

Measuring femicide in Austria

Femicide

Femicide can be understood as the extreme end of a continuum of violence against women that happens in all European Union Member States ⁽¹⁾. There is no standard agreed definition of femicide among EU Member States or around the world. The lack of a uniform definition hampers the measurement of femicide, which becomes invisible among general homicide data ⁽²⁾. The general concept of femicide refers to the killing of a woman or girl because of her gender. The United Nations Vienna Declaration on Femicide ⁽³⁾ was the first to identify different types of femicide, including:

- murder of women as a result of intimate partner violence;
- torture and misogynistic slaying of women;
- killing of women and girls in the name of honour;
- targeted killing of women and girls in the context of armed conflict;
- dowry-related killing of women;
- killing of women and girls because of their sexual orientation and gender identity;
- killing of aboriginal and indigenous women and girls because of their gender;
- female infanticide and gender-based sex selection foeticide;
- genital mutilation-related deaths;
- accusations of witchcraft;
- other types of femicide connected with gangs, organised crime, drug dealers, human trafficking and the proliferation of small arms.

About the study

Data collection systems vary widely across EU Member States, as they draw on various sources. To improve the collection of administrative data on femicide, EIGE has been working to establish indicators that can harmonise data collection processes across Member States' jurisdictions.

EIGE has collected information from a wide variety of stakeholders through a questionnaire sent to official data providers and an online survey filled in by national experts. The ultimate goal is to identify a classification system of femicide with mutually agreed variables that can be used by all EU Member States.

Femicide in Austria

There is no definition of femicide in the Austrian Criminal Code. However, this type of offence may fall under other provisions of Austrian criminal law. The relevant sections for identifying femicide cases are, inter alia, Sections 75, 76 and 86 ⁽⁴⁾. Furthermore, Section 77, killing on request, and Section 79, killing of a child at birth, are included in the data collection.

Section 75 – Murder

Whoever kills another shall be punished with imprisonment from 10 to 20 years or life imprisonment.

Section 76 – Manslaughter

Whoever gets carried away in a generally understandable violent emotion and kills another shall be punished with imprisonment from 5 to 10 years.

Section 86 – Bodily harm with fatal outcome

(1) Whoever physically mistreats another person and thereby negligently causes his or her death shall be punished by imprisonment of up to 10 years.

(2) Anyone who injures another person or harms his or her health and thereby negligently causes his or her death shall be punished by imprisonment of up to 15 years.

Methodology for data collection

To address the lack of comparable data on violence against women, EIGE developed 13 indicators with uniform definitions of the multiple forms of intimate partner violence, femicide and rape ⁽⁵⁾. A detailed report regarding the methodology for the collection, reporting and validation of data, along with detailed metadata per country, has been published ⁽⁶⁾. The data presented in this factsheet refers to indicator 9 on intimate partner violence: 'Women victims of intimate femicide (aged 18 and over) committed by a male intimate partner (aged 18 and over), as a share of the women victims of homicide aged 18 and over'. However, the data available for Austria under this indicator is not yet comparable. The data can be accessed through EIGE's Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/browse/genvio/genvio_int/genvio_int_adm/genvio_int_adm_ipv).

⁽¹⁾ This factsheet includes data collected before the United Kingdom left the EU, so the reference to EU Member States includes the United Kingdom.

⁽²⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017), *Glossary of definitions of rape, femicide and intimate partner violence*, EIGE, Vilnius.

⁽³⁾ UN Economic and Social Council (2012), *Vienna Declaration on Femicide*, UN, New York (https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CCPCJ/CCPCJ_Sessions/CCPCJ_22/E-CN15-2013-NGO1/E-CN15-2013-NGO1_E.pdf).

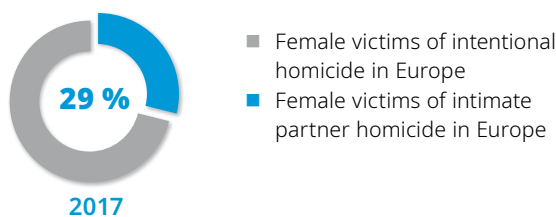
⁽⁴⁾ For more information, see indicator 9 of the Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv__ipv_indic_9/metadata) and the Austrian Criminal Code (https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/8548/file/Austria_CC_1974_am122019_de.pdf).

⁽⁵⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017), *Terminology and Indicators for Data Collection: Rape, femicide and intimate partner violence*, EIGE, Vilnius.

⁽⁶⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2020), *Intimate Partner Violence: Data collection methodology*, EIGE, Vilnius.

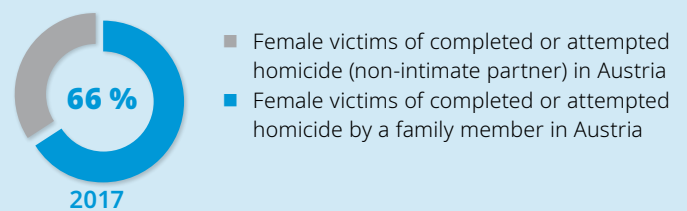
Intimate partner femicide in Europe

From a statistical perspective, and based on the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS), the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) highlights that intentional homicide of female victims perpetrated by intimate partners or family members is the most prevalent form of femicide ⁽⁷⁾. UNODC estimates that, in Europe ⁽⁸⁾, about 29 % of female victims of homicide ⁽⁹⁾ are killed intentionally by an intimate partner.



Intimate partner femicide in Austria

From a statistical perspective, the working definition that the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) uses for femicide is 'killing of a woman by an intimate partner and the death of a woman as a consequence of a practice that is harmful to women. Intimate partner is understood as a former or current spouse or partner, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim'. In Austria, most femicides would be covered by the sections of the Criminal Code identified above. Although there is no specific collection of data on intimate partner femicide in Austria, according to data from the Ministry of the Interior, in 2017 there were 65 female ⁽¹⁰⁾ victims of completed or attempted homicide ⁽¹¹⁾, of whom 66 % were victims of homicide by a family member ($n = 43$) ⁽¹²⁾.



Female victims of homicide and homicide by a family member in Austria

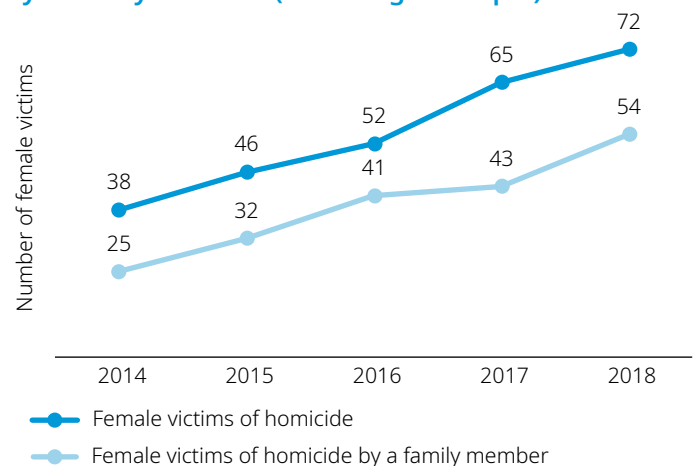
The official administrative data used in Figure 1 is collected by the Ministry of the Interior.

EIGE has gathered data on homicide and intimate partner femicide for 2014–2018. However, data provided by Austria refers to female victims of homicide by a family member. Figure 1 includes data regarding female victims of homicide and homicide by a family member (including attempts). An increasing year-on-year trend can be observed for both crimes.

Type of relationship between the victim and the perpetrator

The Ministry of the Interior collects data on the type of relationship between the victim and the perpetrator according to the following classifications: (i) family members living in the same household; (ii) family members living in a different household; (iii) acquaintances; (iv) acquaintances by chance; (v) no relationship; and (vi) the relationship status is unknown. In the data on female victims of homicide by a family member, family members living in the same household and in a different household are included.

Figure 1: Female victims of homicide and homicide by a family member (including attempts) in Austria



Source: EIGE's Gender Statistics Database.

⁽⁷⁾ UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (2019), *Global Study on Homicide – Gender-related killing of women and girls*, UNODC, Vienna.

⁽⁸⁾ Data from UNODC includes European jurisdictions other than the EU Member States. There is no estimation of the percentage of female victims of homicide who were victims of intimate partner femicide limited to EU Member States.

⁽⁹⁾ The term 'homicide' is used when reporting UNODC data given that it is the term used in the original source (p. 17). The gender-related motivation is not recorded, because of the lack of a standardised definition. However, it is clear from the report that this data quantifies a significant share of all gender-related killings of women and girls.

⁽¹⁰⁾ The term 'female' is used instead of 'woman', as it is not always possible to disaggregate data by the victim's age, meaning that the victim could be either a woman or a girl aged under 18 years.

⁽¹¹⁾ The term 'homicide' is used given that the gender-related motivation for the intentional homicides is not recorded, and therefore it is not possible to classify all the killings as femicides.

⁽¹²⁾ Data is available at: https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv_ipv_indic_9/metadata

Collecting administrative data on femicide



What is administrative data? Administrative data is collected for recording, organising and monitoring purposes ⁽¹³⁾. Administrative data on femicide can be obtained from different institutions, namely those that are involved in criminal investigations, prosecutions, the punishment of perpetrators and victim support – that is, institutions in the **police and justice sectors**. Administrative data might include information about the prevalence and types of femicide, the characteristics of the victim, the perpetrator and their relationship, the characteristics of and motive for the crime, and data about the criminal process.

In order to help policymakers design effective policies to combat femicide, it is necessary to understand the nature and prevalence of the issue. The collection of comparable administrative data on femicide across Member States is key to gaining this understanding ⁽¹⁴⁾. It is particularly important that the motive for the killing is established by the police or judiciary and that this is then translated into standardised statistical data. The ICCS is a standardised tool for obtaining comparable adminis-

trative data. However, it lacks a gender-based motive variable. This means that the concept of femicide cannot be properly operationalised, which prevents the collection of data that fully captures the phenomenon. The collection of data on femicide would make the crime more visible, which would strengthen the political will to eradicate it. Administrative data on femicide also enables countries to monitor trends over time and evaluate the effectiveness of measures.

What administrative data on femicide is available in Austria?

Definition of femicide and availability of data

Definition of femicide used for statistical purposes	No	
Collection of data on femicide	Yes, official data	Yes, non-official data

Although there is no specific collection of data on femicide in Austria, some variables relevant to the identification of femicide are collected or analysed by the Ministry of the Interior ⁽¹⁵⁾. Where data on femicide in this factsheet is drawn from this institution, this is indicated by ^(e). Other official institutions

collect and analyse data on femicide in Austria ⁽¹⁶⁾. The Austrian association "Verein Autonome Österreichische Frauenhäuser" gathers data on different types of femicide, primarily intimate partner femicide and family-related femicide ⁽¹⁷⁾.

	Institution ^(e) Statistics Division, Ministry of the Interior
Type of data collection	Official
Sources of data	Police crime investigations
Stage at which the homicide is established as a femicide	Not established
Stage at which the homicide is registered as a femicide	Not registered
Regularity of data collection	Annual
Availability of data to the public	Data publicly available

⁽¹³⁾ UN Women (2020), *A synthesis of evidence on the collection and use of administrative data on violence against women*, UN Women, New York.

⁽¹⁴⁾ It is important to note that data and statistics should be produced, developed and disseminated in compliance with the principles in the *European Statistics Code of Practice*: Eurostat (2018), *European Statistics Code of Practice*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/4031688/8971242/KS-02-18-142-EN-N.pdf/e7f85f07-91db-4312-8118-f729c75878c7?t=1528447068000>).

⁽¹⁵⁾ See the institutional website (<https://www.bmi.gv.at/508/start.aspx>).

⁽¹⁶⁾ There is a National Coordination Body that publishes available official data on femicide and other forms of violence against women: <http://www.coordination-vaw.gv.at/daten/>. And other reports analyse data, for example, the government's *Safety Report 2019*, which has to be approved by the Parliament: Government of Austria (2020), *Safety Report 2019*, Government of Austria, Vienna (https://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXVII/III/III_00208/index.shtml).

⁽¹⁷⁾ Data on femicide gathered for 2020: https://www.aoeff.at/images/04a_zahlen-und-daten/Frauenmorde_2020_Liste-AOEF_28-12-2020.pdf

Official sources inform administrative data collection in Austria. In line with EIGE's data collection, official administrative data on the total number of female victims of homicide and

homicide by a family member is displayed for 2014–2019. Official data from the Ministry of the Interior ⁽⁹⁾ shows that, in 2019, there were 112 female victims of homicide.

● Official data available ● Non-official data available ○ No data available

Data availability	2014 ^(a)	2015 ^(a)	2016 ^(a)	2017 ^(a)	2018 ^(a)	2019 ^(a)
Female victims of homicide	●	●	●	●	●	●
Female victims of homicide by a family member	●	●	●	●	●	●

Official sources collect data on female victims of homicide by a family member, including family-related femicide, but not on other types of femicide. Given the high number of femicides in 2018, the Ministry of the Interior established a working group that analysed these killings and attempted killings. A publication from 2019 has highlighted the importance of strengthening

measures related to violence against women (e.g. strengthening multiagency working groups that deal with high-risk cases) ⁽¹⁸⁾. The police-recorded crime statistics are published annually, and data concerning killings is analysed to evaluate the current situation as well as developments over time. The analyses are used to develop further strategies and action plans.

Types of femicide	
Intimate partner femicide	○
Family-related femicide ⁽⁹⁾	●
Child femicide	○
Prostitution-related femicide	○
Robbery-related femicide	○
Other types of femicide	○

Characteristics of the victim and the perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator
Age ⁽⁹⁾	●	●
Sex ⁽⁹⁾	●	●
Gender identity	○	○
Sexual orientation	○	○
Nationality ⁽⁹⁾	●	●
Education	○	○
Occupation ⁽⁹⁾	●	●
Applied for protection order ⁽⁹⁾	●	n/a
Active protection order	n/a	○
Socioeconomic profile	○	○
Recidivist status ⁽⁹⁾	n/a	●
Alcohol/drug abuse	○	○
Victim–perpetrator relationship	●	●
Other	○	○

Contextual variables		Motive for femicide	
Method of killing ⁽⁹⁾	●	Variables that indicate gender-related motivation	○
Location ⁽⁹⁾	●	Analysing femicide	
Suicide of the perpetrator ⁽⁹⁾	●	Homicide reviews / domestic homicide reviews	○
Children present ⁽⁹⁾	●	Analysis of court cases ⁽⁹⁾	●
Other killings in connection with the femicide	○	Administrative data from police ⁽⁹⁾	●
Other	○	Administrative data on cause of death	○
Investigating femicide		Media information	○
Protocol for investigating femicide cases	○	Other	○

NB: n/a, not applicable.

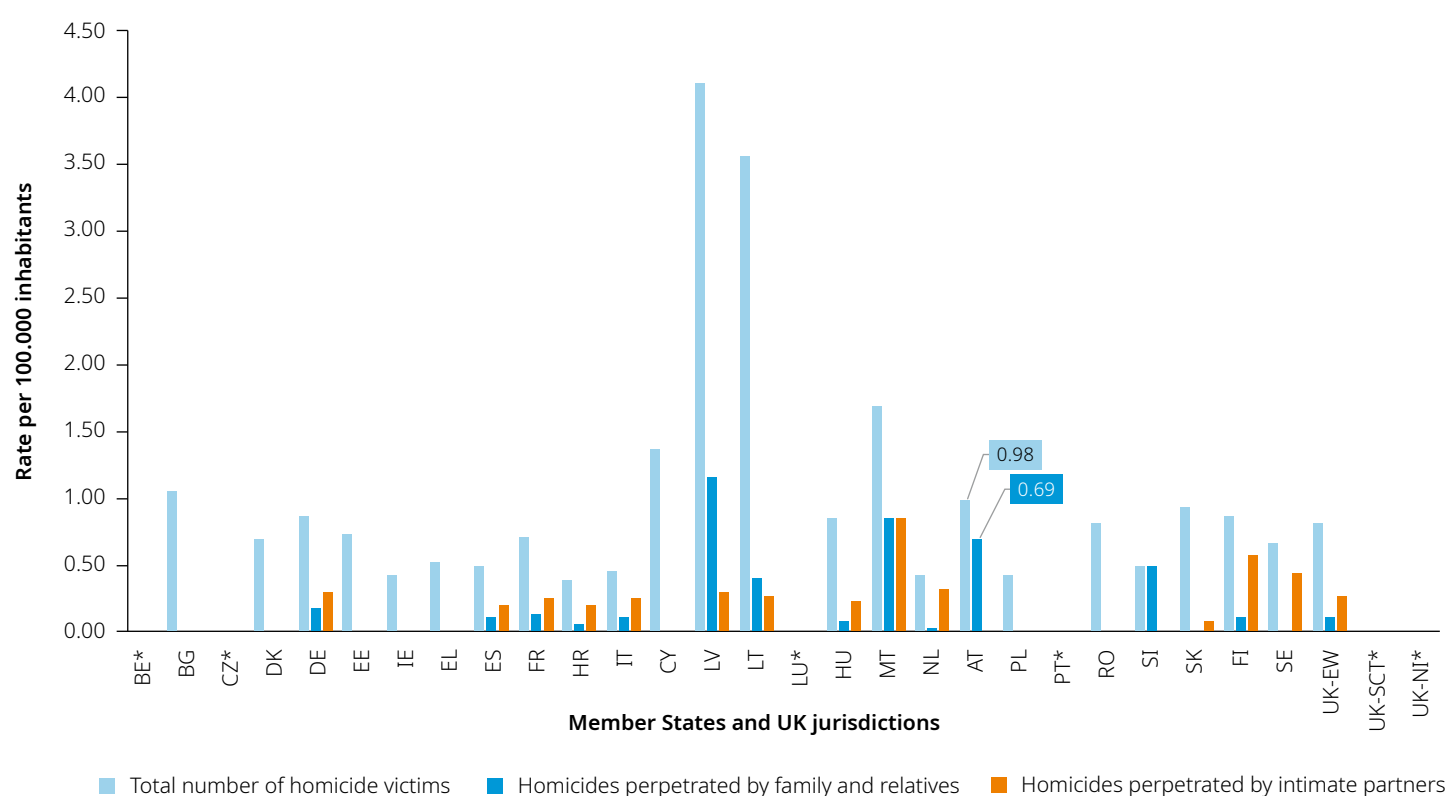
⁽¹⁸⁾ Ministry of the Interior (2019), *Die Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik 2018*, Ministry of the Interior, Vienna (https://www.bundeskriminalamt.at/501/files/PKS_18_Broschuere.pdf).

Female homicide in EU Member States and the United Kingdom (Eurostat)

At the EU level, based on the ICCS, Eurostat compiles data on intentional female homicides, focusing on intimate partner and family-related homicides, disaggregated by age, gender and relationship with the perpetrator. The data from Eurostat presented in Figure 2 reveals that, in 2018, the rate of female victims of homicide in Austria was 0.98 per 100 000 inhabitants,

the sixth highest rate among the 24 Member States for which information is available and the United Kingdom. Austria has the third highest rate (0.69) of female victims of homicide perpetrated by family and relatives (out of 14 jurisdictions). There is no data on the rate of homicide perpetrated by intimate partners in Austria.

Figure 2: Rate of female victims of intentional homicide in EU Member States and the United Kingdom (2018)



(*) No data available.

NB: UK-EW, England and Wales, United Kingdom; UK-NI, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom; UK-SCT, Scotland, United Kingdom.

Source: Eurostat.

Data information

Eurostat regularly publishes figures on crime and criminal justice. Intentional homicides are recorded by the police in each of the Member States and the United Kingdom. It is not possible to collect information about the gender-related motivation for homicide, the sex of the perpetrator or the age of the perpetrator using this database. Therefore, it is not possible to provide precise data on femicide.

Figures for 2008 onwards are based on the joint Eurostat-UNODC data collection. In this database, homicide is classified by the ICCS.

Data is available on Eurostat's website (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/crim_hom_vrel/default/table?lang=en).

Key findings

- Austria does not have a legal definition of femicide. However, the perpetrator may be liable for murder, manslaughter or bodily harm with a fatal outcome.
- There is one institution that collects and analyses data on female victims of homicide by a family member. The combination of variables may allow the identification of family-related femicide.
- EIGE has gathered data on homicide and intimate partner femicide for 2014–2018; however, data may be available in Austria for other years. Available data includes information about the characteristics of the victim and the perpetrator, and contextual variables.
- Femicide is analysed on the basis of official sources, such as data from police and data from court cases.
- In 2019, a screening group analysed cases in which women were killed between 1 January 2018 and 25 January 2019. The main results show that 22 women and 1 man were killed in the context of intimate partner relationships. The main problems underlying the intimate partner killings that were identified were unemployment (48 %), separation initiated by the woman (46 %) and coercive control (36 %). As a result of the analysis of femicide cases, in April 2019 the Federal Ministry of Justice passed Guidelines for the Public Prosecution Offices on the criminal offenses in the domestic sphere ⁽¹⁹⁾.

Recommendations

The collection of accurate and comparable data on femicide by the police and justice sectors across Member States helps to increase knowledge and improve responses to prevent femicide ⁽²⁰⁾. It is therefore important to:

- develop a femicide definition for statistical data collection, in order to reflect the specific circumstances relating to the killing of women;
- implement a process of continuous data collection;
- establish comprehensive data collection, adding variables that are important for detecting key aspects of femicide, such as those describing the context and the circumstances of the killing, the gender-related motivation, and the victim and perpetrator characteristics, in order to

systematise and harmonise the collection of data for statistical use;

- cross-reference the variables of the victim and those of the perpetrator, and analyse them using an intersectional approach;
- ensure that the gender dimension of homicide data is made visible.

Recommendations for data collection on femicide in Austria

To populate EIGE's indicator on femicide (indicator 9) and to improve understanding of intimate partner femicide, it is recommended that the relationship categories be changed to include former and current spouses and partners, whether or not sharing or having shared the same household ⁽²¹⁾.

This factsheet is based on information from EIGE's study 'Advancing administrative data collection on intimate partner violence and gender-related killings of women' (2021) and has been prepared by the Alternative and Response Women's Association (UMAR). For more information, visit <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence/femicide>.

⁽¹⁹⁾ More information can be found: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/SR/Femicide/2020/States/submission-austria.pdf>

⁽²⁰⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2018), *Recommendations to improve data collection on intimate partner violence by the police and justice sectors – Austria*, EIGE, Vilnius; European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2017), *Recommendations for the EU to improve data collection on violence against women*, EIGE, Vilnius; European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2021), *EIGE's indicators on intimate partner violence, rape and femicide: Recommendations to improve data quality, availability and comparability*, EIGE, Vilnius.

⁽²¹⁾ Indicator 9 in the Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv__ipv_indic_9/metadata).

European Institute for Gender Equality

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

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