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Les délégations trouveront ci-joint un rapport intitulé "Lutter contre le contrôle coercitif et la violence psychologique à l'égard des femmes dans les États membres de l'UE" préparé par l'Institut européen pour l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes (EIGE) à la demande de la présidence française.



Beijing Platform for Action

Combatting coercive control and psychological violence against women in the EU Member States

Combating coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States

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Contents

Executive summary	ix
1. Introduction	15
2. Prevalence of coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States 21	
3. Risk factors and consequences associated with coercive control and psychological violence against women.....	39
4. Criminalisation of psychological violence and coercive control in EU Member States	50
5. Prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States 67	
6. Conclusions.....	95
7. Policy recommendations.....	99
References	103
Annexes.....	123

List of figures

Figure 1. Women having experienced any form of psychological violence by a partner since the age of 15 (% , 18-74, EU, 2014)	22
Figure 2. Women having experienced any form of psychological violence by a current partner (% , 18-74, EU, 2014)	23
Figure 3. Women having experienced any form of stalking since the age of 15 (% , EU, 18-74, 2014)24	
Figure 4. Women having experienced cyber harassment in the past five years and the past 12 months (% , 16+, EU, 2019)	25
Figure 5. Administrative data on psychological violence against women in intimate relationships (number of recorded cases by relationship status, DE, 2017-2020)	28
Figure 6. Women having experienced from a current or previous partner by specific types of incidents (% , ES, 2019)	30
Figure 7. Groups of women who experience psychological violence at a higher rate than the general population	32
Figure 8. Reported cases of psychological violence against women in intimate relationships by age group (total numbers of recorded cases, DE, 2017-2020)	33
Figure 9. Women having experienced different forms of psychological violence over the last 12 months by age (% , NL, 2020)	33
Figure 10. Women having experienced any form of cyber harassment in the past five years and the past 12 months by age, health status, education level and occupational status (% , 16+, EU, 2019)	34
Figure 11. Women having experienced different forms of psychological violence over the last 12 months, by sexual orientation (% , 16+, NL, 2020)	36
Figure 12. Overview of risk factors associated with psychological violence and coercive control....	39
Figure 13. Map of domestic violence legislation in EU Member States.....	51

List of tables

Table 1. Cases of psychological intimate partner violence against women recorded by the police (total numbers and number of recorded cases per 100 000 female population, CZ, DE, FI, 2014-2018)..	26
Table 2. Administrative data on psychological violence against women in intimate relationships (total numbers and number of recorded cases per 100 000 female population, DE, 2015-2020)	27
Table 3. Cases of psychological violence against women reported to support services (total numbers and number of recorded cases per 100 000 female population EL, 2018-2020).....	29

Table 4. Reported crimes relating to psychological violence (total numbers and number of recorded cases per 100 000 female population, SE, 2020)	29
Table 5. Overview of criminal offences relating to psychological violence in EU Member States, July-August, 2021	52
Table 6. Victim/perpetrator relationships recognised in domestic violence legislation, 2020	58
Table 7. General criminal offences used to prosecute psychological violence, 2020	61
Table 8. Preventive measures outlined in the Istanbul Convention	67

Abbreviations and country codes

Non-country abbreviations	
BPfA	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for Equality, Development and Peace
EAVN	The European Anti-Violence Network
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EU	European Union
Eurostat	The Statistical Office of the European Union
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
GREVIO	The independent expert body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) by the Parties
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or intersex
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PHGSG	Prevalentiemonitor Huiselijk Geweld en Seksueel Geweld
PTSD	Post-traumatic stress disorder
RCT	Randomised Control Trial
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organisation
WWP EN	The European Network for Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

Country codes

BE	Belgium	LT	Lithuania
BG	Bulgaria	LU	Luxembourg
CZ	Czechia	HU	Hungary
DK	Denmark	MT	Malta
DE	Germany	NL	Netherlands
EE	Estonia	AT	Austria
IE	Ireland	PL	Poland
EL	Greece	PT	Portugal
ES	Spain	RO	Romania
FR	France	SI	Slovenia
HR	Croatia	SK	Slovakia
IT	Italy	FI	Finland
CY	Cyprus	SE	Sweden
LV	Latvia		

Combatting coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States

What is psychological violence?



Psychological violence is defined as “any intentional course of conduct that seriously impairs another person’s psychological integrity through coercion or threats”. (Council of Europe, 2011b).

A large number of women across the EU are affected by psychological violence and this violence has profound and wide-reaching consequences:



Suicide and self-harm



Adverse effect on children



Mental ill health

Who is most at risk of psychological violence?



Younger (under 30) women



Women with a disability or health condition



Asylum-seeking, refugee women and women with a migrant background



Non-heterosexual women

What is coercive control?



Coercive control is defined as “a strategic course of oppressive conduct typically characterised by frequent, but low-level physical abuse and sexual coercion in combination with tactics to intimidate, degrade, isolate, and control victims” (Stark, 2013: 18).

What legislative and non-legislative actions have been taken to prevent psychological violence and coercive control?



Psychological violence and coercive control are criminalised in some form in all EU Member States, although in some countries there are limitations to the legal framework

39

Practices to prevent psychological violence and coercive control have been implemented in EU Member States between 2012 and 2021

What are the barriers to the effective prevention of psychological violence and coercive control?



Low awareness and understanding of psychological violence and coercive control



Telecommunication and digital technology



Insufficient funding and resources



A lack of recognition of psychological violence and coercive control in national policies, strategies and action plans

Policy recommendations:

1

Commit to tackling all forms of violence against women in which coercive control is a constitutive element in the upcoming EU proposal for a dedicated Directive.

2

Address psychological violence specifically, explicitly and comprehensively by aligning definitions with the Istanbul Convention.

3

Introduce specific, targeted measures to prevent and respond to psychological violence and coercive control perpetrated online.

4

Raise awareness and improve understanding about psychological violence and coercive control and their criminalisation.

5

Ensure that practices are effectively and appropriately targeted to reach the most at-risk groups and those who have additional needs.

This report presents evidence on **coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States**. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To analyse **causes and consequences** of coercive control and psychological violence against women.
2. To assess the **criminalisation** of psychological violence and coercive control in EU Member States.
3. To identify and analyse **promising practices and the main hurdles in preventing** coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States.

Coercive control and psychological violence are inter-connected forms of gender-based abuse

- Coercive control is a broader concept than psychological violence in that it can be associated with all forms of partner violence (physical, sexual and economic, as well as psychological). Authors consider coercive control to be a feature of intimate partner violence and almost exclusively perpetuated by men against women (Arrows, 2021). Defined by Stark, 2007 as “a strategic course of oppressive conduct typically characterized by frequent, but low-level physical abuse and sexual coercion in combination with tactics to intimidate, degrade, isolate, and control victims” (Stark, 2013: 18).
- Unlike coercive control psychological violence is included in the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) (Article 33) as “any intentional course of conduct that seriously impairs another person’s psychological integrity through coercion or threats” (Council of Europe, 2011b). Psychological violence encompasses a range of abusive or violent behaviours including emotional abuse, verbal abuse and controlling behaviour. Psychological violence is usually inherent in other forms of violence against women (e.g. stalking and cyber stalking).
- Both concepts refer to a sustained course of conduct seeking to undermine the autonomy and well-being of the victim rather than isolated incidents of abuse.
- Due to its recognition in the Istanbul Convention, psychological violence is more commonly understood and criminalised in EU Member States than coercive control.

Risk factors and consequences for victims and their families associated with psychological violence and coercive control

Psychological violence and coercive control are entrenched and endemic forms of violence against women¹, and in the modern world they are frequently perpetrated in digital as well as physical spaces. **Judging from limited EU-wide data, a large number of women across the EU are affected by psychological violence and such experiences can have profound and wide-reaching consequences including self-harm and suicide.** Experiencing psychological violence and coercive control has a harmful effect on victims' mental health, with victims experiencing mental health conditions such as depression and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) at a higher rate than the general population. In particular, research is emerging on the prevalence of suicide among women experiencing psychological violence (European project on forced suicide, 2021). In terms of the impact on victims' families, children witnessing psychological violence and coercive control perpetrated against their mothers are more likely to perpetrate and become victim to such violence themselves in adulthood.

Certain groups of women are at particular risk of experiencing psychological violence, for instance, women with disabilities or health condition and women from a migrant background. The risk of experiencing psychological violence is elevated at certain points in the life course, for instance, in younger women (particularly in relation to cyber harassment) and in women who are divorced or separated. Women with dependent children may face additional risks, since perpetrators may make threats relating to children and custody arrangements may provide them with opportunities for continued post-separation abuse.

[The criminalisation of psychological violence and coercive control in EU Member States](#)

Psychological violence and coercive control are criminalised in some form in all EU Member States, **although to a limited extent**. For instance, legislation may not refer specifically to psychological violence or coercive control, criminal offences are not well matched to the behaviour typical of these forms of violence and legislation fails to cover all relationships within an intimate partnership or domestic context. In a number of EU Member States, criminal legislation does not refer to psychological violence against women perpetrated online.

[Good examples of non-legislative actions taken to prevent psychological violence and coercive control in EU Member States](#)

Beyond criminal legislation, a range of practices and measures have been implemented in EU Member States to prevent psychological violence and coercive control. **Desk research identified 39 practices**

¹ While not all incidents which impair a person's psychological integrity through coercion or threats reach the threshold of criminalization, this report refers to psychological violence - as defined by art. 33 of the Istanbul Convention and further explained in paras 179-181 of its explanatory report (Council of Europe, 2011a) - which can be considered as a criminal offence. More details is provided in section 1.2.

implemented in EU Member States between 2012 and 2021. These practices are assessed in this report according to 14 elements of promising practice developed for the purposes of this study.

In general, the practices presented in this study are well theorised and grounded in evidence. They are ongoing and sustainable, informed by and often delivered in collaboration with key stakeholders and use language and messaging that challenge myths, stereotypes and victim-blaming attitudes. The practices could be improved when it comes to recognising psychological violence and coercive control as forms of violence against women, recognising and responding to the needs of different groups of women and be more strongly embedded in a national strategy or action plan. Very few practices were formally evaluated. For certain types of activities such as awareness-raising campaigns and vocational training initiatives the evidence is scarce. Only few practices address the role of new technology and online communication.

Main hurdles in the effective prevention of psychological violence and coercive control in EU Member States

Low awareness and understanding of psychological violence and coercive control is a main barrier to its effective prevention, an issue highlighted in relation to professionals in the criminal justice sector, as well as general public, including victims. Insufficient knowledge and understanding make it more challenging for general public and professionals to recognise psychological violence and coercive control as abusive and criminal behaviour and to make use of relevant criminal provisions. Similarly to other forms of gender-based violence, general lack of awareness of these forms of violence and reluctance to report cases of psychological violence and coercive control are also identified as a barrier, linked to negative perceptions of the police and judiciary.

The pervasiveness of **telecommunication and digital technology can make it more difficult to prevent and respond to psychological violence and coercive control**. Perpetrators may use new technology to abuse and control women in new and insidious ways such as by tracking their location, inundating them with messages and monitoring their social media activity. The omnipresence of digital technology can contribute to make it more difficult for them to leave an abusive relationship.

Insufficient funding and resources limit the capacity of organisations working in this area to help and support victims, as well as the effective prevention of psychological violence and coercive control. A **lack of recognition of psychological violence and coercive control in national policies, strategies and action plans** can also act as a barrier to prevention.

Policy recommendations

On the basis of these findings, the study team have identified some overarching recommendations:

- Promote a comprehensive approach to tackling all forms of violence against women in which coercive control is a constitutive element in the upcoming EU proposal for a Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence. Such comprehensive approach should be mirrored in funding streams at the EU and Member State levels, national strategies and action plans and EU forums for sharing evidence and best practice.
- Address psychological violence against women specifically, explicitly and comprehensively (as a stand-alone phenomenon or within the framework of domestic violence) in EU and national legislation by for example aligning definitions with the Istanbul Convention.
- Introduce specific, targeted measures at the EU (e.g., Legislative proposal on Violence Against Women, Digital Services Act, European Strategy for a better Internet for our children) and Member State level (e.g. awareness-raising initiatives, training of law enforcement services,

criminal legislation and other legislative initiatives such as national legislation obligating service providers to remove illegal content without undue delay) to prevent and respond to psychological violence and coercive control perpetrated online.

- Raise awareness and improve understanding about coercive control and psychological violence and their criminalisation via activities such as awareness-raising campaigns and training for law enforcement and social services professionals.
- Ensure that practices funded by the EU and/or Member States are effectively and appropriately targeted to reach groups of women likely to suffer severe consequences of violence and have additional needs (e.g., migrant and refugee women, women with disabilities, homeless women).

Glossary

The following definitions are used in the study (listed in alphabetical order):

- **Coercive control** is defined as “a strategic course of oppressive conduct typically characterized by frequent, but low-level physical abuse and sexual coercion in combination with tactics to intimidate, degrade, isolate, and control victims” (Stark, 2013: 18). Coercive control is not a form of violence, and it can exist independently of violence (Stark & Hester, 2019). However, coercive control is strongly predictive of all forms of partner violence (Stark & Hester, 2019). Coercive control is a broader concept than psychological violence in that it can be associated with all forms of violence against women (physical, sexual and economic, as well as psychological). Authors consider coercive control to be a gendered phenomenon. No definition for coercive control is provided in the Istanbul Convention.
- **Domestic violence** is defined in accordance with the Istanbul Convention (Article 3b), 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” (Council of Europe, 2011b). The scope encompasses both violence against children or elderly members of the household and **intimate partner violence** regardless of whether the relationship is ongoing or historic, or whether the victim and perpetrator live together or have lived together in the past.
- **Intimate partner violence** is “any act of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence against women that occurs between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim” (EIGE, 2017).
- **Primary prevention** refers to preventing new instances of psychological violence and coercive control.
- **Psychological violence** is also defined in accordance with the Istanbul Convention (Article 33) as “any intentional course of conduct that seriously impairs another person’s psychological integrity through coercion or threats” (Council of Europe, 2011b). Psychological violence encompasses a range of abusive behaviours including emotional abuse, verbal abuse or controlling behaviour. Psychological violence is usually an inherent part of other forms of violence against women (e.g. stalking and cyber stalking).
- **Secondary prevention** refers to preventing further instances of psychological violence and coercive control once such violence and control has been identified.
- **Violence against women** refers to “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” (Council of Europe, 2011b). Violence against women is used interchangeably with **gender-based violence against women** hereafter.

1. Introduction

Coercive control and psychological violence against women instil fear and insecurity in women's lives and undermines their well-being and dignity. In many cases, violence against women and girls occurs in the family, where violence is often tolerated, goes unreported and is difficult to detect. Even when such violence is reported, there is often a failure to protect victims or punish perpetrators.

The overall objective of this study is **to strengthen the institutional capacity to combat coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States.**

The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To analyse **causes and consequences** of coercive control and psychological violence against women.²
2. To assess the **criminalisation** of psychological violence and coercive control in EU Member States.
3. To identify and analyse **promising practices and the main hurdles in preventing** coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States.

This work will constitute a key addition to EIGE's evidence base for a better understanding of gender-based violence,³ and will directly inform their support for the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union to ensure ongoing implementation of the *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (BPfA).⁴ More broadly, this research will contribute towards the European Union's strategic priority to end gender-based violence in all its forms as enshrined in the EU Gender Equality Strategy.⁵

1.1 Background and policy context

The EU and its Member States have long demonstrated a commitment to eradicating violence against women by creating policies and contributing to international treaties working towards this goal. Within these policies and treaties, psychological violence is mentioned as a distinct form of gender-based violence that the EU and its Member States are working to eliminate.

The BPfA, established at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, provides guidance and elicits commitments from government, civil society and other stakeholders in the area of gender equality and the human rights of women and girls (UN Women, 1995). All 27 EU

² The sources identified by the study team highlight associations, but do not go as far as to demonstrate causality. For this reason, the findings in this report refer to risk factors and factors associated with psychological violence, rather than causes per se.

³ <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence>.

⁴ <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/plat1.htm#statement>.

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/ending-gender-based-violence_en.

Member States have recognised their responsibility to implement the BPfA. The BPfA identifies psychological violence within its definition of violence against women (Area D), along with all acts or threats instilling fear and insecurity in women's lives (UN Women, 1995). A key strategic objective of the BPfA (D.2) is to study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventative measures (UN Women, 1995). Elimination of all forms of gender-based violence is also a key target of the UN's Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.⁶ Psychological violence is used as a specific indicator for monitoring the progress towards this goal.⁷

In 2017, the EU signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence - the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011b), which aims to protect women and prevent gender-based violence against women (Council of the European Union, 2017a; 2017b). In Articles 33 and 34, the Istanbul Convention focuses specifically on acts of psychological violence and stalking respectively, stating that parties to the treaty "shall take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure the intentional conduct" of psychological violence and stalking is criminalised (Council of Europe, 2011b). The Convention has been ratified by 21⁸ EU Member States and signed by further six.⁹

The Istanbul Convention calls on national governments to implement comprehensive and co-ordinated policies to prevent and combat all forms of violence against women, including psychological violence (Article 7), and to allocate appropriate financial and human resources to this end (Article 8) (Council of Europe, 2011b). Specifically, the Istanbul Convention calls on governments to implement the following kinds of measures: awareness-raising campaigns (Article 13), educational initiatives (Article 14), training of professionals (Article 15), preventative intervention and treatment programmes (Article 16) and initiatives involving the private sector and the media (Article 17) (Council of Europe, 2011b). The Istanbul Convention also states that national governments should take legislative measures to protect victims from any further acts of violence (Article 18.1) (Council of Europe, 2011b). To monitor the effective implementation of its provision, the Istanbul Convention has established a specific monitoring mechanism (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence or GREVIO).

In 2020, the European Commission released two strategies which included their commitment to the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence in the EU: The Gender Equality Strategy 2020-

⁶ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>.

⁷ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5>.

⁸ BE, DK, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, CY, LU, MT, NL, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, FI, SE.

⁹ BG, CZ, LV, LT, HU and SK.

2025 and the EU Strategy on victims' rights 2020-2025. In the Gender Equality Strategy, ending gender-based violence is named as one of the core priorities of the EU (European Commission, 2020a). Should the EU's ratification of the Istanbul Convention remain blocked, the EU will propose new measures (now expected in March 2022) to achieve the same objectives as the Istanbul Convention in the areas of EU competence (European Commission, 2020a). The Victims' Rights Strategy is a commitment to the continuous implementation of the Victims' Rights Directive¹⁰ and to the protection of all victims of all crimes. The Victims' Rights Strategy includes commitments to empower victims and to improve support and protection, particularly protection of the most vulnerable victims, including victims of domestic violence (European Commission 2020b). The Directive is planned to be revised and updated.

Whilst psychological violence and stalking are identified specifically and separately in the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011b), psychological violence and coercive control received less attention at the EU level. The Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025 identifies ending gender-based violence as a key priority for the EU but does not reference psychological violence or coercive control specifically (European Commission, 2020a). The European Parliament have published an analysis of the criminalisation of psychological violence in EU Member States, but it covers 10 out of 27 Member States only (European Parliament, 2020). This report draws together all available evidence on psychological violence and coercive control in 10 EU Member States, covering prevalence, risk factors and consequences, as well as legislative and other measures introduced to prevent psychological violence and coercive control. A special thematic report of the Network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination¹¹ on the criminalisation of gender-based violence against women in European States also highlights the limited criminalisation of psychological violence (EELN, 2021).

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States falls outside of the scope of the present study. However, emerging evidence suggests that the prevalence of psychological violence against women increased during the pandemic (Acosta, 2020; Donato, 2020). For instance, the national helpline in Italy recorded a two-fold increase in calls relating to psychological violence between spring (March – May) 2019 and 2020 (Donato, 2020). Measures taken to limit the spread of Covid-19 infection may have facilitated perpetrators exerting power and control, with victims isolated and less able to seek help (Acosta,

¹⁰ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32012L0029>.

¹¹ <https://www.equalitylaw.eu/downloads/5535-criminalisation-of-gender-based-violence-against-women-in-european-states-including-ict-facilitated-violence-1-97-mb>

2020). During the pandemic victims may have found themselves isolated from their support network and exposed to their perpetrator with greater intensity and regularity than before, as well possibly experiencing financial insecurity, all of which contribute to an increase in psychological violence (Herbinher and Leonhardmair, 2021; Arenas-Arroyo et al, 2021). Certain groups of women may be particularly exposed to psychological violence and coercive control in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, including domestic workers, older women, women with disabilities and women without access to technology (Simonovic, 2020). A range of measures have been introduced in EU Member States to support and protect women victims of intimate partner violence in the context of lockdowns or other restrictions including classifying shelters and other protection services as ‘essential’ raising-awareness campaigns and providing women with innovative channels of reporting (EIGE, 2021b).

1.2 Conceptual and theoretical framework

This study presents evidence on psychological violence and coercive control in EU Member States. The focus is on adult,¹² female victims of psychological violence and coercive control, including women in same-sex relationships.

Psychological violence and coercive control are distinct but interrelated concepts, and where possible the analysis replicates the language of the original source. The analysis and interpretation of the evidence, including the scope of the prevention measures, are guided by the definitions and [the overall framework of the Istanbul Convention \(Council of Europe, 2011b\)](#). Even though psychological violence accompanies all other forms of violence, the study focuses on **psychological violence as a self-standing form of violence**. The study adopts the definition of psychological violence provided in article 33 of the Istanbul Convention and further elaborated in its explanatory report. Psychological violence is defined as an ‘**intentional** conduct that **seriously impairs and damages a person’s psychological integrity**’ (paragraph 180) and refers to a **course of conduct** (rather than a single event) which can be considered as a criminal offence (paragraph 181) (authors’ emphasis).

The report also includes a focus on stalking and its online forms. While psychological violence and stalking constitute separate offenses, their definitions in the Istanbul Convention include commonalities, especially the intentional dimension of the conduct, the element of threat and the

¹² Women aged 15 or over.

effects on the victim. The explanatory report further highlights that both offences are characterized by the repeated nature of the conduct (Council of Europe (2011a) (paragraphs 181, 182, 185).

The study is underpinned by a theoretical framework combining the insights of intersectional and life-course perspectives. The **intersectional perspective** recognises that inequality emerges through the interplay of multiple dimensions of privilege and disadvantage (Florian, 2017). Women are not a homogeneous, static group. Therefore, any analysis of the prevalence, causes and consequences of psychological violence and coercive control requires an understanding of the multiple forms of oppression women experience (Ryan & El Ayadi, 2020). This study also takes a **life-course approach** to addressing coercive control and psychological violence against women, which means that the causes and consequences of violence need to be examined in relation to the moment in an individual's life course at which it occurs (Florian, 2017).¹³ This is of particular relevance for older women, whose experiences of gender-based violence and specific needs tends to be overlooked in public debate and by support services (Bows, 2020).

1.3 Overview of the methodology

This study draws on a range of methods to address its research objectives. Desk research was carried out to better understand the prevalence, risk factors and consequences of psychological violence and coercive control (Sections 1-2) and barriers to prevention (Section 5). Legal analysis and expert consultation (conducted in July and August 2021) informed the mapping of relevant legislation across the EU (Section 4). Targeted desk research was also employed to identify good examples of preventive practice in this area across the EU Member States (Section 5). These practices were then assessed according to criteria for promising practice informed by relevant guidance and frameworks.¹⁴ Finally, an online survey of 56 policymakers and practitioners from 22 Member States working in the area of domestic violence supplemented the desk research in the area of preventive practices and associated barriers.¹⁵

1.4 Report structure

This report is structured as follows:

¹³ Although this report takes a life-course approach, the focus is on adult (female) victims of psychological violence and coercive control. Other experiences during childhood and adolescence are taken into account in the report, including witnessing violence as a child.

¹⁴ Including EIGE guide on best practice in preventing domestic violence (EIGE, 2015) and a Council of Europe report offering practical advice to policymakers and practitioners around raising awareness of violence against women (Heisecke, 2014).

¹⁵ The survey was open to responses from 9 August to 3 September 2021.

- **Section 2** presents evidence on the prevalence of coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States.
- **Section 3** summarises evidence on risk factors associated with psychological violence and coercive control, as well as the consequences of such violence for women and their children.
- **Section 4** offers an overview of the legal framework in EU Member States and the criminalisation of psychological violence and coercive control.
- **Section 5** identifies policies and practices (other than criminal legislation) introduced in EU Member States to prevent psychological violence and coercive control and evaluates practices according to dimensions of promising practice developed for the purposes of this study. This Section also summarises literature on the barriers to effective prevention of psychological violence and coercive control.
- Conclusions are outlined in **Section 6** and recommendations in **Section 7**.

Further information can be found in the report's Annexes, including a more detailed overview of the methodology (**Annex 1**) and research tools (**Annex 2**), and additional research findings and analysis (**Annexes 4-7**).

2 Prevalence of coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States

Effective, evidence-based policymaking for the prevention of violence against women must be underpinned by robust, comparative data that accurately reflects the magnitude of the problem (Council of Europe, 2011b). Accurate prevalence data can raise awareness of the magnitude of the issue among relevant authorities and the broader public and can also encourage incident reporting (Council of Europe, 2011b). All countries that ratify the Istanbul Convention are obliged to conduct regular population-based surveys to assess the prevalence and trends of all forms of violence against women and domestic violence, including psychological violence and stalking (Council of Europe 2011a). Administrative data collected by health care services, social welfare services and judicial authorities can supplement the understanding offered by survey-based data collection (Council of Europe 2011b).

This chapter provides an overview of estimates of the prevalence of psychological violence against women and stalking¹⁶ in EU Member States, focusing first on data at the EU level (Section 2.1), then data available at the Member State level (Section 2.2), and finally data on differences across population sub-groups (Section 2.3). At this time, no EU wide data is available on coercive control. Limitations of available data and gaps in the evidence base are summarised in **Box 2**. Additional prevalence data can be found in Annex 5.

2.1 Comparative data at the EU level

The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) survey on violence against women provides the main source of data on prevalence of psychological violence in the EU (FRA, 2012).¹⁷ Additional data on reported incidents of psychological violence is available from the EIGE Gender Statistics Database, which compiles national-level administrative data on intimate partner violence.¹⁸ However,

¹⁶ While psychological violence and stalking constitute separate offenses in the Istanbul Convention (articles 33-34), the nature of both offences share many commonalities. Therefore, the report also includes data on stalking and its online forms.

¹⁷ Data referenced as “FRA, 2012” is taken from the online data explorer on the FRA website. As of 21.09.21: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/data-and-maps/survey-data-explorer-violence-against-women-survey>. Other FRA results referenced FRA 2014 are taken from the main report summarising findings from the survey (FRA, 2014).

¹⁸ https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv__ipv_indic_5/metadata.

variation in the definitions, data collection approaches and population sizes largely prevents administrative data from being comparable across Member States.

Data from the FRA survey (FRA, 2012) show that **across the EU, 44 % of women have experienced psychological violence from a partner in their lifetime** (see Figure 1). However, there is considerable variation across countries: in Denmark and Latvia, almost two-thirds (60 %) of women have reported experiencing some form of psychological violence, compared to around a third of women (31 %) in Ireland. Such stark variations may also reflect varying levels of awareness of this form of violence against women among respondents.

Figure 1. Women having experienced any form of psychological violence by a partner since the age of 15 (% , 18-74, EU, 2014¹⁹)

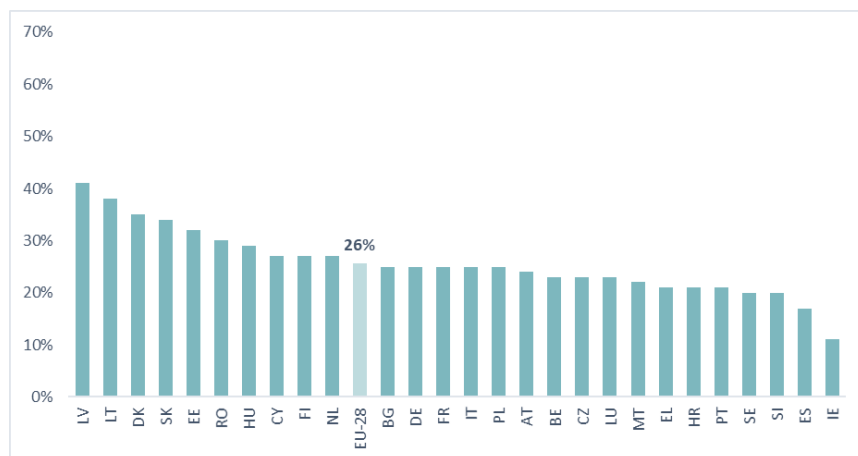


Source: Survey on violence against women in EU, FRA, 2012. Extracted from the online data explorer on the FRA website

Note: As this data is from 2014, a reference period during which the United Kingdom still was a Member State, the EU aggregate used here refers to the 28 EU Member States (EU-28), including the United Kingdom.

Additionally, some **26 % of women have experienced psychological violence by a current partner** (see Figure 2 and Table A5.1 in Annex 5). Again, significant differences are evident across Member States: in Latvia, 41 % of women indicated they had experienced psychological violence from a current partner compared to 11 % in Ireland. Although it distinguishes between violence experienced in a current relationship and a historic relationship, the FRA survey does not capture data on whether historic psychological violence was perpetrated by a current or previous partner.

Figure 2. Women having experienced any form of psychological violence by a current partner (% , 18-74, EU, 2014)



Source: FRA, 2014.

Note: As this data is from 2014, a reference period during which the United Kingdom still was a Member State, the EU aggregate used here refers to the 28 EU Member States (EU-28), including the United Kingdom.

The FRA survey distinguishes between different forms of psychological violence in intimate partner relationships, measured by four composite variables informed by multiple survey questions: (a) controlling behaviour,²⁰ (b) abusive behaviour,²¹ (c) psychological violence including economic violence²² and (d) psychological violence involving dependent children.²³ At the EU level, controlling behaviour is the most prevalent type of psychological violence (35 %), followed by abusive behaviour (32 %), psychological violence including economic violence (12 %) and psychological violence including dependent children (8 %) (FRA 2012). The prevalence of all four forms of psychological violence varies widely across EU Member States (FRA, 2012; see Table A5.2 in Annex 5). For example, the highest percentages of abusive behaviour were reported in

²⁰ Asked as the following questions/scenarios: trying to keep the respondent from seeing her friends or visiting her family or relatives, insisting on knowing where she is, getting angry if she speaks to other men (or women), suspecting her of being unfaithful (Question E01; answer options: E01a-e).

²¹ Asked as the following questions/ scenarios: belittling or humiliating the respondent in public or in private, forbidding her to leave the house or locking her up, making her watch pornographic material against her wishes, scaring or intimidating her on purpose, threatening her with violence or threatening to hurt someone else the respondent cares about (Question E01, E02; answer options: E01h, E02a-d, E02f-h).

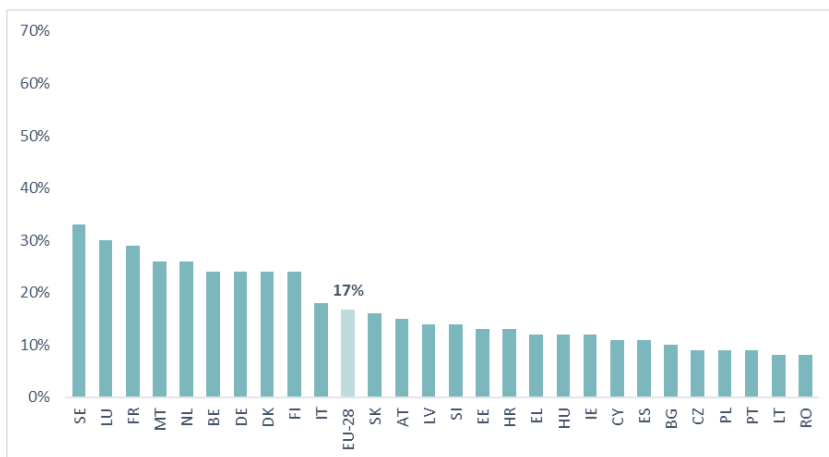
²² Asked as the following questions/scenarios: preventing the respondent from making decisions on family finances or shopping independently or forbidding her to work outside the house (Question E01; answer options: E01f-g).

²³ Asked as the following questions/scenarios: threatening to take the children away from the respondent, threatening to hurt them, or hurting them (Question E02; answer options E02e-g).

Denmark, Estonia, Latvia and Finland (between 41 % and 45 %), while psychological abuse involving economic violence is most prevalent in Bulgaria, Czechia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia (between 15 % and 17 %). A positive correlation between the different forms of violence (authors' calculations presented in Figure A5.1 in Annex 5) suggests that these are linked. While a correlation coefficient needs to be interpreted with caution as it depends on the context and purposes (Cohen, 1988), the highest correlation seems to exist between controlling and abusing behaviour (0.83) and lowest correlations are found between psychological violence involving dependent children and economic abuse (0.20), indicating that these forms of violence are more distinctive.

The data on the prevalence of stalking (see **Figure 3**) shows that **across the EU, 17 % of women have experienced stalking since the age of 15.**²⁴ There is considerable variation across countries, with over a third of women in Sweden (33 %) having experienced stalking compared to 8 % in Lithuania and in Romania , for instance. The most prevalent forms of stalking reported by women in the EU are phone calls (11 %), being followed (6 %) and the perpetrator loitering and waiting around (6 %) (FRA 2014).

Figure 3. Women having experienced any form of stalking since the age of 15 (% , EU, 18-74, 2014)



Source: Violence against women: an EU-wide survey – main results. FRA, 2014.

Note: As this data is from 2014, a reference period during which the United Kingdom still was a Member State, the EU aggregate used here refers to the 28 EU Member States (EU-28), including the United Kingdom.

²⁴ Data on stalking from the FRA 2012 survey is not specific to the intimate partner or domestic context.

The FRA Fundamental Rights Survey (2019) collected data on the prevalence of cyber harassment in EU Member States.²⁵ Across the EU, an estimated **13 % of women have experienced cyber harassment in the last 5 years; 8 % in the last 12 months** (FRA, 2019; see **Figure 4**).²⁶ The proportion is highest in Germany, where almost a quarter (22 %) of women report having experienced cyber harassment in the past five years. Over one in 10 women in BE, CZ, DE, FR, LU, NL and FI report experiencing cyber harassment in the last 12 months.

Figure 4. Women having experienced cyber harassment in the past five years and the past 12 months (% , 16+, EU, 2019)



Source: FRA Fundamental Rights Survey, 2019 (author’s calculation of EU 27 average).

²⁵ Data with the reference “FRA, 2019” are taken from the online data explorer tool. As of 27.09.21: <https://fra.europa.eu/en/data-and-maps/2021/frs?mdq1=theme&mdq2=982>. Cyber harassment was defined as one or more of the following: incidents where somebody 1) Sent you emails or text messages (SMS) that were offensive or threatening, 2) Posted offensive or threatening comments about you on the internet, for example on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter, WhatsApp.

²⁶ Data on cyber harassment from the FRA 2019 survey are not specific to the intimate partner or domestic context.

2.2 Data at the Member State level

This section starts with the overview of administrative data on psychological violence available from EIGE and Germany, Greece and Sweden, followed by survey data from Spain (Ministerio de Igualdad, 2015; 2019), the Netherlands²⁷ and Lithuania (Žukauskienė et al. 2019).

National-level administrative data

The EIGE Gender Statistics Database (EIGE, 2020)²⁸ contains administrative data relating to reported cases of psychological intimate partner violence perpetrated by men against (adult) women in 15 Member States.²⁹ However, only three Member States (CZ, DE, FI) provide the granularity of data necessary for comparability (for further information on the comparability of administrative data relating to intimate partner violence, see EIGE, 2021a).³⁰ The data presented in **Table 1** refers to the absolute number of offences recorded in each of these Member States. As a result, the size of the adult female population in each country should be taken into consideration when interpreting these figures. An increase in reported cases of psychological partner violence in some Member States (DE) and a decrease in others (CZ) can be observed. However, these trends should be interpreted with caution because change in the number of reported cases may stem from factors other than the prevalence of such violence (for example, contextual factors that might affect willingness or ability to report such violence).

Table 1. Cases of psychological intimate partner violence against women recorded by the police (total numbers and number of recorded cases per 100 000 female population, CZ, DE, FI, 2014-2018)

Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
CZ	1,351 (25.3)	1,293 (24.1)	1,073 (10.0)	1,147 (21.3)	889 (16.5)
DE	-	24,402 (59.0)	24,396 (58.6)	28,869 (69.0)	28,657 (68.3)
FI	1,047 (37.8)	1,112 (40.0)	1,152 (41.4)	1,269 (45.5)	1,123 (40.2)

²⁷ <https://longreads.cbs.nl/phgsg-2020/>.

²⁸ https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv_ipv_indic_5/metadata.

²⁹ BE, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, HR, CY, IT, LV, LT, MT, AT, SK and FI.

³⁰ The data of the other Member States in the Gender Statistics Database are not included here because the lack of disaggregation means that it is unclear if the available data describes the prevalence of psychological violence against women by an intimate partner or family member.

Source: EIGE, Gender Statistics Database.³¹

Note: The numbers in brackets indicate the number of recorded cases per 100,000 female population.³²

In some cases, more detailed and more recent administrative data are available at the Member State level.³³ For example, data collected by federal police in Germany (see **Table 2**) indicates that reports of threats were more common than reports of stalking or coercion.³⁴ Overall, 22.3 % of reported cases of intimate partner violence in 2020 involve coercion, stalking or threats (Bundeskriminalamt, 2021). Using this source, it is possible to assess the proportion of each type of violence perpetrated online. The proportion of stalking cases involving cyber violence was highest in relation to the other violence types, at 9.9% (Bundeskriminalamt, 2021). For coercion, 4% of the cases were perpetrated online (Bundeskriminalamt, 2021).

Table 2. Administrative data on psychological violence against women in intimate relationships (total numbers and number of recorded cases per 100 000 female population, DE, 2015-2020)

Offence	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Threats, coercion and stalking in intimate partner relationships			28,869 (69.0)	28,657 (68.3)	28,906 (68.7)	29,301 (69.6)
Threats	16,289 (39.4)	16,753 (40.2)	16,891 (40.4)	16,734 (39.9)	16,607 (39.5)	16,422 (39.0)

³¹ https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv_ipv_indic_5/metadata.

³²

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/DEMO_PJAN__custom_1690617/default/table?lang=en

³³ Administrative data on psychological violence is available in the Crime Statistics database in Cyprus (https://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/dmlstatistical_en/dmlstatistical_en?opendocument), in a police report from Luxembourg in 2017 (Police Grand-Ducale, 2018) and in Belgium (Police fédérale, 2021). However, the gender of victims and sometimes perpetrator in these reports are not clear, therefore it is not possible to extract the number of women victims of psychological violence and coercion by an intimate (ex) partner or family member.

³⁴ Since 2016, the federal police in Germany have published administrative data relating to intimate partner violence against women (Bundeskriminalamt, 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020). In the years 2015 and 2016 data were published for threats and stalking (separately) and for the years 2017-2019 data the combined number of victims of threats, coercion and stalking in intimate partner relationships.

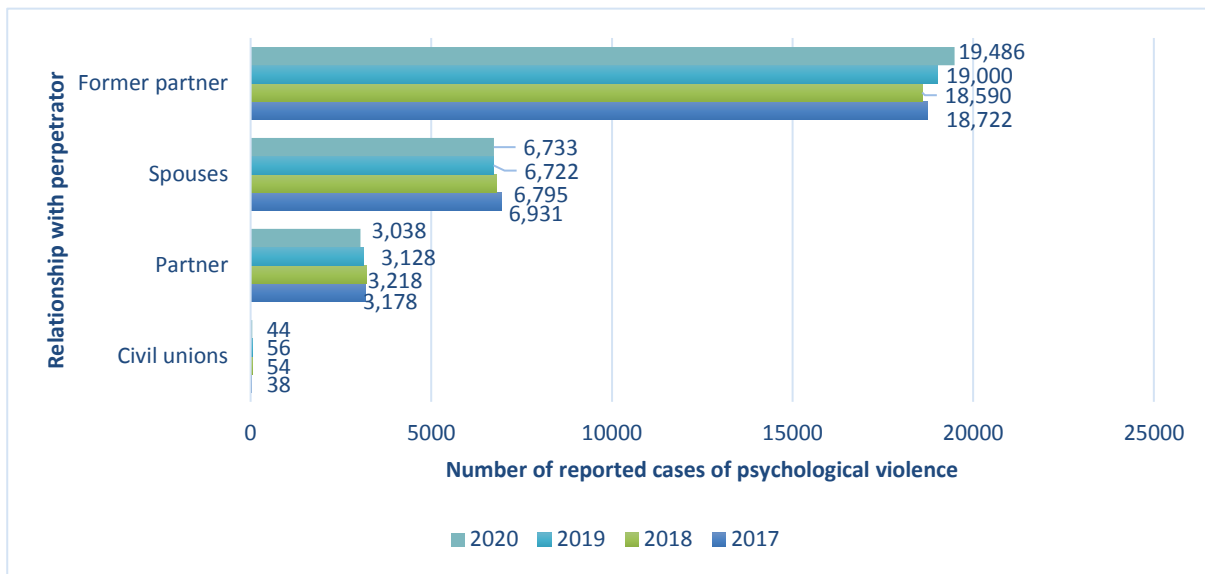
Stalking	7,913 (19.1)	7,643 (18.3)	7,643 (18.3)	7,608 (18.1)	7,736 (18.4)	8,022 (19.0)
Coercion		4,341 (10.4)	4,370 (10.4)	4,187 (10.0)	4,277 (10.2)	4,618 (11.0)

Source: Bundeskriminalamt, 2016; 2017; 2018; 2019; 2020; 2021.

Note: The numbers in brackets indicate the number of recorded cases per 100,000 female population.³⁵

The disaggregated data for Germany (see **Figure 5**) also reveals that the **majority of reported cases of psychological violence against women in intimate relationships are perpetrated by a former partner rather than a current spouse or partner.** It is not possible to identify any clear trends over time.

Figure 5. Administrative data on psychological violence against women in intimate relationships (number of recorded cases by relationship status, DE, 2017-2020)



Source: Bundeskriminalamt, 2018; 2019; 2020,2021.³⁶

Administrative data from domestic violence support services in Greece (see **Table 3**) indicates a slight decline over time in reported cases, albeit over a relatively short time period.

³⁵

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/DEMO_PJAN_custom_1690617/default/table?lang=en

³⁶ As of 2017, homosexual couples can get married and Germany and no new civil unions were registered after that point.

Table 3. Cases of psychological violence against women reported to support services (total numbers and number of recorded cases per 100 000 female population EL, 2018-2020)

	2018	2019	2020
Reported incidents of psychological violence- counselling services	2,189 (39.6)	2,042 (37.0)	1,940 (35.3)
Reported incidents of psychological violence – shelters	189 (3.4)	176 (3.2)	111 (2.0)

Source: authors' elaboration of data presented by Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, 2021.

Note: The numbers in brackets indicate the number of recorded cases per 100,000 female population.³⁷

According to administrative police data from Sweden (see **Table 4**), the most commonly reported criminal offence relating to psychological violence against women is that of unlawful threat from an intimate (ex) partner or family member.

Table 4. Reported crimes relating to psychological violence (total numbers and number of recorded cases per 100 000 female population, SE, 2020)

Offence	2020
Gross violation of integrity by an intimate (ex) partner or family member (domestic violence)	195 (3.8)
Unlawful threat of a woman over 18 by an intimate (ex) partner or family member	10,342 (201.5)
Unlawful harassment a woman over 18 by an intimate (ex) partner or family member	209 (4.1)
Unlawful coercion of a woman over 18 by an intimate (ex) partner or family member	183 (3.6)

Source: authors' elaboration of data presented by Brå.³⁸

Note: The numbers in brackets indicate the number of recorded cases per 100,000 female population (as of 2020).³⁹

Besides psychological violence as a self-standing offence, the reported crimes might include other forms of violence (e.g., physical, sexual, economic) in addition to psychological violence.

³⁷

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/DEMO_PJAN_custom_1690617/default/table?lang=en

³⁸ <https://bra.se/bra-in-english/home/crime-and-statistics/crime-statistics.html>.

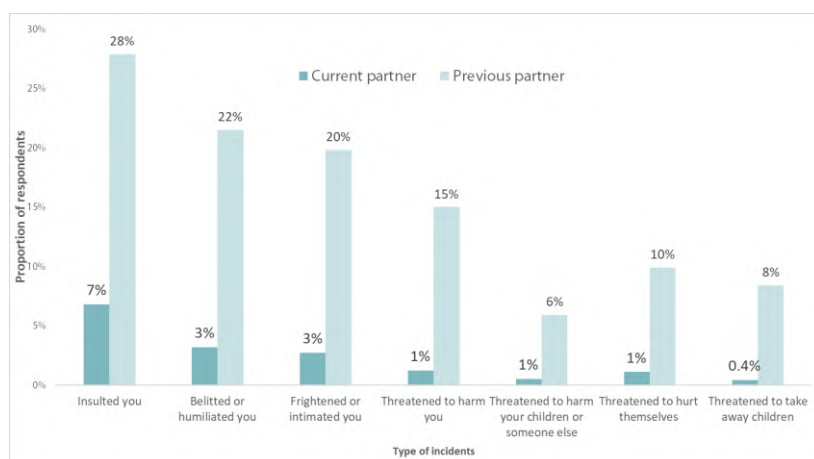
³⁹

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/DEMO_PJAN_custom_1690617/default/table?lang=en

National-level survey data

Another source of data at the Member State level are national-level surveys. The Spanish macro survey on gender-based violence was conducted in 2015 (n=9,807) and 2019 (n=6,501) to gather data on partner-perpetrated gender-based violence experienced by women across Spain (Ministerio de Igualdad, 2015; 2019; see **Figure 6**).⁴⁰ Looking at the specific types of incidents that could constitute psychological violence if occurring intentionally, repeatedly and/or seriously impairing the victim's psychological integrity, in 2019, the most common incidents were insults, humiliation, frightening behaviour and threats of physical harm. This data also shows that women were more likely to experience such incidents from a former partner (28% of respondents experienced insults from a former partner and 7% from a current partner). This is in line with literature showing that separation/divorce is an important risk factor for psychological violence.

Figure 6. Women having experienced from a current or previous partner by specific types of incidents (% , ES, 2019)



Source: authors' elaboration of data presented by the Ministerio de Igualdad, 2019.

Note: current partner includes most recent ex-partner.

The 2020 government-run internet survey carried out in the Netherlands, *Prevalentiemonitor Huiselijk Geweld en Seksueel Geweld* (PHGSG), received over 30 thousand responses.⁴¹ It found that in the previous 12 months **33 % of women respondents had experienced verbal aggression**

⁴⁰ The questions on psychological violence were identical in both surveys, although in the 2019 survey two additional questions were added: "Has your current/ a previous partner ever threatened to hurt themselves if you leave them?" and "Has a previous partner ever threatened to take away your children?".

⁴¹ <https://longreads.cbs.nl/phgsg-2020/>.

in the domestic sphere, 5 % had experienced coercive control and 3 % had experienced stalking by an ex-partner.⁴²

An interview survey of women carried out in Lithuania in 2018 (n=1,173) found that **half of those surveyed (50 %) had experienced psychological violence by an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime** (Žukauskienė et al., 2019). The estimated prevalence is similar to that estimated for Lithuania by the FRA survey, where 51 % of women respondents from Lithuania indicated they had experienced some form of psychological violence (FRA, 2012).

Finally, in Italy, interviews with women aged 16-70 years (n=24,761) in 2014 found that **7 % of participants reported having been stalked by an ex-partner**, making up two thirds (62 %) of the total number of respondents who indicated having been stalked by any individual (Istat, 2016).

Box 1. Prevalence of psychological violence against women based on survey data in other OECD countries

In **New Zealand**, a repeated cross-sectional survey relating to violence against women was conducted in 2003 (n=2,674) and 2019 (n=944) by researchers at the University of Auckland (Fanslow et al., 2021). The survey included four questions relating to psychological violence. In 2019, the most prevalent form of psychological violence was being insulted by a partner (43 %), followed by being humiliated (31 %), intimidated (25 %) and threatened (16 %). Results are compared to the earlier wave of data collected in 2003.

In **Northern Ireland**, a study was conducted with 63 women victims of intimate partner violence. At the time of the interviews, 55 (87 %) women had left the relationships with their perpetrators while eight (13 %) were still in relationships with them. The interviewees were asked about their experience of different forms of intimate partner violence such as psychological, economic, physical and sexual violence. The study indicates that all but one (98 %) of the participating women had experienced psychological violence by their perpetrator. This was often in combination with other forms of violence (Doyle, 2018). This study indicates that psychological violence is extremely common in intimate relationships where there is violence against women. However, it does not estimate the prevalence in the general population.

Source: Fanslow et al., 2021; Doyle, 2018.

⁴² <https://longreads.cbs.nl/phgsg-2020/bijlage-a-tabellen/>.

2.3 Intersectional and life course differences

The Istanbul Convention specifies that all statistical and administrative data on violence against women and domestic violence should be disaggregated by gender and other characteristics (Council of Europe, 2011a). It recognises that certain sub-groups of women are made vulnerable by particular circumstances, resulting in the need for preventive measures to specifically address and take into account their needs (Council of Europe, 2011b). It is consequently of key importance that the differential prevalence of psychological violence across different population sub-groups be well understood. A caveat is necessary in that findings presented in this section refer purely to descriptive trends. The analysis does not control for possible confounding factors or test whether sub-group differences are statistically significant. The following characteristics are detailed below: age group, disability and health status, sexual orientation, education and employment status, migration status, with risk groups summarised in **Figure 7**.

Figure 7. Groups of women who experience psychological violence at a higher rate than the general population



Age group

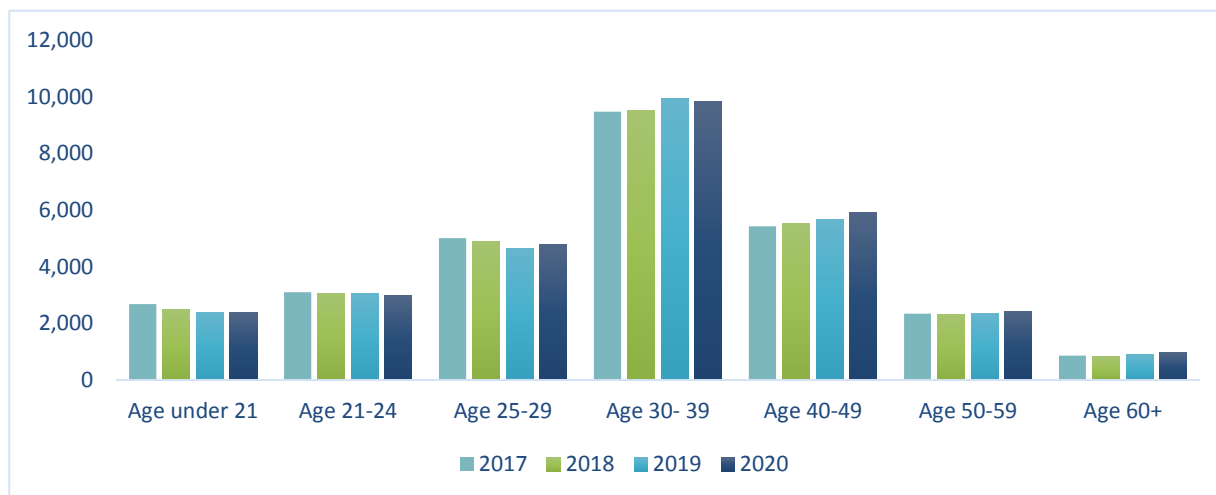
Data from the FRA survey indicates that the **age of the respondent is not related to psychological violence perpetrated by a current partner** (FRA, 2014). However, FRA's report does not include figures broken down by age group (overall or by country), so it is not possible to assess how this varies across EU Member States.

Administrative data from Germany show that **reported cases of psychological violence in intimate partner relationships differ by age, peaking in the 30-39 age group** (see **Figure 8**).

Administrative data collected by age group can give an indication of when women mostly experience psychological violence as reporting to the police most likely indicates a recent event. The reported number of cases, however, do not reflect the true number of incidents within each age

group due to under-reporting to the authorities (for a discussion of the limitations of administrative data see **Box 2**).

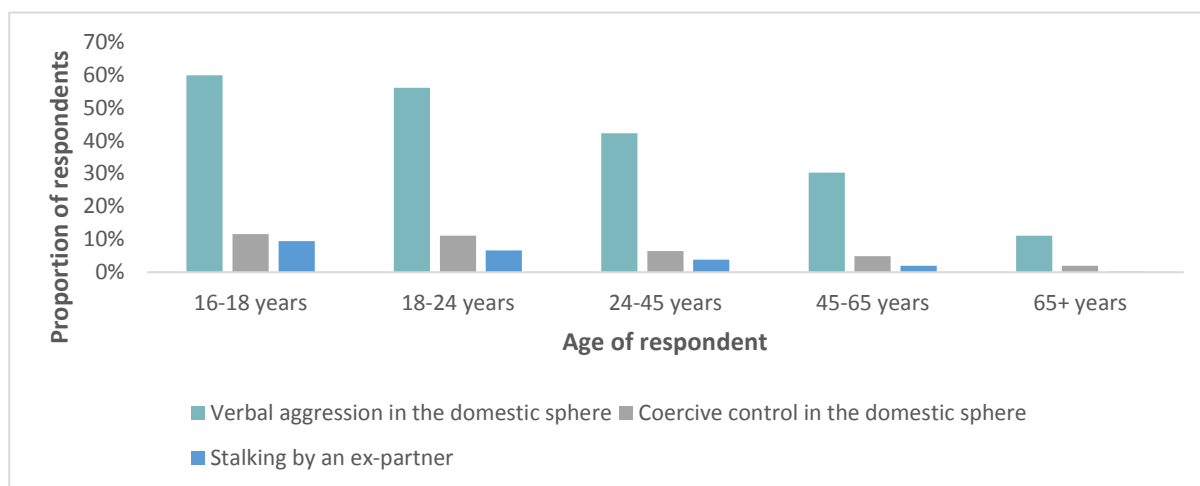
Figure 8. Reported cases of psychological violence against women in intimate relationships by age group (total numbers of recorded cases, DE, 2017-2020)



Source: authors' elaboration of data presented by Bundeskriminalamt, 2018; 2019; 2020; 2021.

PHGSG survey data from the Netherlands also tracks relative prevalence across age groups,⁴³ indicating that **the prevalence of verbal aggression, coercive control and stalking are highest among younger age groups** (see **Figure 9**).

Figure 9. Women having experienced different forms of psychological violence over the last 12 months by age (% , NL, 2020)



Source: authors' elaboration of PHGSG data.⁴⁴

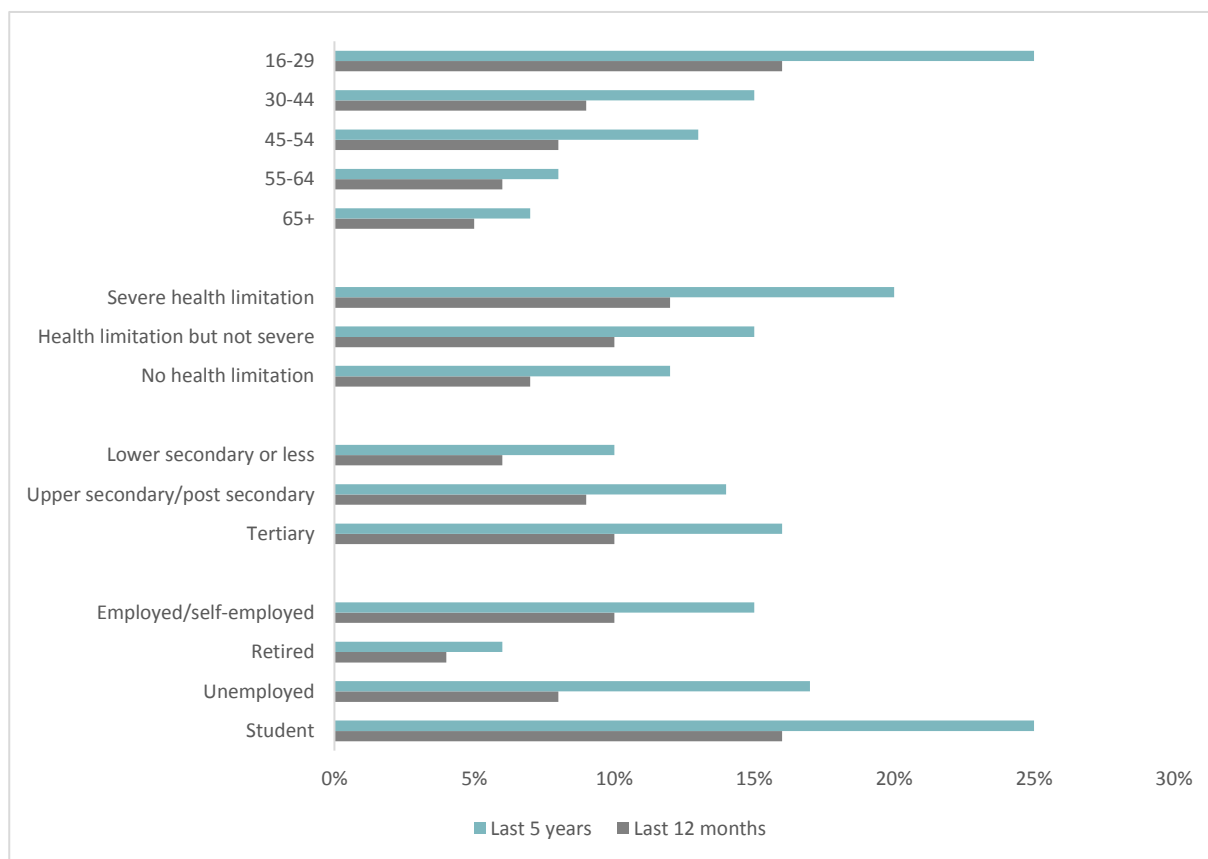
⁴³ <https://longreads.cbs.nl/phgsg-2020/bijlage-a-tabellen/>.

⁴⁴ <https://longreads.cbs.nl/phgsg-2020/bijlage-a-tabellen/>.

Note: the proportion of female respondents who reported having been stalked by an ex-partner is reported here as relative to the total number of respondents aged 16 years or older who reported having an ex-partner. “Verbal aggression” refers to such behaviour as high-pitched disagreements involving shouting or screaming, bullying, belittling or humiliation. “Coercive control” is defined as a form of domestic violence with a repetitive, structural character where one person strongly dominates another. The “domestic sphere” includes all family, relatives and any (ex-) partners.

Data from the FRA Fundamental Rights Survey (2019) show that **women under 30 years old are exposed to cyber harassment more than older women** (see **Figure 10**). Across the EU, an estimated 25 % of women in the youngest age group (16-29 years) have experienced cyber harassment in the last five years, compared to 7 % of women aged 65 and older. Over one in 10 women in the youngest age group report experiencing cyber harassment in the last 12 months.

Figure 10. Women having experienced any form of cyber harassment in the past five years and the past 12 months by age, health status, education level and occupational status (% , 16+, EU, 2019)



Source: FRA, Fundamental Rights Survey, 2019.

Disability and health status

Data from the Spanish Macro Survey (2019, n=9,568) shows that **psychological violence against women with disabilities in intimate relationships is 1.5 times higher** compared to those without

disabilities (Meseguer-Santamaría et al., 2021). Evidence from France shows how the combination of economic dependency and potential dependency from intimate partners for everyday care and activities heighten the vulnerability of experiencing all forms of gender-based violence (ARES VI, 2020). A similar pattern is observed at the EU level. Across the EU, 54 % of women with a disability or health condition have experienced psychological violence from a partner since the age of 15, as compared to 41 % of women without a disability or health condition (FRA, 2014). An estimated 26 % of women with a disability or health condition have experienced stalking, compared to 17% of women without a disability or health conditions. Cyber harassment is also more common among women who have a limiting health condition, as shown in **Figure 10**.

Sexual orientation

The FRA data also indicates that **non-heterosexual women⁴⁵ are more likely than heterosexual women to have experienced psychological intimate partner violence** since the age of 15 (70 % have experienced such violence, compared to 43 % of heterosexual women) (FRA, 2014).

Similarly, 36 % of non-heterosexual women reported having experienced stalking, as compared to only 18 % of heterosexual women. The FRA report (2014) does not provide this data broken down by country, meaning that further trends and patterns cannot be identified.⁴⁶

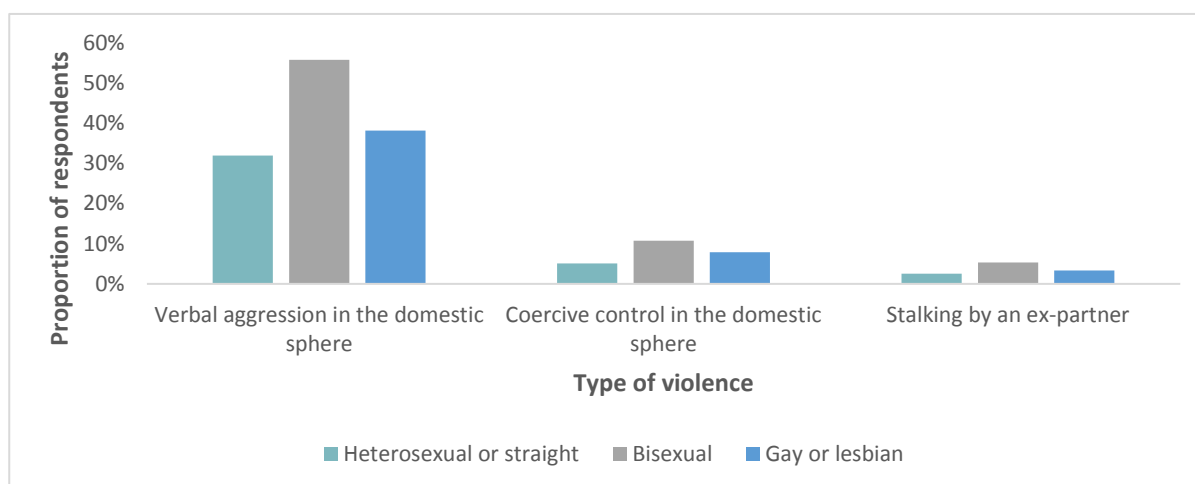
PHGSG survey data from the Netherlands also disaggregates prevalence data by sexual orientation (see **Figure 11**),⁴⁷ with results that align with the FRA survey findings. The prevalence of domestic verbal aggression, coercive control and ex-partner stalking is all greater for non-heterosexual women, with notably high prevalence rates among bisexual women in particular. Such findings should be interpreted with caution since for both sources of data, the sex of the perpetrator of such violence is not known.

⁴⁵ “Non-heterosexual women” are defined as “women who indicate[d] their sexual orientation as ‘lesbian’, ‘bisexual’ or ‘other’ in the survey” (FRA, 2014).

⁴⁶ Accessing micro data from the FRA surveys was not feasible within the project timeline, so data included in this report are taken from published reports and data made available via the online tools on the FRA website.

⁴⁷ <https://longreads.cbs.nl/phgsg-2020/bijlage-a-tabellen/>.

Figure 11. Women having experienced different forms of psychological violence over the last 12 months, by sexual orientation (% , 16+, NL, 2020)⁴⁸



Source: authors' elaboration of PHGSG data (2020).⁴⁹

Note: The domestic circle includes all family and relatives and also any (ex-) partners. The proportion of female respondents who reported having been stalked by an ex-partner is reported here as relative to the total number of respondents aged 16 years or older who reported having an ex-partner.

Education and employment status

There is **no common pattern across EU Member States in the relationship between education level and the prevalence of psychological intimate partner violence**. Across the EU, 40 % of women with primary education only have experienced psychological violence, compared to 45 % of women with secondary education and 44 % of women with tertiary education (FRA, 2012; see Table A5.3 in Annex 5). Data from the Fundamental Rights Survey (FRA, 2019) shows that **cyber harassment is more common among women who have a higher level of education** (FRA, 2019; see Figure 10). This survey also highlights a relatively **high prevalence of cyber harassment among female students**, one quarter of whom (25 %) report experiencing cyber harassment in the last five years.

Employment status is not consistently related to the prevalence of psychological partner violence in EU Member States. In most EU Member States, **women who are unemployed are more likely to have experienced psychological partner violence than those who are employed** (FRA, 2012; see Table A5.4 in Annex 5). However, in many countries the difference is small, and the pattern is

⁴⁸ “Verbal aggression” refers to such behaviour as high-pitched disagreements involving shouting or screaming, bullying, belittling or humiliation. “Coercive control” is defined as a form of domestic violence with a repetitive, structural character where one person strongly dominates another. The “domestic sphere” includes all family, relatives and any (ex-) partners.

⁴⁹ <https://longreads.cbs.nl/phgsg-2020/bijlage-a-tabellen/>.

reversed in three Member States (BG, HU, SE). No clear pattern emerges across EU Member States in terms of whether women who are homemakers are more or less likely than women who are employed to have experienced psychological partner violence (FRA, 2012).

Migration status

Across the EU, **women who are not a citizen of the country in which they live (54 %) are more likely to report experiencing psychological partner violence** than others (the corresponding figure for citizens who have never lived outside of the country of residence is 43 %) (FRA, 2014). The FRA report (2014) does not provide this data broken down by country, meaning that further trends and patterns cannot be identified.

Box 2. Prevalence of psychological violence and coercive control: limitations and data gaps

Limited data on psychological violence and coercive control, as distinct from broader or interrelated concepts such as domestic violence and intimate partner violence. Countries often collect administrative data relating to domestic violence in general or data on proxy indicators such as threats, stalking, harassment, coercion, insults, humiliation, degradation, restricting contact with other people and neglect. Administrative data on domestic violence usually do not provide an indication of which forms of violence the case relates to. There is limited survey data at both the EU and Member State-level relating to psychological violence compared to other forms of violence against women. Besides, there is a complete lack of data on coercive control. The scarcity of administrative data on coercive control is mostly caused by a lack of common understanding and legal regulation of it in the majority of EU Member States.

Available data is often restricted to specific Member States or limited in comparability Administrative data relating to coercive control and psychological violence against women is not comparable across Member States due to a lack of common definitions⁵⁰ and data disaggregation (notably, disaggregation according to the gender of the victim and perpetrator and the nature of their relationship), as well as variation in data collection approaches and population size. Comparable survey data on psychological violence in EU Member States – overall prevalence and differences across sub-groups - is limited to the FRA survey (2012), which represents a snapshot in time almost one decade ago. The upcoming EU-GBV survey (Eurostat) complemented by FRA-EIGE survey on VAW, whose results are expected for 2024, will provide updated prevalence data.

Available data are likely to underestimate the scale of the issue. Administrative data are likely to underestimate the prevalence of coercive control and psychological violence against women due to under-reporting. This is seen, for example, in the fact that the number of reported cases in Czechia, Germany and

⁵⁰ The World Health Organisation (WHO) specifically did not include psychological violence in their work on the global prevalence of violence against women because of the lack of harmonised definition and data collection across the world (WHO, 2021).

Finland (see **Table 1**) is lower than the FRA data suggest (FRA, 2012). Surveys like the FRA survey on gender-based violence (FRA, 2012) and the Spanish macro survey on gender-based violence (Ministerio de Igualdad, 2015; 2019) are more likely to provide an accurate understanding of the phenomenon of psychological violence as the threshold of going to the police or other authorities to report instances of psychological violence is higher than reporting it in an anonymised survey.

2.4 Key findings and implications

Psychological violence against women is an entrenched and endemic phenomenon in EU Member States. Across the EU, almost half (43 %) of all women have experienced psychological violence from a partner and almost two in 10 (17 %) have experienced stalking (FRA, 2012; 2014), although the estimated prevalence varies widely across EU Member States. More than one in 10 women in the EU (13 %) have experienced online harassment in the past five years (FRA, 2019). These figures reinforce the need to take action to prevent and respond to psychological violence against women, including violence perpetrated online.

Certain groups of women experience psychological violence at a higher rate than the general population: non-heterosexual women (FRA, 2014), women with a disability or health condition (FRA, 2014; Meseguer-Santamaría et al., 2021) and women from a migrant background (FRA, 2014). The risk of experiencing psychological violence appears to be elevated at certain points in the life course – for instance, in early adulthood (Bundeskriminalamt, 2017; 2018; 2019), particularly in relation to cyber harassment (FRA, 2019). Variation in the prevalence of psychological violence indicates a need for interventions that are targeted at specific groups of women and tailored to their needs.

Comparative prevalence data relating to psychological violence against women and stalking in EU Member States from FRA (FRA, 2012) is ten years old. More recent data on cyber violence is provided by the Fundamental Rights Survey (FRA, 2019), although it does not aim to measure violence against women. Survey data from specific Member States helps to build a more rounded picture of the prevalence of psychological violence and risk groups affected, but it is unclear how far the findings would be replicated in other countries. There is a need for more up-to-date comparative EU wide data on the prevalence of coercive control and psychological violence against women, in particular, which would allow to assess variation across different groups and in relation to new and evolving forms of violence such as cyber violence. Improved data collection in this regard would enable sub-group analysis to inform the development of policies and interventions that are better targeted to meet the needs of specific groups.

3 Risk factors and consequences associated with coercive control and psychological violence against women

The Istanbul Convention emphasises the importance of research that seeks to increase understanding of the root causes and effects of violence against women to inform evidence-based policymaking and improve responses by the relevant services and authorities (Council of Europe, 2011a). The BPfA also has its strategic objective (D2) to study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures.

This section offers an overview of the evidence relating to risk factors for coercive control and psychological violence against women, as well as the consequences of such violence for women and their dependent children.⁵¹ It is important to note that there may be overlap between risk factors and consequences, and the direction of causality may be unclear. Where possible, the analysis distinguishes risk factors associated with perpetration of psychological violence from those associated with victimisation, although in some cases a cross-over has been found.

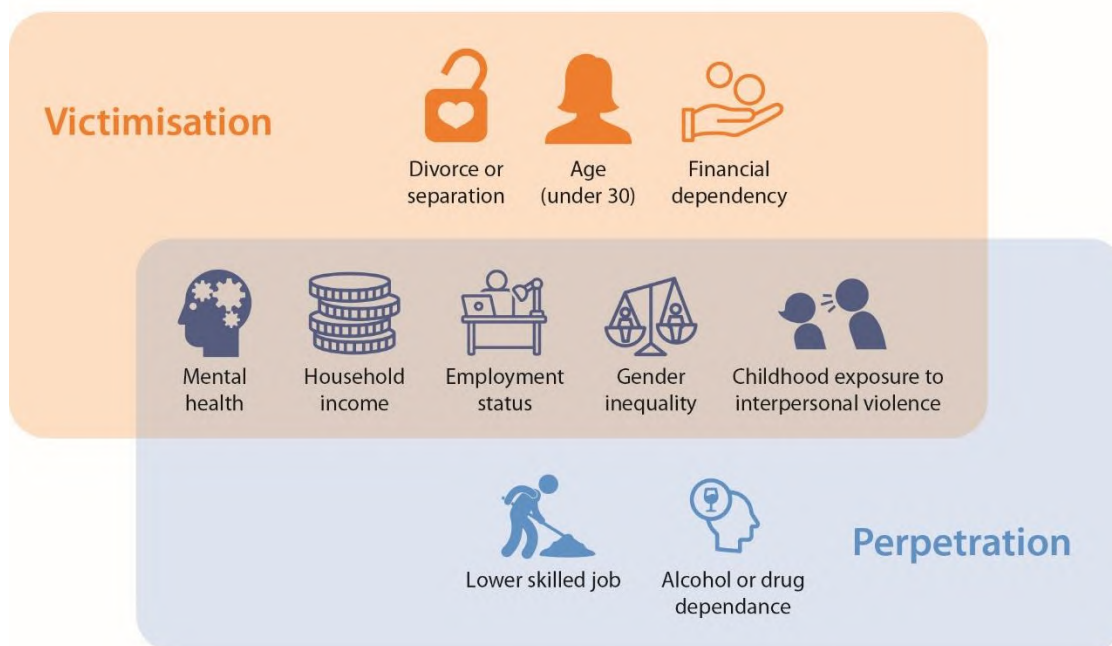
Desk research identified relatively few sources relating to psychological violence and coercive control in EU Member States. The analysis is therefore supplemented by literature from other OECD countries (see **Boxes 4-6**), as well as research relating to domestic violence and intimate partner violence more broadly (i.e., not specific to psychological violence or coercive control) (see **Box 3**).

3.1 Risk factors associated with psychological violence and coercive control

This section presents evidence on the risk factors associated with psychological violence and coercive control, which are summarised in **Figure 12**.

Figure 12. Overview of risk factors associated with psychological violence and coercive control

⁵¹ Sources identified as part of the literature review highlight associations, but they do not go as far as to demonstrate causality. It is important to note that the direction of causality in terms of factors associated with psychological violence is often unclear or unproven i.e., whether a factor is a cause, consequence or both.



3.1.1 Economic risk factors

Women’s financial dependency is an important risk factor for experiencing psychological violence. Research conducted using the FRA data for Spain indicates that economic inequality within a couple is associated with psychological violence, with women whose partners earn more than them being more likely to experience psychological violence in their relationship (Aizpurua et al., 2021). Across the EU, women who feel they do not have an equal say in how the household income is used are more likely to indicate that they have experienced psychological abuse from their current partner (FRA, 2014). A study drawing from empirical research in Spain reports that **an increase in household income reduces the probability of psychological abuse** (Pérez-Sánchez et al., 2020). Education level follows a similar trajectory, with the prevalence of psychological violence having been found to decrease steadily as the partner’s education level rises (FRA, 2014).



The **employment status of both victim and perpetrator have also been identified as risk factors**. Unemployed women in Spain, for example, have been found to be more likely to experience psychological violence (as well as all other types of partner violence) compared to employed women (Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019). The authors of the study suggest that women’s economic dependency on their partner might hinder their ability to leave the relationship (Sanz-

Barbero et al., 2019). This pattern is replicated in several other Member States, as outlined in Section 2.3. Looking specifically at psychological abuse during pregnancy, a study undertaken in Malta finds that unemployment, either in the case of the pregnant woman or their partner, constitutes a predictor for psychological violence against the woman in the relationship (Debono et al., 2017). Economic factors such as unemployment or income are also identified as risk factors for intimate partner violence (and not focused specifically on psychological violence and coercive control), as outlined in **Box 3**.

Box 3. Risk factors relating to all forms of domestic violence or intimate partner violence (i.e., not specific to psychological violence or coercive control)

Social norms and cultural values are influential, with endorsement of **traditional gender roles** and acceptance of violence against women associated with the perpetration of intimate partner violence (Gerino et al., 2018; McCarthy et al., 2018). Social networks are also found to be important: **social support diminishes the risk of intimate partner violence** (Capaldi et al., 2012), including for older adults (Gerino et al., 2018), whereas the presence of intimate partner violence in social networks increases it (Beyer et al., 2013).

Witnessing intimate partner violence or antisocial behaviour within the household as a child, experiencing abuse, neglect or harsh parenting practices, are associated with perpetration of intimate partner violence in adulthood (Capaldi et al., 2012; Costa et al., 2015; Gerino et al., 2018). Similarly, women in same sex relationships with a family history of violence are more likely to perpetrate violence against an intimate partner (Badenes-Ribera et al., 2015).

Men with **alcohol or drug dependence** are more likely to become perpetrators of intimate partner violence (Capaldi et al., 2012; Gerino et al., 2018) and alcohol is also a risk factor for perpetration by women in the same sex relationships (Badenes-Ribera et al., 2015).

Intimate partner violence is associated with characteristics of the intimate relationship, with people who are **divorced or separated** more at risk than those who are married (Capaldi et al., 2012). Marital discord predicts intimate partner violence, particularly in couples where the relationship is unequal (Capaldi et al., 2012). Experience of intimate partner violence in a previous relationship as a risk factor for both perpetration and victimisation (Badenes-Ribera et al., 2015). The point of separation is found to constitute the peak of the risk of violence (Dekeseredy and al, 2017).

In addition, men who experience **unemployment and financial stress** and those who are unemployed found to be at greater risk of perpetrating intimate partner violence (Capaldi et al., 2012) as well as those going through a change in work status. Economic factors are also important at the neighbourhood level: intimate partner violence has been found to be more common in **poorer neighbourhoods** (measured according to median household income, the unemployment rate and poverty rate), in areas where the prevalence of crime is higher and in those where there is a high proportion of lone parent households (Beyer et al., 2013).

Other risk factors identified in the literature include demographic characteristics. Age is a risk factor for intimate partner violence perpetration and victimisation, with **younger adults more at risk** and the highest rates in late adolescence or early adulthood (Capaldi et al., 2012). In the older generation, **women from an ethnic minority background** are more at risk of experiencing intimate partner violence (Gerino et al., 2018) with the caveat that older women's experiences of gender-based violence are often minimised (Bows, 2020).

From a health perspective, **men who have psychological disorders** and those who display antisocial or aggressive behaviour are more likely to perpetrate intimate partner violence (Capaldi et al., 2012). Mental health conditions are also associated with becoming a victim of domestic violence, although the direction of causality is unclear (Trevillion et al., 2012). In the older population, cognitive impairment such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease is a risk factor for intimate partner violence (Gerino et al., 2018).

Sources: Badenes-Ribera et al., 2015; Beyer et al., 2013; Capaldi et al., 2012; Costa et al., 2015; Gerino et al., 2018; McCarthy et al., 2018; Trevillion et al., 2012.



3.1.2 Social risk factors

At a societal level, **psychological violence has been linked to the level of gender inequality and the prevalence of sexist attitudes** (as has intimate partner violence more broadly, see **Box 3**). An analysis of data from the FRA survey on violence against women in EU Member States has found that women living in countries where the level of gender equality is high⁵² report experiencing lower levels of coercive control than women living in countries with lower levels of gender equality (Nevala, 2017). This is contrary to findings for physical and/or sexual violence, where greater prevalence is seen in countries with higher levels of gender equality, leading the author to argue that while unequal gender dynamics produce coercive control, the prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence is more strongly influenced by other factors (Nevala, 2017). Moreover, the prevalence of coercive control does not necessarily follow the same pattern as the prevalence of psychological violence, with some countries where the overall rate of psychological abuse and controlling behaviour is high, including Scandinavian countries like Denmark and Finland, found to have relatively low rates of coercive control (Nevala, 2017). Additionally, research among young people in Spain, indicates that “masculine gender role stress”⁵³ is associated with the perpetration of psychological violence (Merino et al., 2021), while another Spanish study of university students

⁵² Measured according to the EIGE Gender Equality Index.

⁵³ A composite variable reflecting whether young men feel anxious in situations of subordination or inferiority to women.

found that right-wing authoritarian values can act as a risk factor for the perception of psychological abuse suffered by women in relationships as gender violence (Canto et al., 2019).



Exposure to interpersonal violence in childhood, particularly at home, can be a risk factor for either perpetrating or experiencing psychological abuse in adulthood, as it can be for intimate partner violence more broadly (see **Box 3**). According to a study undertaken in Romania, adults who witness psychological violence between their parents as a child are more likely to agree with the statement that violence against women is acceptable for corrective purposes (Rada, 2014). Witnessing violence as a child also predicts perpetration and victimisation of all types of domestic violence, including psychological violence, in adulthood. Research from outside the EU has also drawn attention to the impact of early childhood experiences, as outlined in **Box 4**.

Experiences of aggression outside of the domestic context in childhood and adolescence can also have a bearing on the future risk of psychological violence. One study analysing the link between experiences of bullying in childhood and adolescence (either as a perpetrator or a victim) in Spain found that **those who bullied or were bullied at school are more likely to perpetrate psychological violence in adult relationships, but also more likely to become victim to such violence** (Viejo et al., 2020). Childhood and adolescence may be a formative period in terms of developing expectations around intimate relationships and gender norms, meaning that aggression and abuse experienced or witnessed during this period has a particularly pronounced impact. However, this cannot be established from the identified studies, since they do not compare the impact of experiencing or witnessing abuse at different stages of the life course.

Box 4. Literature from other OECD countries relating to experiences in childhood

The impact of early childhood experiences, particularly in relation to parental attachment style, is linked to perpetration of psychological violence. **Secure attachment with a caregiver in childhood has been found to reduce the likelihood of perpetrating psychological partner abuse** for men in Israel (Gewirtz-Meydan & Finzi-Dottan, 2021) and other countries (Tullio et al., 2021).

Sources: Gewirtz-Meydan & Finzi-Dottan, 2020; Tullio et al., 2021.



A person's relationship status has also been found to have a bearing on the risk of women experiencing psychological abuse from a partner. Research in Slovenia has found **divorce**

to be a risk factor of exposure to psychological partner violence (Selic et al., 2013),⁵⁴ echoing findings from the wider literature on intimate partner violence (see **Box 3**). This aligns with the earlier finding based on administrative data from Germany (see **Figure 5**) that **women are more likely to report psychological violence from an ex-partner than from a current partner**, as compared to physical violence, where perpetrators in reported cases are predominantly current partners (Bundeskriminalamt, 2021). However, similar evidence from other national contexts and how the transition away from being in a relationship affects women’s exposure to psychological violence is limited. Such findings should be interpreted with caution, due to limited knowledge of the circumstances and causal links between psychological violence and relationship break-up. It could be that psychological violence is triggered or aggravated by the end of the relationship but could also mean that psychological violence was a characteristic of the relationship but reporting it only became possible after the relationship has ended. Besides, in situations of physical or sexual violence, psychological violence is often also experienced.



3.1.3 *Demographic and lifestyle-related risk factors*

Several of the identified studies highlight demographic risk factors for psychological violence against women (Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019; Selic et al., 2013; Pérez-Sánchez et al., 2020). In Spain, **younger women are more at risk of experiencing psychological violence** (Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019). Similarly, in Slovenia, older adults (aged 65 or older) are less likely than younger adults to be affected by psychological partner violence (Selic et al., 2013). Similar findings have been reported from countries outside the EU (see **Box 5**). Being elderly, however, has also been identified as a barrier to leaving a violent relationship (Canto et al., 2020).

Additional characteristics have also been identified as risk factors for psychological violence perpetration, including getting drunk at least once a month and a propensity for violence outside the home (FRA, 2014). In a Swedish study of young people aged 15-19 years, self-reported low academic achievement was significantly associated with experiencing psychological violence online (although this finding was not disaggregated by gender) (Korkmaz et al., 2020). Research also

⁵⁴ This study does not capture differences according to whether the violence is perpetrated by the ex-spouse or a different (current or previous) partner, nor are risk factors disaggregated by gender.

suggests that **certain vulnerable sub-groups of women are at greater risk of psychological violence, for example, immigrant women** in Spain (Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019).

Box 5. Literature from other OECD countries relating to demographics and mental health

A key area of research in relation to predictors of experiencing psychological violence and coercive control has been demographic characteristics, including:

- **Young age** – according to two nationally representative surveys of 18,957 American adults (Policastro & Finn, 2021) and 3,633 Scottish mothers (Skafida et al., 2020), respectively.
- **Non-white ethnicity** – according to a nationally representative survey of 18,957 American adults (Policastro & Finn, 2021) and a survey of 84 women attending US health clinics (Thaller & Messing, 2016)⁵⁵
- **Lower education level** – according to study of 7,408 Canadian and 8,000 American women (Kaukinen & Powers, 2014) and a nationally representative survey of 18,957 American adults (Policastro & Finn, 2021).
- **Health limitations**, including when controlling for age – according to a nationally representative survey of 18,957 American adults (Policastro & Finn, 2021).

Poor mental health and the presence of psychological conditions have been identified as a risk factor for psychological violence perpetration and victimisation. A study of 152 British men found that men who exhibit higher levels of narcissism are more likely to perpetrate psychological abuse on a partner (Valashjardi et al. 2020). Depressive symptoms have also been associated with psychological intimate partner perpetration, although findings across studies are inconsistent (Capaldi et al., 2012). A study of 726 young partnered American women finds that those who report depression, stress, loneliness and/or low self-esteem are more likely to experience psychological violence (Shen & Kusunoki, 2019). Indeed, the woman's mental health may be a more significant predictor than the man's, with women's depressive symptoms found to be predictive of the man's psychological aggression, where the man's depressive symptoms were not (Capaldi et al., 2012).

Sources: Policastro & Finn, 2021; Skafida et al., 2020; Thaller & Messing, 2016; Kaukinen & Powers, 2014; Shen & Kusunoki, 2019; Capaldi et al., 2012; Valashjardi et al., 2020.

3.2 Consequences of psychological violence and coercive control

This section presents an overview of the evidence on the consequences of psychological violence and coercive control for women victims and their dependent children.

3.2.1 Consequences for women victims

The ultimate effect of psychological violence on women victims is **suicide**. A November 2021 report from the European Project on Forced Suicides, submitted to the European Commission estimates that in 2017, 1,136 women in the EU took their own lives as a result of repeated psychological violence by their partner or former partner (European Project on Forced Suicides, 2021).

Several studies highlight **the deleterious impact of psychological violence on women's mental health**, with higher rates of depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among victims compared to

⁵⁵ Thaller & Messing (2016) address reproductive coercion specifically.

the general population (Lövestad et al., 2017; Domenech Del Rio & Sirvent Garcia Del Valle, 2017; Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019; Daugherty et al., 2019; Tullio et al., 2021). A study examining the effect of psychological abuse and coercive behaviour on women in Sweden (n=573) finds that these forms of violence are consistently associated with high levels of depression (Lövestad et al., 2017). A large survey of women in Spain (n=10,171) finds that psychological violence is associated with poor mental health, which manifests in a range of symptoms including anxiety, sadness, feelings of worthlessness, wanting to cry for no reason, mood swings, irritability and insomnia (Domenech Del Rio & Sirvent Garcia Del Valle 2017). In the PHGSG Dutch survey of over 30,000 men and women, over a third of respondents reported mental health problems as a consequence of experiencing coercive control (39 %) or stalking from an ex-partner (38 %).⁵⁶ In another study, the negative impact of psychological violence on Spanish women's mental health is reported to be consistent across age groups (Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019).

Psychological consequences of stalking for victims were also identified with the FRA survey, with almost all victims reporting some type of emotional response, most commonly in the form of anger (57 %), annoyance (50 %) and/or fear (45 %) (FRA, 2014). Around three in five victims reported that their experience of stalking had resulted in one or more long-term psychological consequences for them, including anxiety (30 %), feeling vulnerable (24 %) and sleeping difficulties (19 %) (FRA, 2014).

A study of victims of intimate partner violence in women's shelters in Denmark finds that psychological violence is correlated with PTSD (Dokkedahl et al., 2021). Although this study is based on a small, non-representative sample of women (n=147), the authors observe that other forms of partner violence (physical and sexual) are not associated with PTSD after controlling for psychological violence, indicating that **psychological violence and coercive control may be unique in the level of psychological trauma inflicted on victims**. Analysis of data from across the EU shows that psychological consequences from any act of partner violence (including physical violence) are more likely in the presence of controlling behaviour from a partner (Nevala, 2017). The author concludes that partner's controlling behaviour is associated with a more severe impact on victims' health compared to partner violence without a controlling element (Nevala, 2017). Moreover, psychological violence can also be a predictor of severe forms of other types of violence (see **Box 6**).

Psychological violence may also have an impact on cognitive functioning. Research in Spain, based on a small sample of women (n=108), finds that psychological and physical partner violence is associated with lower cognitive functioning for women who have experienced such abuse compared to women who have not (Daugherty et al., 2019). Outcomes measured in this study included visuomotor skills, attention, verbal, visual and working memory, cognitive flexibility (ability to switch between tasks), planning, reasoning and decision-making. According to this study, experiencing psychological violence alone (i.e., without physical violence) particularly affects women victims' attention and decision-making abilities. However, caution is required in interpreting these results since they relate to a small sample of women (n=108).

Two of the identified sources explore the impact of psychological violence on women's health during pregnancy. A study involving 779 mothers receiving antenatal care across 15 hospitals in Spain (with 151 mothers reporting having experienced psychological violence), finds that **psychological violence is associated with breastfeeding avoidance**, after controlling for other obstetric complications (Martin-de-las-Heras et al., 2019). Another study conducted in Malta examines the consequences of psychological

⁵⁶ <https://longreads.cbs.nl/phgsg-2020/bijlage-a-tabellen/>. Please note this data is not disaggregated by the victim's gender.

and verbal abuse on women's pregnancies (n=300, including 45 women who experienced psychological abuse and who experienced verbal abuse).⁵⁷

Box 6. Literature from OECD countries: psychological violence as a predictor of other forms of intimate partner violence

The level of "control" in a relationship has been found to predict future partner violence. Reviewing the literature, Stark (2012) cites a large, multi-city study in the US that reported the combination of a highly controlling perpetrator and the couple's separation after living together to increase the risk of intimate partner femicide nine-fold. High levels of coercive control have also been found to increase the likelihood of overall use of sexual coercion by heterosexual-identifying men in intimate relationships in the US (Mitchell & Raghavan, 2021). Stark & Hester (2019) argue that **the presence of coercive control predicts aspects of "post-relationship distress" such as escalating violence and fear of reprisals from the perpetrator in the context of court-ordered mediation more reliably than other forms of intimate partner violence.**

Sources: Stark, 2012; Mitchell & Raghavan, 2021; Stark & Hester, 2019.

A study examining the effect of psychological abuse on women in same-sex relationships in Italy (n=165) finds that **women who experienced this type of violence are less likely to leave their partners** (Di Battista et al., 2021). The more frequent the psychological abuse, the less likely women were to leave their partner (Di Battista et al., 2021). This finding indicates that victims of psychological violence may find it difficult to leave their perpetrator. This may be because victims tend not to recognise the severity or impact of the abuse (Di Battista et al., 2021), because they blame themselves (Tullio et al., 2021) or because they are concerned about being misunderstood by those to whom they might report the abuse (Di Battista et al., 2021).

The negative impact of psychological violence on women's mental health can also have consequences for their economic wellbeing. In Sweden, the higher incidence of depression among women who have experienced psychological violence is associated with economic penalties through additional healthcare costs and the need to take sick leave (Lövestad et al., 2017). Summarising the literature on the consequences of intimate partner violence, Nevala (2017) highlights the **economic costs associated with psychological abuse**, including lost economic output and the need to access legal and healthcare services which may incur out-of-pocket costs. In addition, the indirect economic impact of being forced to move home as a consequence of stalking is highlighted by the FRA survey (2014). Respondents to the Dutch PHGSG survey also reported that they had been unable to work for a period of time as a result of experiencing coercive control (7 %) or stalking by an ex-partner (7 %).⁵⁸

⁵⁷ For the purposes of this study, "psychological abuse" was defined as the domineering actions exerted by a perpetrator with the intention of exerting control over the victim's actions and behaviour by means of restricting

contact with family and friends, the use of false accusations, jealousy, the continuous suspicion of unfaithfulness

and the use of financial control. "Verbal abuse" was defined as the infliction of insults, humiliation, belittlement, intimidation and threats.

⁵⁸ <https://longreads.cbs.nl/phgsg-2020/bijlage-a-tabellen/>. Please note this data is not disaggregated by the victim's gender.

Box 7. Causes and consequences: limitations and data gaps in the EU context

Relatively few studies focus on psychological violence and coercive control compared to intimate partner violence more broadly

Few studies on risk factors associated with domestic or intimate partner violence and the consequences of such violence for women and their families have focused specifically on psychological violence. Empirical studies generally draw on small sample sizes, often in specific contexts (e.g., universities), limiting the robustness and generalisation of findings.

Methodological limitations make it difficult to draw firm conclusions about causes and consequences

Sources identified as part of the literature review highlight associations, but they do not go as far as to demonstrate causality, hence in this report we refer to risk factors rather than causes. The direction of causality may also be unclear since many of the same factors are identified as risk factors and consequences. For instance, low income may make psychological violence perpetration and victimisation more likely, but it may also result from such violence.

Intersectional experiences and life course effects are under-explored in the literature

Many of the cited studies do not examine differences across sub-groups or the extent to which differences are associated with age (i.e., life stage) versus cohort (i.e., generation).

3.2.2 Consequences for dependent children

Evidence from EU Member States (as well as from outside the EU – see Box 8) shows that **psychological violence within the household has a negative impact on victims' children**.⁵⁹ In Croatia, children who witness psychological violence against their mother are more likely to experience psychological abuse themselves (Rikić et al., 2017). In Romania, adults who witnessed psychological violence against their mother during childhood are more likely to experience various forms of partner violence themselves, including psychological, physical, sexual and economic abuse (Rada, 2014). This aligns with the intergenerational transmission of violence as a risk factor for psychological violence (see Section 3.1.2).

Box 8. Literature from OECD countries relating to consequences for victim's children

Callaghan et al. (2018) argue that children are often affected by intra-parental coercive control to the extent that they should be recognised as direct victims and not simply "witnesses" or "collateral damage", as is often the case. In particular, Callaghan et al. (2018) highlight that children are often used as a strategy to intimidate and control the partner and can be directly involved in the coercive control activities, including isolation, blackmailing, surveillance and stalking, in an effort to minimise, legitimise and justify the perpetrator's behaviour (see also Jaffe et al., 2014 and Feresin et al., 2019).

A qualitative study of 15 British mothers and 15 of their children (mostly aged 10-14) shows that children whose mother is a victim of coercive control often experience disempowerment and reduced confidence (Katz, 2016). **Coercive control from perpetrators/fathers can result in social isolation for children, preventing them from engaging with wider family, peers and extra-curricular activities** (Katz, 2016). This in turn limits their opportunities to experience resilience-building relationships (Katz, 2016) and can contribute to the development of emotional and/or behavioural problems (Stark & Hester 2019; Katz, 2016). Furthermore, the evidence suggests that **the presence of intra-parental coercive control impacts the quality of parenting for both parents and leads to lower family functioning** (Gou et al., 2019). The high levels of attention the perpetrating father demands from the mother also limits parental attention and

⁵⁹ The identified literature does not distinguish between the impact on female and male children of the victim.

restricts opportunities for children to have fun and receive affection (Katz, 2016). Research also indicates that the risk of the perpetrator using verbally abusive parenting styles is elevated following a separation or divorce (Jaffe et al. 2014).

Sources: Callaghan et al., 2018; Jaffe et al., 2014; Feresin et al., 2019; Katz, 2016; Stark & Hester, 2019; Gou et al. 2019.

3.3 Key findings and implications

Economic inequality within the household is an important aspect, with women's economic dependency increasing the risk of experiencing psychological violence or coercive control (Aizpurua et al., 2021; FRA, 2014). This means that broader interventions to reduce economic inequality in society and within households (for instance, through greater access of women to employment or ensuring that women have access to independent income via the social security system) may help to prevent psychological violence and coercive control.

One consistent finding which relates to the life course perspective is that exposure to domestic violence in childhood and adolescence, including psychological violence, is a risk factor for future violence, both in terms of perpetration and victimisation (Rada, 2014). Women are also more at risk of experiencing psychological violence and coercive control from former partners when they are divorced or separated compared to when they are in a relationship (Selic et al. 2013). These findings demonstrate the need to support women who are in the process of leaving a relationship or those who are recently separated, as well as interventions that are targeted at parents and young families designed to break the cycle of intergenerational transmission of violence.

The deleterious impact of psychological violence on women's mental health is well established, with higher rates of depression and PTSD among victims compared to the general population (Lövestad et al., 2017; Dokkedahl et al., 2021; Domenech Del Rio & Sirvent Garcia Del Valle, 2017; Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019; Daugherty et al., 2019; Tullio et al., 2021). There is some indication that psychological violence has a greater negative impact on women's mental health than other forms of domestic or intimate partner violence (Dokkedahl et al., 2021), although it needs further investigation. This demonstrates the need for integrated and coordinated support services, ensuring that mental health is allocated the same importance as physical health and meeting other victim needs.

4 Criminalisation of psychological violence and coercive control in EU Member States

The magnitude and gravity of the problem outlined in the preceding two chapters demand meaningful preventive action, starting with an appropriate legislative framework. Substantive law provisions are a key instrument for combatting violence of all kinds (Council of Europe, 2011b). The Istanbul Convention stipulates that the necessary legislative measures must be taken to ensure all forms of psychological violence and stalking are criminalised (Council of Europe, 2011a). Similarly, the BPfA states that governments should enact and enforce legal sanctions for all forms of violence against women (UN Women, 1995). Nonetheless, the extent to which these forms of violence are appropriately criminalised varies considerably across the EU Member States. Harmonisation in criminal legislation is impeded by the fact that gender-based violence is not an area of crime under Article 83(1) TFEU, as highlighted by the European Parliament.⁶⁰

This chapter presents an overview of the legal framework in EU Member States and the criminalisation of psychological violence and coercive control. Additional information on relevant national legislation can be found in Annex 4.

Table 5 below presents an overview of relevant criminal legislation in EU Member States, distinguishing between:

- a) Criminal offences relating specifically to psychological violence or coercive control as a form of domestic violence/intimate partner violence.
- b) Wider offences relating to domestic violence or intimate partner violence, which might include other forms of violence (e.g., physical, sexual, economic) in addition to psychological violence.
- c) Other criminal offences used to prosecute psychological violence that are not specific to the domestic violence/intimate partner violence context.
- d) Criminal legislation relating to stalking.

There is considerable variation across EU Member States in legal provisions. Only a small number of Member States have criminal legislation specific to psychological violence or coercive control, as shown in **Table 5** and

Figure 13.

⁶⁰ European Parliament resolution of 16 September 2021 with recommendations to the Commission on identifying gender-based violence as a new area of crime listed in Article 83(1) TFEU (2021/2035(INL)).

Figure 13. Map of domestic violence legislation in EU Member States



As shown in **Table 5**, a larger group of countries criminalise some forms of psychological violence under domestic violence legislation more broadly and/or other offences that are not specific to the domestic or intimate partner violence context and/or consider psychological violence as an aggravating circumstance. The majority of EU Member States have criminalised stalking.

Table 5. Overview of criminal offences relating to psychological violence in EU Member States, July- August, 2021

	Psychological violence	Domestic violence	Other offence(s)	Stalking
BE		*	X	X
BG		*	X	X
CZ		X	X	X

	Psychological violence	Domestic violence	Other offence(s)	Stalking
DK	X		X	
DE			X	X
EE		*	X	X
IE	X	*	X	X
EL		X*		X
ES	X	X*	X	X
FR	X	X*	X	X
HR		X	X	X
IT		X*	X	X
CY⁶¹		X*	X	X
LV		X*	X	X
LT		*	X	X
LU		*		X
HU	X	X*	X	X
MT		X*	X	X
NL		*	X	X
AT		*	X	X**
PL		X	X	X
PT		X	X	X
RO		*	X	X
SI		X	X	X
SK		X*	X	X
FI			X	X
SE		X*	X	X
TOTAL	5	15	25	25

Source: authors' elaboration based on national legal databases (see Table A1.4 in Annex), European Commission (2010), European Parliament (2020a, 2020b), EELN (2021), EIGE (2017), Email exchanges with Members of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming (February, 2022).

⁶¹ In Cyprus, two relevant Laws entered into force in May, 2021, namely the Law on Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and on Related Matters 2021 (L. 115(I)/2021) and the Law on Protection from Harassment and Stalking 2021 (L.114(I)/2021).

4.1 Criminal offences specific to psychological violence or coercive control

Five EU Member States have criminal offences that are specific to psychological violence or coercive control. Only Ireland⁶² and Denmark⁶³ uses the language of coercive control; Denmark has a criminal offence for psychological violence⁶⁴ and the criminal code in France specifies that criminal offences relating to violence⁶⁵ can be psychological in nature.⁶⁶ In Hungary, the Criminal Code article relating to domestic violence includes a reference to ‘violent and humiliating behaviour that seriously violates human dignity’ thus including psychological violence⁶⁷. In Spain, three criminal offences are specific to psychological violence against women: threat,⁶⁸ coercion⁶⁹ and mental damage.⁷⁰

Aiding and abetting of violence is criminalised in relation to all the above criminal offences, in line with the Istanbul Convention (Article 41). These offences are punishable by a prison sentence (DK, IE, ES, FR⁷¹), fine (DK, IE, FR) or deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons (ES). France recently introduced a new article in its penal code to acknowledge situations where psychological violence from a partner or former partner lead to the woman’s suicide, thus recognising ‘forced suicide’ as an aggravating circumstance of psychological violence⁷².

In Denmark and Ireland, the legal definition of psychological violence or coercive control includes a requirement that such behaviour be formed of repeated incidents that form a pattern over time (see Table A4.2 in Annex 4). It aligns with the description of psychological violence in the explanatory note to the Istanbul Convention as “an abusive pattern of behaviour

⁶² Article 38 of the Domestic Violence Act 2018,

⁶³ A new phrase was inserted by Act no. 415 of 13 March 2021. This wording was: “including the exercise of coercive control”.

⁶⁴ Article 243 of the Danish Criminal Code. A new phrase was inserted by Act no. 415 of 13 March 2021 to add language on coercive control.

⁶⁵ Our understanding is that this provision relates to all offences under Chapter 2 (attacks on physical or mental integrity), Section 1 (intentional attacks on personal integrity).

⁶⁶ French Criminal Code Article 222-14-3.

⁶⁷ Act C of 2012 of the Criminal Code of Hungary (section 212/A). 212/A (1) a).

⁶⁸ Article 171 of the Spanish Criminal Code.

⁶⁹ Article 172 of the Spanish Criminal Code.

⁷⁰ Article 153 of the Spanish Criminal Code.

⁷¹ In July 2020,

⁷² According to article 222-33-2-1 of the Penal Code introduced on 30 July 2020 perpetrators of psychological violence face up to 10 years’ imprisonment and a fine of 150,000 euros when psychological violence leads to suicide or attempted suicide.

occurring over time” rather than a single act (Council of Europe, 2011a: 31). In line with the Istanbul Convention (Article 46), repetition of violence may also be taken into consideration as an aggravating factor, which is the case in France.

The definition of psychological violence in the Istanbul Convention also holds that psychological violence is an “*intentional* conduct of seriously impairing a person’s psychological integrity through coercion or threats” (emphasis added). **The intention to cause psychological harm is captured in the legal definition of coercive control in Ireland** (along with the requirement for such acts to be repeated as discussed above), which states that the perpetrator should “knowingly and persistently” engage in such behaviour. Intentionality is not explicit in the legal definition of psychological violence (and associated concepts) in other Member States.

There is variation across countries in the degree to which aggravating circumstances set out in Article 46 of the Istanbul Convention can be taken into account in relation to these offences (see Annex 4). GREVIO note that most aggravating circumstances in the Istanbul Convention can be taken into account in France, and they do not note any exceptions relating to psychological violence (GREVIO, 2019b). In Denmark, aggravating circumstances outlined in the Criminal Code are non-exhaustive and judges may consider other aggravating circumstances such as those set out in the Istanbul Convention. However, GREVIO note that this provision is rarely applied in practice in Denmark and recommends to ensure that all aggravating circumstances are taken into account (GREVIO, 2017b).

The offences of threat, coercion and mental damage in Spain relate specifically to intimate partner violence perpetrated by men against women (European Commission, 2010; GREVIO, 2020d), whereas the other offences discussed in this section apply to violence perpetrated against women and men. The offence of coercive control in Ireland and that of psychological violence in France also relate to the intimate partner violence context. In France, the offence of psychological violence applies to partner violence perpetrated against women and men, however violence against women can be considered as an aggravating circumstance.⁷³ In Ireland, Spain and France⁷⁴ intimate partner is defined in accordance with the Istanbul Convention, for instance as someone who “is or was in an intimate relationship” with the victim (Ireland) and “his wife or former wife, or woman with whom he has been bound by a similar emotional relation even without cohabiting” (Spain).

⁷³ Interview FR1

⁷⁴ Interview FR1

The offence of psychological violence in Denmark relates to the domestic violence context, referring to “a person who belongs to or is closely connected with another's household or has previously had such an affiliation with the household”.⁷⁵ This definition does not explicitly include intimate partners who have never shared a residence, but in practice the law also applies to them.⁷⁶ The offences of threat, coercion and mental damage in Spain apply to psychological violence against a vulnerable (female) person who lives with the (male) perpetrator.

4.2 Criminalisation of psychological violence under domestic violence legislation

Domestic violence may be covered by a range of criminal offences rather than a single stand-alone offence (European Parliament, 2020a). **A total of 12 EU Member States⁷⁷ have a specific offence for domestic violence in their criminal code** (see Annex 4). In all cases, aiding and abetting domestic violence is criminalised in line with the Istanbul Convention. Several Member States⁷⁸ take a “framework approach” (sometimes in addition to a specific provision in the criminal code), with the adoption of a dedicated law (Domestic Violence Act or similar) which outlines a legal definition of domestic violence and protection measures for victims (e.g., protection orders), sometimes in combination with the criminalisation of the practice (European Commission, 2010; EELN, 2021). Domestic violence is criminalised in this way in Greece (European Parliament, 2020b), Cyprus (European Parliament, 2020b) and Croatia (EELN, 2021).

In countries where there is no specific criminal offence, domestic violence or intimate partner violence is usually taken into consideration as an aggravating circumstance⁷⁹ as set out in the Istanbul Convention (Article 46a). However, in two Member States – Germany and Finland – there is no legal definition of domestic violence or intimate partner violence, either as a crime or as an aggravating circumstance.⁸⁰ In Finland, a proposal to amend the Penal Code to add offender’s gender-based motive as an aggravating circumstance is being examined in Parliament in 2022⁸¹. Psychological violence may be prosecuted under general criminal offences in these countries (see Section 4.3), but these offences are not specific to violence perpetrated in a domestic or intimate

⁷⁵ Article 243 of the Danish Criminal Code

⁷⁶ Interview DK1

⁷⁷ CZ, ES, FR, IT, HU, LV, MT, PL, PT, SI, SK, SE.

⁷⁸ BG, IE, EL, ES, HR, CY, LT, LU, PL, RO, SI,

⁷⁹ BE, BG, EE, IE, LV, LU, NL, AT.

⁸⁰ This is also the case in Denmark, although there is a specific criminal offence for psychological violence as set out in Section 2.

⁸¹ ‘Supplementing Chapter 6, Section 5 of the Criminal Code by making the making of a crime on a gender-based motive as a hardening criterion’ Ministry of Justice:
<https://oikeusministerio.fi/hanke?tunnus=OM024:00/2019> (in Finnish)

partner context. In its baseline evaluation for Finland, GREVIO recommends to introduce a new legal provision that would better fit the requirement to criminalise psychological violence set out in the Istanbul Convention (GREVIO, 2019a).

Psychological violence, understood as intentional conduct which seriously impairs a person's psychological integrity through coercion or threats, is explicitly included in the definition of domestic violence in 13 MS⁸² while several others make reference to these elements (coercion and threats). In Latvia, the legislation on domestic violence of 2018 considers psychological disorders resulting from the experience of domestic violence is understood as bodily injury⁸³.

In Member States where domestic violence is criminalised in the criminal code or via a specific legal act, psychological violence can be prosecuted under this offence. However, GREVIO (2021) note that **domestic violence provisions are rarely used to prosecute psychological violence alone**, but rather psychological violence coupled with physical violence.⁸⁴ A lack of data collection on the number of opened investigations, prosecutions and convictions relating to domestic violence offences⁸⁵ makes it difficult to assess how effectively these provisions are used to hold perpetrators to account (GREVIO, 2021). Concerns have been raised by GREVIO in relation to some Member States – Belgium, Denmark, France and Malta – about **low levels of awareness and knowledge of the offence of domestic violence among the criminal justice sector** (GREVIO, 2021).

In some Member States, there are additional criminal provisions relating to domestic violence and/or intimate partner violence in a digital context (cyber stalking in relationships is covered under Section 4.4). In Spain, the offence of discovery and revelation of secrets criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, even if the materials were initially obtained with consent (GREVIO, 2020). Non-consensual sharing of intimate images is criminalised in 11 member state (EELN, 2021). Among them are Belgium⁸⁶, France⁸⁷, Malta⁸⁸, Slovenia and Italy.⁸⁹ New legislation to this effect is under consideration in Germany and Slovakia (EELN, 2021).

⁸² BE, BG, CY, EL, ES, HR, LT, LU, MT, PL, PT, RO, SK.

⁸³ Section 125., 126., 130 of the Criminal Law.

⁸⁴ The national expert for Denmark (DK1) mentioned that there was some anecdotal evidence that despite a specific criminal offence for psychological violence (see Section 2), in practice psychological violence may be less likely to be investigated and prosecuted unless it is accompanied by other forms of domestic violence.

⁸⁵ Noted by GREVIO in relation to DK, FI, MT, NL, ES and SE. See GREVIO, 2021.

⁸⁶ The law of 4 May 2020 to combat non-consensual dissemination of sexual images and recordings.

⁸⁷ Article 226-2-1 of the French Criminal Code.

In most Member States where there is a criminal offence for domestic violence, the legal definition explicitly includes psychological violence (see Annex 4). However, **in the Czechia and Italy psychological violence is not mentioned in the legal definition of domestic violence**. In practice, domestic violence legislation might be interpreted as including all forms of violence as set out in the Istanbul Convention, including psychological violence, but this is not stated explicitly. As recognised by GREVIO, “women who are isolated, controlled, intimidated and threatened by their partners day after day would be more likely to report this behaviour if they knew that what they are experiencing is a crime” (GREVIO, 2017a: 40). This may also cause repercussions for professionals in the criminal justice system and their ability to make use of legal provisions.

In Sweden, domestic violence directed by men against women with whom they have or have had a close relationship can be prosecuted under the offence *Gross violation of a woman’s integrity*,⁹⁰ highlighted as an example of a promising practice by GREVIO because it recognises domestic violence (in all its forms, including psychological violence) **as a form of violence against women**. A corresponding gender-neutral penal provision can be applied when the crime is committed between other closely related persons. In other Member States, which have a specific criminal offence for domestic violence, the legal definition does not differentiate between female and male victims.

In Spain, France, Hungary, Portugal and Sweden, criminal offences relating to domestic violence specifically refer to the repetition or regularity of behaviour⁹¹. This aligns with the conceptualisation of psychological violence in the Istanbul Convention as “a course of conduct rather than a single event . . . intended to capture the criminal nature of an abusive pattern of behaviour occurring over time” (Council of Europe, 2011a: 31). In Sweden, the more serious the criminal act, the fewer repetitions are required (EELN, 2021). Additionally, in several Member States (CZ, HR, LT, PT, SK, SE) repetition of violence can be taken into consideration as an aggravating factor as set out in the Istanbul Convention (Article 46b) (EELN, 2021; see Annex 4). In other countries, the application of domestic violence legislation in practice may require repetition and regularity of the behaviour. In Italy, case law indicates that violence has to be systematic to be

⁸⁸ Article 208E of the Maltese Criminal Code.

⁸⁹ Criminalised in 2019 via the Red Code legislation (GREVIO, 2020b).

⁹⁰ Swedish Criminal Code Chapter 4 Section 4a.

⁹¹ In France, this is the case for the criminal offence of ‘moral harassment’ as detailed in Table A4.5. In the case of psychological violence, case law indicates that repetition is not a requirement.

prosecuted under domestic violence, otherwise the perpetrator might be held to account under lesser crimes such as threat (GREVIO, 2020b).

The requirement to prove regularity could have negative consequences in practice (EELN, 2021). Regularity may be contrary to the occasional nature of psychological abuse (EELN, 2021) and might in practice lead to certain instances of psychological violence being overlooked. The GREVIO baseline report for Italy notes that the habitual character of violence was excluded if repetitive violence took place during a short lapse of time, for instance, if the relationship lasted for a short period, or in instances where violence occurred at the end of the relationship and was not preceded by any complaint (GREVIO, 2020b). There is also an indication from Italy that police investigations may often not be thorough enough to demonstrate systematic abuse (GREVIO, 2020b).

There is considerable variation across Member States in who is considered a family member for the purposes of domestic violence and who is recognised as a partner within the context of intimate partner violence (see Table 6). More restricted definitions mean that certain instances of psychological violence may not be covered by the legal framework, and the requirement of the Istanbul Convention to criminalise all forms of domestic violence is not met.

Table 6. Victim/perpetrator relationships recognised in domestic violence legislation, 2020

	Spouse	Former spouse	Co-habiting partner	Former co-habiting partner	Non-cohabiting partner	Other family member
CZ			X			
EL	X	X	X	X	X	X
ES	X	X	X	X	X	X
FR	X	X	X	X	X	X
HR	X	X	X	X	X	X
IT	X	X	X	X	X	X
CY	X	X	X	X	X	X
HU	X	X	X	X	X	X
LV	X	X	X	X	X	X
MT	X	X	X	X	X	X

PL	X		X			X
PT	X	X	X	X	X	X
SI	X	X	X	X	X	X
SK	X	X	X	X	X	X
SE	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total	13	12	14	12	12	13

Source: authors' elaboration based on EELN, 2021; national legal databases (see Table A1.4 in Annex 1); EIGE, 2017; European Parliament, 2020a; 2020b. Email exchanges with Members of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming (February, 2022).

In Czechia and Poland, domestic violence legislation only applies to intimate partner relationships where the couple live together. In Czechia, domestic violence regulation applies to any co-resident person and does not apply to violence from a non-resident partner (EELN, 2021). In Cyprus, violence between non-cohabiting partners is now recognised under legislation entered into force in May 2021⁹². In Poland, the legislation does not apply to violence from an unmarried partner (or ex-spouse or partner) who does not share a residence with the victim (European Parliament, 2020b).⁹³ In tying domestic violence to current co-residence, the legal framework in these countries effectively restricts its criminalisation to current or on-going intimate partner relationships,⁹⁴ which is not in accordance with the Istanbul Convention.

Restrictions on the applicability of domestic violence legislation according to the co-residence of intimate partners (current or previous), their marital status, whether they have children or whether they are in a homosexual or heterosexual relationship contravene the Istanbul Convention. The impact of this may fall disproportionately on certain groups of women who are less likely to be married or to live with a partner, for instance younger women.⁹⁵

⁹² Law on Prevention and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence and on Related Matters 2021 (L. 115(I)/2021)

⁹³ Hypothetically, if the partner is a spouse (husband or wife), he/she is covered by the definition of "family member" even if they do not share the residence (European Parliament, 2020b). A national expert for Poland confirmed that domestic violence legislation does not apply to a non-resident partner, although they did note that the legislation had (in a small number of cases) been applied to situations where the victim and perpetrator do not live together, for instance school bullying (PL1).

⁹⁴ On the basis that couples are unlikely to live together if the relationship is over, although this may occur in some cases, for instance due to financial constraints.

⁹⁵ See Eurostat data on marriage rates by age group. As of 15.09.21:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-demography/demography-population-stock-balance/database>

In several Member States such as Croatia and Cyprus, such restrictions were lifted recently resulting in a wider scope of application of domestic violence legislation, in line with the Istanbul Convention⁹⁶.

In Member States where domestic violence is a criminal offence, this is generally punishable by imprisonment and/or a financial penalty. However, **even where there is relevant criminal legislation, domestic violence may be prosecuted under lesser offences**. In Croatia, government data indicates that in up to 90 % of cases domestic violence is prosecuted as a misdemeanour rather than a crime (Amnesty International, 2020). Although domestic violence can be punished by imprisonment for up to three years in Croatia, most perpetrators receive suspended sentences or fines (Amnesty International, 2020).

In most countries, sanctions applicable to domestic violence are increased in the case of aggravating circumstances. However, **sanctions rarely take into consideration all the aggravating circumstances defined in the Istanbul Convention** (see Annex 4). Only Sweden applies all aggravating circumstances as outlined in the Istanbul Convention (EELN, 2021).

4.3 General criminal offences used to prosecute psychological violence

In most EU Member States⁹⁷ psychological violence is prosecuted under criminal offences that are not specific to the domestic or intimate partner context. The most common general offences used to prosecute psychological violence are threat and coercion (Table 7).

Table 7. General criminal offences used to prosecute psychological violence, 2020

Offence	Member States
Threat	BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, HR, IT, LV, LT, HU, NL, AT, PT, RO, SI, SE, SK
Coercion	BG, DE, IE, HR, HU, NL, AT, PL, PT, SI, FI, SE
Insult/insulting behaviour	BE, EE, IT, AT, SE, HU
Defamation	BE, IT, LT, AT, SE, HU
Degrading treatment	BE
Sexual coercion	AT

⁹⁶ In Croatia, the Law on domestic violence underwent changes in 2021 and also covers couples who are in an intimate relationship (or former intimate relationship) but do not live together.

⁹⁷ BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, IR, EE, ES, FR, HR, IT, LV, LT, HU, NL, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, FI, SE.

Offence	Member States
Duress	DK
Assault	DK, FI, HU
Health impairment/damage	EE, HU
Restriction of freedom	LT HU
Severe health impairment	LT, HU
Mental abuse	PT
Menace	FI

Source: authors' elaboration based on: European Parliament, 2020a; 2020b; EELN, 2021; national legal databases (see Table A1.4 in Annex), Email exchanges with Members of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming (February, 2022).

General criminal offences are not specific to violence against women (European Parliament, 2020b). **General criminal offences may not always be well aligned with the pattern of behaviour typical of psychological violence against women.** For instance, GREVIO note that general offences applicable in Belgium (threat, degrading treatment, insults and defamation) are designed to punish single acts in isolation, whereas psychological violence may be comprised of repetitive acts of violence perpetrated over a long period of time (GREVIO, 2020a). Certain criminal offences also set the threshold high for behaviour to be criminalised and may be out of step with psychological violence comprised of repeated, smaller acts of violence. This limitation is noted by GREVIO in their evaluation of Austria (GREVIO, 2017a), Belgium (GREVIO, 2020a), Denmark (GREVIO, 2017b), Finland (GREVIO, 2019a) and the Netherlands (GREVIO, 2020c). General criminal offences may also not take into consideration the effect of psychological violence on the victim. In Germany, the offence of threat is determined by the perpetrator's behaviour and not by the psychological effect on the victim, meaning that severe psychological harm does not in itself lead to criminal liability (EELN, 2021). Hungary has similar provisions, thus, from among the general criminal offences, only one is used expressis verbis for causing psychological violence (section 164, causing bodily harm), the other criminal offences can only be established based on the perpetrator's behaviour, and not by the psychological effect it causes to the victim, i.e. these can rather be used indirectly for punishing psychological violence.

The domestic violence or intimate partner violence context may be taken into consideration as an aggravating circumstance in relation to general criminal offences such a coercion or threat used to

prosecute psychological violence against women. This is the case in 19 EU Member States,⁹⁸ including 9 Member States⁹⁹ where there is no specific domestic violence legislation in place. However, domestic or intimate partner violence as an aggravating circumstance may not be applicable to all relationships included in the definition of domestic violence in the Istanbul Convention. For instance, in Bulgaria, same-sex partners are not covered by domestic violence as an aggravating circumstance (UN, 2019).

In two Member States – Finland and Germany – there is no specific criminal legislation relating to domestic violence or intimate partner violence and these are not considered as an aggravating circumstance.

4.4 Criminal offences relating to stalking

All EU Member States have criminalised stalking (referred to as harassment in some legal frameworks¹⁰⁰) as a form of psychological violence (**Table 5**). In several Member States, the intimate partner¹⁰¹ or domestic¹⁰² context is recognised as an aggravating factor for stalking (EELN, 2021). In January 2022, Denmark, so far the only Member State yet to criminalise stalking, introduced a new provision in its Penal Code to this effect¹⁰³.

Legal definitions of stalking (see Annex 4) may refer to the intention¹⁰⁴ or behaviour of the perpetrator. Some Member States¹⁰⁵ rely on a list of actions that amount to the offence of stalking (or harassment) under the criminal code. However, **providing an exhaustive list of actions¹⁰⁶ has been criticised on the grounds that “stalkers are creative and able to devise manners to circumvent a criminal offense that has incorporated a limitative list of stalking tactics”** (Van de Aa, 2018: 322). Some Member States have a relatively narrow definition of stalking that does not include all examples of stalking behaviour, as mentioned in the explanatory report to the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011a). For instance, in Romania the legal definition of stalking lists specific behaviours: repeated pursuit of an individual, the surveillance of this person’s

⁹⁸ BE, BG, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, CY, LV, LT, LU, HU, MT, NL, AT, RO, SK, SE.

⁹⁹ BE, BG, DK, EE, IE, LV, LU, NL, AT.

¹⁰⁰ Applies to FR, LU, IE, HU, MT, PL, RO, SE. Harassment is sometimes used as an umbrella term including stalking and other offences (EELN, 2021).

¹⁰¹ AT, BE, BG, HR, EE, HU, IT, MT, PT, SK, ES, SE.

¹⁰² AT, BE, BG, HR, EE, FR, DE, HU, IT, MT, NL, SK, ES, SE.

¹⁰³ Act no. 2600 of 28 December 2021. The Act entered into force on 1 January 2022.

¹⁰⁴ MS that do reflect intentionality in legal definitions of stalking: BE, DK, LU, MT, IE, IE, EE, HU, PT, and DE.

¹⁰⁵ AT, BG, HR, CZ, EE, FI, DE, EL, IE, LV, MT, RO, SK, SI, ES, SE.

¹⁰⁶ As is the case in AT, BG, HR, CZ, IE, LV, MT, RO, SK, SI, ES, SE.

home, working place or other places and/or unwanted (tele)communication with this person (van de Aa, 2018). Other stalking tactics mentioned in the Convention's explanatory report (Council of Europe, 2011a, paragraphs 182 and 183¹⁰⁷), for instance vandalising property or spreading untruthful information online, are not covered (van de Aa, 2018). In Sweden, the legal definition of stalking refers explicitly to other crimes under the criminal code. Even certain smaller acts often characteristic of stalking (e.g., making repetitive phone calls, sending unwanted gifts, etc.) can be recognised if the circumstances are classified as an act of molestation, a crime specially referred to in the stalking provision, and the other elements of the stalking provision are fulfilled.

Placing the focus on the intent or behaviour of the perpetrator than the behaviour of the victim is considered promising practice by GREVIO (2021). GREVIO evaluations for some Member States highlight issues with definitions that focus on the impact of stalking on the victim. In Finland, an offence for stalking was introduced in 2014. However, concerns have been raised that the new offence makes stalking conditional on the victim communicating that the acts are unwanted (GREVIO, 2019a; European Parliament, 2020b). Law enforcement authorities in Finland have been found to place considerable emphasis on the victims' behaviour, in some cases only considering stalking to have commenced after the victim had requested the perpetrator to stop (GREVIO, 2019a). As noted by GREVIO, requiring the victim to engage in communication with the stalker places undue burden on the victim and may even exacerbate the behaviour (GREVIO, 2019a). GREVIO also raise concerns about the offence of stalking in Spain, which requires that the victim significantly alter her daily routine because of the behaviour,¹⁰⁸ thereby also shifting the burden of proof onto the victim (GREVIO, 2020d). The upcoming Organic Law for Sexual Freedom will modify article 172 of the Spanish Criminal Code in order to eliminate the requirement of altering the daily routine.

A controversial element of the criminalisation of stalking is whether to include the psychological or emotional impact on the victim. The definition of stalking in the Istanbul Convention (Article 34) refers to fear experienced by the victim. As with psychological violence, actions must be conducted intentionally and show a repetitive pattern of behaviour (Council of Europe, 2011a) to be recognised as stalking. There is explicit reference to fear experienced by the

¹⁰⁷ The explanatory note also explains that stalking behaviours might include (but should not be limited to) vandalising the property of another person, leaving subtle traces of contact with a person's personal items, targeting a person's pet, or setting up false identities or spreading untruthful information online (Council of Europe, 2011a, paragraph 183).

¹⁰⁸ GREVIO note that legislative amendments are underway to remove this provision (GREVIO, 2020d).

victim in 12 Member States (EELN, 2021).¹⁰⁹ However, the emphasis placed on fear has been criticised by some as a subjective standard, with some stalking legislation (for instance, in the United States) relying on whether a ‘reasonable person’ would have experienced fear as a result of the conduct (EELN, 2021; van de Aa, 2018). Requirements for negative psychological consequences for the victim such as fear mean that these need to be established in court and substantiated by evidence, which may be difficult, or distressing for the victim (van de Aa, 2018).

In some Member States – for instance, in Finland and the Netherlands – it has been reported that police and prosecutors display limited knowledge of offences related to stalking, linked to inadequate training and guidance for criminal justice professionals on how to handle the complex nature of stalking (GREVIO, 2019a; GREVIO 2020c). GREVIO also note that in some Member States – for instance, Finland – the punishment for stalking is weak (GREVIO, 2019a).

There is increasing awareness of cyber stalking as a form of violence against women (EELN, 2021). **Several Member States refer to online communication in their legal definition of stalking** (see Annex 4): electronic communication (CZ, IT, MT, SK), telecommunication (DE, AT), remote communication devices (RO) or electronic devices (EL) and/or by stating that the crime applies to any method of communication (BG, ES, MT, AT, SI). In Italy, the use of electronic communication is an aggravating circumstance for stalking and in France it is an aggravating circumstance for sexual harassment. **In Austria, cyber stalking is specifically mentioned as a form of stalking in the Criminal Code**¹¹⁰. In Lithuania, although there is no criminal offence for stalking, there is an offence for digital and communications-based violence, which covers some forms of cyber stalking (recording or intercepting online messages). New legal offences relating to cyber stalking are planned or being implemented in, Slovakia¹¹¹, Spain¹¹² and Germany (EELN, 2021). However, in several EU Member States¹¹³ the legal definition of stalking or harassment does not refer explicitly to cyber stalking.

¹⁰⁹ BG, HR, CZ, FI, HU, IT, LV, MY, NL, PT, RO, SI

¹¹⁰ § 107a para. 2 no. 2 StGB of the Austrian Criminal Code.

¹¹¹ A new offence of Dangerous electronic harassment – Article 360b has been included into the Penal Code in July 2021.

¹¹² The Organic Law for Sexual Freedom is undergoing parliamentary approval and will reinforce the measures against cyber stalking.

¹¹³ BE, EE, IE, FR, HR, LU, NH, NL, PL, PT, FI, SE.

4.5 Key findings and implications

Only four EU Member States (DK, IE, ES, FR) have criminal offences that are specific to psychological violence or coercive control. In 14 EU Member States, psychological violence can be prosecuted under domestic violence legislation, either by a dedicated provision in the criminal code (11 Member States)¹¹⁴ or via a specific legal act (3 Member States)¹¹⁵. GREVIO raised concerns that domestic violence provisions may not be used effectively to prosecute psychological violence unless it is accompanied by physical violence (GREVIO, 2011). Criminal offences relating to domestic violence do not always refer explicitly to psychological violence. The lack of specificity might make it more difficult for legal provisions to be used to prosecute this type of behaviour. It may not be sufficient for criminal legislation to *implicitly* cover all forms of domestic violence. In some Member States, the legal framework can be strengthened by ensuring that psychological violence and coercive control feature prominently and *explicitly* in domestic violence legislation.

Even if relevant criminal legislation exists (generally punishable by imprisonment and/or a financial penalty), domestic violence may be prosecuted under lesser offences (GREVIO, 2020b; Amnesty International, 2020). Sanctions applicable to domestic violence cases rarely take into consideration all the aggravating circumstances defined in the Istanbul Convention. A lack of data collection on the number of opened investigations, prosecutions and convictions relating to domestic violence offences makes it difficult to monitor how relevant legal provisions are applied in practice (GREVIO, 2021). Effective criminalisation may be prevented by low awareness and understanding of criminal offences such as domestic violence (GREVIO, 2021; Association of Austrian Autonomous Women's Shelters, AOF & Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Vienne, IST, 2016) and stalking (GREVIO, 2019a; GREVIO 2020c; Baldry et al., 2016) among professionals in the criminal justice sector. There is a need to ensure that domestic violence legislation is applied effectively to prosecute psychological violence and coercive control, and that sanctions are appropriate, taking into consideration all relevant aggravating circumstances.

Criminal offences relating to psychological violence, coercive control and domestic violence are in some cases linked to co-residence and do not apply to non-resident partners (either at all, or unless certain conditions are met such as sharing a child together) (European Parliament, 2020b; Amnesty International, 2020; EELN, 2021). More restricted legal concepts mean that certain instances of

¹¹⁴ CZ, ES, FR, IT, HU, MT, PL, PT, SI, SK, SE.

¹¹⁵ EL, HR, CY.

psychological violence may not be covered by the prevailing legal framework, and the requirement of the Istanbul Convention to criminalise all forms of domestic violence is not met.

In 12 EU Member States¹¹⁶ the legal definitions of stalking explicitly include elements of cyber stalking. In Austria the cyber stalking is regulated as a specific, stand-alone offence. In several Member States criminal legislation does not refer to cyber stalking and other forms of psychological violence against women perpetrated online. This makes it less likely that such behaviour will be prosecuted. Without recourse to criminal law, psychological violence against women perpetrated online might be dealt with by digital platforms and other service providers. Whilst several such organisations have introduced initiatives to identify and remove harmful content, the emphasis to date has been on other harmful content (e.g., terrorism related) and not on violence against women (Barker & Jurasz, 2017).

¹¹⁶ BG, CZ, DE, EL, ES, FR, IT, MT, AT, RO, SI, SK.

5 Prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States

The BPfA acknowledges the strategic importance to take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women. The Istanbul Convention recognises that legislation alone is not sufficient for the prevention of violence against women, including psychological violence (Council of Europe, 2011b). Further preventive measures are necessary to create shifts in public attitudes towards gender stereotypes and these forms of violence more specifically (Council of Europe, 2011b). The Istanbul Convention stipulates the need for measures that promote the necessary changes in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour and encourage all members of society to contribute actively to preventing these forms of violence (Council of Europe, 2011a). The types of preventive measures identified in the Istanbul Convention are outlined in **Table 8**.

Table 8. Preventive measures outlined in the Istanbul Convention

Awareness raising	Campaigns or programmes to increase public awareness and understanding of psychological violence, the need to prevent it and the relevant measures in place.
Education	The inclusion of appropriate teaching material that promotes gender equality, mutual respect, non-violent conflict resolution and an understanding of psychological violence and its gender-based roots in formal curricula at all levels of education and informal educational facilities.
Training of professionals	Appropriate training for relevant professionals interacting with victims or perpetrators of psychological violence around detection, gender equality and primary and secondary prevention.
Preventive intervention and treatment programmes	Programmes that seek to teach perpetrators of psychological violence to adopt non-violent behaviour in interpersonal relationship in the pursuit of secondary prevention.

Source: authors' elaboration of Council of Europe, 2011a.

This chapter presents an overview of promising practices to prevent coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States. A complete overview of the assessment process can be found in Annexes 1 and 6. This section also presents an overview of

barriers impeding the effective (primary and secondary) prevention of psychological violence against women.

5.1 Good examples of promising practices to prevent psychological violence and coercive control

The study reviews **39 practices and measures implemented across 19 EU Member States¹¹⁷ to prevent coercive control and psychological violence against women.**¹¹⁸ Practices are classified according to the types of prevention measures as outlined in the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011b):

- training of professionals (20 practices),
- awareness-raising campaigns (7 practices),
- educational initiatives (3 practices),
- other **non-criminal legislation** (3 practices) and **perpetrator programmes** (2 practices),
- miscellaneous (4 practices, all risk assessment tools).

There is no separate category for initiatives involving the private sector and media (as is the case in the Istanbul Convention) due to overlap with other categories.

5.1.1 Evidence, theory and conceptual clarity

The first set of criteria relate to whether practices designed to prevent psychological violence against women are grounded in prior research, whether they are well theorised, transparent about how they define key concepts and whether they recognise the gender dimension of psychological violence.

Out of 39 identified practices, 22 are informed by evidence and research to at least some extent. The degree to which practices can be grounded in evidence depends on the availability of data and information, which may be uneven across practice types and lacking in certain areas. **Educational programmes, perpetrator programmes and risk assessment tools are generally informed to a great extent by evidence and research**, likely due to the large body of research that already exists in these areas. Educational initiatives that score highly on this criterion are the Dat-e Adolescence programme (Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018; Muñoz-Fernández et al., 2019) and the DARSI programme (**Box 9**) (Carrascosa et al., 2019), both implemented in Spain, and the GEAR-II

¹¹⁷ No practices within the scope of this study were identified in AT, FI, LV, LT, MT, SK, SI or SE.

¹¹⁸ While many of practices (particularly the educational initiatives, training programmes and perpetrator programmes) did not focus on psychological violence against women or coercive control specifically, those for which preventing this type of violence constituted a key component, objective or outcome of the practice were still deemed within scope (see Annex 1 for more details).

programme (**Box 10**) implemented in five Member States (EL, ES, HR, CY, RO) (Hagemann-White, 2017). Perpetrator programmes implemented in Ireland (Spratt et al., 2021) and Spain (Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015) also score highly on the evidence criterion. Practices where a robust evaluation has or will be conducted (see Section 5.1.5) are generally well grounded in evidence and research.

Awareness raising campaigns are generally not informed by strong evidence, although some reference statistics on the prevalence of psychological violence.¹¹⁹ A mixed picture emerges for vocational training programmes, some of which are firmly grounded in evidence whereas others are not. In some cases, the involvement and/or consultation of experts and stakeholders in the area are evoked in place of specific evidence (Rodriguez et al., 2020; Engage, 2019),¹²⁰ suggesting that there may be a concern for *experience* over evidence in this area.

Box 9. The DARSI programme (ES)

The **DARSI (Developing Healthy and Egalitarian Adolescent Relationships) programme** is a Spanish **school-based intervention that aims to prevent peer aggressive behaviours and to educate adolescents on gender equality**. The programme's remit is broader than coercive control and psychological violence against women, encompassing all forms of peer aggression. However, forms of psychological abuse (threats, insults, cyber-aggression) are highlighted within this broader context and a key area of focus is violence within romantic relationships. The rationale of the programme builds on a strong body of **evidence**, which identifies a connection between factors such as sexist attitudes, new technologies and myths about romantic love and aggressive behaviour in young people. The **theoretical underpinning** shows clear links between the programme's objectives and the intended mechanisms to achieve them. These mechanisms include reducing sexist attitudes and myths of romantic love to reduce violence in adolescent relationships.

The programme foregrounds gender equality and is built around the premise that reducing sexist attitudes is key to preventing partner violence. Despite the centrality of gender equality to the programme, there is no indication that aggression – including psychological partner violence – is positioned as a form of violence against women.¹²¹ The specific focus on challenging myths and gender stereotypes means that the practice scores highly under the **language and messaging criteria**. No information can be found to suggest that the DARSI programme uses an **intersectional** approach.

¹¹⁹ <https://1712.be/campagnes/id/884/campagne-vertederdvernederd-doorbreekt-taboe-rond-emotioneel-misbruik-in-relaties>; <http://vertederdvernederd.be/achtergrondinfo/>;
<https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/>.

¹²⁰ <https://safetyned.org/ervaringen-van-slachtoffers/>;
<https://professionals.verdwenenzelf.org/training-professionals/>.

¹²¹ However, this may be due to the nature of information available in the public domain (an evaluation) rather than an omission in the programme itself.

Given that this is a school-based initiative, the programme could possibly be applied in other contexts. However, to facilitate **transferability** would probably require translation of materials. There is no publicly available information relating to whether the programme will be continued or **sustained** in the future. The practice has been evaluated and scores highly in relation to **monitoring and evaluation**. A quasi-experimental design efficacy trial with control group has been conducted with 191 participants (aged 12-17 years). The results show that compared to the control group, members of the experimental group had a greater reduction (pre vs. post intervention) in sexist attitudes and reduced belief in romantic myths. However, this is a small-scale evaluation conducted in a limited number of field sites (nine classrooms across two schools), limiting the generalisability of the findings. The evaluation also measures attitudes towards gender and violence rather than perpetration.

Source: Carrascosa et al., 2019.

Most practices (25 out of 39) are well grounded in theory, clearly outlining their aim, objectives and the activities undertaken to achieve these. Good examples include a perpetrator programme implemented in Spain, which has a clear objective of preventing re-offending/re-victimisation in male perpetration of intimate partner violence (including psychological violence) (Fernandez-Montalvo, et al., 2015; **Box 17**). Another example of a practice well-grounded in theory is a campaign in Belgium which has a clear objective to break taboos around emotional abuse in relationships through awareness-raising activities including a campaign website, videos, quizzes, information material and personal testimonies.¹²²

Some practices (6 out of 39) clearly spell out their aims and objectives, but not the mechanisms by which these are to be achieved.

Box 10. GEAR against IPV-II (EL, ES, HR, CY, RO)

The Project **Gender Equality Awareness Raising against Intimate Partner Violence II (GEAR against IPV-II)** is an EU-funded¹²³ **educational and awareness-raising initiative**¹²⁴ relating to **intimate partner violence among young people**. The initiative covers all forms of intimate partner violence, although psychological violence is recognised explicitly within the project objectives. The initiative targets young people aged 12 to 16, as well as professionals who work with them. This intervention is a particularly strong example of a practice with a high degree of **transferability**. The initiative has been implemented in five EU

¹²² <https://1712.be/campagnes/id/884/campagne-vertederdvernederd-doorbreekt-taboe-rond-emotioneel-misbruik-in-relaties>; <http://vertederdvernederd.be/achtergrondinfo/>.

¹²³ The GEAR-II programme is co-funded by the DAPHNE III Programme of the European Union.

¹²⁴ For the purposes of this study, the GEAR intervention is classed as an educational initiative since the focus is on young people and some of the activities take place in schools and with teachers. However, awareness-raising is also a key element of this initiative.

Member States (EL, ES, HR, CY, RO).

The objective of the initiative – to contribute to primary and secondary prevention of intimate partner violence and sexual violence among teens – is clearly spelled out on the programme website.¹²⁵ Activities undertaken to achieve this objective are training teachers to implement awareness raising interventions, conducting awareness raising workshops with adolescents, carrying out e-campaigns and hosting national conferences. By dedicating one module in the teacher training to types and definitions of intimate partner violence, the intervention’s key concepts are clearly defined and aligned with the Istanbul Convention. The intervention approaches intimate partner violence through a gender equality lens. One of the stated aims of the project is to raise awareness among teenagers of “how power inequality between the sexes is related to psychological, physical and/or sexual abuse against women/girls”.¹²⁶ The **language and messaging** used deliberately seeks to combat gender stereotypes and myths and misconceptions around intimate partner violence.

The programme has been externally evaluated and some data on the practice’s **effectiveness** is available. The evaluation (Hagemann-White, 2017) is qualitative, drawing on participant observation and workshops. The evaluation cites data from evaluation questionnaires showing high satisfaction on the part of both teachers and students, as well as changes in attitudes to relationships and gender equality. However, this data is not available as part of the evaluation. The evaluation does not directly measure the effect of the intervention on preventing intimate partner violence, including psychological violence.

Source: Hagemann-White, 2017.

Many practices (14 out of 39) provide clear and comprehensive definitions of key concepts, and in a number of cases definitions are explicitly aligned with the Istanbul Convention (Rodriguez et al., 2020; Engage, 2019; Logar & Marvanova Vargova, 2015). An example of such practice is the ENGAGE project carried out under the European Commission’s Daphne Programme (Engage, 2019; **Box 11**). A roadmap for frontline professionals interacting with male perpetrators developed as part of the ENGAGE project defines domestic violence in accordance with the Istanbul Convention and provides definitions of different types of violence, including psychological violence. In some cases, particularly among awareness raising campaigns, an extensive and nuanced list or depiction of behaviours commonly associated with this type of violence is provided in place of a specific definition.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/the-gear-against-ipv-approach>.

¹²⁶ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/the-gear-against-ipv-approach>.

¹²⁷ <https://safetyned.org/ervaringen-van-slachtoffers/>;
<https://professionals.verdwenenzelf.org/2020/premiere-educatieve-film/>;
<https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/>; <http://www.fredetmarie.be/>.

In relation to some practices, although an effort has been made to clarify key concepts there is still some conceptual confusion. This is the case, for instance, if some concepts are defined but not others (Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018; Muñoz-Fernández, 2019), or the examples provided to illustrate the concepts are deemed to be too limited (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2019).

Box 11. ENGAGE (EU)

ENGAGE was a two-year project carried out between 2018-2019 under the European Commission’s Daphne Programme with the objective of **increasing the potential for perpetrator programmes to prevent and reduce domestic violence against women and children through improving the referral process and prioritising victim safety**. A roadmap for frontline professionals interacting with male perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse was developed in five languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish and Catalan). It targets frontline professionals in health care, social services, child protection services, or police. The roadmap aims to provide frontline professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively refer male perpetrators to a perpetrator programme and other specialist services.

Based on a literature review and expert consultation, the “roadmap” is underpinned by a strong **evidence** base. It was designed based on input from six EU Member States (FR, IT, ES, AT, HR and FI), suggesting a high degree of **transferability**. In case support is needed for implementation, a webinar on training frontline professionals is available within the ENGAGE toolkit. A collaboration between the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (WWP EN)¹²⁸ and various national-level experts, the practice scores high in both **stakeholder engagement** criteria.

The practice is underpinned by strong **conceptual clarity**. The roadmap includes a clear definition of domestic violence in line with the Istanbul Convention. It further provides definitions of different types of abuse and control, including psychological violence. There is also a chapter in the roadmap relating to power and control in domestic relationships. In accordance with the Istanbul Convention definitions, domestic violence is approached as a form of violence against women, linked to historically unequal power relations between men and women. The roadmap explicitly uses **language and messaging** to challenge myths around the perpetration of domestic violence, particularly those that seek to reduce the responsibility of the perpetrator e.g. perpetrators are mentally ill, men use violence because of alcohol, all perpetrators were exposed to abuse as children, etc. While the roadmap points out that perpetrators can be of any race, age, religion, socioeconomic background, educational level or relationship status, the roadmap includes a section on “culture” specifically, encouraging practitioners to take into account how a perpetrator’s community might shape his views and behaviours.

An evaluation has been conducted of the ENGAGE project. Although the full evaluation report is not publicly available, a summary is published on the project website.¹²⁹ There is evidence to support the

¹²⁸ <https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/>.

¹²⁹ <https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/projects/engage>.

effectiveness of the programme, which was found to increase identification of potential perpetrators and referral to programmes by at least 25 %. However, the evaluation methodology and findings in full are unknown.

Source: ENGAGE, 2019.

Only a few practices aiming to prevent psychological violence against women (5 out of 39) are grounded in a gender equality perspective (5 out of 39 practices), including educational initiatives, training programmes and perpetrator programmes. For instance, a participatory training programme for student nurses in Spain (**Box 12**) focuses on violence against women, including psychological violence, and contextualises this in terms of gender inequality and sexism in society (Solano-Ruiz et al., 2021). The GEAR-II educational initiative¹³⁰ (**Box 10**) implemented in five EU Member States (EL, ES, HR, CY, RO) focuses on preventing intimate partner violence through combating sexism and gender equality. Specifically, the initiative aims to raise awareness and improve understanding of healthy relationships, the influence that gender stereotypes have on relationships, how gender inequality is related to violence against women (including psychological violence) and how young people can contribute to the prevention of gender-based violence. A third example is a perpetrator programme implemented in Spain (Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015). This programme explicitly approaches intimate partner violence as a form of gender-based violence and includes components relating to gender equality in the training (directed at male perpetrators of intimate partner violence).

Nearly every fourth practice (10 out of 39) does not acknowledge the gender dimension or just recognise that both women and men can be victims of psychological violence. It is particularly concerning that none of the identified awareness raising campaigns emphasised the gendered nature of violence. While the majority do focus on women victims, they do not explicitly recognise the role of gender inequality and sexism more broadly. Two of the three educational initiatives aimed at adolescents acknowledge the role of gendered beliefs and sexist attitudes in contributing to dating violence but frame such violence as gender neutral or reciprocal (Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018; Carrascosa et al., 2019). While three training programmes scored highly for their focus on the gendered elements of domestic and intimate partner violence (Solano-Ruiz et al., 2021; Engage, 2019; Logar & Marvanoca Vargova, 2015), the majority take a gender-neutral approach, or explicitly focus on both female and male victims. These examples show that much work still needs to be done in responding to the root causes of coercive control and psychological violence against women in terms of sexism and gender inequality.

¹³⁰ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/the-gear-against-ipv-approach>.

Box 12. Innovative training for nursing students (ES)

A **vocational training** initiative for third-year undergraduate nursing students (n=40) at the University of Alicante in Spain, used innovative methods to raise awareness and improve understanding of violence against women. Participating students were divided into small groups and asked to construct a short story on an instance of violence against women taking place in daily life. This short story was later staged as a performance with students taking 3-4 photographs with their mobile phones or tables. The exercise was followed by an extended period of debate within the groups during which students were presented with the printouts of the photographs and the stories. The students were then asked to write down their reflection on the exercise and how it had influenced their perspective on violence against women. The evaluation of the initiative foregrounds psychological violence against women (described by participants as the “invisible part” or the “internal scar”). However, it is unclear whether addressing psychological violence specifically was an intended aim of the training, or whether this emerged organically during the discussion.

This training initiative focused on violence against women and linked it to wider societal understandings about women’s standing in society. The training involved a discussion about the nature and forms of violence against women, including psychological violence, but there is no indication of the conceptual scope of the discussion, nor it was evaluated. The researcher documented the research process and associated results, the data is qualitative. There is some data on **effectiveness**, but it is derived from a small, homogenous sample and qualitative, non-rigorous evaluation design.

Source: Solano-Ruiz et al., 2021.

5.1.2 *Scope and sustainability*

The second set of criteria relate to the scope of identified practices: the degree to which they are tailored to certain contexts and/or to meet the needs of specific groups of women, whether they have the potential to be transferred to other contexts and the degree to which they are sustainable.

A manual for training professionals in relation to domestic violence developed in Poland recognises the needs of different groups of female victims (Logar & Branislava Marvanova, 2015). A few sections of the manual apply to specific groups of women, for instance refugee, migrant and ethnic minority women. It also contains a section on diversity, respect and non-discrimination. This manual was developed as part of the “Polish Family – Free from Violence” project implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy of Poland, in collaboration with the Council of Europe, with the goal of training 500 interdisciplinary teams set up at local level following the Act on Counteracting Family Violence (2010) (Logar & Branislava Marvanova, 2015). In their baseline assessment for Poland, GREVIO welcomes such interdisciplinary training initiatives set up at the local level (GREVIO, 2021b).

A further seven practices have elements that are targeted at or tailored to meet the needs of specific groups of women, including education and training programmes (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2019; EIGE, 2015; Houtsonen, 2020; Engage, 2019),¹³¹ one perpetrator programme (Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015) and one awareness-raising campaign.¹³² In some cases, however, these practices mention “vulnerable” groups but do not spell out who these are and/or how they might need targeted or tailored support (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2019; Houtsonen, 2020), or they emphasise the need to recognise and be sensitive to cultural differences without any further guidance on this issue (Engage, 2019).¹³³ In one case, support is available in multiple languages (EIGE, 2015), and one campaign incorporates diverse representation, although the messages are not specifically tailored to different groups.¹³⁴ Every third practice (12 out of 39) is not targeted or tailored to specific groups of women in any way.

A mixed picture emerges in terms of whether practices have the potential to be replicated or generalised to other geographical contexts. Out of the 39 practices, 12 have been transferred from another context,¹³⁵ designed to operate across multiple contexts¹³⁶ or relate to issues that are not closely linked to specific context, for example, guidelines for women’s shelters about addressing digital stalking (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2019) or a perpetrator programme that does not relate to cultural factors (Spratt et al., 2021). Other practices (14 out of 39 practices) showed moderate potential for transferability as, for instance, they relate to universal issues (e.g., adolescent dating violence) but address cultural factors that relate to the specific geographical context (Carrascosa et al., 2019). Similarly, non-criminal legislation is transferable to other contexts only insofar as certain criminal offences are recognised. Practices relating to training of professionals tend to be low in transferability as they are tied to specific administrative and legal frameworks that differ across countries.¹³⁷

Some practices (6 out of 39) are tailored to a great extent to the national or local context. Examples of these practices include a national unit designed to bring together people working in this area from across the country (Stubberud et al., 2018) and cross-national initiatives like the GEAR-II

¹³¹ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/summary>.

¹³² <https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/>.

¹³³ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/summary>.

¹³⁴ <https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/>.

¹³⁵ <https://safetyned.org/ervaringen-van-slachtoffers/>.

¹³⁶ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/summary>.

¹³⁷ Exceptions apply when an international tool (EIGE, 2019) or foreign practice has been adapted (<https://safetyned.org/ervaringen-van-slachtoffers/>), or a practice is developed at the EU-level (ENGAGE 2019).

programme developed at the EU level and implemented in five Member States (EL, ES, HR, CY, RO) (Hagemann-White, 2017) (see **Box 10**), with materials translated and adapted for use in each of the Member States. For most of the identified practices, the publicly available information does not allow to assess fully whether the practice has been tailored to the context in which it is implemented.

Box 13. Training programme for counsellors (IE)

A **two-day training course on domestic violence, abuse, and coercive control** aims to equip counsellors in Ireland with evidence-based tools and increased awareness in this area. Participants receive continuing professional development (CPD) credit for attending the training by the Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy. The course is **delivered on a semi-regular basis** by a civil society organisation and is **part of a national action plan**.

There are **clear objectives** for each day of the training and mechanisms for how these objectives are to be achieved are outlined. **Clear definitions of concepts** that are aligned with the Istanbul Convention are also offered. Women are identified as the primary victims of domestic violence, however the training does not seem to connect violence against women to broader societal issues relating to **gender equality**. However, the material is grounded in both feminist **language and messaging**. There is no information to suggest that the training covers the needs of different groups of women or adopts an **intersectional** approach.

The principle of training counsellors to identify and respond appropriately to domestic violence cases suggest that this practice can be **transferred** to other contexts. The training was **developed through a collaboration** between the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre and the National University of Ireland Galway, and the NGO Domestic Violence Response Galway. The practice is **tailored to the local context** by providing trainees with information on local legal, specialist support agencies and other relevant referrals.

The training has been evaluated by asking participants to complete questionnaires before and after the training, rating their perceptions of the training using 5-point Likert scale to evaluate four key areas of the training: reaction, learning, behaviour, and results (outcomes). The questionnaire also included three open ended questions where participants could share their opinions on the perceived support, barriers and any general comments about the training. In addition, there was some follow-up with participants three months after the training. Eight participants attended both training days and completed questionnaires. The evaluation found that participant generally enjoyed the training and are keen to improve their skills and knowledge. However, their ability to translate the training into practice depended on a variety of factors, including the participants' confidence and attitudes to domestic violence. This was, however, **a small-scale evaluation lacking a robust design** (i.e., no control group).

Source: Rodriguez et al., 2020

A large number of practices (19 out of 39) are long-term or at least include components such as training resources that remain available (12 out of 39 practices). Good examples in relation to the

sustainability criterion include mandatory training for police officers in Luxembourg (see **Box 14**), which is included in the formal curriculum of police cadet training (EIGE, 2015). Another example is a two-day training course on domestic violence for counsellors in Ireland (see **Box 13**), which is delivered on a regular basis by a civil society organisation (Rodriguez et al., 2020). A small number of practices (7 out of 39) are one-off initiatives, for instance a one-off training session for professionals as part of a conference (Council of Europe, 2021) and many of the awareness-raising campaigns (Stubberud, 2018)¹³⁸ and time-limited educational initiatives (Sanchez-Jimenez, 2018; Carrascosa et al., 2019). These initiatives are, however, all part of evaluation trials, meaning they may be implemented or scaled-up in the future if the evaluation results support it.

Box 14. Mandatory training and tools for police officers (LU)

In 2003, Luxembourg adopted new domestic violence legislation which allows the eviction of a perpetrator from a victim's home (initially for four days, with the possibility for an extension). To help support implementation of this law, **a training course was developed and included in the two-year basic police training**. The training relates to all forms of domestic violence but has a dedicated component relating to psychological violence. As such, **all police officers are required to complete this training**. There are plans to **evaluate** the training. The evaluation of the implementation of the law confirmed that **the training is working well**.

The **training constitutes a collaboration** between the national police force and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and specialists working with victims. There is also an exchange programme with forces in the Germany border regions to exchange learnings about dealing with domestic violence cases.

In Luxembourg, the policy issue of domestic violence is linked within the broader issue of gender mainstreaming. However, there is no evidence that the training course explicitly links domestic violence or coercive control to violence against women. While there is little information to suggest that the training explicitly addresses the needs to different groups of victims, police are supplied with information cards for victims and perpetrators of violence that are **available in 13 languages**.

Source: EIGE, 2015.

5.1.3 Coordination and embeddedness

The third set of criteria relate to the extent to which the design and implementation of practices involves collaboration with other stakeholders and/or integration into national policy on domestic violence/violence against women or gender equality.

¹³⁸ <https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/>; <https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/activites/violence/campagnes> .

Several practices (15 out of 39) are informed (at least to some extent) by collaboration among different stakeholders. The majority of awareness raising campaigns involve some level of collaboration, often between a national or regional governmental body and one or more relevant NGOs. A good example is a campaign implemented in Belgium (#faisonslalumieresurlaviolence) (see **Box 16**) to raise awareness about male perpetration of psychological violence. In developing the campaign, Equal Brussels collaborated with a regional platform bringing together a variety of Brussels-based organisations working in the area of gender-based violence (Plateforme regionale contre les violences conjugales and intrafamiliales) (Chini, 2019). There are also some instances of training provision for professionals (including police officers and counsellors) drawing on the knowledge and experience of victim support organisations (EIGE, 2015; Rodriguez et al., 2020; Logar & Marvanova Vargova, 2015). For instance, a roadmap for professionals as part of the ENGAGE project (**Box 11**) has been developed as part of a collaboration between the WWP EN and various national-level experts (Engage, 2019). Another example is the perpetrator programme in Ireland (**Box 13**) (Rodriguez et al., 2020). However, insufficient information does not allow to assess the full extent of collaboration among stakeholders in many practices (18 practices).

Most practices (23 out of 39) involve some degree of coordination between different actors and organisations (government agencies, NGOs etc.). Examples include the training of police cadets in Luxembourg (see **Box 14**), which is delivered in partnership with specialists who work directly with victims (EIGE, 2015), a manual for training professionals in Poland designed to promote multi-agency cooperation (see Section 5.1.2) and an educational initiative (GEAR-II) implemented through a collaboration between an EU-level organisation (the European Anti-Violence Network (EAVN)) and multiple national-level NGOs.¹³⁹

Every fourth practice (10 practices) **is embedded in a national strategy or action plan on domestic violence/violence against women or gender equality.** A number of training programmes for professionals, as well as one non-criminal legislative measure, are embedded in the Danish action plan for the prevention of psychological and physical violence in intimate relationships (see **Box 15**), and training for police officers is part of Luxembourg's national action plan for equality between women and men (EIGE, 2015). In other cases, measures have been introduced in response to a change in legislation (Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015; Logar & Marvanova Vargova, 2015), as part of a broader governmental strategy for tackling specific types of violence (e.g. stalking) (Stubberud et al., 2018) or following the terms of the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe,

¹³⁹ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/summary>.

2021). However, the majority of practices (23 out of 39) do not form part of a strategy or action plan, whether national or regional. The identified awareness raising campaigns or educational initiatives were not embedded in any kind of broader strategy or action plan.

Box 15. Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs action plan for the prevention of psychological and physical violence in intimate relationships (DK)

The **Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs action plan for the prevention of psychological and physical violence in intimate relationships (2019-2022)** includes four training initiatives for professionals relating to domestic violence or coercive control (each assessed as a separate practice):

- Guidelines for the prosecution service on dealing with cases of psychological violence
- Guidelines and training for police around dealing with cases of intimate partner violence
- Information for women's shelters on how to prevent digital tracking
- Basic training programme for police cadets.

The action plan specifies that gender mainstreaming and gender specific challenges are a central aspect to approaching and dealing with intimate partner violence in Denmark. Psychological violence is not, however, defined as violence against women, and the report looks at both women and men victims. The overall action plan provides examples of types of psychological violence but does not offer a concrete definition.

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2019.

5.1.4 Communication

The next set of criteria relate to communication around the practices: if and how the practice has been promoted and the appropriateness of the language and messaging used.

Insofar as language and messaging can be assessed, **most practices (17 out of 39) do not tend to enforce myths and stereotypes and, more commonly, actively challenge and disrupt them.**¹⁴⁰

Practices seek to challenge a number of harmful beliefs and misconceptions, including victim-blaming (Engage, 2019; Logar & Marvanova Vargova, 2015; Chini, 2019),¹⁴¹ the view that non-physical forms of violence are “less serious” than physical forms (Stubberud et al., 2018),¹⁴² the romanticisation of intimate partner violence (Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018; Carrascosa et al.,

¹⁴⁰ In assessing practices against this criterion, the research team sought to critically examine the content of the practice as far as possible based on their understanding of stereotypes and promising practice in this area. In some cases, however, the research team did rely on explicitly stated objectives around challenging stereotypes and it is important to recognise that this intention may not have been achieved in practice.

¹⁴¹ <https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/>; <https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/activites/violence/campagnes>; <https://safetyned.org/ervaringen-van-slachtoffers/>.

¹⁴² <https://safetyned.org/ervaringen-van-slachtoffers/>.

2019),¹⁴³ gender stereotypes (Solano-Ruiz et al., 2021),¹⁴⁴ and false preconceptions about what abuse looks like (Gafarova, 2015).¹⁴⁵ The awareness raising campaigns are specifically concerned with addressing such misconceptions in order to increase understanding of psychological violence and coercive control among victims, perpetrators, professionals and the general public (see, for example, **Box 11**). Several training programmes for professionals likewise include material on combatting myths around different types of domestic and intimate partner violence (Solano-Ruiz et al., 2021; Engage, 2019; Logar & Marvanova Vargova, 2015). Combatting myths and stereotypes is a core focus for all three educational initiatives aimed at adolescents. Other practices challenge such stereotypes less explicitly. For example, the first stage of one perpetrator programme requires the perpetrator to take responsibility for their actions (Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015), and tougher sentencing for stalking encourages the public and authorities to take this behaviour seriously (Stubberud et al., 2018).

Box 16. #faisonslalumieresurlaviolence (BE)

For the 2019 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the International Human Rights Day, the regional public service Equal Brussels ran an **awareness raising campaign** about men perpetrating psychological violence against women - **#faisonslalumieresurlaviolence**. While awareness campaigns tend to target victims or witnesses, this campaign focused specifically on perpetrators.

Using posters and a video, the campaign identified clear objectives to empower perpetrators to believe that they can change their behaviour, and to promote respect and non-violent communication between partners. The campaign video provides clear examples of types of psychological violence and coercive control and focuses its language and messaging on the perpetrator's actions and what they can do to take responsibility. In developing the campaign, Equal Brussels collaborated with a regional platform bringing together a variety of Brussels-based organisations working in the area of gender-based violence (Plateforme regionale contre les violences conjugales and intrafamiliales).

The video shows individuals from various ethnic backgrounds, and the campaign is available in both French and Dutch. It could be transferred to other contexts but would require being translated. While the campaign focuses on psychological violence against women, none of the communication materials explicitly mention gender inequality. No information on monitoring, evaluation or evidence on effectiveness could be found.

¹⁴³ <https://loveerrors.bg/#errors-list/1>.

¹⁴⁴ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/summary>.

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.fredetmarie.be/>; <https://1712.be/campagnes/id/884/campagne-vertederdvernederd-doorbreekt-taboe-rond-emotioneel-misbruik-in-relaties>;
<http://vertederdvernederd.be/achtergrondinfo/>;
<https://professionals.verdwenenzelf.org/2020/premiere-educatieve-film/>.

In addition to the six awareness raising campaigns, one training course for professionals (Stubberud et al., 2018) and one educational initiative incorporate awareness campaigns into their broader practice.¹⁴⁷ They include campaign websites, posters,¹⁴⁸ videos,¹⁴⁹ social media posts (Chini, 2019),¹⁵⁰ national television and radio broadcasts (Gafarova, 2015), t-shirts and coasters,¹⁵¹ self-tests¹⁵² and short films.¹⁵³ The educational initiative incorporates a variety of promotional elements including an awareness raising campaign developed from the participants' own work.¹⁵⁴ The Danish Stalking Centre likewise carries out a number of awareness raising campaigns alongside the training and guidelines they provide to relevant professionals (Stubberud et al., 2018).

5.1.5 Evaluation

The final cluster of assessment criteria relate to evidence: whether the practice is or has been evaluated and, if so, whether there is evidence to show that it is effective at achieving its objectives.

Just a few practices (5 out of 39) plan, undergo or completed a robust evaluation (Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018; Muñoz-Fernández et al., 2019; Carrascosa et al., 2019; Spratt et al., 2021; Engage, 2019; Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015).¹⁵⁵ A robust evaluation is based on an independent assessment involving quantitative estimation (pre/post treatment and or treatment vs. control). However, the bar is not set so high as to require a full Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT). Evaluation is more prevalent in certain types of intervention. For instance, **educational initiatives and perpetrator programmes generally have a robust evaluation planned or ongoing** whereas this is often not the case for other practices. Good examples include a cluster RCT of the Dat-e Adolescence education initiative in Spain (n=1,764) (Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018), a quasi-experimental evaluation of the DARSI education initiative in Spain (Carrascosa et al., 2019) and

¹⁴⁶ <https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/>.

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/summary>.

¹⁴⁸ <https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/>; <https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/activites/violence/campagnes>.

¹⁴⁹ <https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/>; <https://1712.be/campagnes/id/884/campagne-vertederdvernederd-doorbreekt-taboe-rond-emotioneel-misbruik-in-relaties>; <http://vertederdvernederd.be/>.

¹⁵⁰ <https://loveerrors.bg/>; <https://cjc.be/La-violence-psychologique-c-est-de.html>.

¹⁵¹ <https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/activites/violence/campagnes>.

¹⁵² <https://1712.be/campagnes/id/884/campagne-vertederdvernederd-doorbreekt-taboe-rond-emotioneel-misbruik-in-relaties>; <http://vertederdvernederd.be/>.

¹⁵³ <http://www.fredetmarie.be/>.

¹⁵⁴ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/summary>.

¹⁵⁵ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/summary>.

two evaluations (pre/post intervention) of perpetrator programmes implemented in Ireland and Spain (Spratt et al., 2021; Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015).

A larger number of practices (13 out of 39) have some kind of evaluation in place for which the level of rigour is uncertain because, for instance, the methodology of the evaluation is not published (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2019; EIGE, 2019), or the evaluation data is purely qualitative (EIGE, 2015; Solano-Ruiz, 2021; Rodriguez et al., 2020) or administrative (Marc et al., 2018; Baldry et al., 2016).¹⁵⁶ In one case, an evaluation of the reliability and predictive validity of a risk assessment tool for stalking used by the Netherlands National Police was carried out (Hehemann et al., 2017), but the GREVIO (2020) observed that it is still too early to assess how effective its use is in practice.

An academic evaluation of two perpetrator programmes recognised their potential for effective secondary prevention (Spratt et al., 2021; Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015). A majority of participants in male perpetrators programme in Spain report no instances of psychological (or physical) violence at a 12-month follow-up, although there are a number of methodological limitations that limit the conclusiveness of these findings (see **Box 17**). An evaluation of a perpetrator programme implemented in Ireland (Spratt et al., 2021) highlights a decline in domestic violence acts, including psychological violence. Both studies rely on pre/post treatment comparisons with no control group. Consequently, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that the intervention *caused* the reduction in violence, although the results are promising and warrant further investigation.

Several other practices present some non-rigorous evidence of effectiveness (EIGE, 2015; Solano-Ruiz et al., 2021; Marc et al., 2018; Baldry et al., 2016),¹⁵⁷ or demonstrate effectiveness in relation to behaviours or beliefs associated with psychological violence, but not the violence itself (Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018; Carrascosa et al., 2019; Rodriguez et al., 2020). For instance, the DARSI programme in Spain (see **Box 9**) has been evaluated using a robust, quasi-experimental design. The evidence suggests that the intervention is effective (Carrascosa et al., 2019). However, the evaluation measures attitudes towards violence rather than perpetration (or victimisation). An evaluation of the GEAR-II programme implemented in five Member States (EL, ES, HR, CY, RO

¹⁵⁶ https://www.knack.be/nieuws/gezondheid/emotioneel-misbruik-binnen-een-relatie-komt-vaker-voor-dan-gedacht/article-normal-1100935.html?cookie_check=1631371817.

¹⁵⁷ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/summary>;
https://www.knack.be/nieuws/gezondheid/emotioneel-misbruik-binnen-een-relatie-komt-vaker-voor-dan-gedacht/article-normal-1100935.html?cookie_check=1631371817.

and ES) (Hagemann-White, 2017) identifies promising results, but the evaluation is purely qualitative in nature and does not directly measure the effect of the intervention on preventing psychological violence (see **Box 10**). Most practices do not provide sufficient evidence about their effectiveness. .

Box 17. Court-referred psychological treatment programme for perpetrators of intimate partner violence (ES)

The 2004 Law of Integral Protection Measures against Gender-based Violence in Spain called upon independent provinces to implement specific **therapeutic programmes for men convicted of intimate partner violence**. As part of these programmes, perpetrators can receive a suspension of their sentence if a perpetrator agrees to take part in such court-mandated psychological treatment instead. The underlying idea is that psychological treatment is the most effective in preventing re-offending. An impact evaluation has been carried out by a team of academics for a programme developed by the PSIMAE Instituto de Psicología Jurídica y Forense and directed by the Social Service of Justice of the Government of Navarre. The programme offers 20 one-hour individual cognitive behavioural therapy sessions. Topics covered in the sessions include accepting responsibility for the behaviour, discussing motivation for taking part in the programme, empathy training, and anger management and challenging distorted beliefs related to intimate partner violence.

The programme provides clear objectives of preventing re-offending and identification of mechanisms (through treating motivation, psychopathological symptoms and relapse prevention relating to specific scenarios). The offense of intimate partner violence is understood as a form of gender-based violence. Trainers are introduced to broader **gender inequalities**. While the sessions can be tailored to the individual's needs, wider coverage of **intersectionality** is not documented.

The evaluation of the programme involved 235 men who took part in the programme between 2005 and 2011. Post-treatment and at 12-month follow up, approximately 85 % of participants did not report any further episodes of abuse, either physical or psychological. However, without a control group this evidence needs to be interpreted with caution. While the content and approach of the programme is highly transferable, the authors note that the high success rate is likely attributable to the strict national legislative provisions (i.e. the suspension of the sentence depends on the success of the treatment). This element of the programme implementation also brings into question the evaluation of the findings, as participants may have felt pressure to report and demonstrate positive progress. However, the authors triangulated self-reported data against information collected from victims and/or official records where possible. The potential for this programme to impact the long-term behaviour patterns of the perpetrators will require time and further investigation.

Source: Fernandez-Montalvo et al, 2015.

5.2 Barriers to effective prevention of psychological violence and coercive control

Drawing on desk research and data from a survey of practitioners (n=55) working in the area of domestic violence and violence against women in EU Member States, this section presents an overview of **barriers impeding the effective (primary and secondary) prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women.**

Most of the identified sources include information about secondary prevention of coercive control and psychological violence. In addition, many discuss psychological violence or coercive control more broadly and touch upon issues relating to prevention such as barriers to victim reporting and access to support, or challenges in investigating and criminalising psychological violence and coercive control. Therefore this chapter considers barriers to preventing psychological violence in a broader sense and assumes that addressing barriers related to reporting, support and investigation/criminalisation could help mitigate the harms associated with victimisation and reduce the likelihood of reoffending.

Through both the survey and the literature review, the research identified a number of legal, cultural and structural barriers to the primary and/or secondary prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women, as well as additional barriers relating to limited understanding of the issue among professionals, and the role of technology in perpetuating the violence.

To supplement literature relating to EU Member States, this chapter also draws on literature from other OECD countries, presented in separate text boxes. Additional material from the survey and literature review of other OECD countries can be found in Annex 5.

5.2.1 Legal barriers

Survey participants were asked to what extent certain barriers relating to the law and criminal justice system impede prevention of psychological violence against women in their country (see **Figure A5.3** in Annex 5). The majority of participants highlighted limitations of the legal framework in their Member States, such as having **no specific criminal offence** relating to psychological violence or coercive control (42 participants),¹⁵⁸ relevant **criminal offences not being well aligned with the patterns of behaviour typical of psychological violence**¹⁵⁹ (37

¹⁵⁸ To a great extent, to some extent or to a small extent

¹⁵⁹ For example, being intended to prosecute one-off acts of violence rather than a repetitive pattern of behaviour, as is typical for psychological violence and coercive control. See Section 4 for more information.

participants) and **criminal offences not covering all victim-perpetrator relationships**¹⁶⁰ (30 participants).¹⁶¹ In an open question, 12 participants identified lack of the legislation as the most significant barrier to effective prevention.

Other barriers relating to the law and criminal justice system mentioned by a smaller number of survey participants (five or fewer) are lack of prevention work prior to a first offence, lack of gender-informed policies, gender-neutral laws, victims and their children forced to leave their homes and lengthy court proceedings. According to one survey participant, in Greece the statute of limitations for any misdemeanour which includes all forms of psychological violence is three months, which means that long-term abuse is difficult to report and to prosecute. In addition, it is almost impossible to obtain a strict protective order from a court based on psychological abuse as no risk assessments are conducted in Greece.

Beyond criminal legislation, survey participants highlight **a lack of awareness of psychological violence among professionals in the police and criminal justice sector** (46 participants) (see **Figure A5.3** in Annex 5). It can be a key barrier to secondary prevention. In a study exploring victims' perceptions of the police's role in dealing with stalking cases in Italy that draws on interviews with victims of intimate partner stalking (n=130, including 120 women), participants reported that Italian police officers tend to minimise the impact of stalking on victims and lack the skills necessary to investigate these types of crimes (Baldry et al., 2016). Furthermore, cases of stalking are frequently classified as "simple harassment" or dismissed as a "private matter between ex intimates" (Baldry et al., 2016). A similar issue is reported by GREVIO to Netherlands, where Dutch police have been criticised for failing to effectively identify and respond to stalking cases (GREVIO, 2020c). The public prosecutor's offices and courts in Austria have likewise been found to fail to take threats related to domestic violence and stalking seriously, leading to a disjunction between the existing legislation and its application in practice (Association of Austrian Autonomous Women's Shelters, AOF & Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Vienne, IST, 2016).

An evaluation of a training programme for professionals in Ireland identifies barriers to translating learnings into practice, including professionals' lack of confidence or experience in the field, the lack of sustained support and supervision offered to practitioners, insufficient time allocated in training sessions to respond to practitioners' individual needs and participants forgetting knowledge over time if they do not have an opportunity to apply it in the field (Rodriguez et al., 2020). The authors emphasise the need to change organisational mind-sets to ensure that training is valued and recognised, which can help secure funding and resources (Rodriguez et al., 2020). A lack of awareness of psychological violence and coercive control among professionals is also identified as a barrier to secondary prevention in countries outside the EU (see **Box A5.1** in Annex 5).

Another barrier to prevention highlighted by survey participants (51 participants, see **Figure A5.3**) and discussed in the wider literature is **difficulty proving psychological violence in a court of law**.¹⁶² In relation to prosecuting feederism¹⁶³ as a form of coercive control in Spain, for example,

¹⁶⁰ For example, violence between non-cohabiting partners, unmarried partners or same-sex partners. See Section 4 for more information.

¹⁶¹ These issues are discussed in more detail in Section 4.

¹⁶² In an open question, almost a quarter of survey respondents (10 out of 46) identified this as the most significant barrier to effective prevention.

the difficulty of differentiating abusive behaviour from sexual fetish in court is identified as a barrier to its prosecution (Obreja et al., 2019). Similar arguments around abusive behaviour being difficult to distinguish from “harmless” behaviour are made in relation to proving coercive control in France as many of the tactics used in coercive control are not criminal when viewed in isolation.¹⁶⁴ A similar concern has been raised in relation to the prosecution of stalking in Portugal, as the activities involved in stalking, when viewed individually, are often perceived by professionals simply as “practices of courtship and romance”, rather than criminal offences (Grangeia & Matos, 2013; see also Nikupeteri, 2017). Moreover, the very recurring nature of coercive control may encourage police officers to wait for a pattern of abuse to emerge before they intervene, consequently enabling recidivism.¹⁶⁵ Victims are likewise required to build a case on the continuum of violence, given that the tactics used in coercive control are not criminal when viewed in isolation. Difficulty proving psychological violence and coercive control is also identified as a barrier to prevention in other OECD countries (see **Box A5.2** in Annex 5).

Even where prosecution may be feasible, **insufficient levels of protection offered by the criminal justice system** can also play a role in preventing stalking recidivism, with some countries (BG, HR, LU) providing no protection prior to a final judgement, while others provide only pre-trial protection (IT) or pre and in trial protection (LV) (van der Aa & Romkens, 2013).

Even legislation that does not relate to domestic violence specifically can act as a barrier to effective secondary prevention. For example, **judicial processes and decisions in relation to visitation and custody arrangements have been identified as a barrier to secondary prevention. It provides perpetrators with opportunities for continued post-separation abuse**, generally in the form of coercive control or psychological violence either indirectly through the child or in situations of contact resulting from the co-parenting arrangement (Feresin et al., 2019). Legal emphasis on the child’s “right” to have a relationship with both parents in several European countries (including Italy) results in joint custody as the preferred model, regardless of whether abuse has been perpetrated in the past (Feresin et al., 2019). Furthermore, mothers who raise concerns about abuse tend to receive less favourable custody rulings (Feresin et al., 2019). Similarly, it has been found that the focus on protecting children in family social work can obscure the mother’s experiences of co-parent stalking (Nikupeteri, 2017).

5.2.2 Structural barriers

Survey participants were asked about the extent to which certain structural barriers impede prevention of psychological violence against women in their country (see **Figure A5.4** in Annex 5). A key structural barrier identified in the survey is **insufficient funding** for policies and initiatives to prevent psychological violence (46 participants),¹⁶⁶ perhaps linked to the **limited capacity of support providers** (44 participants). A lack of adequate resources for frontline services is identified as a barrier to secondary prevention in Austria, where some intervention centres are over-subscribed

¹⁶³ Obreja et al. (2019) define feederism as “an occurrence within an intimate relationship where sexual desire is expressed or maintained through acts of encouragement and validation related to the consumption of food, force-feeding or applauding a partner's attempts to gain weight”.

¹⁶⁴ <https://en.womenforwomenfrance.org/post/coercive-control-a-vital-concept-in-domestic-abuse>.

¹⁶⁵ <https://en.womenforwomenfrance.org/post/coercive-control-a-vital-concept-in-domestic-abuse>.

¹⁶⁶ To a great extent, to some extent or to a small extent

and lack the resources to provide long term support to victims (Association of Austrian Autonomous Women's Shelters, AOF & Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Vienne, IST, 2016). Research on ex-partner stalking prevention in Denmark likewise identified legal and bureaucratic barriers, ambiguous responsibilities and a lack of communication and cooperation between agencies, which weaken the capacity of professionals to provide victim support (Lokkegaard et al., 2019). Another study identifies inadequate provision in Portugal for the secondary prevention of stalking, noting **a lack of treatment programmes for perpetrators of stalking**, a failure by criminal justice institution to solicit those services that are available, inadequate risk assessment tools to measure recidivism and an absence of efficient protocols to deal with stalking cases (Ferreira et al., 2018).

Survey participants also highlight a **lack of recognition of psychological violence in national policies, strategies and action plans** (42 participants) as well as a general **lack of coherence of policy in this area** (43 participants). In a report reviewing policy and practices related to psychological violence in Poland, the authors conclude that **stalking is rarely included in policy and initiatives focusing on domestic violence** (Krizsan & Pap, 2016). These insights align with the finding discussed in Section 5.1.3 that the majority of practices to prevent psychological violence implemented in EU Member States are not integrated into a national strategy or action plans on violence against women or gender equality.

The majority of survey participants state that policies **lack robust monitoring and evaluation**, aligning with the lack of evaluations identified as part of our assessment of practices (see Section 5.1.5).

5.2.3 Cultural barriers

Survey participants were asked to what extent cultural barriers impede prevention of psychological violence against women in their country (see **Figure A5.5** in Annex 5). Almost all survey participants identify **a lack of recognition and understanding of psychological violence in the general population** (as distinct from other forms of domestic violence or intimate partner violence) (51 participants),¹⁶⁷ as well as **low awareness of psychological violence and/ or coercive control as a criminal offence** (48 out of 55 participants) and **distrust of the legal system** (46 participants). All of these factors might **discourage victims from reporting cases of psychological violence to the relevant authorities** (49 out of 55 participants).

Several other sources identify **victims not recognising their experiences as violence and control** as a barrier to reporting (and consequently to prevention). The lack of recognition may stem directly from the influence of a controlling partner, as well as the broader social context. A study conducted in Spain examined young people's perception of psychological violence by randomly assigning 693 people aged from 17 to 25 to six different scenarios of psychological violence between heterosexual

¹⁶⁷ To a great extent, to some extent or to a small extent.

couples (Perles et al., 2021). The authors suggest that couples often fail to identify psychological partner violence, including male perpetrators who might normalise their behaviour and consider that women are responsible for their own victimisation (Perles et al., 2021). A lack of recognition of stalking behaviours is highlighted as an issue in the Portuguese context (Montero et al., 2015). In Malta, a study drawing on interviews and focus groups with victims of psychological violence and professionals, finds that cultural factors result in lower awareness and understanding of psychological violence compared to physical violence, reducing the likelihood of victims reporting such crimes to the authorities (Naudi et al., 2018). This research suggests that **female victims lack an understanding of what constitutes psychological violence and/or coercive control** (Naudi et al., 2018). A survey based on a nationally representative cross-sectional sample of adult women living in Spain and attending primary care services (n=10,322) finds that women are more likely to report violent incidents and end the abuse when the duration of violence is short (Montero et al., 2015). Conversely, **women who experience sustained violence over time – a pattern typical of psychological violence- are less likely to seek support to end their victimisation**, including reporting the violence to the authorities, as they gradually come to normalise their experiences. This study suggests that **experiencing physical assault alongside psychological abuse increases the likelihood of victims’ reporting the incident(s) to the authorities** because victims are more likely to identify this as violence (Montero et al., 2015).

Victims’ fear of reporting and distrust of the police and other authorities is identified in literature as a barrier to effective prevention. A report assessing Poland’s response to preventing and combatting gender-based violence concludes that **psychological violence is not considered as “serious” as other forms of violence** such as murder, assault or rape, which might lead victims to think the police will not do anything about their situation (Krizsan & Pap., 2016). This is also highlighted as a barrier to witnesses reporting intimate partner violence (i.e. friends, family members, neighbours etc. who might become aware of such violence) based on qualitative research conducted in Denmark, France, Portugal and Germany (EIGE, 2020). In France, research suggests that stalking victims might be afraid of reporting abuse out of fear that the police will not believe them or that the violence will escalate if the police intervene.¹⁶⁸ Victims’ lack of trust in the police is also identified as a barrier to reporting cases of stalking in Italy (Baldry et al., 2016). Drawing on interviews with victims of stalking (n=130, including 120 women), this study reports that victims have mixed views about the way in which the police handled their case. Several victims felt the police did not believe or help them, felt judged and lacked trust in the police (Baldry et al., 2016).

¹⁶⁸ <https://en.womenforwomenfrance.org/post/coercive-control-a-vital-concept-in-domestic-abuse>.

Some respondents were concerned that reporting might result in retaliation by their partner (Baldry et al., 2016). Qualitative research indicates that **fear of retaliation** is also a barrier to witness reporting of intimate partner violence in EU Member States (EIGE, 2020).

Other cultural barriers to prevention as reported by practitioners in the survey are **gender stereotypes and the perceived gender roles within society** (n=48), as well as **belief that the domestic sphere and intimate relationships are a private matter** (n=48). Respondents highlight stereotypes around women being the “manipulator” in relationships, as well as the place of psychological violence in a broader patriarchal culture that maintains a belief in the dominance and superiority of the man. Research findings in relation to stalking have also observed that victims’ experiences may not be validated if viewed in the context of stereotypical conceptions of domestic violence, parenthood, womanhood and victimhood (Nikupeteri, 2017).

5.2.4 *Other barriers to prevention*

A key barrier discussed earlier relates to low awareness of psychological violence and coercive control among professionals in the police and criminal justice sector. **Professionals’ low awareness and lack of understanding is also identified as a barrier in relation to the healthcare sector.**

One study based on discourse analysis of Portuguese policy and practice related to stalking reports that, in Portugal, health professionals such as general practitioners, psychologists and social workers, lack awareness about how to best assist stalking victims (Grangeia & Matos., 2013).

Another study conducted in Denmark, which surveyed female victims living in a Danish shelter, identifies PTSD as a risk factor for psychological violence re-victimisation, but argues that this is not well identified and addressed by healthcare professionals (Dokkedahl et al., 2021).

Similarly, interviews with Finnish women victims of post-separation stalking (n=15) and professionals¹⁶⁹ that had worked with them (n=5) observed a **failure among the professionals to identify these women as victims and to consequently provide adequate support** (Nikupeteri, 2016). This failure was attributed to the complex nature of stalking and the seemingly “ambivalent” reactions and strategies of the victims, with the victims expressing frustration and dissatisfaction at the inadequate support provided by services and the justice system (Nikupeteri, 2016). A Danish study of female victims of co-parent stalking (n=196) likewise reported that professionals lack both knowledge of the issue and an appreciation of its gravity and consequences (Lokkegaard et al.,

¹⁶⁹ These professionals were either social workers, shelter workers or therapists.

2019). Such misconceptions around stalking can discourage victims from seeking intervention (Nikupeteri, 2016).

A number of barriers associated with preventing **technology-facilitated psychological abuse and coercive control** specifically have also been identified in a number of studies from outside the EU, as outlined in **Box 18**.

Box 18. Literature from other OECD countries: barriers to the prevention of technology-facilitated violence

Two studies from Australia identify barriers for the secondary prevention of technology-facilitated psychological violence and coercive control. For example, **the “spacelessness” of technology-facilitated abuse acts as a barrier to secondary prevention by facilitating continuation of the abuse even in situations of physical distancing** (Harris & Woodlock, 2019; Dragiewicz et al., 2018). Moreover, in situations of geographical isolation – such as rural living – perpetrator control of technologies and vehicles effectively gives him absolute control over her communications and movements, creating significant barriers for help-seeking behaviour (Harris & Woodlock, 2019). Even in densely populated areas, **the use of technology to track the victim’s movements and communications at any distance can making leaving an abusive relationship both more difficult and more dangerous and restricts her access to support in both public and private spaces** (Harris & Woodlock, 2019; Dragiewicz et al., 2018). Even where it is possible and desirable for women to cease engaging with the technologies facilitating the violence, this may simply escalate the abuse (Harris & Woodlock, 2019).

Furthermore, **threats of public humiliation via social media platforms can be used by perpetrators as a “point of leverage” to prevent victims seeking to leave the abusive relationship** (Dragiewicz et al., 2018; Harris & Woodlock, 2019). These platforms can also be used to amplify abuse of the partner through a mobilisation of broader cultures of online misogyny to create a campaign of harassment across multiple platforms and from multiple sources (Dragiewicz et al., 2018). Finally, attempts to prevent abusive behaviour on such platforms are challenged by perpetrators’ capacities to circumnavigate the preventive technologies and exploit the various loopholes available across different platforms, while the tactics of technology-facilitated coercive control are often too complex to report through drop-down menus or flagging tools (Dragiewicz et al., 2018). **A lack of international legal mechanisms for regulation across online platforms further complicates attempts to block or remove abusive material** (Dragiewicz et al., 2018).

A guidance document on how to design technology that “is resistant to being used as a tactic of domestic abuse” discusses the nature of **technology-facilitated coercive control** in the UK and reports – based on a literature review - that **victims find it difficult to leave their relationships** out of fear of what might result from a separation, including a lack of alternative accommodation or financial resources (Nuttall et al., 2019). Drawing on desk research and surveys disseminated amongst victims and practitioners, another UK study finds that female victims often do not seek support after being victimised online because they feel ashamed or fear the consequences (Safelives, 2019). An Australian study on digital coercive control similarly reports that the majority of female victims do not report their experience because

they are embarrassed (Harris & Woodlock, 2019). These emotions are compounded by experiences of being held responsible for the abuse when victims do seek aid (Harris & Woodlock, 2019).

Sources: Harris & Woodlock, 2019; Dragiewicz et al., 2018; Nuttall et al., 2019; Safelives, 2019.

5.2.5 *Barriers to preventing psychological violence for specific groups of women*

Survey participants were asked if there are particular barriers to preventing psychological violence for specific groups of women.¹⁷⁰ As shown in **Figure A5.6** (see Annex 5), the groups most commonly identified as facing particular barriers to preventing psychological violence are **migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee women, homeless women, Roma or traveller women and non-heterosexual women**. However, other groups of women specified in the survey are also identified (young women and girls, women with disabilities, older women, ethnic minority women and women with substance dependence as well as pregnant women, women in rural areas, unemployed women and single mothers). Only four out of the 55 participants think that there are no particular barriers to preventing psychological violence for specific groups of women.

The main barriers identified specifically for **migrant and refugee women** are a lack of targeted support services, language and cultural barriers including limited access to interpreters, lack of awareness of rights and the vulnerability due to immigration status. The lack of targeted support services is also mentioned as one of the main barriers for **homeless women and Roma and traveller women**. For homeless women, other barriers include lack of awareness of psychological violence, as well as stigma against homeless women and lack of access to secure housing or safe places including shelters.

The literature review identified little evidence relating to barriers that affect specific sub-groups of women, suggesting that this topic is under-researched. One study highlights the **difficulty in assessing how to prevent psychological violence amongst LGBTQI+ victims because this population has been understudied and current scales used to assess psychological abuse have been designed to detect abusive behaviours with heterosexual couples** (Longares et al., 2018). The authors also noted that LGBTQI+ victims might be particularly afraid of reporting crimes to the police or domestic abuse shelters out of fear of being publicly “outed” (Longares et al., 2018).

Another study conducted in Sweden and the UK identifies certain barriers specific to migrant women with unsettled immigration status. For example, the **legal dependency of many migrant**

¹⁷⁰ Answers to this question were structured according to a pre-coded list, although there was an option to write in “Other”.

women on their sponsor may further strengthen power inequalities within the family and increase their vulnerability to exploitation and control (Daoud, 2019). The perpetrator may also control the victim's travel documents as part of their abuse, which may escalate to the woman becoming "illegal" if the perpetrator refuses to renew her visa (Daoud, 2019).

5.3 Key findings and implications

Desk research surveyed practitioners highlighted a number of **legal, cultural and structural barriers impeding the effective (primary and secondary) prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women** as well as additional barriers relating to limited understanding of the issue among professionals, and the role of technology in perpetuating the violence.

In terms of legal barriers, limitations of the national legal framework such as having **no specific criminal offence** relating to psychological violence or coercive control, relevant **criminal offences not being well aligned with the patterns of behaviour typical of psychological violence** and **criminal offences not covering all victim-perpetrator relationships** were the most frequently mentioned. Beyond criminal legislation, survey participants highlighted **a lack of awareness of psychological violence among professionals in the police and criminal justice sector.**

Insufficient funding for policies and initiatives to prevent psychological violence and the **limited capacity of support providers** were some of the leading structural barriers identified by respondents. In terms of cultural barriers, respondents mentioned **a lack of recognition and understanding of psychological violence in the general population** as well as **low awareness of psychological violence and/ or coercive control as a criminal offence** and **distrust of the legal system.** All of these factors were seen as potentially **discouraging victims from reporting cases of psychological violence to the relevant authorities.**

Desk research identified 39 practices to prevent coercive control and psychological violence against women implemented in 25 EU Member States in the past ten years. Many of the practices and measures – particularly education, vocational training and perpetrator programmes - are designed to prevent violence against women or domestic violence more broadly, but address psychological violence as a type of it. **A lack of policies and interventions specific to psychological violence and coercive control may contribute to low awareness and understanding of these forms of violence, both among professionals and among the public.**

Psychological violence and coercive control are less well understood than other forms of domestic violence, for instance physical violence (Naudi et al., 2018). To date, the implementation of awareness-raising campaigns relating to psychological violence and coercive control has been limited to a small number of Member States (BE, BG, DK, NL). There is little evidence to suggest that these campaigns are informed by evidence and research, and little or no information could be identified about monitoring and evaluation. There is a need to understand the impact and effectiveness of public awareness campaigns, and to ensure that campaigns reach people living in all Member States.

The gendered nature of psychological violence and the specific needs of vulnerable persons are key principles underpinning the articles of the Istanbul Convention. Although there are good examples where practices recognise and foreground the gender dimension of psychological violence and coercive control, there are a number of instances where it is minimised or ignored. Sexism and gender inequality are fundamental to coercive control and psychological violence against women. Without recognising and responding to them, the root causes of the issue cannot be addressed. Similarly, only a small number of the identified practices are targeted at or tailored to meet the needs of specific groups of women. Little formal research has been conducted in the area, resulting in a limited evidence base to support the development of such targeted practices.

Although there are examples of prevention practices that are embedded in the national strategy or action plan to combat domestic violence/violence against women, this is not the case for the majority. In some cases certain forms of psychological violence (for instance, stalking) are omitted from domestic violence action plans. Nonetheless, practices are often designed and implemented in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including organisations who work directly with victims. **A lack of cohesive policy in this area makes it more difficult to promote a consistent, sustainable, evidence-based approach to preventing psychological violence and coercive control.**

Perpetrators may use new technology to abuse and control women in new and insidious ways and to make it more difficult for them to leave an abusive relationship (Harris & Woodlock, 2019; Dragiewicz et al., 2018). Few of the practices and measures identified in EU Member States address the role of new technology and online communication. The lack of interventions targeted at technology-facilitated psychological violence – or even that address this alongside other forms of violence – indicates an unmet need and an area where women in EU Member States are not well protected and supported.

Of the 39 practices to prevent coercive control and psychological violence against women identified in EU Member States, only a small number have a robust evaluation planned or underway, all of which are educational initiatives or perpetrator programmes. This evidence gap has profound implications because it makes it difficult to implement evidence-based policy in this area.

A number of recommendations for organisations who design and/or implement preventive practices relating to psychological violence can be found in Annex 7.

6 Conclusions

Coercive control and psychological violence are widespread and pervasive, and they have a profound impact on the lives of victims and their families

Across the EU, almost half of all women (43 %) have experienced psychological violence from a partner and around a third (35 %) have experienced controlling behaviour from a partner (FRA, 2012). Psychological violence and coercive control have profound implications for women victims and their children. Women who experience psychological violence face an increased risk of suicide (European Project of Forced Suicide, 2021) depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Lövestad et al., 2017; Dokkedahl et al., 2021; Domenech Del Rio & Sirvent Garcia Del Valle., 2017; Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019; Daugherty et al., 2019; Tullio et al., 2021). Psychological violence also has a negative impact on victims' children, for whom exposure to violence is associated with an increased risk of victimisation and perpetration in adulthood (Rikić et al., 2017; Rada, 2014). The scale of this issue and the magnitude of its implications underlines the need to take action to prevent and respond to coercive control and psychological violence against women.

Limited measures are in place to actively prevent coercive control and psychological violence

A range of actions have been taken at the Member State level to prevent psychological violence and coercive control. Psychological violence and coercive control are criminalised in some form in all EU Member States, although only a small number of Member States have criminal legislation specific to psychological violence or coercive control. A range of practices and measures implemented at the national level to prevent specifically psychological violence and coercive control is also rather limited. Desk research identified 39 such practices implemented in EU Member States between 2012 and 2021). However, whilst there is some attention paid to this issue, there is a lack of funding and resources directed at preventing psychological violence and coercive control. The majority of surveyed practitioners (46 out of 55) agree that insufficient funding and resources limit the capacity of organisations to help and support victims, as well as the effective prevention of psychological violence and coercive control.

The research highlights a lack of strategic direction and coordination to national-level policy on preventing psychological violence and coercive control. Only around a quarter of reviewed practices (10 out of 39) are embedded within a national strategy relating to gender equality or the prevention of domestic violence/violence against women. In some cases, certain forms of psychological violence - for instance, stalking (Krizsan & Pap, 2016) - are omitted from domestic violence action plans. A lack of recognition of psychological violence and coercive control in national action plans is highlighted as a barrier to prevention by most surveyed practitioners (42 out of 55). A lack of cohesive policy in this area makes it more difficult to promote a consistent, sustainable, evidence-based approach to preventing psychological violence and coercive control.

A key objective outlined in the BPfA is to study the effectiveness of preventive measures relating to violence against women (strategic objective D.2) (UN Women, 1995). However, there are relatively few evaluations of practices implemented in EU Member States to prevent psychological violence and coercive control. This evidence gap is more pronounced for certain types of activities such as awareness-raising campaigns and vocational training initiatives. Robust evaluations are most common for educational initiatives and perpetrator programmes. This evidence gap has profound implications for effective implementation of evidence-based policy.

Coercive control and psychological violence in EU Member States are generally addressed as part of broader action around domestic violence.

The Istanbul Convention and BPfA recognise psychological violence (and domestic violence more broadly) as a type of violence against women, which is both the cause and the result of unequal power relationships between women and men. However, practices and legislation implemented in EU Member States to prevent psychological violence often do not recognise the disproportionate impact on women. A third of the practices and measures assessed in this study (10 out of 39) do not identify psychological violence or coercive control as forms of violence against women or link them to gender equality more broadly. Sexism and gender inequality are fundamental elements of coercive control and psychological violence against women; without recognising and responding to them, the root causes of the issue cannot be addressed.

Only four Member States (DK, IE, ES, and FR) have a stand-alone criminal offence for psychological violence or coercive control¹⁷¹. Psychological violence is more commonly criminalised under domestic violence offences (this is the case in 14 Member States), although in some Member States legislation does not refer to all forms of domestic violence as defined in the Istanbul Convention, including psychological violence. This lack of specificity makes it more challenging for the general public and professionals to recognise psychological violence as criminal behaviour and to make use of the relevant legal provisions.

In some Member States, domestic violence legislation deviates from the Istanbul Convention as it does not cover all relevant relationships and contexts (for instance, legislation only applies to current relationships, or relationships where the partners live together or have done in the past). More restricted definitions mean that certain instances of psychological violence may not be covered by the prevailing legal framework, and the requirement of the Istanbul Convention to criminalise all forms of domestic violence is not met.

In most EU Member States (22), psychological violence is criminalised under general criminal offences such as coercion and threats. General criminal offences are not specific to violence against women and are often not well matched to the behaviour characteristic of psychological violence (GREVIO, 2017a; 2017b; 2019a; 2020a, 2020c). This limits the effective criminalisation of psychological violence and coercive control and results in fewer prosecutions.

Practices and measures implemented in EU Member States to prevent psychological violence and coercive control rarely focus exclusively on these forms of violence; these are often addressed alongside other forms of domestic violence (only identified awareness-raising campaigns focus on psychological violence, stalking and/or coercive control). A lack of policies and interventions specific to psychological violence and coercive control may contribute to low awareness and understanding of these forms of violence, both among professionals and among the public.

Telecommunication and digital technology introduce new challenges in preventing and responding to psychological violence and coercive control.

Across the EU, more than one in ten women (13 %) have experienced cyber harassment in the last five years; rising to a quarter (25 %) of women in the youngest age group (16-29) (FRA, 2019). Telecommunication and digital technology can make it more difficult to prevent and respond to psychological violence (Harris & Woodlock 2019; Dragiewicz et al. 2018), yet few practices implemented in EU Member States address the role of new technology and online communication. The lack of

¹⁷¹ Ireland being the only EU Member States currently including criminalising coercive control as a stand-alone offence.

interventions targeted at technology-facilitated psychological violence – or even that address this alongside other forms of violence – indicates an unmet need and an area where women in EU Member States are not well protected and supported.

In a number of EU Member States, criminal legislation does not refer to cyber stalking and other forms of psychological violence against women perpetrated online, making it less likely that such behaviour will be prosecuted. Without recourse to criminal law, psychological violence against women perpetrated online is dealt with by digital platforms and other service providers, and whilst several such organisations have introduced initiatives to identify and remove harmful content, the emphasis to date has been on other harmful content (e.g., terrorism related) and not on violence against women (Barker & Jurasz, 2017).

Improved awareness and understanding of psychological violence and coercive control could result in greater use of legal provisions and more effective criminalisation

Victims may not recognise psychological violence and coercive control as abusive behaviour or criminal conduct (Perles et al., 2021; Montero et al., 2015; Naudi et al., 2018) due to the dynamics of abuse and control, as well as broader cultural factors such as myths around courtship and romance. Several of the identified practices actively seek to challenge harmful beliefs and misconceptions such as victim-blaming and the romanticisation of intimate partner violence. Psychological violence and coercive control are less well understood than other forms of domestic violence, for instance physical violence (Naudi et al., 2018). Experiencing physical assault alongside psychological abuse increases the likelihood of victims reporting the incident(s) to the authorities because they are more likely to identify this as violence (Montero et al., 2015). A lack of awareness of psychological violence and coercive control, particularly among victims, might contribute to under-reporting, impeding effective criminalisation, and making it more difficult for victims and their families to access support services.

Awareness-raising campaigns have been implemented in some EU Member States (BE, BG, DK, NL) to raise awareness about psychological violence and coercive control. Some campaigns – for instance, a campaign in Denmark about stalking (Stubberud et al., 2018) – focus on raising awareness about the criminality of such behaviour. Others, for instance a campaign in Bulgaria,¹⁷² seek to dispel myths about romance that serve to reinforce and perpetuate abusive behaviour. However, the reach of awareness-raising campaigns relating to psychological violence and coercive control across the EU is limited to a small number of Member States and their impact and effectiveness still need to be evaluated.

Effective criminalisation may be prevented by low awareness and understanding of criminal offences such as domestic violence (GREVIO, 2021a; Association of Austrian Autonomous Women's Shelters, AOF & Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Vienne, IST, 2016) and stalking (GREVIO, 2019a; GREVIO, 2020c; Baldry et al., 2016) among professionals in the criminal justice sector. There have been efforts to address this issue in EU Member States, as evidenced by the number of training programmes for professionals in the criminal justice sector (20 practices) identified in this study. However, implementation of such interventions is uneven across Member States and their impact and effectiveness unclear. A lack of knowledge and understanding among professionals may result in legal provisions not being used fully or effectively, for instance in psychological violence and coercive control being prosecuted under lesser offences.

Women with certain characteristics and those who experience specific life events face an elevated risk of experiencing coercive control and psychological violence

Certain groups of women experience psychological violence at a higher rate than the general population: non-heterosexual women (FRA, 2014), women with a disability or health condition (FRA,

¹⁷² <https://loveerrors.bg/#errors-list/1>

2014; Meseguer-Santamaria et al., 2021) and women from a migrant background (FRA, 2014). The risk of experiencing psychological violence appears to be elevated at certain points in the life course – for instance, in early adulthood (Bundeskriminalamt, 2017; 2018; 2019), particularly in relation to cyber harassment (FRA, 2019). Women may also be more exposed to psychological violence and coercive control during or after experiencing certain life events, for instance divorce or separation (Selic et al., 2013), particularly since such violence is more often perpetrated by a former partner than a current spouse or partner (Bundeskriminalamt, 2018; 2019; 2020). Women with dependent children may face additional risks, since perpetrators may make threats relating to children and custody arrangements may provide them with opportunities for continued post-separation abuse (Feresin et al., 2019). Variation in the prevalence of psychological violence indicates a need for interventions that are targeted at specific groups of women, and that support women through certain life experiences.

Comparative victimisation data relating to psychological violence and stalking in EU Member States (FRA, 2012) enables sub-group analysis and inform who is more at risk of experiencing violence. However, this data set is almost 10 years old, and the picture may have changed during that time. More recent EU wide data is available on cyber violence (FRA, 2019), but this is not specific to the domestic or intimate partner context. There is a need for more up-to-date data on the prevalence of coercive control and psychological violence against women in the domestic or intimate partner context and how this varies across different groups, particularly in relation to new and evolving forms of violence such as cyber violence. The upcoming EU-GBV survey (Eurostat) complemented by FRA-EIGE survey on VAW whose results are expected for 2024 will hopefully enable sub-group analysis to inform the development of policies and interventions that are better targeted to meet the needs of specific groups.

The Istanbul Convention (Article 18.3) states that measures to prevent violence against women and domestic violence should address the specific needs of vulnerable persons. Similarly, the BPfA recognises that some women face particular barriers to empowerment, emphasising the need to reach the most marginalised women and girls by tackling inequality and discrimination (UN Women, 1995). Most surveyed practitioners agreed that specific barriers exist to preventing psychological violence and coercive control for certain groups of women, notably migrant and refugee women, homeless women, Roma or traveller women and non-heterosexual women. However, the reviewed prevention practices by and large do not address these specific needs, either ignoring them or just declaring attention to “vulnerable groups” with no specific actions. Only a small number of the identified practices are targeted at or tailored to meet the needs of specific groups of women, whether vulnerable groups or women who are deemed more at risk.

Coercive control and psychological violence against women are pervasive, widespread and profoundly harmful. The magnitude of this issue and the seriousness of its consequences underlines the need to act. A range of actions have been taken to prevent and respond to psychological violence and coercive control in EU Member States, but there are areas where policy and practice might be further developed and strengthened. The following section outlines policy recommendations at the EU and Member State levels.

7 Policy recommendations

Promote a comprehensive approach to tackling all forms of violence against women in which coercive control is a constitutive element in the upcoming EU proposal for a Directive on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Recommendations for the EU institutions and agencies:

- As set out in the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, the European Commission should prioritise the EU accession to the Istanbul Convention as the landmark for international standards in terms of prevention and response to gender-based violence.
- Should the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention remain blocked, the European Commission should introduce new measures to improve the protection of victims of all forms of violence against women and domestic violence, including psychological violence, in line with the Istanbul Convention. Specifically, the new **legislative proposal from the European Commission on combating violence against women and domestic violence** (expected in March 2022) should be aligned with the Istanbul Convention, including with regard to psychological violence against women.
- As recommended by the European Parliament, the European Commission should appoint a coordinator against violence against women and other forms of gender-based violence¹⁷³. Such coordinator would support the assessments of trends in gender-based violence, the measuring of results of prevention actions, including the gathering of statistics in close cooperation with relevant civil society organisations active in this field, and reporting. It would also facilitate the sharing of evidence and best practice on prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women through the **EU network on the prevention of gender-based violence and domestic violence**.
- The European Commission should dedicate funding as part of the **Daphne strand of the Citizens, Equality, Rights and Values Programme** and other funding streams for practices and measures that are designed to prevent coercive control and psychological violence against women. Such measures should seek to address sexism and gender inequality as root causes of coercive control and psychological violence against women. Monitoring and evaluation should form an integral component of EU-funded activities relating to coercive control and psychological violence against women, and evaluation findings should inform future practices.

Recommendations for Member States:

- All activities to prevent coercive control and psychological violence against women implemented at the national level should be integrated in a cohesive action plan or strategy relating to the prevention of domestic violence/violence against women.

¹⁷³ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0388_EN.html

- National governments should dedicate funding for practices and measures that are designed to prevent coercive control and psychological violence against women. Monitoring and evaluation should form an integral component of these activities.

Address psychological violence specifically, explicitly and comprehensively as a stand-alone phenomenon or within the framework of domestic violence

Recommendations for EU institutions and agencies:

- If domestic violence or gender-based violence is included as a Eurocrime under **Article 83(1) TFEU**, this should be defined in line with the Istanbul Convention i.e., including psychological violence as a form of domestic violence.
- The European Commission should make available guidance to MS and EU institutions on how to design and implement gender-sensitive practices in relation to preventing domestic violence, including coercive control and psychological violence against women.

Recommendations for Member States:

- Member States who have ratified the Istanbul Convention should prioritised its implementation with adequate resources. Member States in which ratification of the Istanbul Convention was not successful yet are encouraged to increase the knowledge about the importance of the Convention in order to end misconceptions so that the process can be completed.
- Where necessary, national governments should introduce criminal legislation or amend existing legislation to ensure that domestic violence is defined in line with the Istanbul Convention, referencing all forms of domestic violence – including psychological violence – and recognising all contexts in which this violence occurs.

Introduce specific, targeted measures to prevent and respond to coercive control and psychological violence against women perpetrated online

Recommendations for EU institutions and agencies:

- As set out in the **EU Gender Equality Strategy**, gender mainstreaming should be applied to all EU policy and legislation relating to digital technology.
- The European Commission **Digital Services Act** should clarify online platforms' responsibilities with regards to cyber violence against women, including cyber stalking and the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, to ensure a common approach across EU Member States.
- The European Commission should include technology-enabled forms of gender-based violence against in its **legislative proposal from the European Commission on combating violence against women and domestic violence** such as cyber stalking to further promote their criminalisation in the EU.
- Actions relating to cyber violence as part of the **European Strategy for a better Internet for our children** should encompass forms of psychological violence against children, such a cyber-harassment alongside other forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation.
- The EU campaign to raise awareness about victims' rights outlined as part of the **Victims' Rights Strategy** (2020) should include cyber violence against women as a central component.

Recommendations for Member States:

- As recommended by the European Parliament¹⁷⁴, national governments should establish networks of national contact points and initiatives to improve the approximation of rules and strengthen the enforcement of existing rules to address gender-based cyber violence.
- Member States should ensure that coercive control and psychological violence against women perpetrated online are covered by existing criminal legislation and to amend or introducing new legislation where necessary.
- National governments should develop guidance, strengthen regulation and where necessary introduce new legislation to promote safe platform design and to enable swift and effective moderation of online content as a means of preventing psychological violence against women perpetrated online.

Raise awareness and improve understanding about psychological violence and coercive control and their criminalisation.

Recommendations for EU institutions and agencies:

- The European Commission should dedicate funding towards training of practitioners specifically in relation to violence against women and domestic violence, including psychological violence and coercive control as a way to further strengthen the application of national criminal law.
- The European Commission should dedicate funding for gender-sensitive awareness-raising campaigns focusing on coercive control and psychological violence against women, and for monitoring and evaluation activities to understand their impact and effectiveness.
- EU institutions and agencies should promote the dissemination and exchange of promising practices towards effective criminalisation and prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women.

Recommendations for Member States:

- National governments should fund and deliver training for professionals on coercive control and psychological violence against women.
- National governments should ensure that coercive control and psychological violence against women is systematically included in individual assessments to identify specific protection needs as per Article 22 (2 and 3) of the Victim's Right Directive and the proposal for a Directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence.

Ensure that practices are effectively and appropriately targeted to reach the most at-risk groups and those who have additional needs

- As recommended in the European Parliament's report on cyber violence¹⁷⁵, national governments, EU institutions, offices and agencies should establish a reliable system for regularly collecting Union-wide statistical disaggregated, comparable and relevant data on gender-based violence, including cyber violence and its prevalence, dynamics and consequences, and to

¹⁷⁴ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0338_EN.html

¹⁷⁵ https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0338_EN.html

develop indicators to measure progress; reaffirms the need to collect comprehensive disaggregated and comparable data, including scientific data, in order to measure the scale of gender-based violence. They should furthermore make use of the capacity and expertise of the EIGE, Eurostat, the FRA, Europol, Eurojust and ENISA.

Recommendations for EU institutions and agencies:

- Invest in research to build a more up-to-date picture of the prevalence of coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States and how this varies across different groups of women. In particular, increase the knowledge base on the risk factors of coercive control and psychological violence against women and its impact on the victims' health as well as links with suicides and self-harm.
- EU funds to support the implementation of practices to prevent psychological violence and coercive control in Member States should have as a requirement that practices should be targeted at groups of women at higher risk or tailored to meet their needs.

Recommendations for Member States:

- Funds available at the national level to support the implementation of practices to prevent psychological violence and coercive control should have as a requirement that practices should be targeted at groups of women at higher risk or tailored to meet their needs.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Methodology

The geographical scope for all research activities covers the EU Member States. However, relatively few studies address coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States. The analysis in this study is consequently supplemented by literature relating to domestic violence or intimate partner violence more broadly (see Box 3), as well as literature relating to coercive control and psychological violence against women in other OECD countries (see Box 4-6).

A number of limitations to this methodology should be noted. All desk research activities constituted targeted literature reviews that, while structured, do not follow the same levels of rigour as a systematic review or Rapid Evidence Assessment. This approach was chosen in order to enable the research team to cover a large range of material but does mean that certain sources may have been missed. The focus on English-language searches and sources may likewise have resulted in certain findings or good examples of preventive practice being excluded from this study.

Research questions

A complete list of the research questions for this study can be found in **Box A1.1**.

Box A1.1. Research questions

1. What is the **prevalence** of psychological violence and coercive control in EU Member States based on **survey data**?
2. What evidence and conclusions can be drawn based on analysis of available **administrative data** on psychological violence and coercive control across the EU?
3. What **economic, legal, political and cultural factors** contribute to the prevalence of coercive control and psychological violence against women?
4. What are the **consequences** of coercive control and psychological violence against women for women and their families?
5. How do the **intersections between gender and other forms of inequality** impact the prevalence, causes and consequences of coercive control and psychological violence against women?
6. Which forms of psychological violence are criminalised in EU Member States and **what is the scope of criminalisation**?
7. Is psychological violence criminalised as a form of **domestic violence** or as a **self-standing offence**?
8. What **recommendations** could be drawn to improve legal regulation as regards the prevention of psychological violence and coercive control in the EU?

9. What **criteria** could define a promising practice in preventing coercive control and psychological violence against women?
10. What are the **good examples** of establishing and implementing legislative or non-legislative/'soft' measures to prevent coercive control and psychological violence against women, including repeat victimisation, in EU Member States?
11. What are the main **barriers** impeding the effective primary/secondary prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women?
12. How do the **intersections between gender and other forms of inequality** impact the scope and effectiveness of preventive measures and repeat victimisation?
13. What specific **policy recommendations** could be drawn to improve primary/secondary prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women?

Desk research and secondary analysis on the prevalence of coercive control and psychological violence against women

The aim of the desk research and secondary analysis was to assess the availability of data and the quality of data available, including the degree to which it enables cross-national comparisons and analysis from an intersectional and/or life course perspective. Desk research was carried out first to identify relevant survey and administrative data sources (e.g., police and judicial statistics) on the prevalence of coercive control and psychological violence against women of women in EU Member States. Secondary data analysis was then carried out to collate, clean and analyse the data, as far as permitted by data availability, quality and comparability, to develop an overall picture of prevalence and trends across the EU.

Data sources and inclusion criteria

The desk research involved targeted searches of the websites of relevant EU institutions and international organisations, as well as Google, Google Scholar and select academic databases (such as Scopus and Criminal Justice Abstracts). Snowballing was used to identify additional relevant documents and data sources. The inclusion and exclusion criteria used to assess sources for relevant data are outlined in [Table A1.1](#). A data extraction template was used to ensure all these criteria were met in the sources identified for further analysis.

Table A1.1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria for desk research on the prevalence of psychological violence

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Survey, administrative or other quantitative data	Qualitative data or non-quantifiable information
Data relating to psychological violence against women or coercive control of women	Data relating to other forms of violence against women (not capturing psychological violence or coercive control)
Data relating to the period post-2012 (last 10 years)	Data relating to the pre-2012 period (older than 10 years)
Within the EU	Outside the EU
Published in English	Published in other languages*

*With the exception of specific seminal sources.

Additional searches

As number of relevant sources identified in the original search was limited, an additional targeted search was carried out following the same inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table), with the exception of geographical, which was expanded to include non-EU members of the OECD. A small number of highly relevant sources identified from this search were subsequently included in the report.

Secondary analysis and synthesis of findings

Data from the sources identified in the desk research was then collated in a spreadsheet and analysed for quality and comparability. This data has been presented in table or graph format in the body of the report, and further analysis included in the report narrative and conclusions.

Literature review on the causes and consequences of coercive control and psychological violence against women

The aim of the literature review was to search for academic and grey literature relating to the political, economic, social/cultural, technological, environmental and legal factors that contribute to the occurrence of coercive control and psychological violence against women of women, and the consequences or costs of such violence for women victims, their children, other family members and broader society. The review was carried out according to the following steps:

1. **Search** - noting down the number of results for each database/search string
2. **Initial screen** - screening for relevancy based on title and compilation of a list of sources.
3. **In-depth screen** - screening for relevancy based on a more in-depth assessment of the abstract/conclusion, briefly noting on the extraction template if and why sources have been excluded.

4. **Snowballing** – identifying additional relevant sources, noting in the extraction template whether sources were identified via snowballing/structured search.

Data sources, search terms and inclusion criteria

The databases and other sources that were included in the literature review are outlined in

Table A1.2 Databases and other sources for the search on causes and consequences of psychological violence

	Academic literature	Grey literature	Other sources
Database	Scopus; Criminal Justice Abstracts; JSTOR	Google Scholar; Opengrey	Google; EU institutions or Agencies (e.g. EIGE, European Commission, FRA) or International organisations' web sites (e.g. CoE, OECD, UN Women)
Type of source	Journal articles; Book chapters	Reports; Journal articles	Official statistics; policy or legislative documents; reports

Search terms were provided to ensure the consistency and replicability of the review, and to maximise the relevance of results. These search terms were combined with geographical terms (e.g. EU, Europe or country names) at the researcher's discretion.

Box A1.2 Search terms for the literature review on causes and consequences of psychological violence

<p>Search string 1:</p> <p>“psychological violence” OR “coercive control” OR “psychological abuse” AND</p> <p>“cause” OR “driver” OR “motiv*” OR “risk factor” OR “predict*” AND</p> <p>“women” OR “woman” OR “girl” OR “female” OR “ladies” AND</p> <p>“domestic” OR “intimate” OR “household” OR “home” OR “relationship”</p> <p>Search string 2:</p> <p>“psychological violence” OR “coercive control” OR “psychological abuse” AND</p> <p>“consequence” OR “harm” OR “outcome” OR “cost” AND</p>
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“women” OR “woman” OR “girl” OR “female” OR “ladies” AND
 “domestic” OR “intimate” OR “household” OR “home” OR “relationship”

The inclusion and exclusion criteria used to assess sources for relevant data are outlined in [Table A1.3](#).

Table A1.3 Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature review on causes and consequences of psychological violence

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Information and data covering psychological violence against women or coercive control of women	Information and data relating to other forms of violence against women (not capturing psychological or coercive control)
Information on the causes, predictors, or risk factors for psychological violence against women or coercive control (quantitative and qualitative)	-
Information or data on the consequences, costs or harms of psychological violence against women or coercive control (quantitative and qualitative)	-
2012 – 2021 (10 years)	Pre-2012 studies (older than 10 years)
Peer reviewed, grey, and unpublished literature, policy documents, monitoring reports, empirical data, conference proceedings, primary and secondary studies (e.g. reviews)	Opinion and commentary pieces, letters, notes, editorials and media articles, dissertations and theses.
Within the EU	Outside the EU
Written in English	Writing in languages other than English

A data extraction template was used to ensure all these criteria were met in the sources identified for further analysis, and that the following information was extracted for each source:

- Full reference, abstract and publication type;
- Geographic scope;

- Methodology, including study population and sample size;
- How psychological violence or coercive control is defined and measures;
- The validity, generalisability, reliability and transparency of the data;
- Political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal causes of psychological violence and coercive control;
- The health, social and economic impacts or costs of psychological violence on women victims;
- The impact of psychological violence on the children of women victims;
- The indirect impacts of psychological violence on family, friends and the wider community;
- Consequences of repeat victimisation;
- Recommendations for future interventions and policy responses;
- How the source was identified;
- Relevant sources for snowballing;
- Where relevant, reasons for excluding the source.

Additional searches

As number of relevant sources identified in the original search was limited, an additional targeted search was carried out following the same inclusion and exclusion criteria with the exception of geographical scope, which was expanded to include non-EU members of the OECD. A small number of highly relevant sources identified from this search were subsequently included in the report (presented in separate text boxes). In addition, we also reviewed literature on risk factors associated with domestic violence and intimate partner violence more broadly i.e., not specific to psychological violence and coercive control. This literature was restricted to systematic reviews published in the relevant time period covering EU Member States and/or OECD countries.

Legislative document review

The document review was comprised of two phases:

Phase 1: reviewing existing reports and documents that provide overviews or summaries of the legislative position across the EU.

Phase 2: reviewing documentation from the Member State level.

Phase 1 – EU-level

Types of documents to be included: The first phase of the legislative documentary was to review existing reports and documents that provide overviews or summaries of the legislative position

across the EU. This included the three reports listed below, as well as potentially documents from international organisations (e.g. GREVIO reports); documents of EU institutions, bodies and agencies; and other documents such as academic literature and think tank reports.

1. EIGE (2017). Glossary of definitions of rape, femicide, and intimate partner violence. <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/glossary-definitions-rape-femicide-and-intimate-partner-violence>
2. European Parliament (2020). Violence against women – psychological violence and coercive control. Requested by the FEMM Committee.
3. EELN (2021) Criminalisation of gender-based violence against women in European States, including ICT-facilitated violence.¹⁷⁶

Process for identifying (additional) relevant documents: Searches of Google, Google Scholar and academic databases such as Scopus and Criminal Justice Abstracts. The focus will be on identifying the most up-to-date information relating to laws in the 27 Member States.

Phase 2 – National-level

Whereas the focus of Phase 1 was sources that include information about all Member States and provide an EU wide picture, the second phase looked in more detail for information at the national level. Given that the 2020 European Parliament report covers the legislative framework of 10 Member States¹⁷⁷ and is directly relevant to the present study – the national level searches undertaken for this study focused on filling gaps for the remaining 17 Member States. This phase involved searching relevant legal databases, legal literature, and national official legal databases. The search was conducted in English.

National legal databases

¹⁷⁶ Draft publication shared with RAND Europe by EIGE.

¹⁷⁷ DK, EL, ES, FR, IT, CY, PL, PT, RO, FI.

Table A1.4. National legal databases

MS	Name of the legal database	Link
AT	Legal Information System of the Republic of Austria	https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/defaultEn.aspx
BE	Justel	http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/cgi_loi/loi.pl http://www.ejustice.just.fgov.be/wet/wet.htm
BG	State Gazette	https://dv.parliament.bg/DVWeb/index.faces
CY	CYLAW	http://www.cylaw.org/
CZ	Legislativa	https://www.mvcr.cz/web-legislativa.aspx
DE	JURIS	https://www.juris.de/jportal/index.jsp
DK	Retsinformation	https://www.retsinformation.dk/
EE	Riigi Teataja	https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/
EL	Official Gazette	http://www.et.gr/
ES	Boletín Oficial del Estado	https://www.boe.es
FI	Finlex	http://www.finlex.fi/
FR	Légifrance	https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr
HR	Ministry of Justice - Laws and regulations	https://pravosudje.gov.hr/pristup-informacijama-6341/zakoni-i-ostali-propisi/zakoni-i-propisi-6354/6354
HU	Magyar Közlöny,	http://kozlony.magyarorszag.hu/
IE	Irish Statute Book	http://www.irishstatutebook.ie
IT	Normattiva	https://www.normattiva.it/
LT	Lietuvos teisės aktų duomenų bazė	http://www3.lrs.lt/dokpaieska/forma_1.htm
LU	Légilux	http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/index.html
LV	Latvijas Vēstnesis	https://www.vestnesis.lv/
MT	Laws of Malta	http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/LegalServices.aspx?pageid=72
NL	Overheid	https://www.overheid.nl/
PL	Polish legal database (Sejm)	http://isip.sejm.gov.pl/
PT	Digesto	https://dre.pt/
RO	Legislative Portal	http://legislatie.just.ro/
SE	Lagrummet	https://lagrummet.se/
SI	Register predpisov RS	http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/
SK	JASPI database	http://jaspi.justice.gov.sk/jaspiw1/jaspiw_mini_fr0.htm

Consultation with legal experts

We conducted three **interviews with experts in national criminal legislation** to clarify certain points or fill in the gaps in our understanding. These were relatively short (15-20 minute), informal discussions with experts (via telephone or email), focused on answering specific questions. Findings from these interviews are referenced in the main text according to a code for each interviewee:

- **PL1:** Interview with expert for **Poland** (academic). The interview covered whether domestic violence legislation would apply to an ex-spouse or partner or a partner who has never lived with the victim.
- **DK1:** Interview with expert for **Denmark** (researcher consultancy/NGO). The interview covered whether non-resident partners are covered in relation to the offence of psychological violence, as well as legislation to address cyber violence.
- **FR1:** Interview with expert for **France** (academic). The interview covered whether legal provision relating to psychological violence covers non-resident partners, rationale for introducing this provision and treatment of cyber violence against women under French law.

In addition, all experts consulted as part of this study were asked general questions about the legislative framework in their country and how it might be strengthened or improved.

Desk research to identify practices or measures relating to the primary or secondary prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women across the EU Member States

The aim of the desk research was to identify relevant legislative and non-legislative (“soft”) measures and practices within or across EU Member States relating to the primary and/or secondary prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women.

While practices focusing specifically on psychological violence and coercive control were considered a priority, practices were still considered within scope if preventing coercive control and psychological violence against women was:

- a) Explicitly mentioned as an aim or objective;
- b) Captured as an outcome; or
- c) Constituted a meaningful component of the prevention (e.g. a module in a training course).

All searches were conducted in English, but non-English language sources identified through these searches and snowballing were included if relevant and within scope.

Search process, data sources and inclusion criteria

As it was likely that the types of practices likely to be relevant to the study would not necessarily be covered by a policy or academic research, the process for the desk research was deliberately

unstructured and inclusive of a range of sources. Suggested sources and search terms were nonetheless provided, as seen in [Table A1.5](#). Snowballing and targeted searches were employed to recover additional details about practices mentioned in more than one source.

Table A1.5. Suggested sources and search terms for the desk research on practices to prevent coercive control and psychological violence against women

Sources	<p>General internet search / Google.</p> <p>Academic databases: Google Scholar, Scopus, Criminal Justice Abstracts.</p> <p>Information published by EU institutions (e.g., EIGE, European Commission, European Parliament) and international organisations (e.g. CoE and GREVIO, OECD, UN Women, Beijing+25 country reports to UNECE, CEDAW reports). In particular, baseline evaluation reports on each Member State from GREVIO (where available).</p> <p><u>Snowballing</u> should be used to identify relevant documents.</p>
Search terms	<p>1. Search terms specific to psychological violence and coercive control:</p> <p>‘psychological violence’ OR ‘psychological abuse’ OR ‘control*’ OR ‘coercive control’ OR ‘emotional abuse’ OR ‘stalk*’ OR ‘intimate terror*’ OR ‘controlling behaviour’</p> <p>AND</p> <p>‘measure’ OR ‘polic*’ OR ‘response’ OR ‘support’ OR ‘program*’ OR ‘intervention’ OR ‘campaign’ OR ‘education’ OR ‘training’ OR ‘perpetrator program*’ OR ‘offender rehab’ OR ‘prevent*’</p> <p>AND</p> <p>‘Europe’ OR ‘EU’ OR <Member States></p> <p>2. Search terms relating to domestic violence and intimate partner violence more broadly:</p> <p>‘domestic violence’ OR ‘domestic abuse’ OR ‘partner violence’ OR ‘relationship violence’</p> <p>AND</p> <p>‘measure’ OR ‘polic*’ OR ‘response’ OR ‘support’ OR ‘program*’ OR ‘intervention’ OR ‘campaign’ OR ‘education’ OR ‘training’ OR ‘perpetrator program*’ OR ‘offender rehab’ OR ‘prevent’</p> <p>AND</p> <p>‘Europe’ OR ‘EU’ OR <Member States></p> <p>3. Search terms relating to cyber violence:</p>

'cyber' OR 'online' OR 'ICT facilitated'
AND 'abuse' OR 'harassment' OR 'stalking' OR 'violence' OR 'threat*' OR 'bully*'
OR 'revenge porn*' OR 'non-consensual porn*' OR 'violation of privacy'
AND
'measure' OR 'polic*' OR 'response' OR 'support' OR 'program*' OR 'intervention' OR
'campaign' OR 'education' OR 'training' OR 'perpetrator program*' OR 'offender rehab' OR
'prevent'
AND
'Europe' OR 'EU' OR <Member States>

Relevant data about the practices identified was extracted using a data extraction tool, which covered citation information, details of the practice and any monitoring and evaluation that had occurred, and relevant sources for snowballing.

Practices identified from the survey

A small number of additional practices were identified through responses to the survey (see below). Where possible, further details about the practices were located through targeted searches. In some cases, however, the information provided by the respondent was insufficient to identify the specific practice or any additional details.

In cases where no survey responses were received from a Member State (ES, FR, CY, HU, NL), targeted emails were sent to the experts identified requesting information about any relevant practices of which they may be aware. Informative responses were received from experts in Cyprus and the Netherlands.

Development of criteria for assessing examples of promising practice in the primary or secondary prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women

The proposed criteria were developed by the research team on the basis of a targeted literature review on evaluating best practices, including EIGE's guide on best practice in preventing domestic violence (EIGE, 2015). They were also informed by the work undertaken by the research team as part of the first two deliverables for this project, as well as general common-sense principles of promising practice. The draft criteria were reviewed and discussed by colleagues from EIGE over the course of a workshop.

Assessment of identified practices against the developed criteria

All relevant practices identified from the desk research were assessed against the developed criteria. For each criterion, the practice would be classed as “red”, “amber” or “green” according to the scoring specifications associated with the criterion and the evidence available. Where insufficient evidence was available to draw meaningful conclusions, the practice was classed as “grey”.

In order to limit subjective bias in the assessment process, two members of the research team independently assessed the practices and assigned scores with an accompanying rationale. The Project Manager then performed the role of mediator, discussing the rationale with the scorers and making a final decision in cases of disagreement or doubt. A workshop between the research team and EIGE was then carried out to discuss the scoring process and make adjustments to the scores if and where necessary.

No overall score was assigned to each practice as the number of relevant criteria and level of evidence available was deemed to vary too significantly for meaningful comparison of such scores. Moreover, not all of the criteria are of equal importance, and developing a well-considered and researched weighting for the criteria identified was outside the scope of this project.

In addition, to the overall scores, specific case studies of interesting examples of practice were identified to be outlined qualitatively and in more detail within the body of the report.

Literature review of barriers to the primary and secondary prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women

The aim of the literature review was to identify barriers impeding the effective primary and/or secondary prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women.

While the **geographical scope** was initially limited to studies carried out within an EU Member State, limited search results led the scope to be expanded to include studies carried out in other OECD countries that are not part of the EU. These findings were presented separately in the report from the findings relating specifically to the EU.

All searches were conducted in English, but non-English language sources identified through these searches and snowballing were included if relevant and within scope.

Search process, data sources and inclusion criteria

The review was carried out according to the following steps:

5. **Search** - noting down the number of results for each database/search string
6. **Initial screen** - screening for relevancy based on title and compilation of a list of sources.
7. **In-depth screen** - screening for relevancy based on a more in-depth assessment of the abstract/conclusion, briefly noting on the extraction template if and why sources have been excluded.
8. **Snowballing** – identifying additional relevant sources, noting in the extraction template whether sources were identified via snowballing/structured search.

The recommended sources and search terms can be found in [Table A1.6](#).

Table A1.6 Suggested sources and search terms for the literature review on barriers to the primary and secondary prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women

Sources	<p>General internet search / Google.</p> <p>Academic databases: Google Scholar, Scopus, Criminal Justice Abstracts.</p> <p>Information published by EU institutions (e.g., EIGE, European Commission) and international organisations (e.g. CoE and GREVIO, OECD, UN Women).</p> <p><u>Snowballing</u> should be used to identify relevant documents.</p>
Search terms	<p>1. Search terms specific to psychological violence and coercive control:</p> <p>‘psychological violence’ OR ‘psychological abuse’ OR ‘control*’ OR ‘coercive control’ OR ‘emotional abuse’ OR ‘stalk*’ OR ‘intimate terror*’ OR ‘controlling behaviour’</p> <p>AND</p> <p>‘prevent*’ OR ‘reduc*’ OR ‘address*’ OR ‘stop’ OR ‘fight’ OR ‘counter’</p> <p>AND</p> <p>‘barrier’ OR ‘factor’ OR ‘difficult*’ OR ‘obstacle’ OR ‘limitation’ OR ‘imped*’</p> <p>AND</p> <p>‘Europe’ OR ‘EU’ OR <Member States></p> <p>2. Search terms relating to cyber violence:</p> <p>‘cyber’ OR ‘online’ OR ‘ICT facilitated’</p> <p>AND ‘abuse’ OR ‘harassment’ OR ‘stalking’ OR ‘violence’ OR ‘threat*’ OR ‘bully*’</p> <p>OR ‘revenge porn*’ OR ‘non-consensual porn*’ OR ‘violation of privacy’</p> <p>AND</p> <p>‘prevent*’ OR ‘reduc*’ OR ‘address*’ OR ‘stop’ OR ‘fight’ OR ‘counter’</p>

AND

'barrier' OR 'factor' OR 'difficult*' OR 'obstacle' OR 'limitation' OR 'imped*'

AND

'Europe' OR 'EU' OR <Member States>

Relevant data about the practices identified was extracted using a data extraction tool, which covered citation information, details of the research method, an assessment of the data quality, further information about the barrier(s) identified, the type(s) of intervention concerned and the population concerned (including relevance for specific vulnerable subgroups. Relevant sources for snowballing were also identified.

Barriers identified from the survey

Survey respondents were asked about their perceptions of the key legal, structural and cultural barriers to the primary and secondary prevention of coercive control and psychological violence against women. They were also asked about barriers affecting specific groups of women. These responses were incorporated alongside the findings of the literature review to give a more nuanced and comprehensive view to the barriers identified both within research and on the frontline.

Survey of relevant experts and practitioners in the field of domestic and intimate partner violence

The research team sent a survey to 212 experts and practitioners in the field of domestic and intimate partner violence across the EU Member States. Between seven and nine organisations or individuals were contacted for each country, and at least eighteen organisations targeted vulnerable groups (including the LGBTQI+ community, migrant and refugee women, roman and traveller women, women with disabilities and ethnic minority women) specifically. The survey instrument is provided in Annex 2.

Survey responses

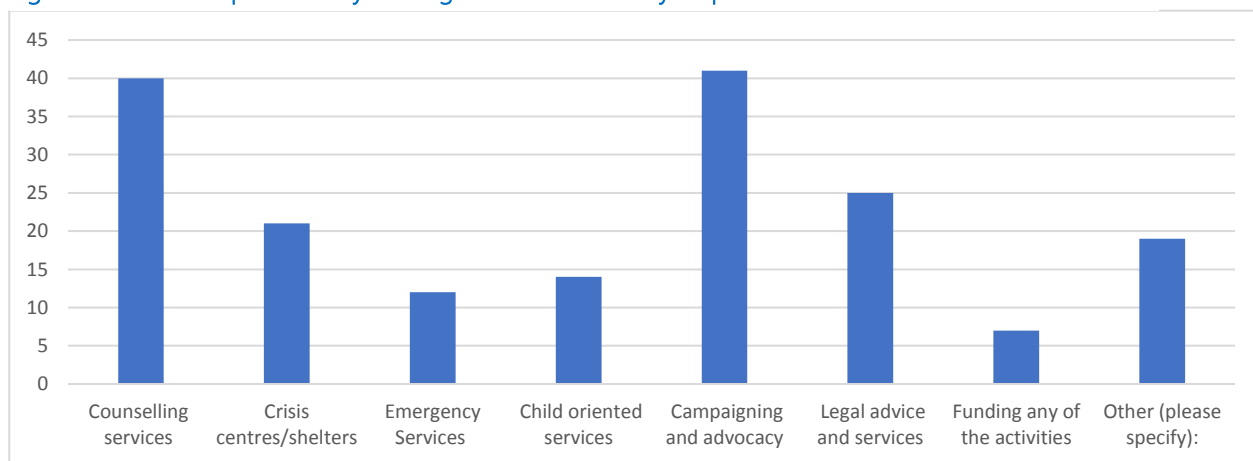
The research team received 56 survey responses from 22 Member States. No response was received from Cyprus, France, Hungary, the Netherlands or Spain. One further reminder email was sent to organisations from these five Member States inviting them to share information about practices to prevent psychological violence and coercive control in their country via email.

The majority of respondents belonged to NGOs (n=41), while an additional ten belonged to national government services providers. There was also one respondent from local government, a university or research and “other” organisation, respectively.

The most common functions of support services are provision of counselling services for women victims of psychological violence, witnesses and/or perpetrators (in-person, online or telephone helpline) (n=40). The range of services provided by the organisations to which respondents belonged can be found in **Figure A1.1**. Additional services provided by respondents include providing training and educational material (five respondents), prevention work (three respondents), research (three respondents), psychotherapy for victims (two respondents) and investigating crimes related to violence against women (one respondent).

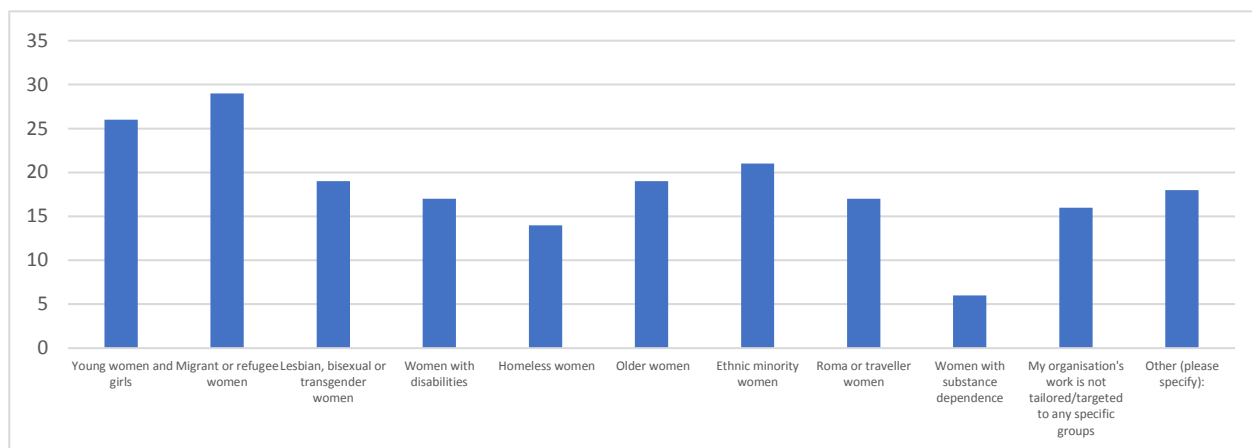
The service providers were asked whether they have specialised services for especially vulnerable women. Survey respondents were able to name multiple categories. The most named group for specialised services were migrant or refugee women (n=29), followed by young women and girls (n=60) and older women (n=19). According to 16 respondents, their organisations do not provide any specialised services. A summary of the responses to this question can be found in **Figure A1.2**. In addition to the options provided, respondents also identified specialised services targeting victims of violence against women (n=7), victims of crimes (n= 1), women working in prostitution (n=1) and professionals working with victims of violence against women (n=2).

Figure A1.1 Services provided by the organisations of survey respondents



Note: Multiple responses per respondent were possible.

Figure A1.2 Specialised services for vulnerable groups provided by the organisations of survey respondents



Note: Multiple responses per respondent were possible.

Annex 2: Survey instrument

About this study

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has contracted [RAND Europe](#) to conduct a study on practices and barriers relating to the prevention of psychological violence against women. More information on the study can be found [here](#). We would appreciate it if you could share your views with us to support the study.

This survey is about psychological violence and coercive control against women as a form of intimate partner violence and/or domestic violence. For the purposes of this research study:

- **Psychological violence (including coercive control)** is defined as any intentional course of conduct that seriously impairs another person's psychological integrity through coercion or threats. This includes emotional abuse (insulting, humiliating, scaring, intimidating, or threatening the partner), controlling behaviour (isolating, monitoring, ignoring, being excessively jealous, controlling the partner) and cyber-violence (e.g., cyber stalking, online abuse/trolling, non-consensual sharing of intimate images).
- **Intimate partner violence** is defined as violence against women that occurs between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence with the victim.
- **Domestic violence** is defined as violence that occurs within the family or domestic unit, irrespective of biological or legal family ties, or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same residence as the victim.

When answering the survey questions, please think specifically about psychological violence as opposed to domestic violence or intimate partner violence more broadly.

You have been invited to participate in the survey because we believe that you are:

- a) A member/employee of an organisation based in the EU and concerned with preventing violence against women or supporting victims; and/or
- b) A member/employee of an organisation based in the EU and concerned with supporting certain vulnerable groups, and who has been involved in work relating to violence against women.

If you do not belong to either of these categories, we apologise for troubling you and ask you to ignore this request.

The participation in this survey is voluntary. There are no right or wrong answers – we ask you to answer questions as honestly as you can. Your responses will not be attributed to you.

The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. Thank you for very much for your participation.

Consent

By completing this survey, you consent that you agree to the terms in the Data Privacy Notice below, and to the treatment of your answers in accordance with these terms.

Data Privacy Notice

What data do we collect and how?

Personal data (such as organisational email addresses) have been identified using public information and collected by RAND Europe during the study solely for the purpose of contacting you. The information you provide as part of the survey questionnaire is the research data. This includes practices for primary and secondary prevention of psychological violence against women and related challenges or barriers. All responses provided to the survey (including direct quotes) will be anonymous and no further personal data will be collected. Statements from this survey may be used, referring to aggregated categories such as the type of the organisation or group of countries, in publications of this study.

Why are we collecting it?

RAND Europe are collecting and using your personal data to enable us to contact you. We believe that you are a member/employee of an organisation based in the EU and concerned with preventing violence against women or supporting victims, and/or a member/employee of an organisation based in the EU and concerned with supporting certain vulnerable groups. Your personal data will only be used for the purposes of the study. Use of your personal data is always in accordance with the requirements of [Regulation \(EU\) 2018/1725](#).

RAND Europe will share the anonymised responses with EIGE.

What is the legal basis for processing your data?

RAND Europe (contractor) is using your data on the basis of our legitimate interests. Your data is supplied solely to facilitate your voluntary contribution to the project. The data is not excessive and will be used for the basic purposes of contacting you and organising data to meet the study goals as outlined above, in support of wider public benefit. As such, RAND Europe's approach to processing balances our legitimate interests against your interests, rights and freedoms.

How do we share the data?

Your personal data will not be shared. It will be used exclusively within the assigned RAND Europe research team.

How do we keep your data secure?

Strict arrangements will be in place to make sure that the personal data information collected from you in the survey is stored securely. All research records including the responses and personal data used to communicate with survey respondents will be handled in line with RAND Europe's classification and handling policy, and stored securely in line with the Regulation (EU) 2018/1725. Backups taken for disaster recovery purposes will be encrypted and stored in a secure offline site.

RAND Europe has implemented a company-wide Information Security Management System (ISMS). RAND Europe is accredited for ISO 27001 certification and Cyber Essentials Plus. We have a senior management team that supports the continuous review and improvement of the company ISMS.

All personal data will be stored by RAND Europe for 12 months after the completion of the study. During this time, RAND Europe will maintain a record of your personal data, inform you of possible transfers of personal data, security breaches, provide responses to requests from you in respect of your personal data and to requests for access to your personal data by third parties. Anonymised data will be stored indefinitely in a secure environment by EIGE according to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

What choices do you have in our use of your data?

You may contact us to request the deletion of your personal data.

What are your rights?

RAND Europe operates in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and EU law including Regulation (EU) 2018/1725. You are provided with certain rights that you may have the right to exercise through us or EIGE. In summary those rights are:

- To access, correct or erase your personal data.
- To object to the processing of your personal data.
- To request that our processing of your data is restricted.

If you wish to exercise any of these rights, please contact the RAND Europe Data Protection Officer by email at REdpo@rand.org or in writing to Data Protection Officer, RAND Europe, Westbrook Centre, Milton Road, Cambridge, CB4 1YG, UK.

You may also contact Data Protection Officer at EIGE at dpo@eige.europa.eu to inform him or her of any issues related to the processing of your data.

How do you contact us?

If you have a query or concern about any aspect of this study, please send any questions about the survey or the study to Lillian Flemons, Project Manager at RAND Europe, at lflemons@randeurope.org.

Survey questions

Page 1

1. In which country is your organisation based? *(Only one answer allowed)*
2. Which activities or services(s) relating to violence against women does your organisation undertake or provide? *(Multiple answers allowed)*
 - a. Counselling services for victims, witnesses and/or perpetrators (in-person, online, telephone helpline)
 - b. Crisis centres/shelters/accommodation for victims and their families
 - c. Emergency services (e.g., emergency health services, police, social services)
 - d. Child-oriented services
 - e. Campaigning and advocacy
 - f. Legal advice and services

- g. Funding any of the activities/services described above
- h. None of the above
- i. Other (please specify)

3. Which of the following best describes your organisation? *(Please select one option)*

- a. Governmental body or agency (national government)
- b. Governmental body or agency (local government)
- c. Non-governmental organisation (NGO)
- d. University or research group
- e. Other (write in)

4. Which of the following population groups, if any, does your organisation's work specifically target (overall, or part of specific programmes/activities)? *(Multiple answers allowed)*

- a. Young women and girls
- b. Migrant or refugee women
- c. Lesbian, bisexual or transgender women
- d. Women with disabilities
- e. Homeless women
- f. Older women
- g. Ethnic minority women
- h. Roma or traveller women
- i. Women with substance dependence
- j. None of the above
- k. Other (please specify)

Page 2

This set of questions relates to factors that make preventing coercive control and psychological violence against women difficult.

5. In your opinion, what is the most significant barrier to preventing psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country? *(Open question)*

6. To what extent do the following barriers relating to law and the criminal justice system impede the prevention of psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country? *(Only one answer allowed per row)*

		<i>To a great extent</i>	<i>To some extent</i>	<i>To a small extent</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
a.	There is no specific, stand-alone criminal offence for psychological violence or					

	coercive control.					
b.	Criminal offences used to prosecute psychological violence and coercive control are not well aligned with the patterns of behaviour typical of psychological violence (for instance, smaller acts of violence perpetrated over a long period of time).					
c.	Criminal offences used to prosecute psychological violence and coercive control do not cover all victim-perpetrator relationships (e.g., violence between non-cohabiting partners, unmarried partners or same-sex partners).					
c.	Underreporting of psychological violence and coercive control by victims and/or witnesses makes it difficult to prosecute such cases.					
d.	Obtaining evidence that is sufficient to prove psychological violence or coercive control in a court of law can be challenging.					
e.	Lack of awareness among the police and/or judiciary about criminal offences that can be used to prosecute psychological violence and coercive control					

f.	Sanctions applicable to crimes used to prosecute psychological violence and coercive control are insufficient to deter offenders.					
g.	Other (please specify)					

7. To what extent do the following structural barriers impede the prevention of psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country? (Only one answer allowed per row)

		<i>To a great extent</i>	<i>To some extent</i>	<i>To a small extent</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
a.	Lack of recognition of psychological violence and coercive control in national policies (e.g., in gender equality strategies, national action plans).					
b.	Insufficient funding for policies or initiatives to prevent psychological violence and coercive control.					
c.	Lack of coordination between key stakeholders working to prevent psychological violence and coercive control.					
d.	Lack of coherence and coordination of policies relating to psychological violence and coercive control.					
e.	Limited capacity of support providers.					
f.	Lack of targeted or tailored					

	support for specific populations (e.g., migrants, ethnic minorities, the LGBTIQ community).					
g.	Lack of robust monitoring and evaluation processes.					
h.	Other (please specify)					

8. To what extent do the following cultural barriers impede the prevention of psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country? *(Only one answer allowed per row)*

		To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know
a.	Lack of recognition or understanding of psychological violence and coercive control (as distinct from intimate partner violence or domestic violence more broadly).					
b.	Lack of awareness of psychological violence and/or coercive control as a criminal offence.					
c.	A belief that others (for instance, police and other authorities) will not be aware of psychological violence and/or coercive control as a criminal offence.					
c.	Gender stereotypes; perceived gender roles.					
d.	Beliefs about the domestic sphere or intimate relationships					

	being a private matter.					
e.	Distrust of the legal system discourages reporting of psychological violence and coercive control.					
f.	Other: (please specify)					

Page 3

9. For which of the following groups of women in your country (if any) are there particular barriers to preventing psychological violence? *(Multiple answers allowed)*
- Young women and girls
 - Migrant or refugee women
 - Lesbian, bisexual or transgender women
 - Women with disabilities
 - Homeless women
 - Older women
 - Ethnic minority women
 - Roma or traveller women
 - Women with substance dependence
 - None of the above
 - Other (please specify)

Skip logic: *[IF Q9 = j skip to Page 5]*

Page 4

10. Please can you describe barriers to preventing psychological violence and coercive control that are particularly relevant to following groups of women (where applicable): *(Write in - multiple textboxes)*

a.	Young women and girls	<i>Write in</i>
b.	Migrant or refugee women	<i>Write in</i>
c.	Lesbian, bisexual or transgender women	<i>Write in</i>
d.	Women with disabilities	<i>Write in</i>
e.	Homeless women	<i>Write in</i>

f.	Older women	<i>Write in</i>
g.	Ethnic minority women	<i>Write in</i>
h.	Roma or traveller women	<i>Write in</i>
i.	Women with substance dependence	<i>Write in</i>

Page 5

The following set of questions relates to **practices or measures aimed at preventing psychological violence and coercive control against women** in your country.

- **Measures** relate to legislation, policies, guidance or funding that have broad/general applicability, for instance legislation requiring mandatory training for public sector workers (police officers, doctors, teachers etc.) in the area of psychological violence/coercive control.
- **Practices** relate to specific programmes, interventions or initiatives, for instance an NGO-run programme working with perpetrators of psychological violence/coercive control to prevent re-offending.

All questions in this section relate to practices *or* measures and it will not be necessary to distinguish between measures and practices.

11. Are you aware of any specific practices or measures aimed at preventing psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country? (*Only one answer allowed*)
- Yes
 - No

Skip logic: [IF Q11 = a, go to Page 6] [IF Q10 = b, go to Page 9]

Page 6

You will now be asked to provide information on **up to three** practices or measures that you are aware of that are aimed at preventing psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country.

12. Please provide the name (or a brief description) of the first practice or measure aimed at preventing psychological violence and coercive control that you are aware of: (*Open question*)
13. Which of the following category (or categories) would this practice or measure fall into? (*Multiple answers allowed*)
- Support services for victims and/or witnesses
 - Programmes or initiatives working with perpetrators
 - Criminal legislation
 - Non-criminal legislation, for instance a legal obligation to train professionals.
 - Awareness-raising campaigns
 - Training of professionals (e.g., police officers, judges, doctors)

- g. Educational initiatives in schools/universities
 - h. Regulation of online platforms
 - i. Don't know
 - j. Other (please specify)
14. Please could you tell us a bit more about this practice or measure, for instance: how it is funded (by whom, for how long), how long it has been in place, who delivers or implements it, whether it has been evaluated. If you are aware of any information about this practice or measure that is available online, it would be helpful if you could provide a link. *(Open question)*
15. Which of the following groups, if any, is this practice/measure targeted at? *(Multiple answers allowed)*
- a. Young women and girls
 - b. Migrant or refugee women
 - c. Lesbian, bisexual or transgender women
 - d. Women with disabilities
 - e. Homeless women
 - f. Older women
 - g. Ethnic minority women
 - h. Roma or traveller women
 - i. Women with substance dependence
 - j. Other (please specify)
 - k. I don't know
 - l. Practice/measure is not targeted/tailored
16. Do you know of any further examples of practices or measures aimed at preventing psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country? *(Only one answer allowed)*
- a. Yes
 - b. No

Skip logic: [IF Q16 = a, go to Page 7] [IF Q16 = b, go to Page 9]

Page 7

17. Please provide the name (or a brief description) of the second practice or measure aimed at preventing psychological violence and coercive control that you are aware of: *(Open question)*
18. Which of the following category (or categories) would this practice or measure fall into? *(Multiple answers allowed)*
- a. Support services for victims and/or witnesses
 - b. Programmes or initiatives working with perpetrators
 - c. Criminal legislation
 - d. Non-criminal legislation, for instance a legal obligation to train professionals.
 - e. Awareness-raising campaigns
 - f. Training of professionals (e.g., police officers, judges, doctors)
 - g. Educational initiatives in schools/universities
 - h. Regulation of online platforms
 - i. Don't know

- j. Other (please specify)
19. Please could you tell us a bit more about this practice or measure, for instance: how it is funded (by whom, for how long), how long it has been in place, who delivers or implements it, whether it has been evaluated. If you are aware of any information about this practice or measure that is available online, it would be helpful if you could provide a link. *(Open question)*
20. Which of the following groups, if any, is this practice/measure targeted at? *(Multiple answers allowed)*
- Young women and girls
 - Migrant or refugee women
 - Lesbian, bisexual or transgender women
 - Women with disabilities
 - Homeless women
 - Older women
 - Ethnic minority women
 - Roma or traveller women
 - Women with substance dependence
 - Other (please specify)
 - I don't know
 - Practice/measure is not targeted/tailored
21. Do you know of any further examples of practices or measures aimed at preventing psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country? *(Only one answer allowed)*
- Yes
 - No

Skip logic: [IF Q21 = a, go to Page 8] [IF Q21 = b, go to Page 9]

Page 8

22. Please provide the name (or a brief description) of the third practice or measure aimed at preventing psychological violence and coercive control that you are aware of: *(Open question)*
23. Which of the following category (or categories) would this practice or measure fall into? *(Multiple answers allowed)*
- Support services for victims and/or witnesses
 - Programmes or initiatives working with perpetrators
 - Criminal legislation
 - Non-criminal legislation, for instance a legal obligation to train professionals.
 - Awareness-raising campaigns
 - Training of professionals (e.g., police officers, judges, doctors)
 - Educational initiatives in schools/universities
 - Regulation of online platforms
 - Don't know
 - Other (please specify)

24. Please could you tell us a bit more about this practice or measure, for instance: how it is funded (by whom, for how long), how long it has been in place, who delivers or implements it, whether it has been evaluated. If you are aware of any information about this practice or measure that is available online, it would be helpful if you could provide a link. *(Open question)*
25. Which of the following groups, if any, is this practice/measure targeted at? *(Multiple answers allowed)*
- Young women and girls
 - Migrant or refugee women
 - Lesbian, bisexual or transgender women
 - Women with disabilities
 - Homeless women
 - Older women
 - Ethnic minority women
 - Roma or traveller women
 - Women with substance dependence
 - Other (please specify)
 - I don't know
 - Practice/measure is not targeted/tailored

Page 9

26. Please outline any additional practices or measures (if any) that you think should be introduced to prevent psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country: *(Open question)*
27. What (if anything) could the EU institutions and agencies do to help prevent psychological violence and coercive control against women across the Member States? *(Open question)*

Page 10

28. Please could you note down the names of any (other) organisations working in your country to prevent psychological violence and coercive control against women. *(Open question)*

End of survey. Thank you for very much for your participation.

Annex 3: Background/context of the Istanbul Convention

The Council of Europe Convention of preventing and combating violence against women (hereafter the Istanbul Convention) is the first international treaty specifically tackling violence from a gender perspective. It recognises “the structural nature of violence against women” and “that domestic violence affects women disproportionately”, while recognising that men may also be victims of such violence (Council of Europe, 2011b).

The Istanbul Convention requires countries to take the necessary legislative or other measures to ensure that all forms of domestic violence are criminalised, with domestic violence defined 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" (Article 3). This includes:

- Psychological violence (Article 33): *"the intentional conduct of seriously impairing a person's psychological integrity through coercion or threats"*.
- Stalking (Article 34): *"the intentional conduct of repeatedly engaging in threatening conduct directed at another person, causing her or him to fear for her or his safety"*.

Aiding and abetting all forms of violence covered in the convention should be criminalised (Article 41.2). According to the Convention, sanctions should be effective, proportionate, and dissuasive (Article 45) and take into consideration a range of specified aggravating circumstances (Article 46):

- a. The offence was committed against a former or current spouse or partner as recognised by internal law, by a member of the family, a person cohabiting with the victim or a person having abused her or his authority;
- b. The offence, or related offences, were committed repeatedly;
- c. The offence was committed against a person made vulnerable by particular circumstances
- d. The offence was committed against or in the presence of a child;
- e. The offence was committed by two or more people acting together; (f) The offence was preceded or accompanied by extreme levels of violence;
- f. The offence was committed with the use or threat of a weapon;
- g. The offence resulted in severe physical or psychological harm for the victim and
- h. The perpetrator had previously been convicted of offences of a similar nature.

As of September 2020¹, 21 EU Member States have ratified the Istanbul Convention (see [Table A3.1](#) below). Upon ratification, Member States are bound to review and adjust their legislative and policy frameworks where necessary to meet the Convention's requirements. A review by the European Parliament found that in all Member States ratification triggered amendments to existing legislation (enacted or pending) or the adoption of new legal measures (European Parliament, 2020). Legislative changes have been more extensive in countries that have ratified the Convention compared to countries that have not (European Parliament, 2020a).

The Istanbul Convention establishes a specific monitoring mechanism (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence or **GREVIO**) to ensure the effective implementation of its provisions. GREVIO is comprised of independent and impartial experts appointed on the basis of their recognised expertise in the fields of human rights, gender equality, violence against women and/or assistance to and protection of victims. Its members are elected by the state parties; depending on the number of state parties the body consists of between ten and fifteen members.

Table A3.1 Ratification of the Istanbul Convention and associated legislative developments

	Signed	Ratified	Overview of legislative developments since ratification or 2014
BE	X	X	Changes were already made prior to ratification. In addition, two Acts were adopted on 18 June 2018: 1) Act on combating acts of violence perpetrated in the name of culture, custom, religion, tradition or so-called honour, including FGM and 2) Act on alternative forms of dispute resolution requiring consent to mediation.
BG	X		Law for Protection against Domestic Violence criminalising all forms of domestic violence was amended in 2019 by SG No. 24 of 22 March 2019.
CZ	X		Amendment to the Criminal Code No. 287/2018 Coll (Poslanecká sněmovna Parlamentu České republiky), including the criminalisation of forced marriage in order to better align the legislation with the Istanbul Convention.
DK	X	X	Before ratification of the Convention, Act no. 168 of 26 February 2014 was adopted to align the legislation with the Istanbul Convention, by amending the statute of limitation for initiating criminal proceedings of violence by forced abortion and forced sterilisation. In addition, the Restraining Order Act was adopted in December 2016 introducing a new temporary restraining order.
DE	X	X	Germany adopted legislation in 2016 to align the national legal framework with the Convention. Relevant amendments were made to the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code during the ratification process. One of the main legal changes in the course of the ratification was the 2017 adoption of a new law in addition to the national act on domestic violence, principally the inclusion of stalking as an offence. Another legal change expanded the existing definition of sexual violence to any act of sexual nature against the will of the person. The new Section 184i of the Strafgesetzbuch (German Criminal Code) criminalises sexual harassment.
EE	X	X	The Penal Code was updated in 2017 (RT I, 26.06.2017) to include stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage, FGM, forced abortion and criminal offence against sexual self-determination of a child. The Victim Support Act was amended to provide for the service of a women's support centre for victims of VAW, including both safe accommodation and counselling.
IE	X	X	The following legislative measures prepared Ireland for the ratification of the Convention in 2019: Law of 2018 – Domestic Violence Act replaced the existing 1996 Domestic Violence Act, the Criminal Justice (Sexual Offences) Act 2017 and Criminal Justice (Victims of Crime) Act 2017, transposing Directive 2012/29/EU on the rights of victims of crime.
EL	X	X	Adoption on 26 March 2019 of the new Law No. 4604/2019 on the enhancement of substantive gender equality, prevention and combating of gender-based violence. Law 4619/2019 amending the Penal Code on rape now includes the option 'denial of consent'.

ES	X	X	Two new pieces of legislation were identified: 1) Reform of the Criminal Code by Organic Law 1/2015 of 30 March, which introduced the offence of stalking and forced marriage; 2) Law 4/2015 of 27 April on the statute of victims of crime, Royal Decree 1109/2015 of 11 December on the statute of victims of crime, regulating the offices for supporting victims of crime.
FR	X	X	Changes were made upon ratification. For instance, the offences of FGM and forced marriage were introduced/amended in 2013 to align with the Convention. At least eight new pieces of relevant legislation were adopted: 1) 2018 Law on sexual and sexist violence; 2) 2017 Law on equality and citizenship amends several criminal offences related to VAW; 3) 2017 Law n° 2017-258 on public safety foresees electronic surveillance of protection order for victims of domestic violence; 4) 2016 Law on the protection of asylum seeker victims of gender-based violence; 5) 2016 Law on a framework to better support sex workers; 6) 2015 Law on social dialogue and employment foreseeing prohibition of sexist behaviour; 7) 2016 Decree establishing local committees to support victims in each department; 8) 2016 Law on child protection.
HR	X	X	In light of ratification, the new Act on the protection against domestic violence was adopted on 4 July 2017 to amend the categorisation of DV offences (inclusion of DV as a misdemeanour). The Act implements Directive 2012/29/EU and the Istanbul Convention.
IT	X	X	Italy has taken a range of measures to implement the Istanbul Convention: Act No. 119/2013, on urgent provisions on safety and for the fight against gender-based violence, as well as on civil protection and compulsory administration of provinces. Law No.119/2013 formalised the authorities' duty to support and promote a vast network of support services for victims. Law No. 4/2018 contains several measures in favour of orphans of a victim of domestic violence. Law No. 69/2019 (the Red Code) aims to enhance the effectiveness of judicial responses to VAW and improve victims' protection.
CY	X	X	A new bill submitted on 27/1/2017 entitled 'Protection from harassment and stalking and other related issues, and enactment of other related laws' is to be adopted to implement the Convention.
LV	X		The Law on Administrative Penalties for Offences in the Field of Administration, Public Order, and Use of the Official Language determines responsibility for domestic violence, which entered into force on 01.07.2020, determines the liability for committing minor bodily injury, if committed against a person with whom the offender is related in the first or second degree of kinship, or against the spouse or former spouse, or against a person with whom the offender is or has been in a continuous intimate relationship, or against a person with whom the offender shares a joint (undivided) household, a fine from eighty-six up to one hundred and forty units of fine shall be imposed.
LT	X		No new legislation adopted since 2014 identified.

LU	X	X	The Act ratifying the Convention amended the Criminal Code, the Act of 8 September 2003 on domestic violence and the Act of 29 August 2008 on free movement and migration in order to align them with the Convention.
HU	X		Two legislative developments identified: Legislation on victim support in 2019: 1645/2019. (XI. 19.) and 2017 new Criminal Procedure Code.
MT	X	X	The Convention was implemented via the Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence Act adopted on 14 May 2018, setting out: 1) the introduction of a Commission for gender-based violence and domestic violence; 2) ‘any ordinary law which is inconsistent with rights set out in the Convention, the latter shall prevail, and such ordinary law shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void: Provided that where any ordinary law confers a higher degree of protection and/or further rights than those set out in the Convention, that ordinary law shall apply.’
NL	X	X	The legislation was already aligned with the Convention prior to ratification (according to the Dutch government state report to GREVIO). The Criminal Code was amended in recent years, including in 2016 in relation to the human trafficking offence, to include harsher sentencing. The Social Support Act 2015 covers DV, support to victims and protection orders.
AT	X	X	Changes were already made prior to ratification. In addition, new legislation has been adopted since 2013, including Gewaltschutzgesetz 2019 (Violence Protection Act 2019), as well as amendments to the Criminal Code in 2015 to bring it in line with the Convention (introduction of new criminal offences, such as the violation of sexual integrity). In addition, the Code of Criminal Procedure related to the protection of victims was amended in 2016.
PL	X	X	Since the entry into force on 1 August 2015 of the ratification of the Convention, amendments to the Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure sought to give priority to combating VAW and family violence, including increased penalties for offences committed against minors and vulnerable persons, for offences involving the use of violence and for offences of a sexual nature; amendments of the provisions on the probationary period and of the provisions on the obligation to award damages are intended to better protect victims of violence.
PT	X	X	In 2015, the Penal Code was amended (Law No. 83/2015) to comply with the Convention. It introduced three new crimes (namely FGM, stalking and forced marriage), while the offences of rape, sexual coercion and sexual harassment crimes were amended. In 2017, Residence status - Law No. 23/2007; Article 107, paragraph 4 was amended by Law No. 102/2017 - an autonomous residence permit can be granted to victims of domestic violence, irrespective
RO	X	X	New legislation was adopted on 18 June 2018 to implement the Convention: Law No.

			174/2018 amended Law No. 217/2003 to prevent and combat family violence; Law No. 178/2018 amending Law No. 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men; Emergency Ordinance No. 24/2019 to transpose provisions under Directive 2012/29/EU to implement measures to ensure the protection of victims of crime.
SI	X	X	After ratification of the Convention, key improvements were made to the Domestic Violence Prevention Act in 2016, introducing the definition of DV (definition of physical, sexual, psychological and economic violence, along with neglect and stalking), the possibility of the first extension of a restraining order from 10 to 15 days, prohibiting the use of alternative forms of dispute settlement in all proceedings conducted in relation to violence. Forced marriage or a similar union was defined in a special article of the KZ1 (Slovenian Criminal Code) in 2015. In 2018, changes to the Foreigners Act allowed victims of DV to obtain an independent permit for temporary residence.
SK	X		Adoption of the Act on victims of crime (effective from 1 January 2018) and the amendment of several legal acts, effective 1 January 2016. Among others, the expulsion order was prolonged from 48 hours to 10 days. An important step was the establishment of the Coordination-Methodological Centre for the Prevention of Violence against Women and the 24/7 free-of-charge helpline for women experiencing violence.
FI	X	X	Changes were made upon ratification. The Act on the ratification of the Convention amended the Criminal Code on dual criminality and the provision of Section 54 of the Aliens Act on residence permits. In addition, the Criminal Code was modified by 12.4.2019/486 amending the provisions related to sexual abuse of children. The maximum penalty for sexual exploitation of a child was increased from four to six years in prison and a new penalty provision for aggravated child rape was added to the Penal Code.
SE	X	X	Following ratification, legal amendments were introduced expanding the scope of restraining orders, introducing Penal Code provisions against forced marriage. The Criminal Code was amended in 2018 (SFS 2018: 618 Act amending the Criminal Code) and 2019 (SFS 2019: 806 Act on Amendments to the Criminal Code) in relation to certain relevant offences (child sexual abuse, murder, etc.).
EU	X		

Source: European Parliament, 2020a.

Annex 4: Additional information on relevant legislation

Legislation relating to psychological violence and coercive control

Table A4.1 Legislation relating to psychological violence and/or coercive control

MS	Criminal offence	Definition	Legislation	Sanctions
DK	Psychological violence	<i>A person who belongs to or is closely connected with another's household or has previously had such an affiliation with the household, and who repeatedly over a period of time exposes the other to grossly degrading, insulting or abusive behaviour that is suitable for improper control the other, including the exercise of coercive control, is punishable for psychological violence with a fine or imprisonment for up to 3 years.</i>	Article 243 of the Criminal Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison sentence of up to 3 years • Fine
IE	Coercive control	<i>knowingly and persistently engages in behaviour that-- (a) is controlling or coercive, (b) has a serious effect on a relevant person, and (c) a reasonable person would consider likely to have a serious effect on a relevant person . . . a person's behaviour has a serious effect on a relevant person if the behaviour causes the relevant person-- (a) to fear that violence will be used against him or her, or (b) serious alarm or distress that has a substantial adverse impact on his or her usual day-to-day activities . . . a person is a "relevant person" in respect of another person if he or she—(a) is the spouse or civil partner of that other person, or (b) is not the spouse or civil partner of that other person and is not related to that other person within a</i>	Article 38 of the Domestic Violence Act 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison sentence of 12 months to 5 years • Fine

		<i>prohibited degree of relationship but is or was in an intimate relationship with that other person.</i>		
ES	Threat	<i>“Whoever lightly intimidates his wife or former wife, or woman with whom he has been bound by a similar emotional relation even without cohabiting, shall be punished with a sentence of imprisonment of six months to one year, or community service from thirty-one to eighty days and, in all cases, deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons from a year and a day to three years, as well as, when the Judge or Court of Law sees it fit in the interest of the minor or person with disability requiring special protection, special barring from exercise of parental authority, guardianship, care, safekeeping or fostering for up to five years. The same punishment shall be imposed on whoever lightly intimidates an especially vulnerable person who lives with the offender.</i>	Article 171.4 of the Criminal Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison sentence of 6 months to 1 year or community service • Deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons for between 1 and 3 years • Barring from parental rights for up to 5 years
	Coercion	<i>Whoever lightly coerces his wife or former wife, or woman with whom he has been bound by a similar emotional relation even without cohabiting, shall be punished with a sentence of imprisonment of six months to one year, or community service from thirty-one to eighty days and, in all cases, deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons from a year and a day to three years, as well as, when the Judge or Court of Law sees it fit in the interest of the minor or person with disability requiring special protection, special barring from exercise of parental authority, guardianship, care, safekeeping or fostering for up to five years. The same punishment shall be imposed on whoever lightly coerces an especially vulnerable person who lives with the offender.</i>	Article 172.2 of the Criminal Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison sentence of 6 months to 1 year or community service • Deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons for between 1 and 3 years • Barring from parental rights for up to 5 years
	Mental damage	<i>Whoever by any means or procedure, causes another mental damage or an injury not defined as a felony in this Code, or who hits or abuses another by action, without causing such a person an injury, when the victim is his wife or former wife, or woman with whom he has been bound by a similar emotional relation even without cohabiting, or an especially vulnerable person who lives with the offender, the offender shall be punished with a sentence of imprisonment of six months to one year, or community service from thirty-one to eighty days and,</i>	Article 153 of the Criminal Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison sentence of 6 months to 1 year or community service • Deprivation of the right to own and

		<i>in all cases, deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons from a year and a day to three years, as well as, when the Judge or Court of Law sees it fit in the interest of the minor or person with disability requiring special protection, special barring from exercise of parental authority, guardianship, care, safekeeping or fostering for up to five years.</i>		carry weapons for between 1 and 3 years <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barring from parental rights for up to 5 years
FR	Psychological violence	No definition of psychological violence in the Penal Code.	Criminal code 222-14-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various. Article 222-14-3 makes clear that several violence-related offences can be psychological in nature

Sources: national legal databases (see Table A1.4); EI GE, 2017.

Table A4.2 Aggravation of psychological violence/coercive control

Aggravating circumstance	Member States
a. The offence was committed against a former or current spouse or partner as recognised by internal law, by a member of the family, a person cohabiting with the victim or a person having abused her or his authority	DK, IE, ES, FR
b. The offence, or related offences, were committed repeatedly.	FR, DK
c. The offence was committed against a person made vulnerable by particular circumstances.	DK, ES, FR
d. The offence was committed against or in the presence of a child.	ES, FR, DK
e. The offence was committed by two or more people acting together.	DK, FR
f. The offence was preceded or accompanied by extreme levels of violence.	DK, IE, ES, FR
g. The offence was committed with the use or threat of a weapon.	DK, ES, FR
h. The offence resulted in severe physical or psychological harm for the victim.	FR
i. The perpetrator had previously been convicted of offences of a similar nature.	DK, ES, FR

Note: applies to legal offences listed in Table A4.1.

Source: national legal databases (see Table A1.4); GREVIO reports; EELN, 2021, Email exchanges with members of the High Level Groups on Gender Mainstreaming (February, 2022).

Legislation relating to domestic violence and intimate partner violence

Table A4.3 Domestic violence (DV) and intimate partner violence (IPV)

MS	Overview	Criminal offence	Legal definition of DV/IPV	Legislation	Sanctions
BE	No specific criminal offence for DV/IPV Article 410 recognises DV/IPV as an aggravating circumstance	N/A	<i>the spouse or the person with whom he cohabits or has cohabited and has, or has had, a lasting affective and sexual relationship</i>	Article 410 of the Criminal Code	N/A
BG	No specific criminal offence for DV/IPV DV is an aggravating circumstance	N/A	<i>Domestic violence is any act of physical, mental or sexual violence, and any attempt at such violence, as well as the forcible restriction of individual freedom and of privacy, carried out against individuals who have or have had family or kinship ties or cohabit or dwell in the same home.</i>	Law on Protection against Domestic Violence 2005, Section 2.	N/A
CZ	Criminal offence for DV DV/IPV is not recognised as an aggravating circumstance	Abuse of a person living in a shared dwelling	<i>1. Whoever maltreats a close person or other person, that lives with him/her in a jointly occupied flat or a house shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 6 months up to 4 years. 2. The offender shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 2 years up to 8 years: a. if he/she commits the act defined in paragraph (1) in an especially cruel manner; or b. if he/she causes grievous bodily harm;</i>	Article 199 of the Criminal Code	Prison sentence of between 6 months to 4 years (longer if extreme levels or violence or severe physical or psychological harm)

			<p><i>c. if the offence is perpetrated against more than two people;</i></p> <p><i>d. if the contravention has continued for a prolonged period of time.</i></p> <p><i>3. The offender shall be sentenced to a term of imprisonment of 5 years up to 12 years if he/she causes by the act defined in paragraph (1):</i></p> <p><i>a. serious bodily harm to at least two people, or</i></p> <p><i>b. death.'</i></p>		
DK	<p>Separate legal offences for different types of DV – for PV see Table A1</p> <p>DV/IPV is not specifically recognised as an aggravating circumstance, although courts are not limited to the circumstances limited in the Criminal Code</p>	N/A (see Table A1)	N/A	N/A	N/A
DE	<p>No specific criminal offence for DV/IPV</p> <p>DV/IPV is not recognised as an aggravating circumstance</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EE	Legal definition	N/A	<i>Commission of the offence against a</i>	Article 58 of	N/A

	of DV restricted to physical abuse (Article 121 of the Estonian Criminal Code). DV/IPV is recognised as an aggravating circumstance		<i>person who is in a service or financially dependent relationship with the offender, and against a former or current family member of the offender, against a person who lives with the offender or a person who is otherwise in a family relationship with the offender</i>	the Estonian Criminal Code	
IE	No specific criminal offence for DV/IPV – only for coercive control (see Table A1) DV is an aggravating circumstance	N/A	No specific definition (EIGE, 2017)	Domestic Violence Act 1996	
EL	Criminal offence for DV DV is recognised as an aggravating circumstance	Domestic illegal violence and threat	<i>1. A member of the family who coerces another member using violence or threats with a serious and imminent danger in action, omission or tolerance without the victim being obliged to do so shall be punished by imprisonment of at least six months, regardless of whether the threatened evil is directed against him. the victim himself or one of his relatives within the meaning of case b of article 13 of the Penal Code. A family member who causes terror or anxiety to another family member by threatening him / her with violence or other illegal act or omission shall be punished by imprisonment.</i>	Article 7 of Law 3500/2006	Prison sentence of at least 6 months
ES	In addition to specific offences	Domestic violence	<i>'Whoever habitually uses physical or mental violence against the person who</i>	Article 173 of the	Prison sentence of

			<p>2. The present act establishes integrated protection measures whose goal is to prevent, punish and eradicate this violence and lend assistance to its victims.</p> <p>3. The gender violence to which this act refers encompasses all acts of physical and psychological violence, including offences against sexual liberty, threats, coercion and the arbitrary deprivation of liberty.’</p>		
		Discovery and revelation of secrets		Article 197 of Criminal Code	Prison sentence of 3 months – 1 year
FR	<p>DV/IPV are prosecuted under a range of offences, which also apply in the case of PV (see Table A1).</p> <p>Two provisions relate to domestic violence in a relationship and outside a relationship under Article 222-33-2 of the Criminal Code (this is also the definition of stalking)</p> <p>An offence for invasion of privacy</p>	Moral harassment	<p><i>‘To harass others by words or repetitive behaviours that have the purpose or effect of degrading another person’s working conditions, likely to affect this person’s rights and dignity, to alter his/her physical or mental health or to jeopardize his professional future, is punishable by two years’ imprisonment and a € 30,000 fine. (1) Harassing one’s spouse, civil partner or cohabitee by words or repetitive behaviours that have the purpose or effect of deteriorating this person’s living conditions, resulting in an impairment of physical or mental health, is punishable by three years imprisonment and a € 45,000 fine when these acts have caused a total incapacity to work of eight days or less or have not resulted in any incapacity to work, and five years’ imprisonment and €75,000 fine when they have caused a total incapacity to work for more than eight days. The same penalties are incurred when the offense is committed</i></p>	Criminal code 222-33-2	<p>Prison sentence of up to 2 years (3 years for IPV)</p> <p>Fine of up to € 30,000 (€ 45,000 fine for IPV)</p>

	<p>criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images</p> <p>DV/IPV is recognised as an aggravating circumstance</p>		<p><i>by a former spouse or former cohabitee of the victim, or a former civil partner.</i></p> <p><i>(2) To harass a person by words or repetitive behaviours that have the purpose or effect of deterioration this person's living conditions, resulting in an impairment of physical or mental health is punishable by one year imprisonment and a € 15,000 fine when these acts have caused a total incapacity to work for eight days or less or resulted in no incapacity to work.</i></p>		
		Invasion of privacy	<p><i>When the offences provided for in articles 226(1) and 226(2) relate to words or images presenting a sexual nature taken in a public or private place, the penalties are increased to two years' imprisonment and €60,000 fine. The same penalties shall apply to the fact that, in the absence of the person's agreement to broadcasting, the person may, knowledge of the public or of a third party any recording or document relating to words or images of a sexual nature, obtained with the express or presumed consent of the person, or by itself, by means of one of the acts provided for in Article 226(1).</i></p>	Article 226-2-1 of the Criminal Code	Two years' imprisonment and €60,000 fine
HR	<p>DV is criminalised</p> <p>DV/IPV is not recognised as an aggravating circumstance</p>	Domestic violence	<p><i>Any form of physical, mental, sexual or economic violence, in particular:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Physical violence or the use of physical force, regardless of whether physical injury resulted or not,</i> - <i>Corporal punishment and other forms of degrading treatment of children in the educational purposes,</i> - <i>Psychological violence, or the application of psychological</i> 	Law on Protection from Domestic Violence (2003), Article 4.	<p>Prison sentence of up to 3 years</p> <p>Fine</p>

			<p><i>pressure that caused a feeling of fear, danger, distress or injury to dignity, verbal violence, verbal assaults, insults, cursing, name calling, or otherwise crude verbal harassment, stalking or harassment through all means of communication or through electronic and printed media or otherwise, or to communicate with third parties, illegal isolation or threat to freedom of movement,</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sexual violence or sexual harassment, - Economic violence such as damage or destruction of personal and common property, banning or preventing the use of personal and joint property including the attempts to do so, as well as deprivation of rights or prohibition of having personal income and property acquired by inheritance or personal work at your disposal, exclusion from employment or work, forced economic dependence, denial of funds for maintenance of the common household and care for children or other dependents of a common household.' 		
IT	<p>DV is criminalised under the Italian Criminal Code</p> <p>DV is recognised as an aggravating factor</p>	Domestic violence	<p><i>Whoever maltreats a member of the family shall be punished with imprisonment from 1 to 5 years. If a serious personal injury derives from the ill-treatment, the offender should be punished with imprisonment from 4 to 9 years; if a very serious personal injury derives from the ill-treatment, imprisonment from 7 to 15 years; when the death of the victim derives from the ill-treatment, imprisonment from 12 to 20 years.'</i></p>	Article 572 of the Criminal Code	Prison sentence of between 1 and 5 years (increased if severe physical or psychological harm for the victim)
CY	<p>DV is criminalised</p> <p>DV/IPV is recognised as an</p>	Domestic violence	<p><i>Any act, omission or behaviour which causes physical, sexual or mental injury to any member of the family by another member of the family and includes violence used for the purpose of having</i></p>	Law on violence in the family (Prevention and	Prison sentence of up to five years

	aggravating circumstance		<i>sexual intercourse without the consent of the victim as well as of restricting its freedom.</i>	protection of victims) 119(I)/200, Article 3	Fine
LV	Domestic violence is criminalised according to Section 125., 126., 130 of the Criminal Law.	Domestic violence	<p><i>Section 125. Intentional Serious Bodily Injury</i></p> <p><i>(1) For a person who commits intentional infliction of serious bodily injury, the applicable punishment is deprivation of liberty for a period up to seven years, with or without probationary supervision for a period up to three years.</i></p> <p><i>(2) For the commission of the same acts, if:</i></p> <p><i>9) the criminal offence related to violence or threats of violence, or the criminal offence against morality and sexual inviolability was committed against a person to whom the perpetrator is related in the first or second degree of kinship, against the spouse or former spouse, or against a person with whom the perpetrator is or has been in continuous intimate relationships, or against a person with whom the perpetrator has a joint (single) household, the applicable punishment is deprivation of liberty for a period from two up to ten years, with or without probationary supervision for a period up to three years.</i></p> <p><i>Section 126. Intentional Moderate Bodily Injury</i></p> <p><i>(1) For a person who commits intentional infliction of moderate bodily injury, the applicable punishment is deprivation of</i></p>		<p>Prison sentence of up to three years</p> <p>Fine</p>

		<p><i>liberty for a period up to three years, or temporary deprivation of liberty, or community service, or a fine.</i></p> <p><i>(2) For the commission of the same acts, if:</i></p> <p><i>7) the criminal offence related to violence or threats of violence, or the criminal offence against morality and sexual inviolability was committed against a person to whom the perpetrator is related in the first or second degree of kinship, against the spouse or former spouse, or against a person with whom the perpetrator is or has been in continuous intimate relationships, or against a person with whom the perpetrator has a joint (single) household, the applicable punishment is deprivation of liberty for a period up to five years, or temporary deprivation of liberty, or community service, or a fine, with or without probationary supervision for a period up to three years.</i></p> <p><i>Section 130. Intentional Slight Bodily Injury</i></p> <p><i>(2) For a person who commits intentional infliction of slight bodily injury, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a period of up to one year or temporary deprivation of liberty, or community service, or a fine.</i></p> <p><i>(3) For the commission of the same acts, if:</i></p> <p><i>6) the criminal offence related to violence or threats of violence, or the criminal offence against morality and</i></p>		
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			<p><i>sexual inviolability was committed against a person to whom the perpetrator is related in the first or second degree of kinship, against the spouse or former spouse, or against a person with whom the perpetrator is or has been in continuous intimate relationships, or against a person with whom the perpetrator has a joint (single) household, the applicable punishment is the deprivation of liberty for a period of up to three year or temporary deprivation of liberty, or community service, or a fine.</i></p>		
LT	<p>DV is not criminalised, although there is a Domestic Violence act with some protections for victims</p> <p>DV is recognised as an aggravating circumstance</p>	Domestic violence	<p><i>Article 1: Domestic violence shall be an act of violation of human rights and freedoms.</i></p> <p><i>Article 2: 1. Domestic environment means the environment comprising the persons currently or previously linked by marriage, partnership, affinity or other close relations, also the persons having a common domicile and a common household.</i></p> <p>[. . .]</p> <p><i>5. Violence shall mean an intentional physical, mental, sexual, economic or another influence exerted on a person by an act or omission as a result whereof the person suffers physical, property or non-pecuniary damage.'</i></p>	Act on Domestic Violence 2011, Articles 1 and 2	
LU	<p>No specific criminal offence for DV/IPV</p> <p>DV/IPV is recognised as an aggravating</p>	N/A	<p><i>'In the context of its prevention and protection missions, the police, with the authorisation of the state prosecutor, expelled from their homes and premises the persons against whom there is evidence that they are planning to commit an offence to the life or physical integrity against a person with whom they cohabit, or that they are planning to commit an offence to the life or</i></p>	Law of 8 September 2003 on domestic violence, Articles 1 and 11.	N/A

	circumstance		<p><i>physical integrity against a person that has already been his/her victim.'</i></p> <p><i>'Where a person makes intolerable for a person with whom she/he is cohabiting or has cohabited in a family unit, the continuation of the common life, because he/she committed assaults or threats of assault or because he/she has a behaviour that seriously undermines his/her mental health, the President of the district court shall enjoin this person, upon the request of the person concerned, to leave home and the premises and forbid him/her to return before the expiry of a period of 3 months [...].'</i></p>		
HU	<p>Domestic violence is criminalised</p> <p>DV is recognised as an aggravating factor under Article 38 of the Criminal Code</p>	Domestic violence	<p><i>(1) Any person who, on a regular basis: seriously violates human dignity or is engaged in any degrading and violent conduct, misappropriates or conceals any assets from conjugal or common property, and thus causing serious deprivation, against the parent of his/her child, or against a relative, former spouse or domestic partner living in the same household or dwelling at the time of commission or previously, against his/her conservator, person under conservatorship, guardian or person under guardianship is guilty of a misdemeanour punishable by imprisonment not exceeding 2 years, insofar as the act did not result in a more serious criminal offence.</i></p> <p><i>(2) A person who commits, on a regular basis and against a person specified in paragraph (1) a) the criminal offence of causing bodily harm as specified in section 164 (2),</i></p>	Criminal code, Section 212/A.	Prison sentence of up to 2 years

			<p><i>or insult, as specified in section 227 (2) is guilty of a felony and shall be punished by imprisonment for up to three years, b) the criminal offence of causing bodily harm as specified in section 164 (3) or (4), violation of personal freedom as specified in section 194 (1), or coercion shall be punished by imprisonment for one to five years. (3) The perpetrator of the criminal offence of domestic violence may also be subject to a ban on entering certain areas. (4) The criminal offence specified in paragraph (1) shall only be punishable upon a private motion.</i></p>		
MT	<p>Domestic violence is criminalised</p> <p>DV is taken into consideration as an aggravating factor under Article 251H of the Criminal Code</p>	Domestic violence	<p><i>Whosoever shall use violence, including moral and, or, psychological violence, and, or coercion, in order to compel another person to do, suffer or omit anything or to diminish such other person's abilities or to isolate that person, or to restrict access to money, education or employment shall, on conviction, be liable to the punishment laid down in sub-article (1) of the last preceding article.</i></p>	Chapter 9, Article 251 of the Criminal Code	Prison sentence of 1-5 years
NL	<p>No specific criminal offence for DV/IPV. DV is defined in the Social Support Act of 2015</p> <p>DV/IPV is recognised as an aggravating circumstance</p>	N/A	<p><i>'Physical, mental or sexual violence or threat thereof by someone in the family circle.'</i></p>	Social support act 2015, Article 1.	

AT	No specific criminal offence for DV/IPV DV/IPV is recognised as an aggravating circumstance under Article 33 of the Criminal Code				
PL	DV is criminalised under ‘Mistreatment of close persons’. DV is defined in the 2005 Act on counteracting DV.	Mistreatment of close persons	<i>Whoever mentally or physically mistreats a person close to him, or another person being in a permanent or temporary state of dependence to the perpetrator, a minor or a person who is vulnerable because of his mental or physical condition shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for a term of between 3 months and 5 years.</i>	Article 207 of the Penal Code	Prison sentence of between 3 months and 5 years
	DV/IPV is not recognised as an aggravating factor	Domestic violence	<i>One-time or prevalent intentional action or lack of action which violates rights or personal goods of the people mentioned in item 1 (See below), in particular exposing these persons to the of the loss of their life, health, violation of dignity, physical integrity freedom, including sexual freedom, resulting in the loss of physical and psychological health, resulting in suffering and moral injuries to people exposed to violence.’ <i>Article 2 (1) (Family member): ‘Closest person as defined by Article 115 Section 11 of the act of 6 June 1997 (Criminal code), but also another person jointly living in or running a common household.</i></i>	Act of 29 July 2005 on Counteracting domestic violence, Article 2.	N/A
PT	DV is criminalised	Domestic Violence	<i>Whoever, in a repetitive manner or not, imposes physical or mental abuses, including bodily punishments,</i>	Article 152 of the Penal Code	Prison sentence of between 1

	DV/IPV is not recognised as an aggravating factor		<i>deprivations of liberty and sexual offences to the spouse or ex-spouse; to a person of another or of the same sex with whom the agent maintains or has maintained a relationship equal to a relationship of spouses, even if without cohabitation; to a progenitor of common descendant in the first degree; or to a person particularly undefended, due to age, deficiency, disease, pregnancy or economic dependency, who cohabitates with him, is punished with a sentence of imprisonment from one to five years”.</i>		and 5 years
RO	<p>No specific criminal legislation for DV/IPV</p> <p>DV is defined in civil law (Law 2017/2003 and 174/2018)</p> <p>DV/IPV is recognised as an aggravating factor</p>	Domestic violence	<p>“For the purposes of this Law, domestic violence means any intentional inaction or action of physical, sexual, psychological, economic, social or spiritual violence that occurs in the family or domestic environment or between spouses or former spouses, and between current or former partners, regardless of whether the abuser lives or lived with the victim.”</p> <p>Family violence takes the following forms:</p> <p>(a) verbal violence: the use of offensive language, brutal language, insults, threats, humiliating or degrading expressions;</p> <p>(b) psychological violence: imposing the will or personal control over a family member. Provoking tension and psychological suffering. Demonstrative violence against objects, pets, verbal threats, display of guns, neglects, acts of jealousy, constraints of all kinds as well as actions of similar effect;</p> <p>(c) physical violence: assault or battery through pushing, blows, hair pulling, slapping, slashing, burning, choking, biting in any intensity;</p> <p>(d) sexual violence: sexual assault, harassment, intimidation, manipulation,</p>	Law 2017/2003, amended by Law no. 174/2018	

			<p><i>brutality in pursuing coerced sexual intercourse, marital rape;</i></p> <p><i>(e) economic violence: forbidding professional activity, depriving a family member of economic means, including deprivation of basic needs such as food, medicine, intention of theft of personal goods, deprivation of use of common goods, forced work, refuse to contribute to family expenses, imposing hard or dangerous labour on family members including minors;</i></p> <p><i>(f) social violence: imposing an isolating environment from family, community or friends. Forbidding to attend school, restraining their movement. intentional deprivation of information and all similar acts;</i></p> <p><i>(g) spiritual violence: underestimating or diminishing the importance of satisfying moral and spiritual necessities through the interdiction, limit, ridicule or penalising such aspirations by family members, denying access to cultural, ethnical, linguistic or religious values, imposing religion and spiritual practices on family members as well as similar acts</i></p>		
SI	<p>DV is criminalised under the Criminal Code and defined under the 2008 Act</p> <p>DV is recognised as an aggravating factor</p>	Domestic violence	<p><i>(1) Whoever within a family treats badly another person, beats them, or in any other way treats them painfully or degradingly, threatens with direct attack on their life or limb to throw them out of the joint residence or in any other way limits their freedom of movement, stalks them, forces them to work or give up their work, or in any other way puts them into a subordinate position by aggressively limiting their equal rights shall be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than 5 years.</i></p> <p><i>(2) The same punishment shall be imposed on whoever commits the acts</i></p>	Article 191 of the Criminal Code	Prison sentence of up to 5 years

			<p><i>under the preceding paragraph in any other permanent living community.</i></p> <p><i>(3) If the act under paragraph 1 is committed against a person with whom the perpetrator lived in a family or other permanent community, which fell apart, however this act is connected to the community, the perpetrator shall be sentenced to imprisonment for not more than 3 years.'</i></p>		
			<p><i>Article 3 (Family violence):</i></p> <p><i>'(1) Family violence (hereinafter: violence) denotes any form of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence exerted by one family member against the other (i.e. including violence against children), or disregard of any family member as found in the Article 2 of this act (hereinafter: victims) regardless of the age, sex or any other personal circumstance of the victim or perpetrator of violence (hereinafter: perpetrator of violence).</i></p> <p><i>(2) Physical violence denotes any use of physical force that causes pain, fear or shame to the family member regardless of the fact whether injuries were inflicted.</i></p> <p><i>(3) Sexual violence pertains to handling with sexual content that is opposed by one family member, or if he or she is forced into acting them out or because of his or her stage of development they do not understand their meaning.</i></p> <p><i>(4) Psychological violence denotes such actions with which the perpetrator of violence exerting it against a family member induces fear, shame, feelings of</i></p>	<p>Family violence prevention act 2008, Article 3.</p>	

			<p><i>inferiority, endangerment and other anguish.</i></p> <p><i>(5) Economic violence is undue control or setting of restrictions of any family member concerning disposing with one's income or in other words managing the financial assets with which the family member disposes or manages and it can also mean undue restricting of disposing or managing the common financial assets of family members.</i></p> <p><i>(6) Disregard falls under those forms of violence in which a person does not provide due care for the family member who is in need of it due to illness, disability, old age, developmental or any other personal circumstances.'</i></p>		
SK	<p>DV is criminalised</p> <p>DV/IPV is taken into consideration as an aggravating factor</p>	Domestic violence	<p><i>'(1) Whoever ill-treats a close person or a person in his custody or care, causing physical or psychological suffering by:</i></p> <p><i>(a) beating, kicking, punching, causing injuries and burns of any kind, humiliating, contemptuous treatment, stalking, threatening, evoking fear or stress, forcing into isolation, emotional blackmailing or any other behaviour endangering the person's physical or psychological health or limiting the person's safety,</i></p> <p><i>(b) groundless denying of food, rest or sleep, or denying of necessary personal care, basic clothing, hygiene, healthcare, housing, upbringing or education,</i></p> <p><i>(c) forcing the person to beg or to perform activities requiring excessive physical or psychological exhaustion regarding the age or health condition of the person, or to perform activities that</i></p>	Criminal Code, Section 208.	Prison sentence of between 3 and 8 years (between 7 and 15 years if aggregating conditions are met)

			<p><i>may harm the person's health,</i></p> <p><i>(d) exposure to substances that may harmful the person's health, or</i></p> <p><i>(e) groundless preventing of access to property that the person has a right to use shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of 3 to 8 years.</i></p>		
FI	<p>No specific criminal offence for DV/IPV</p> <p>DV/IPV is not recognised as an aggravating circumstance</p>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SE	<p>DV is criminalised (specific offence for violence against women)</p> <p>DV/IPV is taken into consideration as an aggravating factor</p>	<p>Gross violation of integrity and gross violation of a woman's integrity</p>	<p><i>A person who commits criminal acts under Chapter 3 or 4, Chapter 5, Section 1 or 2, Chapter 6 or 12 or under Section 24 of the Non-Contact Orders Act (1988:688) against a person with whom they are or have previously been in a close relationship is, if each of the acts was part of a repeated violation of the person's integrity and the acts were liable to severely damage the person's self-esteem, guilty of gross violation of integrity and is sentenced imprisonment for at least one year and at most six years.</i></p> <p><i>If acts referred to in the first paragraph were committed by a man against a woman to whom he is or has been married, or with whom he is or has been cohabiting under circumstances similar to marriage, he is instead guilty of gross violation of a woman's integrity and is sentenced to the same penalty.</i></p>	<p>Criminal code, Chapter 4, Sections 4a.</p>	<p>Prison sentence of between 1 year and 6 years</p>

Sources: national legal databases (see Table A1.4); EIGE, 2017; European Parliament, 2020a, 2020b.

Table A4.4. Aggravation of domestic violence

Aggravating circumstance	Member States
a. The offence was committed against a former or current spouse or partner as recognised by internal law, by a member of the family, a person cohabiting with the victim or a person having abused her or his authority ¹⁷⁸	BE, BG, DK, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, LV, LT, LU, NL, RO, SI, SK, SE
b. The offence, or related offences, were committed repeatedly.	CZ, HR, LV, LT, PT, SK, SE
c. The offence was committed against a person made vulnerable by particular circumstances.	FR, IT, LV, LT, PL, PT, SK, SE
d. The offence was committed against or in the presence of a child.	EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, LV, LT, PT, SE
e. The offence was committed by two or more people acting together.	FR, LV, LT, SK, SE
f. The offence was preceded or accompanied by extreme levels of violence.	CZ, FR, IT, LV, LT, PL, PT, SK, SE
g. The offence was committed with the use or threat of a weapon.	ES, FR, IT, LV, LT, SK, SE
h. The offence resulted in severe physical or psychological harm for the victim.	CZ, EL, FR, IT, LV, LT, PT, SK, SE
i. The perpetrator had previously been convicted of offences of a similar nature.	ES, LV, PT, SK, SE

Source: EELN, 2021.

¹⁷⁸ Table A4.4 is based on a single source (EELN, 2021). Other sources suggest that domestic violence/intimate partner violence is not an aggravating circumstance in Denmark (GREVIO, 2017b), although courts are free to take into consideration any aggravating circumstances. Our analysis of national legal databases suggests that that domestic violence/intimate partner violence can be taken into consideration as an aggravating factor in LV, HU and MT in addition to the countries listed in Table A4.4.

Table A4.5. Legislation relating to stalking and cyber stalking

MS	Criminal offence	Definition	Legislation	Sanctions
BE	Harassment	<p><i>'He who harassed a person, while he knew or should have known that due to his behaviour he would seriously disturb this person's peace, will be punished with a term of imprisonment of 15 days to two years and with a fine ranging from 50 euros to 300 euros or with one of those penalties. In case the acts mentioned in the first paragraph are committed against a person whose vulnerable situation as a consequence of age, pregnancy, illness or physical or mental disability or impairment, was apparent or known to the offender, the minimum penalty mentioned in the first paragraph is doubled. The behaviour described in this article can only be prosecuted following a complaint by the person claiming to be harassed or, when a person mentioned in the</i></p> <p><i>second paragraph is concerned, of the public institutions or entities mentioned in article 43 of the act of 26 November 2011 to change the Criminal Code in order to criminalize abuse of the vulnerable position of persons, and extend the criminal law protection of vulnerable persons against abuse.'</i></p>	442bis Criminal Code	<p>Prison sentence of between 15 days and 2 years</p> <p>Fine of between 50 and 300 EURO</p>
BG	Stalking	<p><i>(1) A person who systematically stalks another person and thereby may incite in that person a justified fear for his/her life or health, or for the life or health of his/her next of kin, shall be punished by imprisonment for up to one year or by probation, as well as by public censure, provided the act does not constitute a graver crime. (2) The stalking under Paragraph 1 is any threatening behaviour against a particular person, which may involve persecuting the other person, demonstrating the other person that he/she is being watched, entering into unwanted communication with him/her by any means of communication. (3) Where the act has been committed in the situation of domestic violence, the punishment shall be</i></p>	Article 144a of the Penal Code	Imprisonment of up to 1 year (up to 5 years in the context of domestic violence)

		<i>imprisonment for up to five years.</i>		
CY	Harassment and Stalking	<i>‘When a person, engages in a behaviour which constitutes stalking and cause harassment, whilst that person knows or ought to know that such behaviour causes harassment is guilty of a criminal offence, and upon conviction such person is subject to imprisonment with a term not exceeding two (2) years or to a fine not exceeding five thousand euros (5000) or to both’</i>	Law 114 (I) / 2021	Imprisonment of up to 2 years and/or a fine (up to 5 years in certain cases).
CZ	Dangerous Persecution	<i>‘(1) Whoever pursues another in long term by a) threatening with bodily harm or another harm to him/her or to persons close to him/her, b) seeks his/her personal presence or follows him/her, c) persistently contacts him/her by means of electronic communications, in writing or in another way, d) abuses his/her personal data for the purpose of gaining personal or other contact, and this conduct is capable of raising reasonable fear for his/her life or health or lives or health of persons close to him/her, shall be sentenced to imprisonment for up to one year or to prohibition of activity. (2) An offender shall be sentenced to imprisonment for six months to three years, if he/she commits the act referred to in Sub-section (1) a) against a child or a pregnant woman, b) with a weapon, or c) with at least two persons.’</i>	Article 354 of Criminal Code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (up to 3 years in the case of aggravating circumstances)
DE	Stalking	<i>‘(1) Whosoever unlawfully stalks another person by: 1) seeking his proximity; 2) trying to establish contact with him by means of telecommunications or other means of telecommunication or through third persons; 3) abusing his personal data for the purpose of ordering goods or services for him or causing third persons to make contact with him; 4) threatening him or a person close to him with loss of life or limb, damage to health, or deprivation of freedom, or 5) committing similar acts, and thereby seriously infringes his lifestyle shall be liable to imprisonment of not more than three years or a fine. (2) The penalty shall be three months to five years if the offender places the victim, a relative of or another person close to the victim in danger of death or serious</i>	Article 238 of the Criminal Code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years (up to 5 years in the context of aggravating circumstances) Fine

		<i>injury. (3) If the offender causes the death of the victim, a relative of or another person close to the victim the penalty shall be imprisonment from one to ten years. (4) Cases under subsection (1) above may only be prosecuted upon request unless the prosecuting authority considers proprio motu that prosecution is required because of special public interest.'</i>		
DK	Stalking	<i>"Section 242. A person who in a manner which is suitable for violating another person's peace, systematic and continuous contacts, persecutes or otherwise harass the person in question, shall be punished for stalking with a fine or imprisonment for up to 3 years."</i>	Act no. 2600 of the Penal Code of 28 December 2021. The Act entered into force on 1 January 2022.	Prison sentence of up to 3 years Fine
EE	Harassing pursuit	<i>(1) Repeated or consistent attempts to contact another person, watching him or her or interference in the privacy of another person against the will of such person in another manner, if the intent or effect thereof is to intimidate, humiliate the other person or disturb him or her in any other manner, if the act does not contain the necessary elements of an offence provided for in § 137 of this Code, is punishable by a pecuniary punishment or up to one year's imprisonment. (2) The same act, if committed by a legal person, is punishable by a pecuniary punishment</i>	Article 157.3 of the Penal Code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year Fine
IE	Harassment	<i>'(1) Any person who, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, by any means including by use of the telephone, harasses another by persistently following, watching, pestering, besetting or communicating with him or her, shall be guilty of an offense. (2) For the purposes of this section a person harasses another where(a) he or she, by his or her acts intentionally or recklessly, seriously interferes with the other's peace and privacy or causes alarm, distress or harm to the other, and(b) his or her acts are such that a reasonable person would realize that the acts would seriously interfere with the other's peace and privacy or cause alarm, distress or harm to the other. (3) Where a person is guilty of an offense under subsection</i>	Section 10 of the Non-fatal Offences against the Person Act	Prison sentence of up to 12 months Fine of up to 1500 EURO

		<p><i>(1), the court may, in addition to or as an alternative to any other penalty, order that the person shall not, for such period as the court may, specify, communicate by any means with the other person or that the person shall not approach within such distance as the court shall specify of the place of residence or employment of the other person.</i></p> <p><i>(4) A person who fails to comply with the terms of an order under subsection (3) shall be guilty of an offense. (5) If on the evidence the court is not satisfied that the person should be convicted of an offense under subsection (1), the court may nevertheless make an order under subsection (3) upon an application to it in that behalf if, having regard to the evidence, the court is satisfied that it is in the interests of justice so to do. (6) A person guilty of an offense under this section shall be liable (a) on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding 1500 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to both, or (b) on conviction on indictment to a fine or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 7 years or to both.'</i></p>		
EL	Stalking	<p><i>The causing of fear or uneasiness in another person, whom the perpetrator repeatedly follows or watches, in particular by seeking constant contact through a telephone or an electronic device or by repeated visits to her/his family, social or working environment, contrary to the individual's explicitly expressed will. This provision does not presuppose the threat of violence or other illegal act or omission.</i></p>	Law 3500/2006 Article 2	
ES	Stalking	<p><i>'(1)With an imprisonment of three months to two years or a fine of 6 to 24 months shall be punished he who harasses a person by insistently, repeatedly, and without being lawfully authorized, displays any of the following behaviours, thereby seriously altering the development of this person's daily life: 1) Watching, pursuing or searching her physical proximity; 2) Contacting or trying to contact her through any media, or through third parties; 3) Purchasing products or goods, by misusing her personal data, or hiring services,</i></p> <p><i>or having third parties come in contact with her; 4) Violating her freedom or property, or violate freedom or</i></p>	172ter Criminal Code	Prison sentence of 3 months to 2 years Fine

		<i>property of another person close to her. If a particularly vulnerable person is concerned, because of age, illness or other circumstances, imprisonment of six months to two years shall be imposed. (2) When the injured party concerned is one of the persons referred to in paragraph 2 of Article 173, a prison sentence of one to two years, or community service of 60 to 120 days shall be imposed. In this case, the complaint referred to in paragraph 4 of this article is not required. (3) The penalties provided for in this article shall be imposed regardless of the penalties imposed because of the crimes that can constitute the stalking. (4) The facts described in this article will only be prosecuted on the complaint of the aggrieved person or his legal representative.'</i>		
FR	Moral harassment	<i>'To harass others by words or repetitive behaviours that have the purpose or effect of degrading another person's working conditions, likely to affect this person's rights and dignity, to alter his/her physical or mental health or to jeopardize his professional future, is punishable by two years' imprisonment and a € 30,000 fine. (1) Harassing one's spouse, civil partner or cohabitee by words or repetitive behaviours that have the purpose or effect of deteriorating this person's living conditions, resulting in an impairment of physical or mental health, is punishable by three years imprisonment and a € 45,000 fine when these acts have caused a total incapacity to work of eight days or less or have not resulted in any incapacity to work, and five years' imprisonment and €75,000 fine when they have caused a total incapacity to work for more than eight days. The same penalties are incurred when the offense is committed by a former spouse or former cohabitee of the victim, or a former civil partner. (2) To harass a person by words or repetitive behaviours that have the purpose or effect of deterioration this person's living conditions, resulting in an impairment of physical or mental health is punishable by one year imprisonment and a € 15,000 fine when these acts have caused a total incapacity to work for eight days or less or resulted in no incapacity to work.</i>	Criminal code 222-33-2	Prison sentence of up to 2 years (3 years for IPV) Fine of up to € 30,000 (€ 45,000 fine for IPV)
	Sexual	<i>I. - Sexual harassment is the fact of repeatedly imposing</i>	Article 222-33	three years'

	harassment	<i>on a person statements or behaviour with sexual or sexist connotations that is harmful to his or her dignity because of their degrading or humiliating character, or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive situation against him III. - The acts mentioned in I and II are punishable by two years' imprisonment and a fine of €30,000. These penalties are increased to three years' imprisonment and a fine of €45,000 when the acts are committed: 6° By using a communication service to the public online or through a digital medium or electronic;</i>	of the Criminal Code	imprisonment and a fine of €45,000 when the acts are committed
HR	Intrusive behaviour	<i>'(1) Whoever persistently and over a long period of time follows or spies on another, or establishes or seeks to establish unwanted contact with another, or intimidates another in some other way and, by doing so, provokes anxiety in him/her or causes him/her to fear for his/her safety or the safety of persons close to him/her shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of up to one year. (2) If the offense referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article is committed against the current or former spouse or cohabitant or same-sex partner, a person with whom the perpetrator was in an intimate relationship or a child, the perpetrator shall be sentenced to imprisonment for a term of up to three years. (3) Unless it was committed against a child, the criminal offense referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article shall be prosecuted upon request.'</i>	Criminal Code Article 140	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (up to 3 years in the context of IPV)
IT	Stalking	<i>'Unless the act constitutes a more serious crime, anyone who, repeatedly threatens or harasses another person in such a way as to cause in her/him a serious and constant state of anxiety or fear, or to produce reasonable fear for his or her safety or for that of a close relative or of a person bound by an affective relationship, or to force the victim to change his/her lifestyle, shall be punished with imprisonment from six months to five years. The penalty is increased if the offense is committed by a legally separated or divorced spouse or by a person who is bound to the victim by an affective relationship or when</i>	612bis Criminal Code	Prison sentence of 6 months to 5 years (increased in the context of IPV or phone/electronic communication)

		<i>the offense is committed by phone or electronic communication. The penalty is increased by up to its half if the offense is committed against a minor, a pregnant woman or a person with disabilities as expressed in art. 3 of the Law 5 February 1992, n. 104, or by a person with weapons or under false appearances. The crime is punishable upon complaint of the victim. The deadline for applying for the lawsuit is six months. The complaint can be voluntarily dismissed, but the dismissal must be formal and must happen in the trial. In any case the complaint cannot be dismissed when the offense is committed by repeated threats, as specified in Article 612. The crime is immediately prosecuted if the offense is committed against a minor or a person with disabilities as expressed by art. 3 of the Law 5 February 1992, n. 104 and when the fact is connected with another offense automatically subjected to prosecution.'</i>		
LV	Stalking	<i>For repeated or lasting tracking and surveillance of another person, expressing threats to such person, or unsolicited communication with such person, if such person has had reasonable grounds to fear for his or her safety or the safety of his or her relatives, the applicable punishment is a temporary deprivation of liberty or community service, or a fine.</i>	Article 132(1) of the Criminal Code	Prison sentence, community service or fine
LT	Stalking	<i>A person who, without a lawful ground therefor, systematically stalks another person against their will, which forces the victim to change their place of residence or work, or educational institution, or cause other adverse effects for their social life or emotional state, has committed a criminal offence that is punishable by community service or fine, or restriction of liberty, or arrest.</i>	Article 148(1) of the Criminal Code	Community service Fine Prison sentence
	Digital and communication-based violence	<i>1. A person who unlawfully intercepts a postal item or postal parcel sent by post or via a provider of courier services or unlawfully intercepts, records or observes a person's messages transmitted by electronic communications networks or unlawfully records, wiretaps or observes a person's conversations transmitted by electronic communications networks or otherwise violates</i>	Article 166 of Criminal Code	Community service Fine Prison sentence for up to two years

		<i>inviolability of a person's correspondence shall be punished by community service or by a fine or by restriction of liberty or by arrest or by a custodial sentence for a term of up to two year. 2. A legal entity shall also be held liable for an act provided for in this Article</i>		
LU	Obsessive harassment	<i>'Anyone who repeatedly harassed a person while he knew or should have known that by such conduct he would seriously affect the tranquillity of that person, shall be punished with imprisonment of 15 days to two years and a fine of 251 to 3000 euro, or one of these penalties. The offense in this article shall be prosecuted on the complaint of the victim, his legal representative, or his assigns.'</i>	442–2 Criminal Code	Prison sentence of 15 days to 2 years Fine of 251-3000 EURO
HU	Harassment	<i>'(1) Any person who engages in conduct intended to intimidate another person, to disturb the privacy of or to upset, or cause emotional distress to another person arbitrarily, or who is engaged in the pestering of another person on a regular basis, is guilty of a misdemeanour punishable by imprisonment not exceeding one year, insofar as the act did not result in a more serious criminal offense. (2) Any person who, for the purpose of intimidation: a) conveys the threat of force or public endangerment intended to inflict harm upon another person, or upon a relative of this person, or b) giving the impression that any threat to the life, physical integrity or health of another person is imminent, is guilty of a misdemeanour punishable by imprisonment not exceeding two years. (3) Any person who commits the act of harassment: a) against his/her spouse or former spouse, or against his/her domestic partner or former domestic partner, b) against a person under his/her care, custody, supervision or treatment, or c) if abuse is made of a recognized position of trust, authority or influence over the victim, shall be punishable by imprisonment not exceeding two years in the case provided for in Subsection (1), or by imprisonment not exceeding three years for a felony in the case provided for in Subsection (2).'</i>	Article 222 of the Criminal Code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (2 years in the context of IPV)
MT	Stalking	<i>'(1) A person who: (a) pursues a course of conduct in breach of article 251A(1), and (b) the course of conduct</i>	251AA Criminal	Prison sentence of 6-12 months

		<p>amounts to stalking, shall be guilty of an offense under this article. (2) For the purposes of paragraph (b) of sub-article (1) of this article and article 251BA(1)(a), a person's course of conduct amounts to stalking of another person if: (a) it amounts to harassment of that person, (b) it constitutes any of the acts mentioned in sub-article (3), and (c) the person, whose course of conduct it is, knows or ought to know that the course of conduct amounts to harassment of the other person. (3) The following acts shall be deemed to be acts of stalking: (a) following a person, (b) contacting, or attempting to contact, a person by any means, (c) publishing, by any means, any statement or other material (i) relating or purporting to relate to a person, or (ii) purporting to originate from a person, (d) monitoring the use by a person of the internet, email or any other form of electronic communication, (e) loitering in any place, whether public or private, (f) interfering with any property in the possession of a person,</p> <p>(g) watching or spying on a person. (4) A person guilty of an offense under this article shall be liable to the punishment of imprisonment for a term from 6 to 12 months or to a fine (multa) not exceeding ten thousand euro (10,000), or to both such fine and imprisonment: Provided that the punishment shall be increased by one degree when the offense is committed against any person mentioned in article 222(1).'</p>	Code	Fine of up to 10,000 EURO
NL	Stalking	<p>'(1) He who unlawfully, systematically, intentionally intrudes upon another person's privacy with the aim of forcing that person to do something, to refrain from doing something, to tolerate something or to instil fear in that person, is liable, as guilty of stalking, to a prison term with a maximum of three years or a fine of the fourth category. (2) Prosecution can only occur on the complaint of the person against whom the crime was committed.'</p>	285b Criminal Code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years
AT	Persistent stalking	<p>'(1) He who unlawfully insistently persecutes a person shall be punished with imprisonment of up to one year. (2) A person insistently persecutes if he, in a suitable way, with the intention of seriously affecting his way of life,</p>	107a Criminal Code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (More if the crime

		<i>during a longer period of time 1. Seeks his physical proximity 2. Uses telecommunication or other means of communication or third parties to get into contact with him 3. Orders goods or services for him by using his personal data 4. Prompts third parties to contact him by using his personal data.'</i>		period exceeds one year and/or if the crime results in suicide or attempted suicide.)
	Harassment through telecommunications	<i>(1) Who by means of telecommunications or using a computer system in a manner which is likely to unreasonably impair a person's conduct of life, a continued for a long period of time 1. a person perceptibly violates honour for a larger number of people, or 2. Facts or images of a person's most personal area of life without their makes consent perceptible to a larger number of people, is punishable by imprisonment of up to one year or with a fine of up to 720 daily rates.</i>	Article 107c of criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (More if the crime period exceeds one year and/or if the crime results in suicide or attempted suicide.) Fine
PL	Stalking	<i>'(1) He who by the persistent harassment of another person or a person's near ones raises in him a reasonable fear or significantly violates his privacy shall be liable to an imprisonment of up to 3 years. (2) He who, pretending to be another person, uses his image or other personal data in order to cause material or personal damage, shall be subjected to the same penalty. (3) If the act specified in § 1 or 2 results in a suicide attempt by the victim, the perpetrator is liable to an imprisonment of 1 to 10 years. (4) Prosecution of the crime specified in § 1 or 2 occurs at the request of the victim.'</i>	Article 190a of the Criminal Code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years
PT	Stalking	<i>'(1) Every person who, in a continuous manner, persecutes</i>	154-A	Prison sentence

		<i>or harasses another person, by any direct or indirect means, in a way that can reasonably cause fear or distress or jeopardize this person's freedom is guilty of an offense punishable with 3 years' imprisonment or a fine, unless a more serious penalty applies by force of another legal provision. (2) The attempt is punishable. (3) In the cases provided for in paragraph 1, accessory penalties of prohibition of contacts can be issued against the defendant for a period of 6 months up to 3 years and mandatory attendance of specific programmes for prevention of the acts of persecution. (4) The accessory penalty of prohibition of contacts with the victim shall include prohibition of approaching the house or the workplace of the victim. The defendant's compliance with these conditions shall be monitored by electronic surveillance devices. (5) The criminal proceedings depend on an official complaint.'</i>	Criminal Code	of up to 3 years Fine Prohibition of contact Mandatory participation in rehabilitation programme
RO	Stalking	<i>(1) The act of an individual who repeatedly, with or without a right or legitimate interest, pursues an individual or supervises their domicile, working place or other places attended by the latter, thus causing to them a state of fear, shall be punishable by no less than 3 and no more than 6 months of imprisonment or by a fine. (2) Making of phone calls or communications through remote communication devices which, through their frequency or content, cause a state of fear to an individual, shall be punishable by no less than 1 and no more than 3 months of imprisonment or by a fine, unless such act represents a more serious offense. (3) Criminal action shall be initiated based on a prior complaint filed by the victim.</i>	208 Criminal Code	Prison sentence of 3-6 months Fine
SI	Stalking	<i>'(1) Whoever through repetitive observation, following or an intrusive attempt to engage in direct contact or contact through the means of electronic communication stalks another person or his relative and thereby causes fright or feelings of threat in another person or his relative, shall be punished by a fine or sentenced to imprisonment up to two years. (2) If the stalked person is a minor or a helpless person, the perpetrator shall be punished with a fine or</i>	134a Criminal Code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years (up to 3 years in the case of aggravating circumstances)

		<i>sentenced to imprisonment of up to three years. (3) The prosecution of the offense under paragraph 1 and 2 of this article shall be initiated upon a complaint.'</i>		Fine
SK	Stalking	<i>'(1) Any person who continually pursues another to an extent that may give rise to justifiable fear for his/her life or health, or the life or health of someone close to this person, or significantly worsens his/her quality of life by a) threatening with bodily harm or other injury to him/her or to someone close to him/her, b) seeking this person's physical proximity or pursuing him/her, c) contacting him/her against his/her will through a third party, through an electronic communication service, in writing or another manner, (d) exploiting this person's personal data for the purpose of obtaining personal or other contact or e) otherwise limiting him/her in his/her usual way of life, shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of up to one year. (2) The offender shall be liable to imprisonment between six months and three years, if he commits the offense referred to in paragraph 1 a) against a protected person, b) in a serious manner, c) with specific motives, d) in public.'</i>	360a Criminal Code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (up to 3 years in the case of aggravating circumstances)
FI	Stalking	<i>'A person who repeatedly threatens, observes, contacts or in another comparable manner unjustifiably stalks another so that this is conducive toward instilling fear or anxiety in the person being stalked, shall, unless an equally or a more severe penalty is provided elsewhere in law for the act, be sentenced for stalking to a fine or to imprisonment for at most two years.'</i>	Chapter 25 Section 7(a) Criminal Code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years
SE	Stalking	<i>A person who harasses another person by means of criminal acts that constitute:</i> <i>1. assault under Chapter 3, Section 5 or attempting to commit such an offence that is not minor;</i> <i>2. unlawful coercion under Chapter 4, Section 4, first paragraph;</i> <i>3. making an unlawful threat under Chapter 4, Section 5, first paragraph;</i> <i>4. violation of the privacy of the home or unlawful</i>	Chapter 4 §4b Criminal Code	Prison sentence of up to 4 years

	<p><i>intrusion under Chapter 4, Section 6;</i></p> <p><i>5. intrusive photography under Chapter 4, Section 6a;</i></p> <p><i>6. unlawful identity use under Chapter 4, Section 6b;</i></p> <p><i>7. unlawful breach of privacy under Chapter 4, Section 6c;</i></p> <p><i>8. molestation under Chapter 4, Section 7;</i></p> <p><i>9. encouraging suicide or negligently encouraging suicide under Chapter 4, Section 7a;</i></p> <p><i>10. sexual molestation under Chapter 6, Section 10;</i></p> <p><i>11. damage to property under Chapter 12, Section 1 or attempting to commit such an offence;</i></p> <p><i>12. minor damage under Chapter 12, Section 2; or</i></p> <p><i>13. breach of a non-contact order with electronic monitoring or breach of a non-contact order under Section 24 of the Non-Contact Orders Act (1988:688),</i></p> <p><i>is, if each of the acts was part of a repeated violation of the person's integrity, guilty of unlawful harassment and is sentenced to imprisonment for at most four years.</i></p>		
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Source: van de Aa, 2018; EELN, 2021.

Other relevant legislation

Table A4.6. Other legislation used to prosecute psychological violence

MS	Offence	Legal definition	Article/section	Sanctions
BE	Threats	<p><i>(1) The threat by gestures or emblems of an attack against people or property, punishable by a criminal penalty, will be punished by imprisonment of eight days to three months and a fine of twenty-six [euros] at one hundred [euros].</i></p> <p><i>(2) The threat, made either verbally, or in writing anonymously or signed, with order or condition, of an attack against people or property, punishable by imprisonment of at least three months, will be punished by imprisonment of eight days to three months and a fine of twenty-six [euros] to one hundred [euros]</i></p>	Penal Code Articles 329, 330	Prison sentence of eight days to three months Fine
	Inhuman and degrading treatment	<i>1 ° torture: any deliberate inhuman treatment which causes acute pain or very serious and cruel suffering, physical or mental;</i>	Penal Code Article 417 bis	Prison sentence of 10-15 years

	<p><i>2 ° inhuman treatment: any treatment by which serious mental or physical suffering is intentionally inflicted on a person, in particular with the aim of obtaining information or confessions from him, to punish him, to put pressure on him or to intimidate that person or third parties;</i></p> <p><i>3 ° degrading treatment: any treatment which causes to the one subjected to it, in the eyes of others or in his own, a serious humiliation or degradation.</i></p>		
Calumny and Defamation	<p><i>Whoever, in the cases indicated below, has badly attributed to a person a specific fact which is likely to damage the honor of that person or to expose him to public contempt, and of which the legal proof does not is not reported, is guilty of slander when the law admits proof of the imputed fact, and of libel when the law does not admit this proof. (When the fact imputed is to have, during the hostilities, made a pact with the enemy, either by providing him with relief in soldiers, men, money, food, arms, ammunition or any materials, or by procuring or by him facilitating by any means the entry, the maintenance or the stay in the territory, without having been forced or required, the proof will always be admissible and it can be done by any legal means.</i></p> <p><i>If this proof is sufficiently provided, the imputation will not give rise to any criminal prosecution.) <L 11-10-1919, art. unique></i></p>	Penal Code Article 443	Prison sentence of 8 days to 1 year Fine
Insults	<p><i>Whoever has insulted a person either by facts, or by writings, images or emblems, in one of the circumstances indicated in article 444, will be punished with imprisonment of eight days to two months and a fine of twenty-six [euros] to five hundred [euros], or just one of these penalties. <L 2000-06-26 / 42, art. 2, Effective: 01-01-2002></i></p> <p><i>(Will be punished with the same penalties whoever, in one of the circumstances indicated in article 444, will have insulted by words, in his capacity or by reason of his functions, a person depositary of the authority or of the public force, or of a public nature.) <L 27-07-1934, art. 3></i></p>	Penal Code Article 448	Prison sentence of 8 days to 2 months Fine

BG	Coercion	<p><i>(1) (Previous text of Article 143, SG No. 62/1997) A person who compels another to do, to omit or to suffer something contrary to his will, using for that purpose force, threats or abuse of his authority, shall be punished by imprisonment for up to six years. (2) (New, SG No. 62/1997) Where the act has been perpetrated by a person under Article 142, paragraph (2), subparagraphs 6 and 8, the punishment shall be imprisonment for three to ten years. (3) (New, SG No. 16/2019) Where the act under Paragraph 1 has been committed in the situation of domestic violence, the punishment shall be imprisonment for three to ten years. (4) (New, SG No. 62/1997, amended and supplemented, SG No. 103/2004, effective 1.01.2005, supplemented, SG No. 43/2005, amended, SG No. 27/2009, SG No. 33/2011, renumbered from Paragraph 3, SG No. 16/2019) Where the coercion is imposed upon a judge, a prosecutor, an examining magistrate, a police body, an investigating police officer, a public enforcement agent, a private enforcement agent or an assistant private enforcement agent, a customs officer, a revenue officer, an official of the Executive Forestry Agency, or an official of the Ministry of Environment and Waters performing a control activity in the course of or in relation to carrying out his/her duties or functions, the punishment shall be:</i></p> <p><i>1. imprisonment from two to eight years, in cases within the scope of Paragraph 1;</i></p> <p><i>2. imprisonment from five to fifteen years, in cases within the scope of Paragraph 2.</i></p>	Penal Code Article 143	Prison sentence of up to 6 years (up to 10 years in the presence of aggravating circumstances, including domestic violence)
	Threat	<p><i>(1) (Amended, SG No. 28/1982, SG No. 10/1993, SG No. 62/1997, SG No. 26/2010) A person who threatens someone with a crime against his person or property or against the person or property of his next-of-kin, and where this threat could evoke justified fear of its implementation, shall be punished by imprisonment for up to three years. (2) (Amended and supplemented, SG No. 28/1982, amended, SG No. 10/1993, SG No. 62/1997, SG No. 26/2010) For threat towards an official or representative of the public during or in connection with</i></p>	Penal Code Article 144	Prison sentence of up to 3 years

		<p><i>carrying out their duties or functions, or to a person enjoying international protection, the punishment shall be imprisonment for up to five years. (3) (Supplemented, SG No. 62/1997, amended, SG No. 92/2002, effective 1.01.2005 in respect of the punishment of probation - amended, SG No. 26/2004, effective 1.01.2004, SG No. 26/2010, supplemented, SG No. 16/2019) If the perpetrator has made a threat of murder or the act has been committed by a person under Article 142, paragraph (2), sub-paragraphs 6 and 8, or has been committed in the situation of domestic violence, the punishment shall be imprisonment for up to six years.</i></p>		
CZ	Dangerous Threat	<p><i>(1) Whoever threatens another person by death, serious injury or other serious harm in such a way as to arouse reasonable concern shall be punished by imprisonment for up to one year or a ban on activity.</i></p> <p><i>(2) The offender shall be punished by imprisonment for up to three years or a ban on activity if he commits the act referred to in paragraph 1</i></p> <p><i>a) as a member of an organized group,</i></p> <p><i>b) against a child or a pregnant woman,</i></p> <p><i>c) with a weapon,</i></p> <p><i>(d) to a witness, expert or interpreter in connection with the performance of their duties; or</i></p> <p><i>(e) to a healthcare professional in the performance of a medical or life-saving occupation or profession, or in another who has performed a similar duty in the protection of life, health or property arising from or imposed on him by his employment, profession, position or function.</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 353	Prison sentence of up to 1 year Ban on activity
DK	Duress	<p><i>A fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years for duress is imposed on any person who i. coerces someone to do, accept or refrain from doing something through the use of violence or through threat of violence, of considerable damage to property, of deprivation of liberty, of making an incorrect allegation of a criminal or defamatory act, or of disclosing private details; ii. coerces</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 260	Prison sentence of up to 2 years Fine

		<i>someone to do, accept or refrain from doing something through threats of reporting or disclosing a criminal act, or of making true defamatory accusations, and such coercion is considered not to be properly justified by the underlying cause of the threat. (2) If someone is coerced into marriage or to participate in a religious marriage ceremony with no legal effect, the punishment may increase to imprisonment for a term not exceeding four years. (3) If someone is coerced into wearing a garment covering the face, the punishment may increase to imprisonment for a term not exceeding four years.</i>		
	Threat	<i>Any person who threatens to commit a criminal act in a manner suited to create a serious fear in another person of his or her own or other people's life, health or welfare is sentenced to a fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.</i>	Criminal Code Article 266	Prison sentence of up to 2 years
	Assault	<i>Whoever commits violence against or in any other way attacks another's body, shall be punished by a fine or imprisonment for up to 3 years. Commitments mentioned in para. 1, repeatedly over a period by a person in or closely related to the victim's household, without the matter being covered by section 245, the penalty may increase to imprisonment for up to 6 years</i>	Criminal Code Article 245	Prison sentence of up to 3 years (up to 6 years in the context of domestic violence)
DE	Threat	<i>(1) Whosoever threatens a person with the commission of a felony against him or a person close to him shall be liable to imprisonment not exceeding one year or a fine. (2) Whosoever intentionally and knowingly pretends to another person that the commission of a felony against him or a person close to him is imminent shall incur the same penalty.</i>	Criminal Code Article 241	Prison sentence of up to 1 year Fine
	Coercion	<i>(1) Whosoever unlawfully with force or threat of serious harm causes a person to commit, suffer or omit an act shall be liable to imprisonment not exceeding three years or a fine. (2) The act shall be unlawful if the use of force or the threat of harm is deemed inappropriate for the purpose of achieving the desired outcome. (3) The attempt shall be punishable. (4) In especially serious cases the penalty shall be imprisonment from six months to five</i>	Criminal Code Article 240	Prison sentence of up to 3 years (5 years in the case of aggravating circumstances)

		<i>years. An especially serious case typically occurs if the offender 1. causes another person to engage in sexual activity; 2. causes a pregnant woman to terminate the pregnancy; or 3. abuses his powers or position as a public official</i>		
IE	Coercion	<p><i>(1) A person who, with a view to compel another to abstain from doing or to do any act which that other has a lawful right to do or to abstain from doing, wrongfully and without lawful authority—</i></p> <p><i>(a) uses violence to or intimidates that other person or a member of the family of the other, or</i></p> <p><i>(b) injures or damages the property of that other, or</i></p> <p><i>(c) persistently follows that other about from place to place, or</i></p> <p><i>(d) watches or besets the premises or other place where that other resides, works or carries on business, or happens to be, or the approach to such premises or place, or</i></p> <p><i>(e) follows that other with one or more other persons in a disorderly manner in or through any public place, shall be guilty of an offence.</i></p> <p><i>(2) For the purpose of this section attending at or near the premises or place where a person resides, works, carries on business or happens to be, or the approach to such premises or place, in order merely to obtain or communicate information, shall not be deemed a watching or besetting within the meaning of subsection (1) (d).</i></p> <p><i>(3) A person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable—</i></p> <p><i>(a) on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding £1,500 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months or to both, or</i></p> <p><i>(b) on conviction on indictment to a fine or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 5 years or to both.</i></p>	Non-violent Offences Against the Person Act 1997, Article 9	Prison sentence of up to 5 years Fine
EE	Threat	<i>(1) A threat to kill, cause health damage or cause significant damage to or destroy property, if there is</i>	Penal Code Article 120	Prison sentence of up to 1 year

		<p><i>reason to fear the realisation of such threat,</i></p> <p><i>is punishable by a pecuniary punishment or up to one year of imprisonment.</i></p> <p><i>(2) The same act, if committed by a legal person, is punishable by a pecuniary punishment.</i></p>		Fine
	Causing Serious Health Damage	<p><i>(1) Causing health damage which results in:</i></p> <p><i>1) danger to life;</i></p> <p><i>2) a health disorder which persists for at least four months or which results in partial or no work ability;</i></p> <p><i>3) severe mental disorder;</i></p> <p><i>4) miscarriage;</i></p> <p><i>5) permanent mutilating facial injury;</i></p> <p><i>6) loss or cessation of functioning of an organ; or</i></p> <p><i>7) death,</i></p> <p><i>is punishable by four to twelve years' imprisonment.</i></p> <p><i>(2) An act provided for in this subsection, if committed by a legal person,</i></p> <p><i>is punishable by a pecuniary punishment.</i></p> <p><i>(3) For the criminal offence provided for in this section, the court may impose extended confiscation of assets or property acquired by the criminal offence pursuant to the provisions of § 832 of this Code.</i></p>	Penal Code Article 118	<p>Prison sentence of 4 to 12 years</p> <p>Fine</p> <p>Confiscation of assets or property</p>
HR	Threat	<p><i>(1) Whoever seriously threatens another with any evil in order to frighten or disturb him, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Whoever seriously threatens to kill another or a person close to him, seriously injure him, abduct him, or deprive him of his liberty, or cause harm by arson, explosion, ionizing radiation, weapons, dangerous weapons or other dangerous means, or destroy social position or material survival, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years.</i></p> <p><i>(3) If the criminal offense referred to in paragraphs 1 and</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 139	<p>Prison sentence of up to 1 year (3 years if the threat is to kill).</p> <p>Prison sentence of up to 5 years in the case of aggravating circumstances</p>

		<p><i>2 was committed against an official or responsible person in connection with his work or position or against a journalist in connection with his work, or against a large number of people, or if it caused greater distress to the population, or if the person being threatened for a long time is placed in a difficult position, the perpetrator shall be punished by imprisonment for a term between six months and five years.</i></p> <p><i>(4) The criminal offense referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be prosecuted on the basis of a private lawsuit, and the criminal offense referred to in paragraph 2 of this Article shall be prosecuted upon motion, unless the offense referred to in paragraph 1 or 2 is committed out of hatred. with a disability or family member.</i></p>		
	Coercion	<p><i>(1) Whoever, by force or serious threat, forces another to do, not do or suffer, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years.</i></p> <p><i>(2) The criminal offense referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be prosecuted on the basis of a private lawsuit, unless committed out of hatred, against a child or a person with a disability or a family member.</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 138	Prison sentence of up to 3 years
IT	Defamation	Not identified	Criminal Code Article 595	
	Insults	Not identified	Criminal Code Article 594	
	Threat	Not identified	Criminal Code Article 612	
LV	Threatening to Commit Murder and to Inflict Serious Bodily Harm	<i>For a person who commits threatening to commit murder or to inflict serious bodily injury, if there have been reasonable grounds to fear that these threats may be carried out, the applicable punishment is a temporary deprivation of liberty or community service, or a fine.</i>	Criminal Code Section 132	Prison sentence, community service Fine
	Persecution	<i>For repeated or lasting tracking and surveillance of</i>	Criminal	Prison sentence,

		<i>another person, expressing threats to such person, or unsolicited communication with such person, if such person has had reasonable grounds to fear for his or her safety or the safety of his or her relatives, the applicable punishment is a temporary deprivation of liberty or community service, or a fine.</i>	Code Section 133	community service Fine
LT	Threatening to kill or seriously disrupt human health or terrorizing a person	<p><i>1 . A person who has threatened to kill a person or seriously impair his health, if there was sufficient reason to believe that the threat could be perpetrated, is punishable by public works or a fine, or restriction of liberty, or arrest, or imprisonment for up to two years.</i></p> <p><i>2 . Anyone who has terrorized a person by threatening to blow up, set fire to or otherwise commit any act dangerous to life, health or property, or who has systematically intimidated a person through mental coercion, is punishable by up to four years' imprisonment.</i></p> <p><i>3 . A person shall be liable for the acts provided for in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article only if there is a complaint of the victim or a statement of his or her legal representative or a request of the prosecutor.</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 145	Prison sentence of up to 4 years Fine
	Restriction of freedom	<p><i>1 . A person who has demanded that a person commit illegal acts or refrain from performing lawful acts, or otherwise act in accordance with the instructions of the perpetrator by using mental violence against the victim or his or her relatives, shall be punishable by a fine or by deprivation of liberty, or by arrest, or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years.</i></p> <p><i>2 . A person shall be liable for the act provided for in Paragraph 1 of this Article only if there is a complaint of the victim or a statement of his or her legal representative or a request of the prosecutor.</i></p> <p><i>1 . A person who has demanded that a person commit illegal acts or refrain from performing lawful acts, or otherwise act in accordance with the instructions of the perpetrator by using mental violence against the victim or his or her relatives,</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 148	Prison sentence of up to 3 years Fine

	<p><i>shall be punishable by a fine or by deprivation of liberty, or by arrest, or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years.</i></p> <p><i>2 . A person shall be liable for the act provided for in Paragraph 1 of this Article only if there is a complaint of the victim or a statement of his or her legal representative or a request of the prosecutor.</i></p> <p><i>1 . A person who has demanded that a person commit illegal acts or refrain from performing lawful acts, or otherwise act in accordance with the instructions of the perpetrator by using mental violence against the victim or his or her relatives,</i></p> <p><i>shall be punishable by a fine or by deprivation of liberty, or by arrest, or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years.</i></p> <p><i>2 . A person shall be liable for the act provided for in Paragraph 1 of this Article only if there is a complaint of the victim or a statement of his or her legal representative or a request of the prosecutor.</i></p>		
Severe health impairment	<p><i>Article 135. Severe Health Impairment 1. A person who causes bodily harm or an illness to a person resulting in the victim's loss of eyesight, hearing, ability to speak, ability to reproduce, pregnancy or other serious mutilation, contracting of a terminal illness or a long-lasting illness posing a threat to his life or seriously affecting his mental health or in the loss of a considerable part of professional or general capacity for work or in a permanent disfigurement of the victim's body shall be punished by a custodial sentence for a term of up to ten years. 2. A person who causes a serious bodily injury or illness 1) to a young child; 2) to a person in a helpless state; 3) to his close relative or family member; 4) to a pregnant woman; 5) to two or more persons; 6) by torturing or in another particularly cruel manner; 7) in a manner endangering other persons' lives; 8) by reason of disorderly conduct; 9) for mercenary reasons; 10) by reason of performance of official or citizen's duties by the victim; 11) in order to conceal another crime; 12) in order</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 135	Prison sentence of up to 10 years (up to 12 years in the context of aggravating circumstances, including domestic violence)

		<i>to acquire the victim's organ, tissue or cells; 13) in order to express hatred towards a group of persons or a person belonging thereto on grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, nationality, language, descent, social status, religion, convictions or views shall be punished by a custodial sentence for a term of two up to twelve years.</i>		
	Defamation	<i>1. A person who spreads false information about another person that could arouse contempt for this person or humiliate him or undermine trust in him 56 shall be punished by a fine or by restriction of liberty or by arrest or by a custodial sentence for a term of up to one year. 2. A person who libels a person accusing him of commission of a serious or grave crime or in the media or in a publication shall be punished by a fine or by arrest or by a custodial sentence for a term of up to two years. 3. A person shall be held liable for the acts provided for in this Article only under a complaint filed by the victim or a statement by the legal representative thereof or at the prosecutor's request</i>	Criminal Code Article 154	Prison sentence of up to 2 years Fine
HU	Threat	<i>(1) Any person who engages in conduct intended to intimidate another person, to disturb the privacy of or to upset, or cause emotional distress to another person arbitrarily, or who is engaged in the pestering of another person on a regular basis, is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment not exceeding one year, insofar as the act did not result in a more serious criminal offense. (2) Any person who, for the purpose of intimidation: a) conveys the threat of force or public endangerment intended to inflict harm upon another person, or upon a relative of this person, or b) giving the impression that any threat to the life, physical integrity or health of another person is imminent, is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment not exceeding two years. (3) Any person who commits the act of harassment:</i>	Criminal Code Article 222	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (2 years in the context of aggravating circumstances, including domestic violence)

		<p><i>a) against his/her spouse or former spouse, or against his/her domestic partner or former domestic partner,</i></p> <p><i>b) against a person under his/her care, custody, supervision or treatment,</i></p> <p><i>c) in a recognized position of trust, authority or influence over the victim, and/or</i></p> <p><i>d) against a public official, at a place and time that is incompatible with his official duties,</i></p> <p><i>shall be punishable by imprisonment not exceeding two years in the case provided for in Subsection (1), or by imprisonment not exceeding three years for a felony in the case provided for in Subsection (2).</i></p>		
	Degrading Treatment of Vulnerable Persons	<p><i>(1) Any person who exhorts another person by exploiting his vulnerability to engage in conduct to humiliate himself is guilty of a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment not exceeding one year, insofar as the act did not result in a more serious criminal offense.</i></p> <p><i>(2) The penalty shall be imprisonment not exceeding two years if the offender:</i></p> <p><i>a) provides or promises some form of compensation for engaging in the conduct referred to in Subsection (1),</i></p> <p><i>b) makes a recording of the person while engaging in the conduct referred to in Subsection (1), or makes such recordings available to the general public.</i></p> <p><i>(3) The penalty for a felony shall be imprisonment not exceeding three years if the criminal offense is committed on a commercial scale.</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 225	Prison sentence of up to 2 years
	Coercion	<i>Whoever compels another person by force or threat to do, does not do or tolerate something, and thereby causes significant harm to the interests of others, if no other criminal offense is committed, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years.</i>	Criminal Code Article 195	Prison sentence of up to 3 years
NL	Coercion	<i>The following shall be punished by a term of imprisonment not exceeding two years or a fine of the fourth category:</i> <i>1°.he who unlawfully forces another person to do, not to do or to tolerate something by force or any other fact or by</i>	Criminal Code Article 284	Prison sentence of up to 2 years

		<p><i>threat of violence or any other fact, directed either against that other or against third parties;</i></p> <p><i>2°.he who compels another by threats of libel or libel to do, not to do or to tolerate something.</i></p> <p><i>2In the case described under 2°, the offense will not be prosecuted except on a complaint from the person against whom it was committed.</i></p>		Fine
	Threat	<p><i>Threats openly in association committing violence against persons or property, with violence against an internationally protected person or his protected property, with any crime which endangers the general security of persons or property or common danger to the provision of services, with rape, with actual indecent assault, with any crime against life, with hostage-taking, with aggravated assault or with arson, shall be punished with a term of imprisonment not exceeding two years or a fine of the fourth category.</i></p> <p><i>2If this threat is made in writing and under certain conditions, it shall be punished by a term of imprisonment not exceeding four years or a fine of the fourth category.</i></p> <p><i>3Threat of a terrorist offense is punishable by a term of imprisonment not exceeding six years or a fine of the fifth category.</i></p> <p><i>4If the offense described in the first, second or third paragraph is committed with the intent to prepare or facilitate a terrorist offence, the prison sentence imposed on the offense is increased by one third.</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 285	Prison sentence of up to 2 years Fine
AT	Coercion	<p><i>Any person who coerces another to do, acquiesce, or omit to do an act by use of force or dangerous threat is liable for imprisonment for up to one year or a fine not exceeding 720 penalty units.</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 105	Prison sentence of up to 1 year Fine
	Serious Coercion	<p><i>(1) Any person who coerces 1. by making death threats or threats of serious mutilation or noticeable disfigurement, kidnapping, arson, nuclear power hazards, ionising radiation, explosives, or loss of livelihood or social status;</i></p> <p><i>2. by putting the coerced person or another person against which the use of force or dangerous threat is made into a state of agony through these means for a longer period of time; or 3. by leading the coerced person into prostitution</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 106	Prison sentence of 6 months to 5 years (10 years if the offence results in suicide or attempted suicide)

	<p><i>or to engage in a pornographic performance (§ 215a para. 3) or to commit another act, to acquiesce, or to omit the doing of an act which violates particularly important interests of the coerced person or another person is liable to imprisonment for six months to five years.</i></p> <p><i>(2) The perpetrator is liable to imprisonment for one to 10 years if the offence results in the suicide or a suicide attempt of the coerced person or of another person against which the force is used or the threat is made(3) The same penalty applies to any person who commits the coercion in order to lead a minor into prostitution or to engage in a pornographic performance, or who commits the coercion as part of a criminal association, by using serious violence, or in a manner which intentionally or with gross negligence (§ 6 para. 3) places the life of another at risk, or if the offence causes a particularly serious detriment to the other person.</i></p>		
Dangerous Threat	<p><i>(1) Any person who makes a dangerous threat to another in order to put the other person into a state of fear or anxiety is liable to imprisonment for up to one year or a fine not exceeding 720 penalty units. (2) Any person who makes a dangerous threat by making death threats or by threatening serious mutilation or noticeable disfigurement, kidnapping, arson, nuclear power hazards, ionising radiation, explosives, or loss of livelihood or social status, or by putting the threatened person or another person against which the force is used or the dangerous threat is made through these means into a state of agony for an extended period of time is liable to imprisonment for up to three years. (3) For cases under § 106 para. 2 the penalties under that provision apply.</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 107	Prison sentence of up to 1 year Fine
Defamation	<p><i>If someone accuses a person presence of others (in a way that they can observe/witness this accusation) of possessing a disdainful trait or disposition, or of dishonourable behaviour, or of behaviour contrary to common decency, in a way that is intended to lower the esteem of the person in the eyes of the bystanders or the public, they are punishable with imprisonment up to six months or to be fined with 360 ‘daily rates’.</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 111	Prison sentence of up to 1 year Fine

	<p><i>If someone commits this offence in print, on the radio, or in any other way where the defamation is accessible by the broader public, they are punishable with imprisonment up to one year or to be fined with 720 'daily rates'.</i></p> <p><i>The offender is not to be punished if the accusation is proven to be truthful. In case of Paragraph 1, the offender is also not to be punished if the circumstances were as such that the offender had good reason to believe the accusation to be true.</i></p>		
Insult	<p><i>If someone publicly, or in front of multiple people, insults, humiliates someone else, causes someone else bodily harm or threatens them with bodily harm, they are punishable with either imprisonment up to three months or 180 daily rates, provided that the offender is not already subject to severe punishment because of a [violating a] different regulation.</i></p> <p><i>An action is committed 'in front of multiple people' when it is committed in the presence of more than two [persons] aside of the perpetrator and victim and when these two persons can perceive [=take note/are aware/can observe] the action (=insult etc).</i></p> <p><i>Anyone who allows himself to be carried away by indignation about the behaviour of another person into insulting, ridiculing, abusing or threatening them with ill-treatment in a way that is excusable in the circumstances is excused [=pardoned], especially if his indignation is generally understandable, and especially if is generally understandable once some time has past since the occurrence of the situation</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 115	Prison sentence of up to 3 months Fine
Sexual Coercion	<p><i>(1) Any person who, except in cases under § 201, by use of force or dangerous threat coerces another to engage in or acquiesce to sexual conduct is liable to imprisonment for six months to five years.</i></p> <p><i>(2) The person is liable to imprisonment for five to 15 years if the offence results in a serious assault (§ 84 para. 1) or pregnancy of the victim or if the victim is placed into a state of agony or treated in a particularly humiliating</i></p>	Criminal Code Article 202	Prison sentence of six months to 5 years (longer in the case of extreme violence or death)

		<i>way for a longer period of time; the person is liable to imprisonment for 10 to 20 years or imprisonment for life if the offence results in the death of the victim.</i>		
PL	Coercion	<i>Whoever uses force or an illegal threat with the purpose of compelling another person to conduct himself in a specified manner, or to resist from or to submit to a certain conduct shall be subject to the penalty of deprivation of liberty for up to 3 years.</i>	Penal Code Article 191	Prison sentence of up to 3 years
PT	Mental Abuse	Not identified	Penal Code Article 152	
	Threat	Not identified	Penal Code Art 153	
	Coercion	Not identified	Penal Code Art 154	
RO	Threat	<i>(1) The act of threatening a person with a crime or an act prejudicial against him or another person, whether it is liable to produce a state of fear, is punished with imprisonment from three months to one year fine without penalty imposed shall not exceed the penalty provided for the offense which has been threatened. (2) Criminal proceedings shall be initiated upon prior complaint from the injured person.</i>	Criminal Code Article 206	Prison sentence 3 months to 1 year Fine
SI	Coercion	<i>(1) Whoever, by means of force or serious threat, coerces another person to perform an act or to omit the performance of an act or to suffer any harm shall be sentenced to imprisonment for up to one year. (2) Prosecution shall be initiated upon a proposal</i>	Criminal Code Article 132 KZ-1	Prison sentence of up to 1 year
	Threat	<i>(1) Whoever seriously threatens another person with the intention of intimidating or upsetting this person with an attack on his or her life or body or freedom, or threatens to destroy property of his or hers of substantial value or to commit any of these acts against a person close to him or her, shall be punished by a fine or imprisonment for up to six months (2) Whoever commits an act referred to in the preceding paragraph against two or more persons either by ill-</i>	Criminal Code Article 135 KZ-1	Prison sentence of up to 6 months (up to 1 year in the case of aggravating circumstances) Fine

		<p><i>treatment or by means of a weapon, dangerous implement or any other implement capable of causing serious bodily harm or severe damage to health, shall be punished by a fine or imprisonment for up to one year.</i></p> <p><i>(2) Whoever commits an act referred to in the preceding paragraph against two or more persons either by ill-treatment or by means of a weapon, dangerous implement or any other implement capable of causing serious bodily harm or severe damage to health, shall be punished by a fine or imprisonment for up to one year.</i></p>		
FI	Coercion	<p><i>A person who unlawfully by violence or threat forces another to do, endure or omit to do something shall, unless a more severe penalty has been provided elsewhere in law for the act, be sentenced for coercion to a fine or to imprisonment for at most two years.</i></p>	Criminal Code Chapter 25, section 8	Prison sentence of up to 2 years Fine
	Menace	<p><i>A person who raises a weapon at another or otherwise threatens another with an offence under such circumstances that the person so threatened has justified reason to believe that his or her personal safety or property or that of someone else is in serious danger shall, unless a more severe penalty has been provided elsewhere in law for the act, be sentenced for menace to a fine or to imprisonment for at most two years.</i></p>	Criminal Code Chapter 25, section 7	Prison sentence of up to 2 years Fine
	Assault	<p><i>1) A person who employs physical violence on another or, without such violence, injures the health of another, causes pain to another or renders another unconscious or into a comparable condition, shall be sentenced for assault to a fine or to imprisonment for at most two years. (2) An attempt is punishable</i></p>	Criminal Code Chapter 21	Prison sentence of up to 2 years
SE	Coercion	<p><i>A person who, by assault or otherwise by violence or by threat of a criminal act, coerces another person to do, submit to or omit to do something, is guilty of unlawful coercion and is sentenced to a fine or imprisonment for at most two years. A person who exercises coercion with such effect by threatening to bring a prosecution against or report another person for an offence or to give detrimental information about another person is also guilty of unlawful coercion, provided that the coercion is</i></p>	Criminal Code Chapter 4, Section 4	Prison sentence of up to 2 years (9 months up to 6 years if the offence is gross). Fine

	<p><i>improper.</i></p> <p><i>If the offence is gross, the person is guilty of gross unlawful coercion and is sentenced to imprisonment for at least nine months and at most six years. When assessing whether the offence is gross, particular consideration is given to whether the act: 1. included violence of a serious kind; 2. included a threat that was substantially reinforced with the aid of a weapon, an explosive or a dummy weapon, or by allusion to a capacity for violence, or that was otherwise of a serious kind; or 3. was otherwise of a particularly ruthless or dangerous nature</i></p>		
Threat	<p><i>A person who threatens another person with a criminal act in a manner that is liable to occasion serious fear in the person threatened for the safety of their own or someone else's person, property, liberty or peace is guilty of making an unlawful threat and is sentenced to a fine or imprisonment for at most one year. If the offence is gross, the person is guilty of making a gross unlawful threat and is sentenced to imprisonment for at least nine months and at most four years. When assessing whether the offence is gross, particular consideration is given to: 1. whether the threat was substantially reinforced with the aid of a weapon, an explosive or a dummy weapon, or by allusion to a capacity for violence, or was otherwise of a serious kind; or 2. whether the act was otherwise of a particularly ruthless or dangerous nature</i></p>	Criminal Code Chapter 4, Section 5	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (4 years in the case of aggravating circumstances) Fine
Insulting behaviour	<p><i>A person who, in cases other than those referred to in Section 1 or 2, directs accusation, a derogatory statement or humiliating conduct at another person is, if the act is liable to violate the other person's self-esteem or dignity, guilty of insulting behaviour and is sentenced to a fine. If the offence is gross, the sentence is a fine or imprisonment for at most six months.</i></p>	Criminal Code Chapter 5, Section 3	Prison sentence of up to 6 months Fine
Defamation	<p><i>A person who identifies someone as being a criminal or as having a reprehensible way of life, or otherwise provides information liable to expose that person to the contempt of others is guilty of defamation and is sentenced to a fine. If they were obliged to make a statement or if, in view of the circumstances, it was otherwise justifiable to provide</i></p>	Criminal Code Chapter 5, Section 1	Fine

		<i>information about the matter, and if they show that the information was true or that they had reasonable grounds for it, they are not held responsible.</i>		
SK	Dangerous threats Gross defamation	<p><i>(1) Any person who threatens another with killing, inflicting grievous bodily harm or other aggravated harm to an extent which may give rise to justifiable fears shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of up to one year.</i></p> <p><i>(2) The offender shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of six months to three years if he commits the offence referred to in paragraph 1</i></p> <p><i>a) acting in a more serious manner,</i></p> <p><i>b) against a protected person,</i></p> <p><i>c) with the intention of preventing or obstructing the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms by another,</i></p> <p><i>d) out of a specific motive, or</i></p> <p><i>e) in public. If an offence referred to in Section 1 is gross, the person is guilty of gross defamation and is sentenced to a fine or imprisonment for at most two years. When assessing whether the offence is gross, particular consideration is given to whether the information was, in view of its content or the method or scope of its dissemination or for some other reason, liable to result in serious damage.</i></p>	PenalCriminal Code, Chapter 5, Section 3602	Prison sentence of up to 2 years

Annex 5: Additional research findings

Prevalence data

Table A5.1 Proportion of women who reported experiencing any form of psychological violence by a partner in the EU, 2014

	Current partner (%)	Previous partner (%)
AT	24	36
BE	23	52
BG	25	58
CY	27	50
CZ	23	50
DE	25	51
DK	35	56
EE	32	54
EL	21	30
ES	17	37
FI	27	55
FR	25	56
HR	21	46
HU	29	50
IE	11	37
IT	25	46
LT	38	56
LU	23	55
LV	41	63
MT	22	59
NL	27	51
PL	25	41
PT	21	47

RO	30	45
SE	20	51
SI	20	46
SK	34	52
EU-28	26	49

Source: FRA, 2014.

Note: As this data is from 2014, a reference period during which the United Kingdom still was a Member State, the EU aggregate used here refers to the 28 EU Member States (EU-28), including the United Kingdom. For current partners, the percentage refers to respondents who say that they have experienced a particular form of psychological violence at least sometimes during the relationship. In the case of previous partners, the survey asked if respondents have ever experienced each of the forms of psychological violence by any previous partner.

Table A5.2 Proportion of women who reported experiencing each of the four forms of psychological violence by a partner since the age of 15 in the EU, 2014

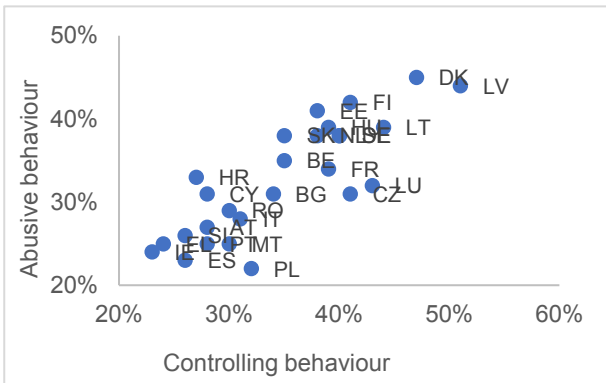
	Psychological abuse which involved controlling behaviour by a partner	Psychological abuse which involved economic violence by a partner	Psychological abuse which involved abusive behaviour by a partner	Psychological abuse which involved blackmail with/abuse of children
AT	28	11	27	8
BE	35	14	35	10
BG	34	17	31	6
CY	28	10	31	6
CZ	41	16	31	8
DE	40	11	38	9
DK	47	14	45	10
EE	38	14	41	10
EL	24	9	25	4
ES	26	9	23	7
FI	41	14	42	10
FR	39	11	34	10
HR	27	11	33	17
HU	39	13	39	10
IE	23	10	24	6
IT	31	13	28	7
LT	44	15	39	6
LU	43	13	32	8
LV	51	15	44	9
MT	30	11	25	6
NL	38	11	38	9
PL	32	12	22	4
PT	28	8	25	7

RO	30	12	29	6
SE	40	10	38	8
SI	26	9	26	5
SK	35	15	38	9
EU-28	35	12	32	8

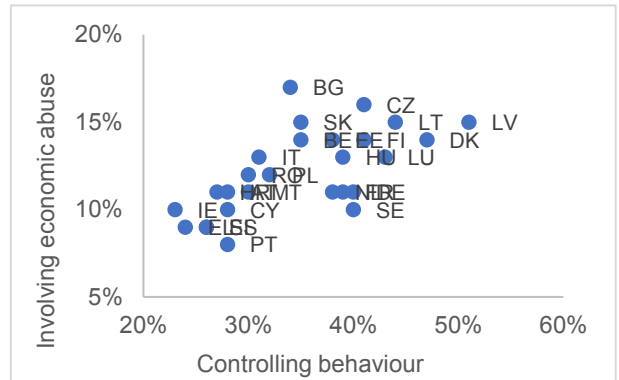
Source: FRA, 2012.

Note: As this data is from 2014, a reference period during which the United Kingdom still was a Member State, the EU aggregate used here refers to the 28 EU Member States (EU-28), including the United Kingdom.

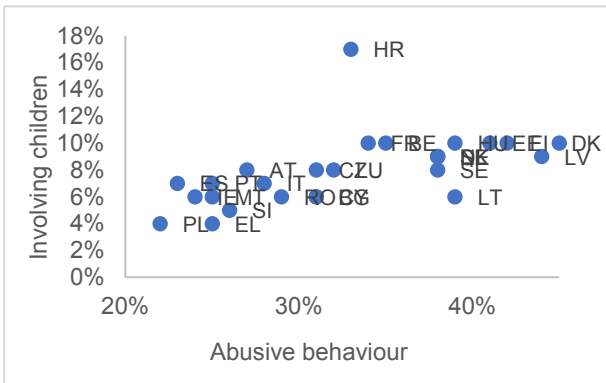
Figure A5.1 Correlation between different forms of psychological violence in EU Member States



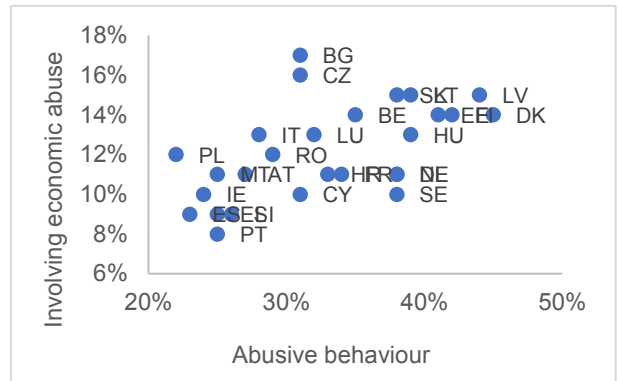
Correlation coefficient **0.83**



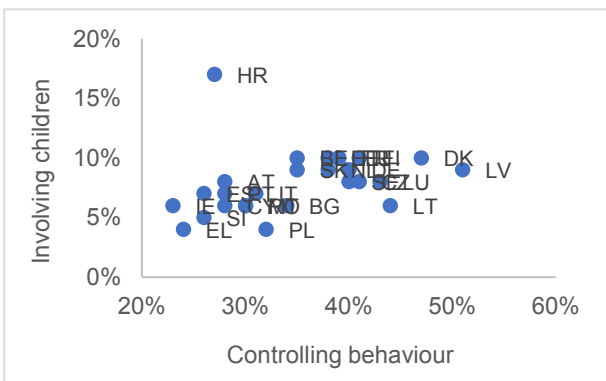
Correlation coefficient **0.64**



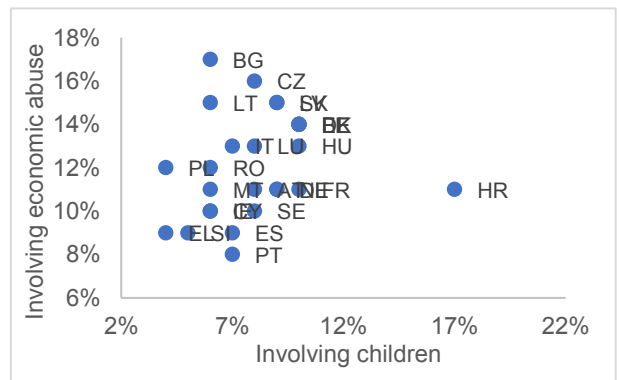
Correlation coefficient **0.56**



Correlation coefficient **0.55**



Correlation coefficient **0.31**



Correlation coefficient **0.20**

Source: authors' elaboration based on FRA survey (2014).

Table A5.3 Proportion of women who reported experiencing any form of psychological partner violence by education level, 2014

	Primary Education	Secondary Education	Tertiary Education
AT	48	37	30
BE	47	43	46
BG	36	41	37
CY	30	39	46
CZ	49	48	30
DE	48	50	53
DK	58	62	59
EE	50	48	55
EL	29	35	34
ES	28	37	39
FI	54	55	48
FR	43	50	50
HR	44	42	36
HU	45	51	48
IE	33	29	32
IT	38	38	34
LT	53	54	46
LU	46	53	47
LV	64	62	52
MT	25	40	42
NL	49	51	48

PL	39	38	35
PT	38	31	34
RO	39	40	36
SE	57	51	49
SI	32	35	34
SK	49	47	51
EU-28	40	45	44

Source: FRA, 2014.

Note: As this data is from 2014, a reference period during which the United Kingdom still was a Member State, the EU aggregate used here refers to the 28 EU Member States (EU-28), including the United Kingdom.

Table A5.4 Proportion of women who reported experiencing any form of psychological partner violence by employment status, 2014

	Employed	Homemaker	In Education	Other	Retired	Unemployed
AT	36	47	35	50	36	58
BE	42	30	52	58	32	66
BG	44	45	41	34	27	40
CY	38	35	62	32	26	45
CZ	49	52	38	53	36	60
DE	49	59	55	79	38	64
DK	60	69	70	63	48	63
EE	53	59	40	49	36	59
EL	37	26	41	46	24	39
ES	38	22	36	30	27	34
FI	52	58	61	75	49	59
FR	47	44	75	61	36	54
HR	37	43	42	32	43	48
HU	54	52	53	71	37	53
IE	31	27	50	26	25	39
IT	41	26	38	52	38	46
LT	51	41	49	57	49	62
LU	51	41	61	53	39	53
LV	61	54	58	78	45	78
MT	46	27	50	47	29	38
NL	49	42	60	57	42	62

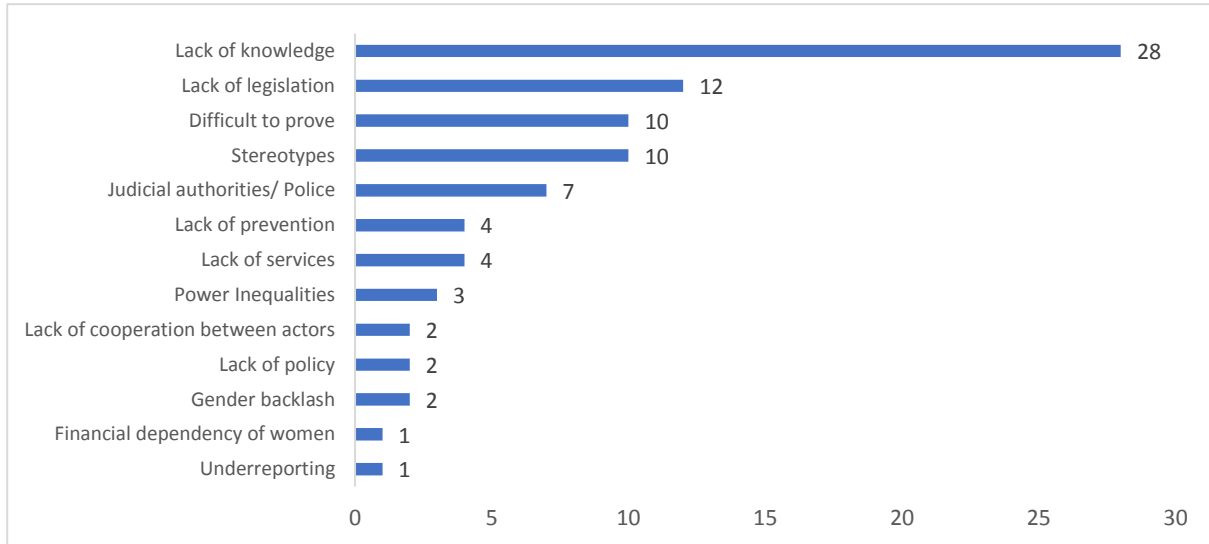
PL	39	29	42	40	34	39
PT	31	34	35	30	38	51
RO	41	36	30	37	39	46
SE	51	55	52	68	46	49
SI	35	21	38	50	31	42
SK	48	57	26	59	41	57
EU-28	45	38	49	52	36	49

Source: FRA, 2014.

Note: As this data is from 2014, a reference period during which the United Kingdom still was a Member State, the EU aggregate used here refers to the 28 EU Member States (EU-28), including the United Kingdom.

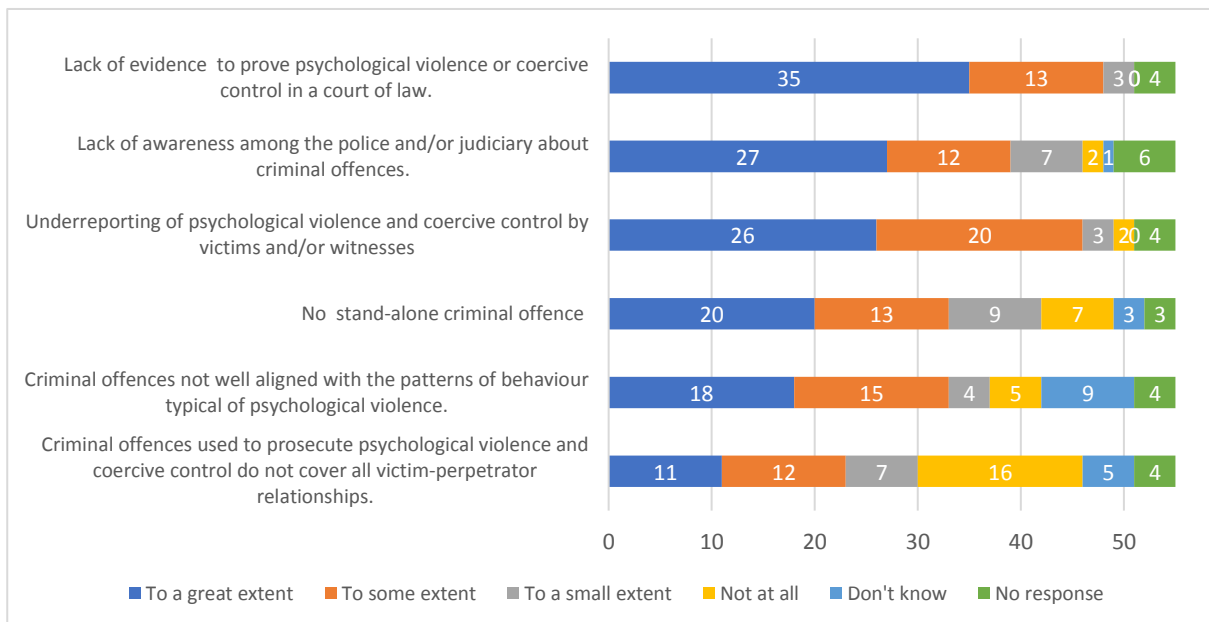
Data from the survey

Figure A5.2 Most important barrier to preventing psychological violence against women (open question)



Question: In your opinion, what is the most significant barrier¹⁷⁹ to preventing psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country? (n=46).

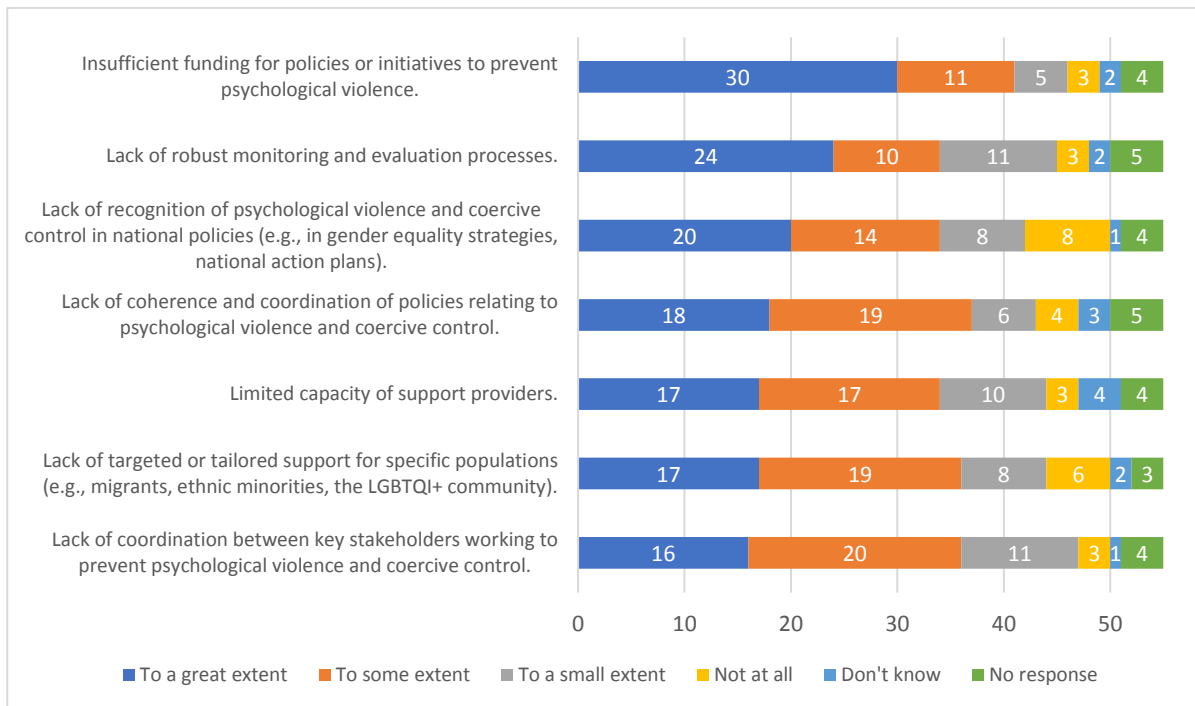
Figure A5.3 Extent to which barriers relating to law and the criminal justice system impede the prevention of psychological violence against women



Question: To what extent do the following barriers relating to law and the criminal justice system impede the prevention of psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country? Base size differs across barriers because some participants did not give an answer.

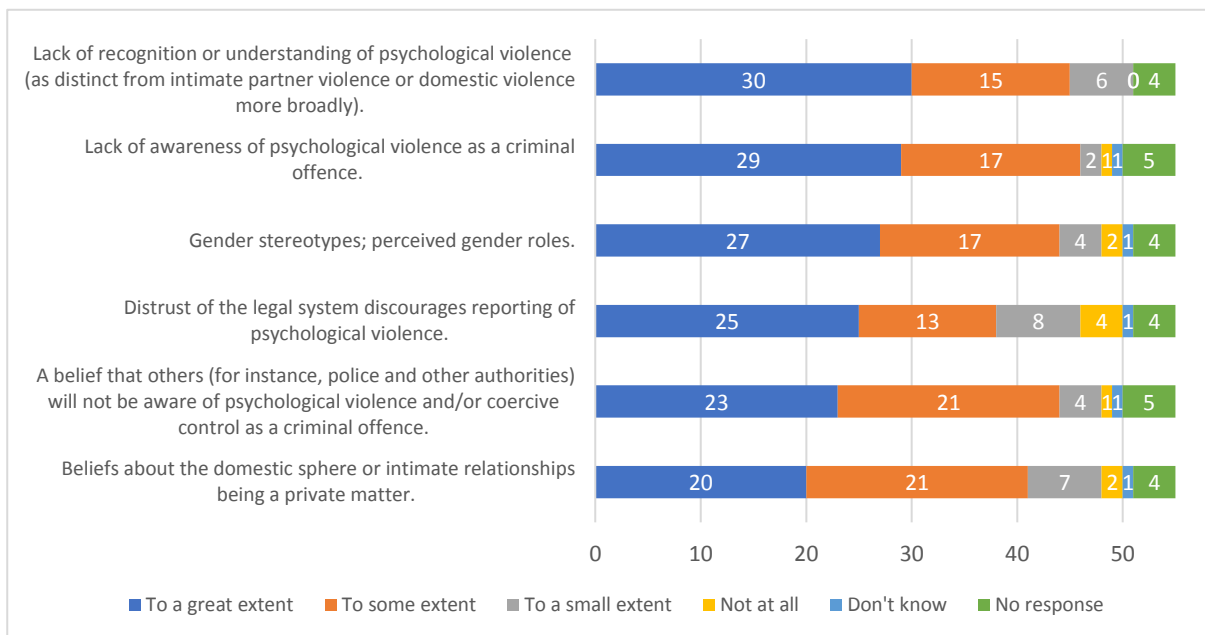
¹⁷⁹ Although the question asks about the most important barrier, some participants mentioned more than one factor.

Figure A5.4 Extent to which structural barriers impede the prevention of psychological violence against women



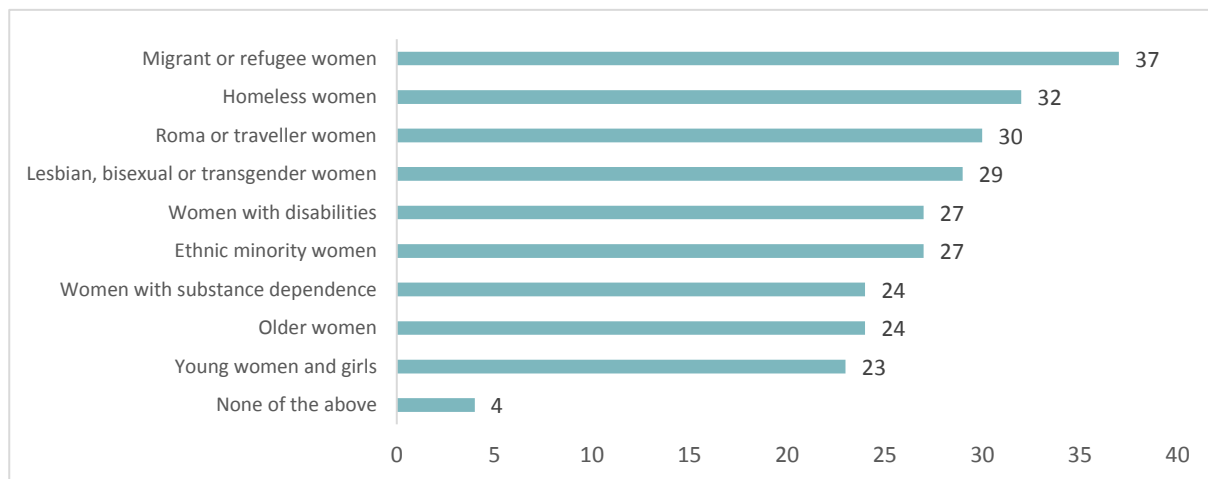
Question: To what extent do the following structural barriers impede the prevention of psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country? Base size differs across barriers because some participants did not give an answer.

Figure A5.5 Extent to which cultural barriers impede the prevention of psychological violence against women



Question: To what extent do the following cultural barriers impede the prevention of psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country? Base size differs across barriers because some participants did not give an answer.

Figure A5.6 Groups of women for whom there are particular barriers to preventing psychological violence



Question: For which of the following groups of women in your country (if any) are there particular barriers to preventing psychological violence? (n=55). Participants could select more than one option

Additional material on barriers to effective prevention from other OECD countries

Box A5.1 Lack of knowledge and understanding among professionals

In a qualitative study examining the experience of victims of stalking (N=26) in the UK, respondents report that **the police and the courts often fail to recognise stalking** in its various forms and do not fully consider the severity of the incident(s) and the impact on victims (Korkodeilou, 2014). Similar findings are reported in Canada, where the harms caused by coercive control appear to be overlooked by some police officers and in criminal proceedings in court, focusing instead primarily on physical assaults (Gill & Aspinall, 2020).

A study conducted in the UK, which surveyed non-specialist police officers, students and members of the general public reveals that, **police officers frequently consider stalking cases where the offender is a victim’s acquaintance or ex-partner as less serious than those where the stalker is a stranger** (Scott et al., 2013). The study claims that UK **police officers sometimes blame victims of stalking** for encouraging the offender’s behaviour. Evidence also suggests that cases occurring in the ‘intimate’ sphere are less frequently prosecuted by the Crown Prosecution Service compared to cases involving strangers (Scott et al., 2013).

According to another study published in the UK, the creation of a coercive control offence should be complemented with training programmes for professionals (including judicial authorities, the police and community-based partitioners) to help them understand the definitions and adequately use this offence (Lee et al., 2020). The UK Home Office also report that some professionals still lack awareness of how to investigate and charge cases of coercive control (Home Office, 2020), with recent research identifying a failure to situate ‘incidents’ of domestic violence in a broader context and **excessive emphasis still placed on physical violence with injury** (Brennan et al., 2021).

Barriers specific to judicial authorities' understanding of technology-facilitated abuse were also identified. An Australian study (n=198) also identifies concern among domestic violence support practitioners and victims that **the use of technology as an abusive tactic is not taken seriously by police**, and that **digital coercive control is viewed by criminal justice agents as less serious than other forms of abuse and traditional stalking** (Harris & Woodlock, 2019). Moreover, the study finds that breaches of intervention or protection orders via digital means tend to be regarded by authorities as being a low-level risk (Harris & Woodlock, 2019). This study also highlights the common expectation among police that **the onus is on the victim to change her behaviour around her use of technology**, and that no alternative solutions are offered if she is unable or unwilling to do so (Harris & Woodlock, 2019).

Box A5.2 Difficulties of providing evidence of coercive control

A study relating to new legislation in the UK around coercive control highlights the **challenge of providing adequate levels of evidence to enable prosecution** as this form of abuse tends to both produce little or no physical evidence and involves manipulation of the victim and normalisation of the abuse such that they themselves may not be aware that a crime has been committed (Brennan et al. 2021).

Similar barriers have been noted in relation to the identification and prosecution of digital coercive control, both because norms of the digital world are highly ambiguous and context-dependent (for example, it is normal for some young women to receive fifty texts from their boyfriend in a day) and because such behaviour of 'repeated contact' closely resembles an accepted model for 'romantic behaviour' (Dragiewicz et al., 2018; Harris & Woodlock, 2019).

Box A5.3 Barriers to reporting psychological violence and coercive control

In the UK, research suggests that **victims of psychological violence often overlook abusive conduct** as their partners claim their behaviour is driven by love and romance (Safelives, 2019). According to another study conducted in the UK, those surrounding the victim (friends and family members) may also normalise the victims' experience, failing to prevent future victimisation (Dolye, 2020). Similar observations around the normalisation of abusive behaviour for the victim have been noted specifically in relation to digital coercive control (Harris & Woodlock, 2019).

A qualitative study exploring victims' experience in the UK highlights that **stalking victims seldom report incidents out of mistrust in the police and concern that nothing would come of an investigation** (Korkodeilou, 2014).

In a study investigating the effect of criminalising coercive control in Australia, researchers found that one of the main barriers to victims reporting crimes is their **fear of what might come from interacting with the criminal justice system** (e.g., losing custody of their children) (Walklate & Fitz-Gibbon, 2019). Another Australian study reports that local conservative values and patriarchal power relations can discourage reporting by limiting both the perception and reality of support available for the victim (Harris & Woodlock, 2019).

Finally, there are findings to suggest that cultural stereotypes may act as a barrier to perpetrators attempting to change their own behaviour, with one UK study (n=64) of men attending a domestic violence perpetrator programme reporting that **traditional masculinity and gender norms** play a role in sustaining coercive control by male partners (Downes et al., 2019).

Box A5.4 Barriers to prevention for specific sub-groups of women

An empirical study conducted in Wales drawing from 18 interviews with professionals working in support centres and 34 written submissions from LGBTQI+ people reports that **LGBTQI+ people encounter distinct barriers when trying to access support services**. For example, the study suggests that partners can exercise control over victims and prevent them from accessing support by drawing on victims' fear of being outed. Perpetrators might also exercise their control by withholding victims from undertaking administrative or medical procedures to change their gender identity (Harvey et al., 2014).

An Australian study on digital coercive control suggested that certain sub-groups, including **victims with disabilities and Indigenous peoples**, may be more at risk of normalising these kinds of violence due to their persistent exposure to systemic discrimination – although the authors noted that so far very little research in this area has been conducted in these settings (Harris & Woodlock, 2019).

Annex 6: Assessment of practices against criteria

Table A6.1 Overview of how identified practices performed against the criteria (total number of practices classified as “green”, “amber” or “red”)

Evidence: Practices are likely to be more effective at achieving their objectives if they are based on in-depth knowledge of the issue, the target audience and ‘what works’ in that area (Heisecke, 2014).			
The practice design and implementation is informed to a great extent by evidence and research	9	The practice design and implementation is informed to some extent by evidence and research	0
The practice design and implementation is not informed by evidence and research			
Theoretical underpinning: Formulating goals and objectives for the practice will help to clarify the expected contribution to preventing psychological violence and coercive control. A well-theorised practice also provides a framework for an evaluation of effectiveness (Heisecke, 2014).			
The objectives and the mechanisms by which these are to be achieved are clear	6	The objectives are clear but the mechanisms by which these are to be achieved are not	0
The objectives and mechanisms by which these objectives are to be achieved are not clear			
Conceptual clarity: Without defining key concepts, there is a lack of clarity about what the practice hopes to achieve and the parameters in which it operates. Providing clear, appropriate and comprehensive definitions of concepts is one of criteria to identify promising practice in relating to combating and preventing domestic violence (EIGE, 2015).			
Key concepts are clearly defined	6	Some information is provided to clarify key concepts	2
Key concepts are not defined			
Gender equality: The Istanbul Convention (Article 18.3) states that measures to prevent violence against women and domestic violence should be based on a gendered understanding of violence against women. Sexism and gender inequality are fundamental to coercive control and psychological violence against women; without recognising and responding to this gendered dimension the root causes of the issue cannot be addressed.			
The practices identified psychological violence as a form of violence against women, linked to gender inequality in society	13	The practice identifies psychological violence as a form of violence against women or links it to gender inequality in society (but not both)	10
The practice does not identify psychological violence as a form of violence against women, linked to gender inequality in society			
Intersectionality: The Istanbul Convention (Article 18.3) states that measures to prevent violence against women and domestic violence should address the specific needs of			

vulnerable persons.			
Practice is fully targeted at or tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups	7	Practice has elements that are tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups	12 Practice is not targeted or tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups
Transferability: This is one of the basic elements of a promising practice as identified by EIGE (2015). Transferability is particularly relevant from the EU perspective because of the importance of mutual learning and sharing practice across Member States.			
The principles or ideas of the practice have been or can be applied in other geographical contexts/Member States	14	Some of the principles or ideas of the practice may be applied in other geographical contexts/Member States	11 The principles or ideas of the practice are unique to the geographical context in the Member State
Tailoring to context: There is a need for practices to be tailored to the (national, regional or local) context in which they are implemented (Heisecke, 2014). Although elements of a practice may be transferable across geographical or other contexts, the practice will be most effective if it responds to the specific situation in which it is implemented.			
The practice is tailored to a great extent to the national/regional/local context	8	The practice is tailored to some extent to the national/regional/local context	0 The practice is not tailored to the national/regional/local context
Sustainability: Psychological violence against women is an endemic, complex issue, for which there can be no “quick fix”. Practices are likely to have a bigger impact if they are long-term and sustained (including financially) rather than short-term and ad hoc (Heisecke, 2014; EIGE, 2015).			
The practice is ongoingly being actively implemented/scaled-up/improved	12	The practice remains available but is not being actively implemented/scaled-up/improved	7 The practice is a one-off
Stakeholder engagement I & II: Practices may be more effective at preventing psychological violence against women if they engage with a range of organisations and actors with expertise in this area, particularly organisations who work directly with victims (Heisecke, 2014).			
The practice is/was informed to a great extent by collaboration with stakeholders	4	The practice is/was informed to some extent by collaboration with stakeholders	6 The practice is/was not informed by collaboration with stakeholders
To a great extent there is/was co-ordination and integration (e.g. range of actors)	10	To some extent there is/was co-ordination and integration (e.g. more than one actor / organisation)	7 The practice is/was not integrated or coordinated and involved only a single actor/organization

Policy embedment: The embedment of a practice in a wider gender mainstreaming strategy could guarantee a structured approach and continuity over time, and possibly ongoing funding (Heisecke, 2014; EIGE, 2015).				
The practice is/was embedded in broader strategy or action plan on gender-based violence implemented at national level by government	3	The practice is/was part of strategy or action plan implemented at regional or local level	23	The practice is/was standalone/ad hoc and not part of any broader strategy or action plan on gender-based violence
Language and messaging: The choice of language and messages (including visual images) is an important factor, particularly in relation to awareness-raising campaigns (Heisecke, 2014), since it can reinforce myths, stereotypes and victim-blaming attitudes.				
The language and messages used in the practice challenge myths, stereotypes, and victim-blaming attitudes	5	The language and messages used in the practice do not reinforce myths, stereotypes, and victim-blaming attitudes, but do not challenge them either	0	The language and messages used in the practice reinforce myths, stereotypes, and victim-blaming attitudes
Promotion: The Istanbul Convention (Article 13.2) states that parties shall ensure the wide dissemination among the general public of information on measures available to prevent acts of violence covered by the scope of this Convention. Practices to prevent psychological violence against women will not be effective if the target audience is unaware of them.				
An awareness campaign complemented the practice or the practice itself was an awareness raising campaign	8	There is/was some active promotion of the practice (e.g., via online or social media channels)	0	The practice is/was not actively promoted
Monitoring, evaluation & effectiveness: Monitoring and evaluation is an important component of promising practice because without data collection and evaluation it is not possible to understand “what works” (and what does not work and why) (Heisecke, 2014; EIGE, 2015). Without this understanding grounded in data and evidence, the design and implementation of practices cannot be updated and adapted to better achieve the stated objectives.				
A robust evaluation is planned or underway	13	Some administrative data is being collected or some monitoring is underway	1	There is no data collection, monitoring or evaluation planned or underway
There is compelling evidence of the effectiveness of	11	There is weak evidence of the effectiveness of the	0	There is evidence to suggest the practice is not

the practice

practice

effective

Table A6.2. Outcome of the assessment of each practice against the criteria: evidence, theory and conceptual clarity; scope and sustainability; coordination and embeddedness

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	MS	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
Awareness raising campaigns									
#faisonslalumieresurlaviolence: posters and videos seeking to raise awareness among perpetrators of psychological violence (Chini 2019) ¹⁸⁰	BE								
Stalking is a crime: a nationwide information campaign (Stubberud et al. 2018)	DK								
La violence psychologique, c'est de la violence tout court Fred et Marie/Marie et Fred): short films depicting	BE								

¹⁸⁰ <https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/>

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	MS	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
psychological violence in a relationships (Gafarova 2015) ¹⁸¹									
#VERTEDERDVERNEDERD: a video, self-test, informative website and toolbox seeking to break the taboo around emotional abuse in relationships ¹⁸²	BE								
La violence verbale, aussi, ça fait mal: slogans on t-shirts, coasters and posters to raise awareness of verbal violence and the connection with physical violence ¹⁸³	BE								

¹⁸¹ <https://cjc.be/La-violence-psychologique-c-est-de.html>; <http://www.fredetmarie.be/>

¹⁸² <https://1712.be/campagnes/id/884/campagne-vertederdvernederd-doorbreekt-taboe-rond-emotioneel-misbruik-in-relaties>; https://www.knack.be/nieuws/gezondheid/emotioneel-misbruik-binnen-een-relatie-komt-vaker-voor-dan-gedacht/article-normal-1100935.html?cookie_check=1631371817; <http://vertederdvernederd.be/>

¹⁸³ <https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/activites/violence/campagnes>

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	MS	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
#loerrors: online campaign to challenge the romanticising of abuse in relationships ¹⁸⁴	BG								
Zij lijkt het probleem te zijn: an educational film/documentary about recognising intimate partner violence and coercive control ¹⁸⁵	NL								
Educational initiatives									
Dat-e Adolescence: programme designed to prevent dating violence among adolescents (Sanchez-Jimenez et al. 2018 ; Munoz-Fernandez et al. 2019)	ES								

¹⁸⁴ <https://loveerrors.bg/#errors-list/1>

¹⁸⁵ <https://professionals.verdwenenzelf.org/2020/premiere-educatieve-film/>

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	MS	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
The DARSI program (Developing Healthy and Egalitarian Adolescent Relationships): programme seeking to prevent peer and teen dating violence by promoting values of tolerance, gender equality and healthy relationships (Carrascosa et al. 2019)	ES								
Gender Equality Awareness Raising (GEAR) against Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) II: a project aiming to contribute to the primary and secondary prevention of intimate partner/dating/sexual violence among adolescents ¹⁸⁶	HR, EL, CY, RO, ES								
Non-criminal legislation									

¹⁸⁶ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/summary>

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	MS	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
Legal support for victims of stalking (including in the context of DV): victims have the right to be represented by a lawyer as auxiliary prosecutor in criminal proceedings, the cost of which is usually covered by legal aid (Hademann-White 2019)	DE								
Immediate restraining orders and tougher sentencing for stalking (Stubberud et al. 2018)	DK								
Administrative ammonimento (civil protection orders) for intimate partner stalking (Baldry et al. 2016)	IT								
Perpetrator programmes									
Dublin Safer Families Service (DSFS): a whole-family intervention approach for secondary prevention of	IE								

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	MS	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
domestic violence (Spratt et al. 2021)									
Court-Referred Psychological Treatment Program for Intimate Partner Batterer Men With Suspended Sentences (Fernandez-Montalvo et al. 2015)	ES								
Risk assessment tools									
Specialised risk assessment questionnaire for identification of risk of repeated violence in relationship and risk assessment of serious violence (EIGE 2019)	CZ								
Lähisuhtevägivalda infoleht: an intimate partner violence case information sheet used by police to assess risk of	EE								

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	MS	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
reassault/reoffending and psychological abuse (EIGE 2019)									
TRAQUE-VFF protocol: to support health professionals in identifying women victims of violence (Marc et al. 2018) ¹⁸⁷	FR								
SASH (Screening Assessment for Stalking and Harassment): a tool used by police to assess situations of stalking (GREVIO 2020; Hehemann 2017)	NL								
Training for professionals									
Guidelines for the prosecution service on dealing with cases of psychological violence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark)	DK								

¹⁸⁷ <https://www.ghef.fr/actualites/traquer-les-violences-faites-aux-femmes-le-ghef-sengage>

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	MS	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
2019)									
Guidelines and training for police around dealing with cases of psychological violence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2019)	DK								
Information for women's shelters on how to prevent digital tracking (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2019)	DK								
Training for police cadets on how to approach and deal with victims of physical and/or psychological intimate partner violence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2019)	DK								
Mandatory training and tools for all police officers on the psychological aspects of domestic violence (EIGE 2015)	LU								

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	MS	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
Police training on stalking: there is a special focus on stalking in the training police receive in one federal state, and the Berlin police offer in-service specialist courses on stalking in the context of domestic violence (Houtsonen 2021)	DE								
Victim-centred domestic violence training for police: a course in one police secondary school emphasizes the importance of empathy and support in situations of abuse (Houtsonen 2020)	HU								
Training for police officers on using the RVD-1L and RVD 2L risk assessment reports on domestic violence situations (EIGE 2019)	PT								
Training for police in	DK								

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	MS	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
employing the stalking assessment and management (SAM) tool									
The national unit against violence in intimate relations: the unit focuses on collecting and communicating knowledge and promising practices in relation to different forms of violence to relevant professionals (Stubberud et al. 2018)	DK								
Training about stalking for case workers (Stubberud et al. 2018)	DK								
New procedures and improved training for police handling of stalking cases (Stubberud et al. 2018)	DK								
Lectures, training, guides and a knowledge-sharing network for professional groups who	DK								

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	MS	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
meet victims of stalking in their line of work (Stubberud et al. 2018)									
A domestic violence training programme for nurses: using dramatisation and photovoice technologies to stimulate reflections on violence against women in society (Solano-Ruiz et al. 2021)	ES								
An Introduction to Domestic Violence, Abuse and Coercive Control training course for counsellors: focused on increasing awareness and equipping professionals with evidence-based tools (Rodriguez et al. 2020)	IE								
Roadmap for frontline professionals interacting with male perpetrators of domestic	EU								

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	MS	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
violence and abuse									
Polish Family - Free from Violence: training 500 interdisciplinary teams at the local government level to protect and support victims of domestic and gender-based violence (Logar & Marvanova Vargova 2015)(PL								
International conference on psychological violence (CoE 2021)	EE								
SafetyNed: offers training and workshops to professionals about identifying and preventing digital violence, including intimate partner digital stalking and harassment	NL								
The Disappeared Self: training for professionals around coercive control	NL								

Table A6.3. Outcome of the assessment of each practice against the criteria: coordination and embeddedness, communication and evaluation

Practice		Criteria						
Name/description	MS	Stakeholder engagement (I)	Stakeholder engagement (II)	Policy embedment	Language & messaging	Promotion	Monitoring & evaluation	Effectiveness
Awareness raising campaigns								
#faisonslalumieresurlaviolence: posters and videos seeking to raise awareness among perpetrators of psychological violence (Chini 2019) ¹⁸⁸	BE							
Stalking is a crime: a nationwide information campaign (Stubberud et al. 2018)	DK							
La violence psychologique, c'est de la violence tout court Fred et Marie/Marie et Fred): short films depicting psychological violence in a relationships (Gafarova 2015) ¹⁸⁹	BE							
#VERTEDERDVERNERD: a video, self-test, informative website and toolbox seeking to break the taboo around emotional abuse in relationships ¹⁹⁰	BE							

¹⁸⁸ <https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/>

¹⁸⁹ <https://cjc.be/La-violence-psychologique-c-est-de.html>; <http://www.fredetmarie.be/>

Practice		Criteria						
Name/description	MS	Stakeholder engagement (I)	Stakeholder engagement (II)	Policy embedment	Language & messaging	Promotion	Monitoring & evaluation	Effectiveness
La violence verbale, aussi, ça fait mal: slogans on t-shirts, coasters and posters to raise awareness of verbal violence and the connection with physical violence ¹⁹¹	BE							
#loverrors: online campaign to challenge the romanticising of abuse in relationships ¹⁹²	BG							
Zij lijkt het probleem te zijn: an educational film/documentary about recognising intimate partner violence and coercive control ¹⁹³	NL							
Educational initiatives								
Dat-e Adolescence: programme designed to prevent dating violence among adolescents (Sanchez-Jimenez et al. 2018 ; Munoz-Fernandez et al. 2019)	ES							

¹⁹⁰ <https://1712.be/campagnes/id/884/campagne-vertederdvernederd-doorbreekt-taboe-rond-emotioneel-misbruik-in-relaties>;
https://www.knack.be/nieuws/gezondheid/emotioneel-misbruik-binnen-een-relatie-komt-vaker-voor-dan-gedacht/article-normal-1100935.html?cookie_check=1631371817; <http://vertederdvernederd.be/>

¹⁹¹ <https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/activites/violence/campagnes>

¹⁹² <https://loveerrors.bg/#errors-list/1>

¹⁹³ <https://professionals.verdwenenzelf.org/2020/premiere-educatieve-film/>

Practice		Criteria						
Name/description	MS	Stakeholder engagement (I)	Stakeholder engagement (II)	Policy embedment	Language & messaging	Promotion	Monitoring & evaluation	Effectiveness
The DARSI program (Developing Healthy and Egalitarian Adolescent Relationships): programme seeking to prevent peer and teen dating violence by promoting values of tolerance, gender equality and healthy relationships (Carrascosa et al. 2019)	ES							
Gender Equality Awareness Raising (GEAR) against Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) II: a project aiming to contribute to the primary and secondary prevention of intimate partner/dating/sexual violence among adolescents ¹⁹⁴	HR, EL, CY, RO, ES							
Non-criminal legislation								
Legal support for victims of stalking (including in the context of DV): victims have the right to be represented by a lawyer as auxiliary prosecutor in criminal proceedings, the cost of which is usually covered by legal aid (Hademann-White 2019)	DE							
Immediate restraining orders and tougher sentencing for stalking (Stubberud et al. 2018)	DK							

¹⁹⁴ <https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/summary>

Practice		Criteria						
Name/description	MS	Stakeholder engagement (I)	Stakeholder engagement (II)	Policy embedment	Language & messaging	Promotion	Monitoring & evaluation	Effectiveness
Administrative ammonimento (civil protection orders) for intimate partner stalking (Baldry et al. 2016)	IT							
Perpetrator programmes								
Dublin Safer Families Service (DSFS): a whole-family intervention approach for secondary prevention of domestic violence (Spratt et al. 2021)	IE							
Court-Referred Psychological Treatment Program for Intimate Partner Batterer Men With Suspended Sentences (Fernandez-Montalvo et al. 2015)	ES							
Risk assessment tools								
Specialised risk assessment questionnaire for identification of risk of repeated violence in relationship and risk assessment of serious violence (EIGE 2019)	CZ							
Lähisuhtevägivalla infoleht: an intimate partner violence case information sheet used by police to assess risk of reassault/reoffending and psychological abuse (EIGE 2019)	EE							

Practice		Criteria						
Name/description	MS	Stakeholder engagement (I)	Stakeholder engagement (II)	Policy embedment	Language & messaging	Promotion	Monitoring & evaluation	Effectiveness
TRAQUE-VFF protocol: to support health professionals in identifying women victims of violence (Marc et al. 2018) ¹⁹⁵	FR							
SASH (Screening Assessment for Stalking and Harassment): a tool used by police to assess situations of stalking (GREVIO 2020; Hehemann 2017)	NL							
Training for professionals								
Guidelines for the prosecution service on dealing with cases of psychological violence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2019)	DK							
Guidelines and training for police around dealing with cases of psychological violence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2019)	DK							
Information for women's shelters on how to prevent digital tracking (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2019)	DK							
Training for police cadets on how to approach and deal	DK							

¹⁹⁵ <https://www.ghef.fr/actualites/traquer-les-violences-faites-aux-femmes-le-ghef-sengage>

Practice		Criteria						
Name/description	MS	Stakeholder engagement (I)	Stakeholder engagement (II)	Policy embedment	Language & messaging	Promotion	Monitoring & evaluation	Effectiveness
with victims of physical and/or psychological intimate partner violence (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark 2019)								
Mandatory training and tools for all police officers on the psychological aspects of domestic violence (EIGE 2015)	LU							
Police training on stalking: there is a special focus on stalking in the training police receive in one federal state, and the Berlin police offer in-service specialist courses on stalking in the context of domestic violence (Houtsonen 2021)	DE							
Victim-centred domestic violence training for police: a course in one police secondary school emphasizes the importance of empathy and support in situations of abuse (Houtsonen 2020)	HU							
Training for police officers on using the RVD-1L and RVD 2L risk assessment reports on domestic violence situations (EIGE 2019)	PT							
Training for police in employing the stalking assessment and management (SAM) tool	DK							

Practice		Criteria						
Name/description	MS	Stakeholder engagement (I)	Stakeholder engagement (II)	Policy embedment	Language & messaging	Promotion	Monitoring & evaluation	Effectiveness
The national unit against violence in intimate relations: the unit focuses on collecting and communicating knowledge and promising practices in relation to different forms of violence to relevant professionals (Stubberud et al. 2018)	DK							
Training about stalking for case workers (Stubberud et al. 2018)	DK							
New procedures and improved training for police handling of stalking cases (Stubberud et al. 2018)	DK							
Lectures, training, guides and a knowledge-sharing network for professional groups who meet victims of stalking in their line of work (Stubberud et al. 2018)	DK							
A domestic violence training programme for nurses: using dramatisation and photovoice technologies to stimulate reflections on violence against women in society (Solano-Ruiz et al. 2021)	ES							

Practice		Criteria						
Name/description	MS	Stakeholder engagement (I)	Stakeholder engagement (II)	Policy embedment	Language & messaging	Promotion	Monitoring & evaluation	Effectiveness
An Introduction to Domestic Violence, Abuse and Coercive Control training course for counsellors: focused on increasing awareness and equipping professionals with evidence-based tools (Rodriguez et al. 2020)	IE							
Roadmap for frontline professionals interacting with male perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse	EU							
Polish Family - Free from Violence: training 500 interdisciplinary teams at the local government level to protect and support victims of domestic and gender-based violence (Logar & Marvanova Vargova 2015)(PL							
International conference on psychological violence (CoE 2021)	EE							
SafetyNed: offers training and workshops to professionals about identifying and preventing digital violence, including intimate partner digital stalking and harassment	NL							
The Disappeared Self: training for professionals around coercive control	NL							

Annex 7: Recommendations for organisations who design and/or implemented preventive practices in relation to psychological violence

Organisations responsible for designing and implementing practices to prevent psychological violence, whether national governments and public sector bodies, NGOs, universities or other organisations, should consider and implement as far as possible the following elements of promising practice.

Box A7.1. Elements of promising practice in preventing psychological violence and coercive control

Practices should:

- Be informed by **evidence and research**
- Be grounded in **theory** i.e., have clearly defined objectives, expected results and activities designed to achieve these
- Be underpinned by **clear, appropriate, comprehensive definitions** of key concepts
- Identify psychological violence/coercive control as a form of **violence against women**, linked to **gender inequality** in society
- Adopt an intersectional approach, tailoring the content of practices – e.g., format, communication channel, language, messaging – to meet the needs of different groups of women, including vulnerable groups
- Have the potential to be **transferable** to other geographical contexts
- Be **tailored** to the national/regional/local context
- Be **sustainable** and implemented on a long-term basis
- Informed by **collaboration with key stakeholders**, including those who work directly with victims
- **Integrated and coordinated** involving government agencies, NGOs, as well as national, regional and local parliaments and authorities
- **Embedded in a wider gender mainstreaming strategy** and that could guarantee a structured approach and continuity over time, and possibly ongoing funding
- Use **language and messaging** to challenge myths, stereotypes, and victim-blaming attitudes
- Be sufficiently **promoted** among the general population and potential service users
- Be subject to **robust monitoring and evaluation activities** that are sufficient to draw firm conclusions about the **effectiveness** of the practice.