citizenship and Equality; <https://www.cig.gov.pt/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/GuiDeBoasPraticas.pdf>

<sup>57</sup> Available at (summary in English): <https://www.erc.pt/pt/estudos-e-publicacoes/representacao-de-genero/estudo-representacoes-da-violencia-domestica-nos-telejornais-de-horario-nobre>

situation.<sup>58</sup> Especially in the last ten years, there has been a clear change, namely that the media - mainly the print media - usually have specialised teams to deal with these issues, and also national and regional conferences and congresses work on the subject. There is a lot of media coverage of gender-based violence in Spain. Although progress has been made in television news programmes, for example by including a reference to the quick dial service number 016 after each report of a femicide, introducing key terms and giving information about the sentences imposed on the perpetrators, there is still a lot of work to be done.

## 2.8 Gender values and gender equality in the countries as a background to femicides

Given that **violence against women and girls is not only a cause but also a consequence of gender inequality**, it can also be seen as **an expression of the structural inequalities between women and men**. It is reinforced by the presence of various circumstances like patriarchal structures or an **instrument of power, control and dominance**, just to name a few of them. **All countries** have **in common** that **gender inequality** and more or less **patriarchal attitudes** and **stereotypes still generally exist in the societies**. In **Cyprus and Germany**, there have been some positive developments, but not enough progress has been made in regard to gender (in)equality; sexist stereotypes still persist in social, economic and political life. In **Germany**, girls and women have already achieved a high level of education in recent decades and there are successively better working conditions for them, but there is still no gender equality in the most important resources at the above-mentioned reference levels; therefore, traditional tasks and role divisions regarding the role of men and women, boys and girls in the family and society show that inequality persists. In **Cyprus**, despite impressive legislative achievements in the area of gender equality, mechanisms for effective implementation are lacking, leading to a fragmented approach with different bodies, mechanisms, and policies often overlapping, a lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and insufficient allocation of financial and human resources.<sup>59</sup> In **Malta**, notwithstanding high levels of women graduates, society is still predominantly patriarchal. It has been noted that patriarchal values and attitudes still prevail in Malta, which hinder women in accessing support.<sup>60</sup> Women in Malta are still relatively financially constrained, even if they have their

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<sup>58</sup>Available in

<https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/sensibilizacionConcienciacion/laSociedad/mediosComunicacion/home.htm>

<sup>59</sup> Kofou, E., Kouta, C., Pavlou, S., Shakou, A. (2021). Country report on femicide research and data: CYPRUS. Nicosia: Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies.

<sup>60</sup> Naudi, M., Clarke, M., Saliba, H. (2018). Full Cooperation: Zero Violence Barriers to help-seeking in Gender-Based Violence against Women: A Research Study. University of Malta & Ministry for European Affairs & Equality. Available at:

own independent income, as their income is usually used for the family's daily needs, leaving them disproportionately financially disadvantaged.<sup>61</sup> **Portugal and Spain** also have in common that they are countries with a family-centred tradition that relies heavily on family support and retains a value rooted in the notion of the 'pater familias', especially in structures such as the justice system.<sup>62</sup> **In Portugal**, some national laws reflect family values and those enshrined in the EU and most Western societies. Most of these laws target the 'traditional' Portuguese family of heterosexual dual-earner couples with minor children to help them reconcile family and work. The endorsement of traditional gendered values is still prevalent and influences gender inequality, for instance reflected in the gender wage gap and in the fact of women being the ones who assume most of family and household work (Matias, Monteiro, & Coimbra, 2021).

Furthermore, **EIGE's Gender Equality Index (GEI)** shows for all five countries that they are still far from equal living conditions and resources for women and men, but improvements are emerging. Cyprus currently ranks 57.0 on the Gender Equality Index, 11.0 points below the EU average score.<sup>63</sup> Germany's rank on the Gender Equality Index has improved since 2010 and currently stands at 68.6 points.<sup>64</sup> Malta's score is currently 65.0 and has increased by 1.6 points since 2018.<sup>65</sup> Portugal currently ranks at 62.2 on the Gender Equality Index,<sup>66</sup> and Spain is above the Gender Equality Index average at 73.7.<sup>67</sup>

In regard to femicides, both aspects are relevant: on the one hand traditional gender relations are a risk for violence against women and femicide, on the other hand, the dynamic of change, without a change in men's perception of gender roles, may also lead to an increased risk of femicides when women decide to abandon their controlling and dominant partners. This

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[https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:9yESLe7m548J:https://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants/results/daphne-toolkit/file/3383/download\\_en%3Ftoken%3DT-Fho\\_Ll+&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=mt](https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:9yESLe7m548J:https://ec.europa.eu/justice/grants/results/daphne-toolkit/file/3383/download_en%3Ftoken%3DT-Fho_Ll+&cd=3&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=mt)

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Reference selection: Bodelón, E. (2010). Gender equality laws in Spain and Europe: Towards a new citizenship? *Yearbook of Philosophy of Law*, (26), 85-106; Larrauri, E. (2009). Sound, silent and forgotten inequalities: gender and criminal law. *Yearbook of the Faculty of Law of the Autonomous University of Madrid*, 13, 37-55; Lombardo, E., & León, M. (2014). Gender and social equality policies in Spain: origin, development and dismantling in a context of economic crisis. *Feminist Research*, 5, 3-35; Rubio Castro, A. (2013). Innovations in the measurement of inequality. Madrid: Dickinson; EMAKUNDE – Basque Institute for Women (2017). "Qualitative evaluation of Law 4/2005 for the Equality of Women and Men in the CAE. 2015". Vitoria-Gasteiz. Available online: [https://www.emakunde.euskadi.eus/contenidos/informacion/politicas\\_evaluaciones/es\\_def/adjuntos/2015.evaluacion\\_cualitativa.pdf](https://www.emakunde.euskadi.eus/contenidos/informacion/politicas_evaluaciones/es_def/adjuntos/2015.evaluacion_cualitativa.pdf); Nicolás Lazo, G. (2013). Feminisms, sex-gender concept and law. In Sánchez Urrutia, A. and Pumar Beltrán, N. (coords.), *Análisis feminista del derecho. Theories, equality, interculturality and gender violence* (15-34). Barcelona: University of Barcelona.

<sup>63</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2021/country/C>

<sup>64</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2021/country/DE>

<sup>65</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2021/country/MT>

<sup>66</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2021/country/PT>

<sup>67</sup> <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-equality-index/2021/country/ES>

process has to be accompanied by intensified intervention and prevention strategies by the states and institutions.

## 2.9 Impact of COVID-19 on legislation, service delivery, action and prevalence of femicide

**No specific legislation to prevent femicide was enacted in the five countries during the pandemic.** While in none of the five countries specific measures or action plans were introduced by governments and other State institutions and authorities in order to **combat femicide in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in some countries** new legislation (Spain) or amendments to existing (Germany) or new measures (Cyprus, Malta and Portugal) were adopted on the impact of the pandemic on women in the context of domestic violence.

**In Cyprus,** the Ministry of Labour provided emergency funding to the Association for the Prevention and Handling of Violence in the Family (SPAVO) to expand its services under the State Assistance Programme. In addition, SPAVO, with the support of the Ministry of Labour, secured additional accommodation for victims and their children to ensure that the demand for these services could be met. **In Germany,** discussions were held on the issue of domestic violence and possibly increased risks, and campaigns were conducted: the Federal Ministry of Social and Women's Affairs (BMFSFJ, 2021) within the framework of the online initiative "Stronger than Violence" launched a campaign under the slogan "Not safe at home?" and promoted it at 26.000 supermarket counters by providing information to women (and men and perpetrators of violence) affected by domestic violence about available support services through the website.<sup>68</sup> **Information** with contact numbers of **domestic violence services** was also distributed in **Maltese pharmacies** and **rent subsidies** were offered to those who had to leave their homes because of this. The **platform against homelessness** was also launched, which provided a mechanism for temporary accommodation, swabbing for COVID-19 and transport for those at risk of homelessness.<sup>69</sup> The **Portuguese government** has taken some relevant measures - including awareness campaigns - to address domestic violence and improve protection by providing help and support to victims, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown periods. **In Spain,** Royal Decree-Law 12/2020 **defined measures for women suffering from gender-based violence as a vulnerable group in situations of domestic isolation** in the context of the possible consequences of the state of alarm decreed on 15.th March 2020, with **six articles of the Royal Decree-Law** guaranteeing comprehensive assistance and protection services for victims of gender-based violence. In addition, the

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<sup>68</sup> <https://staerker-als-gewalt.de/english>

<sup>69</sup> Once they tested negative, they were placed in homeless shelters or shelters for people experiencing domestic violence, as needed. One of the DV emergency shelters designated an area for new residents until they were cleared by a negative Covid test, so they did not have to be placed in temporary accommodation first.

Ministry of Equality promoted a specific Contingency Plan against gender violence due to the COVID-19 crisis three days after the State of Alarm was decreed.<sup>70</sup>

**Data on the prevalence of femicides during the pandemic are not available in most of the countries, except of Portugal and Spain<sup>71</sup>.** In Portugal the Observatory on Murdered Women (OMA) of UMAR published a report in August 2020 **on the incidence of femicides in March, April and May 2020, when Portugal had its first lockdown<sup>72</sup>**; the incidence is, according to OMA data since 2004, lower than the average for these months in previous years.<sup>73</sup> The 2020 Report also accounts for lower numbers of femicides when compared with previous years.<sup>74</sup> Also, in other European countries, no indication for an increase of femicides in 2020 or during the lockdowns, could be found (see also section 3.3.1). According to the **EOF data** and data in the **FEM-United analysis**, there is **no indication for a relevant increase in femicides between 2019 and 2020 for all five countries** (see chapter 3).

However, **in terms of domestic violence**, higher prevalence was reported in some European countries, while in others this was not the case or unclear. For **Cyprus**, it is noted that reported incidents of domestic violence increased by 58 % during the first lockdown (March-April 2020).<sup>75</sup> The recent results of a study **in Germany** on the impact of COVID-19 **in relation to violence against women** and children appears to confirm an increase in violence against women and children, but the data is not valid at this point as comparable data is lacking.<sup>76</sup> **As for Malta**, the Crime Report 2020 indicated that the number of reports of domestic violence increased by 24% compared to 2019. This significant increase of 319 cases compared to the previous year reflects the vulnerable situation of victims, exacerbated by a pandemic that led to double victimisation of vulnerable persons.<sup>77</sup> In addition, a position paper on the effect of COVID-19 was issued by the Consultative Council for Women's Rights in June 2020,

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<sup>70</sup> Information available at: [NOTA INTERIOR \(igualdad.gob.es\)](https://www.igualdad.gob.es/NOTA_INTERIOR)

<sup>71</sup> The available data include: Number of murders/homicides, arrests, calls to emergency numbers, restraining orders. They can be found in the monthly bulletins of the Government Delegation for gender violence. Information available at:

[https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/boletines/boletinMensual/2020/docs/Principales\\_Datos\\_Abril\\_2020.pdf](https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/boletines/boletinMensual/2020/docs/Principales_Datos_Abril_2020.pdf); on deaths information available at: <https://www.poderjudicial.es/cgpj/es/Temas/Violencia-domestica-y-de-genero/Actividad-del-Observatorio/Datos-estadisticos/>

<sup>72</sup> Including two weeks before and two weeks after the official lockdown, as most of the population was in voluntary lockdown.

<sup>73</sup> [http://www.umarfeminismos.org/images/stories/oma/Femicide\\_in\\_Portugal\\_during\\_the\\_COVID-19\\_pandemic.pdf](http://www.umarfeminismos.org/images/stories/oma/Femicide_in_Portugal_during_the_COVID-19_pandemic.pdf)

<sup>74</sup> OMA-UMAR (2020). Final Report 2020 [in Portuguese]. Available at:

[http://www.umarfeminismos.org/images/stories/oma/Relatorio\\_Final\\_OMA\\_2020.pdf](http://www.umarfeminismos.org/images/stories/oma/Relatorio_Final_OMA_2020.pdf)

<sup>75</sup> In addition, the overall number of calls to the National Counselling Centre for Victims of Violent Crime during the COVID-19 pandemic increased by about 47% in 2020.

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.hfp.tum.de/globalhealth/forschung/covid-19-and-domestic-violence/>; Access a lay summary of preliminary descriptive project results:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/19Wqpby9nwMNjdgO4\\_FCqqlfYyLJmBn7y/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/19Wqpby9nwMNjdgO4_FCqqlfYyLJmBn7y/view)

<sup>77</sup> It should be noted that of the 319 cases, 316 were due to psychological harm" (Malta Crime Report, 2020, p.2).

highlighting that women are suffering disproportionately as a result of the pandemic. In **Spain**, there are also studies that assessed the impact of the pandemic on women experiencing violence; of particular note is the study by Ferrer-Perez (2020) which examines the consequences of forced cohabitation with others, especially for women and minors who experience gender-based violence.

Although the total number of women reporting domestic violence has, on average, not increased during the first year of the pandemic and lockdowns in most European countries, there are clear indications that the **situation of women already living in violent home situations has dramatically worsened as the possibilities to leave the situation were minimised**. This may have led to higher or lower reporting to the police or to different support centres; thus, increase or decrease in institutional data is not valid to measure the real effect of the pandemic on violence against women. Nevertheless, **additional measures to safeguard women in these difficult situations are and have been very important** in all countries contributing to this study.



### 3. The extent of femicide

#### 3.1 Data sources and methods of data collection

As described in section 2.3, statistical information on femicides can be obtained through the **official police crime statistics** and/or through **court statistics** in all five countries participating in this project. Some of these statistics contain not only the number of women killed, but also background information on victims and perpetrators, as well as on the victim-perpetrator relationship, on the method of killing and/or on the results of the trial. Only one of the countries (Spain) provides in-depth case-specific information on motives, prior interventions or prevention measures by the state. The **official data is not comparable between the countries** due to different legal definitions and different methods of counting, reporting and documenting the cases.

The **most elaborate official monitoring system** has been developed in **Spain** within the **Observatory against Domestic and Gender Violence of the General Council of the Judiciary**. It provides official statistics on gender-related violence and killings of women by an intimate partner or ex-partner. The Observatory publishes an annual report on the number of victims, the main characteristics of victims and perpetrators and the circumstances of the murder.<sup>78</sup> The report contains the following information:

- Number of cases
- Characteristics of the victims
- Children who became orphans
- Circumstances of the aggression
- Characteristics of the perpetrators
- Previous complaints
- Protection measures
- Cases with multiple victims

In the case of **Spain**, the statistics of the Observatory against Domestic and Gender Violence do not offer data on family femicides where the perpetrator has another type of relationship with the victim (son, brother, father, son-in-law, etc.). As a consequence, the data sources to be used for the elaboration of this report are, for IPFs (Intimate Partner Femicides) the official data of the Observatory against Domestic and Gender Violence, and for family femicides the data provided by Femicidio.net, who collect data from the media on all murders of women.

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<sup>78</sup> The latest published report is for 2019 and is available at: <https://www.poderjudicial.es/cgpj/es/Temas/Violencia-domestica-y-de-genero/Actividad-del-Observatorio/Informes-de-violencia-domestica-y-de-genero/Informe-sobre-victimas-mortales-de-la-violencia-de-genero-y-domestica-en-el-ambito-de-la-pareja-o-expareja-en-2019> .

In **Germany**, the official police statistics collect the number of cases of murder, manslaughter and bodily harm resulting in death. An annual report on intimate partner violence has been published since 2016 (based on the police registered cases of the former year). It documents the number of victims of several violent crimes against both women and men committed by current/former intimate partners, including murder and manslaughter. It reports the number of female and male victims, their age-group, nationality, drug or alcohol use, marital and household status, as well as possible disabilities and health problems of the victims, but not specified for women killed by their intimate partners. Another official source of data in Germany are the statistics on alleged suspected perpetrators that are not combined with the victims' statistics. The annual report on intimate partner violence reported to the police provides some information on the suspects of intimate partner violence in general, but no specified information on perpetrators of murder/manlaughter in relation to femicides. Thus, no case-related statistics on both victims and perpetrators of femicides is available and officially documented in Germany, nor is case-related information on prosecution and the outcomes of trials for intimate partner femicides.

The official statistics in **Portugal and Cyprus** contain the number of women killed by partners or ex-partners on an annual basis. In **Malta**, this information can be obtained upon request any time of the year. Nevertheless, no official reports or specified analysis of femicides are published by the state.

In **Portugal** no official statistics specifically on femicide is available, but the Annual Report on Internal Security<sup>79</sup> mentions the number of homicides of women killed by intimate partners and of women killed by other family members. Furthermore, the Judicial Police's report on intimate partner homicide investigations conducted between 2014 and 2019 documents the number of women victims killed by intimate partners.<sup>80</sup>

In **Cyprus**, the official police statistics collect and report data for the total number of murders/homicides and attempted murders that are committed each year. Like in the other countries, femicide is not a separate offence and thus not recorded separately but as homicide or attempted homicide. Specific information on femicide is recorded in police case files and is available only by request to the authorities. In relation to domestic violence, official police

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<sup>79</sup> Report available at: <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/download-ficheiros/ficheiro.aspx?v=%3D%3DBQAAAB%2BLCAAAAAAABAAzNDA0sAAAQJ%2BlAUAAAA%3D>

<sup>80</sup> Report available at: <https://www.policiajudiciaria.pt/homicidios-nas-relacoes-de-intimidade-estudo-dos-inqueritos-investigados-pela-policia-judiciaria-2014-2019/>

statistics include data for the total number of domestic violence cases disaggregated by type of violence, sex of victims and perpetrators, and age.<sup>81</sup>

In **Malta**, the Malta Police Force (MPF) collects statistics and provides data on reports related to domestic violence. They stem from the National Police System (NPS) database. All individuals in DV cases, including children, are recorded separately. Additionally, the NPS contains information gathered from the Police Incident Reporting System (PIRS) that collects information from all police districts and stations across Malta and Gozo. The system records a case according to the main crime category. Data on killings of women by partners can be gained from the MPF upon request by members of the public including researchers and journalists.

In **all participating countries** of this project, **NGOs are collecting further information on femicide cases**. In **Malta**, additional data on domestic violence and femicide is collected by the Women's Rights Foundation; in **Cyprus**, the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) collects data on femicide through the systematic monitoring and cataloguing of media and analysis of police data; in **Germany**, the project One Billion Rising (OBR) lists cases of women murdered by their partners; in **Portugal**, the Observatory on Murdered Women (created by Alternative and Response Women's Association - UMAR) gathers annual data on killings of women (including femicide) since 2004, analysing variables/information about the victim, perpetrator, the crime, trials, protection measures for victims, among others, being available to the public on the institution's webpage.<sup>82</sup> In **Spain**, feminicidio.net, an NGO, systematically collects the figures of the different types of femicide that occur in Spain. It contains not only intimate partner femicides but also killings of women by other family members.

To gain **European wide comparable data and in-depth information on femicides**, all participating countries, except Spain, use the data collection tool from the **European Observatory of Femicide (EOF)** that is in use since 2019. The data collection tools have been slightly revised for this project in order to systematically collect all available femicide data. They provide more in-depth information on the cases than can be found in the official crime statistics. As mentioned above, the Spanish research team used statistics from the Observatory against Domestic and Gender Violence and the feminicidio.net register in this context. The comparability of the Spanish data with the data of the other countries participating in this project is limited due to different measurement and sources of data collection.

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<sup>81</sup> Information available at: [https://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/dmlstatistical\\_en/dmlstatistical\\_en?OpenDocument&Start=1&Count=1000&Expand=1.3](https://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/dmlstatistical_en/dmlstatistical_en?OpenDocument&Start=1&Count=1000&Expand=1.3).

<sup>82</sup> Official website: <http://www.umarfeminismos.org/index.php/observatorio-de-mulheres-assassinadas>

### 3.2 The use of the EOF data collection tool

The EOF data collection tool that was slightly revised for this project was, in general, rated positively by all participating countries. It was perceived as easy to use, clearly structured and complete. The categories were considered highly relevant for the characterisations of killings of women and femicides, and as suitable to process the accumulated data well.

There was some difficulty in accessing information available through media reports and police press releases, e.g. information on domestic violence and state interventions prior to the killings, or whether the case was known to officials or to other institutions before. As a result, these columns were frequently filled in with “not known”. Yet, gathering this data remains important and in further activities more sources for information should be included, for example information from the trials at court, from the support system and other professionals in order to systematically improve the case knowledge. This information would also be very useful to develop suitable prevention strategies.

As the Spanish data collection system was not fully comparable with the EOF data collection tools, it should be decided whether and how a revised and further developed data collection tool for Europe could provide the highest level of comparability with other existing national data collection tools on femicide in European countries.

For long-term European data collection, a final online tool should be programmed and implemented in EOFs work that allows an automatic descriptive statistical analysis for all countries in the same way.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> It was also suggested by the researchers of the five countries to add further information to the quantitative tool for future data collection of the EOF, e.g. the existence and presence of victims' children, as passive victims of the killings; killings within the family as a highly relevant type of femicide as these cases occurred quite often and the perpetrators were almost exclusively male (and often sons killing their elderly mother); country specific definitions of 'town or village' in relation to 'area of femicide'; cohabitation with the perpetrator; restraining orders and offender's response; the killing of girls (though this has to be further discussed in relation to gender-based killings).

### 3.3 Extent of femicide and further information on cases

#### 3.3.1 Extent of femicide on the basis of official statistics

The FEM-UnitED work on quantitative data showed that in most countries contributing to this project, the case basis of the official police crime statistics is quite similar or identical to the case basis of the modified EOF data collection. For **Spain**, this is simply the case because the analysis was based on the official data provided by the State monitoring system.

In smaller countries like Malta and Cyprus with a lower overall case number (not rate!), most femicides are known to the police as well as reported to the media and become public.

In **Malta**, two cases (and three victims) were officially registered in 2019 and 2020. In **Cyprus**, there were a total of 11 cases in both years (with seven women killed in 2019 and four women in 2020).

In **Portugal**, according to the State quarterly reports on domestic violence, 26 women have been killed in a domestic violence context in 2019, and 27 women in 2020. The Judicial Police's report on intimate partner homicide documents 22 women killed by an intimate partner in 2019<sup>84</sup>.

In **Spain**, with regard to official data on gender-based violence resulting in death, the number of women presumably murdered by their male partners or ex-partners in 2019, according to data from the judicial investigation, was 56 women, and 46 women in 2020. It is worth mentioning that Spain is the only country with a significant decrease in cases in the past ten years.

In **Germany**, in relation to intimate partner killings, the federal crime office reported 117 cases of intimate partner violence against women which resulted in death in 2019, and 139 women killed by their partner in 2020. Though the number in 2020 was higher than in 2019, neither a long-term increase nor a decrease of femicides could be found in the official statistics, but rather annual fluctuations.

#### 3.3.2 Extent of femicide on the basis of the EOF data collection

**In total, 629 women have been killed** in Cyprus, Germany, Malta, Portugal and Spain in the years 2019 (n=324) and 2020 (n=305). **Most women** have been **killed** in Germany (360) and Spain (187), followed by Portugal (68), Cyprus (11) and Malta (3). The **annual population based rate** varies between **0,19** and **0,78** cases per 100.000 inhabitants in the five countries.

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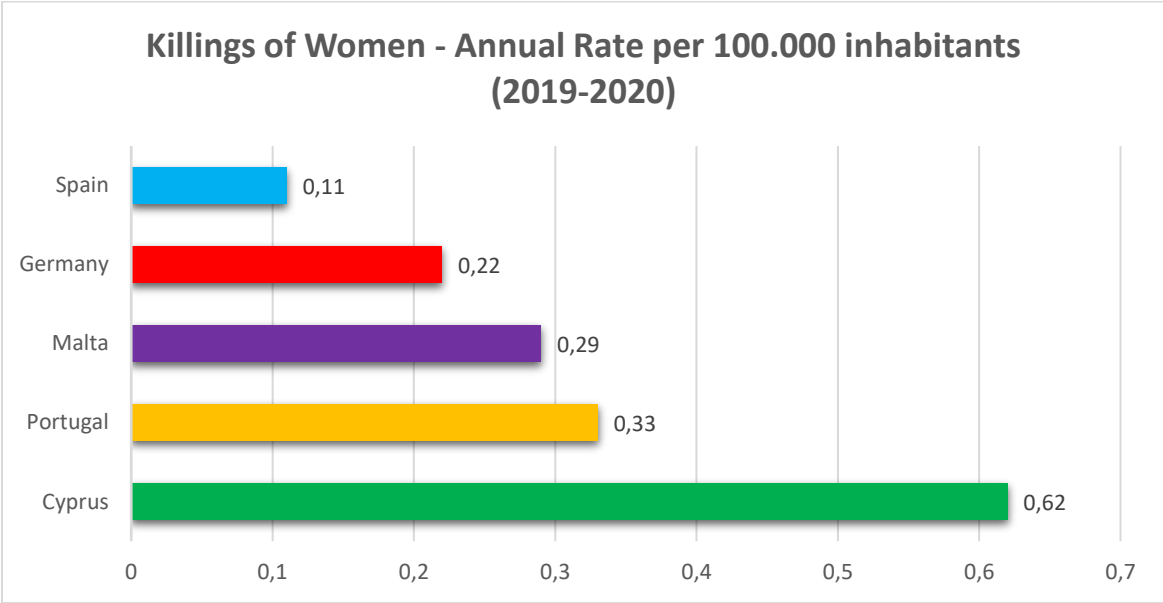
<sup>84</sup> Report available at: <https://www.policiajudiciaria.pt/homicidios-nas-relacoes-de-intimidade-estudos-inqueritos-investigados-pela-policia-judiciaria-2014-2019/>

The annual average **rate per 100.000 inhabitants for both years** is highest in Cyprus (0,62), followed by Portugal (0,33), Malta (0,29), Germany (0,22) and Spain (0,19). (see Table 1 and Figure 1)

**Table 1: Women killed in 2019 and 2020 per country**

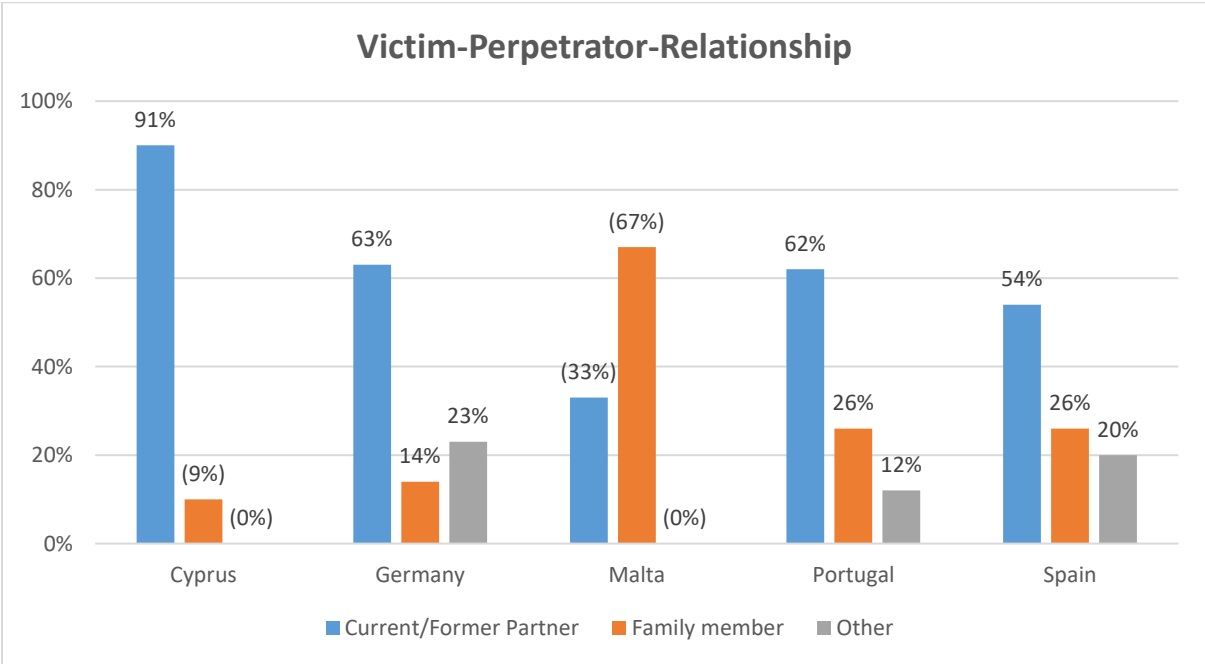
Country / Year	Number of all women killed (age 16+)	Annual rate per 100.000 inhabitants	Number of women killed by partners	Number of women killed by other family members	Number of women killed by other or unknown persons
<b>Cyprus</b>					
2019	7	0,78	7	0	0
2020	4	0,45	3	1	0
<b>2019 / 2020</b>	11	0,62 (annual average)	10 (91%)	1 (9%)	0 (0%)
<b>Germany</b>					
2019	177	0,21	109	30	38
2020	183	0,22	116	22	45
<b>2019 / 2020</b>	360	0,22 (annual average)	225 (63%)	52 (14%)	83 (23%)
<b>Malta</b>					
2019	2 (one case)	0,38	0	2	0
2020	1	0,19	1	0	0
<b>2019 / 2020</b>	3	0,29 (annual average)	1 (33%)	2 (67%)	0 (0%)
<b>Portugal</b>					
2019	34	0,33	23	6	5
2020	34	0,33	19	12	3
<b>2019 / 2020</b>	68	0,33 (annual average)	42 (62%)	18 (26%)	8 (12%)
<b>Spain</b>					
2019	104	0,22	55	22	27
2020	83	0,17	46	26	11
<b>2019 / 2020</b>	187	0,19 (annual average)	101 (54%)	48 (26%)	38 (20%)

**Figure 1: Average annual rate of women killed per 100.000 inhabitants (all killings of women by all kinds of perpetrators)**



Of all women killed in the participating countries, **60%** were killed by current or former **intimate partners**. With the exception of Malta, in all participating countries the **majority** of women have been **killed by a partner or ex-partner**.<sup>85</sup> The rate of women killed by intimate partners ranged between 33 % in Malta and 91 % in Cyprus. In countries with a higher case basis, the rate was 54 % in Spain, 62 % in Portugal and 63 % in Germany. (see Table 1 and Figure 2)

**Figure 2: Victim-perpetrator-Relationship (all killings of women by all kinds of perpetrators), 2019 -2020**



(% ) = case basis less than 5; please interpret cautiously

<sup>85</sup> The rate of IPF cases recorded in Cyprus for the year 2019 includes 5 women were killed by a IPF serial killer.

A **relevant number and rate** of women had been **killed by other family members (19 % of all women killed)**: 9 % (n=1) in Cyprus, 14 % (n=52) in Germany, 26 % in both Portugal (n=18) and Spain (n=48), and 67 % (n=2) in Malta. In some countries like Germany and Spain, the perpetrators of killings of women by other family members were **almost exclusively men**, and most **often adult sons who killed their elder mothers**. In Portugal, considering the total killings perpetrated within a family context, in 39 % of cases, women were killed by a son or son-in-law. (see Table 1 and Figure 2)

One in five women have been killed **by persons other than partners and family members** (21% of all women killed), with highest rates in Germany (23%) and Spain (20%), followed by Portugal (12%), and 0% in Malta and Cyprus. (see Table 1 and Figure 2)

**The victim-perpetrator relationship per country** documented above shows that most women had been killed by partners or family members while other relationships and unknown perpetrators play a subordinate role. These **results correspond to worldwide data of the UNODC Global study on Homicide** (UNODC 2019).

### 3.4 Types of killings

Looking at the **types of the killings of women** (see Figure 3), we can see that most women that were killed by a partner had not yet been separated but were still in the relationship, as far as we know (in most cases, the database information is missing on whether the woman had planned to end the relationship with the perpetrator). Thus, the higher number of cases of IPFs during the relationship than in the context of planned separation should be treated very cautiously. The result contradicts several in-depth-studies from European countries that found separation killings as most prevalent in intimate partner femicides (e.g. Monckton-Smith 2019, Greuel 2009). These studies were usually built on knowledge from the trials that might be more accurate on this aspect. Also the qualitative analysis in chapter 4 of this report shows that (planned) separation is one of the most important risk factors for femicides.

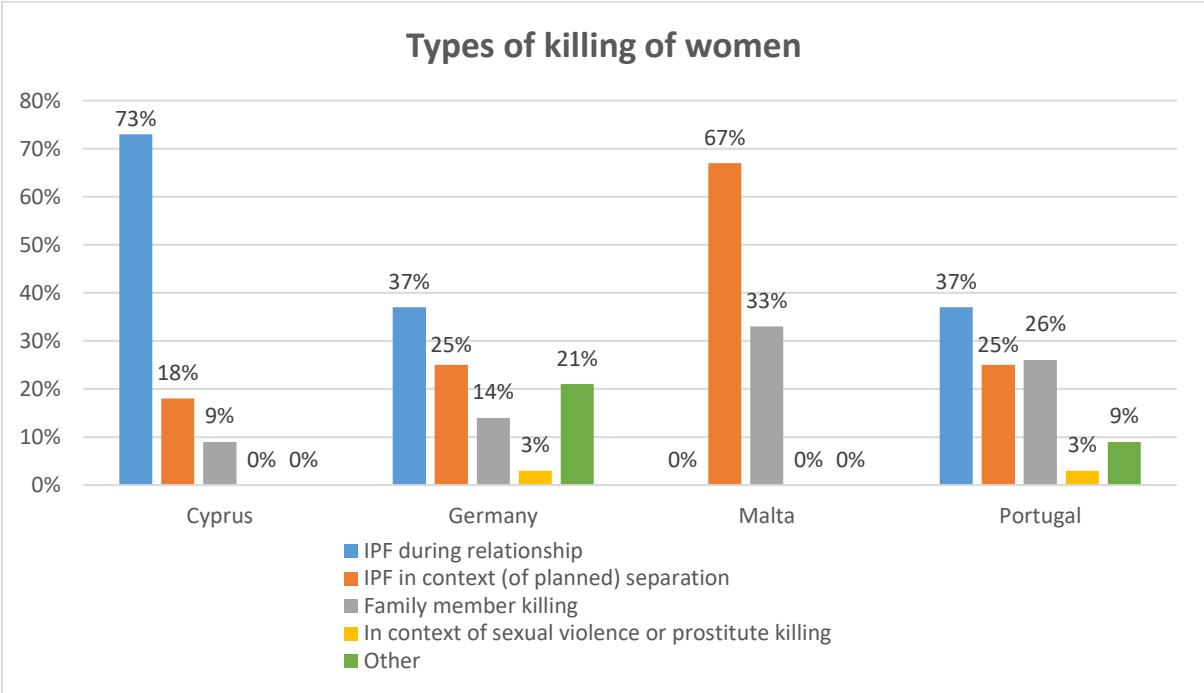
Other forms of femicide like killings of women in the context of sexual violence or prostitute killings are relatively rare (0-3%) in all countries contributing to this project (see Figure 3).

Other types of killings were only documented for Germany (21%) and for Portugal (10%); here, types are often not known, or types of killings were not clearly related to gender-based violence (e.g. killings in the context of robbery, terror attacks or by unknown persons). Therefore, the great majority of killings of women in all countries are gender-based killings and can be counted as femicides.

For Spain, no comparable data on the types of killing is available.



**Figure 3: Types of killing (all killings of women by all kinds of perpetrators), 2019-2020**



**4. Further background information on the cases**

**4.1 Additional victims**

The analysis of killings in the five countries contributing to this project shows that in addition to the women killed, **in 12-18 % of the cases other persons had been killed**, like children of the victim, other family members, friends or other persons (e.g. new partners).

In **Cyprus**, in addition to 11 women killed in 2019 and 2020, there were two additional victims (two girls) who were the children of the femicide victims. In **Germany**, in 12 % of the 360 cases of women killed, additional victims had been killed; of the 87 additional victims (in 43 cases), 10 were young or adult children of the women, 31 were other family members, 8 were friends and 38 other persons. In **Malta**, in one case two women were killed by the same perpetrator, with a mother and her daughter being killed by their son/brother. In **Portugal**, in addition to the 68 women killed in 2019 and 2020, additional victims were also killed in 15 % of the cases; of the 10 additional victims, 4 were other family members, 3 were young or adult children, and 1 was a victim’s friend (in 2 cases, the relationship between the women killed and the additional victim was not identified). For **Spain** there is also some information available about additional victims killed in cases of femicide. Especially intimate partner killings seem to be very dangerous for other family members and persons close to the women killed. According to official data on the number of minors killed by their parents in connection with gender-based violence, there were three cases in Spain for each of the two reporting years. Based on non-

official data (femicidio.net and press), there were the so-called "familial femicides by association": people murdered to explicitly harm their partner or ex-partner (son-in-law, brother-in-law, etc.) with four in 2019 and two cases in 2020. Other cases were familial femicides (sons murdering their mothers, uncles or brothers).

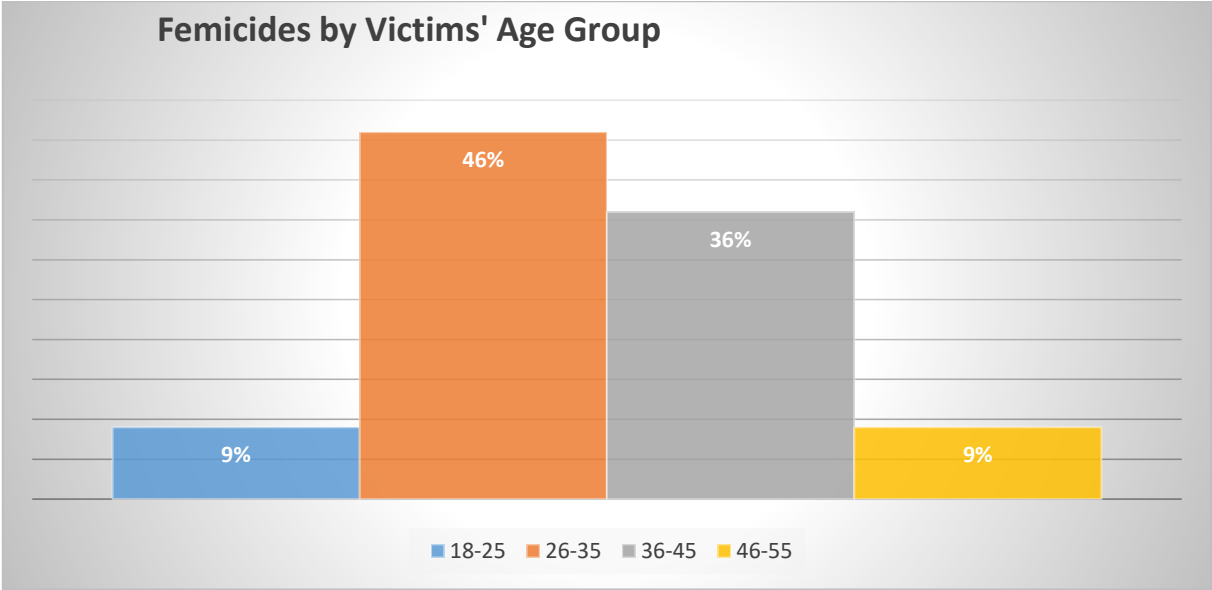
## 4.2 Characteristics of victims of femicide

### 4.2.1 Age of women killed

As can be seen in country related Figures 4-7, women of all ages had been killed, with the majority of women killed in the ages between 26 and 55.

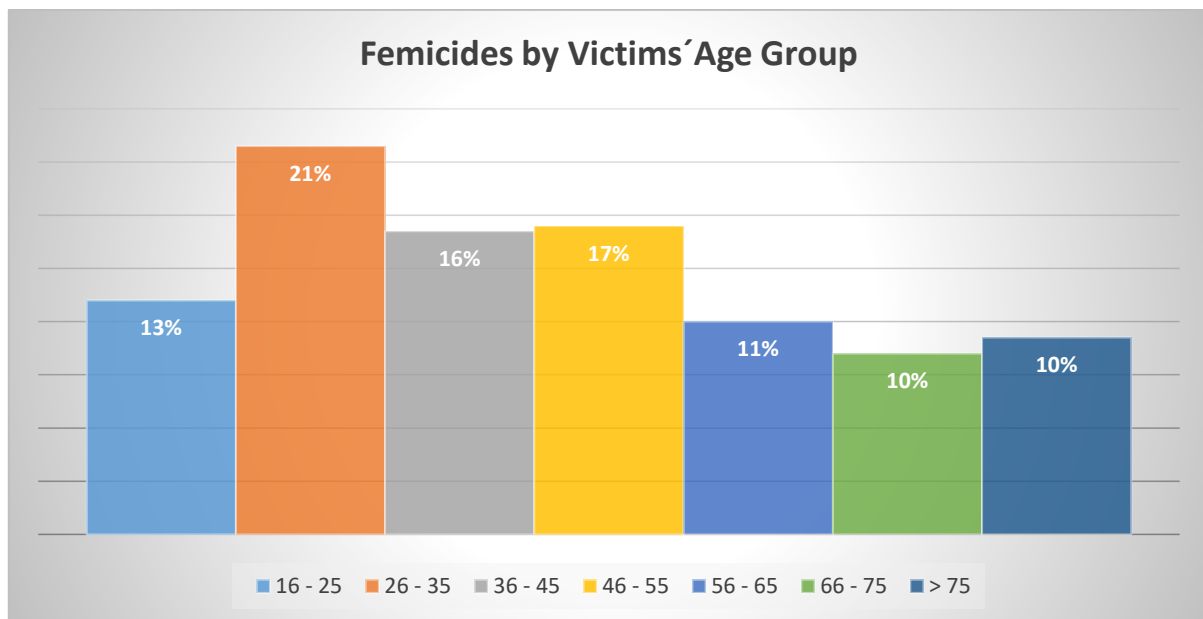
In **Cyprus**, with 82% most women killed were between the age ranges of 26 and 45. Specifically, 46 % of the women victims were between the age range of 26 - 35 years old and 36% between the age range of 36-45 years old and 9 % were in the age ranges of 18-25 and 46-55 years old respectively.

**Figure 4 - Cyprus: Percentage of Femicides by Victims' Age group (2019-2020)**



In **Germany**, in comparison to Cyprus, more elderly women had been killed: one third of the victims (33 %) were 16 to 35 years old, another third (33 %) 36-55 years old and almost one third (32 %) 56 years and older; in 3 % of the cases the age of the victim was not known.

**Figure 5 - Germany: Percentage of Femicides by Victims' Age group (2019-2020)**

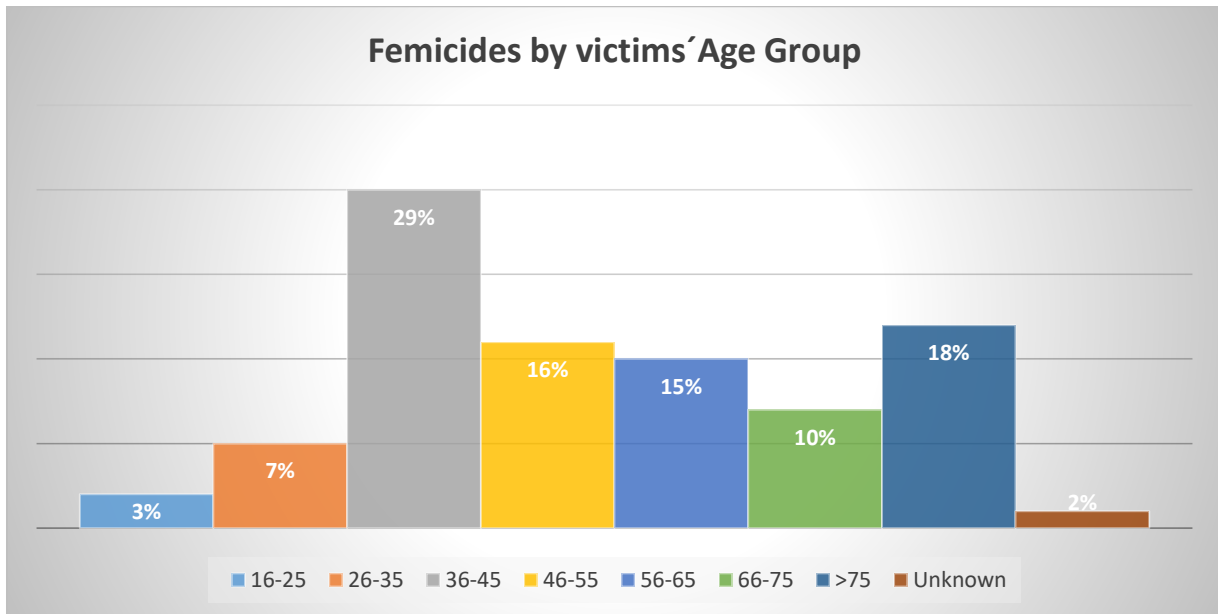


In Germany, victims of IPFs tended to be younger and victims of killings by family members were significantly older than the average age of women killed. Also for victims of killings outside of intimate partner and family contexts, the relatively older age is significant and underlines the high risk of elderly women in relation to killings by others rather than intimate partners. In further gender critical analysis, it should be investigated whether also elderly men were at similar risk to be killed by their family members/descendants, and if relevant gender dimensions in the killing of elderly family members could be found. Of the female victims of killings by family members, 37 % were elderly women (with about 10 % of them in need of care).

In **Malta**, the case basis is too low for statistical analysis of age groups. Two victims were between 26 and 34 years old, while one victim killed by a family member was 70 years old.

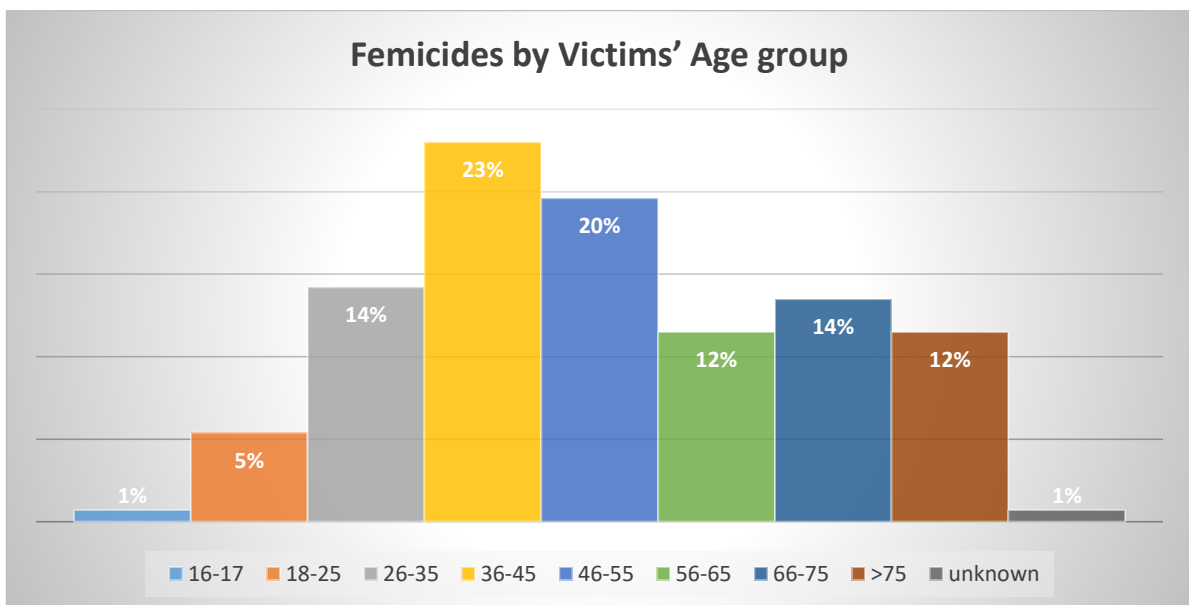
In **Portugal**, although women of all ages were killed, most women were older than 35. Almost one third of the victims (30 %) were 36 to 45 years old, and 28 % were 66 or older. Women over 35 were at higher risk of homicide/femicide, as well as older women. Special attention to these vulnerable groups is deemed urgent.

**Figure 6 - Portugal: Percentage of Killings of Women by Victims' Age group (2019-2020)**



Also in **Spain**, the range of women killed reaches all age groups, with a high average age of the murdered women of 58.4 years. However, similar as in Germany and Portugal, there is an important difference as the average age of the women in Intimate Partner Femicide cases is 45.8 years while in the case of killings by other family members it is 62 years.

**Figure 7 - Spain: Percentage of Femicides by Victims' Age group (2019-2020)**



## 4.2.2 Further characteristics of the victims

Further characteristics of the victims show a great diversity in terms of employment, profession and ethnic/national backgrounds of the victims, but as this information is not available for most cases, the data cannot be generalized and further in-depth-research on the cases is needed.

In most countries' databases - except for Cyprus and Spain - no indication for a greater risk for minority ethnic women was found, as well as no greater risk of unemployed and/or disabled women. Only elderly, ill or suicidal victims, as a category used in the data collection tool, appear to be at higher risk in some countries.

As too much information on the situation of the women victims is missing, these results are preliminary and call for further in-depth-research on cases based on other sources like in-depth case information from the trials.

## 4.3 Characteristics of the perpetrators

### 4.3.1 Gender of the perpetrators

The killing of women is clearly gendered in relation to both victims and perpetrators. More than 99 % of all perpetrators of whom the gender is known, were male; only very few cases of female perpetrators were identified in the 2019 and 2020 cases of all participating countries (2 female perpetrators in Germany and 3 in Portugal, none of them related to IPF and femicides). In Spain, Cyprus and Malta, all perpetrators were male.

### 4.3.2 Age of the perpetrators

Similar to the victims, the most common age group of perpetrators in all countries was between 26 to 55 years (see Figures 8-10). As the Figures show, 63 % of the perpetrators in Germany, 58 % in Portugal, 57 % in Spain and Cyprus and 100 % in Malta were of that age group. 13 % up to 30 % of the perpetrators in the countries were 56 years and older, with lower rates in Spain and higher rates in Portugal and Cyprus.

If disaggregated by the type of killings, in Spain and Germany the average age of the perpetrators of IPF is older than the average age of the perpetrators of killings by family members (49 years against 41 years in Spain and even younger in Germany with most perpetrators of family violence being aged between 18 and 35 years old). This is related to the fact that in cases of family femicides it was often the sons killing their mothers.

### 4.3.3 Other characteristics of the perpetrators

The **marital status, the employment status and the ethnic minority backgrounds of the perpetrators** were not known for the great majority of cases. Therefore, in the database no indication could be found that unemployed men or those with a low occupational status, or men with a migrant background, were more present in the perpetrator samples than in the

average population. Only in **Spain**, the rate of perpetrators of foreign origin was significantly higher than the rate in the average population.

In **Germany**, for 22 % of the perpetrators an ethnic minority background was identified; this rate is not higher than the rate in the average population. The list of occupations of the perpetrators shows a high number of men working in qualified jobs and also in management positions. Low social status is also not identified as a relevant risk factor. This corresponds to the results of another German in-depth study on femicide that found no specific perpetrator profile in regard to the social status in cases of femicides (Greuel 2009).

Also in **Spain, Portugal and Malta**, the majority of the perpetrators were employed and working in various professions.

The **mental health state** of the majority of the perpetrators was unknown. However, according to the German data-base, 27 % of the perpetrators were described to have mental health issues such as schizophrenia, depression, and other issues. Nevertheless, this information has to be interpreted cautiously as it is also a defending strategy to excuse the murder due to mental health problems of the perpetrator.

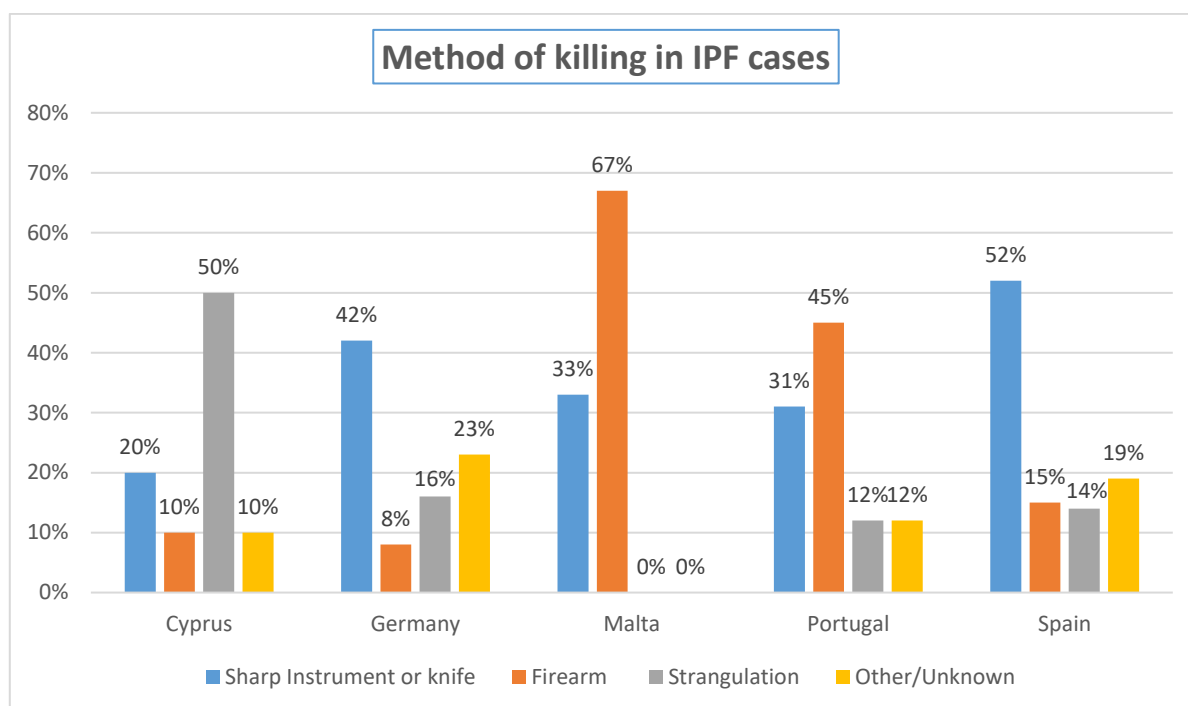
A clear indication for **suicide** is found in several country samples: after the crime, in every fifth to third case of IPFs, the perpetrator committed suicide (29 % in Portugal, 33% in Spain, and 20-21 % in Germany and Cyprus, see also section 4.5.2). This high proportion of suicides is important information for the further development of risk factor assessment and warning signal tools for the police and other institutions.

#### 4.4 Further background information on cases of intimate partner femicides

The database provides further background information on cases of intimate partner violence regarding **place and methods of the femicides**. The great majority of killings took place in the **victims' and/or perpetrators' home** (70-74 % in Germany and Cyprus, 84 % in Spain and 69 % in Portugal).

The most prevalent **methods of killing** in most countries were killings by a sharp instrument or knife (52 % in Spain, 42 % in Germany, 31 % in Portugal, 20 % in Cyprus), strangulation (50 % in Cyprus, 16 % in Germany, 12 % in Portugal and 14% in Spain) and killings by firearms (with highest rates of 45 % in Portugal, followed by 15 % in Spain, and 8-10 % in Germany and Cyprus). Hitting, kicking and blows were used as a killing method in 19 % of the cases in Spain and in 10 % of the cases in Portugal; for the other countries this is unknown. (see Figure 7)

**Figure 7 – Method of killing the women in IPF cases (2019-2020)**



**Witnesses were present in every fifth to fourth case** (26-27 % of the IPFs in Germany and Portugal, 20 % in Cyprus, and one case in Malta). Often children and family members had witnessed the crime. For Spain, no comparable data is available.

## 4.5 Institutional knowledge in advance of the killings and institutional reactions

### 4.5.1 Prior case knowledge

Regarding **prior domestic violence, threats or stalking**, as well as prior case knowledge and **complaints to the police or support systems**, for many cases of the countries' analysis no information was available. This was, for example, the case for 87-97 % of the IPFs in the German database. Here, more information from the support and justice systems and trials has to be gained, before an in-depth statistical analysis makes sense.

In **Germany**, as far as information is available, in 11 % of the cases prior violence or threat was known to the police. In 3 %, there was knowledge that the perpetrator threatened to kill the woman prior to the femicide. Further investigations of the trials might gain more information of prior violence, stalking or threats in the femicide cases. (see Table 2)

**Table 2: Germany - Prior knowledge and state interventions known (IPV, N=225), 2019-2020**

	Yes (%)	No / not known (%)
Prior domestic violence by same partner	8 %	92%
Prior Stalking	6 %	94%
Prior threats to kill the woman	3 %	97%
Prior Violence or threat known to the police	11 %	89%
Prior state interventions	8 %	92%

There is more case information available on prior violence, institutional interventions and visibility of the cases prior to the murder **for Portugal and Spain**. This is a result of higher state activities to collect data on the cases due to the police, justice system as well as social services. Moreover, in Portugal, neighbours tend to be somewhat connected, and information on people’s private lives tends to be known and passed around between acquaintances, which makes it possible for journalists to find this information and report it in the news articles.

In **Portugal**, in regard to all 42 IPF cases, according to the information available, there was prior domestic violence in 62% (n=26) of the cases. In 24% (n=10) of all cases, this violence was known to the police. In one out of these 10 cases (10 %) in which the police had been aware of the violence, protection orders had been given. According to the available information, one case (2%) was known to the support systems. In 43% (n=18) of all cases, the violence had been known to others (family members, neighbours, and friends). These results indicate that a relevant number of cases were known either to the social environment or to the police or support systems and could, perhaps, have been prevented. (see Table 3)

**Table 3: Portugal - Prior knowledge and state interventions (IPV, N=42), 2019-2020**

	Yes (%)	No (%)	Not known (%)
Prior domestic violence by same partner	62%	12%	26%
Prior Stalking	5%	36%	59%
Prior threats to kill the woman	12%	7%	81%
Prior Violence or threat known to the police	24%	29%	47%
Prior state interventions	2%	22%	76%

In **Spain**, which data base is different from the other countries, also a relevant section of the cases was known to the state systems prior to the femicides. In 2019 and 2020, 17 % of women



victims of femicide had filed a previous complaint against the perpetrators. This is lower than in 2018 (34 %) and the average for 2003-2018 (25 %). Furthermore, in half of the cases prior threats to kill the woman were registered and in every sixth case domestic violence by the same partner.

**Table 4: Spain - Prior knowledge and state interventions (IPV, N=101), 2019-2020**

	Yes (%)	No / Not known (%)
Prior domestic violence by same partner	18%	82%
Prior Stalking	-	-
Prior threats to kill the woman	50%	50%
Prior Violence or threat known to the police	7%	93%
Prior state interventions	7%	93%

In the IPF case in **Malta**, close friends and family members knew of prior threats and domestic violence was known to the police.

For **Cyprus**, the perpetrator had threatened to kill the victim prior to the femicide in 2 out of 10 IPF cases, and there was only one case in which the violence or threat was known to the police and prior state interventions were made.

**Table 5: Cyprus - Prior knowledge and state interventions for Cyprus (IPF, N=10), 2019-2020**

	Yes (%)	No / Not known (%)
Prior domestic violence by same partner	10%	90%
Prior Stalking	-	-
Prior threats to kill the victim	20%	80%
Prior Violence or threat known to the police	10%	90%
Prior state interventions	10%	90%

#### 4.5.2 Trial and results of the trial

Tables 6 to 9 give an overview over the current results of the cases and trials in court, as far as known to the countries' research teams.

For **Germany**, we can see that for about half of the cases, there is no knowledge of the outcome, or no outcome yet, or no trial, because the perpetrator had committed suicide; this was the case for 51 % of all killings, for 58 % of killings perpetrated by intimate partners, for 51 % of other family killings, and for 33 % of killings by other persons. (Table 6, first three rows)

For those cases, where the perpetrator was found guilty (Table 6, rows 4 and 5), in half of the cases the killings were qualified as manslaughter and in the other half as murder. The relative percentage of cases qualified as murder is lower in cases of IPF than in cases of other killings. The rate of perpetrators who were remanded to a psychiatric institution is relatively high in cases perpetrated by family members (with 27 %, see row 6).

**Table 6: Results of the Trials 2019 and 2021 – Germany (as of Mai 2021), 2019-2020**

Results of the Trials	All Cases (N=360)	IPF (N=225)	Family Members (N=52)	Other (N=83)
No outcome yet	12 %	11 %	14 %	10 %
No Trial (suicide)	16 %	21 %	14 %	6 %
Not known	23 %	26 %	23 %	17 %
Guilty of manslaughter	12 %	15 %	6 %	6 %
Guilty of murder	12 %	12 %	14 %	10 %
Mental health institution	9 %	4 %	27 %	9 %
Not guilty	1 %	0 %	0 %	3 %
Other	2 %	2 %	2 %	3 %
Unsolved	2 %	1 %	0 %	5 %

Considering the systematic data collection for **Portugal** and the outcomes demonstrated in Table 7, it is relevant to mention, that, like in the other countries, for some cases (namely those classified as 'no outcome yet') due to the duration of the process, the sentence might not have been passed or the results/outcomes may not yet have been released by the media.

**Table 7: Portugal - Results of the Trials 2019 and 2020 (as of Mai 2021), 2019-2020**

Results of the Trials	All Cases	IPF	Family Members	Other
	(N=68)	(N=40)	(N=18)	(N=10)
No outcome yet	26%	19%	50%	12%
No Trial (suicide)	25%	29%	11%	38%
Guilty of homicide	28%	33%	11%	38%
Mental health institution	4%	0%	18%	0%
Not guilty	2%	2%	0%	0%
Outcome not known	12%	14%	5%	12%
Other	3%	3%	5%	0%

In **Cyprus**, two thirds of the cases went to trial and the perpetrator was found guilty of murder. In two cases, the perpetrator committed suicide following the femicide, and in the remaining two cases, there is no information on the result of the trial. In one case, a family member committed the murder and was found guilty by the court. (see Table 8)

**Table 8: Cyprus- Results of the Trials 2019 and 2020 (as of Mai 2021), 2019-2020**

Results of the Trials	All Cases	IPF	Family Members	Other
	(N=11)	(N=10)	(N=1)	(N=0)
No outcome yet	0%	0%	0%	0%
No Trial (suicide)	18%	20%	0%	0%
Guilty of homicide	64%	60%	100%	0%
Mental health institution	0%	0%	0%	0%
Not guilty	0%	0%	0%	0%
Outcome not known	18%	20%	0%	0%
Other	0%	0%	0%	0%

For **Malta**, both cases went to court, but have no outcome, yet.

For **Spain**, no comparable data is available. In May 2020 (date of publication by the Gender Violence Observatory of the report on the first 1000 murdered women), the trial had not yet been held in most of the cases that occurred in 2019, 2018 and in some cases in 2017. The average time elapsed between the facts and the sentence is 2.0 years, so the only information Spain can provide for now is that of suicide (of the 55 femicides committed in 2018, one third - 18 perpetrators - committed suicide). Results of the trials for 2020 are not as yet available.

The analysis of the trials and outcomes is difficult due to the high rate of cases without final information. The research team suggests to conduct more in-depth-research on the topic at a later period of time, when the trials have been finalized, and also in combination with in-depth-analysis of court statistics and documents. But that would be another research project that might be conducted in cooperation with the European Observatory on Femicide.

#### 4.6 Summary of quantitative analysis

The quantitative analysis of this project is based on 629 women who were killed in 2019 and 2020 in five European countries. In total, most women have been killed in Germany, while the population based rate was highest in Cyprus, followed by Portugal and Malta. The lowest population-based rate was found in Spain.

60 % of the women were killed by an intimate partner or ex-partner and these cases can be clearly identified as gender-based killings or femicides. Every fifth woman (19 %) was killed by other family members, often by sons killing their elderly mother. Thus, almost 80 % of the killings of women were perpetrated by partners or family members in the domestic sphere (almost exclusively by men). Other forms of gender-based killings (like killing in the context of sexual violence) are relatively rare.

Femicides are often connected with killings of other close persons like children and friends of the victim or new partners. This was the case for 12-18 % of the crimes in the five participating countries. Witnesses (family members, friends and others) were present in every fifth to fourth case of IPF.

Victims and perpetrators of IPFs show a great diversity in relation to age groups, education, occupation, social status and migration background. Some indications could be found for mental health problems on the side of the perpetrators; furthermore, every fifth to third perpetrator of IPF committed suicide after the murder.

Warning signs in advance of the killings, like prior threat and stalking, prior domestic violence and complaints to the police or support systems were visible in a number of cases, but the data-base is unreliable here as in countries without a monitoring system by the State and Justice system, like Germany, in most of the cases information on this aspect is not available.

Further in-depth analysis of police and court protocols would be necessary to gather valid information on this topic that is highly relevant for improved prevention.

Furthermore, the outcomes of the trials of the cases in 2019 and 2020 are not available for a high number of cases in all participating countries and further analysis at a later time is necessary to gain more knowledge on the sanction systems and practice. A tendency to qualify IPF cases as manslaughter rather than killings by other perpetrators, with the consequence of lower sentences, was found in the German database, but also here, more information is needed to verify these first observations.

## 5. Qualitative analysis - In-depth case knowledge as an example for cases that can be informative for prevention

For this report, ten femicide cases (with 11 victims) from 5 countries have been analysed in-depth, in order to find similar and different patterns concerning the circumstances of the crimes, as well as the reactions of the social environment and institutions.

### 5.1 Characterisation of the victim, the perpetrator and relationship

Most of the eleven<sup>86</sup> **victims** were young adults, six of them aged between 26 and 35 years old, and two of them even younger, between 16 and 25 years old. Two victims were middle aged between 44 and 53 years old and one victim was an elderly woman (70 years old).

The **perpetrators** were mostly middle aged, with five of them between 36 and 55 years old and the oldest being 62 years old. The other four were young adults aged between 25 and 35. In most cases, the **perpetrator** was **older than the victim**, seven of them with a difference of at least 9 years and one of only 3 years. In three cases, the **perpetrators** were **younger** than the victims.

At the time they were killed, most **victims were employed**, with four exceptions<sup>87</sup>: a university student, a pensioner, and two unemployed women. The victims had **mostly low or semi-skilled jobs**, such as factory or supermarket workers, with the exception of a social worker. As for the victims' **educational background**, there is not much information, although it is specified that in one case from Cyprus, the woman's education was limited to primary education. Two of the victims were **migrants/refugees**. In one of the cases from Cyprus, the woman had also been a victim of child marriage.

Regarding the **perpetrators**<sup>88</sup>, two perpetrators were **unemployed** at the time of the killing, one was a university student, and the remaining had **less qualified jobs**, with the exception of one man from Spain, who was a National Police Officer. Three of the perpetrators were **migrants/refugees**. Both cases from Malta were characterised by **criminal antecedents**: in one case, the father of the perpetrator was convicted of murder, and in the other the perpetrator was described as having a drug addiction. **Mental health issues** prior to the femicide were reported regarding one of the perpetrators. Three perpetrators were described as **obsessively jealous, aggressive and antisocial**.

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<sup>86</sup> In one case, two women were killed by the perpetrator.

<sup>87</sup> There was no information available regarding the professional occupation of one victim.

<sup>88</sup> There is no information regarding the educational background or occupation of three perpetrators.

With respect to the **relationship between victim and perpetrator**, in almost all cases, victim and perpetrator were or had previously been in an **intimate partner relationship** for a period of time that varies from around one year to 18 years. The exceptions include one case from Portugal, in which victim and perpetrator were university classmates and the latter was romantically interested in the former, and one case from Malta, in which the perpetrator was the son and brother of the victims and his sister had accused him of sexual abuse. In the case of four of the intimate partner femicide victims, they already had **children from previous relationships**. In another two cases, the victims had **children with the perpetrator**.

In almost all cases, **prior known conflicts or even formal complaints** from the victims had occurred. In almost all the situations in which the victim and perpetrator were in an intimate **relationship**, there were **current or prior attempts to end it** (the only exception is one case from Germany). In fact, the **relationship dissolution, or its imminence**, was identified as the **main trigger** of several of the femicides in the qualitative case analysis. This differs from the quantitative analysis in which often no in-depth information about women's attempt to end the relationship was available.

## 5.2 Coercive control and the victim's strategies to deal with the perpetrator

In **all femicides** analysed, **coercive control behaviours** were described. These coercive control behaviours can be grouped into three moments: before the killing, during the killing and after the killing.

**Coercive control before the killing** is indicated in most cases, in all countries, and includes behaviours such as stalking, physical violence, and psychological violence. In one of the cases from Malta, the perpetrator would use their daughter as a means to extend the control over the victim. Other strategies of control from this same perpetrator include preventing the victim from gaining employment, using emotional manipulation, and making threats to the victim's mother. In fact, **threats** were often used as strategies of coercive control in several cases, including **death threats** (Cyprus, Germany, Malta, Portugal) and **threats to commit suicide** if the victims continued to reject them (Malta, Cyprus). Moreover, **manifestations of jealousy and prohibitions** from speaking and contacting other people were also reported in cases from Malta, Germany and Spain. One of the perpetrators was described as using his height and physical build to command respect. As for the type of **physical violence** used to control the victims, it was often **nearly lethal**, including one case from Germany where the victim was strangled until she spat out blood.

**Coercive control strategies during the killing** were also identified, namely in cases from Germany, Malta and Cyprus. These strategies included attracting and ambushing the victim at the crime site using a suicide threat, meticulously planning the femicide, and preparing and

creating the weapon. It is also possible to recognise that **coercive control does not end with the victim's death** – the perpetrator continues to **control** what he does with the **body** (e.g. disposing of the body, in one case from Malta and another from Portugal), and even tries to escape and **control the course of the investigation** (in one case from Portugal, the perpetrator inserted himself into the police search while the case was being handled as a disappearance).

The **victims' strategies to deal with the violence and try to survive** were numerous and were identified in all countries. Two victims hid friends or current intimate partners from the perpetrator to avoid violent reactions. In one case from Malta, the victim would try to appease the perpetrator by doing everything he wished, to diminish the risk of retaliation. In one case from Germany, the victim's strategies included hiding sharp objects from the perpetrator, sleeping separately and pretending to sleep to avoid being touched. **Separation or attempting to separate was identified in advance of several femicides**, as victims attempted to get away from the perpetrators, even including, in one case from Portugal, moving to a different city. In one of the cases from Cyprus, the victim not only reported the crime to the police but also asked for help from friends and relatives.

### 5.3 Family, formal and informal networks

Regarding the victims' families, most of the victims had **children, with whom they lived**. In a few cases, the children were in some way **present** in the process leading to or during the femicide: in one case from Malta, the perpetrator called their elder daughter to ask where the victim was, 10 minutes before perpetrating the femicide; and in one case from Germany, the victim's underage daughter was in the apartment at the moment of the crime. In some cases it is described that the victims had a very **close relationship with their families, such as their parents and siblings**, as well as other relatives.

As for the **perpetrators' families**, there is less information available than about the victims' families. In one case from Malta, it is described that the perpetrator's father is a well-known businessman who hid his relationship with his son due to him being the product of an extramarital affair. One common theme in a few cases is that the perpetrators' relatives are described as supporting him in some way, such as helping him hide after the crime, praising him to the media or even testifying in court on his behalf. On the contrary, in one case from Portugal, the perpetrator's father went to the police to talk to the perpetrator while he was in custody to urge him to confess the crime, which he did after the conversation.

With regard to the **victims' informal networks**, in several cases it is described that the victims had very **close friends**, who **encouraged the victim** to seek help, and appeared in court or spoke to the media in support of her memory. On the other hand, in one case from Malta, the



aunt of the younger victim with whom the victim had disclosed sexual abuse committed by the perpetrator claimed that she did not believe her, due to her alleged promiscuity.

As for the perpetrator, in some cases the **people who knew the perpetrator** describe them negatively, as not being very sociable or harsh. In other cases, the perpetrators are described in the media as having a close relationship with their friends and their informal networks speak about them in a positive light. In one case from Malta, the perpetrator's previous partner had committed suicide in his residence, allegedly due to the perpetrator's mother disapproving of their relationship.

Regarding **formal networks**, there is not much information in most cases. In one case from Cyprus, the family was under the supervision of the Social Welfare Services and was receiving psychological support and some necessities (food, clothes, toys) from the children's school.

In many cases, a **common theme** is that the **victims' and/or the perpetrators' networks were aware of prior violence by the perpetrator** against the victim. Relatives or friends are described not only as being aware of the violence, but also, in some cases, as **trying to convince the perpetrator to stop the violence**, being told of his **intention to kill** the victim, or even also being a direct victim of physical and verbal abuse by him.

However, in a **few cases**, the reports suggest that **not many people knew about the violence**. Such is the case of the femicides in Spain, with only one person being aware of the violence or the people who knew the couple only having suspicions of it. Moreover, in one of the cases from Portugal, the victim's friends have different accounts, with some reporting that the perpetrator was obsessed with the victim and others mentioning they were not aware of any issues. Finally, in one case from Malta, despite the testimonies about previous sexual abuse, the perpetrator's network **completely denied knowing** of any other violence.

#### 5.4 Social and economic status

The victims' and perpetrators' **social and economic status was diverse**. Many lived in their own houses, whether owned or rented. In one case from Malta, they lived in their family's house. Most lived in urban settings, although in one case the victim had moved from a rural town to a bigger city, to get away from the perpetrator, and in one case the victim lived in a small town. A few victims and perpetrators are described as middle class. However, in one case from Cyprus, the victim and perpetrator were both refugees and had economic difficulties, receiving help from a victim's friend and the children's school in order to cover basic necessities such as food and clothes.

## 5.5 Previous help-seeking and reports to the authorities

In four cases, there is **no information available on previous help-seeking or reports** to the authorities, either because there was no information available from any sources used, or because there was no history of previous violence registered between the couple. In one case from Spain, despite evidence of previous violence, there was no information about prior reports or help-seeking. In two cases, despite not having information regarding previous reports to the authorities or official support services involved, the **victims disclosed the experienced victimisation and violence to their friends or family members**. In both cases, the **informal network did not intervene**. In one case from Malta, there is no information on the previous help-seeking apart from family support and a previous domestic violence report seven years before the femicide. However, the court had proceeded with an acquittal due to the victim's refusal to testify and her request to drop charges. When the victim had filed the report of previous domestic violence, authorities did not as yet carry out risk assessments in Malta.

In two other cases, victims filed **previous domestic violence complaints to the authorities**. Nevertheless, the **system's reaction** was **insufficient** to protect both victims. In one case from Cyprus, the killed woman and her five children were identified as potential victims of domestic violence upon their arrival in the country and allocated to a separate apartment. This victim made several reports to the police with the support of the Social Welfare Services, and the **perpetrator was imprisoned** for 48 hours. The court issued restraining orders and the obligation to be present at the police station twice a week. Despite that, he continued to terrorise the victim and invaded her home, stealing various objects. In one case from Portugal, although there is no specific mention of risk assessment being made, sources indicate that the **Public Prosecutor delineated a safety plan** (which usually happens right after a risk assessment is completed), which was **not effective**. In one case from Spain, despite no previous report by the femicide victim, there were previous reports regarding gender violence involving the perpetrator and his previous intimate partners.

## 5.6 Social and cultural norms relevant to the specific case

There is a common theme in most of these cases regarding the **perpetrator's sense of ownership towards the victim**, demonstrated by **obsessive jealousy** and **refusal to accept the separation** and the refusal of **rejection**. This sense of male **proprietaryness** is reinforced by **cultural values surrounding a woman's role as a subordinate** and as 'belonging' to her male partner. In one case from Germany, it is described that the perpetrator had had a more insecure economic status than the victim, which contradicts this stereotype of the **perceived superiority of the man in a couple**, which the perpetrator may have held due to his belonging to a **subculture of traditionally violent masculinity** (rocker groups). In one case from Spain,

the man's perceived superiority seemed to also have been fueled by his position of power and **access to weapons** due to his profession as a police officer.

In one case from Malta, the **importance of maintaining family unity** and the factor of **perceived shame** seemed to have contributed to the lack of reporting of the previous sexual abuse to the authorities and even the disbelief shown towards the victim's account of the abuse. In one of the cases from Cyprus, the **couple's status as refugees** may have also increased the victim's difficulty in leaving the relationship due to the **language and cultural barriers** when accessing support services.

It becomes extremely important to note the **media discourse surrounding the femicides**, the victims and the perpetrators, as evidenced in some of these cases. In one case from Portugal, there was a tendency by some media outlets to **disseminate victim blaming discourses**, using **sensationalist headlines** and **biased narratives**, and even reporting incorrect information (such as the existence of an intimate relationship between victim and perpetrator, which the media initially reported as being the case), which was later discredited by the victim's family and friends. On the other hand, in one case from **Spain**, the media discourse is shown to demonstrate the **positive evolution of the country's media's coverage of gender-based violence**. In this case, media discourses seemed to be devoid of victim blaming and perpetrator justification, focusing on facts and **highlighting the gender-based dimension** of the crime.

**Patriarchal values around the family and women's roles and bodies** as well as **gender power relations** are present in all the five countries' societies, making possible **male feelings of entitlement towards women's bodies**. These values may act as obstacles to witnesses and third parties (informal networks) **unraveling men's coercive control strategies** and **believing women's experiences** of suffering. Furthermore, these **patriarchal values** are also **pervasive in the institutional networks** of victim support in the way that rapid and effective protective measures were not issued in most of the cases. In some cases, there were some **protective measures**, yet they were **not sufficient**. Society in general, and institutions in particular, still do not pay sufficient attention to the dangerousness of these perpetrators. Many times, they assume that a simple measure will be enough to stop the perpetrator. However, **masculinity entitlement** to the women's bodies, thinking they "belong" to them, **needs to be deeply challenged** to decrease femicide and to improve women's safety as well as their human rights.

## 6. Preliminary recommendations for prevention and multidimensional action

The national reports, as well as this comparative report, have documented the high prevalence of femicide in all participating countries and underline the **urgent need for effective prevention and multidimensional action** to end the gender-based killings of women, being most often perpetrated by intimate partners.

Given that in a relevant number of IPFs no prior domestic violence or threat was reported to the police or other institutions, both primary and secondary intervention is necessary, as well as **awareness raising on all levels of society and institutions**. Here, the **close social environment** of victims and perpetrators plays an important role. Furthermore, **improvements in the intervention and sanction practices** of the police and justice systems have to be made. Further, for all women in danger of severe violence and femicide (and their children), **immediate support and shelter** have to be ensured.

The **FEM-UnitedED** team **suggests the following measures to the States** to better protect women, to adequately intervene and sanction the cases, and to raise awareness of institutions and the public.

### 1. Consistent intervention and comprehensive protection for women at risk

- **Standardised, systematised and gender-sensitive risk assessment** must be implemented in all institutions dealing with women at risk of femicide (and with potential perpetrators), especially in the police force and justice system, in various support systems, youth offices, lawyers, the education system, therapists and the medical and care system. They should content a set of shared criteria and be appropriate to evaluate the risk of femicide.
- Therefore, **existing risk assessment tools** for domestic violence have to be **further developed** in a way that a potential risk of femicide can be identified as early as possible and that multiprofessional interventions can be initiated. A central aspect of improved risk assessment tools is to **identify patterns of controlling and coercive behaviour, possessiveness towards women, isolation and extreme emotional reactions on (impending) separation, even if no prior domestic violence by the male partner is known** to the police or other institutions. The tools should **not only focus on previous physical violence**, but also **include gender dynamics, coercive controlling behaviour, stalking, threats, threat of suicide, aggression** against and blaming of the woman. Appropriate significance should be assigned to the victims'

assessments of risk. **Specialised training for front-line professionals** on the use of risk assessment tools is essential.

- Notwithstanding that firearms are used in a minority of femicide cases analysed in this report, any assessment of the risks faced by a victim should systematically take into consideration, at all stages of the investigation and application of protective measures, **whether the perpetrator legally or illegally possesses or has access to firearms** in order to guarantee the safety of victims.
- Risk assessment must include **clear risk management strategies**. Each institution and professional group must have **clear instructions on what can and must be done** in the event of a risk situation, regardless of risk level, in order to prevent escalation of violence, **within a multi-agency framework**.
- **More effective use and monitoring of protection measures** is needed: The use of protection orders should be increased and their effectiveness improved. Breaches of protection orders should be appropriately sanctioned in order to act as a deterrent.
- **Permanent multi-professional intervention systems** (with police and justice, NGOs, support organisations, social services, perpetrator work, and other relevant institutions) have to be implemented in every region nationwide. Their task is to **immediately initiate coordinated, multiagency intervention** strategies in risk situations and provide support for women at risk (and their children).
- **Women's specialist services, including counselling services and shelters**, have to be supported through a comprehensive framework of funding at the system level, which should guarantee sustainable funding. This is even more crucial considering how women's specialist services have been severely affected by the continuing health crisis with an increased demand for services. Services should be available at sufficient levels so that all women at risk (and their children) can get **immediate help and protection from further violence, threat or control by an intimate partner**, as well as **immediate counselling**.
- **Decisions on child custody and child contact** after separation must put the **protection of women and children first**, against the background that the separation process is associated with an extremely high risk of exposure to violence and killings for women (and their children and also other family members).
- **Perpetrator prevention and perpetrator work** has to be implemented in every region and should further develop their strategies to reach men at risk of perpetrating a femicide; therefore, not only men who have been perpetrators of violence, but also **men who cannot deal constructively with the woman's integrity and freedom to decide** for separation, must be addressed. **Perpetrator programmes should operate within a multiagency framework and prioritise victim safety**.

## 2. Primary prevention and awareness raising

- As the **cultural patriarchal background forms the central causal context** of the femicides, primary prevention is crucial in order to achieve a long-term-reduction of Intimate Partner Femicides and other femicides.
- In **education and culture, as well as media work, gender roles and expectations** have to be addressed and **equal gender relationships should be promoted**. **Work with boys and men** has to be expanded to deconstruct the perceptions of toxic masculinities, machismo and dominance, as well as to educate on the benefits of power-equal relationships and equality.
- Through **awareness raising campaigns** and work with **media**, as well as **community engagement** (in neighbourhoods, at workplaces, schools, health centres etc.), on providing **more information about warning signs and risk factors within the social environment**, combined with **knowledge and instructions on how to act** in cases of risk for women and children, prevention of femicide has to be strengthened.
- **More engagement by the media and training** have to be implemented and intensified to improve the knowledge about the gendered background of dominance and control against women that leads to femicide, as well as on individual and collective strategies to prevent and end violent male behaviour and violent situations for women and girls, also with the support of several institutions. Media training should also include **ethical issues on reporting**, and reflect the **perspective of surviving family members** and friends who can be traumatised, also by media reporting. It is essential to establish **ethical guidelines for the media** regarding the portrayal and coverage of domestic violence and femicide and to analyse and monitor media in the countries that have produced and published such guidelines.

## 3. Multi-Agency and multi-professional training

- **Mandatory and systematic training for all frontline professionals** has to be implemented, aimed at raising awareness on the issue and taking warning signs seriously, but also reflecting on one's own **professional role in prevention and intervention**; also **legal professionals and civil lawyers** dealing with separations must be included.

## 4. Change laws and judicial practices

- Femicide must be identified and defined as a **clearly gendered crime** during the whole process of investigation and sanctioning of the crime.

- The background of gender discrimination and gender inequality has to be taken into account as an **aggravating circumstance leading to higher sanctions**, rather than mitigating the crime.

## 5. Data collection, monitoring and research

- Member States have to **monitor femicides and evaluate system responses at different levels**.
- **Disaggregated administrative/institutional data** (by police and justice system) on all forms of violence against women, including femicide, have to be collected and regularly published on national- and EU-level in a comparable way (and with standardized EU measures). They should contain information on victims, perpetrators and additional victims, as well as on circumstances of the killings.
- **Protection measures, prevention strategies, investigation and sanctioning practices** by the State have to be **monitored on a case-by-case-basis and data made available as well as reported** regularly, in order to successively improve prevention (and sanctioning practice).
- **Existing data collection initiatives on femicide** at national and international levels, such as the **European Observatory on Femicide (EOF) should be funded and supported by the EU and the Member States**, in order to gain in-depth knowledge on individual cases and overall knowledge for improved prevention strategies. In every state, based on the existing work, an **Observatory on Femicide** has to be implemented and funded.
- **Further in-depth research on femicides and femicide prevention** should be promoted and sufficiently resourced by the state.

## 6. Protection and measures for specific target groups at risk

- **Protection measures for specific target groups** at higher risk, for example for **migrant women** and **women with disabilities**, have to be developed, in order to **remove barriers** to support and adequate protection.
- **Women who want to separate from controlling/dominant partners** should be specifically addressed in policies and measures to prevent femicide and support women at risk.
- **Children should be recognised in their own right as victims and a specific group at risk** of IPV and IPF, with specific prevention and protection measures, and considered in their **own right for shelter and support**. They must also be acknowledged as victims after their mother has been killed, with their need for specific support in **situations of grief and traumatization**, but also **during the investigation**

**and sanction process** through specific **training for police officers, prosecutors and judges**. Furthermore, children have to be informed about their **rights during the court proceedings**, and also their **rights to compensation and reparation**.

**These preliminary recommendations will be further developed, discussed and reflected in the framework of this project in 2022 together with different stakeholders and decision-makers as well as with practitioners in the project countries. They will then be processed and structured in such a way that different institutions and stakeholders can adopt them for their political and practical work.**



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