



FEM-UNITED

united to prevent femicide in europe

**EU POLICY BRIEF ON FEMICIDE
PREVENTION**

Authors

Marceline Naudi, Martina Farrugia, Lara Dimitrijevic, Emily Galea, Alexia Shakou, Christiana Kouta, Elina Kofou, Susana Pavlou, Monika Schröttle, Maria Arnis, Camila Iglesias, Carolina Magalhães Dias, Cátia Pontedeira, Maria José Magalhães, Susana Coimbra, Chaime Marcuello Servós, Santiago Boira Sarto, Patricia Almaguer Kalixto, Antonio Eito Mateo, Paz Olaciregui Rodríguez

Suggested citation

Naudi, M., Farrugia, M., Dimitrijevic, L., Galea, E., Shakou, A., Kouta, C., Kofou, E., Pavlou, S., Schröttle, M., Arnis, M., Iglesias, C., Magalhães Dias, C., Pontedeira, C., Magalhães, M.J., Coimbra, Marcuello Servós, C., Boira Sarto, S., Almaguer, P., Eito, A., Olaciregui Rodríguez, P. (2022). EU Policy Brief on Femicide Prevention. FEM-United Project



Co-funded by the
Rights, Equality &
Citizenship Programme
of the European Union

This EU Policy Brief was prepared in the context and for the purposes of the Project “FEM-UnitED to prevent femicide in Europe”, funded by the European Union’s Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020). The contents represent the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.



L-Università
ta' Malta

Womens
Rights
Foundation



Cyprus
University of
Technology



MEDITERRANEAN
INSTITUTE OF
GENDER STUDIES



Institut für empirische Soziologie
an der Friedrich-Alexander-Universität
Erlangen-Nürnberg



U. PORTO

FACULDADE DE PSICOLOGIA
E DE CIÊNCIAS DA EDUCAÇÃO
UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
The FEM-UnitED Project	4
Prevalence of Femicide	5
Data Sources, Methods of Data Collection & Reporting	8
Legal and Policy Framework	11
National Legal Frameworks on GBV and Femicide	11
National Policies on GBV	13
Policy Recommendations for Effective Prevention and Intervention	15

Introduction

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

Despite the magnitude of the problem, and calls by the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, data on femicide was not officially and systematically collected in the EU and there was a lack of transnational tools for the study of femicide, before the European Observatory on Femicide began to develop an internationally comparable data base. A common definition of femicide does not exist. Furthermore, harmful attitudes, behaviours and stereotypes, as well as a lack of understanding of the gendered dynamics of intimate partner femicides (IPFs), impede effective prevention measures, including early intervention.

This policy brief consists of a summary of the findings and outcomes of the research, capacity-building trainings and multi-stakeholder meetings conducted within the framework of the EU-funded project “FEM-UnitED - United to prevent IPV/DV Femicide in Europe”.

The FEM-UnitED Project

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 femicide. The project aims to develop system-wide responses to IPV by creating an evidence base for raising public awareness and fostering multidisciplinary 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 seeks to reinforce and contribute to international efforts, such as the Femi(ni)cide Watch Platform¹ and the EOF,² through: 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 Sociology (IfeS) at the Friedrich-Alexander-University Erlangen-Nürnberg in Germany, the University of Zaragoza in Spain, and the University of Porto in Portugal. The project team also includes women’s rights

¹ Femi(ni)cide Watch Platform: <https://femicide-watch.org/>.

² European Observatory on Femicide: <http://eof.cut.ac.cy/>

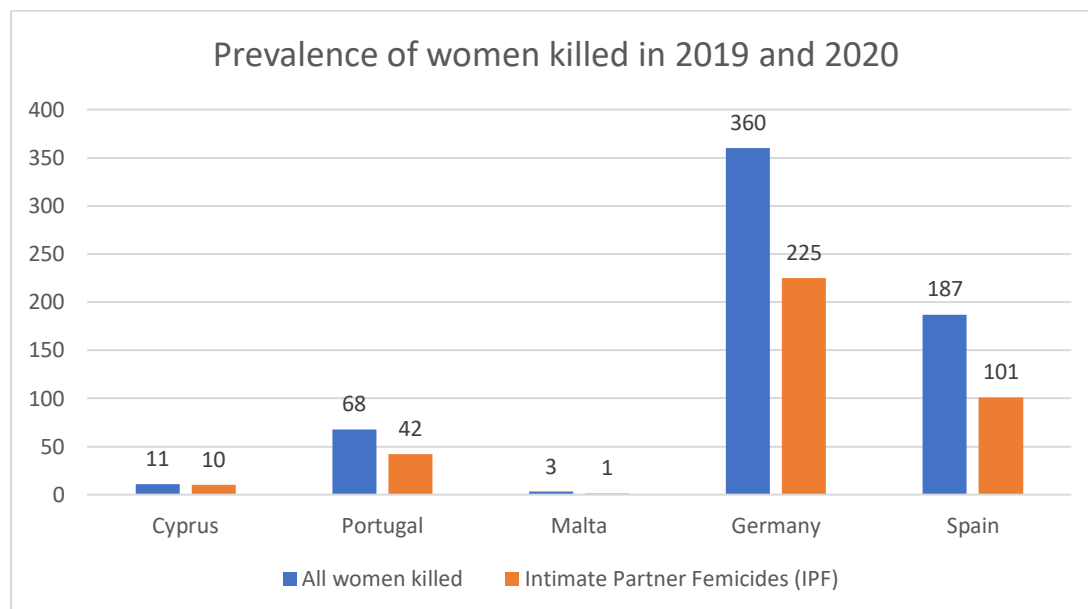
and gender equality NGOs, specifically the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (Cyprus), the Women’s Rights Foundation (Malta), and the Alternative and Response Women’s Association / União de Mulheres Alternativa e Resposta (UMAR) (Portugal).

This project builds on the work of the EU-funded project “COST Action on Femicide across Europe” (2014-2017),³ which resulted in the establishment of the EOF, the first Europe-wide network for the monitoring and prevention of cases of femicide. The EOF has been systematically collecting data on femicide in Europe since 2020.

Prevalence of Femicide

Within the framework of the FEM-UnitED project, data was collected on the 629 women who had been killed in the participating countries (Malta, Germany, Cyprus, Portugal and Spain) in 2019 and 2020. Intimate partner or ex-partner killings accounted for 60% of these cases, which were clearly identifiable as femicide. In the rest, which included killings by family members (19% of all women killed) or by other known/unknown persons, the gender dimension was not clear, although we note that 99% of the perpetrators were men.

Figure 1: Prevalence of women killed in 2019 and 2020



In relation to all women who were killed across the participating countries in 2019 and 2020, the majority were in Germany (360), followed by Spain (187), Portugal (68), Cyprus (11) and

³ COST Action IS1206: Femicide across Europe (2014-2017): <https://www.cost.eu/actions/IS1206/>

Malta (3). For further details, see Figure 1 above and the FEM-UnitED Comparative Report, p. 35.⁴

The annual population base rate varies between 0.19 and 0.78 cases per 100,000 inhabitants across the five countries. Therefore, the annual average rate per 100,000 inhabitants for both years was the highest in Cyprus (0.62), followed by Portugal (0.33), Malta (0.29), Germany (0.22) and Spain (0.19).

Malta and **Cyprus**, being the two smallest countries in this project, recorded correspondingly low numbers of women victims. Malta recorded two cases in total, one case in 2019 and another in 2020 (one of which had two victims): one of the victims was killed by an ex-partner, two by other family members. Cyprus recorded seven cases in 2019 and four in 2020: almost all of the women (10) were killed by an intimate partner, and one by a family member.

From the data collected through the media, a total of 34 women were killed in 2019 and 34 women were killed in 2020 in **Portugal**. Sixty-two percent of these women were killed by intimate partners, current or former, or by men who wanted a relationship with the victim, but had been rejected (23 in 2019 and 19 in 2020); 26% of the women were killed by other family members (6 in 2019 and 12 in 2020).

Of the 187 women that had been killed in **Spain** – 104 cases in 2019 and 83 in 2020 – 54% (101 cases) were killed by an intimate partner and 26% (48 cases) by other family members.⁵ From all the participating countries in this project, Spain is the only country that recorded a significant decrease in cases over the past 10 years.

Germany registered 360 women that have been killed in 2019 (177) and 2020 (183). Sixty-three percent of these women (225) were killed by intimate partners and 14% (52) by other family members. Even though an increase can be noted from these statistics, seen in the wider context of police statistics since 2015, this is a result of annual fluctuations and not a long-term increase or decrease of femicides.

From the data shown above, the women killed in the partner countries were mainly killed by their current/former partners or by a family member. The other killings of women were committed by perpetrators who were either known or unknown to the victim.

⁴https://www.um.edu.mt/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/490109/FINAL_FEM_United_Comparative_Report_28.02.2021_EDITED.pdf

⁵ As of March 2022, following further investigation of cases and resulting updates to the statistics, between 2019 and 2020, 198 women were killed, of which 103 by a current or former intimate partner, and 9 killed by other perpetrators.

More specifically, 60% of the women were killed by current or former intimate partners. In four out of the five participating countries, the majority of women were killed by a partner or ex-partner.⁶ Malta and Cyprus, which had the lowest number of cases, identified the rate of women killed by intimate partners ranging between 33% in Malta⁷ and 91% in Cyprus. The other three countries, which had a higher number of cases, had rates of 54% in Spain, 62% in Portugal and 63% in Germany for women killed by intimate partners.

Family members were the perpetrators in 19% of all cases of women killed. In Germany and Spain, these family members were almost exclusively men, in the rest, men were the majority. The perpetrators were often adult sons who killed their elderly mothers. For Portugal, looking at the total killings within a family context not perpetrated by an intimate partner, in 39% of the cases, women were killed by their son or son-in-law.

From the total of 629 women killed, it was also recorded that about one in five women (21%) were killed by persons other than partners and family members. The highest rate was recorded in Germany (23%) and Spain (20%), followed by Portugal (12%), and 0% in Malta and Cyprus.

According to the data gathered from each country and the broader information from across partner countries, the types of killings of women which were recorded as the majority could be classified as IPFs. Most women who were killed were still in a relationship with the perpetrator with no separation noted. However, for most of these cases, there was no information on whether the woman had planned to end the relationship with the perpetrator prior to the killing. Therefore, the higher number of cases of IPFs in the context of an ongoing relationship rather than that of a planned separation should be treated very cautiously. The qualitative analysis highlights that (planned) separation is one of the most important risk factors for IPFs.

Other forms of femicide, such as women killed in the context of sexual violence or prostitution, emerged as relatively uncommon across the partner countries (0-3% of all cases). Furthermore, other types of killings which were not clearly related to GBV, such as killings in the context of robbery, terror attacks or by unknown persons, were only documented in two out of the five partner countries (9% in Portugal and 21% in Germany).

⁶ The rate of IPF cases recorded in Cyprus for 2019 includes five women killed by an IPF serial killer.

⁷ Since numbers for Malta are so low, this statistic cannot be considered reliable.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the majority of women victims across the partner countries were killed because of their gender and these cases should be categorised as gender-based killings, and femicides.

Data Sources, Methods of Data Collection & Reporting

In four of the five partner countries,⁸ statistical information on femicides can be obtained through the official police crime statistics and/or through court statistics. Some countries provide statistics that include information not just on the number of women killed, but also additional information on the victim, the perpetrator, the victim–perpetrator relationship, the method of killing and/or on the results of the trial. Spain is the only country out of the five which provides in-depth, case-specific information on motives, as well as prior interventions or prevention measures by the state. The official data is unfortunately not comparable between the countries, as each country has a different legal definition of femicide (if they have one at all), as well as different methods of recording women who have been killed, reporting standards and ways in which cases are documented.

Spain has developed the most detailed official monitoring system to record femicide cases. This was done under the Observatory against Domestic and Gender Violence of the General Council of the Judiciary. The official statistics focus on gender-related violence and killings of women by an intimate partner or ex-partner. Every year, the Observatory publishes the number of victims, the main characteristics of the victims and perpetrators, as well as the circumstances of the murders.⁹ The report includes all IPV killings of women aged over 15.¹⁰

The report contains information such as:

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

⁸ In Portugal, there are no official statistics for non-DV femicides, as discussed later in this section.

⁹ The most recent report was published in 2019 and is available at: [C.G.P.J - Informes de violencia doméstica y de género \(poderjudicial.es\)](https://www.poderjudicial.es/cgpj/informes-de-violencia-domestica-y-de-genero)

¹⁰ For further information: [C.G.P.J - Informes de violencia doméstica y de género \(poderjudicial.es\)](https://www.poderjudicial.es/cgpj/informes-de-violencia-domestica-y-de-genero)

- Cases with multiple victims

However, the Observatory does not offer data on family femicides where the perpetrators are not current or former partners, such as killings perpetrated by other male family members. This data is however made available by Femicidio.net,¹¹ who collect data on all murders of women based on media reporting.

Germany's police statistics include the official number of cases of murder, manslaughter and bodily harm resulting in death.¹² Since 2016, an annual report known as the "Intimate Partner Violence – Crime Statistics Analysis" has been published reporting on cases of IPV.¹³ In some respects, it is well-detailed and provides information on the number of victims of several violent crimes against both women and men committed by current/former intimate partners, including murder and manslaughter.¹⁴ Beyond prevalence, however, the report does not include in-depth information on femicide cases, nor on corresponding state interventions or sanctions. Another source of data in Germany are court statistics on convicted offenders, but these are not compatible with police data and also do not specify the (intimate partner) killings of women by men.

No official statistics are available specifically on femicide in **Portugal**; however, the Annual Report on Internal Security¹⁵ mentions the number of homicides involving women killed by intimate partners and women killed by other family members, with no information available about the other female victims. Portugal also publishes quarterly state reports on DV,¹⁶ detailing information on adult male and female victims, as well as children. These reports do not account for killings of women outside of a DV context, even if they would constitute (non-family) femicides. Furthermore, the judicial police report on intimate partner homicide investigations conducted between 2014 and 2019 documents the number of women killed by intimate partners in those years.¹⁷ As the official data only reports on total homicides and on women killed in the context of DV, it is not possible to determine the rate of femicides outside of the family context by looking at official statistics alone. Apart from this, the Directorate

¹¹ <https://femicidio.net/>

¹² The German Police Crime Statistics (PKS) official website available at:

https://www.bka.de/DE/AktuelleInformationen/StatistikenLagebilder/PolizeilicheKriminalstatistik/pks_node.html

¹³ For more information see:

https://www.bka.de/DE/AktuelleInformationen/StatistikenLagebilder/Lagebilder/Partnerschaftsgewalt/partnerschaftsgewalt_node.html

¹⁴ It reports also their age group, nationality, drug or alcohol use, marital and household status, as well as possible disabilities and health problems of the victims.

¹⁵ Report available at: <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/download-ficheiros/ficheiro.aspx?v=%3D%3DBQAAAB%2BLCAAAAAAAAAABAAzNDQ1NAUABR26oAUAAAA%3D>

¹⁶ Latest report available at: <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/pt/gc23/comunicacao/documento?i=dados-trimestrais-de-crimes-de-violencia-domestica-2-trimestre-de-2022>

¹⁷ Report available at: <https://www.policiajudiciaria.pt/homicidios-nas-relacoes-de-intimidade-estudo-dos-inqueritos-investigados-pela-policia-judiciaria-2014-2019/>

General for Justice Policy regularly publishes data on court cases concerning offenders convicted of all types of intimate partner homicides. The Team for the Retrospective Analysis of Homicides in the Context of Domestic Violence (EARHVD) regularly contributes data, as it performs selected reviews of domestic homicides that occurred in the context of DV and proposes recommendations for improving the system's responses to this form of violence.¹⁸ Moreover, the Observatory on Murdered Women, a working group of the feminist NGO, UMAR, collects data on all femicides in Portugal, using media reports as a source, and publishes an annual report.¹⁹

The official police statistics in **Cyprus** report the total number of murders/homicides and attempted murders that are committed each year. Data on femicide is only provided upon request as these are not publicly available. However, data collected in relation to DV is available and recorded both as a total number of cases, and further disaggregated by type of violence, sex of victims and perpetrators, and age.²⁰ Judicial data for monitoring cases of GBV during criminal proceedings is not made available to the public.

In **Malta**, the police collects and provides data on cases of DV. They document all the cases reported in the National Police System (NPS) database. While not publicly available, data can be provided upon request for research and journalistic purposes. Homicide data can also be obtained upon request. Nevertheless, no official reports or dedicated analyses of femicides are published by the state. The state social work service Aġenzija Appoġġ (Domestic Violence Services) issues their own DV statistics on an annual basis. The recently set up Malta Observatory on Femicide is now also collecting data on femicides, including retroactively.

NGOs across all five participating countries play an important role in the collection of data on femicide cases. Additional data on cases of DV and femicide is collected by the Women's Rights Foundation (WRF) in Malta, whilst, in Cyprus, the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) collects data on femicide through the systematic monitoring and cataloguing of media reports and analysis of police data. The Alternative and Response Women's Association (UMAR) created the Observatory on Murdered Women in Portugal, which gathers annual data on killings of women (including femicides) since 2004, analysing variables/information – about the victim, the perpetrator, details of the crimes and resulting trials, and protection measures for victims – and makes them freely available online.²¹ One

¹⁸ Reports can be found at: <https://earhvd.sg.mai.gov.pt/RelatoriosRecomendacoes/Pages/default.aspx>

¹⁹ All reports available at: <http://www.umarfeminismos.org/>

²⁰ Information available at:

https://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/dmlstatistical_en/dmlstatistical_en?OpenDocument&Start=1&Count=1000&Expand=1.3

²¹ <http://www.umarfeminismos.org/index.php/observatorio-de-mulheres-assassinadas>

Billion Rising (OBR), in Germany lists cases of women murdered by their partners.²² Finally, feminicidio.net systematically collects data on different types of femicide in Spain. The figures include not only intimate partner femicides, but also killings of women by other family members.

All partner countries use risk assessment tools to assess the DV cases. For example, Malta uses DASH or SARA, whilst Spain uses VioGén. In Cyprus, risk assessment tools are only applied by specialised units of the criminal police, whilst in Germany and Portugal only well-trained police officers make use of the risk assessment tool. In Malta, only trained social welfare staff can use the tool.

For the purposes of the present project, four of the participating countries, all except Spain, used the EOF data collection tool (established in 2019). The EOF data collection tools have been slightly revised for this project in order to systematically collect all available femicide data. On the other hand, Spain used statistics from the Observatory against Domestic and Gender Violence and the feminicidio.net database.

Legal and Policy Framework

All countries participating in the FEM-UnitED project – Cyprus, Germany, Malta, Portugal and Spain – have signed and ratified the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence, also known as the Istanbul Convention. However, each country varies in its level of implementation of the legal provisions to prevent and combat all forms of VAW and DV. Below is a breakdown of the common features and differences in the legal frameworks on femicide and more broadly on GBV across the partner countries.

National Legal Frameworks on GBV and Femicide

Portugal, Germany and Spain²³ have no explicit legal definition for femicide or the killing of women on the basis of their gender. Other legal provisions are used when VAW and femicide cases are presented in court. It should be noted that these legal provisions vary across these countries.

²² OBR is a global organisation that focuses on awareness-raising campaigns and also provides data on cases of femicide in Germany online.

²³ At state level, the laws do not define femicide specifically, however, gender is an aggravating factor in the murder of women. On the other hand, some regional laws do define femicide as a specific crime, as is the case of the Autonomous Community of Navarra or Andalusia, among others.

In contrast, both Malta and Cyprus have a legal definition for femicide due to newly passed bills. With regards to **Malta**, with the passing of legal reform in June 2022, the conditions under which the court is to consider homicide as a femicide have been listed; in these cases, the highest form of punishment, a life sentence, is provided.²⁴ The law further recognises that in crimes affecting the dignity of the person, gender is considered to be an aggravating factor to the crime, resulting in harsher punishment.

In the case of **Cyprus**, in 2021, the passing of the Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence Law (VAW Law 2021) extended the legal framework to all forms of GBV against women, in compliance with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention. Furthermore, in July 2022, the law was amended to include a legal recognition of femicide as a criminal offence. Under this provision, in calculating and passing sentence for the offence of femicide, a court will consider the following as aggravating factors: that the death occurred as a result of violence by a sexual partner, torture or misogynistic violence, DV or honour-based violence.

In the case of **Germany**, the killings of women are still treated in gender-neutral terms, applying the provisions for murder, manslaughter and other offences against bodily integrity leading to death. As a result, the killings of women by intimate partners during or after separation are more often classified as manslaughter or crimes resulting in death. In terms of killings of women due to GBV, under the law, no harsher punishment is specified.²⁵ Nevertheless, the German government is now planning legal reform measures that could take into account the gender dimension and misogynist backgrounds as aggravating circumstances, leading to higher sanctions.

From the five partner countries, Spain and Portugal have a clear legal definition that classify a homicide by an (ex-)spouse or an (ex-)partner as an aggravating circumstance that leads to higher sanctions.

In the case of **Portugal**, if the killing is categorised as having been the result of a gender-based crime, due to sex or gender identity, which also includes sexual orientation,²⁶ then it can be classified as qualified homicide, which is the most serious type of homicide.

²⁴ Article 211A, Criminal Code, Chapter 9 of the Laws of Malta. See <https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/9/eng>

²⁵ There are exceptions for honour killings and 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>

²⁶ As per Article 132(2)(f) of the Criminal Code.

Femicide in **Spain** is recognised as a form of GBV but only at certain regional levels.²⁷ However, Spain does have special courts that deal with cases of IPV.

National Policies on GBV

More broadly, all the participating countries have ongoing and/or past policies against GBV.

The standards of the Istanbul Convention are enforceable in **Malta** even though in the Maltese Law there is no specific law dealing with the prevention of GBV.²⁸ During the period 2018-2020, Malta had a Gender Based Violence and Domestic Violence Strategy and Action Plan, which focused on legal and policy measures, data collection, research and training, awareness-raising, as well as protection and support for victims and children. For the period 2021-2022, a second strategy was introduced with a focus on raising awareness and streamlining measures to achieve faster criminal proceedings.²⁹

Although there is currently no national action plan for the prevention of DV, or a national action plan on the prevention of GBV/VAW in **Cyprus**, the current 2019-2023 National Action Plan for Equality between Women and Men includes “Combating gender-based violence/Full respect for the provisions of the Istanbul Convention” as a key priority. Unfortunately, this action plan does not make clear the quantitative and qualitative indicators for monitoring the implementation of its provisions, nor does it provide information on allocation of resources. Pursuant to the provisions of the VAW Law 2021, a Coordinating Body for the Prevention and Combating of Violence against Women was established in March 2022, which is responsible for the development, implementation and monitoring of a national strategy on preventing and combating VAW and DV.

With regards to **Germany**, the government had developed and partially implemented two action plans in the last two decades or so (1999 and 2007).³⁰ In this period, the federal states drove initiatives to include preventive measures to support victims of IPV and of sexual

²⁷ 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.

²⁸ See Article 22 of the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act, Chapter 58.

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ The first strategic action plan was published in 1999 with the aim to combat VAW; stakeholders were brought together at the federal level by the establishment of the Federal-State Working Group on Domestic Violence; the second action plan was published in 2007 and contained a framework for implementing 135 measures to fight VAW via 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.

violence and to prevent VAW. They implemented a variety of action plans addressing the full spectrum of VAW and DV, at both the state and federal state levels; however, some strategies just address specific points within the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.³¹ Overall, on a national and regional level, no comprehensive strategy for prevention was developed. However, two important steps for the protection of women victims of DV and stalking as well as victims of broader violence have been already taken in Germany: the Civil Protection Against Violence Act (2002) and the National Violence Against Women Helpline (2013).³² Nevertheless, GREVIO's current evaluation report concluded that there's an inadequate strategic framework at the federal level and saw a clear need for improvement with regard to the implementation of a comprehensive national strategy to combat and prevent VAW in Germany.³³

Since 1999, **Portugal** has taken critical steps in ensuring the prevention of GBV by developing national plans against DV in four-year cycles, up to the fifth national plan which ran in the period 2014-2017. In 2018, a more comprehensive National Strategy for Equality and Non-Discrimination 2018-2030 (ENIND) was launched, focusing on a strategic approach promoting cooperation and coordination between all actors and sectors. Its three main action plans are: a) non-discrimination based on gender and gender equality; b) preventing and combating all forms of VAW, GBV (also relevant to femicide, even if it is not specifically addressed), DV and female genital mutilation (FGM); and c) combating discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sexual characteristics.

In **Spain**, there are ongoing policies that outline a set of tools for prevention, awareness-raising and a multidisciplinary approach to VAW. The autonomous communities (regions) have different competences and degrees of autonomy, for example in the areas of justice,

³¹ Currently, a federal-state working group (BLAG) is working on the development of a uniform federal definition in the context of combating crimes specifically against women, which is to serve as a basis for the other areas to be worked on by the Standing Conference of the Ministers and Senators of the Interior of the States (IMK) in its mandate: statistics, prevention, combating measures and research needs. Baden-Württemberg is in charge of the commission. Further information is available in the first status report (LKA - BW, 2021) under: https://www.innenministerkonferenz.de/IMK/DE/termine/to-beschluesse/20211201-03/anlagen-zu-top-11.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=2

³² <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/hilfetelefon/>; www.hilfetelefon.de

³³ <https://rm.coe.int/executive-summary-grevio-germany-in-german/1680a8693a>

education, tax collection or GBV.³⁴ This allows for a broader legal framework in addition to the National Law Against Gender-Based Violence.³⁵

All national plans and strategies should specifically address the killing of women because of their gender and all partner countries need to improve on this.

Policy Recommendations for Effective Prevention and Intervention

The countries participating in the FEM-UnitED project have collectively developed recommendations for improving system-wide responses to violence against women and girls, and more specifically for the prevention of femicide. The recommendations were a result of the project's research findings, meetings with stakeholders and workshops with frontline professionals. These recommendations have been categorised as follows: a) training and awareness-raising; b) support and protection; c) policy and legislation; and d) research and data collection.

Training and awareness-raising

1. Mandatory and ongoing training to frontline professionals working with victims and survivors of VAW (including IPV and DV):
 - Focusing on identifying various forms of VAW and the early identification of risks for femicide.
 - Highlighting various dynamics in advance of femicide, such as stalking, deprivation of liberty, and coercive and controlling behaviour.
 - Taking into consideration children, who could be both witnesses and direct victims of violence.
 - Focusing on targeting harmful attitudes, behaviours and stereotypes (ABS) embedded within state institutions and among frontline professionals. The aim of the training would be to help them understand the importance of having a gender

³⁴ 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 organised into 17 Autonomous Communities and 2 cities with autonomous status, Ceuta and Melilla, as well as Spanish exclaves bordered by the Mediterranean and Morocco 14 and 130 kilometres from the Iberian Peninsula. The complexity of the territorial organisation 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 GBV, as well as their children.

³⁵ The delegation of competence made by the central state allows the regions to develop their own laws on gendered violence where, for example, femicide is categorised 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.

perspective when dealing with such cases, whilst also strengthening and addressing their interpersonal skills to prevent femicide.

2. Mandatory and ongoing training for legal practitioners, court staff and the judiciary dealing with VAW (including IPV and DV) aiming to provide:
 - An in-depth understanding of the gendered dynamics of VAW.
 - Awareness of the correlation between DV and femicide.
 - Better knowledge of the risk factors for revictimisation and lethality.
3. Raising awareness on the impact of DV on children, and the importance of emphasising and understanding the gender imbalance in IPV and the effects on any children involved.
4. Training media and journalists on providing sensitive rather than sensational reporting, limiting reporting to facts and ensuring respect to the victim(s) and her family members in cases of femicide.
5. Developing ethical guidelines for the media and promoting self-regulatory mechanisms within media institutions, which are adequately monitored.
6. Focus on addressing social and cultural norms and beliefs around VAW through awareness-raising campaigns and in education on a national scale, in order to change attitudes towards the issue.
7. Implementing multi-professional case conferences for all high-risk cases across all locations and developing corresponding guidelines.

Support and protection

1. Ensuring immediate access to shelters, safe housing, counselling and other protection measures for victims and their children.
2. Acknowledging and supporting women's organisations and NGOs that provide specialist services to women and children, whilst providing adequate and sustainable economic and other resources; supplying ideal level of assistance through a multi-agency approach.
3. Strengthening risk management measures that focus on the perpetrator's behaviour, and implementing perpetrator programmes on a broad basis, with the aim of keeping women and children safe from revictimisation.
4. Developing specialist support measures that target children who are direct or indirect victims of DV, including children orphaned due to femicide.

5. Offering support for specific target groups at higher risk of DV and femicide and/or addressing barriers to access immediate support and protection (e.g., migrant women, women with disabilities or in difficult social situations, older women, women in care situations, with mental health issues or and addiction disorders, women in prostitution); adopting an intersectional perspective on vulnerabilities, prevention and intervention.
6. Offering long-term (including therapeutic) support for women survivors of DV and attempted femicide who are coping with threats, fear or other psychological consequences of violence.

Policy and legislation

1. Aligning national laws with the provisions of the Istanbul Convention.
2. Ensuring that risk assessment is carried out by trained professionals, including the police and courts, for all cases of VAW and DV, within a multi-agency framework.
3. Developing and implementing risk assessment protocols that are both gender sensitive and culturally competent. Risk factors associated with coercive and controlling behaviour should be incorporated in such protocols and these should be used by trained frontline professionals.
4. Developing and implementing actionable risk management guidelines for dealing with identified high-risk cases for all relevant fields of practice.
5. Ensuring that children are acknowledged as victims in their own right, beyond their status as witnesses, especially if they live within a violent intimate partner setting.
6. Increasing the use and improving the effectiveness of protection orders by ensuring that monitoring mechanisms are developed and put in place, so that protection orders effectively provide safety and protection for women and their children. Breaches of protection orders must be appropriately sanctioned in order to have a deterrent effect.
7. Reforming legal practice in family proceedings regarding contact and custody in the case of separation from a violent partner in order to ensure the safeguarding and protection of women and their children.
8. Investigating, prosecuting and punishing such cases through a gendered lens. Investigations by the police should be carried out in a timely manner and all reports should be taken seriously.
9. Systematically monitoring reported cases of DV and IPV to better ensure victims' safety and keep perpetrators accountable.

10. Considering intersectionality in investigations when dealing with the victim (age, location, substance use, disability, migration status, socio-economic situation, motherhood etc.)
11. Mandatory reporting of suspected cases of domestic abuse; professionals to be held accountable in carrying out their obligations.
12. Appropriate sanctioning of femicide by taking into account the gender-specific background and motives (dominance, coercive control and power dynamics).
13. Strengthening of sanctions for repeat offenders.

Research and data collection

1. Research on diverse aspects of VAW and femicide, such as: police investigations; effects on the perpetrators; perpetrator characteristics and attitudes; circumstances; media reporting; toxic masculinity; risk factors; cycle and escalation of violence in cases of femicide; child victims; and so on. Research should inform the development of preventative measures.
2. Collecting reliable, regularly updated administrative and statistical data on victims and perpetrators of all forms of VAW, disaggregated by sex, age and victim–perpetrator relationship, should be mandatory. A common tool for statistical data collection in order to reflect the specific circumstances relating to the killings of women should be adopted by relevant stakeholders to strengthen the multi-agency approach.
3. Monitoring protection measures, prevention strategies, as well as investigation and sanctioning practices of the state on a case-by-case basis for ongoing improvement; in this context, consistent monitoring of cases of failed intervention should be included.
4. Initiating fatality reviews on cases of femicide to identify existing gaps and ways to improve prevention.
5. Implementing comprehensive monitoring of femicide on a case-by-case basis, building on the work of the EOF; such work should be financed by states in order to consolidate the monitoring and prevention work.