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##### **Violence against women**

## Development of the Gender-based Violence Survey Within the European Statistical System

Note by EUROSTAT\*

### *Abstract*

This paper informs the participants of Work Session on Gender Statistics about the ongoing work on the development of the Gender Based Violence (GBV) survey being prepared by Eurostat to respond to the policy needs of DG JUST and the Istanbul Convention, to be ratified by all EU Member States and the EU as such. Data on non-partner and partner violence, sexual harassment at work and violence in childhood will be collected with this survey.

The survey questionnaire will be pretested in 2017 and pilot surveys will be carried out in 2018 at the national level. After finalization of the questionnaire and the methodology in 2019 it will be implemented in the Member States from 2020/2021.

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## I. Background of the developing the GBV survey

1. The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence<sup>1</sup>, the so-called "Istanbul Convention", of 12 April 2011 indicates in its article 11 that (paragraph 1) "For the purpose of the implementation of this Convention, parties shall undertake to: a) collect disaggregated relevant statistical data at regular intervals on cases of all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention" and that (paragraph 2) "Parties shall endeavour to conduct population-based surveys at regular intervals to assess the prevalence of and trends in all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention".
2. In its article 3 the Convention indicates the meaning of violence against women as "all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life". It also defines domestic violence as "all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim".
3. In the European Commission (EC), the DG Justice and Consumers Directorate-General (DG JUST), developed a four-fold approach to combatting gender-based violence, which involves relevant legislation, policies, funding and data collection. Moreover, there have been repeated calls from the Council and the European Parliament for data on gender-based violence.
4. Hence, in Eurostat, the Working Group on Statistics on Crime and Criminal Justice, at its meeting on 10 March 2016, agreed to the creation of a Task Force in the context of the Istanbul Convention and the importance of comparable survey methodologies in this field. More specifically, it was decided that the Task Force would involve Member States and experts from a range of relevant organisations and disciplines and would aim at developing a survey on the prevalence of gender-based violence within the European Statistical System (ESS). Eurostat also informed the Working Group that no regulation was planned for this survey but that funding to support the development would be sought.
5. The objective of the work of the Task Force is to develop and test a population-based survey methodology which is appropriate for the collection of representative statistics on gender based violence in EU Member States and which covers the data collection requirements of the Istanbul Convention. The Task Force was established in 2016 and have met two times accompanied with the work through written consultations. Task Force consists the representatives from the Member States (10 MS have been represented), private experts, and the representatives from DG JUST, EIGE, FRA, HEUNI and UN.

## II. Review of existing experiences of conducting GBV/VAW surveys

6. All EU Member States have at least certain level of national experiences on conducting the survey on violence against women or gender based violence. Majority of the Member States have been conducted at least once the dedicated survey at national level, while few have included the module in another survey or just few questions in some other social survey on similar topic, for example in health survey. However, only few Member States have repeated the survey and few have put in place regular data collection to assess the prevalence of violence through population survey. The scope of

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<sup>1</sup> <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168008482e>

national GBV/VAW surveys is different country by country. The data have been collected on family violence or on domestic violence or on intimate partner violence or generally on violence against women. The surveys have been including psychological or/and physical or/and sexual violence. Reference period has been lifetime (since 15, 16 or 18 years old), during last year, during last 2 years or during last five years. The target population included in the national survey is different country by country. Around half of Member States have included only women in their national survey while another half included both: women and men. Also, the age limits have been different, for both: younger and older population. Some countries have tried to address specific target groups as migrants, disabled, LGBT in their national surveys. Interviewing (PAPI/CAPI/CATI) as well as self-administered questionnaires has been used as data collection method; several countries have been used also multi-mode data collection.

7. To prepare the EU GBV survey, additionally to national experiences, several international initiatives were reviewed as well: IVAWS (coordinated by HEUNI), CAHRV, EU-wide VAW survey (FRA).
8. Finally, already developed indicators at international level to measure and monitor the GBV or VAW were reviewed: indicators to monitor the critical area D in Beijing Platform for Action<sup>2</sup>; UN Sustainable Development Goal indicators<sup>3</sup>; indicators of gender equality to improve the monitoring of gender equality in the UNECE region<sup>4</sup>; indicators developed by the group of the Friends of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission on Statistical Indicators on Violence against Women<sup>5</sup>; indicators developed by EIGE<sup>6</sup>.
9. The outcome of this work is available as working documents of Task Force on GBV survey, accessible here: <https://circabc.europa.eu/w/browse/c38aaca0-0ed6-434e-9714-edc73613bebd>.

### III. Scope of the EU-wide survey

10. Based on the literature review and discussions in the TF on GBV, the EU survey on GBV will be developed as dedicated survey and not as module. The survey will include non-partner physical and sexual violence, partner psychological, physical and sexual violence, sexual harassment at work, stalking, physical and sexual violence experienced in childhood. Reference period will be lifetime (since 15 years old), during last five years and during last year. The possibility to cover the total population (both women and men) aged 18+ will be tested and costs evaluated, the target population for the main survey will be discussed and decided after piloting the draft survey.
11. Considering the high sensibility of the topic, the questionnaire and not only variables will be developed, accompanied with the methodological guidelines, including target population and sample design, interviewing modes, interviewers training, treating non-response, confidentiality and security during the interview, data coding and transmission, strategies of data dissemination and reporting on

<sup>2</sup> Council of the European Union, Press release, 2470th Council meeting, Brussels, 2 and 3 December 2002 ([http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/73454.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/73454.pdf)) and Council of the European Union, Press release, Council meeting, Brussels, 6 and 7 December 2004 ([http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/83140.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/lisa/83140.pdf))

<sup>3</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.unece.org/stats/publications/gender\\_equality/](http://www.unece.org/stats/publications/gender_equality/)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/v-issues-focus.htm>

<sup>6</sup> European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) (2015). *Gender Equality Index 2015: Measuring gender equality in European Union 2005-2012: Report*. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg. Available at: <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/mh0215616enn.pdf>

quality. The implementation of the survey will be at national level. Face-to-face interview will be recommended to collect data on GBV/VAW; however, probably multimode data collection will be used in practice in Member States.

12. The first version of the questionnaire has been developed<sup>7</sup> for starting the pretesting process at national level accompanied with description of variables<sup>8</sup>. Methodological paper on pretesting the questionnaires including theory and recommendations focusing gender based violence topic has been prepared<sup>9</sup> as well as guidelines for pretesting EU GBV questionnaire<sup>10</sup>.

#### IV. The way forward

13. To support the development of EU GBV survey, Eurostat launched a call for proposal in May 2017 to pre-test and pilot the draft questionnaire and methodology at national level. One third of the Member States applied.
14. The pretesting of the EU GBV questionnaire will be conducted in 2017 with the purpose to receive results and recommendations how to improve the questionnaire in the beginning of 2018. The developing the common EU methodology to conduct GBV survey is ongoing with the purpose to finalise common methodology and improved version of the questionnaire for pilot surveys on GBV in the first semester of 2018. The pilot surveys on GBV will be conducted at national level in the second semester of 2018 in order to receive results of the pilots as well as recommendations for improvements in the beginning of 2019.
15. The final EU GBV survey methodology and questionnaire will be finalised in 2019 in order to start the implementation of the survey at national level in the end of 2020 or even in 2021. The implementing of the survey will be on a voluntary basis, however, the intention is to provide the necessary funding for testing as well as implementing the survey at national level. The Istanbul Convention clearly refers to conducting "population-based surveys at regular intervals", but one wave is planned at this stage.

#### V. Conclusions

16. The development of EU survey on GBV within ESS system is based on policy needs of DG JUST and the Istanbul Convention to be ratified by all EU Member States and the EU as such and repeated calls from the Council and the European Parliament for data on gender-based violence. The common methodology and questionnaire will be developed in coming years, but the new EU-wide survey will not be covered by a Regulation (not in IESS) and participation in the project will be on a voluntary basis.

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<sup>7</sup> Available at: <https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/cb025a2d-de59-4a58-91c4-1e84196487b9/FINAL%20GBV%20questionnaire%20for%20pretesting%20September%202017.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Available at: <https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/f1f497ae-c75c-41e6-b4d8-a30691dabcf4/Description%20of%20variables.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Available at: <https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/7f617c55-1b01-41a5-96a4-966394f28b32/Methodological%20document%20-%20Qualitative%20methods%20for%20pretesting.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Available at: <https://circabc.europa.eu/sd/a/b9bdfb29-ae28-466c-829c-c945c38cdf0e/Guidelines%20for%20pretesting%20EU%20GBV%20survey%20questionnaire.pdf>