

Measuring femicide in Germany

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 Germany

There is no definition of femicide in the German Criminal Code. However, this type of offence may fall under other provisions of German criminal law. The relevant sections for identifying femicide cases are, inter alia, Sections 211, 212 and 227 ⁽⁴⁾.

Section 211 – Murder under specific aggravating circumstances (*Mord*)

(1) Whosoever commits murder under the conditions of this provision shall be liable to imprisonment for life.

(2) A murderer under this provision is any person who kills a person for pleasure, for sexual gratification, out of greed or otherwise base motives, by stealth or cruelly or by means that pose a danger to the public, or in order to facilitate or to cover up another offence.

Section 212 – Murder (*Totschlag*)

(1) Whosoever kills a person without being a murderer under Section 211 shall be convicted of murder and be liable to imprisonment of no less than 5 years.

(2) In especially serious cases, the penalty shall be imprisonment for life.

Section 227 – Bodily harm resulting in death

(1) If the offender, by inflicting bodily harm, causes the victim's death, the penalty is imprisonment for a term of at least 3 years.

(2) In less serious cases, the penalty is imprisonment for a term of between 1 year and 10 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 Germany under this indicator is not comparable, since the data has no age restrictions. The data can be accessed through EIGE's Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/browse/genvio/genvio_int).

⁽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).

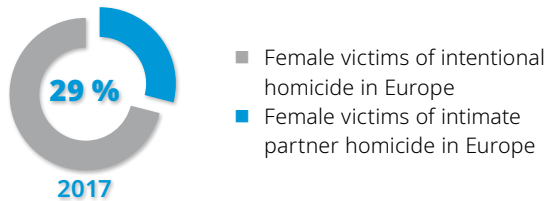
⁽⁴⁾ For more information, see indicator 9 of the Gender Statistics Database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv__ipv_indic_9/metadata) and the German Criminal Code, Date: 13/11/1998. Available at: https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_stgb/englisch_stgb.html.

⁽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.

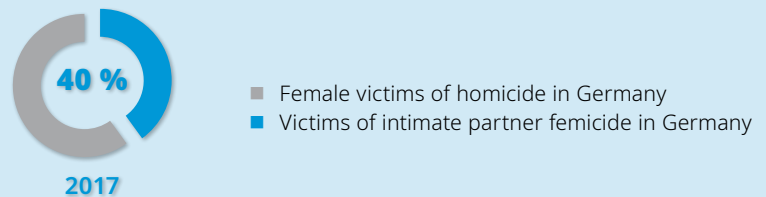
Intimate partner femicide in Europe

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 Germany

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 Germany, most femicides would be covered by the sections of the Criminal Code identified above. According to data from police crime statistics, in 2017 there were 366 female (10) victims of homicide (11), of whom 40 % were victims of intimate partner femicide ($n = 147$) (12).



Female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide in Germany

The official administrative data used in Figure 1 is collected by the Federal Criminal Police Agency and Crime Statistics. EIGE has gathered data on homicide and intimate partner femicide for 2014 to 2018.

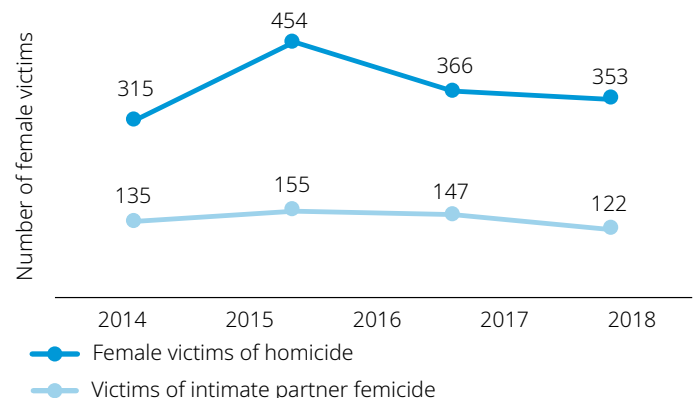
Figure 1 includes data regarding female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide. Despite the fact that the trend in the homicide numbers shows a decrease since 2016, the trend in the numbers of intimate partner femicides is less pronounced.

Type of relationship between the victim and the perpetrator

The Federal Criminal Police Agency and Crime Statistics collects data on the type of relationship between the victim and the perpetrator according to the following classifications: (i) marriage/partnership/family (all relatives according to the Criminal Code, namely life companions, in-laws, fiancés, divorcees, foster parents and foster children, including uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces and cousins); (ii) informal social relationship (in cases in which the victim has befriended or is acquainted with the suspect: private-level relationship); (iii) formal social relationship (the victim or perpetrator as part of an institution,

for example teacher–student, patient–physician); (iv) no relationship; and (v) unclear relationship.

Figure 1: Female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide in Germany



Source: EIGE's Gender Statistics Database.

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 – namely 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.

(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

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

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

administrative data. However, it lacks a gender-related 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 issue 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 Germany?

Definition of femicide and availability of data		
Definition of femicide used for statistical purposes	Currently in the process of establishing a definition	
Collection of data on femicide	Yes, official data	Yes, non-official data

Two public institutions collect or analyse data on femicide in Germany: the German Federal Office of Criminal Investigation (Bundeskriminalamt (BKA))⁽¹⁵⁾ and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth⁽¹⁶⁾. Data from police crime statistics, handled by BKA, is analysed together with data from the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth; the analysis has been made pub-

licly available⁽¹⁷⁾. Non-official data is collected by the non-governmental organisations One Billion Rising (Germany)⁽¹⁸⁾ and the Federal Association of Helplines and Emergency Calls for Women / Les MigraS⁽¹⁹⁾. Where data on femicide in this fact-sheet is drawn from these institutions, this is indicated by (a), (b), (c) and (d), respectively. Other institutions and researchers also collect and analyse data on femicide in Germany⁽²⁰⁾.

	Institution (a) BKA	Institution (b) BKA and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth	Non-governmental organisation (c) One Billion Rising (Germany)	Non-governmental organisation (d) Federal Association of Help- lines and Emergency Calls for Women / Les MigraS
Type of data collection	Official	Official	Non-official	Non-official
Sources of data	Police crime investigations	Police crime statistics from BKA	Police reports and press reports	Quantitative and qualita- tive study (methodology unknown)
Stage at which the homi- cide is established as a femicide	Not established	Not established	Information not available	During the data analysis
Stage at which the homi- cide is registered as a femicide	During the data analysis	During the data analysis	Information not available	During the data analysis
Regularity of data collec- tion	Annual	Annual	Occasional	Occasional
Network(s) with which in- formation is shared	Ministries, Department of Equal Opportunities or another gender equality body, statistics authorities, non-governmental organ- isations and the media	Ministries, non-govern- mental organisations and the media	Information not available	Information not available
Availability of data to the public	Data publicly available	Data publicly available	Data publicly available	Data publicly available

⁽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⁾ https://www.bka.de/EN/Home/home_node.html

⁽¹⁶⁾ <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/meta/en>

⁽¹⁷⁾ Reports on this data are available on BKA's website (https://www.bka.de/DE/AktuelleInformationen/StatistikenLagebilder/Lagebilder/Partnerschaftsgewalt/partnerschaftsgewalt_node.html).

⁽¹⁸⁾ <http://www.onebillionrising.de/femizid-opfer-meldungen-2019/>

⁽¹⁹⁾ <https://www.frauen-gegen-gewalt.de/de/studie-von-lesmigras-2013.html>; <https://lesmigras.de/english.html>; <https://lesmigras.de/de/>

⁽²⁰⁾ For example feminizidmap (<https://feminizidmap.org/>) and the Femicide Observation Center (<https://kristina-wolff.de/science/>).

Official and non-official sources inform administrative data collection in Germany. In line with EIGE's data collection, official administrative data on the total number of female victims of homicide and intimate partner femicide is displayed for 2014 to 2019. However, data may be available in Germany for other years. Official data from BKA shows that, in 2019, there were

111 completed and 190 attempted killings of women by intimate partners, and 6 bodily harm crimes resulting in the death of a female victim ⁽²¹⁾.

Non-official data from the One Billion Rising report for the same period indicates that 15 children were killed in the context of femicide

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

Data availability	2014	2015 ^(a)	2016 ^(a)	2017 ^(a)	2018 ^(a)	2019 ^(b)
Female victims of homicide	●	●	●	●	●	●
Victims of intimate partner femicide	●	●	●	●	●	●

Official and non-official sources collect data on intimate partner femicide, but also on other types of femicide, such as family-related femicide, prostitution-related femicide, robbery-

related femicide ^(c) and femicide related to racism, sexism, homophobia and transphobia ^(d).

Types of femicide	
Intimate partner femicide ^(a) ^(b)	●
Family-related femicide ^(a) ^(c)	●
Child femicide ^(c)	●
Prostitution-related femicide ^(c)	●
Robbery-related femicide ^(c)	●
Other types of femicide ^(d)	●
Femicide related to racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia ^(d)	

Characteristics of the victim and the perpetrator	Victim	Perpetrator
Age ^(a) ^(d)	●	●
Sex ^(a) ^(d)	●	●
Gender identity ^(d)	●	○
Sexual orientation ^(d)	●	○
Nationality ^(a) ^(d)	●	●
Reason for stay (for non-Germans) ^(a)	●	●
Education ^(d)	●	○
Occupation ^(d)	●	○
Applied for protection order	○	n/a
Active protection order	n/a	○
Socioeconomic profile ^(d)	●	○
Recidivist status ^(a)	n/a	●
Alcohol/drug abuse ^(a)	○	●
Victim-perpetrator relationship ^(a)	●	●
Other ^(a) ^(d)	●	●
	Religion, ethnical/cultural affiliation, self-designation ^(a)	Possession of a firearm ^(a)

Contextual variables		Investigating femicide	
Method of killings	○	Protocol for investigating femicide cases	○
Location	○	Analysing femicide	
Suicide of the perpetrator	○	Data on femicide analysed	○
Killing of children	○	Motive for femicide	
Killing of other persons in the family	○	Variables that indicate gender-related motivation	○
Children present	○		
Other killings in connection with the femicide	●		
Other (a)	●		
Threatened or killed with a firearm	●		

NB: n/a, not applicable.

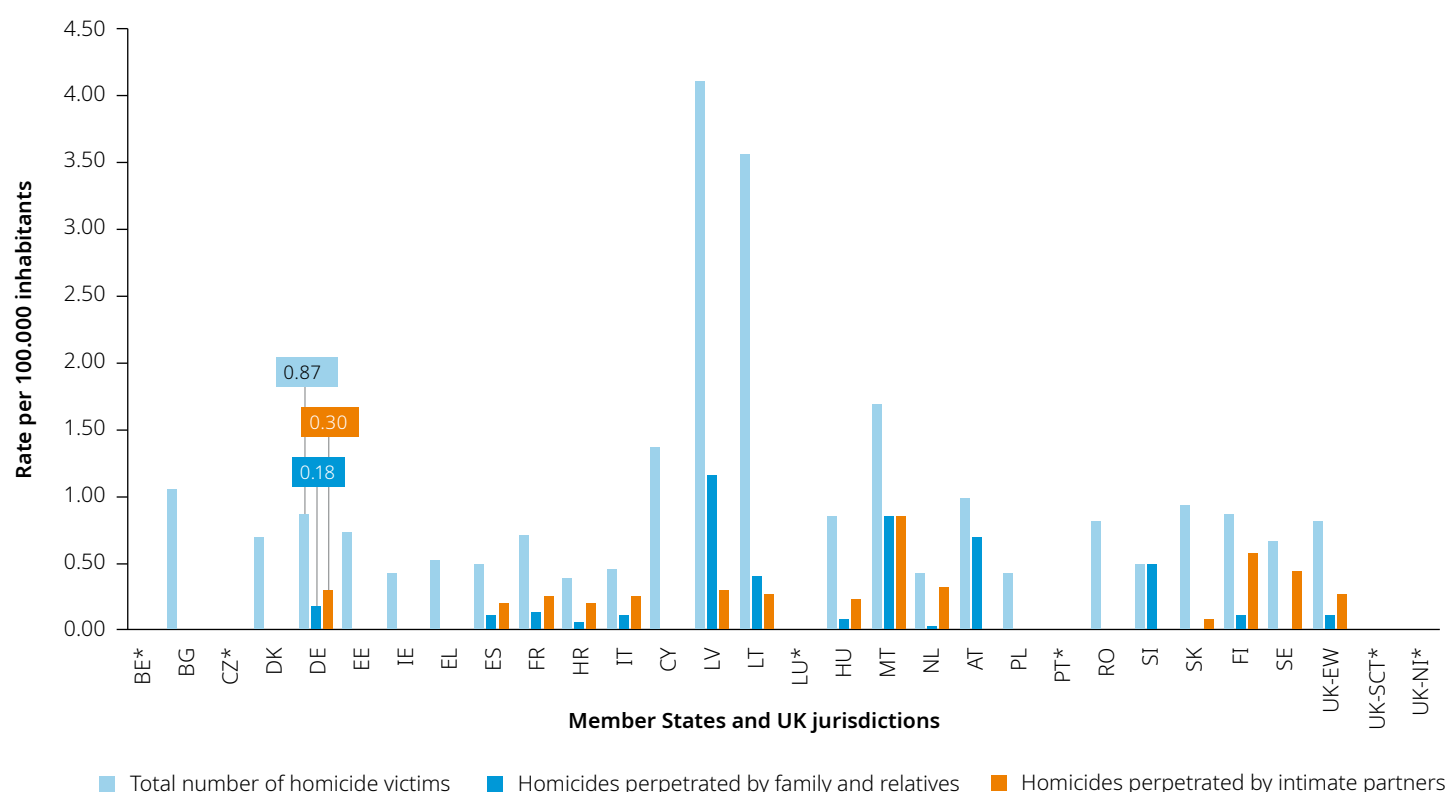
⁽²¹⁾ Data provided by the Federal Office for Criminal Investigations

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 Germany was 0.87 per 100 000 inhabitants, the eighth highest rate among the 24 Member States for

which information is available and the United Kingdom. Germany had the fifth highest rate (0.30) of female victims of intentional homicide perpetrated by intimate partners (out of 15 jurisdictions) and the sixth highest rate (0.18) of female victims of intentional homicide perpetrated by family and relatives (out of 14 jurisdictions).

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/data/database>).

Key findings

- Germany does not have a legal definition of femicide. However, the perpetrator may be liable for murder, aggravated murder or bodily harm resulting in death.
- There are two main institutions that collect or analyse data for the identification of femicide. Data is available for intimate partner femicide and other types of femicide. In addition, two non-governmental organisations collect non-official data.
- EIGE has gathered data on homicide and intimate partner femicide for 2014 to 2018; however, data may be available in Germany for other years. Available data includes information about the characteristics of the victim and the perpetrator, and contextual variables.

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⁽²²⁾. 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.

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>.

⁽²²⁾ European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2018), *Recommendations to improve data collection on intimate partner violence by the police and justice sectors – Germany*, 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.

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.

© European Institute for Gender Equality, 2021

Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.



European Institute for Gender Equality
Gedimino pr. 16
LT-01103 Vilnius
Lithuania

Contact details

<http://eige.europa.eu/> 
[facebook.com/eige.europa.eu](https://www.facebook.com/eige.europa.eu) 
twitter.com/eurogender 
[youtube.com/user/eurogender](https://www.youtube.com/user/eurogender) 
<https://www.linkedin.com/company/eige> 
eige.sec@eige.europa.eu 
+370 52157444 
<https://eurogender.eige.europa.eu/> 



Publications Office
of the European Union