European Institute for Gender Equality

Beijing Platform for Action

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

European Institute
for Gender Equality

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

Acknowledgements

This report was developed by the research and statistics team of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE): Blandine Mollard, Julia Ochmann, Davide Barbieri and Dr Jolanta Reingardė. The report is based on a study prepared by the research team of RAND Europe: Dr Madeline Nightingale, Lillian Flemons, Dr Michaela Bruckmayer, Emma Louise Blondes, Katrin Feyerabend, Joanna Hofman and Dr Shann Hulme. Axelle Devaux and Dr Renate Klein acted as independent reviewers in the context of RAND Europe's quality assurance processes and standards.

Many thanks to other colleagues at EIGE for their valuable contributions and comments throughout the report's development, such as Cristina Fabre and Agata Szypulska. Sincere thanks are extended to Dr Sandra Walklate for her role in reviewing the report. The report greatly benefited from expert advice received from the French Ministry for Solidarity and Health, the French Delegate Ministry for Gender Equality and the European Commission, in particular the Gender Equality Unit at the Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers and the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming.

European Institute for Gender Equality

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) is an autonomous body of the European Union established to strengthen gender equality across the EU. Equality between women and men is a fundamental value of the EU and EIGE's task is to make this a reality in Europe and beyond. This includes becoming a European knowledge centre on gender equality issues, supporting gender mainstreaming in all EU and Member State policies, and fighting discrimination based on sex.

European Institute for Gender Equality, EIGE
Gedimino pr. 16
LT-01103 Vilnius
LITHUANIA

Tel. +370 52157444

Email: eige.sec@eige.europa.eu

http://www.eige.europa.eu

http://twitter.com/eurogender

http://www.facebook.com/eige.europa.eu

http://www.youtube.com/eurogender

http://eurogender.eige.europa.eu

https://www.linkedin.com/company/eige/

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2022

Print	ISBN 978-92-9486-003	doi:10.2839/122820	MH-06-22-145-EN-C
PDF	ISBN 978-92-9486-002-6	doi:10.2839/341329	MH-06-22-145-EN-N

Abbreviations

Country codes

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

Frequently used abbreviations

BPfA	*Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*
DARSI	developing healthy and egalitarian adolescent relationships
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
FRA	EU Agency for Fundamental Rights
GEAR-II	gender equality awareness raising against intimate partner violence II
GREVIO	Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence
ISMS	information security management system
LGBTQI+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and other self-identifications
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PHGSG	Prevalentiemonitor Huiselijk Geweld en Seksueel Geweld
PTSD	post-traumatic stress disorder
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
WWP EN	European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

Contents

List of figures

List of tables

Glossary

The following terms, with the following definitions, are used in this report.

- **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 and Hester, 2019). However, coercive control is strongly predictive of all forms of partner violence (Stark and 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). Coercive control is generally considered to be a gendered phenomenon. No definition of coercive control is provided in the Istanbul Convention.

- **Domestic violence** is defined in the Istanbul Convention (Article 3(b)) 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, 2011a). Domestic violence encompasses both violence against children or elderly members of the household and **intimate partner violence**, regardless of whether the relationship is ongoing or historic and 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 defined in 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, 2011a). Psychological violence encompasses a range of abusive behaviours, including emotional abuse, verbal abuse and controlling behaviour. Psychological violence is usually an inherent part of other forms of violence against women (e.g. stalking and cyberstalking).

- **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, 2011a). The term violence against women is used interchangeably with **gender-based violence against women** hereafter.

Executive summary

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

What is pyschological 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, 2011a)

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 to:

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

Interconnected 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). Generally, coercive control is considered a feature of intimate partner violence and as almost exclusively perpetuated by men against women (Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety, 2021). Coercive control is defined by Stark (2013: 18) 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'.

Unlike coercive control, psychological violence is included in the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (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, 2011a). 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 cyberstalking).

Both concepts, namely coercive control and psychological violence, refer to a sustained course of conduct seeking to undermine the autonomy and well-being of the victim, rather than isolated incidents of abuse.

Owing 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

Psychological violence and coercive control are entrenched and endemic forms of violence against women ([1]), 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 Suicides, 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 victims of such violence themselves in adulthood.

Certain groups of women are at particular risk of experiencing psychological violence, for instance women with disabilities or health

([1]) While not all incidents that impair a person's psychological integrity through coercion or threats reach the threshold of criminalisation, this report refers to psychological violence – as defined by Article 33 of the Istanbul Convention and further explained in paragraphs 179–181 of its explanatory report (Council of Europe, 2011b) – which can be considered a criminal offence. More details are provided in Section 1.2.

conditions 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 (under 30) women (particularly in relation to cyber harassment) and in women who are divorced or separated. Women with dependent children may face additional risks, as perpetrators may make threats relating to children and because custody arrangements can provide perpetrators with opportunities for continued post-separation abuse.

Criminalisation 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 may not be well matched to the behaviours that are typical of these forms of violence, and legislation may fail to cover all types of relationship within an intimate partnership or a domestic context. In a number of EU Member States, criminal legislation does not refer to psychological violence against women that is perpetrated online.

Good examples of non-legislative preventive actions

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 such practices implemented in EU Member States between 2012 and 2021.** These practices are assessed in this report in relation to 14 elements of promising practice that were 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, are 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 being 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. Very few practices address the role of new technology and online communication.

Main hurdles in effective prevention

A low degree of awareness and understanding of psychological violence and coercive control is a significant barrier to effective prevention. This is an issue for both professionals in the criminal justice sector and the general public, including victims. Insufficient knowledge and understanding make it more challenging for the general public and professionals to recognise psychological violence and coercive control as abusive and criminal behaviours and to make use of relevant criminal provisions. Similarly to other forms of gender-based violence, a general lack of awareness of these forms of violence and a reluctance to report cases of psychological violence and coercive control are also identified as barriers, with the latter 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 making it more difficult for a victim 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. This comprehensive approach should be mirrored in funding streams at 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 EU (e.g. the legislative proposal on violence against women, the digital services act and the European strategy for a better internet for our children) and Member State levels (e.g. awareness-raising initiatives, training for 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 the understanding of 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 the groups of women who are likely to suffer severe consequences of violence and have additional needs (e.g. women who are migrants or refugees, women with disabilities and women who are homeless).

1. Introduction

Coercive control and psychological violence against women instil fear and insecurity in women's lives and undermine 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 to:

- analyse the **causes and consequences** of coercive control and psychological violence against women ([2]);
- assess the **criminalisation** of psychological violence and coercive control in EU Member States;
- 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 serve as a key addition to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)'s evidence base for a better understanding of gender-based violence ([3]), and will directly inform EIGE's 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; UN Women, 1995). More broadly, this research will contribute to the EU's strategic priority to end gender-based violence in all its forms, as enshrined in the EU gender equality strategy ([4]).

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 that work 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 governments, 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 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 objective of the BpfA (strategic objective D.2) is to study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures (UN Women, 1995). The elimination of all forms of gender-based violence is also a key target of the UN's 2030 agenda for sustainable development ([5]). Psychological violence is used as a specific indicator for monitoring the progress towards this goal ([6]).

([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]) For further details on this evidence base, see EIGE's web page on gender-based violence (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-based-violence).
([4]) For more information on the gender equality strategy, see the European Commission's web page on ending gender-based violence (https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-based-violence/ending-gender-based-violence_en).
([5]) For more information on this agenda, see the UN's web page on the sustainable development goals (https://sdgs.un.org/goals).
([6]) For more information on the use of psychological violence as an indicator for sustainable development, see the web page on sustainable development goal 5 (https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal5).

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, 2011a), which aims to protect women and prevent gender-based violence against women (Council of the European Union, 2017a, b). 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, 2011a). The convention has been acceded by 21 ([7]) EU Member States and signed by the remaining six ([8]).

The Istanbul Convention calls on national governments to implement comprehensive and coordinated 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, 2011a). 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), preventive intervention and treatment programmes (Article 16) and initiatives involving the private sector and the media (Article 17) (Council of Europe, 2011a). 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, 2011a). To monitor the effective implementation of its provision, the Istanbul Convention has established a specific monitoring mechanism, namely an independent expert body responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Istanbul Convention by the parties (i.e. the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO)).

In 2020, the European Commission released two strategies that included its commitment to the elimination of all forms of gender-based violence in the EU: the gender equality strategy for 2020–2025 and the EU strategy on victims' rights for 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 full accession to the Istanbul Convention remain blocked, the EU has proposed new measures ([9]) (proposal released in March 2022) to achieve the same objectives as the Istanbul Convention in the areas of EU competence (European Commission, 2020a). The EU strategy on victims' rights is a commitment to the continuous implementation of the victims' rights directive ([10]) and to the protection of all victims of all crimes. The strategy on victims' rights 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.

While psychological violence and stalking are identified specifically and separately in the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011a), psychological violence and coercive control receive less attention at EU level. The gender equality strategy for 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 has published an analysis of the criminalisation of psychological violence in EU Member States, but it covers only 10 of the 27 Member States (European Parliament, 2020a). This report draws together all of the 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

([7]) BE, DK, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, HR, IT, CY, LU, MT, NL, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, FI and SE.
([8]) BG, CZ, LV, LT, HU and SK.
([9]) Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating violence against women and domestic violence, COM(2022) 105 final (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=COM:2022:105:FIN).
([10]) Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 57 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex %3A32012L0029).

thematic report of the European network of legal experts in gender equality and non-discrimination on the criminalisation of gender-based violence against women in European Member 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 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 twofold increase in calls relating to psychological violence between spring (March–May) 2019 and spring 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, 2020). During the pandemic, victims may have found themselves isolated from their support networks and exposed to their perpetrators with greater intensity and regularity than before, as well possibly experiencing financial insecurity, all of which contribute to an increase in psychological violence (Arenas-Arroyo et al., 2021; Herbinher and Leonhardmair, 2021). Certain groups of women may have been 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, 2021a).

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 (aged 15 or over) women 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, 2011a). 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 (Council of Europe, 2011a) and further elaborated on in its explanatory report (Council of Europe, 2011b). Psychological violence is defined as an '**intentional** conduct that **seriously impairs** and **damages a person's psychological integrity**' (Council of Europe, 2011b: paragraph 180) and refers to a **course of conduct** (rather than a single event), which can be considered as a criminal offence (Council of Europe, 2011b: paragraph 181) (authors' emphasis).

The report also includes a focus on stalking and its online forms. While psychological violence and stalking constitute separate offences, their definitions in the Istanbul Convention include commonalities, especially the intentional dimension of the conduct, the element of threat and the effects on the victim. The Istanbul Convention's explanatory report further highlights that both offences are characterised by the repeated nature of the conduct (Council of Europe, 2011b: paragraphs 181, 182 and 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 that women experience (Ryan and 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 when it occurs (Florian, 2017) ([11]). This is of particular relevance for older women, whose experiences of gender-based violence and specific needs tend 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 2 and 3) and the 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 that were developed for the purposes of this study, informed by relevant guidance and frameworks ([12]). 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 ([13]).

1.4. Report structure

This report is structured as follows.

- Section 2 presents evidence on the prevalence of coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States.
- Section 3 summarises the evidence on the risk factors associated with psychological violence and coercive control, as well as on 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) that have been introduced in EU Member States to prevent psychological violence and coercive control, and evaluates practices according to dimensions of promising practice that were developed for the purposes of this study. This section also summarises the literature on the barriers to effective prevention of psychological violence and coercive control.
- Conclusions are outlined in Section 6 and recommendations are set out 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), background information on the Istanbul Convention (Annex 3) and additional research findings and analysis (Annexes 4–7).

([11]) Although this report takes a life-course approach, the focus is on adult (women) 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.

([12]) The EIGE guide on best practices in preventing domestic violence (EIGE, 2015) and a Council of Europe report offering practical advice to policymakers and practitioners on raising awareness of violence against women (Heisecke, 2014) were used as the basis for developing these criteria.

([13]) The survey was open to responses from 9 August to 3 September 2021.

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, 2011a). 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, 2011a). All countries that accede to 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, 2011b). Administrative data collected by healthcare services, social welfare services and judicial authorities can supplement the understanding offered by survey-based data collection (Council of Europe, 2011a).

This chapter provides an overview of estimates of the prevalence of psychological violence against women and stalking ([14]) in EU Member States, focusing first on data at EU level (Section 2.1), then data available at Member State level (Section 2.2) and finally data on differences across population subgroups (Section 2.3). At this time, no EU-wide data is available on coercive control. Examples of prevalence data from non-EU Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries are provided in Box 1. The limitations in terms of the available data and the gaps in the evidence base are summarised in Box 2. Additional prevalence data can be found in Annex 5.

2.1. Comparative data at EU level

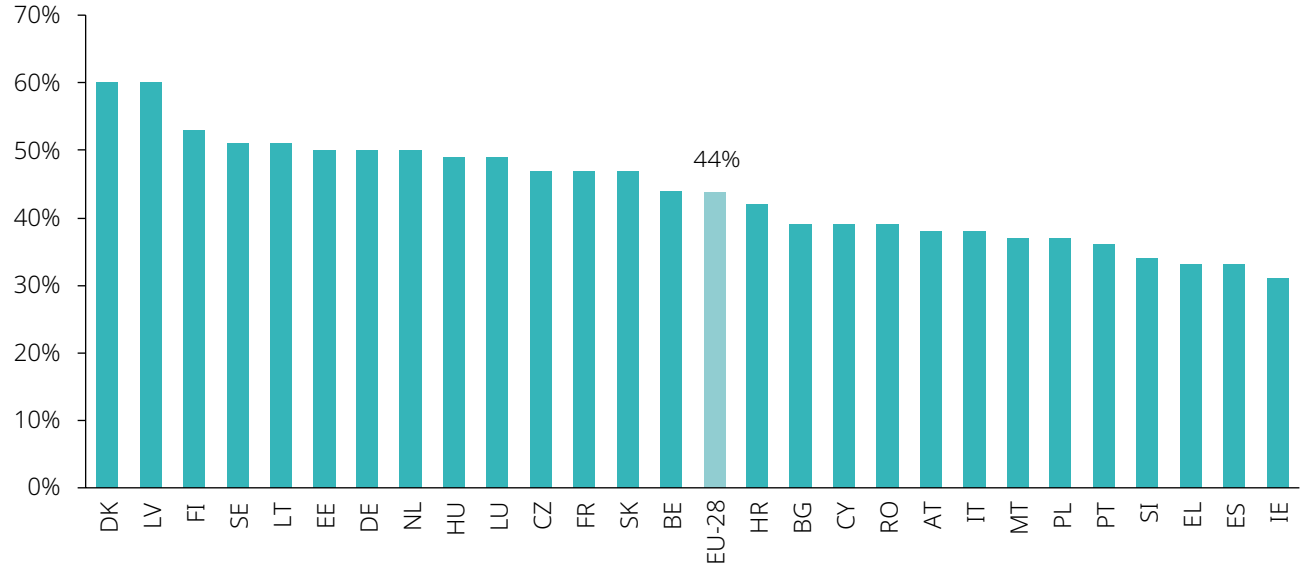
The EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) survey on violence against women provides the main source of data on the prevalence of psychological violence in the EU (FRA, 2012). Additional data on reported incidents of psychological violence is available from the EIGE gender statistics database, which compiles national-level administrative data on intimate partner violence ([15]). However, variations in definitions, data collection approaches and population sizes largely prevent administrative data from being comparable across Member States.

Data from the FRA survey (FRA, 2012) shows that, **across the EU, 44 % of women have experienced psychological violence from a partner in their lifetime** (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 with 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.

([14]) While psychological violence and stalking constitute separate offences in the Istanbul Convention (Articles 33 and 34), the offences have many commonalities. Therefore, the report also includes data on stalking and its online forms.

([15]) Reported incidents of psychological violence is one of the intimate partner violence indicators within EIGE's gender statistics database (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv__ipv_indic_5/metadata).

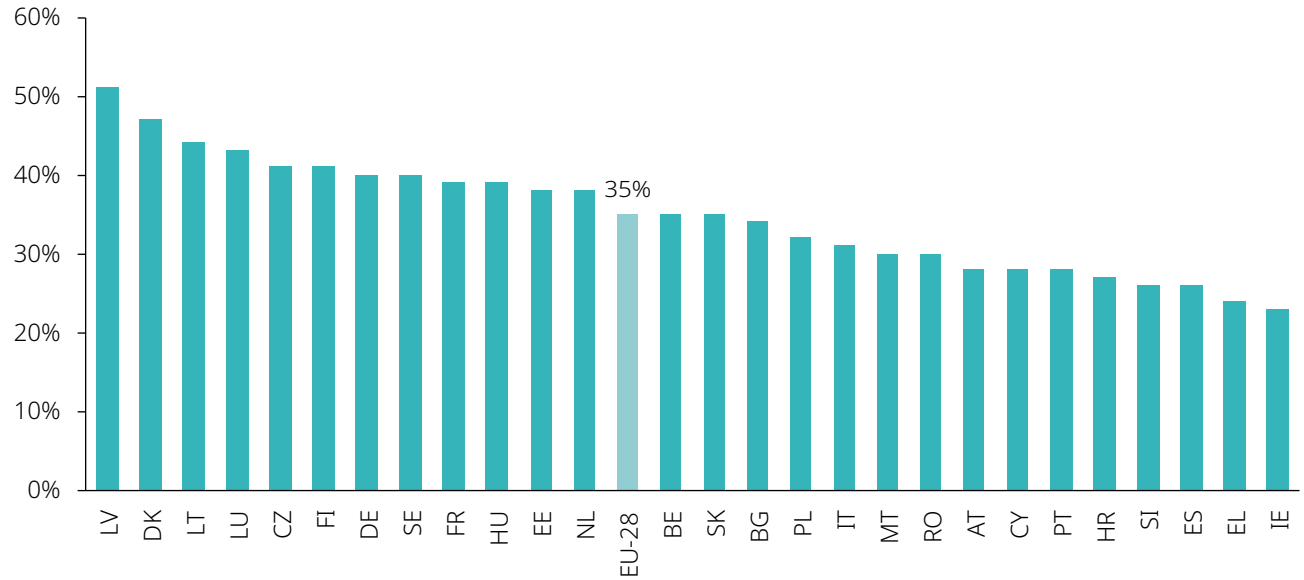
Figure 1. Women having experienced any form of psychological violence by a partner since the age of 15 (%, 18–74, EU, 2014)



NB: As this data is from 2014, a reference period during which the United Kingdom was still a Member State, the EU aggregate used here refers to the 28 EU Member States (EU-28), including the United Kingdom.
Source: FRA (2014). Data was extracted from the online data explorer on the FRA website.

Additionally, some **26 % of women have experienced psychological violence by a current partner** (Figure 2; see also 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 with 11 % in Ireland. Although the FRA survey (FRA, 2014) distinguishes between violence experienced in a current relationship and in a historic relationship, it 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)



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

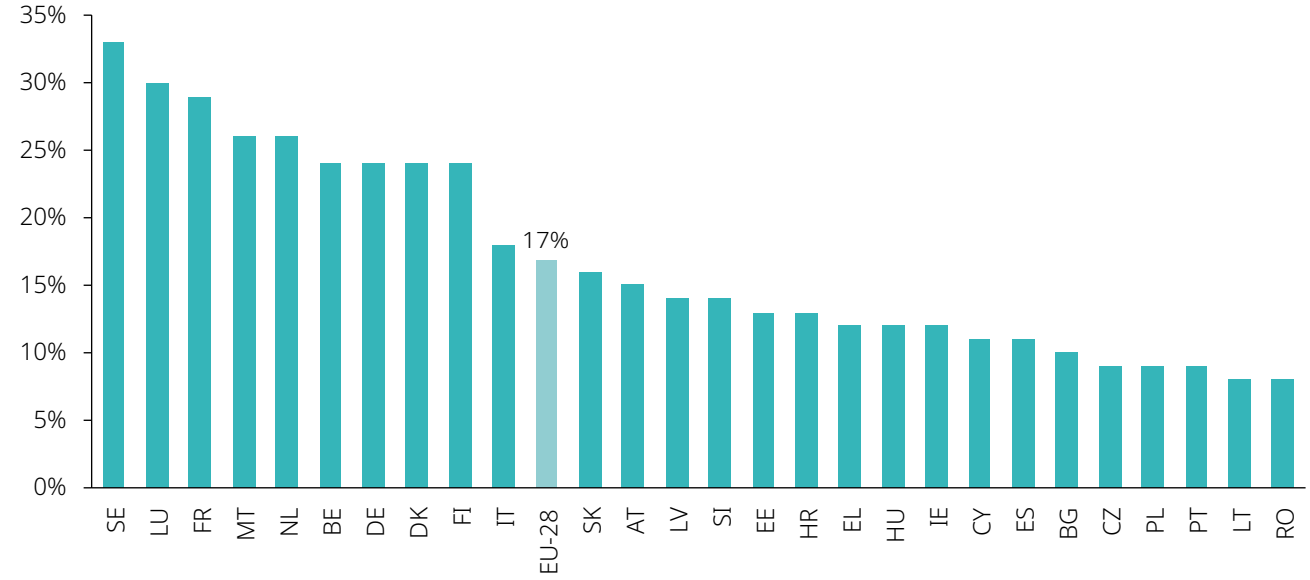
The FRA survey (FRA, 2014) distinguishes between different forms of psychological violence in intimate partner relationships, measured by four composite variables informed by multiple survey questions: (1) controlling behaviour ([16]), (2) abusive behaviour ([17]), (3) psychological violence involving economic violence ([18]) and (4) psychological violence involving dependent children ([19]). At EU level, controlling behaviour is the most prevalent type of psychological violence (35 %), followed by abusive behaviour (32 %), psychological violence involving economic violence (12 %) and psychological violence involving dependent children (8 %) (FRA 2012). The prevalence of these four forms of psychological violence varies widely across EU Member States (FRA, 2014; see also Table A5.2 in Annex 5). For example, the highest percentages of abusive behaviour were reported in Denmark, Estonia, Latvia and Finland (between 41 % and 45 %), while psychological abuse involving economic violence was most prevalent in Bulgaria, Czechia, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovakia (between 15 % and 17 %). A positive correlation between the different forms of violence (the authors' calculations are presented in Figure A5.1 in Annex 5) suggests that these are linked. While a correlation coefficient needs to be interpreted with caution, as the context and purposes in which it is used must be considered (Cohen, 1988), the highest correlation seems to exist between controlling and abusive behaviours (0.83) and the lowest correlations are found between psychological violence involving dependent children and psychological violence involving economic abuse (0.20), indicating that these forms of violence are more distinctive.

The data on the prevalence of stalking (Figure 3) shows that, **across the EU, 17 % of women have experienced stalking since the age of 15** ([20]). There is considerable variation across countries, with around a third of women in Sweden (33 %) having experienced stalking, compared with 8 % in Lithuania and 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).

The FRA (2019) survey collected data on the prevalence of cyber harassment in EU Member States ([21]). Across the EU, an estimated 26 % of women **have experienced cyber harassment in the last 5 years, and 13 % have done so in the last 12 months** (FRA, 2019; Figure 4) ([22]). The proportion is highest in France, where 41 % of women report having experienced cyber harassment in the past 5 years. Short-term prevalence is highest in Germany, with 22 % of women reporting having experienced cyber harassment in the last 12 months. Over one in six women in Germany, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Finland report experiencing cyber harassment in the last 12 months.

([16]) This is defined as 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) or suspecting her of being unfaithful (question E01; answer options E01a–e).
([17]) This is defined as 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, or threatening her with violence or threatening to hurt someone else the respondent cares about (questions E01 and E02; answer options E01h, E02a–d and E02f–h).
([18]) This is defined as 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).
([19]) This is defined as threatening to take the children away from the respondent, threatening to hurt the children or hurting the children (question E02; answer options E02e–g).
([20]) Data on stalking from the FRA (2012) survey is not specific to the intimate partner or domestic context.
([21]) Cyber harassment was defined as one or more of the following: incidents in which somebody (1) sent you emails or text messages (SMS) that were offensive or threatening and (2) posted offensive or threatening comments about you on the internet, for example on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Snapchat, LinkedIn, Twitter or WhatsApp.
([22]) Data on cyber harassment from the FRA (2019) survey is not specific to the intimate partner or domestic context.

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



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

Figure 4. Women having experienced cyber harassment in the past 5 years and in the past 12 months (%, 16 +, EU, 2019)

Source: FRA (2019), with authors' calculation of the EU-27 average.

2.2. Data at Member State level

This section begins with an overview of administrative data on psychological violence that is available from EIGE and from Germany, Greece and Sweden, followed by a discussion of survey data from Spain (Ministerio de Igualdad, 2015, 2019), Lithuania (Žukauskienė et al., 2019) and the Netherlands (CBS, 2020).

2.2.1. National-level administrative data

The EIGE gender statistics database (23) contains administrative data relating to reported cases of psychological intimate partner violence perpetrated by men against (adult) women in 15 Member States (24). However, only three Member States (CZ, DE and 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, 2021b) (25). 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 population of adult women 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 a change in the number of reported cases may stem from factors other than the prevalence of such violence (e.g. contextual factors that might affect the willingness or ability to report such violence).

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

MS	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)

NB: The number of recorded cases per 100 000 women is based on population data from Eurostat (demo_pjan) ([26]).
Source: EIGE gender statistics database ([27]).

In some cases, more detailed and more recent administrative data is available at Member State level ([28]). For example, data collected by federal police in Germany (Table 2) indicates that reports of threats were more common than reports of stalking or coercion ([29]). Overall, 22 % of reported cases of intimate partner violence in 2020 involved coercion, stalking or threats (Bundeskriminalamt, 2021). Using this source, it is possible to assess the proportion of each type of violence perpetrated online: stalking cases involving cyber violence were highest, at 10 %, while 4 % of coercion cases were perpetrated online (Bundeskriminalamt, 2021).

([23]) The section of the database of interest here is the intimate partner violence indicator on the reported number of incidents (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv__ipv_indic_5/metadata).
([24]) BE, CZ, DE, EE, ES, FR, HR, IT, CY, LV, LT, MT, AT, SK and FI.
([25]) The data of the other Member States in the gender statistics database is 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.
([26]) The population data used was from the Eurostat database 'Population on 1 January by age and sex' (demo_pjan) (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/DEMO_PJAN__custom_1690617/default/table?lang=en).
([27]) The section of the database of interest here is the intimate partner violence indicator on the reported number of incidents (https://eige.europa.eu/gender-statistics/dgs/indicator/genvio_int_adm_ipv__ipv_indic_5/metadata).
([28]) Administrative data on psychological violence is available in the Cypriot crime statistics database (https://www.police.gov.cy/police/police.nsf/dmlstatistical_en/dmlstatistical_en?opendocument) and in police reports from Luxembourg in 2017 (Police Grand-Ducale, 2018) and Belgium (Police Fédérale, 2021). However, in these reports, the gender of victims and sometimes of the perpetrator is 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.
([29]) Since 2016, the federal police in Germany has published administrative data relating to intimate partner violence against women (Bundeskriminalamt, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021). In 2015 and 2016, data was published for threats and stalking (separately) and, for 2017–2019 data, the combined number of victims of threats, coercion and stalking in intimate partner relationships was published.

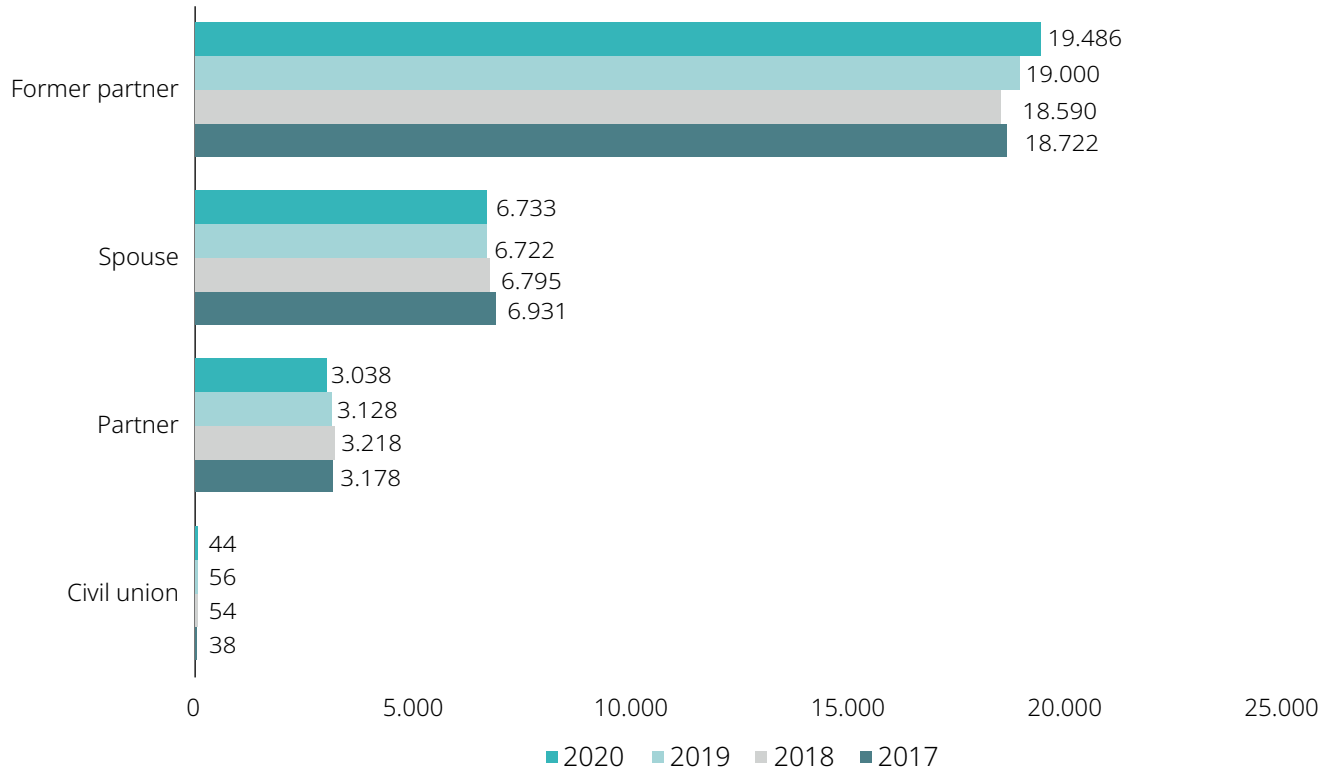
Table 2. Administrative data on psychological violence against women in intimate relationships (total number (number of recorded cases per 100 000 women), DE, 2015–2020)

Offence	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Threats, coercion and stalking	—	—	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)
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)

NB: The number of recorded cases per 100 000 women is based on population data from Eurostat (demo_pjan) ([30]).
Sources: Bundeskriminalamt (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021).

The disaggregated data for Germany (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 by 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)



NB: Since 2017, homosexual couples have been able to get married in Germany and no new civil unions were registered after that point.
Sources: Bundeskriminalamt (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021).

([30]) The population data used was from the Eurostat database 'Population on 1 January by age and sex' (demo_pjan) (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/DEMO_PJAN__custom_1690617/default/table?lang=en).

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

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

Type of support service	2018	2019	2020
Counselling services	2 189 (39.6)	2 042 (37.0)	1 940 (35.3)
Shelters	189 (3.4)	176 (3.2)	111 (2.0)

NB: The number of recorded cases per 100 000 women is based on population data from Eurostat (demo_pjan) ([31]).
Source: Authors' calculation, based on data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2021).

According to administrative police data from Sweden (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 number (number of recorded cases per 100 000 women), 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 of 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)

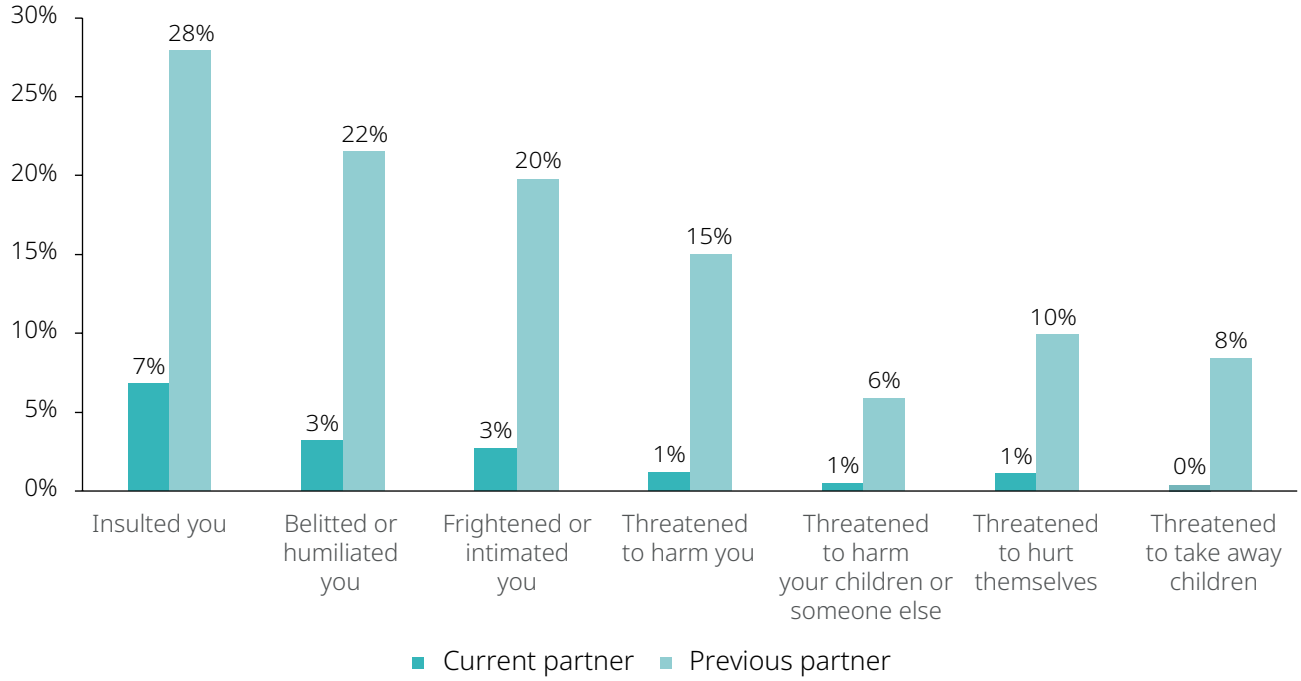
NB: The number of recorded cases per 100 000 women (as of 2020) is based on population data from Eurostat (demo_pjan) ([32]). Besides psychological violence as a self-standing offence, the reported crimes might include other forms of violence (e.g. physical, sexual or economic) in addition to psychological violence.
Source: Authors' calculation, based on data from the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) ([33]).

2.2.2. National-level survey data

Another source of data at Member State level is national-level surveys. The Spanish macro-level 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; Figure 6) ([34]). In 2019, in terms of the specific types of incidents that could constitute psychological violence if occurring intentionally and/or repeatedly and/or if seriously impairing the victim's psychological integrity, 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 than from a current 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.

([31]) The population data used was from the Eurostat database 'Population on 1 January by age and sex' (demo_pjan) (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/DEMO_PJAN__custom_1690617/default/table?lang=en).
([32]) The population data used was from the Eurostat database 'Population on 1 January by age and sex' (demo_pjan) (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/DEMO_PJAN__custom_1690617/default/table?lang=en).
([33]) Brå reports on crime trends in Sweden (https://bra.se/bra-in-english/home/crime-and-statistics/crime-statistics.html).
([34]) 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?'

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



NB: The category 'current partner' includes the most recent ex-partner.
Source: Authors' calculation, based on data from the Ministerio de Igualdad (2019).

The 2020 government-run internet survey carried out in the Netherlands entitled 'Prevalentiemonitor Huiselijk Geweld en Seksueel Geweld' (PHGSG) received over 30 000 responses (CBS, 2020). It found that, in the previous 12 months, **33 % of women respondents had experienced verbal aggression in the domestic sphere, 5 % had experienced coercive control and 3 % had experienced stalking by an ex-partner** (CBS, 2020, Annex A).

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

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**, with stalking 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 non-EU OECD countries

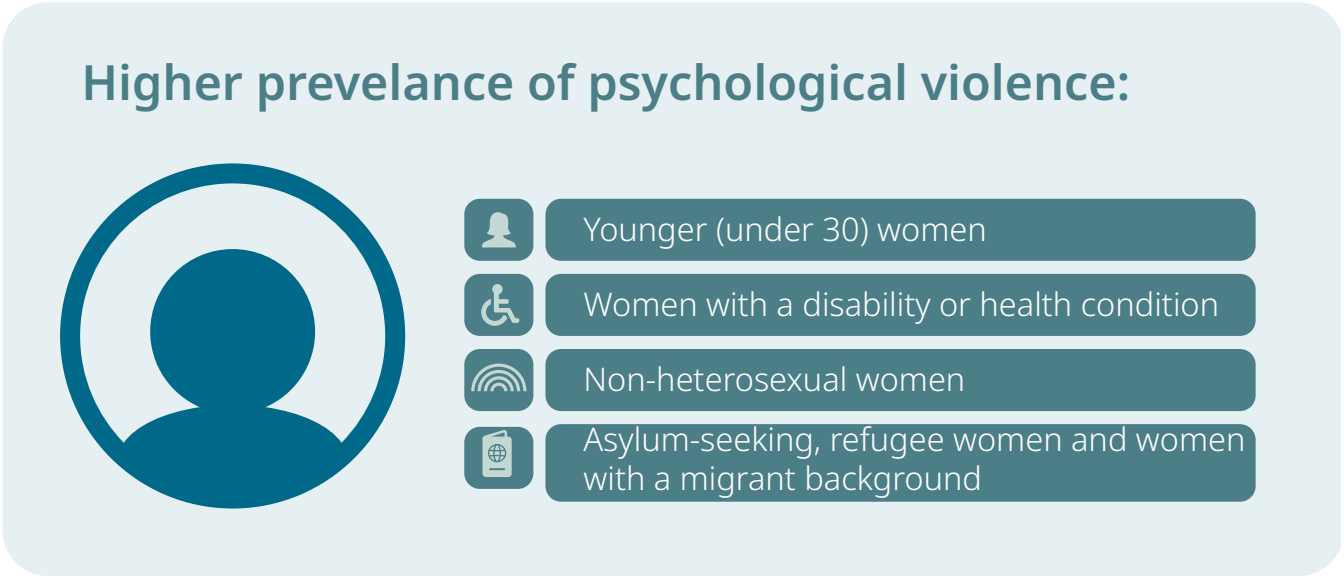
In **New Zealand**, a repeated cross-sectional survey relating to violence against women was conducted in 2003 (*n* = 2 674) and 2019 (*n* = 944) by researchers at the University of Auckland (Fanslow et al., 2021). The survey included four questions relating to psychological violence. In 2019, the most prevalent form of psychological violence was being insulted by a partner (43 %), followed by being humiliated (31 %), intimated (25 %) and threatened (16 %). Results are compared with 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 women (87 %) 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, 2020). 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.

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 sex and other characteristics (Council of Europe, 2011b). It recognises that certain subgroups 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, 2011a). It is consequently of key importance that the differing prevalence of psychological violence across different population subgroups be well understood. A caveat is necessary here in that the findings presented in this section refer purely to descriptive trends. The analysis does not control for possible confounding factors or test whether subgroup differences are statistically significant. The following characteristics are detailed in this section, with risk groups summarised in Figure 7: age group, disability and health status, sexual orientation, education and employment status, and migration status.

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



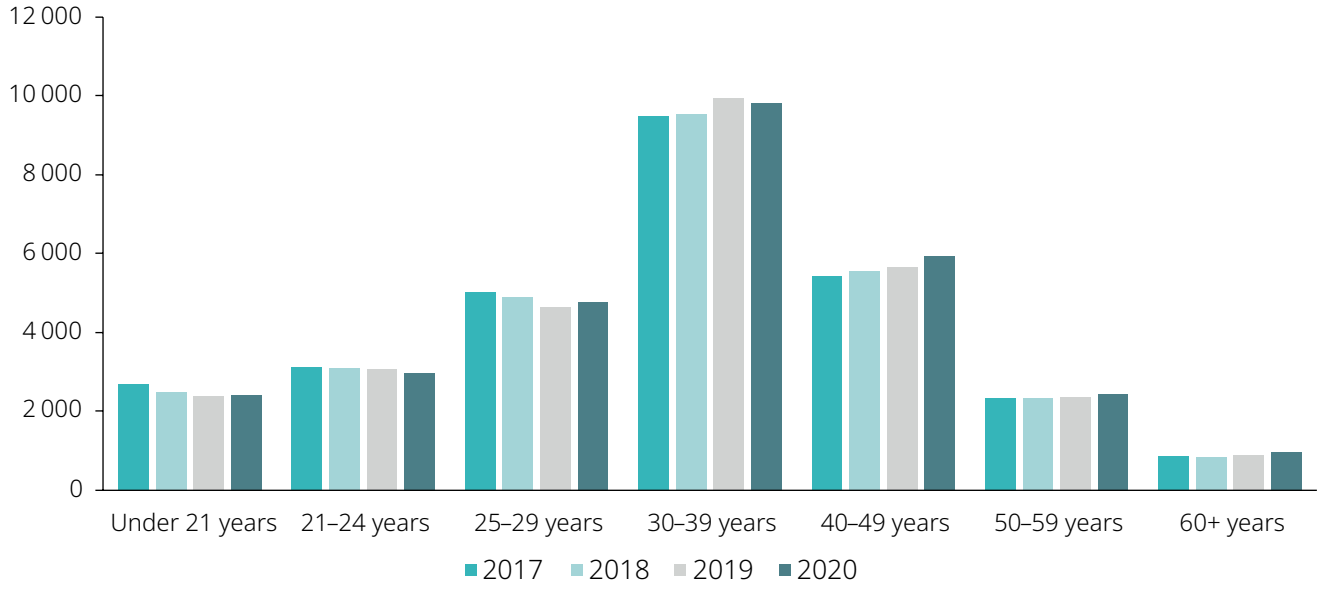
Sources: FRA, 2014, 2019; Meseguer-Santamaría et al., 2021; CBS, 2020.

2.3.1. Age group

Data from the FRA (2014) survey indicates that the **age of the respondent is not related to psychological violence perpetrated by a current partner**. 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 shows that **reported cases of psychological violence in intimate partner relationships differ by age, peaking in the 30–39 age group** (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, does not reflect the true number of incidents within each age group owing to under-reporting to the authorities (for a discussion of the limitations of administrative data, see Box 2).

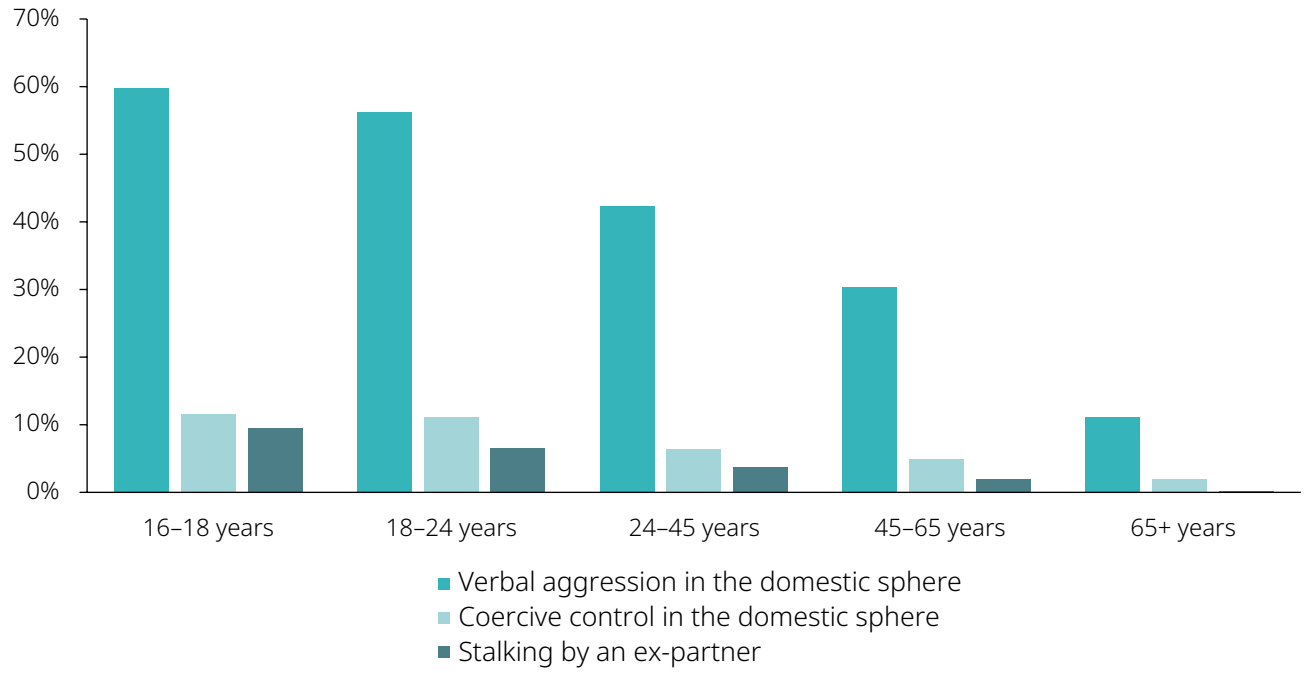
Figure 8. Reported cases of psychological violence against women in intimate relationships by age group (total numbers of recorded cases, DE, 2017–2020)



Source: Authors' calculation, based on data from Bundeskriminalamt (2018, 2019, 2020, 2021).

PHGSG survey data from the Netherlands also tracks the relative prevalence across age groups (CBS, 2020, Annex A), indicating that **the prevalence of verbal aggression, coercive control and stalking is highest among younger age groups** (Figure 9).

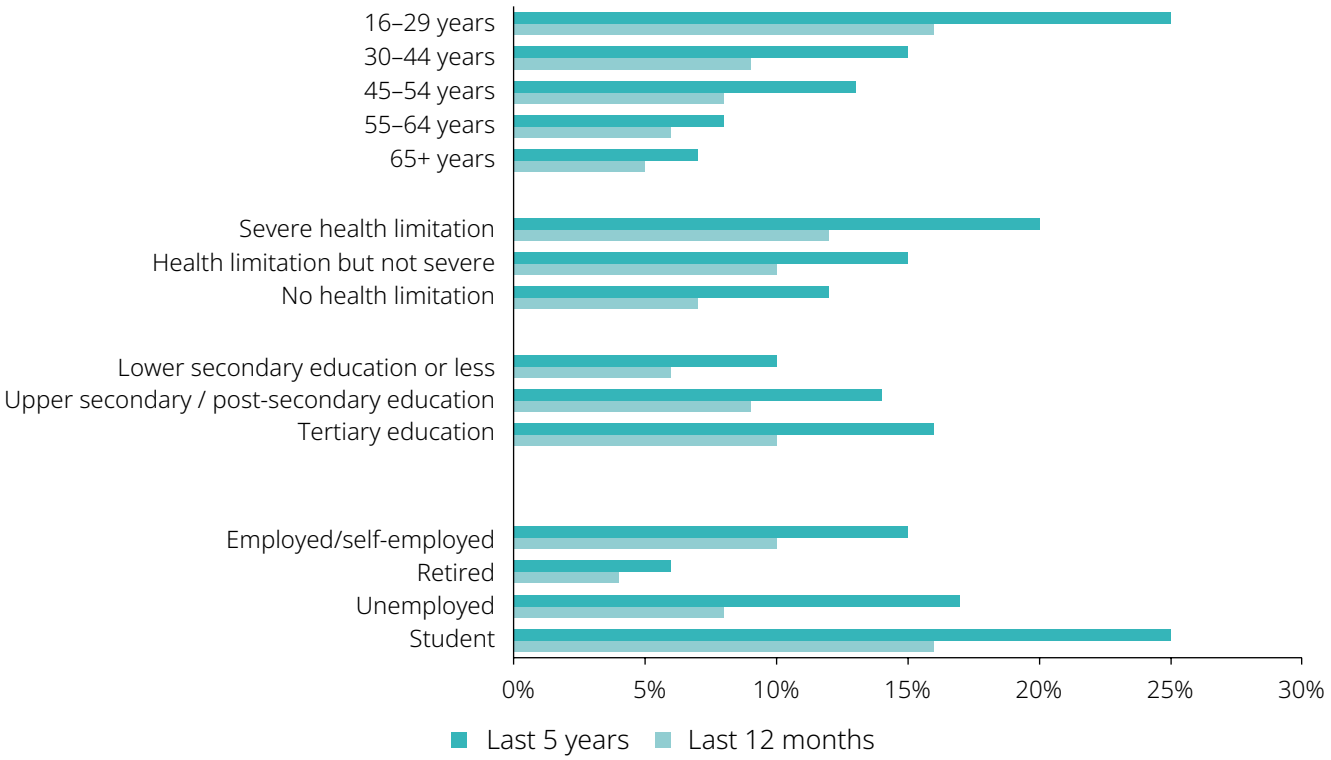
Figure 9. Women having experienced different forms of psychological violence over the last 12 months by age (%, NL, 2020)



NB: The proportion of women 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 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 whereby one person strongly dominates another. The 'domestic sphere' includes all family and relatives and any (ex-)partners.
Source: Authors' calculation, based on PHGSG data (CBS, 2020, Annex A).

Data from the FRA (2019) fundamental rights survey shows that **women under 30 years old are exposed to cyber harassment more than older women** (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 5 years, compared with 7 % of women aged 65 and older. More than 1 in 10 women in the youngest age group reported experiencing cyber harassment in the last 12 months.

Figure 10. Women having experienced any form of cyber harassment in the past 5 years and the past 12 months by age, health status, education level and occupational status (%, 16 +, EU, 2019)



Source: FRA (2019).

2.3.2. Disability and health status

Data from the Spanish macro-level survey (2019, *n* = 9 568) shows that **psychological violence against women with disabilities in intimate relationships is 1.5 times higher** than against women without disabilities (Meseguer-Santamaría et al., 2021). Evidence from France shows how the combination of economic dependency and potential dependency on intimate partners for everyday care and activities heightens a person's vulnerability to experiencing all forms of gender-based violence (ARESVI, 2020). A similar pattern is observed at 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, compared with 41 % of women without a disability or health condition (FRA, 2014). Similarly, an estimated 26 % of women with a disability or health condition have experienced stalking, compared with 17 % of women without a disability or health condition. Cyber harassment is also more common among women who have a limiting health condition than among those who do not, as shown in Figure 10.

2.3.3. Sexual orientation

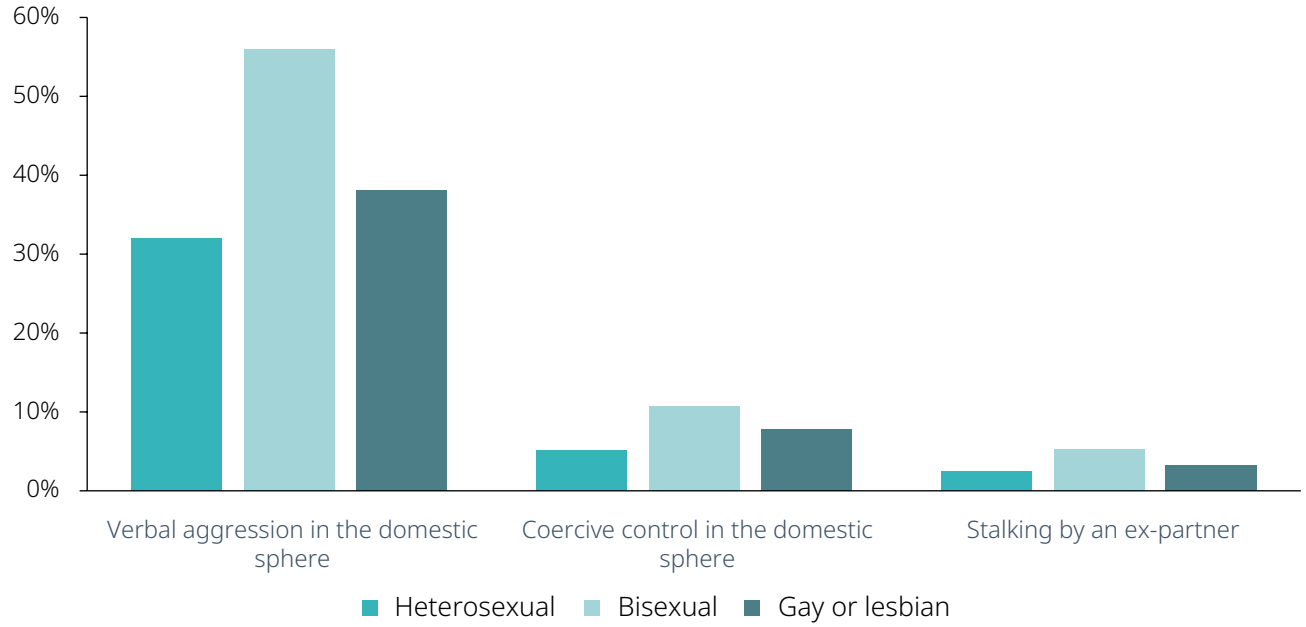
The FRA data also indicates that **non-heterosexual women** ([35]) **are more likely than heterosexual women to have experienced psychological intimate partner violence** since the age of 15 (70 % versus 43 %, respectively) (FRA, 2014). Similarly, 36 % of non-heterosexual women reported having experienced stalking, compared with only 18 % of heterosexual women. The FRA (2014) report does not provide these data broken down by country, meaning that

([35]) 'Non-heterosexual women' are defined as 'women who indicate[d] their sexual orientation as "lesbian", "bisexual" or "other" in the survey' (FRA, 2014).

further trends and patterns cannot be identified ([36]).

The PHGSG survey data from the Netherlands also disaggregates prevalence data by sexual orientation (Figure 11) (CBS, 2020, Annex A), with results that align with the FRA (2014) survey findings. The prevalence of domestic verbal aggression, coercive control and ex-partner stalking is greater for non-heterosexual women than for heterosexual women, with particularly high prevalence rates among bisexual women. Such findings should be interpreted with caution, as, for both sources of data, the sex of the perpetrator of such violence is not known.

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



NB: The proportion of women 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 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 whereby one person strongly dominates another. The 'domestic sphere' includes all family and relatives and any (ex-) partners.
Source: Authors' calculation, based on PHGSG data (CBS, 2020, Annex A).

2.3.4. 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 a primary education only have experienced psychological violence, compared with 45 % of women with a secondary education and 44 % of women with a tertiary education (FRA, 2012; see Table A5.3 in Annex 5). Data from the FRA 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 women students**, one quarter of whom report having experienced cyber harassment in the last 5 years.

Employment status is not consistently related to the prevalence of psychological partner violence in EU Member States. In most EU Member States,

([36]) Accessing micro-level data from the FRA surveys was not feasible within the project timeline, so the data included in this report is taken from published reports and data made available via the online tools on the FRA website.

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 reversed in three Member States (BG, HU and 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).

2.3.5. 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 their country of residence is 43 %) (FRA, 2014). The FRA (2014) report does not provide this data broken down by country, meaning that further trends and patterns cannot be identified.

Box 2. Limitations and data gaps in the prevalence of psychological violence and coercive control

There is 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 does not provides an indication of which forms of violence the case relates to. There is limited survey data at both EU and Member State levels relating to psychological violence compared with other forms of violence against women, and there is a complete lack of data on coercive control. The scarcity of administrative data on coercive control is mostly the result of a lack of common understanding and of legal regulation of coercive control 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 owing to a lack of common definitions ([37]) and data disaggregation (notably, disaggregation according to the sex of the victim and of the 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 subgroups – is limited to the FRA (2012) survey, which represents a snapshot in time almost a decade ago. The upcoming Eurostat EU gender-based violence survey complemented by a FRA–EIGE survey on violence against women, whose results are expected in 2024, will provide updated prevalence data.

Available data is likely to underestimate the scale of the issue. Administrative data is likely to underestimate the prevalence of coercive control and psychological violence against women owing to under-reporting. This is seen, for example, in the fact that the number of reported cases in Czechia, Germany and Finland (see Table 1) is lower than the FRA data suggest (FRA, 2012). Surveys such as the FRA survey on gender-based violence (FRA, 2012) and the Spanish macro-level 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 for reporting instances of psychological violence to the police or other authorities is higher than for reporting it in an anonymised survey.

([37]) The World Health Organization specifically did not include psychological violence in its work on the global prevalence of violence against women because of the lack of a harmonised definition and data collection across the world (WHO, 2021).

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 2 in 10 (17 %) have experienced stalking (FRA, 2012, 2014), although the estimated prevalence varies widely across EU Member States. More than 1 in 10 women in the EU (13 %) have experienced online harassment in the past 5 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 10 years old. More recent data on cyber violence is provided in the FRA fundamental rights survey (FRA, 2019), although this survey did 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 the risk groups affected, but it is unclear how much 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 an assessment of the variation across different groups and of new and evolving forms of violence such as cyber violence. Improved data collection in this regard would enable subgroup 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 the 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, 2011b). The BPfA also includes a strategic objective (D.2) to study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures.

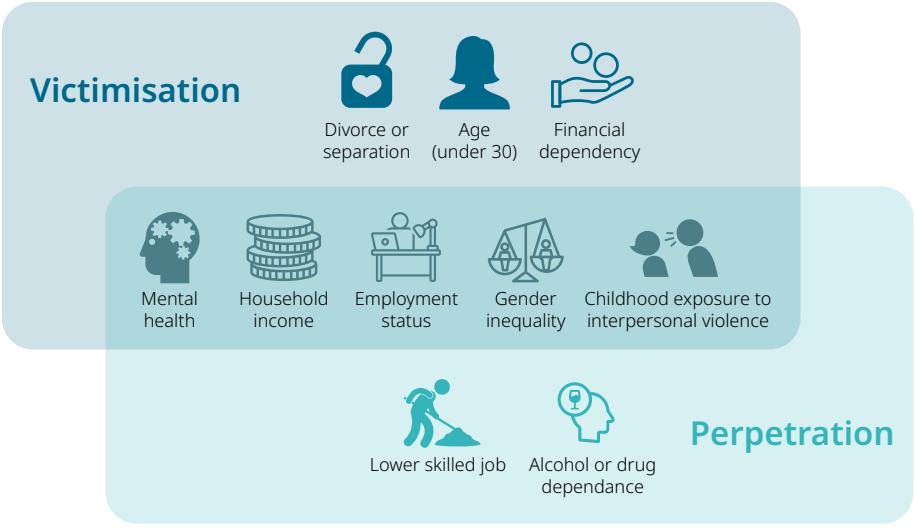
This chapter offers an overview of the evidence relating to the risk factors for coercive control and psychological violence against women, as well as the consequences of such violence for women and their dependent children ([38]). It is important to note that there may be overlap between risk factors and consequences, and the direction of causality may be unclear. Where possible, the analysis distinguishes between risk factors associated with the perpetration of psychological violence and risk factors associated with victimisation, although in some cases a crossover 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 OECD countries outside the EU (see Boxes 4–6) and by 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



Sources: Capaldi et al., 2012; FRA, 2014; Rada, 2014; Costa et al., 2015; Nevala, 2017; Gerino et al., 2018; Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019; Aizpurua et al., 2021.

([38]) Sources identified as part of the literature review highlight associations, but do not go as far as to demonstrate causality. It is important to note that the direction of causality in terms of the factors associated with psychological violence is often unclear or unproven (i.e. it is not clear if a factor is a cause, a 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 than women who earn the same or more than their partner (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 than those who feel that they have an equal say (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 the victim and the perpetrator has also been identified as a risk factor**. 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) than employed women (Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019). The authors of this 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 found that unemployment, in the case of either the pregnant woman or the partner, is 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 the endorsement of **traditional gender roles** and the 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 the risk (Beyer et al., 2015).

Witnessing intimate partner violence or antisocial behaviour within the household as a child and experiencing abuse, neglect or harsh parenting practices are associated with the 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 are more likely to perpetrate violence against an intimate partner when they have a family history of violence than when they do not (Badenes-Ribera et al., 2016).

Men with **alcohol or drug dependence** are more likely to become perpetrators of intimate partner violence than those without such a dependence (Capaldi et al., 2012; Gerino et al., 2018), and alcohol is also a risk factor for perpetration by women in same-sex relationships (Badenes-Ribera et al., 2016).

There is also an association between intimate partner violence and the 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 is a predictor of intimate partner violence, particularly in couples in which the relationship is unequal (Capaldi et al., 2012). Experience of intimate partner violence in a previous relationship is a risk factor for both perpetration and victimisation (Badenes-Ribera et al., 2016). The point at which a couple separate is found to be the peak of the risk of violence (Dekeseredy et al., 2017).

In addition, men who experience **unemployment and financial stress** and those going through a change in work status are found to be at a greater risk of perpetrating intimate partner violence than those who are employed and financially stable (Capaldi et al., 2012). Economic factors are also important at neighbourhood level: intimate partner violence has been found to be common in **poor neighbourhoods** (measured according to median household income, the unemployment rate and poverty rate), in areas where the prevalence of crime is high and in areas where there is a high proportion of lone-parent households (Beyer et al., 2015).

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 at the greatest risk** and the highest rates in late adolescence and early adulthood (Capaldi et al., 2012). In the older generation, **women from an ethnic minority background** are at the greatest risk of experiencing intimate partner violence (Gerino et al., 2018), with the caveat that older women's experiences of gender-based violence are often overlooked or 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 than healthy men (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).

3.1.2. Social risk factors

At 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 (2014) survey on violence against women in EU Member States has found that women living in countries where the level of gender equality is high ([39]) report experiencing lower levels of coercive control than women living in countries with lower levels of gender equality (Nevala, 2017). This contrasts with findings related to physical and/or sexual violence, for which 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 than gender equality (Nevala, 2017). Moreover, the prevalence of coercive control does not necessarily follow the same pattern as the prevalence of psychological violence: some countries where the overall rate of psychological abuse and controlling behaviour is high, including Scandinavian countries such as Denmark and Finland, have relatively

([39]) Measured according to the EIGE Gender Equality Index.

low rates of coercive control (Nevala, 2017). Additionally, research among young people in Spain indicates that 'masculine gender role stress' ([40]) is associated with the perpetration of psychological violence (Merino et al., 2021), while another Spanish study of university students 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., 2020).

Exposure to interpersonal violence in childhood, particularly at home, can be a risk factor for either perpetrating or experiencing psychological abuse in adulthood, as well as 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 is also a predictor of 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 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 (as either 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 are also more likely to become victims to such violence** (Viejo et al., 2020). Childhood and adolescence may be a formative period in terms of developing expectations regarding 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 studies identified, as they do not compare the impact of experiencing or witnessing abuse at different stages of the life course.

Box 4. Literature from OECD countries outside the EU relating to experiences in childhood

Early childhood experiences, particularly in relation to parental attachment style, are linked to the likelihood of perpetration of psychological violence. Secure attachment with a caregiver in childhood has been found to reduce the likelihood of perpetrating psychological partner abuse among men in **Israel** (Gewirtz-Meydan and Finzi-Dottan, 2021) and **other countries** (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) ([41]), echoing findings from the wider literature on intimate partner violence (see Box 3). This aligns with the 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**, whereas, for physical violence, the perpetrators in reported cases are predominantly current partners (Bundeskriminalamt, 2021). However, similar evidence from other national contexts and on 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 owing to limited knowledge

([40]) A composite variable reflecting if young men feel anxious in situations of subordination or inferiority to women.

([41]) 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 sex.

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 a relationship, but it could also be that psychological violence was a characteristic of the relationship but reporting it became possible only after the relationship ended. Furthermore, 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 studies identified highlight demographic risk factors for psychological violence against women (Selic et al., 2013; Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019; Pérez-Sánchez et al., 2020). In Spain, **younger women are more at risk of experiencing psychological violence** than older women (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 sex) (Korkmaz et al., 2020). Research also suggests that **certain vulnerable subgroups of women are at a greater risk of psychological violence, for example immigrant women** in Spain (Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019).

Box 5. Literature from OECD countries outside the EU 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 and Finn, 2021) and 3 633 Scottish mothers (Skafida et al., 2021);
- **non-white ethnicity**, according to a nationally representative survey of 18 957 American adults (Policastro and Finn, 2021) and a survey of 84 women attending US health clinics (Thaller and Messing, 2016) ([42]);
- **lower education level**, according to study of 7 408 Canadian and 8 000 American women (Kaukinen and Powers, 2015) and a nationally representative survey of 18 957 American adults (Policastro and Finn, 2021);
- **health limitations** – including when controlling for age – according to a nationally representative survey of 18 957 American adults (Policastro and Finn, 2021).

Poor mental health and the presence of psychological conditions have been identified as risk factors for psychological violence perpetration and victimisation. A study of 152 British men found that men who exhibited higher levels of narcissism were 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 found that those who reported depression, stress, loneliness and/or low

([42]) Thaller and Messing (2016) addressed reproductive coercion, specifically.

self-esteem were more likely to experience psychological violence (Shen and Kusunoki, 2019). Indeed, women's mental health may be a more significant predictor than men's, with women's depressive symptoms found to be predictive of men's psychological aggression, while men's depressive symptoms were not (Capaldi et al., 2012).

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. Descriptions of the limitations of available data and the data gaps in relation to the consequences of psychological violence and coercive control is provided in Box 7.

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, estimated 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 than in the general population (Domenech Del Rio and Sirvent Garcia Del Valle, 2017; Lövestad et al., 2017; Daugherty et al., 2019; Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019; Tullio et al., 2021). A study examining the effect of psychological abuse and coercive behaviour on women in Sweden (n = 573) found that these forms of violence were consistently associated with high levels of depression (Lövestad et al., 2017). A large survey of women in Spain (n = 10 171) found that psychological violence was associated with poor mental health, which manifested 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 and Sirvent Garcia Del Valle, 2017). In the PHGSG Dutch survey of over 30 000 women and men, over a third of respondents reported mental health problems as a consequence of experiencing coercive control (39 %) or stalking from an ex-partner (38 %) (CBS, 2020, Annex A) ([43]). In another study, the negative impact of psychological violence on Spanish women's mental health was reported to be consistent across age groups (Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019).

Psychological consequences of stalking for victims were also identified through the FRA (2014) 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 %). 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 found that psychological violence was correlated with PTSD (Dokkedahl et al., 2021). Although this study was based on a small, non-representative sample of women (n = 147), the authors observed that other forms of partner violence (physical and sexual) were 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 the likelihood of psychological consequences from any act of partner violence (including physical violence) increases in the presence of controlling behaviour from a partner (Nevala, 2017). The author of this study concludes that a partner displaying controlling behaviour is associated with a more

([43]) Please note, this data is not disaggregated by the victim's sex.

severe impact on the victim's health than 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), found that psychological and physical partner violence was associated with lower cognitive functioning for women who had experienced such abuse than for women who had not (Daugherty et al., 2019). The outcomes measured in this study included visuomotor skills; attention; verbal, visual and working memory; cognitive flexibility (i.e. the 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, as they relate to a small sample of women (*n* = 108).

Two of the sources identified 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) found that **psychological violence was associated with breastfeeding avoidance**, after controlling for other obstetric complications (Martin-de-las-Heras et al., 2019). Another study conducted in Malta examined the consequences of psychological and verbal abuse on women's pregnancies (*n* = 300, including 45 women who experienced psychological abuse and who experienced verbal abuse) ([44]).

Box 6. Psychological violence as a predictor of other forms of intimate partner violence in OECD countries outside the EU

The level of 'control' in a relationship has been found to predict future partner violence. Reviewing the literature, Stark (2012) cited a large, multi-city study in the **United States** that reported that the risk of intimate partner femicide in an abusive relationship increased ninefold in situations of a highly controlling perpetrator and the couple's separation after living together. 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 United States (Mitchell and Raghavan, 2021). Stark and Hester (2019) argue that the **presence of coercive control predicts aspects of 'post-relationship distress'**, such as escalating violence and a fear of reprisals from the perpetrator in the context of court-ordered mediation, more reliably than other forms of intimate partner violence.

A study examining the effect of psychological abuse on women in same-sex relationships in Italy (*n* = 165) found that **women who experienced this type of violence were less likely to leave their partners** than women who did not experience such violence (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

([44]) For the purposes of this study, 'psychological abuse' was defined as 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.

consequences for their economic well-being. In Sweden, the higher incidence of depression among women who have experienced psychological violence than those who have not 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) highlighted 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 was highlighted by the FRA (2014) survey. 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 %) (CBS, 2020, Annex A) ([45]).

Box 7. Limitations and data gaps regarding causes and consequences in the EU context

Relatively few studies focus on psychological violence and coercive control compared with intimate partner violence more broadly. Few studies on the 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 in this report highlight associations, but they do not go as far as to demonstrate causality; therefore, in this report, we refer to risk factors rather than causes. The direction of causality may also be unclear, as 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 underexplored in the literature. Many of the studies cited in this report do not examine differences across subgroups 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** ([46]). 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).

([45]) Please note, this data is not disaggregated by the victim's sex.
([46]) The literature identified in this report does not distinguish between whether the victims' children are girls or boys.

Box 8. Literature from OECD countries outside the EU relating to consequences for victims' 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 as 'witnesses' or 'collateral damage', as is often the case. In particular, Callaghan et al. (2018) highlight that children are often used 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; Feresin et al., 2019).

A qualitative study of 15 British mothers and 15 of their children (mostly aged 10–14) showed that children whose mother was a victim of coercive control often experienced 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 extracurricular 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 (Katz, 2016; Stark and Hester, 2019). Furthermore, the evidence suggests that the **presence of intra-parental coercive control affects the quality of parenting of both parents and leads to lower family functioning** (Gou et al., 2019). The high levels of attention that the perpetrating father demands from the mother also limits parental attention and 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).

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 (FRA, 2014; Aizpurua et al., 2021). This means that broader interventions to reduce economic inequality in society and within households (e.g. through improving women's access to employment or ensuring that women have access to an independent income via the social security system) may help to prevent psychological violence and coercive control.

One consistent finding that 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, in terms of both 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 than 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 the need for interventions that are targeted at parents and young families that are designed to break the cycle of the 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 than in the general population (Domenech Del Rio and Sirvent Garcia Del Valle, 2017; Lövestad et al., 2017; Daugherty et al., 2019; Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019; Dokkedahl et al., 2021; 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 this 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 combating violence of all kinds (Council of Europe, 2011a). 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, 2011b). 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) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), as highlighted by the European Parliament ([47]).

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.

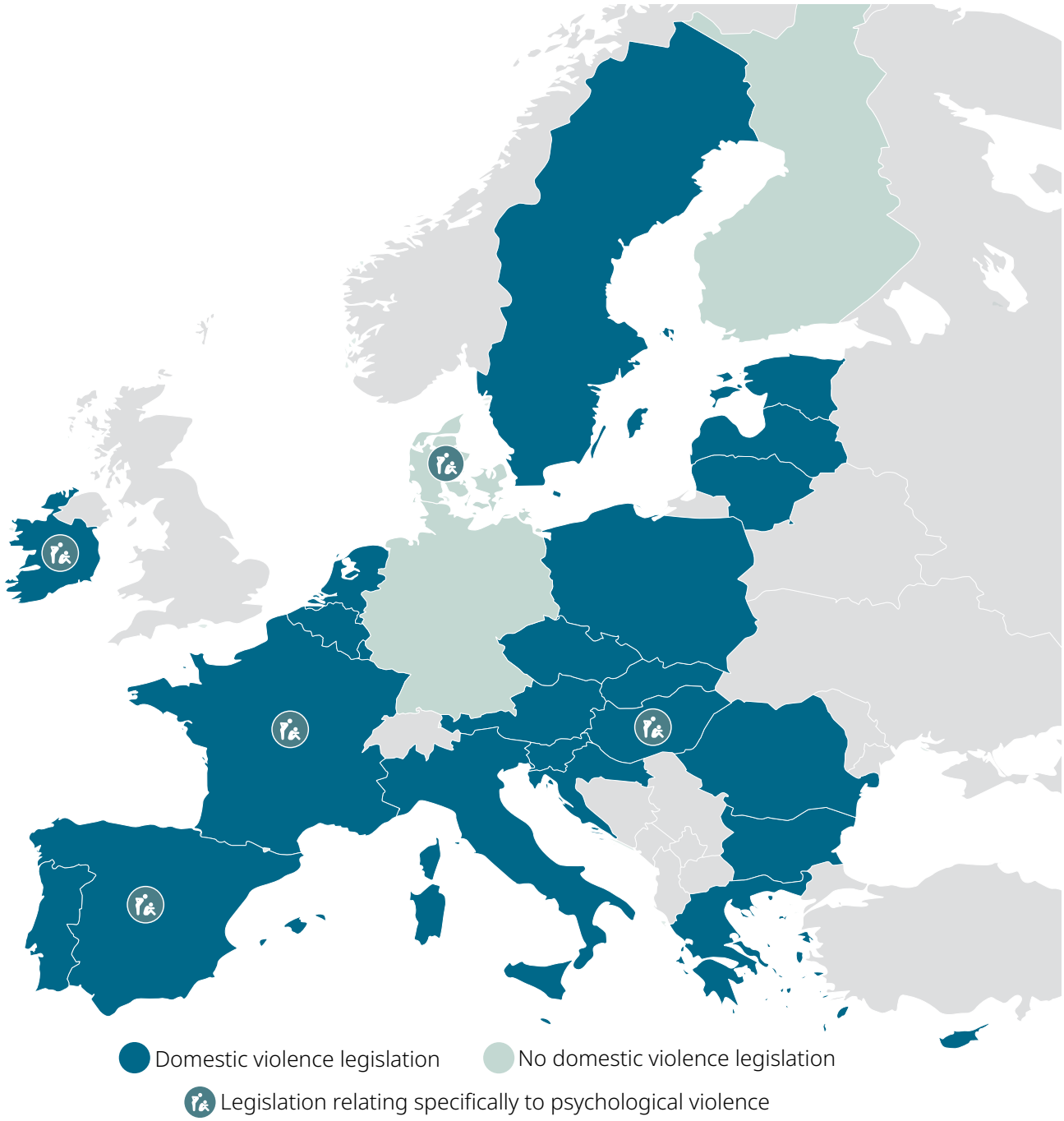
Table 5 presents an overview of the relevant criminal legislation in EU Member States, distinguishing between:

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

There is considerable variation in legal provisions across EU Member States. 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.

([47]) 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)), OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 88 (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0388_EN.html).

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 under other offences that are not specific to the domestic or intimate partner violence context, and/or consider psychological violence as an aggravating circumstance, than those that have specific legislation relating to psychological violence. 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)

MS	Psychological violence	Domestic violence	Other offence(s)	Stalking
BE		*	X	X
BG		*	X	X
CZ		X	X	X
DK	X		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
CY ([48])		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**	**27**

NB: X indicates relevant criminal offences, * indicates aggravating circumstances and ** indicates a separate legal offence for cyberstalking.
Source: Authors' calculation, based on national legal databases (see Table A1.4 in Annex 4), European Commission (2010), European Parliament (2020a, b), EELN (2021), EIGE (2017) and email exchanges with members of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming (February 2022).

([48]) 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 (Law 115(I)/2021) and the law on protection from harassment and stalking (Law 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 Ireland ([49]) and Denmark ([50]) use the term coercive control; Denmark has a criminal offence for psychological violence ([51]) and the criminal code in France specifies that criminal offences relating to violence ([52]) can be psychological in nature ([53]). In Hungary, the article of the criminal code relating to domestic violence includes a reference to 'violent and humiliating behaviour that seriously violates human dignity', thus including psychological violence ([54]). In Spain, three criminal offences are specific to psychological violence against women: threat ([55]), coercion ([56]) and mental damage ([57]).

Aiding and abetting violence is criminalised in relation to all of the above criminal offences, in line with the Istanbul Convention (Article 41). These offences are punishable by a prison sentence (DK, IE, ES and FR), a fine (DK, IE and 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 in which psychological violence from a partner or former partner leads to the woman's suicide, thus recognising 'forced suicide' as an aggravating circumstance of psychological violence ([58]).

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). This aligns with the description of psychological violence in the explanatory note to the Istanbul Convention as 'an abusive pattern of behaviour occurring over time' rather than a single act (Council of Europe, 2011b: 31). In line with the Istanbul Convention (Article 46), the 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 the 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 notes that most of the aggravating circumstances in the Istanbul Convention can be taken into account in France, without any exceptions relating to psychological violence (GREVIO, 2019a). In Denmark, the 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 notes that this provision is rarely applied in practice in Denmark and recommends that it is ensured that all aggravating circumstances are taken into account (GREVIO, 2017a).

([49]) Article 38 of the domestic violence act of 2018.
([50]) A new phrase was inserted by Act No 415 of 13 March 2021, namely 'including the exercise of coercive control'.
([51]) Article 243 of the Danish criminal code.
([52]) 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).
([53]) Article 222-14-3 of the French criminal code.
([54]) Act C of 2012 of the criminal code of Hungary (Section 212/A, Article (1)(a)).
([55]) Article 171 of the Spanish criminal code.
([56]) Article 172 of the Spanish criminal code.
([57]) Article 153 of the Spanish criminal code.
([58]) 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 EUR 150 000 when psychological violence leads to suicide or attempted suicide.

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, 2020a), whereas the other offences discussed in this section apply to violence perpetrated against both 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 an aggravating circumstance ([59]). In Ireland, Spain and France ([60]), an 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).

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' ([61]). This definition does not explicitly include intimate partners who have never shared a residence, but in practice the law also applies to them ([62]). The offences of threat, coercion and mental damage in Spain apply to psychological violence against a vulnerable woman who lives with the perpetrator (a man).

4.2. Criminalisation of psychological violence under domestic violence legislation

Domestic violence may be covered by a range of criminal offences rather than by a single stand-alone offence (European Parliament, 2020a). **A total of 12 EU Member States** ([63]) **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 States ([64]) take a 'framework approach' (sometimes in addition to a specific provision in the criminal code), with the adoption of a dedicated law (a domestic violence act or similar) that 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), Croatia (EELN, 2021) and Cyprus (European Parliament, 2020b).

In countries where there is no specific criminal offence, domestic violence or intimate partner violence is usually taken into consideration as an aggravating circumstance ([65]) 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 ([66]). In Finland, a proposal to amend the penal code to add the perpetrator's gender-based motive as an aggravating circumstance is being examined in parliament in 2022 ([67]). 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 partner context. In its baseline evaluation for Finland, GREVIO recommended introducing a new legal provision that would better fit the requirement to criminalise psychological violence set out in the Istanbul Convention (GREVIO, 2019b).

([59]) Interview FR1 (see Annex 1 for an explanation of the interview codes used).
([60]) Interview FR1.
([61]) Article 243 of the Danish criminal code.
([62]) Interview DK1.
([63]) CZ, ES, FR, IT, LV, HU, MT, PL, PT, SI, SK and SE.
([64]) BG, IE, EL, ES, HR, CY, LT, LU, PL, RO and SI.
([65]) BE, BG, EE, IE, LV, LU, NL and AT.
([66]) This is also the case in Denmark, although there is a specific criminal offence for psychological violence as set out in Section 2 of the Danish criminal code.
([67]) For more information on this proposal, see the Finnish Ministry of Justice's web page (in Finnish) on making gender-based motives an aggravating circumstance (https://oikeusministerio.fi/hanke?tunnus=OM024:00/2019).

Psychological violence, understood as intentional conduct that seriously impairs a person's psychological integrity through coercion or threats, is explicitly included in the definition of domestic violence in 13 Member States ([68]), while several others make reference to these elements (coercion and threats). In Latvia, the legislation on domestic violence of 2018 classifies psychological disorders resulting from the experience of domestic violence as bodily injury ([69]).

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 (2021a) notes that **domestic violence provisions are rarely used to prosecute psychological violence alone**, but rather are used to prosecute psychological violence coupled with physical violence ([70]). A lack of data collection on the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions relating to domestic violence offences ([71]) makes it difficult to assess how effectively these provisions are used to hold perpetrators to account (GREVIO, 2021a). 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 those in the criminal justice sector** (GREVIO, 2021a).

In some Member States, there are additional criminal provisions relating to domestic violence and/or intimate partner violence in a digital context (cyberstalking in relationships is covered under Section 4.4). In Spain, the offence of the discovery and revelation of secrets criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images, even if the materials were initially obtained with consent (GREVIO, 2020a). Non-consensual sharing of intimate images is criminalised in 11 Member State (EELN, 2021). Among them are Belgium ([72]), France ([73]), Italy ([74]), Malta ([75]) and Slovenia. New legislation to this effect is under consideration in Germany and Slovakia (EELN, 2021).

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 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, 2017b: 40). This may also create repercussions for professionals in the criminal justice system and for their ability to make use of legal provisions.

In Sweden, domestic violence perpetrated by men against women with whom they have or have had a close relationship can be prosecuted under the offence of a gross violation of a woman's integrity ([76]), 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 that have a specific criminal offence for domestic violence, the legal definition does not differentiate between women and men victims.

([68]) BE, BG, EL, ES, HR, CY, LT, LU, MT, PL, PT, RO and SK.
([69]) Sections 125, 126 and 130 of the criminal law.
([70]) The national expert for Denmark (DK1) mentioned that there was some anecdotal evidence that, despite psychological violence being a specific criminal offence (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.
([71]) Noted by GREVIO in relation to DK, ES, MT, NL, FI and SE (GREVIO, 2021a).
([72]) The law of 4 May 2020 to combat non-consensual dissemination of sexual images and recordings.
([73]) Article 226-2-1 of the French criminal code.
([74]) Criminalised in 2019 via the red code legislation (GREVIO, 2020b).
([75]) Article 208E of the Maltese criminal code.
([76]) Chapter 4, Section 4a, of the Swedish criminal code.

In Spain, France, Hungary, Portugal and Sweden, criminal offences relating to domestic violence specifically refer to the repetition or regularity of behaviour ([77]). 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, 2011b: 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 and SE), the 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 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 requiring regularity 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 in which 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 (Table 6). More restricted definitions mean that certain instances of psychological violence may not be covered by the legal framework, and therefore the requirement of the Istanbul Convention to criminalise all forms of domestic violence may not be met.

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

MS	Spouse	Former spouse	Cohabiting partner	Former cohabiting 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
LV	X	X	X	X	X	X
HU	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	**14**	**13**	**15**	**13**	**13**	**14**

Source: Authors' calculation, based on EELN (2021), national legal databases (see Table A1.4 in Annex 1), EIGE (2017), European Parliament (2020a, b) and email exchanges with members of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming (February 2022).

([77]) In France, this is the case for the criminal offence of moral harassment, as detailed in Table A4.5 in Annex 4. In the case of psychological violence, case-law indicates that repetition is not a requirement.

In Czechia and Poland, domestic violence legislation applies only to intimate partner relationships in which 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 that entered into force in May 2021 ([78]). 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) ([79]). In tying domestic violence to current co-residence, the legal framework in these countries effectively restricts its criminalisation to current or ongoing intimate partner relationships ([80]), 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 ([81]).

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 Convention ([82]).

In Member States where domestic violence is a criminal offence, this is generally punishable by imprisonment and/or a financial penalty. However, **even in those countries 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 as a crime (Amnesty International, 2020). Although domestic violence can be punished by imprisonment for up to 3 years in Croatia, most perpetrators receive suspended sentences or fines (Amnesty International, 2020).

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

4.3. General criminal offences used to prosecute psychological violence

In most EU Member States ([83])**, 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).

([78]) Law on prevention and combating violence against women and domestic violence and on related matters (Law 115(I)/2021).

([79]) Hypothetically, if the partner is a spouse, he or 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 (PL1) confirmed that domestic violence legislation does not apply to a non-resident partner, although the expert did note that the legislation had (in a small number of cases) been applied to situations in which the victim and perpetrator did not live together, for instance school bullying.

([80]) This is done 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.

([81]) For more information on this association between marriage rates and age group, see the corresponding Eurostat databases (as of 15 September 2021 (https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-demography/demography-population-stock-balance/database).

([82]) 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.

([83]) BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, IE, ES, FR, HR, IT, LV, LT, HU, NL, AT, PL, PT, RO, SI, FI and SE.

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

Offence	MS
Threat	BE, BG, CZ, DK, DE, EE, HR, IT, LV, LT, HU, NL, AT, PT, RO, SI, SK, SE
Coercion	BG, DE, IE, HR, HU, NL, AT, PL, PT, SI, FI, SE
Insult / insulting behaviour	BE, EE, IT, HU, AT, SE
Defamation	BE, IT, LT, HU, AT, SE
Degrading treatment	BE
Sexual coercion	AT
Duress	DK
Assault	DK, HU, FI
Health impairment/damage	EE, HU
Restriction of freedom	LT, HU
Severe health impairment	LT, HU
Mental abuse	PT
Menace	FI

Source: Authors' calculation, based on European Parliament (2020a, b), EELN (2021), national legal databases (see Table A1.4 in Annex 1) and 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 notes that general offences applicable in Belgium (threat, degrading treatment, insults and defamation) are designed to punish single acts in isolation, whereas psychological violence may comprise repetitive acts of violence perpetrated over a long period of time (GREVIO, 2020c). Certain criminal offences also set a high threshold for behaviour to be criminalised and may be out of step with psychological violence comprising repeated smaller acts of violence. This limitation is noted by GREVIO in its evaluation of Austria (GREVIO, 2017b), Belgium (GREVIO, 2020c), Denmark (GREVIO, 2017a), Finland (GREVIO, 2019b) and the Netherlands (GREVIO, 2020d). 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: from among the general criminal offences, only one is used *expressis verbis* for psychological violence (Section 164, causing bodily harm); the other criminal offences can be established based only on the perpetrator's behaviour, and not by the psychological effect it causes to the victim (although 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, for prosecuting psychological violence against women. This is the case in 19 EU Member States ([84]), including nine Member States ([85]) 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).

([84]) BE, BG, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, CY, LV, LT, LU, HU, MT, NL, AT, RO, SK and SE.
([85]) BE, BG, DK, EE, IE, LV, LU, NL and AT.

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

4.4. Criminal offences relating to stalking

All EU Member States have criminalised stalking (referred to as harassment in some legal frameworks ([86])) as a form of psychological violence (see Table 5). In several Member States, the intimate partner ([87]) or domestic ([88]) context is recognised as an aggravating factor for stalking (EELN, 2021). In January 2022, Denmark, which to date is the only Member State yet to criminalise stalking, introduced a new provision in its penal code to this effect ([89]).

Legal definitions of stalking (see Annex 4) may refer to the intention ([90]) or behaviour of the perpetrator. Some Member States ([91]) 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 actions** ([92]) **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, 2011b). For instance, in Romania, the legal definition of stalking lists specific behaviours: the repeated pursuit of an individual, the surveillance of this person's home, working place or other places, and/or unwanted (tele)communication with this person (van de Aa, 2018). Other stalking tactics mentioned in the Istanbul Convention's explanatory report (Council of Europe, 2011b: paragraphs 182 and 183 ([93])), 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 and sending unwanted gifts) can be recognised if the circumstances are classified as an act of molestation, a crime specifically 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 rather than on the behaviour of the victim is considered promising practice by GREVIO (2021a). 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, 2019b; European Parliament, 2020b). Law enforcement authorities in Finland have been found to place considerable emphasis on victims' behaviour, in some cases considering stalking to have commenced only after the victim had requested the perpetrator to stop (GREVIO, 2019b). 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 stalker's behaviour (GREVIO, 2019b). GREVIO also raises concerns about the offence of stalking in Spain, which requires that the victim significantly alter her daily routine because of the behaviour,

([86]) Applies to FR, IE, LU, HU, MT, PL, RO and SE. Harassment is sometimes used as an umbrella term including stalking and other offences (EELN, 2021).
([87]) BE, BG, EE, ES, HR, IT, HU, MT, AT, PT, SK and SE.
([88]) BE, BG, DE, EE, ES, FR, HR, IT, HU, MT, NL, AT, SK and SE.
([89]) Act No 2600 of 28 December 2021 entered into force on 1 January 2022.
([90]) The Member States that do reflect intentionality in legal definitions of stalking are BE, DK, DE, EE, IE, LU, HU, MT and PT.
([91]) BG, CZ, DE, EE, IE, EL, ES, HR, LV, MT, AT, RO, SI, SK, FI and SE.
([92]) As is the case in BG, CZ, IE, ES, HR, LV, MT, AT, RO, SI, SK and SE.
([93]) The explanatory note 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, setting up false identities and spreading untruthful information online (Council of Europe, 2011b: paragraph 183).

thereby also shifting the burden of proof onto the victim (GREVIO, 2020a). The upcoming organic law for sexual freedom will modify Article 172 of the Spanish criminal code to eliminate the requirement for the victim to alter 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 the fear experienced by the victim. As with psychological violence, actions must be conducted intentionally and must show a repetitive pattern of behaviour (Council of Europe, 2011b) to be recognised as stalking. There is explicit reference to the fear experienced by the victim in 12 Member States (EELN, 2021) ([94]). However, the emphasis placed on fear has been criticised by some as a subjective standard, with some stalking legislation (e.g. in the United States) relying on whether a 'reasonable person' would have experienced fear as a result of the conduct (van de Aa, 2018; EELN, 2021). 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 may be distressing for the victim (van de Aa, 2018).

In some Member States – for instance in the Netherlands and Finland – 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 in how to handle the complex nature of stalking (GREVIO, 2019b, 2020d). GREVIO also notes that, in some Member States – for instance Finland – the punishment for stalking is weak (GREVIO, 2019b).

There is increasing awareness of cyberstalking 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 and SK), telecommunication (DE and 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 and 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, cyberstalking is specifically mentioned as a form of stalking in the criminal code** ([95]). 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 cyberstalking (recording or intercepting online messages). New legal offences relating to cyberstalking are planned or being implemented in Slovakia ([96]), Spain ([97]) and Germany (EELN, 2021). However, in several EU Member States ([98]), the legal definition of stalking or harassment does not refer explicitly to cyberstalking.

4.5. Key findings and implications

Only five EU Member States (DK, IE, ES FR and HU) have criminal offences that are specific to psychological violence or coercive control. In 15 EU Member States, psychological violence can be prosecuted under domestic violence legislation, either by a dedicated provision in the criminal code (12 Member States) ([99]) or via a specific legal act (three Member States) ([100]). GREVIO raised concerns that domestic violence provisions may not be used effectively to prosecute psychological violence unless such violence is accompanied by physical violence (GREVIO, 2021a). Criminal offences relating to domestic violence do not always refer explicitly to psychological violence. The lack of specificity might make it more difficult

([94]) BG, CZ, HR, IT, LV, HU, MT, NL, PT, RO, SI and FI.
([95]) Section 107a, paragraph 2, of the Austrian criminal code.
([96]) A new offence of dangerous electronic harassment (Article 360b) was included in the penal code in July 2021.
([97]) The organic law for sexual freedom is undergoing parliamentary approval and will reinforce the measures against cyberstalking.
([98]) BE, EE, IE, FR, HR, LU, NL, PL, PT, FI and SE.
([99]) CZ, ES, FR, IT, LV, HU, MT, PL, PT, SI, SK and SE.
([100]) EL, HR and CY.

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 (Amnesty International, 2020; GREVIO, 2020b). Sanctions applicable to domestic violence cases rarely take into consideration all of the aggravating circumstances defined in the Istanbul Convention. A lack of data collection on the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions relating to domestic violence offences makes it difficult to monitor how relevant legal provisions are applied in practice (GREVIO, 2021a). Effective criminalisation may be prevented by a low degree of awareness and understanding of criminal offences such as domestic violence (Association of Austrian Autonomous Women's Shelters and Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Vienna, 2016; GREVIO, 2021a) and stalking (Baldry et al., 2016; GREVIO, 2019b, 2020d) 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 of the 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) (Amnesty International, 2020; European Parliament, 2020b; EELN, 2021). More restricted legal concepts 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 may not be met.

In 12 EU Member States ([101]), the legal definitions of stalking explicitly include elements of cyberstalking. In Austria, cyberstalking is regulated as a specific, stand-alone offence. In several Member States, criminal legislation does not refer to cyberstalking or 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. While 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 and Jurasz, 2017).

([101]) BG, CZ, DE, EL, ES, FR, IT, MT, AT, RO, SI and SK.

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

The BPfA acknowledges the strategic importance of taking 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, 2011a). Further preventive measures are necessary to create shifts in public attitudes towards gender stereotypes and these forms of violence, more specifically (Council of Europe, 2011a). The Istanbul Convention stipulates the need for measures that promote the changes required in the social and cultural patterns of behaviour and that encourage all members of society to contribute actively to preventing these forms of violence (Council of Europe, 2011b). The types of preventive measures identified in the Istanbul Convention are outlined in Table 8.

Table 8. Preventive measures outlined in the Istanbul Convention

Measure	Description
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 relationships in the pursuit of secondary prevention

Source: Authors' compilation based on Council of Europe (2011b).

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 chapter 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

The study has reviewed **39 practices and measures implemented across 19 EU Member States** ([102]) **to prevent coercive control and psychological violence against women** ([103]). Practices are classified according to the types of prevention measures outlined in the Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011a):

([102]) No practices within the scope of this study were identified in LV, LT, MT, AT, SI, SK, FI or SE.

([103]) While many of the 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 the scope of this study (see Annex 1 for more details).

- **training of professionals** (20 practices);
- **awareness-raising campaigns** (seven practices);
- **educational initiatives** (three practices);
- other **non-criminal legislation** (three practices) and **perpetrator programmes** (two practices);
- miscellaneous (four 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) owing to overlap with other categories. The following sections set out the different sets of criteria used to review the practices and measures to prevent coercive control and psychological violence against women.

5.1.1. Evidence, theory and conceptual clarity

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

Out of the 39 practices identified, 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**, probably because of the large body of research that already exists in these areas. Educational initiatives that score highly on this criterion include the Dat-e Adolescence programme (Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018; Muñoz-Fernández et al., 2019) and the developing healthy and egalitarian adolescent relationships (DARSI) programme (Box 9) (Carrascosa et al., 2019), both implemented in Spain, as well as the gender equality awareness raising against intimate partner violence II (GEAR-II) programme (Box 10), which has been implemented in five Member States (EL, ES, HR, CY and 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 in which a robust evaluation has been 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 campaigns make reference to statistics on the prevalence of psychological violence ([104]). A mixed picture emerges for vocational training programmes, some of which are firmly grounded in evidence whereas others are not. In some cases, experts and stakeholders in the area are involved and/or consulted in place of the use of specific evidence (ENGAGE, 2019; Rodriguez et al., 2021) ([105]), suggesting that there may be a concern regarding experience being favoured over evidence in this area.

Box 9. The DARSI programme (ES)

The **DARSI 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,

([104]) These include campaigns in Belgium (https://1712.be/campagnes/id/884/campagne-vertederdvernederd-doorbreekt-taboe-rond-emotioneel-misbruik-in-relaties, http://vertederdvernederd.be/achtergrondinfo/ and https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/).

([105]) This is also the case in two campaigns in the Netherlands (https://safetyned.org/ervaringen-van-slachtoffers/ and https://professionals.verdwenenzelf.org/training-professionals/).

encompassing all forms of peer aggression. However, forms of psychological abuse (threats, insults and cyberaggression) 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 about 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 ([106]). 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 **intersectiona**l approach.

Given that this is a school-based initiative, the programme could possibly be applied in other contexts. However, to facilitate its **transferability**, the materials would probably need to be translated. There is no publicly available information on whether the programme will be continued or **sustained** in the future.

The practice has been evaluated (Carrascosa et al., 2019) and scores highly in relation to **monitoring and evaluation**. A quasi-experimental design efficacy trial with a control group was conducted with 191 participants (aged 12–17 years). The results show that, compared with the control group, members of the experimental group had a greater reduction (pre- versus post-intervention) in sexist attitudes and a reduced belief in romantic myths. However, this was 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.

Most practices (25 out of 39) are well grounded in theory, clearly outlining their aims and objectives and the activities undertaken to achieve these. Good examples include a perpetrator programme implemented in Spain, which has a clear objective, namely preventing reoffending / re-victimisation in the perpetration of intimate partner violence (including psychological violence) among men (Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015; see Box 17). Another example of a practice well grounded in theory is a campaign in Belgium, which has the clear objective of breaking taboos regarding emotional abuse in relationships through awareness-raising activities, using a campaign website, videos, quizzes, information material and personal testimonies ([107]).

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

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

([107]) More information on this campaign is available online (https://1712.be/campagnes/id/884/campagne-vertederdvernederd-doorbreekt-taboe-rond-emotioneel-misbruik-in-relaties and http://vertederdvernederd.be/achtergrondinfo/).

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

The **GEAR-II** project is an EU-funded ([108]) **educational and awareness-raising initiative** ([109]) 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 Member States (EL, ES, HR, CY and RO).

The objective of the initiative – to contribute to the primary and secondary prevention of intimate partner violence and sexual violence among adolescents – is clearly spelled out on the programme website ([110]). The activities undertaken to achieve this objective are as follows: 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 activity to the 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' ([111]). The **language and messaging** used deliberately seeks to combat gender stereotypes and the 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 that showss high levels of 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.

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 (Logar and Marvanova Vargova, 2015; ENGAGE, 2019; Rodriguez et al., 2021). An example of such a practice is the ENGAGE project carried out under the European Commission's Daphne programme (ENGAGE, 2019; Box 11). As part of the ENGAGE project, a roadmap was developed for frontline professionals interacting with men perpetrators. It 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

([108]) The GEAR-II programme is co-funded by the Daphne III programme of the EU.
([109]) For the purposes of this study, the GEAR intervention is classed as an educational initiative, as 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.
([110]) The GEAR-II website sets out the project's approach to intimate partner violence (https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/the-gear-against-ipv-approach).
([111]) The aims of the project are set out on the GEAR-II website (https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/the-gear-against-ipv-approach).

of violence is provided in place of a specific definition ([112]).

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 et al., 2019) or if 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 2-year project carried out between 2018 and 2019 under the European Commission's Daphne programme. The objective was to **increase 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 men perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse was developed in five languages (English, French, Italian, Spanish and Catalan). It targets frontline professionals in healthcare, social services, child protection services and the police. The roadmap aims to provide frontline professionals with the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively refer men 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 (ES, FR, HR, IT, AT and FI), which suggests it has a high degree of **transferability**. If support is needed for implementation, a webinar on training frontline professionals is available within the ENGAGE toolkit. As a collaboration between the European Network for the Work with Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (WWP EN) ([113]) and various national-level experts, the practice scores highly in both **stakeholder engagement** criteria.

The practice is underpinned by strong **conceptual clarity**. The roadmap includes a clear definition of domestic violence that is 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 women and men. 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 (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 (ENGAGE, 2019). Although the full evaluation report is not publicly available, a summary is published on the project website ([114]). There is evidence to support the **effectiveness** of the programme, which was found

([112]) This is the case for several campaigns in Belgium (https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/ and http://www.fredetmarie.be/) and the Netherlands (https://safetyned.org/ervaringen-van-slachtoffers/, https://professionals.verdwenenzelf.org/2020/premiere-educatieve-film/).

([113]) See the WWP EN's website for more information on this network (https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/).

([114]) See the WWP EN's web page on ENGAGE (https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/projects/engage).

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

Only a few practices aiming to prevent psychological violence against women (5 out of 39) are grounded in a gender equality perspective, 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 initiative (see Box 10), which has been implemented in five EU Member States (EL, ES, HR, CY and 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 activity (directed at men perpetrators of intimate partner violence).

Nearly a quarter of the practices identified (10 out of 39) do not acknowledge the gender dimension or simply state that both women and men can be victims of psychological violence. It is particularly concerning that none of the awareness-raising campaigns identified emphasises 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 identified that are 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 score highly for their focus on the gendered elements of domestic and intimate partner violence (Logar and Marvanoca Vargova, 2015; ENGAGE, 2019; Solano-Ruiz et al., 2021), the majority take a gender-neutral approach or explicitly focus on both women and men 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.

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, Spain, used innovative methods to raise awareness and improve understanding of violence against women (Solano-Ruiz et al., 2021). 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 three or four photographs with their mobile phones or tablets. 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 reflect 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 discussions.

This training initiative focused on violence against women and linked it to the wider societal understanding of 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 was it evaluated. The researcher documented the research process and the results; the data is qualitative. There is some data on **effectiveness**, but they are derived from a small, homogeneous sample and a qualitative, non-rigorous evaluation design.

5.1.2. Scope and sustainability

The second set of criteria relates to the scope of the practices identified, that is, 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 women victims (Logar and Marvanova Vargova, 2015). A few sections of the manual apply to specific groups of women, for instance refugees, migrants and those of an ethnic minority. 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. The goal of the project is to train 500 interdisciplinary teams set up at local level in line with the act on counteracting family violence of 2010 (Logar and Marvanova Vargova, 2015). In its baseline assessment for Poland, GREVIO welcomes such interdisciplinary training initiatives set up at local level (GREVIO, 2021b).

A further seven practices have elements that target or are tailored to meeting the needs of specific groups of women, including education and training programmes (EIGE, 2015; ENGAGE, 2019; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2019; Houtsonen, 2020; see also Box 10), one perpetrator programme (Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015) and one awareness-raising campaign ([115]). 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; see also Box 10). 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 ([116]). A third of the practices identified (12 out of 39) are not targeted at 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 identified, 12 have been transferred from another national context ([117]). The practices have been designed to operate across multiple contexts (see Box 10) or relate to issues that are not closely linked to a 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) show a 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 in question (Carrascosa et al., 2019). Similarly, non-criminal legislation is transferable to other contexts only insofar as

([115]) For more information on this Belgian campaign, see the Equal Brussels website (https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/).
([116]) For more information on this Belgian campaign, see the Equal Brussels website (https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/).
([117]) This includes a campaign in the Netherlands (https://safetyned.org/ervaringen-van-slachtoffers/).

certain criminal offences are recognised. Practices relating to the training of professionals tend to have a low potential for transferability, as they are tied to specific administrative and legal frameworks that differ across countries ([118]).

Some practices (6 out of 39) are tailored to a great extent to national or local contexts. 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 such as the GEAR-II programme, which was developed at EU level and implemented in five Member States (EL, ES, HR, CY and RO; Hagemann-White, 2017; see also Box 10), with materials translated and adapted for use in each of the Member States. For most of the practices identified, the publicly available information does not allow a full assessment to be made of whether the practice has been tailored to the context in which it is implemented.

A large number of practices (19 out of 39) are long-term or at least include components, such as training resources, that remain available after the activity is complete (12 out of 39 practices). Good examples in relation to the sustainability criterion include mandatory training for police officers in Luxembourg (Box 13), which is included in the formal curriculum of police cadet training (EIGE, 2015). Another example is a 2-day training course focusing on domestic violence for counsellors in Ireland (Box 14), which is delivered on a regular basis by a civil society organisation (Rodriguez et al., 2021). 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 (Institut pour l'egalite des femmes et des hommes, 2015; Stubberud et al., 2018) ([119]) and time-limited educational initiatives (Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018; Carrascosa et al., 2019). These initiatives are, however, all a part of an evaluation trial, meaning that they may be implemented or scaled up in the future if the evaluation results support it.

Box 13. Mandatory training and tools for police officers (LU)

In 2003, Luxembourg adopted new domestic violence legislation that allows the eviction of a perpetrator from a victim's home (initially for 4 days, with the possibility for an extension). To help support the implementation of this law, **a training course was developed and included in the 2-year basic police training**. The training course 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 course**. There are plans to **evaluate** the course. The evaluation of the implementation of the law confirmed that **the training course is working well** (EIGE, 2015).

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

In Luxembourg, the policy issue of domestic violence is part of 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 course explicitly addresses the needs of different groups of victims, police are supplied with information cards for victims and perpetrators of violence that are **available in 13 languages**.

([118]) 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 EU level (ENGAGE, 2019).

([119]) This also includes a campaign in Belgium (https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/).

Box 14. Training programme for counsellors (IE)

A **2-day training course focusing on domestic violence, abuse and coercive control** aims to equip counsellors in Ireland with evidence-based tools and to increased awareness in this area. Participants receive continuing professional development credit for attending the training course run 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 course, 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 course does not seem to connect violence against women with 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 course 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 suggests that this practice can be **transferred** to other contexts. The training course 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 course has been evaluated (Rodriguez et al., 2021) through participants being asked to complete questionnaires before and after the training course, rating their perceptions of the training course using the five-point Likert scale to evaluate four key areas of the training course: reaction, learning, behaviour and results (outcomes). The questionnaire also included three open-ended questions in which participants could share their opinions on the support provided and any barriers, as well as any general comments about the training course. In addition, participants were followed 3 months after the training course. Eight participants attended both training days and completed questionnaires. The evaluation found that participants generally enjoyed the training course and were 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 towards domestic violence. This was, however, **a small-scale evaluation lacking a robust design** (i.e. no control group).

5.1.3. Coordination and embeddedness

The third set of criteria relates 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.

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 perpetration by men 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 (Chini, 2019). There are also some instances of training for

professionals (including police officers and counsellors) that draws on the knowledge and experience of victim support organisations (EIGE, 2015; Logar and Marvanova Vargova, 2015; Rodriguez et al., 2021). For instance, a roadmap for professionals as part of the ENGAGE project (see 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 (see Box 14; Rodriguez et al., 2021). However, insufficient information means that the full extent of collaboration among stakeholders cannot be assessed in many of the practices identified (i.e. in 18 of the 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 13), which is delivered in partnership with specialists who work directly with victims (EIGE, 2015); a manual for training professionals in Poland designed to promote multiagency cooperation (see Section 5.1.2); and an educational initiative (GEAR-II) implemented through collaboration between an EU-level organisation (the European Anti-Violence Network) and multiple national-level NGOs (see Box 10).

A quarter of the practices identified (10 practices) are **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 (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 and 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, 2021). However, the majority of the practices identified (23 out of 39) do not form part of a strategy or action plan, whether national or regional. None of the awareness-raising campaigns or educational initiatives identified is embedded in any kind of broader strategy or action plan.

Box 15. 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 for 2019–2022** (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2019) 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 in 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.

5.1.4. Communication

The next set of criteria relates to the communication of practices, that is, 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 of the practices identified (17 out of 39) do not tend to enforce myths and stereotypes and, more commonly, actively challenge and disrupt them** ([120]). Practices seek to challenge a number of harmful beliefs and misconceptions, including victim blaming (Institut pour l'egalite des femmes et des hommes, 2015; Logar and Marvanova Vargova, 2015; Chini, 2019; ENGAGE, 2019) ([121]), the view that non-physical forms of violence are 'less serious' than physical forms (Stubberud et al., 2018) ([122]), the romanticisation of intimate partner violence (Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018; Carrascosa et al., 2019) ([123]), gender stereotypes (Solano-Ruiz et al., 2021; see also Box 10), and false preconceptions about what abuse looks like (Gafarova, 2015) ([124]). The awareness-raising campaigns are specifically concerned with addressing such misconceptions in order to increase the 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 combating myths about different types of domestic and intimate partner violence (Logar and Marvanova Vargova, 2015; ENGAGE, 2019; Solano-Ruiz et al., 2021). Combating myths and stereotypes is a core focus of all three of the educational initiatives aimed at adolescents that were identified. Other practices challenge such stereotypes less explicitly. For example, the first stage of one perpetrator programme requires perpetrators 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 perpetrators' 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 (Chini, 2019) ([125]).

([120]) In assessing practices against this criterion, the research team sought to critically examine the content of the practices as far as possible based on the team's understanding of stereotypes and promising practice in this area. In some cases, however, the research team did rely on explicitly stated objectives regarding challenging stereotypes, and it is important to recognise that such objectives may not have been achieved in practice.

([121]) This also applies to campaigns in Belgium (https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/) and the Netherlands (https://safetyned.org/ervaringen-van-slachtoffers/).

([122]) This also applies to a campaign in the Netherlands (https://safetyned.org/ervaringen-van-slachtoffers/).

([123]) This also applies to a campaign in Bulgaria (https://loveerrors.bg/#errors-list/1).

([124]) This also applies to several campaigns in Belgium (http://www.fredetmarie.be/, https://1712.be/campagnes/id/884/campagne-vertederdvernederd-doorbreekt-taboe-rond-emotioneel-misbruik-in-relaties and http://vertederdvernederd.be/achtergrondinfo/) and one in the Netherlands (https://professionals.verdwenenzelf.org/2020/premiere-educatieve-film/).

([125]) See the Equal Brussels website for more information on this campaign (https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/).

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 it would need to be translated. While the campaign focuses on psychological violence against women, none of the communication materials explicitly mentions gender inequality. No information on monitoring, evaluation or evidence on effectiveness could be found.

In addition to the six awareness-raising campaigns, awareness campaigns are incorporated into broader practice in one training course for professionals (Stubberud et al., 2018) and one educational initiative (see Box 10). They include campaign websites, posters (Institut pour l'egalite des femmes et des hommes, 2015) ([126]), videos ([127]), social media posts (Chini, 2019) ([128]), national television and radio broadcasts (Gafarova, 2015), t-shirts and coasters (Institut pour l'egalite des femmes et des hommes, 2015), self-tests ([129]) and short films ([130]). The educational initiative incorporates a variety of promotional elements, including an awareness-raising campaign developed based on the participants' own work (see Box 10). The Danish Stalking Centre likewise carries out a number of awareness-raising campaigns alongside the training and guidelines it provides to relevant professionals (Stubberud et al., 2018).

5.1.5. Evaluation

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

Just a few of the practices identified (5 out of 39) have planned, undergone or completed a robust evaluation (Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015; Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018; Carrascosa et al., 2019; ENGAGE, 2019; Muñoz-Fernández et al., 2019; Spratt et al., 2021; see also Box 10). A robust evaluation should be based on an independent assessment involving quantitative estimation (pre- versus post-treatment and/or treatment versus control). However, the bar is not set so high as to require a full randomised controlled trial.

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 the cluster randomised controlled trial 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; see also Box 9) and two evaluations (pre- versus post-intervention) of perpetrator programmes implemented in Ireland (Spratt et al., 2021) and Spain (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 (EIGE, 2019; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2019) or the evaluation data is either purely qualitative (EIGE, 2015; Rodriguez et al., 2021; Solano-Ruiz et al., 2021) or administrative (Baldry et al., 2016; Marc et al., 2018) ([131]). In one case, an evaluation of the reliability and predictive validity of a risk assessment tool for stalking used

([126]) This applies to a campaign in Belgium (https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/).
([127]) This applies to several campaigns in Belgium (https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/, https://1712.be/campagnes/id/884/campagne-vertederdvernederd-doorbreekt-taboe-rond-emotioneel-misbruik-in-relaties and http://vertederdvernederd.be/).
([128]) This applies to campaigns in Belgium (https://cjc.be/La-violence-psychologique-c-est-de.html) and Bulgaria (https://loveerrors.bg/).
([129]) This applies to two campaigns in Belgium (https://1712.be/campagnes/id/884/campagne-vertederdvernederd-doorbreekt-taboe-rond-emotioneel-misbruik-in-relaties and http://vertederdvernederd.be/).
([130]) This applies to a campaign in Belgium (http://www.fredetmarie.be/).
([131]) This also applies to a campaign in Belgium (https://www.knack.be/nieuws/gezondheid/emotioneel-misbruik-binnen-een-relatie-komt-vaker-voor-dan-gedacht/article-normal-1100935.html?cookie_check=1631371817).

by the Netherlands national police was carried out (Hehemann et al., 2017), but GREVIO (2020d) observed that it is still too early to assess how effective its use is in practice.

An academic evaluation of two perpetrator programmes recognised the potential of these programmes for effective secondary prevention (Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015; Spratt et al., 2021). The majority of participants in a perpetrators programme for men in Spain reported 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 (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- versus post-treatment comparisons, and neither has a 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; Baldry et al., 2016; Marc et al., 2018; Solano-Ruiz et al., 2021; see also Box 10) ([132]) or demonstrate effectiveness in relation to behaviours or beliefs associated with psychological violence, but not in relation to the violence itself (Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018; Carrascosa et al., 2019; Rodriguez et al., 2021). 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 and RO; Hagemann-White, 2017) provides 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 on 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 the perpetrator agrees to take part in such court-mandated psychological treatment instead. The underlying idea is that psychological treatment is the most effective method of preventing reoffending. An impact evaluation has been carried out by a team of academics (Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015) for a programme developed by the Psimae Instituto de Psicología Jurídica y Forense and directed by the department of social rights of the government of Navarre. The programme offers 20 1-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, anger management, and challenging distorted beliefs related to intimate partner violence.

The programme provides clear objectives, namely the prevention of reoffending and the identification of mechanisms (through treating motivation, psychopathological symptoms and relapse prevention relating to specific scenarios). The offence of intimate partner violence is understood as a form of gender-based violence. Trainers are introduced to broader **gender**

([132]) This also applies to a campaign in Belgium (https://www.knack.be/nieuws/gezondheid/emotioneel-misbruik-binnen-een-relatie-komt-vaker-voor-dan-gedacht/article-normal-1100935.html?cookie_check=1631371817).

inequalities. While the sessions can be tailored to individuals' 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 the 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 to be 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's 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. To determine the potential for this programme to have an impact on the long-term behaviour patterns of the perpetrators will require time and further investigation.

5.2. Barriers to effective prevention

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 sources identified include information about the 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 section considers barriers to preventing psychological violence in a broader sense and assumes that addressing barriers related to reporting, support and investigation/criminalisation could help to 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 the limited understanding of the issue among professionals and the role of technology in perpetuating the violence.

To supplement the literature relating to EU Member States, this section also draws on literature from OECD countries outside the EU, which is presented in separate boxes. Additional material from the survey and from the literature review of OECD countries outside the EU 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 the prevention of psychological violence against women in their country (see Figure A5.3 in Annex 5). The majority of participants noted that there were limitations of the legal framework in their country, such as having **no specific criminal offence** relating to psychological violence or coercive control (42 participants) ([133]), relevant **criminal offences not being well aligned with the patterns of behaviour typical of psychological violence**

([133]) The extent of these limitations varied among responses, with participants noting that there were legal framework limitations to a great extent, to some extent or to a small extent in their country.

(37 participants) ([134]) and **criminal offences not covering all victim–perpetrator relationships** (30 participants) ([135]). In response to an open question, 12 participants identified a lack of legislation as the most significant barrier to effective prevention.

Other barriers relating to the law and criminal justice system that were mentioned by a smaller number of survey participants (five or fewer) are a lack of prevention work prior to a first offence, a lack of gender-informed policies, gender-neutral laws, victims and their children being 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 3 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 highlighted **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). This 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, which drew 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 regarding the Netherlands, where Dutch police have been criticised for failing to effectively identify and respond to stalking cases (GREVIO, 2020d). 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 and Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Vienna, 2016).

An evaluation of a training programme for professionals in Ireland identified barriers to translating training into practice, including professionals' lack of confidence or experience in the field, a 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., 2021). The authors of this evaluation emphasise the need to change organisational mindsets to ensure that training is valued and recognised, which can help secure funding and resources (Rodriguez et al., 2021). 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 the **difficulty in proving psychological violence in a court of law** ([136]). In relation to prosecuting feederism ([137]) as a form of coercive control in Spain, for example, the difficulty in differentiating between abusive behaviour and sexual fetish in court has been identified as a barrier to prosecution (Obreja, 2019). Similar arguments regarding abusive behaviour being difficult to distinguish from 'harmless' behaviour are made in relation to

([134]) An example of this is criminal offences 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 Chapter 4 for more information).

([135]) The situations not covered include violence between non-cohabiting partners, unmarried partners and same-sex partners (see Chapter 4 for more information).

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

([137]) Obreja (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'.

proving coercive control in France, as many of the tactics used in coercive control are not criminal when viewed in isolation (Women for Women France, 2021). 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 and Matos, 2013; see also Nikupeteri, 2017). Moreover, the recurring nature of coercive control may encourage police officers to wait for a pattern of abuse to emerge before they intervene, consequently enabling recidivism (Women for Women France, 2021). Victims are likewise required to build a case on the continuity of violence, given that the tactics used in coercive control are not criminal when viewed in isolation. The difficulty in proving psychological violence and coercive control is also identified as a barrier to prevention in OECD countries outside the EU (see Box A5.2 in Annex 5).

Even when prosecution may be feasible, **insufficient levels of protection offered by the criminal justice system** can also hinder the prevention of stalking recidivism, with some countries (BG, HR and 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 and Romkens, 2013).

Even legislation that does not specifically relate to domestic violence 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. These arrangements **provide 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 co-parenting arrangements (Feresin et al., 2019). The legal emphasis on the child's 'right' to have a relationship with both parents in several European countries (including IT) 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 than mothers who do not (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 the prevention of psychological violence against women in their country (see Figure A5.4 in Annex 5). A key structural barrier identified in the survey was **insufficient funding** for policies and initiatives to prevent psychological violence (46 participants) ([138]), perhaps linked to the **limited capacity of support providers** (44 participants). A lack of adequate resources for frontline services was identified as a barrier to secondary prevention in Austria, where some intervention centres are oversubscribed and lack the resources to provide long-term support to victims (Association of Austrian Autonomous Women's Shelters and Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Vienna, 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, all of which weaken the capacity of professionals to provide victim support (Lokkegaard et al., 2019). Another study identified 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 institutions to solicit the 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 highlighted a **lack of recognition of psychological violence in national policies, strategies and action plans** (42 participants), as well as a general **lack of**

([138]) The responses varied in terms of the extent of the lack of funding, with participants noting insufficient funding to a great extent, to some extent or to a small extent in their country.

coherence of policy in this area (43 participants). A report reviewing policy and practices related to psychological violence in Poland concluded that **stalking is rarely included in policy or initiatives focusing on domestic violence** (Krizsan and 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 the survey participants stated that policies **lack robust monitoring and evaluation**, a finding that aligns 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 the prevention of psychological violence against women in their country (see Figure A5.5 in Annex 5). Almost all of the survey participants identified **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) ([139]), a **low degree of awareness of psychological violence and/or coercive control as a criminal offence** (48 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 participants).

Several other sources identify **victims not recognising their experiences as violence and control** as a barrier to reporting (and consequently to prevention). This lack of recognition of psychological violence may stem directly from the influence of a controlling partner, as well as from 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 in which psychological violence between heterosexual couples was described (Perles et al., 2021). The authors suggest that couples often fail to identify psychological partner violence within their relationship, including men 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 Spanish context (Montero et al., 2015). In Malta, a study drawing on interviews and focus groups with victims of psychological violence and professionals found that cultural factors resulted in a lower degree of awareness and understanding of psychological violence than of physical violence, reducing the likelihood of victims reporting such crimes to the authorities (Naudi et al., 2018). This research suggests that **women 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) found 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 the literature as a barrier to effective prevention. A report assessing Poland's response to preventing and combating gender-based violence concludes that **psychological violence is not considered as 'serious' as other forms of violence**, such as

([139]) The responses varied in terms of the extent of the lack of recognition and understanding, with participants noting that this was the case to a great extent, to some extent or to a small extent in their country.

murder, assault or rape, which might lead victims to think that the police will not do anything about their situation (Krizsan and 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, Germany, France and Portugal (EIGE, 2020). In France, research suggests that the victims of stalking 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 (Women for Women France, 2021). 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), Baldry et al. reported that victims had mixed views about the way in which the police handled their case. Several victims felt that the police did not believe or help them, felt judged and lacked trust in the police (Baldry et al., 2016). 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 witnesses reporting 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** (48 participants) and the **belief that the domestic sphere and intimate relationships are a private matter** (48 participants). Respondents highlighted stereotypes regarding women being 'manipulators' in relationships and the placement of psychological violence within a broader patriarchal culture, which maintains a belief in the dominance and superiority of men. Research findings in relation to stalking have also observed that victims' experiences may not be validated if they are 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 the low degree of awareness of psychological violence and coercive control among professionals in the police and criminal justice sector. **Professionals' low degree of awareness and lack of understanding are also identified as barriers in relation to the healthcare sector.** One study based on discourse analysis of Portuguese policy and practice related to stalking reported that, in Portugal, health professionals such as general practitioners, psychologists and social workers lack awareness about how to best assist stalking victims (Grangeia and Matos, 2013). Another study conducted in Denmark, which surveyed women victims living in a Danish shelter, identified PTSD as a risk factor for psychological violence re-victimisation, but argued 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 professionals ([140]) who 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, 2017). 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, 2017). A Danish study of women 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., 2019). Such misconceptions regarding stalking can discourage victims from seeking intervention (Nikupeteri, 2017).

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.

([140]) These professionals were either social workers, shelter workers or therapists.

Box 18. Barriers to the prevention of technology-facilitated violence in OECD countries outside the EU

Two studies from Australia identified barriers to 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 the continuation of the abuse, even in situations of physical distancing** (Dragiewicz et al., 2018; Harris and Woodlock, 2019). Moreover, in situations of geographical isolation – such as rural living – perpetrators' control of technologies and vehicles effectively gives them absolute control over victims' communications and movements, creating significant barriers to help-seeking behaviour (Harris and 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 difficult and dangerous, and restricts her access to support in both public and private spaces** (Dragiewicz et al., 2018; Harris and Woodlock, 2019). Even when it is possible and desirable for women to cease engaging with the technologies facilitating the violence, this may simply escalate the abuse (Harris and Woodlock, 2019).

Furthermore, **threats of public humiliation via social media platforms can be used by perpetrators as a 'point of leverage' to prevent victims from seeking to leave the abusive relationship** (Dragiewicz et al., 2018; Harris and Woodlock, 2019). These platforms can also be used to amplify the abuse through the mobilisation of broader cultures of online misogyny to create a campaign of harassment across multiple platforms and from multiple sources (Dragiewicz et al., 2018). In addition, 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. Furthermore, 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 United Kingdom 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 among victims and practitioners, another UK study found that women 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 women victims do not report their experience because they are embarrassed (Harris and Woodlock, 2019). These emotions are compounded by experiences of being held responsible for the abuse when victims do seek aid (Harris and Woodlock, 2019).

5.2.5. Barriers to prevention for specific groups of women

Survey participants were asked if they had come across particular barriers to preventing psychological violence for specific groups of women ([141]). As shown in Figure A5.6 (see Annex 5), the groups of women most commonly identified as facing particular barriers to preventing psychological violence are **migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee women**; **homeless women**; **Roma and 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 4 out of the 55 participants thought that there were 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, a lack of awareness of rights, and vulnerability owing to immigration status. A lack of targeted support services was also mentioned as one of the main barriers for **homeless women** and **Roma and traveller women**. For homeless women, other barriers include a lack of awareness of psychological violence, stigma against homeless women and a lack of access to secure housing or safe places including shelters.

The literature review identified little evidence relating to barriers that affect specific subgroups of women, suggesting that this topic is under-researched. One study highlighted the **difficulty in assessing how to prevent psychological violence among victims in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and other self-identifications (LGBTQI+) community** because this population has been understudied, and current scales used to assess psychological abuse have been designed to detect abusive behaviours within heterosexual couples (Longares et al., 2018). The authors of this study also noted that LGBTQI+ victims might be particularly afraid of reporting crimes to the police or domestic abuse shelters out of a fear of being publicly 'outed' (Longares et al., 2018).

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

Both desk research and the survey of 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 a limited understanding of the issue among professionals and the role of technology in perpetuating the violence.

In terms of legal barriers, the most frequently mentioned limitations of the national legal framework were 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**

([141]) Answers to this question were structured according to a precoded list, although there was an option to answer 'other'.

victim–perpetrator relationships. 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, a **low degree of 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 having the potential to **discourage victims from reporting** cases of psychological violence to the relevant authorities.

Desk research identified 39 practices that had been implemented to prevent coercive control and psychological violence against women in 25 EU Member States since 2012. Many of the practices and measures – particularly education, vocational training and perpetrator programmes – were designed to prevent violence against women or domestic violence more broadly, although address psychological violence as a type of such violence. **A lack of policies and interventions specific to psychological violence and coercive control may contribute to a low degree of awareness and understanding of these forms of violence, among both professionals and 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 and 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 of practices that recognise and foreground the gender dimension of psychological violence and coercive control, **there are a number of instances in which the gender dimension is minimised or ignored**. Sexism and gender inequality are fundamental elements of coercive control and psychological violence against women. Without recognising and responding to these elements, the root causes of the issue cannot be addressed. Similarly, only a small number of the practices identified were targeted at or tailored to meeting 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 plans to combat domestic violence / violence against women, this is not the case for the majority. In some cases, certain forms of psychological violence (e.g. stalking) are omitted from domestic violence action plans. Nonetheless, practices are often designed and implemented in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, including organisations that 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 (Dragiewicz et al., 2018;

Harris and Woodlock, 2019). 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 in which women in EU Member States are not well protected and supported.

Of the 39 practices to prevent coercive control and psychological violence against women that were identified in EU Member States, only a small number have a robust evaluation planned or under way, and all of these 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 that 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 on Forced Suicides, 2021), depression and PTSD (Domenech Del Rio and Sirvent Garcia Del Valle, 2017; Lövestad et al., 2017; Daugherty et al., 2019; Sanz-Barbero et al., 2019; Dokkedahl et al., 2021; 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 (Rada, 2014; Rikić et al., 2017). The scale of this issue and the magnitude of its implications underline 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 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. The range of practices and measures implemented at national level to prevent psychological violence and coercive control specifically is also rather limited. Desk research identified 39 such practices implemented in EU Member States between 2012 and 2021. However, while some attention has been paid to this issue, there is a lack of funding and resources directed at preventing psychological violence and coercive control. The majority of the practitioners surveyed (46 out of 55) agreed 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 the practices reviewed (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 and Pap, 2016) – are omitted from domestic violence action plans. A lack of recognition of psychological violence and coercive control in national action plans was highlighted as a barrier to prevention by most of the practitioners surveyed (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 the effective implementation of evidence-based policy.

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

The Istanbul Convention and the 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 these elements, 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 control ([142]). Psychological violence is more commonly criminalised under domestic violence offences (this is the case in 14 Member States), although in some Member States the 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 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 of the relevant relationships and contexts (e.g. the legislation applies only to current relationships or to relationships in which 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 behavioural characteristics of psychological violence (GREVIO, 2017a, b, 2019b, 2020c, d). 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 awareness-raising campaigns were found to focus specifically on psychological violence, stalking and/or coercive control). A lack of policies and interventions specific to psychological violence and coercive control may contribute to a low degree of 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 1 in 10 women (13 %) have experienced cyber harassment in the last 5 years, which rises to a quarter of women in the youngest age group (16–29 years) (FRA, 2019). Telecommunication and digital technology can make it more difficult to prevent and respond to psychological violence (Dragiewicz et al., 2018; Harris and Woodlock, 2019), yet few practices implemented 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

([142]) Ireland is the only EU Member State that currently includes coercive control as a stand-alone offence.

in which women in EU Member States are not well protected and supported.

In a number of EU Member States, criminal legislation does not refer to cyberstalking 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 while 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 and 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 (Montero et al., 2015; Naudi et al., 2018; Perles et al., 2021) owing to the dynamics of abuse and control, as well as broader cultural factors such as myths regarding courtship and romance. Several of the practices identified actively seek to challenge harmful beliefs and misconceptions, such a 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 physical assault as violence (Montero et al., 2015). A lack of awareness of psychological violence and coercive control, particularly among victims, might contribute to under-reporting, which impedes effective criminalisation and makes 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 and 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 ([143]), 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 the impact and effectiveness of such campaigns still need to be evaluated.

Effective criminalisation may be prevented by a low degree of awareness and understanding of criminal offences such as domestic violence (Association of Austrian Autonomous Women's Shelters and Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Vienna, 2016; GREVIO, 2021a) and stalking (Baldry et al., 2016; GREVIO, 2019b, 2020d) 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, the implementation of such interventions is uneven across Member States, and their impact and effectiveness remain unclear. A lack of knowledge and understanding among professionals may result in legal provisions not being used fully or effectively, for instance by psychological violence and coercive control being prosecuted under lesser offences.

([143]) More information about this Bulgarian campaign is available online (https://loveerrors.bg/#errors-list/1).

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, 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). 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 because such violence is more often perpetrated by a former partner than by a current spouse or partner (Bundeskriminalamt, 2018, 2019, 2020). Women with dependent children may face additional risks, as 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 subgroup analysis and informs who is most at risk of experiencing violence. However, this dataset (FRA, 2012) 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 dataset 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 on how the prevalence of such violence varies across different groups, particularly in relation to new and evolving forms of violence such as cyber violence. The upcoming EU gender-based violence survey (Eurostat), complemented by a FRA–EIGE survey on violence against women whose results are expected in 2024, will hopefully enable subgroup analysis, in order 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 of the practitioners surveyed 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 and traveller women, and non-heterosexual women. However, the prevention practices reviewed, by and large, do not address these specific needs, either ignoring them or only drawing attention to 'vulnerable groups' without outlining specific actions. Only a small number of the practices identified are targeted at or tailored to meeting 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 in which policy and practice might be further developed and strengthened. The following chapter outlines policy recommendations at 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 EU institutions and agencies

- As set out in the EU gender equality strategy for 2020–2025, the European Commission should prioritise the EU's accession to the Istanbul Convention, which serves as the landmark for international standards in terms of prevention and responses 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** ([144]) (released 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 violence ([145]). This 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. This coordinator would also facilitate the sharing of evidence and best practice on the 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 national level should be integrated in a cohesive action plan or strategy relating to the prevention of domestic violence / violence against women.

- National governments should dedicate funding for practices and measures that are

([144]) Proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on combating violence against women and domestic violence, COM(2022) 105 final (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=COM:2022:105:FIN).

([145]) 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)), OJ C 117, 11.3.2022, p. 88 (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0388_EN.html).

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 an EU crime under **Article 83(1) of the 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 guidance to available Member States 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 that have acceded to the Istanbul Convention should prioritise its implementation with adequate resources. Member States that have not yet successfully acceded to the Istanbul Convention are encouraged to improve their understanding of the importance of the convention to put an end to 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 regard to cyber violence against women, including cyberstalking 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 women in its **legislative proposal on combating violence against women and domestic violence**, such as cyberstalking, to further promote the criminalisation of such violence 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 cyber harassment, alongside other forms of child sexual abuse and exploitation.
- The EU campaign to raise awareness about victims' rights, included as part of the **strategy on victims' rights** (2020), should include cyber violence against women as a central component.

Recommendations for Member States

- As recommended by the European Parliament (2021), 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 should amend or introduce 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 to training 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 to gender-sensitive awareness-raising campaigns focusing on coercive control and psychological violence against women, and to monitoring and evaluation activities to understand the impact and effectiveness of such campaigns.
- EU institutions and agencies should promote the dissemination and exchange of promising practices in the area of 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 in coercive control and psychological violence against women.
- National governments should ensure that coercive control and psychological violence against women are systematically included in individual assessments to identify specific protection needs, as per Article 22(2 and 3) of the victims' rights directive ([146]) 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

Recommendations for EU institutions and agencies and for Member States

- As recommended in the European Parliament's report on cyber violence (European Parliament, 2021), national governments, EU institutions, offices and agencies should establish a reliable system for regularly collecting EU-wide statistically disaggregated, comparable and relevant data on gender-based violence, including cyber violence and its prevalence, dynamics and consequences, and should develop indicators to measure progress.

([146]) Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 establishing minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, and replacing Council Framework Decision 2001/220/JHA, OJ L 315, 14.11.2012, p. 57 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex %3A32012L0029).

- National governments, EU institutions, offices and agencies should make use of the capacity and expertise of EIGE, Eurostat, FRA, Europol, Eurojust and the European Union Agency for Cybersecurity (ENISA).·

Recommendations for EU institutions and agencies

- EU institutions and agencies should 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, the knowledge base should be expanded on the risk factors for coercive control and psychological violence against women and on the impact of such violence on victims' health, as well as on the 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 the following as a requirement: practices need to be targeted at groups of women who are at a higher risk of psychological violence and coercive control or tailored to meet their needs.

Recommendations for Member States

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

References

Links accessed on 24.3.2022.

Acosta, M. L. (2020), 'Gender-based violence during the pandemic and lockdown', *Revista Española de Medicina Legal*, Vol. 46, No 3, pp. 139–145 (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2445424920300236).

Aizpurua, E., et al. (2021), 'Controlling behaviors and intimate partner violence among women in Spain: an examination of individual, partner, and relationship risk factors for physical and psychological abuse', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol. 36, No 1–2, pp. 231–254 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0886260517723744?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori:rid:crossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub%20%200pubmed).

Amnesty International (2020), *Croatia: Existing laws are failing victims of domestic violence – Amnesty International submission for the UN universal periodic review, 36th session of the UPR working group, 2–13 November 2020*, London (https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur64/2842/2020/en/).

Arenas-Arroyo, E., et al. (2021), 'Intimate partner violence under forced cohabitation and economic stress: evidence from the COVID-19 pandemic', *Journal of Public Economics*, Vol. 194, No 104350.

ARESVI (Association de Recherche et d'Étude sur la Santé, la Ville et les Inégalités) (2020), *Rapport sur les violences sexistes et sexuelles en Nouvelle Aquitaine*(https://associationaresvi.fr/violences-sexistes-et-sexuelles-resultats/).

Association of Austrian Autonomous Women's Shelters and Domestic Abuse Intervention Centre Vienna (2016), *Austrian NGO-shadow report to GREVIO* (http://fileserver.wave-network.org/home/Austria_NGOGREVIOShadowReport_September2016.pdf).

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (2021), *Defining and responding to coercive control: Policy brief* (https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/defining-and-responding-to-coercive-control/).

Badenes-Ribera, L., et al. (2016), 'Intimate partner violence in self-identified lesbians: a systematic review of its prevalence and correlates', *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*, Vol. 17, No 3, pp. 284–297 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1524838015584363?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori:rid:crossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub %20 %200pubmed).

Baldry, A. C., et al. (2016), 'Victim's perception of quality of help and support by the police issuing warnings orders in ex intimate partner stalking cases in Italy', *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, Vol. 10, No 4, pp. 432–445 (https://academic.oup.com/policing/article/10/4/432/2742982).

Barker, K. and Jurasz, O. (2017), *Submission of evidence on online violence against women to the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences*, United Nations (https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Women/SRWomen/Pages/OnlineViolence.aspx).

Beyer, K., et al. (2015), 'Neighborhood environment and intimate partner violence: a systematic review'. *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*, Vol. 16, No 1, pp. 16–47 (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4476540/).

Bows, H. (2020), 'The other side of late-life intimacy? Sexual violence in later life', *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, Vol. 39, pp. 65–70 (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/ajag.12728).

Brennan, I., et al. (2021), 'Policing a new domestic abuse crime: effects of force-wide training on arrests for coercive control', *Policing and Society*, Vol. 31, No 10, pp. 1153–1167 (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10439463.2020.1862838).

Bundeskriminalamt (2016), *Partnerschaftsgewalt: Kriminalstatistische Auswertung – Berichtsjahr 2015*

(https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/JahresberichteUndLagebilder/Partnerschaftsgewalt/Partnerschaftsgewalt_2015.html;jsessionid=0AAC30FFBE389FC9D813D7CA5F4CB14A.live302?nn=63476).

Bundeskriminalamt (2017), *Partnerschaftsgewalt: Kriminalstatistische Auswertung – Berichtsjahr 2016* (https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/JahresberichteUndLagebilder/Partnerschaftsgewalt/Partnerschaftsgewalt_2017.html;jsessionid=0AAC30FFBE389FC9D813D7CA5F4CB14A.live302?nn=63476).

Bundeskriminalamt (2018), *Partnerschaftsgewalt: Kriminalstatistische Auswertung – Berichtsjahr 2017* (https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/JahresberichteUndLagebilder/Partnerschaftsgewalt/Partnerschaftsgewalt_2017.html;jsessionid=0AAC30FFBE389FC9D813D7CA5F4CB14A.live302?nn=63476).

Bundeskriminalamt (2019), *Partnerschaftsgewalt: Kriminalstatistische Auswertung – Berichtsjahr 2018* (https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/JahresberichteUndLagebilder/Partnerschaftsgewalt/Partnerschaftsgewalt_2018.html;jsessionid=0AAC30FFBE389FC9D813D7CA5F4CB14A.live302?nn=63476).

Bundeskriminalamt (2020), *Partnerschaftsgewalt: Kriminalstatistische Auswertung – Berichtsjahr 2019* (https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/JahresberichteUndLagebilder/Partnerschaftsgewalt/Partnerschaftsgewalt_2019.html;jsessionid=0AAC30FFBE389FC9D813D7CA5F4CB14A.live302?nn=63476).

Bundeskriminalamt (2021), *Partnerschaftsgewalt: Kriminalstatistische Auswertung – Berichtsjahr 2020* (https://www.bka.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Publikationen/JahresberichteUndLagebilder/Partnerschaftsgewalt/Partnerschaftsgewalt_2020.html;jsessionid=9E8AD034BFDE3014D54DDEE0C7285129.live612?nn=63476).

Callaghan, J., et al. (2018), 'Beyond witnessing: children's experiences of coercive control in domestic violence and abuse', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol. 33, pp. 1555–1581 (https://dspace.stir.ac.uk/bitstream/1893/26502/1/Coercive %20control %20Callaghan20158007.pdf).

Canto, J., et al. (2020), 'Influence of right-wing authoritarianism and the values proposed by Schwartz on the perception of psychological abuse as gender violence: an exploratory study [Influencia del autoritarismo de derechas y de los valores propuestos por Schwartz en la percepción del abuso psicológico como violencia de género: un estudio exploratorio]', *International Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 35, No 1, pp. 69–99 (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02134748.2019.1682294).

Capaldi, D., et al. (2012), 'A systematic review of risk factors for intimate partner violence', *Partner Abuse*, Vol. 3, pp. 231–280 (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3384540/).

Carrascosa, L., et al. (2019), 'Reduction of sexist attitudes, romantic myths and aggressive behaviours in adolescents: efficacy of the DARSI program', *Psicothema*, Vol. 31, No 2, pp. 121–127 (http://www.psicothema.com/PDF/4523.pdf).

CBS (Statistics Netherlands) (2020), *Prevalentiemonitor huiselijk geweld en seksueel geweld 2020* (https://longreads.cbs.nl/phgsg-2020/).

Chini, M. (2019), 'Half of women in Brussels suffer from psychological violence', *The Brussels Times*, 19 November 2019 (https://www.brusselstimes.com/brussels/79413/half-of-women-in-brussels-suffer-from-psychological-violence).

Cohen, J. (1988), *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates (http://www.utstat.toronto.edu/~brunner/oldclass/378f16/readings/CohenPower.pdf).

Costa, B. M., et al. (2015), 'Longitudinal predictors of domestic violence perpetration and victimization: a systematic review', *Aggression and Violent Behaviour*, Vol. 24, No 1, pp. 261–272 (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1359178915000828?via %3Dihub).

Council of Europe (2011a), *Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*, Council of

Europe Treaty Series No 210, Istanbul (https://rm.coe.int/168008482e).

Council of Europe (2011b), *Explanatory report to the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*, Council of Europe Treaty Series No 2010, Istanbul (extension://elhekieabhbkpmcefcoobjddigjcaadp/viewer.html?pdfurl=https%3A%2F%2Frm.coe.int%2F1680a48903&clen=758287&pdffilename=CETS_210_Rapex_EN.docx.pdf).

Council of Europe (2021), *Report submitted by Estonia pursuant to Article 68, paragraph 1 of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Baseline Report)*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (https://rm.coe.int/grevio-inf-2021-3-state-report-estonia/1680a24cd4).

Council of the European Union (2017a), Council Decision (EU) 2017/865 of 11 May 2017 on the signing, on behalf of the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence with regard to matters related to judicial cooperation in criminal matters, OJ L 131, 20.5.2017, p. 11 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?toc=OJ:L:2017:131:TOC&uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2017.131.01.0011.01.ENG).

Council of the European Union (2017b), Council Decision (EU) 2017/866 of 11 May 2017 on the signing, on behalf of the European Union, of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence with regard to asylum and non-refoulement, OJ L 131, 20.5.2017, p. 13 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX %3A32017D0866).

Daoud, N. (2019), 'Counting the uncounted burdens: intimate partner violence in migrant communities – systematic review of the literature', *International Journal of Gender Studies in Developing Countries*, Vol. 3, No 2, pp. 126–152 (https://www.inderscienceonline.com/doi/abs/10.1504/IJGSDS.2019.102160).

Daugherty, J. C., et al. (2019), 'Severity of neurocognitive impairment in women who have experienced intimate partner violence in Spain', *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology*, Vol. 30, No 2, pp. 322–340 (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14789949.2018.1546886).

Debono, C., et al. (2017), 'Intimate partner violence: psychological and verbal abuse during pregnancy', *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, Vol. 26, No 15–16, pp. 2426–2438 (https://core.ac.uk/reader/74396044?utm_source=linkout).

Dekeseredy, W. S., et al. (2017), *Abusive Endings: Separation and divorce violence against women,* University of California Press, Oakland, CA.

Di Battista, S. D., et al. (2021), 'Emotional abuse among Lesbian Italian women: relationship consequences, help-seeking and disclosure behaviors', *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Mental Health*, Vol. 25, No 2, pp. 175–207 (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19359705.2020.1843582).

Dokkedahl, S., et al. (2021), 'The complex trauma of psychological violence: cross-sectional findings from a cohort of four Danish women shelters', *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, Vol. 12, No 1, 1863580 (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20008198.2020.1863580).

Domenech Del Rio, I. and Sirvent Garcia Del Valle, E. (2017), 'The consequences of intimate partner violence on health: a further disaggregation of psychological violence – evidence from Spain', *Violence against Women*, Vol. 23, No 14, pp. 1771–1789 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1077801216671220).

Donato, S. (2020), 'Gender-based violence against women in intimate and couple relationships. The case of Spain and Italy during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown', *Italian Sociological Review*, Vol. 10, No 3S, pp. 869–887 (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346658690_Gender-Based_Violence_against_Women_in_Intimate_and_Couple_Relationships_The_Case_of_Spain_and_Italy_during_the_COVID-19_Pandemic_Lockdown).

Downes, N., et al. (2019), '"It's a work in progress": men's accounts of gender and change in their use of coercive control', *Journal of Gender-Based Violence*, Vol. 3, No 3, pp. 267–282 (https://dro.dur.ac.uk/28902/).

Doyle, J. (2020), 'Experiences of intimate partner violence: the role of psychological, economic, physical and sexual violence', *Women's Studies International Forum*, Vol. 80, pp. 1–10 (https://pure.ulster.ac.uk/en/publications/experiences-of-intimate-partner-violence-the-role-of-psychologica).

Dragiewicz, M., et al. (2018), 'Technology facilitated coercive control: domestic violence and the competing roles of digital media platforms', *Feminist Media Studies*, Vol. 18, No 4, pp. 609–625 (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14680777.2018.1447341).

EELN (European Equality Law Network) (2021), *Criminalisation of gender-based violence against women in European States including ICT-facilitated violence*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (https://www.equalitylaw.eu/downloads/5535-criminalisation-of-gender-based-violence-against-women-in-european-states-including-ict-facilitated-violence-1-97-mb).

EIGE (European Institute for Gender Equality) (2015), *Preventing Domestic Violence: Good practices*, European Institute for Gender Equality, Vilnius (https://eige.europa.eu/publications/preventing-domestic-violence-good-practices).

EIGE (2017), *Glossary of definitions of rape, femicide and intimate partner violence*, European Institute for Gender Equality, Vilnius (https://eige.europa.eu/publications/glossary-definitions-rape-femicide-and-intimate-partner-violence).

EIGE (2019), *Risk assessment and management of intimate partner violence in the EU*, European Institute for Gender Equality, Vilnius (https://eige.europa.eu/publications/risk-assessment-and-management-intimate-partner-violence-eu).

EIGE (2020), *Intimate Partner Violence and Witness Intervention: What are the deciding factors*?, European Institute for Gender Equality, Vilnius (https://eige.europa.eu/publications/intimate-partner-violence-and-witness-intervention-what-are-deciding-factors).

EIGE (2021a), *The Covid-19 pandemic and intimate partner violence against women in the EU*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (https://eige.europa.eu/publications/covid-19-pandemic-and-intimate-partner-violence-against-women-eu).

EIGE (2021b), *EIGE's indicators on intimate partner violence, rape and femicide: Recommendations to improve data quality, availability and comparability*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (https://eige.europa.eu/publications/eiges-indicators-intimate-partner-violence-rape-and-femicide-recommendations-improve-data-quality-availability-and).

ENGAGE (2019), *Roadmap for frontline professionals interacting with male perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse* (https://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu/fileadmin/WWP_Network/redakteure/ENGAGE/engage_EN_190313_web.pdf).

European Commission (2010), *Feasibility study to assess the possibilities, opportunities and needs to standardise national legislation on violence against women, violence against children and sexual orientation violence*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/cc805fb4-c139-4ac0-99b7-b0dad60179f7/language-en).

European Commission (2020a), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – A union of equality: Gender equality strategy 2020–2025, COM(2020) 152 final (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX %3A52020DC0152).

European Commission (2020b), Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – EU strategy on victims' rights (2020–2025), COM(2020) 258 final (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0258).

European Parliament (2020a), *Violence against Women: Psychological violence and coercive control*, European Parliament, Brussels (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/650336/IPOL_STU(2020)650336_EN.pdf).

European Parliament (2020b), *Tackling violence against women and domestic violence in Europe – The added value of the Istanbul Convention and remaining challenges*, European Parliament, Brussels (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document/IPOL_STU(2020)658648).

European Parliament (2021), *Report with recommendations to the Commission on combating gender-based violence: Cyberviolence*, 2020/2035(INL) (https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/A-9-2021-0338_EN.html).

European Project on Forced Suicides (2021), *Internal report submitted to the European Commission,* (unpublished).

Fanslow, J., et al. (2021), 'Change in prevalence of psychological and economic abuse, and controlling behaviours against women by an intimate partner in two cross-sectional studies in New Zealand, 2003 and 2019' *BMJ Open*, Vol. 11, No 1, pp. 1–11 (https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/11/3/e044910.long).

Feresin, M., et al. (2019), 'The involvement of children in postseparation intimate partner violence in Italy: a strategy to maintain coercive control?', *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, Vol. 34, No 4, pp. 481–497 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0886109919857672).

Fernandez-Montalvo, J., et al. (2015), 'Impact of court-referred psychological treatment program for intimate partner batterer men with suspended sentences', *Violence and Victims*, Vol. 30, No 1, pp. 3–15 (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271499043_Impact_of_Court-Referred_Psychological_Treatment_Program_for_Intimate_Partner_Batterer_Men_With_Suspended_Sentences).

Ferreira, C., et al. (2018), 'Pathways towards new criminalisation: the case of stalking in Portugal', *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, Vol. 24, pp. 335–44 (https://www.researcher-app.com/paper/1142203).

Florian, S. M. (2017), 'Motherhood and employment among Whites, Hispanics, and Blacks: a life course approach', *Journal of Marriage and Family*, Vol. 80, No 1, pp. 134–149 (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/jomf.12448).

FRA (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights) (2012), *Survey on Violence against Women in EU (2012)*, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights ().

FRA (2014), *Violence against Women: An EU-wide survey – Main results*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg (https://fra.europa.eu/en/publication/2014/violence-against-women-eu-wide-survey-main-results-report).

FRA (2019), *Fundamental Rights Survey*, European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (https://fra.europa.eu/en/data-and-maps/2021/frs?mdq1=theme&mdq2=982).

Gafarova, S. (2015), *Promoting best practices in tackling violence against women*, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, 26 October (http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML-2HTML-EN.asp?fileid=22201&lang=en).

Gerino, E., et al. (2018), 'Intimate partner violence in the golden age: systematic review of risk and protective factors', *Frontiers in Psychol*ogy, Vol. 9, No 1595, pp. 1–14 (https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.01595/full).

Gewirtz-Meydan, A. and Finzi-Dottan, R. (2021), 'Psychological abuse as a mediator between insecure attachment orientations and relationship satisfaction', *Family Relations*, Vol. 70, No 2, pp. 498–513 (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/fare.12490).

GHEF (Grand Hôpital de l'Est Francilien) (2018), *Traquer les violences faites aux femmes: Le GHEF s'engage*, Grand Hôpital de l'Est Francilien (https://www.ghef.fr/actualites/traquer-les-violences-faites-aux-femmes-le-ghef-sengage).

Gill, C. and Aspinall, M. (2020), *Understanding coercive control in the context of intimate partner violence in Canada: How to address the issue through the criminal justice system?*, Office of the Federal Ombudsman for Victims of Crime, Department of Justice Canada (https://www.victimsfirst.gc.ca/res/cor/UCC-CCC/index.html).

Gou, L. H., et al. (2019), 'Coercive control during the transition to parenthood: an overlooked factor in intimate partner violence and family wellbeing?', *Aggressive Behavior*, Vol. 45, No 2, pp. 139–150 (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/ab.21803).

Grangeia, H. and Matos, M. (2013), 'Stalking – the Portuguese case: discursive constructions of stalking and their implications', in: Petrie, S. (ed.), *Controversies in Policy Research*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, United Kingdom.

GREVIO (Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence) (2017a), *GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report: Denmark*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (https://rm.coe.int/grevio-first-baseline-report-on-denmark/16807688ae).

GREVIO (2017b), *GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report: Austria*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (https://rm.coe.int/grevio-report-austria-1st-evaluation/1680759619).

GREVIO (2019a), *GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report: France*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (https://rm.coe.int/grevio-inf-2019-16/168098c61a).

GREVIO (2019b), *GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report: Finland*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (https://rm.coe.int/grevio-report-on-finland/168097129d).

GREVIO (2020a), *GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report: Spain*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (https://rm.coe.int/grevio-s-report-on-spain/1680a08a9f).

GREVIO (2020b), *GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report: Italy*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (https://rm.coe.int/grevio-report-italy-first-baseline-evaluation/168099724e).

GREVIO (2020c), *GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report: Belgium*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (https://rm.coe.int/grevio-report-on-belgium/16809f9a2c).

GREVIO (2020d), *GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report: Netherlands*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (https://rm.coe.int/grevio-report-on-netherlands/1680997253).

GREVIO (2021a), *Mid-term horizontal review of GREVIO baseline evaluation reports*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (https://rm.coe.int/horizontal-review-study-2021/1680a26325).

GREVIO (2021b), *GREVIO Baseline Evaluation Report: Poland*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (https://rm.coe.int/grevio-baseline-report-on-poland/1680a3d20b).

Hagemann-White, C. (2017), 'Redress, rights and responsibilities – institutional frameworks of domestic violence intervention in four countries', in: Hagemann-White, C., Kelly, L. and Meysen, T. (eds), *Interventions against Child Abuse and Violence against Women: Ethics and culture in practice and policy*, Verlag Barbara Budrich, Leverkusen, Germany, pp. 87–103 (https://d-nb.info/1225069971/34).

Harris, B. and Woodlock, D. (2019), 'Digital coercive control: insights from two landmark domestic violence studies', *The British Journal of Criminology*, Vol. 59, No 3, pp. 530–550 (https://academic.oup.com/bjc/article/59/3/530/5172990).

Harvey, S., et al. (2014), *Barriers faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in accessing domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and sexual violence services*, Welsh Government, Cardiff (https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/statistics-and-research/2019-07/140604-barriers-faced-lgbt-accessing-domestic-abuse-services-en.pdf).

Hehemann, K., et al. (2017), 'The reliability and predictive validity of the Screening Assessment

for Stalking and Harassment (SASH)', *Journal of Threat Assessment and Management*, Vol. 4, No 3, pp. 164–177 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1073191116653470).

Heisecke, K. (2014), *Raising Awareness of Violence against Women: Article 13 of the Istanbul Convention*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (https://edoc.coe.int/en/violence-against-women/7142-raising-awareness-of-violence-against-women-article-13-of-the-istanbul-convention.html).

Herbinher, P. L. and Leonhardmair, N. (2021), 'Domestic abuse during the pandemic', *European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin*, Special Conference Edition No 5, pp. 69–81 (http://91.82.159.234/index.php/bulletin/article/view/493/354).

Home Office (2021), *Review of the Controlling or Coercive Behaviour Offence*, Home Office, London (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-the-controlling-or-coercive-behaviour-offence).

Houtsonen, J. (2020), 'Policing of domestic violence: strategy, competence, training', *European Law Enforcement Research Bulletin*, Vol. 19, pp. 135–151 (https://bulletin.cepol.europa.eu/index.php/bulletin/article/view/417).

Institut pour l'egalite des femmes et des hommes (2015), 'Campagne 25 novembre 2015: réagissez avant d'agir!', Institut pour l'egalite des femmes et des hommes (https://igvm-iefh.belgium.be/fr/activites/violence/campagnes).

Istat (2016) 'Stalking sulle donne – Anno 2014', 24November(https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/5348).

Jaffe, P., et al. (2014), *Risk factors for children in situations of family violence in the context of separation and divorce*, Department of Justice Canada (https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/rfcsfv-freevf/rfcsfv-freevf.pdf).

Katz, E. (2016), 'Beyond the physical incident model: how children living with domestic violence are harmed by and resist domestic violence', *Child Abuse Review*, Vol. 25, pp. 46–59 (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/car.2422).

Kaukinen, C. E. and Powers, R. A. (2015), 'The role of economic factors on women's risk for intimate partner violence: a cross-national comparison of Canada and the United States', *Violence against Women*, Vol. 21, No 2, pp. 229–248 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1077801214564686).

Korkmaz, S., et al. (2020), 'Youth intimate partner violence: prevalence, characteristics, associated factors and arenas of violence', *Nordic Social Work Research* (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2156857X.2020.1848908).

Korkodeilou, J. (2014), 'Dealing with the unknown: learning from stalking victims' experiences', *Crime Prevention and Community Safety*, Vol. 16, pp. 253–268 (https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/98559/16/Dealing_with_the_unknown-Revised__J.Korkodeilou__Crime_Prevention_and_Community_Safety_An_International_Journal.pdf).

Krizsan, A. and Pap, E. (2016), *Implementing a Comprehensive and Coordinated Approach: An assessment of Poland's response to prevent and combat gender-based violence*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (https://rm.coe.int/168064ecd8).

Lee, L., et al. (2020), *Building a case for using 'coercive control' in Alberta: Discussion paper*, University of Calgary, Calgary, Canada (https://prism.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/handle/1880/112525/R44_Shift_2020_Building_Case_for_Using_Coercive_Control_in_Alberta_Discussion_Paper.pdf).

Logar, R. and Marvanova Vargova, B. (2015), *Effective multi-agency co-operation for preventing and combating domestic violence – Training of trainers manual*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg (http://fileserver.wave-network.org/trainingmanuals/Effective_Multi_Agency_Cooperation_2015.pdf).

Lokkegaard, S. S., et al. (2019), 'When daddy stalks mommy: experiences of intimate partner stalking and involvement of social and legal authorities when stalker and victim have children together', *Violence Against Women*, Vol. 25, No 14, pp. 1759–1777 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1077801219826738).

Longares, L., et al. (2018), 'Psychological abuse in Spanish same-sex couples: prevalence and relationship between victims and perpetrators', *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, Vol. 31, No 1, pp. 125–141 (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13511610.2017.1326304).

Lövestad, S., et al. (2017), 'Prevalence of intimate partner violence and its association with symptoms of depression: a cross-sectional study based on a female population sample in Sweden', *BMC Public Health*, Vol. 17, No 1, pp. 1–11 (https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12889-017-4222-y).

Marc, B., et al. (2018), 'Draw, spot and accompany by means of a questionnaire used in eastern Paris suburb hospitals. Violence against women (TRAQUE-VFF): methodology and first results', *Journal de Medecine Legale Droit Medical*, Vol. 61, No 1, pp. 37–44 (https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007 %2Fs00737-020-01058-4).

Martin-de-las-Heras, S., et al. (2019), 'Breastfeeding avoidance following psychological intimate partner violence during pregnancy: a cohort study and multivariate analysis', *BJOG: An International Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*, Vol. 126, No 6, pp. 778–783 (https://obgyn.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1471-0528.15592).

McCarthy, K. J., et al. (2018), 'Gender, power, and violence: a systematic review of measures and their association with male perpetration of IPV', *PLoS ONE*, Vol. 13, No 11, pp. 1–27 (https://ideas.repec.org/a/plo/pone00/0207091.html).

Merino, E., et al. (2021), 'Masculine gender role stress as a mediator of the relationship between justification of dominance and aggression and male adolescent dating violence against women', *Psicothema*, Vol. 33, No 2, pp. 206–213 (http://www.psicothema.com/pdf/4665.pdf).

Meseguer-Santamaría, M.-L., et al. (2021), 'Intimate partner violence against women with disabilities in Spain: a public health problem', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, Vol. 18, No 2, p. 728 (https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/18/2/728).

Ministerio de Igualdad (2015), *Macroencuesta de violencia contra la mujer 2015*, Ministerio de Igualdad, Madrid (https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/estudios/colecciones/pdf/Libro_22_Macroencuesta2015.pdf).

Ministerio de Igualdad (2019), *Macroencuesta de violencia contra la mujer 2019*, Madrid, Ministerio de Igualdad (https://violenciagenero.igualdad.gob.es/violenciaEnCifras/macroencuesta2015/Macroencuesta2019/home.htm).

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (2019), *Action plan for the prevention of psychological and physical violence in intimate relationships 2019–2022*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, Copenhagen (https://www.globalwps.org/data/DNK/files/Action%20Plan%20for%20the%20Prevention%20of%20Psychological%20and%20Physical%20Violence%20in%20Intimate%20Relationships%202019-2022.pdf).

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (2021), *Statistical data derived from the Counseling Centers and the Accommodation Shelters for the time period 2018–2020*, E-bulletin No 28, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Athens (https://isotita.gr/en/28th-e-bulletin-statistical-data-derived-from-the-counseling-centers-and-the-accommodation-shelters-for-the-time-period-2018-2020/).

Mitchell, J. E. and Raghavan, C. (2021), 'The impact of coercive control on use of specific sexual coercion tactics', *Violence against Women*, Vol. 27, No 2, pp. 187–206 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1077801219884127).

Montero, I., et al. (2015), 'Factors associated with the cessation of intimate partner violence in women attending primary care in Spain', *Journal of Family Violence*, Vol. 30, pp. 453–460 (https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Factors-Associated-with-the-Cessation-of-Intimate-Montero-Mart %C3 %ADn-Baena/fcd77d2e5e0839d744ee238b4955cb9d624fc35a).

Muñoz-Fernández, N., et al. (2019), 'The efficacy of the 'Dat-e Adolescence" prevention program in the

reduction of dating violence and bullying', *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, Vol. 16, No 3, p. 408 (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6388360/).

Naudi, M., et al. (2018), *Full Cooperation: Zero Violence – Barriers to help-seeking in gender-based violence against women: A research study*, University of Malta, Msida, Malta (https://stopviolencecms.gov.mt/en/Documents/Docs/Full%20Cooperation%20-%20Zero%20Violence.pdf).

Nevala S. (2017), 'Coercive control and its impact on intimate partner violence through the lens of an EU-wide survey on violence against women', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol. 32, No 12, pp. 1792–1820 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0886260517698950).

Nikupeteri, A. (2017), 'Stalked lives: Finnish women's emotional experiences of post-separation stalking', *Nordic Social Work Research*, Vol. 7, No 1, pp. 6–17 (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/2156857X.2016.1192055).

Nuttall, L. et al. (2019), *Coercive control resistant design: the key to safer technology*, IBM Corporation.

Obreja, L.-D. (2019), 'Feederism as coercive control: connecting the dots between sexuality and law', *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, Vol. 22, No 11, pp. 1207–1221 (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13691058.2019.1668058).

Pérez-Sánchez, J. M., et al. (2020), 'Determinants of gender-based violence against women in Spain: an asymmetric Bayesian model', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, No 886260520967749 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0886260520967749).

Perles, F., et al. (2021), 'The role of gender in the perception of different forms of psychological violence in young couples', *Journal of Family Issues* (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0192513X21996390).

Policastro, C. and Finn, M. A. (2021), 'Coercive control in intimate relationships: differences across age and sex', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol. 36, No 3–4, pp. 1520–1543 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0886260517743548).

Police Fédérale (2021), *Statistiques policières de criminalité: Belgique: 2000 – Trimestre 1 2021* (http://www.stat.policefederale.be/statistiques criminalite/).

Police Grand-Ducale (2018), *Rapport d'activité 2017 de la police grand-ducale* (https://police.public.lu/en/publications/2018/rapport-activite-2017.html).

Rada, C. (2014), 'Violence against women by male partners and against children within the family: prevalence, associated factors, and intergenerational transmission in Romania, a cross-sectional study', *BMC Public Health*, Vol. 14, No 1, pp. 1–15 (https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-2458-14-129).

Rikić, J., et al. (2017), 'Transgenerational transmission of violence among parents of preschool children in Croatia', *Acta Clinica Croatica*, Vol. 56, No 3, pp. 478–486 (https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/29479914/).

Rodriguez, L., et al. (2021), 'Introduction to domestic violence, abuse, and coercive control for counselors: an evaluation of the impact of training', *Gender, Work and Organization*, Vol. 28, No 2, pp. 547–557 (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/gwao.12588).

Ryan, N. and El Ayadi, A. M. (2020), 'A call for a gender-responsive, intersectional approach to address COVID-19', *Global Public Health*, Vol. 15, No 9, pp. 1404–1412 (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17441692.2020.1791214).

Safelives (2019), *Psychological Violence Executive Summary*, Safelives, Bristol, United Kingdom (https://safelives.org.uk/psychological-violence-executive-summary).

Sanchez-Jimenez, V., et al. (2018), 'Efficacy evaluation of "Date-e Adolescence": a dating violence prevention program in Spain', *PLoS ONE*, Vol. 13, No 10, e0205802 (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328296647_Efficacy_evaluation_of_

Dat-e_Adolescence_A_dating_violence_prevention_program_in_Spain).

Sanz-Barbero, B., et al. (2019), 'Prevalence, associated factors and health impact of intimate partner violence against women in different life stages', *PLoS ONE*, Vol. 14, No 10 (https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0221049).

Scott, A. J., et al. (2013), 'The influence of prior relationship on perceptions of stalking: a comparison of laypersons, nonspecialist police officers, and specialist police officers', *Criminal Justice and Behaviour*, Vol. 40, No 12, pp. 1434–1448 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0093854813494183).

Selic, P., et al. (2013), 'How many Slovenian family practice attendees are victims of intimate partner violence? A re-evaluation cross-sectional study report', *BMC Public Health*, Vol. 13, p. 703 (https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-2458-13-703).

Shen, S. and Kusunoki, Y. (2019), 'Intimate partner violence and psychological distress among emerging adult women: a bidirectional relationship', *Journal of Women's Health*, Vol. 28, No 8, pp. 1060–1067 (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6709941/).

Simonovic, D. (2020), 'Violence against women, its causes and consequences regarding COVID-19 and the increase of domestic violence against women', UN Special Rapporteur (https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/03/submission-un-special-rapporteur-violence-against-women-its-causes-and-consequences).

Skafida, V., et al. (2021), 'Prevalence and social inequality in experiences of domestic abuse among mothers of young children: a study using national survey data from Scotland', *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, No 886260520980392 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0886260520980392).

Solano-Ruiz, M., et al. (2021), 'Photovoice and dramatisation in the classroom with nursing students: an exploratory study to raise awareness of the cultural and social dimensions of violence against women', *Nurse Education Today*, Vol. 103, No 104974 (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0260691721002318?via %3Dihub).

Spratt, T., et al. (2021), 'Domestic violence and whole family interventions: charting change in the lives of service user', *The British Journal of Social Work* (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353995060_Domestic_Violence_and_Whole_Family_Interventions_Charting_Change_in_the_Lives_of_Service_Users).

Stark, E. (2007), *Coercive Control: How men entrap women in personal life*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Stark, E. (2012), 'Looking beyond domestic violence: policing coercive control', *Journal of Police Crisis Negotiations*, Vol. 12, No 2, pp. 199–217 (https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/15332586.2012.725016).

Stark, E. (2013), 'The dangers of dangerousness assessment', *Family and Intimate Partner Violence Quarterly*, Vol. 6, No 2, pp. 13–22 (http://www.ncdsv.org/FIPVQ_Dangers-of-dangerousness-assessment_11-20-2013.pdf).

Stark, E. and Hester, M. (2019), 'Coercive control: update and review', *Violence against Women*, Vol. 25, No 1, pp. 81–104 (https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1077801218816191).

Stubberud, E., et al. (2018), *The Istanbul Convention: The Nordic way – The Nordic countries' implementation of a selection of paragraphs in the Council of Europe convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence*, Forlaget Nora (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/325466703_The_Istanbul_Convention_-_The_Nordic_Way_The_Nordic_Countries %27_Implementation_of_a_selection_of_paragraphs_in_The_Council_of_Europe_Convention_on_preventing_and_combating_violence_against_women_and_do).

Thaller, J. and Messing, J. T. (2016), 'Reproductive coercion by an intimate partner: occurrence, associations, and interference with sexual health decision making', *Health and Social Work*, Vol. 41,

No 1, pp. 11–19 (https://asu.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/reproductive-coercion-by-an-intimate-partner-occurrence-associati).

Trevillion, K., et al. (2012), 'Experiences of domestic violence and mental disorders: a systematic review and meta-analysis', *PLoS ONE*, Vol. 7, No 12 (https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0051740).

Tullio, V., et al. (2021), 'Violence against women in heterosexual couples: a review of psychological and medico-legal considerations', *Medicine, Science and the Law*, Vol. 61, Suppl. 1, pp. 113–124 (https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33591871/).

UN (2019), 'Official visit to Bulgaria, 14–21 October 2019 by United Nations Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, Dubravka Šimonović', Geneva, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (https://www.ohchr.org/FR/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25173&LangID=E).

UN Women (1995), *Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action* (https://beijing20.unwomen.org/~/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/csw/pfa_e_final_web.pdf).

Valashjardi, A., et al. (2020), 'Unmasking gender differences in narcissism within intimate partner violence', *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol. 167, 110658 (https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0191886921000337?via %3Dihub).

van der Aa, S. (2018), 'New trends in the criminalization of stalking in the EU Member States', *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, Vol. 24, pp. 315–333 (https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10610-017-9359-9).

van der Aa, S. and Romkens, R. (2013), 'The state of the art in stalking legislation: reflections on European developments', *European Criminal Law Review*, Vol. 3, No 2, pp. 232–256 (https://research.tilburguniversity.edu/en/publications/the-state-of-the-art-in-stalking-legislation-reflections-on-europ).

Viejo, C., et al. (2020), 'Bullying and psychological dating violence: the relation between two aggressive peer-behaviours', *Psicothema*, Vol. 32, No 4, pp. 533–540 (http://www.psicothema.com/pdf/4632.pdf).

Walklate, S. and Fitz-Gibbon, K. (2019), 'The criminalisation of coercive control: the power of law?', *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, Vol. 8, No 4, p. 94 (https://www.crimejusticejournal.com/article/download/1205/831).

WHO (World Health Organization) (2021), *Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018*, World Health Organization, Geneva (https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022256).

Women for Women France (2021), *Coercive Control: A vital concept in domestic abuse*, Women for Women France (https://en.womenforwomen-france.org/post/coercive-control-a-vital-concept-in-domestic-abuse).

Žukauskienė, R., et al. (2019), 'Prevalence and patterns of intimate partner violence in a nationally representative sample in Lithuania', *Journal of Family Violence*, Vol. 36, pp. 117–130 (https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Prevalence-and-Patterns-of-Intimate-Partner-in-a-in-%C5%BDukauskien%C4%97-Kaniu%C5%A1onyt%C4%97/3baf54a08b6a913bc7c6ff2a63d172862111ef1b).

Annexes

Annex 1. Methodology

The geographical scope of all of the research activities in this study was 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 OECD countries outside the EU (see Box 4–6).

A number of limitations to this methodology should be noted. All desk research activities comprised targeted literature reviews and, while structured, such literature reviews do not follow the same levels of rigour as systematic reviews or rapid evidence assessments. This approach was chosen to enable the research team to cover a large range of material, but it did 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 an analysis of the 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** affect 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 made to improve legal regulation as regards the prevention of psychological violence and coercive control in the EU?

9. What **criteria** could be used to 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** affect the scope and effectiveness of preventive measures and repeat victimisation?

13. What specific **policy recommendation**s could be made 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 the data available, including the degree to which the data enables cross-national comparisons and analysis from an intersectional and/or life-course perspective. The desk research was carried out to first identify relevant survey and administrative data sources (e.g. police and judicial statistics) on the prevalence of coercive control and psychological violence against women in EU Member States. Secondary data analysis was then carried out to collate, clean and analyse the data – as far as was permitted by the availability, quality and comparability of the data – to develop an overall picture of the 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 searches using Google, Google Scholar and select academic databases (e.g. Scopus and Criminal Justice Abstracts). Snowballing (see the following section on the literature review for a definition of this term) was used to identify additional relevant documents and data sources. The inclusion and exclusion criteria used to assess which sources would provide relevant data are outlined in Table A1.1. A data extraction template was used to ensure that all of 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 after 2012 (i.e. the last 10 years)	Data relating to before 2012 (older than 10 years)
Within the EU	Outside the EU
Published in English	Published in other languages*

NB: *With the exception of specific seminal sources.

Additional searches

As the number of relevant sources identified in the original search was limited, an additional targeted search was carried out using the same inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table), with the exception of the geographical criteria, that is, the scope was expanded to include non-EU OECD countries. A small number of highly relevant sources that were identified through 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 is presented in tables and figures in the main body of the report, and further analysis is included in the report body 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 of women and psychological violence against 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 the title of sources, and the compilation of a list of sources;

3. **in-depth screen** – screening for relevancy based on a more in-depth assessment of the abstract/conclusion of sources, briefly noting in the extraction template if and why sources were excluded;

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

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

Type of source	Academic literature	Grey literature	Other sources
Database	Scopus Criminal Justice Abstracts JSTOR	Google Scholar Opengrey	Google Websites of EU institutions or agencies (e.g. EIGE, the European Commission and FRA) or international organisations (e.g. Council of Europe, the OECD and UN Women)
Other sources	Journal articles Book chapters	Reports Journal articles	Official statistics Policy or legislative documents Reports

Search terms (Box A1.2) 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 the causes and consequences of psychological violence

Search string 1

'psychological violence' OR 'coercive control' OR 'psychological abuse'

AND

'cause' OR 'driver' OR 'motiv*' OR 'risk factor' OR 'predict*'

AND

'women' OR 'woman' OR 'girl' OR 'female' OR 'ladies'

AND

'domestic' OR 'intimate' OR 'household' OR 'home' OR 'relationship'

Search string 2

'psychological violence' OR 'coercive control' OR 'psychological abuse'

AND

'consequence' OR 'harm' OR 'outcome' OR 'cost'

AND

'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 find sources of relevant data are outlined in Table A1.3.

Table A1.3. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature review on the 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 of, predictors for 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, and 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	Written in languages other than English

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

- a full reference, the abstract and the publication type;
- the geographic scope;
- the methodology, including the study population and sample sizes;
- how psychological violence or coercive control is defined and measured;
- 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;
- the consequences of repeat victimisation;
- recommendations for future interventions and policy responses;
- how the source was identified;
- relevant sources for snowballing;
- where relevant, the reasons for excluding the source.

Additional searches

As the number of relevant sources identified in the original search was limited, an additional targeted search was carried out using the same inclusion and exclusion criteria, with the exception of the geographical criteria, that is, the scope was expanded to include non-EU OECD countries. A small number of highly relevant sources that were identified through this search were subsequently included in the report (and presented in text boxes in the main body of the text). 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 comprised two phases:

1. reviewing existing reports and documents that provide overviews or summaries of the legislative position across the EU;
2. reviewing documentation from Member State level.

Phase 1: EU level

Types of documents to be included. The first phase of the legislative document review 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)
2. European Parliament (2020a)
3. EELN (2021) ([147]).

Process for identifying (additional) relevant documents. Searches were undertaken using Google, Google Scholar and academic databases such as Scopus and Criminal Justice Abstracts.

([147]) This is a draft publication shared with RAND Europe by EIGE.

The focus was 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 included information about all of the Member States and provided an EU-wide picture, the second phase looked in more detail for information at national level. Given that the European Parliament (2020a) report covers the legislative framework of 10 Member States ([148]) and is directly relevant to the present study, the national-level searches undertaken for this study focused on filling the gaps for the remaining 17 Member States. This phase involved searching relevant legal databases, legal literature and national official legal databases (Table A1.4). The search was conducted in English.

Table A1.4. National legal databases

MS	Name of legal database	Link
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
CZ	Legislativa	https://www.mvcr.cz/web-legislativa.aspx
DK	Retsinformation	https://www.retsinformation.dk/
DE	JURIS	https://www.juris.de/jportal/index.jsp
EE	Riigi Teataja	https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/
IE	Irish Statute Book	http://www.irishstatutebook.ie
EL	Official Gazette	http://www.et.gr/
ES	Boletín Oficial del Estado	https://www.boe.es
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
IT	Normattiva	https://www.normattiva.it/
CY	CYLAW	http://www.cylaw.org/
LV	Latvijas Vēstnesis	https://www.vestnesis.lv/
LT	Lietuvos teisės aktų duomenų bazė	http://www3.lrs.lt/dokpaieska/forma_l.htm
LU	Légilux	http://www.legilux.public.lu/leg/index.html
HU	Magyar Közlöny	https://magyarkozlony.hu/
MT	Laws of Malta	http://www.justiceservices.gov.mt/LegalServices.aspx?pageid=72
NL	Overheid	https://www.overheid.nl/
AT	Legal Information System of the Republic of Austria	https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/defaultEn.aspx
PL	Polish legal database (Sejm)	https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/
PT	Digesto	https://dre.pt/
RO	Legislative Portal	https://legislatie.just.ro/
SI	Register predpisov RS	http://www.pisrs.si/Pis.web/
SK	JASPI database	http://jaspi.justice.gov.sk/jaspiw1/jaspiw_mini_fr0.htm
FI	Finlex	http://www.finlex.fi/
SE	Lagrummet	https://lagrummet.se/

([148]) DK, EL, ES, FR, IT, CY, PL, PT, RO and FI.

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 minutes), informal discussions with experts (via telephone or email), focused on answering specific questions. Findings from these interviews are referenced in the main text using a code for each interviewee.

- **PL1.** Interview with the expert for **Poland** (an 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 the expert for **Denmark** (a researcher for a 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 the expert for **France** (an academic). The interview covered whether legal provision relating to psychological violence covers non-resident partners, the rationale for introducing this provision and the treatment of cyber violence against women under French law.

In addition, all of the 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 to be within the scope of the study if preventing coercive control and psychological violence against women was:

- explicitly mentioned as an aim or objective;
- captured as an outcome;
- 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 through snowballing were included if relevant and within the scope of the study.

Search process, data sources and inclusion criteria

As the types of practices that were 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 shown 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	General internet search / Google Academic databases: Google Scholar, Scopus and Criminal Justice Abstracts Information published by EU institutions (e.g. EIGE, the European Parliament and the European Commission) and international organisations (e.g. the Council of Europe, GREVIO, the OECD, UN Women, the Bejing+25 country reports to the UN Economic Commission for Europe, and reports of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women). In particular, baseline evaluation reports on each Member State from GREVIO (where available) Snowballing
Search terms	1. Search terms specific to **psychological violence and coercive control** 'psychological violence' OR 'psychological abuse' OR 'control*' OR 'coercive control' OR 'emotional abuse' OR 'stalk*' OR 'intimate terror*' OR 'controlling behaviour' 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> 2. Search terms relating to **domestic violence and intimate partner violence more broadly** 'domestic violence' OR 'domestic abuse' OR 'partner violence' OR 'relationship violence' 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> 3. Search terms relating to **cyber violence** '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 the following section 'Survey of relevant experts and practitioners'). 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 in which no survey responses were received from a Member State (ES, FR, CY, HU and 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 the practices identified against the criteria developed

All of the relevant practices identified from the desk research were assessed against the criteria developed. 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. When insufficient evidence was available to draw meaningful conclusions, the practice was classed as 'grey'.

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 when necessary.

No overall score was assigned to each practice, as the number of relevant criteria and the degree of evidence available were 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, which were 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 being expanded to include studies carried out in OECD countries outside the EU. These findings were presented in the report separately from the findings relating specifically to the EU.

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

Search process, data sources and inclusion criteria

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 the title of sources, and the compilation of a list of sources;
3. **in-depth screen** – screening for relevancy based on a more in-depth assessment of the abstract/conclusion of sources, briefly noting in the extraction template if and why sources were excluded;
4. **snowballing** – identifying additional relevant sources, noting in the extraction template whether sources were identified via snowballing / a 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	General internet search / Google Academic databases: Google Scholar, Scopus and Criminal Justice Abstracts Information published by EU institutions (e.g. EIGE and the European Commission) and international organisations (e.g. the Council of Europe, GREVIO, the OECD and UN Women) Snowballing
Search terms	1. Search terms specific to **psychological violence and coercive control** 'psychological violence' OR 'psychological abuse' OR 'control*' OR 'coercive control' OR 'emotional abuse' OR 'stalk*' OR 'intimate terror*' OR 'controlling behaviour' AND 'prevent*' OR 'reduc*' OR 'address*' OR 'stop' OR 'fight' OR 'counter' AND 'barrier' OR 'factor' OR 'difficult*' OR 'obstacle' OR 'limitation' OR 'imped*' AND 'Europe' OR 'EU' OR <Member States> 2. Search terms relating to **cyber violence** '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 'prevent*' OR 'reduc*' OR 'address*' OR 'stop' OR 'fight' OR 'counter' 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 any 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. Their responses were incorporated alongside the findings of the literature review to give a more nuanced and comprehensive view of 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 18 organisations targeted vulnerable groups specifically (including the LGBTQI+ community, migrant and refugee women, Roma and traveller women, women with disabilities, and

women of an ethnic minority). The survey instrument is provided in Annex 2.

Survey responses

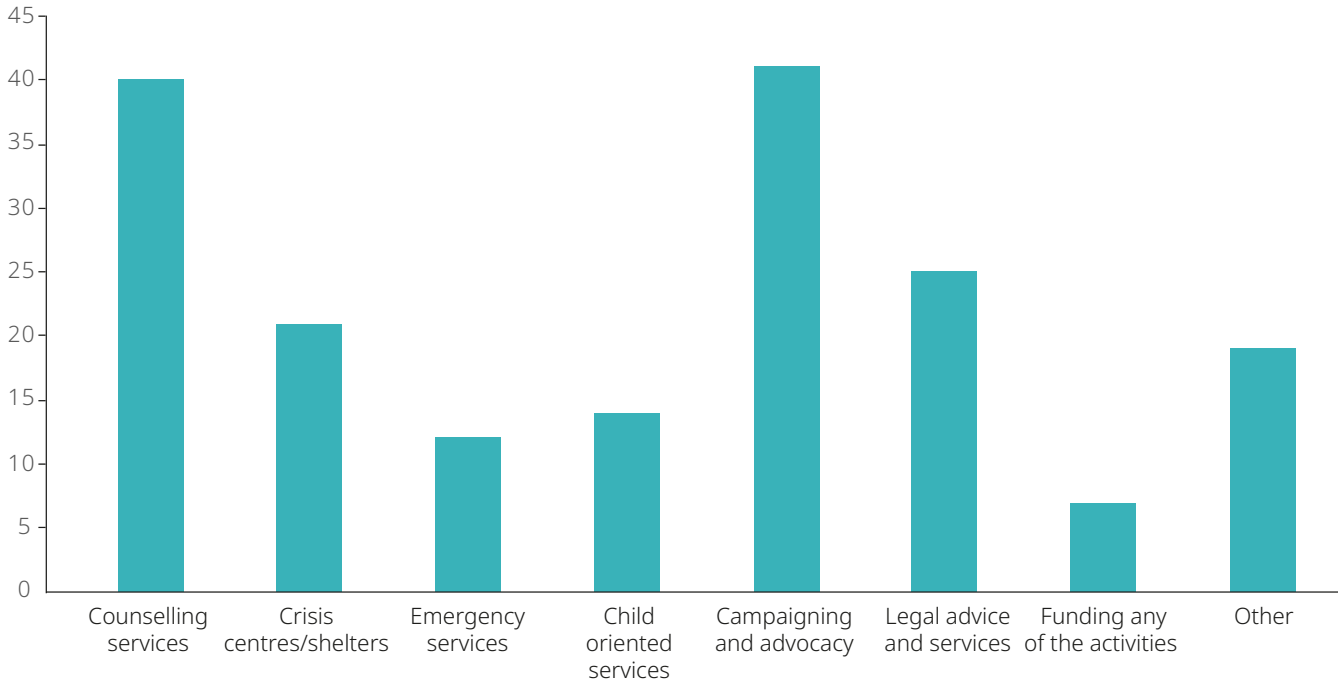
The research team received 56 survey responses from 22 Member States. No responses were received from Spain, France, Cyprus, Hungary or the Netherlands. One further reminder email was sent to organisations from these five Member States inviting them to share information about practices to prevent psychological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

The majority of respondents belonged to NGOs (*n* = 41), while an additional 10 belonged to national government service providers. There was also one respondent each from local government, a university a research organisation and an 'other' organisation.

The most common function of support services was the provision of counselling services for women victims of psychological violence, witnesses and/or perpetrators (in person, online or through a 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 included 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).

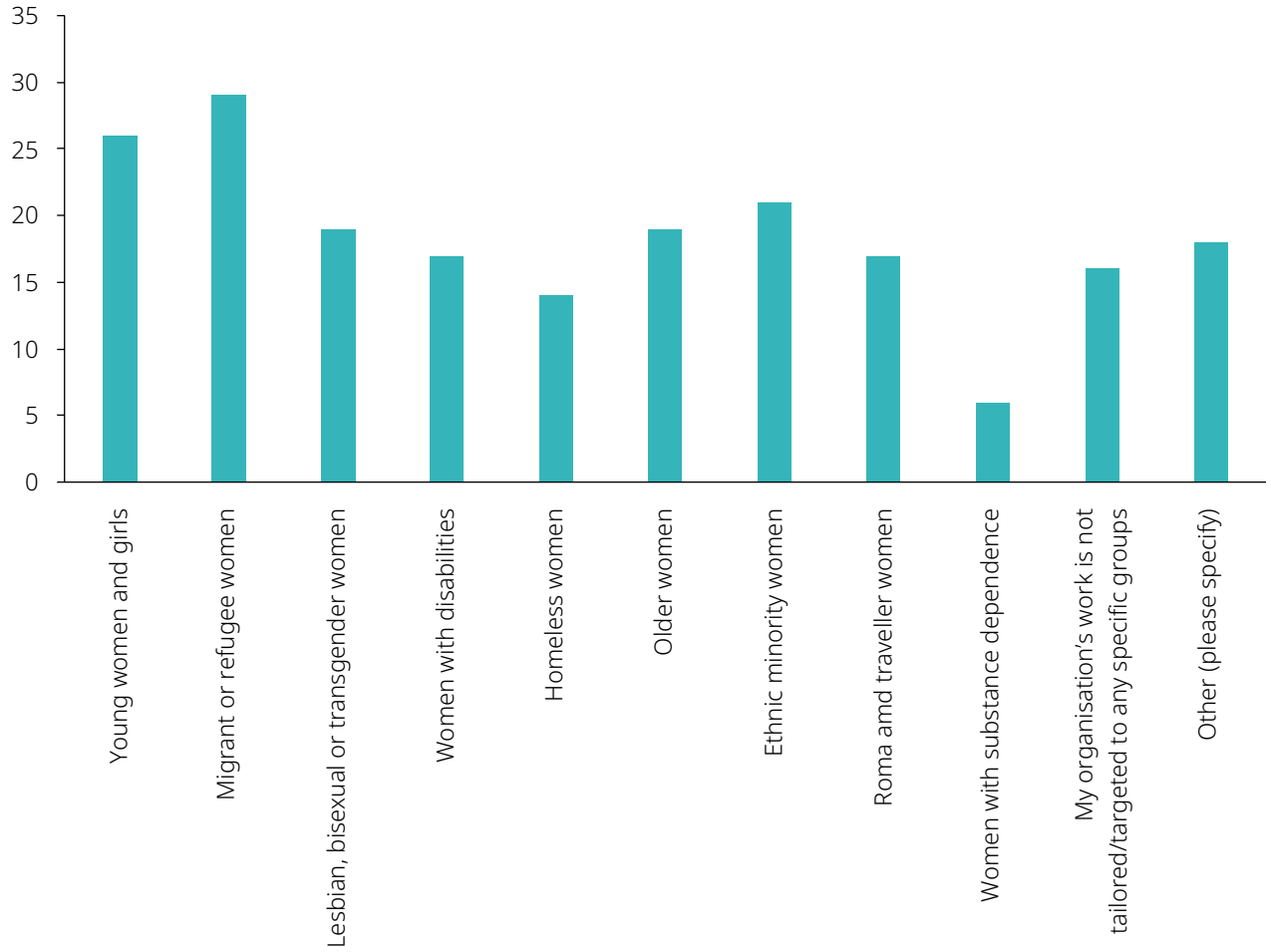
The service providers were asked whether they had specialised services for particularly vulnerable women. Survey respondents were able to name multiple categories. The most named group for specialised services was migrant or refugee women (*n* = 29), followed by young women and girls (*n* = 60) and older 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 (*n* = 56), 2021



NB: Multiple responses per respondent were possible.
Source: EIGE survey on practices and barriers relating to the prevention of psychological violence against women, 2021.

Figure A1.2. Specialised services for vulnerable groups provided by the organisations of survey respondents (*n* = 56), 2021



NB: Multiple responses per respondent were possible.
Source: EIGE survey on practices and barriers relating to the prevention of psychological violence against women, 2021.

Annex 2. Survey instrument

About this study

The European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE) has contracted RAND Europe ([149]) 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 on the RAND Europe website ([150]). 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, including emotional abuse (insulting, humiliating, scaring, intimidating or threatening the partner), controlling behaviour (isolating, monitoring, ignoring, being excessively jealous of or controlling the partner) and cyber violence (e.g. cyberstalking, online abuse / trolling and 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 one or both of the following:

- a member/employee of an organisation based in the EU and concerned with preventing violence against women or supporting victims;
- 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.

([149]) More information about this organisation can be found on its website (https://www.rand.org/randeurope.html).

([150]) The RAND Europe website contains a web page dedicated to this project (https://www.rand.org/randeurope/research/projects/combatting-psychological-violence-against-women.html).

Data privacy notice

What data do we collect and how?

Personal data (such as organisational email addresses) has 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 is 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 be used only for the purposes of the study. The use of your personal data is always in accordance with the requirements of Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 ([151]).

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 data 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 and security breaches, and 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

([151]) Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC, OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, p. 39 (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1725).

indefinitely in a secure environment by EIGE in accordance with 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 of 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 or 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 using the following address: Data protection officer, RAND Europe, Westbrook Centre, Milton Road, Cambridge CB4 1YG, UK.

You may also contact the 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 (please specify)

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)*

		To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know
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 (e.g. 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.	Under-reporting 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.	There is a 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 perpetrators					
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)*

		To a great extent	To some extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Do not know
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.	ack 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 LGBTQI+ community)					
g.	ack 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	Do not 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 (e.g. the 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, which 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)*

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)

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 the following groups of women (where applicable): *(Write in as many text boxes as required)*

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	

(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 reoffending.

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)*

a. Yes
b. 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 category (or categories) among the following 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. Do not 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 and 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. Do not 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 category (or categories) among the following 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. Do not 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 and 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)*

    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. Do not know
    l. 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)*

a. Yes
b. 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 category (or categories) among the following 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. Do not know
j. 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 and 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)*

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. Do not know
l. 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 on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women (the Istanbul Convention) is the first international treaty to specifically tackle 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, 2011a).

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 of the 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 should 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, by a person cohabiting with the victim or by a person having abused her or his authority;

b. the offence was, 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;

g. the offence was committed with the use or threat of a weapon;

h. the offence resulted in severe physical or psychological harm for the victim;

i. the perpetrator had previously been convicted of offences of a similar nature.

As of September 2021, 21 EU Member States have acceded to the Istanbul Convention (Table A3.1). Upon accession, 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, accession triggered amendments to existing legislation (enacted or pending) or the adoption of new legal measures (European Parliament, 2020b). Legislative changes have been more extensive in countries that have acceded to the convention than in countries that have not (European Parliament, 2020a).

The Istanbul Convention establishes a specific monitoring mechanism (GREVIO) to ensure the effective implementation of its provisions. GREVIO comprises 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 for and the protection of victims. Its members are elected by the state parties; depending on the number of state parties, the body consists of between 10 and 15 members.

Table A3.1. Accession to the Istanbul Convention and associated legislative developments

MS	Signed	Acceded	Overview of legislative developments since accession or 2014
BE	X	X	Changes were already made prior to accession. In addition, two acts were adopted on 18 June 2018: (1) the act on combating acts of violence perpetrated in the name of culture, custom, religion, tradition or so-called honour, including female genital mutilation, and (2) the act on alternative forms of dispute resolution requiring consent to mediation
BG	X		The 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		Criminal Code No 287/2018 Coll (Poslaneckásněmovna Parlamentu České republiky) was amended, including the criminalisation of forced marriage, to better align the legislation with the Istanbul Convention
DK	X	X	Before accession to the convention, Act No 168 of 26 February 2014 was adopted to align the legislation with the Istanbul Convention, by amending the statute of limitations 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 accession process. One of the main legal changes in the course of the accession process 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 a sexual nature against the will of the person. The new Section 184i of the Strafgesetzbuch (the German criminal code) criminalises sexual harassment
EE	X	X	The penal code was updated in 2017 (RT I, 26.6.2017) to include stalking, sexual harassment, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, forced abortion and criminal offences against the 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 violence against women, including both safe accommodation and counselling
IE	X	X	The following legislative measures prepared Ireland for accession to the convention in 2019: the 2018 domestic violence act, which replaced the existing 1996 domestic violence act; the criminal justice (sexual offences) act of 2017; and the criminal justice (victims of crime) act of 2017, transposing Directive 2012/29/EU on the rights of victims of crime
EL	X	X	On 26 March 2019, the new Law No 4604/2019 on the enhancement of substantive gender equality, prevention and combating of gender-based violence was adopted. 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 adopted: (1) a reform of the criminal code by Organic Law 1/2015 of 30 March, which introduced the offence of stalking and forced marriage, and 2) Law 4/2015 of 27 April on the statute of victims of crime and 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 accession. For instance, the offences of female genital mutilation and forced marriage were introduced/amended in 2013 to align with the convention. At least eight new pieces of relevant legislation were adopted: (1) the 2018 law on sexual and sexist violence; (2) the 2017 law on equality and citizenship, which amended several criminal offences related to violence against women; (3) Law No 2017–258 of 2017 on public safety, which requires electronic surveillance of protection orders for victims of domestic violence; (4) the 2016 law on the protection of asylum seeker victims of gender-based violence; (5) the 2016 law on a framework to better support sex workers; (6) the 2015 law on social dialogue and employment, which prohibits sexist behaviour; (7) the 2016 decree establishing local committees to support victims in each department; and (8) the 2016 law on child protection
HR	X	X	In the light of accession, the new act on protection against domestic violence was adopted on 4 July 2017 to amend the categorisation of domestic violence offences (the inclusion of domestic violence 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 focuses on urgent provisions for safety and for the fight against gender-based violence, as well as on civil protection and the 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 for helping orphans of victims of domestic violence. Law No 69/2019 (the red code) aims to enhance the effectiveness of judicial responses to violence against women and improve victims' protection
CY	X	X	A new bill submitted on 27 January 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

MS	Signed	Acceded	Overview of legislative developments since accession or 2014
LV	X		The law on administrative penalties for offences in the fields of administration, public order and use of the official language sets out the sanction for domestic violence and entered into force on 1 July 2020. This law determines the penalty for committing minor bodily injury, if committed against a person with whom the perpetrator is related in the first or second degree of kinship, against a spouse or former spouse, against a person with whom the perpetrator is or has been in a continuous intimate relationship, or against a person with whom the perpetrator shares a joint (undivided) household, namely a fine of EUR 86 to 140
LT	X		No new legislation has been adopted since 2014
LU	X	X	The act acceding 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 these with the convention
HU	X		Two legislative developments have been made, namely the legislation on victim support was amended in 2019 (1645/2019 (XI. 19)) and a new criminal procedure code was adopted in 2017
MT	X	X	The convention was implemented via the gender-based violence and domestic violence act adopted on 14 May 2018, which set out: (1) the introduction of a commission for gender-based violence and domestic violence and (2) in the case of '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 accession (according to the Dutch government state report to GREVIO). The criminal code has been amended in recent years, including in 2016 in relation to the human trafficking offence, to include harsher sentencing. The social support act of 2015 covers domestic violence, support for victims and protection orders
AT	X	X	Changes had already been made prior to accession. In addition, new legislation was adopted in 2013, including Gewaltschutzgesetz 2019 (the violence protection act of 2019), and amendments were made to the criminal code in 2015 to bring it in line with the convention (i.e. the 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 Poland's accession to the convention on 1 August 2015, amendments to the penal code and the code of criminal procedure have sought to prioritise combating violence against women 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 (Law No 83/2015) was amended to comply with the convention. It introduced three new crimes (i.e. female genital mutilation, stalking and forced marriage), while the offences of rape, sexual coercion and sexual harassment were amended. In 2017, Article 107, paragraph 4, of the law on residence status (Law No 23/2007) was amended by Law No 102/2017, namely an autonomous residence permit can be granted to victims of domestic violence, irrespective of the circumstances
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 amended Law No 202/2002 on equal opportunities and treatment between women and men; and Emergency Ordinance No 24/2019 transposed provisions under Directive 2012/29/EU to implement measures to ensure the protection of victims of crime
SI	X	X	After accession to the convention, key improvements were made to the domestic violence prevention act in 2016, introducing the definition of domestic violence (the 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, and 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 (the Slovenian criminal code) in 2015. In 2018, changes to the foreigners act allowed victims of domestic violence to obtain an independent permit for temporary residence
SK	X		The act on victims of crime was adopted (effective from 1 January 2018) and several legal acts were amended (effective from 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

MS	Signed	Acceded	Overview of legislative developments since accession or 2014
FI	X	X	Changes were made upon accession. The act on the accession to 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 Law 12.4.2019/486 amending the provisions related to the sexual abuse of children. The maximum penalty for sexual exploitation of a child was increased from 4 to 6 years in prison and a new penalty provision for aggravated child rape was added to the penal code
SE	X	X	Following accession, legal amendments were introduced that expanded the scope of restraining orders and penal code provisions against forced marriage were introduced. The criminal code was amended in 2018 (SFS 2018: 618, the act amending the criminal code) and 2019 (SFS 2019: 806, the act on amendments to the criminal code) in relation to certain relevant offences (child sexual abuse, murder, etc.).
EU	X		

Source: European Parliament (2020b).

Annex 4. Additional information on relevant legislation

Legislation and aggravating circumstances relating to psychological violence and coercive control

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

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
DK	Psychological violence	*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 can be considered improper control of the other, including the exercise of coercive control, is punishable for psychological violence with a fine or imprisonment for up to 3 years*	Article 243 of the criminal code	• Prison sentence of up to 3 years • Fine
IE	Coercive control	*A person commits an offence where he or she 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 prohibited degree of relationship but is or was in an intimate relationship with that other person*	Article 39 of the domestic violence act of 2018	• Prison sentence of between 12 months and 5 years • Fine
ES	Threat	*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 6 months to 1 year, or community service from 31 to 80 days and, in all cases, deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons from a year and a day to 3 years, as well as, when the judge or court of law sees it fit in the interest of the minor or person with a disability requiring special protection, special barring from exercise of parental authority, guardianship, care, safekeeping or fostering for up to 5 years. The same punishment shall be imposed on whoever lightly intimidates an especially vulnerable person who lives with the offender*	Article 171.4 of the criminal code	• Prison sentence of between 6 months and 1 year or community service • Deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons for between 1 year and 3 years • Barring from parental rights for up to 5 years
	Coercion	*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 6 months to 1 year, or community service from 31 to 80 days and, in all cases, deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons from a year and a day to 3 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 5 years. The same punishment shall be imposed on whoever lightly coerces an especially vulnerable person who lives with the offender*	Article 172.2 of the criminal code	• Prison sentence of between 6 months and 1 year or community service • Deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons for between 1 year and 3 years • Barring from parental rights for up to 5 years

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
ES	Mental damage	*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 6 months to 1 year, or community service from 31 to 80 days and, in all cases, deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons from a year and a day to 3 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 5 years*	Article 153.1 of the criminal code	• Prison sentence of between 6 months and 1 year or community service • Deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons for between 1 year and 3 years • Barring from parental rights for up to 5 years
FR	Psychological violence	No definition of psychological violence in the penal code	Article 222-14-3 of the criminal code	• Various sanctions. Article 222-14-3 makes clear that several violence-related offences can be psychological in nature

Sources: National legal databases (see Table A1.4) and EIGE (2017).

Table A4.2. Aggravating circumstances of psychological violence / coercive control (Article 46 of the Istanbul Convention)

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, by a person cohabiting with the victim or by a person having abused her or his authority	DK, IE, ES, FR
b. The offence was, or related offences were, committed repeatedly	DK, FR
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	DK, ES, FR
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

NB: Applies to the legislation listed in Table A4.1.
Sources: National legal databases (see Table A1.4), GREVIO reports, EELN (2021) and email exchanges with members of the High Level Group on Gender Mainstreaming (February 2022).

Legislation and aggravating circumstances relating to domestic violence and intimate partner violence

Table A4.3. Legislation relating to domestic violence and intimate partner violence

MS	Overview	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
BE	There is no specific criminal offence for domestic violence / intimate partner violence Article 410 of the criminal code recognises domestic violence / intimate partner violence as an aggravating circumstance	N/A	*The crime is committed against the spouse or the person with whom he cohabits or has cohabited and has, or has had, a lasting affective and sexual relationship*	Article 410 of the criminal code	N/A
BG	There is no specific criminal offence for domestic violence / intimate partner violence Domestic violence is an aggravating circumstance	N/A	*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*	Section 2 of the protection against domestic violence act of 2005,	N/A
CZ	There is a criminal offence for domestic violence Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is not recognised as an aggravating circumstance	Abuse of a person living in a shared dwelling	*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;* *b. if he/she causes grievous bodily harm;* *c. if the offence is perpetrated against more than two people; or* *d. if the contravention has continued for a prolonged period of time.* *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):* *a. serious bodily harm to at least two people; or* *b. death*	Article 199 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of between 6 months and 4 years (longer if the offence includes extreme levels or violence or severe physical or psychological harm)
DK	There are separate legal offences for different types of domestic violence (for psychological violence see Table A4.1) Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is not specifically recognised as an aggravating circumstance, although courts are not limited to the circumstances set out in the criminal code	N/A (see Table A4.1)	N/A	N/A	N/A
DE	There is no specific criminal offence for domestic violence / intimate partner violence Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is not recognised as an aggravating circumstance	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
EE	The legal definition of domestic violence is restricted to physical abuse (Article 121 of the Estonian criminal code) Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is recognised as an aggravating circumstance	N/A	*Commission of the offence against a 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*	Article 58 of the Estonian criminal code	N/A

MS	Overview	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
IE	There is no specific criminal offence for domestic violence / intimate partner violence – only for coercive control (see Table A4.1) Domestic violence is an aggravating circumstance	N/A	No specific definition (EIGE, 2017)	Domestic violence act of 1996	N/A
EL	There is a criminal offence for domestic violence Domestic violence is recognised as an aggravating circumstance	Domestic illegal violence and threat	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 6 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*	Article 7 of Law 3500/2006	Prison sentence of at least 6 months
ES	In addition to specific offences for psychological violence (see Table A4.1), domestic violence / intimate partner violence (including psychological violence) is criminalised under Article 173 of the criminal code Article 197 of the criminal code criminalising the non-consensual sharing of intimate images Intimate partner violence is an aggravating circumstance	Domestic violence	*Whoever habitually uses physical or **mental violence against** the person who is or has been his spouse or the person who is or has been bound to him by a similar emotional relation, even without cohabitation, or against descendants, ascendants or biological, adopted or fostered siblings, against that person or the spouse or cohabitating partner, or against minors or the incapacitated who live with him or who are subject to the parental rights, guardianship, care, fostership or safekeeping of the spouse or cohabitating partner, or against a person protected by any other relation by which that person is a member of the core family unit, as well as against persons who, due to their special vulnerability are subject to custody or safekeeping in public or private centres, shall be punished with a sentence of imprisonment of 6 months to 3 years, deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons from 2 to 5 years and, when appropriate, when the judge or court of law sees it fit in the interest of the minor or incapacitated person, special barring from exercise of parental rights, guardianship, care, safekeeping or fostership for a term from 1 to 5 years, without prejudice to the penalties that may be relevant for the felonies or misdemeanours in which the acts of physical or mental violence have been materialised*	Article 173.2 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of between 6 months and 3 years Deprivation of the right to own and carry weapons between 2 and 5 years Barring of parental rights (when the judge or court of law sees fit)
		Intimate partner violence	1. *The purpose of this act is to combat the violence exercised against women by their present or former spouses or by men with whom they maintain or have maintained analogous affective relations, with or without cohabitation, as an expression of discrimination, the situation of inequality and the power relations prevailing between the sexes.* 2. *The present act establishes integrated protection measures whose goal is to prevent, punish and eradicate this violence and lend assistance to its victims.* 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*	Article 1 of Organic Law 1/2004	N/A
		Discovery and revelation of secrets		Article 197 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of between 3 months and 1 year

MS	Overview	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
FR	Domestic violence and intimate partner violence are prosecuted under a range of offences, which also apply in the case of psychological violence (see Table A4.1) Two provisions relate to domestic violence within and outside a relationship under Article 222-33-2 of the criminal code (this is also the definition of stalking) An offence for invasion of privacy criminalises the non-consensual sharing of intimate images Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is recognised as an aggravating circumstance	Moral harassment	*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 jeopardise his professional future, is punishable by 2 years' imprisonment and a EUR 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 3 years' imprisonment and a EUR 45 000 fine when these acts have caused a total incapacity to work of 8 days or less or have not resulted in any incapacity to work, and 5 years' imprisonment and EUR 75 000 fine when they have caused a total incapacity to work for more than 8 days. The same penalties are incurred when the offence 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 deteriorating this person's living conditions, resulting in an impairment of physical or mental health is punishable by 1 year of imprisonment and a EUR 15 000 fine when these acts have caused a total incapacity to work for 8 days or less or resulted in no incapacity to work*	Article 222-33-2 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years (3 years for intimate partner violence) Fine of up to EUR 30 000 (EUR 45 000 for intimate partner violence)
		Invasion of privacy	*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 2 years' imprisonment and EUR 60 000 fine. The same penalties shall apply to, in the absence of the person's agreement to broadcasting, the causing to be brought to the knowledge of the public or of a third party of 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)*	Article 226-2-1 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of 2 years Fine of EUR 60 000
HR	Domestic violence is criminalised Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is not recognised as an aggravating circumstance	Domestic violence	*Any form of physical, **mental**, sexual or economic violence, in particular:* • *physical violence or the use of physical force, regardless of whether physical injury resulted or not;* • *corporal punishment and other forms of degrading treatment of children for educational purposes;* • ***psychological violence or the application of psychological 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;*** • *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*	Article 4 of the protection from domestic violence act of 2003	Prison sentence of up to 3 years Fine

MS	Overview	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
IT	Domestic violence is criminalised under the Italian criminal code Domestic violence is recognised as an aggravating factor	Domestic violence	*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 24 years*	Article 572 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of between 1 year and 5 years (increased if there is severe physical or psychological harm for the victim)
CY	Domestic violence is criminalised Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is recognised as an aggravating circumstance	Domestic violence	*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 sexual intercourse without the consent of the victim as well as of restricting its freedom*	Article 3 of the law on violence in the family (prevention and protection of victims) (Law 119(I)/200)	Prison sentence of up to 5 years Fine
LV	Domestic violence is criminalised according to Sections 125, 126 and 130 of the criminal law	Domestic violence	*Section 125. Intentional serious bodily injury* *(1) For a person who commits intentional infliction of serious bodily injury, the applicable punishment is deprivation of liberty for a period up to 7 years, with or without probationary supervision for a period up to 3 years.* *(2) For the commission of the same acts, if:* *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 2 up to 10 years, with or without probationary supervision for a period up to 3 years.* *Section 126. Intentional moderate bodily injury* *(1) For a person who commits intentional infliction of moderate bodily injury, the applicable punishment is deprivation of liberty for a period up to 3 years, or temporary deprivation of liberty, or community service, or a fine.* *(2) For the commission of the same acts, if:* *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 5 years, or temporary deprivation of liberty, or community service, or a fine, with or without probationary supervision for a period up to 3 years.* *Section 130. Intentional slight bodily injury* *(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 1 year or temporary deprivation of liberty, or community service, or a fine.* *(3) For the commission of the same acts, if:* *6) 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 the deprivation of liberty for a period of up to 3 years or temporary deprivation of liberty, or community service, or a fine*	Sections 125, 126 and 130 of the criminal law	Prison sentence of up to 3 years Fine

MS	Overview	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
LT	Domestic violence is not criminalised, although there is a domestic violence act that gives some protections for victims Domestic violence is recognised as an aggravating circumstance	Domestic violence	*Article 1: Domestic violence shall be an act of violation of human rights and freedoms.* *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.* *[...]* *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*	Articles 1 and 2 of the act on domestic violence of 2011	N/A
LU	There is no specific criminal offence for domestic violence / intimate partner violence Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is recognised as an aggravating circumstance	N/A	*In the context of its prevention and protection missions, the police, with the authorisation of the state prosecutor, can expel from their homes and premises the persons against whom there is evidence that they are planning to commit an offence against the life or physical integrity of a person with whom they cohabit, or that they are planning to commit an offence against the life or physical integrity of a person who has already been his/her victim.* *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 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 ...*	Articles 1 and 11 of the law of 8 September 2003 on domestic violence	N/A
HU	Domestic violence is criminalised Domestic violence is recognised as an aggravating factor under Article 38 of the criminal code	Domestic violence	*(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.* *(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), or insult, as specified in Section 227(2) is guilty of a felony and shall be punished by imprisonment for up to 3 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 5 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*	Section 212/A of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years
MT	Domestic violence is criminalised Domestic violence is taken into consideration as an aggravating factor under Article 251H of the criminal code	Domestic violence	*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 subarticle (1) of the last preceding article*	Chapter 9, Article 251, of the criminal code	Prison sentence of 1–5 years
NL	There is no specific criminal offence for domestic violence / intimate partner violence. Domestic violence is defined in the social support act of 2015 Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is recognised as an aggravating circumstance	N/A	*Physical, **mental** or sexual violence or threat thereof by someone in the family circle*	Article 1 of the social support act of 2015	N/A

MS	Overview	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
AT	There is no specific criminal offence for domestic violence / intimate partner violence Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is recognised as an aggravating circumstance under Article 33 of the criminal code	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
PL	Domestic violence is criminalised under the offence 'mistreatment of close persons'. Domestic violence is defined in the 2005 act on counteracting domestic violence Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is not recognised as an aggravating factor	Mistreatment of close persons	*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*	Article 207 of the penal code	Prison sentence of between 3 months and 5 years
		Domestic violence	*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.* *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*	Article 2 of the act of 29 July 2005 on counteracting domestic violence	N/A
PT	Domestic violence is criminalised Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is not recognised as an aggravating factor	Domestic violence	*Whoever, in a repetitive manner or not, imposes **physical or mental abuses**, including bodily punishments, 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 1 to 5 years*	Article 152 of the penal code	Prison sentence of between 1 year and 5 years
RO	There is no specific criminal legislation for domestic violence / intimate partner violence Domestic violence is defined in civil law (Laws 2017/2003 and 174/2018) Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is recognised as an aggravating factor	Domestic violence	*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.* *Family violence takes the following forms:* ***(a) verbal violence: the use of offensive language, brutal language, insults, threats, humiliating or degrading expressions;*** ***(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, neglect, acts of jealousy, constraints of all kinds as well as actions of similar effect;*** *(c) physical violence: assault or battery through pushing, blows, hair pulling, slapping, slashing, burning, choking, biting in any intensity;* *(d) sexual violence: sexual assault, harassment, intimidation, manipulation, brutality in pursuing coerced sexual intercourse, marital rape;* *(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, refusing to contribute to family expenses, imposing hard or dangerous labour on family members including minors;* *(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;* *(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*	Law 2017/2003, amended by Law 174/2018	N/A

MS	Overview	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
SI	Domestic violence is criminalised under the criminal code and defined under the 2008 act Domestic violence is recognised as an aggravating factor	Domestic violence	*(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.* *(2) The same punishment shall be imposed on whoever commits the acts under the preceding paragraph in any other permanent living community.* *(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*	Article 191 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 5 years
			Article 3 (Family violence): *(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 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).* *(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.* *(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.* *(4) Psychological violence denotes such actions with which the perpetrator of violence exerting it against a family member induces fear, shame, feelings of inferiority, endangerment and other anguish.* *(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.* *(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*	Article 3 of the family violence prevention act of 2008	
SK	Domestic violence is criminalised Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is taken into consideration as an aggravating factor	Domestic violence	*(1) Whoever ill-treats a close person or a person in his custody or care, causing physical or* ***psychological suffering*** *by:* *(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,* *(b) groundless denying of food, rest or sleep, or denying of necessary personal care, basic clothing, hygiene, healthcare, housing, upbringing or education,* *(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 may harm the person's health,* *(d) exposure to substances that may harmful the person's health, or* *(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*	Section 208 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of between 3 and 8 years (or between 7 and 15 years if aggregating conditions are met)

MS	Overview	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
FI	There is no specific criminal offence for domestic violence / intimate partner violence Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is not recognised as an aggravating circumstance	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
SE	Domestic violence is criminalised (there is a specific offence for violence against women) Domestic violence / intimate partner violence is taken into consideration as an aggravating factor	Gross violation of integrity and gross violation of a woman's integrity	*A person who commits criminal acts under Chapter 3 or 4, Chapter 5, Section 1 or 2, Chapter 6 or 12 or 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 1 year and at most 6 years. 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*	Chapter 4, Section 4a of the criminal code	Prison sentence of between 1 year and 6 years

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

Table A4.4. Aggravating circumstances of domestic violence (Article 46 of the Istanbul Convention)

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, by a person cohabiting with the victim or by a person having abused her or his authority ([152])	BE, BG, DK, EE, IE, EL, ES, FR, IT, LV, LT, LU, NL, RO, SI, SK, SE
b. The offence was, 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).

([152]) 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, 2017a), although courts are free to take into consideration any aggravating circumstances. Our analysis of national legal databases suggests that domestic violence / intimate partner violence can be taken into consideration as an aggravating factor in HU and MT, in addition to the countries listed in Table A4.4.

Legislation relating to stalking and cyberstalking

Table A4.5. Legislation relating to stalking and cyberstalking

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
BE	Harassment	*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 2 years and with a fine ranging from EUR 50 to 300 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 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 criminalise abuse of the vulnerable position of persons, and extend the criminal law protection of vulnerable persons against abuse*	442bis of the criminal code	Prison sentence of between 15 days and 2 years Fine of between EUR 50 and 300
BG	Stalking	*(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 1 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 imprisonment for up to 5 years*	Article 144a of the penal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (up to 5 years in the context of domestic violence)
CZ	Dangerous persecution	*(1) Whoever pursues another in the 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 1 year or to prohibition of activity. (2) An offender shall be sentenced to imprisonment for 6 months to 3 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*	Article 354 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (up to 3 years in the case of aggravating circumstances)
DK	Stalking	*Section 242. A person who in a manner which is suitable for violating another person's peace, systematic and continuous contacts, persecutes or otherwise harasses the person in question, shall be punished for stalking with a fine or imprisonment for up to 3 years*	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

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
DE	Stalking	*(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 3 years or a fine. (2) The penalty shall be 3 months to 5 years if the offender places the victim, a relative of or another person close to the victim in danger of death or serious 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 1 to 10 years. (4) Cases under subsection (1) above may only be prosecuted upon request unless the prosecuting authority considers* propio motu *that prosecution is required because of special public interest*	Article 238 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years (up to 5 years in the context of aggravating circumstances) Fine
EE	Harassing pursuit	*(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 1 year's imprisonment. (2) The same act, if committed by a legal person, is punishable by a pecuniary punishment*	Article 157.3 of the penal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year Fine
IE	Harassment	*(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 offence. (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 realise 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 offence under subsection (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. (4) A person who fails to comply with the terms of an order under subsection (3) shall be guilty of an offence. (5) If on the evidence the court is not satisfied that the person should be convicted of an offence 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 offence under this section shall be liable (a) on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding EUR 1 500 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*	Section 10 of the non-fatal offences against the person act	Prison sentence of up 12 months Fine of up to EUR 1 500
EL	Stalking	*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*	Article 2 of Law 3500/2006	N/A

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
ES	Stalking	*(1) With an imprisonment of 3 months to 2 years or shall be punished he who harasses a person by insistently, repeatedly, and without being lawfully authorised, 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, or having third parties come in contact with her; (4) violating her freedom or property, or violate freedom or property of another person close to her. If a particularly vulnerable person is concerned, because of age, illness or other circumstances, imprisonment of 6 months to 2 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 1 to 2 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*	Article 172 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of 3 months to 2 years Fine
FR	Moral harassment	*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 jeopardise his professional future, is punishable by 2 years' imprisonment and a EUR 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 3 years imprisonment and a EUR 45 000 fine when these acts have caused a total incapacity to work of 8 days or less or have not resulted in any incapacity to work, and 5 years' imprisonment and EUR 75 000 fine when they have caused a total incapacity to work for more than 8 days. The same penalties are incurred when the offence 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 1 year imprisonment and a EUR 15 000 fine when these acts have caused a total incapacity to work for 8 days or less or resulted in no incapacity to work*	Article 222-33-2 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years (3 years for intimate partner violence) Fine of up to EUR 30 000 (EUR 45 000 fine for intimate partner violence)
	Sexual harassment	*I. – Sexual harassment is the fact of repeatedly imposing 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 2 years' imprisonment and a fine of EUR 30 000. These penalties are increased to 3 years' imprisonment and a fine of EUR 45 000 when the acts are committed: … 6.* ***By using a communication service to the public online or through a digital medium or electronic***	Article 222-33 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of 3 years and a fine of EUR 45 000 when the acts are committed
HR	Intrusive behaviour	*(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 1 year. (2) If the offence 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 3 years. (3) Unless it was committed against a child, the criminal offence referred to in paragraphs 1 and 2 of this article shall be prosecuted upon request*	Article 140 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (up to 3 years in the context of intimate partner violence)

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
IT	Stalking	*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 6 months to 5 years.* ***The penalty is increased if the offence 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 the offence is committed by phone or electronic communication****. The penalty is increased by up to its half if the offence is committed against a minor, a pregnant woman or a person with disabilities as expressed in Article 3 of Law No 104 of 5 February 1992, 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 6 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 offence is committed by repeated threats, as specified in Article 612. The crime is immediately prosecuted if the offence is committed against a minor or a person with disabilities as expressed by Article 3 of Law No 104 of 5 February 1992 and when the fact is connected with another offence automatically subjected to prosecution*	612bis of the criminal code	Prison sentence of 6 months to 5 years (increased in the context of intimate partner violence or phone/electronic communication)
CY	Harassment and stalking	*When a person, engages in a behaviour which constitutes stalking and causes 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 2 years or to a fine not exceeding EUR 5 000 or to both*	Law 114 (I)/2021	Prison sentence of up to 2 years and/or a fine (up to 5 years in certain cases)
LV	Stalking	*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*	Article 132(1) of the criminal code	Prison sentence, community service or fine
LT	Stalking	*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*	Article 148(1) of the criminal code	Community service, fine or prison sentence
	Digital and communication-based violence	*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 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 2 years.* *2. A legal entity shall also be held liable for an act provided for in this article*	Article 166 of the criminal code	Community service, fine or prison sentence of up to 2 years
LU	Obsessive harassment	*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 2 years and a fine of EUR 251 to 3 000, or one of these penalties. The offence in this article shall be prosecuted on the complaint of the victim, his legal representative, or his assigns*	Article 442–2 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of 15 days to 2 years Fine of EUR 251–3 000

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
HU	Harassment	*(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 1 year, insofar as the act did not result in a more serious criminal offence. (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 2 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 recognised position of trust, authority or influence over the victim, shall be punishable by imprisonment not exceeding 2 years in the case provided for in subsection (1), or by imprisonment not exceeding 3 years for a felony in the case provided for in subsection (2)*	Article 222 of the the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (2 years in the context of intimate partner violence)
MT	Stalking	*(1) A person who: (a) pursues a course of conduct in breach of Article 251A(1), and (b) the course of conduct amounts to stalking, shall be guilty of an offence 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, (g) watching or spying on a person. (4) A person guilty of an offence 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 EUR 10 000), or to both such fine and imprisonment: provided that the punishment shall be increased by one degree when the offence is committed against any person mentioned in Article 222(1)*	Article 251AA of the criminal code	Prison sentence of 6 to 12 months Fine of up to EUR 10 000
NL	Stalking	*(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 3 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*	Article 285b of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years
AT	Persistent stalking	*(1) He who unlawfully insistently persecutes a person shall be punished with imprisonment of up to 1 year. (2) A person insistently persecutes if he, in a suitable way, with the intention of seriously affecting his way of life, 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*	Article 107a of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (more if the crime period exceeds 1 year and/or if the crime results in suicide or attempted suicide)

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
AT	Harassment through tele-communications	*(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, continued for a long period of time, a person 1. perceptibly violates honour for a larger number of people, or 2. makes facts or images of a person's most personal area of life without their consent perceptible to a larger number of people, is punishable by imprisonment of up to 1 year or with a fine of up to EUR 720 daily*	Article 107c of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (more if the crime period exceeds 1 year and/or if the crime results in suicide or attempted suicide) Fine
PL	Stalking	*(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*	Article 190a of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years
PT	Stalking	*(1) Every person who, in a continuous manner, persecutes or harasses another person, by any direct or indirect means, in a way that can reasonably cause fear or distress or jeopardise this person's freedom is guilty of an offence 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 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*	Article 154-A of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years Fine Prohibition of contact Mandatory participation in rehabilitation programme
RO	Stalking	*(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 offence. (3) Criminal action shall be initiated based on a prior complaint filed by the victim*	Article 208 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of 3 to 6 months Fine
SI	Stalking	*(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 2 years. (2) If the stalked person is a minor or a helpless person, the perpetrator shall be punished with a fine or sentenced to imprisonment of up to 3 years. (3) The prosecution of the offence under paragraphs 1 and 2 of this article shall be initiated upon a complaint*	Article 134a of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years (up to 3 years in the case of aggravating circumstances) Fine

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
SK	Stalking	*(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) threating 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 1 year. (2) The offender shall be liable to imprisonment between 6 months and 3 years, if he commits the offence referred to in paragraph 1 (a) against a protected person, (b) in a serious manner, (c) with specific motives, (d) in public*	Article 360a of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (up to 3 years in the case of aggravating circumstances)
FI	Stalking	*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 2 years*	Chapter 25, Section 7(a), of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years
SE	Stalking	*A person who harasses another person by means of criminal acts that constitute:* *1. assault under Chapter 3, Section 5, or attempting to commit such an offence that is not minor;* *2. unlawful coercion under Chapter 4, Section 4, first paragraph;* *3. making an unlawful threat under Chapter 4, Section 5, first paragraph;* *4. violation of the privacy of the home or unlawful intrusion under Chapter 4, Section 6;* *5. intrusive photography under Chapter 4, Section 6a;* *6. unlawful identity use under Chapter 4, Section 6b;* *7. unlawful breach of privacy under Chapter 4, Section 6c;* *8. molestation under Chapter 4, Section 7;* *9. encouraging suicide or negligently encouraging suicide under Chapter 4, Section 7a;* *10. sexual molestation under Chapter 6, Section 10;* *11. damage to property under Chapter 12, Section 1, or attempting to commit such an offence;* *12. minor damage under Chapter 12, Section 2; or* *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), 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 4 years*	Chapter 4, § 4b, of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 4 years

Sources: van de Aa (2018), EELN (2021).

Other relevant legislation

Table A4.6. Other legislation used to prosecute psychological violence

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
BE	Threats	*(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 8 days to 3 months and a fine of EUR 26 to 100.* *(2) The threat, made either verbally, or in writing anonymously or signed, with order or condition, of an attack against people or property, will be punished by imprisonment of 8 days to 3 months and a fine of EUR 26 to 100*	Articles 329 and 330 of the penal code	Prison sentence of 8 days to 3 months Fine
	Inhuman and degrading treatment	*1. torture: any deliberate inhuman treatment which causes acute pain or very serious and cruel suffering, physical or mental;* *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;* *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*	Article 417bis of the penal code	Prison sentence of 10 to 15 years
	Calumny and defamation	*Whoever, in the cases indicated below, has badly attributed to a person a specific fact which is likely to damage the honour 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. If this proof is sufficiently provided, the imputation will not give rise to any criminal prosecution.)*	Article 443 of the penal code	Prison sentence of 8 days to 1 year Fine
	Insults	*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 8 days to 2 months and a fine of EUR 26 to 500, or just one of these penalties. (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.)*	Article 448 of the penal code	Prison sentence of 8 days to 2 months Fine
BG	Coercion	*(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 6 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 3 to 10 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 3 to 10 years. (4) (New, SG No 62/1997, amended and supplemented, SG No 103/2004, effective 1.1.2005, 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:* *1. imprisonment from 2 to 8 years, in cases within the scope of paragraph 1;* *2. imprisonment from 5 to 15 years, in cases within the scope of paragraph 2*	Article 143 of the penal code	Prison sentence of up to 6 years (up to 10 years in the presence of aggravating circumstances, including domestic violence)
	Threat	*(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 3 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 carrying out their duties or functions, or to a person enjoying international protection, the punishment shall be imprisonment for up to 5 years. (3) (Supplemented, SG No 62/1997, amended, SG No 92/2002, effective 1.1.2005 in respect of the punishment of probation – amended, SG No 26/2004, effective 1.1.2004, 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 6 years*	Article 144 of the penal code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
CZ	Dangerous threat	*(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 1 year or a ban on activity. (2) The offender shall be punished by imprisonment for up to 3 years or a ban on activity if he commits the act referred to in paragraph 1 a) as a member of an organised group, b) against a child or a pregnant woman, c) with a weapon, (d) to a witness, expert or interpreter in connection with the performance of their duties, or (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*	Article 353 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year Ban on activity
DK	Duress	*A fine or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 2 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 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 4 years*	Article 260 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years Fine
	Threat	*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 2 years*	Article 266 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years
	Assault	*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 paragraph 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*	Article 245 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years (up to 6 years in the context of domestic violence)
DE	Threat	*(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 1 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*	Article 241 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year Fine
	Coercion	*(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 3 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 6 months to 5 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*	Article 240 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years (5 years in the case of aggravating circumstances)
EE	Threat	*(1) A threat to kill, cause health damage or cause significant damage to or destroy property, if there is reason to fear the realisation of such threat, is punishable by a pecuniary punishment or up to 1 year of imprisonment.* *(2) The same act, if committed by a legal person, is punishable by a pecuniary punishment*	Article 120 of the penal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year Fine
	Causing serious health damage	*(1) Causing health damage which results in:* *1) danger to life;* *2) a health disorder which persists for at least 4 months or which results in partial or no work ability;* *3) severe mental disorder;* *4) miscarriage;* *5) permanent mutilating facial injury;* *6) loss or cessation of functioning of an organ; or* *7) death,* *is punishable by 4 to 12 years' imprisonment.* *(2) An act provided for in this subsection, if committed by a legal person, is punishable by a pecuniary punishment.* *(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*	Article 118 of the penal code	Prison sentence of 4 to 12 years Fine Confiscation of assets or property

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
IE	Coercion	*(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–* *(a) uses violence to or intimidates that other person or a member of the family of the other, or* *(b) injures or damages the property of that other, or* *(c) persistently follows that other about from place to place, or* *(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* *(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.* *(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).* *(3) A person guilty of an offence under this section shall be liable–* *(a) on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding GBP 1 500 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 5 years or to both*	Article 9 of the non-violent offences against the person act of 1997	Prison sentence of up to 5 years Fine
HR	Threat	*(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 1 year.* *(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, ionising 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 3 years.* *(3) If the criminal offence referred to in paragraphs 1 and 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 6 months and 5 years.* *(4) The criminal offence referred to in paragraph 1 of this article shall be prosecuted on the basis of a private lawsuit, and the criminal offence referred to in paragraph 2 of this article shall be prosecuted upon motion, unless the offence referred to in paragraph 1 or 2 is committed out of hatred, against a person with a disability or family member*	Article 139 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (3 years if the threat is to kill) Prison sentence of up to 5 years in the case of aggravating circumstances
	Coercion	*(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 3 years.* *(2) The criminal offence 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*	Article 138 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years
IT	Defamation	Not identified	Article 595 of the criminal code	N/A
	Insults	Not identified	Article 594 of the criminal code	N/A
	Threat	Not identified	Article 612 of the criminal code	N/A
LV	Threatening to commit murder and to inflict serious bodily harm	*For a person who commits or is 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*	Section 132 of the criminal code	Prison sentence or community service Fine
	Persecution	*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*	Section 133 of the criminal code	Prison sentence or community service Fine
LT	Threatening to kill or seriously disrupt human health or terrorising a person	*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 2 years.* *2. Anyone who has terrorised 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 4 years' imprisonment.* *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*	Article 145 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 4 years Fine

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
LT	Restriction of freedom	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 3 years.* 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*	Article 148 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years Fine
	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 10 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 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 2 up to 12 years*	Article 135 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 10 years (up to 12 years in the context of aggravating circumstances, including domestic violence)
	Defamation	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 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 1 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 2 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*	Article 154 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years Fine
HU	Threat	*(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 1 year, insofar as the act did not result in a more serious criminal offence.* *(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 2 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,* *c) in a recognised position of trust, authority or influence over the victim, and/or* *d) against a public official, at a place and time that is incompatible with his official duties,* *shall be punishable by imprisonment not exceeding 2 years in the case provided for in subsection (1), or by imprisonment not exceeding 3 years for a felony in the case provided for in subsection (2)*	Article 222 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (2 years in the context of aggravating circumstances, including domestic violence)
	Degrading treatment of vulnerable persons	*(1) Any person who exhorts another person by exploiting his vulnerability to engage in conduct to humiliate himself is guilty of a misdemeanour punishable by imprisonment not exceeding 1 year, insofar as the act did not result in a more serious criminal offence.* *(2) The penalty shall be imprisonment not exceeding 2 years if the offender:* *a) provides or promises some form of compensation for engaging in the conduct referred to in subsection (1),* *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.* *(3) The penalty for a felony shall be imprisonment not exceeding 3 years if the criminal offence is committed on a commercial scale*	Article 225 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years
	Coercion	*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 offence is committed, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term not exceeding 3 years*	Article 195 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
NL	Coercion	*The following shall be punished by a term of imprisonment not exceeding 2 years or a fine of the fourth category:* *1. he who unlawfully forces another person to do, not to do or to tolerate something by force or any other fact or by threat of violence or any other fact, directed either against that other or against third parties;* *2. he who compels another by threats of libel or libel to do, not to do or to tolerate something.* *In the case described under 2, the offence will not be prosecuted except on a complaint from the person against whom it was committed*	~	Prison sentence of up to 2 years Fine
	Threat	*1. 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 2 years or a fine of the fourth category.* *2. If this threat is made in writing and under certain conditions, it shall be punished by a term of imprisonment not exceeding 4 years or a fine of the fourth category.* *3. Threat of a terrorist offence is punishable by a term of imprisonment not exceeding 6 years or a fine of the fifth category.* *4. If the offence 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 offence is increased by one third*	Article 285 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years Fine
AT	Coercion	*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 1 year or a fine not exceeding 720 penalty units*	Article 105 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year Fine
	Serious coercion	*(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; 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 or to engage in a pornographic performance (§ 215a, paragraph 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 6 months to 5 years.* *(2) The perpetrator is liable to imprisonment for 1 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, paragraph 3) places the life of another at risk, or if the offence causes a particularly serious detriment to the other person*	Article 106 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of 6 months to 5 years (10 years if the offence results in suicide or attempted suicide)
	Dangerous threat	*(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 1 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 3 years.* *(3) For cases under § 106, paragraph 2, the penalties under that provision apply*	Article 107 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year Fine
	Defamation	*If someone accuses a person in the 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 6 months or to be fined with 360 'daily rates'.* *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 1 year or to be fined with 720 'daily rates'.* *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*	Article 111 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year Fine

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
AT	Insult	*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 3 months or 180 daily rates, provided that the offender is not already subject to severe punishment because of [violating] a different regulation.* *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).* *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*	Article 115 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 3 months Fine
	Sexual coercion	*(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 6 months to 5 years.* *(2) The person is liable to imprisonment for 5 to 15 years if the offence results in a serious assault (§ 84, paragraph 1) or pregnancy of the victim or if the victim is placed into a state of agony or treated in a particularly humiliating 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*	Article 202 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of 6 months to 5 years (longer in the case of extreme violence or death)
PL	Coercion	*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*	Article 191 of the penal code	Prison sentence of up to 3 years
PT	Mental abuse	Not identified	Article 152 of the penal code	N/A
	Threat	Not identified	Article 153 of the penal code	N/A
	Coercion	Not identified	Article 154 of the penal code	N/A
RO	Threat	*(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 3 months to 1 year fine without penalty imposed shall not exceed the penalty provided for the offence which has been threatened. (2) Criminal proceedings shall be initiated upon prior complaint from the injured person*	Article 206 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of 3 months to 1 year Fine
SI	Coercion	*(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 1 year.* *(2) Prosecution shall be initiated upon a proposal*	Article 132 KZ-1 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year
	Threat	*(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 6 months.* *(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 1 year*	Article 135 KZ-1 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 6 months (up to 1 year in the case of aggravating circumstances) Fine
SK	Dangerous threats and gross defamation	*(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 1 year.* *(2) The offender shall be liable to a term of imprisonment of 6 months to 3 years if he commits the offence referred to in paragraph 1* *a) acting in a more serious manner,* *b) against a protected person,* *c) with the intention of preventing or obstructing the exercise of fundamental rights and freedoms by another,* *d) out of a specific motive, or* *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 2 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*	Chapter 5, Section 3602, of the penal criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years

MS	Criminal offence	Legal definition	Legislation	Sanctions
FI	Coercion	*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 2 years*	Chapter 25, Section 8, of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years Fine
	Menace	*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 2 years*	Chapter 25, Section 7, of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years Fine
	Assault	*(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 2 years. (2) An attempt is punishable*	Chapter 21 of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years
SE	Coercion	*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 2 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 improper.* *If the offence is gross, the person is guilty of gross unlawful coercion and is sentenced to imprisonment for at least 9 months and at most 6 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*	Chapter 4, Section 4, of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 2 years (9 months to 6 years if the offence is gross) Fine
	Threat	*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 1 year. If the offence is gross, the person is guilty of making a gross unlawful threat and is sentenced to imprisonment for at least 9 months and at most 4 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*	Chapter 4, Section 5, of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 1 year (4 years in the case of aggravating circumstances) Fine
	Insulting behaviour	*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 6 months*	Chapter 5, Section 3, of the criminal code	Prison sentence of up to 6 months Fine
	Defamation	*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 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*	Chapter 5, Section 1 of the criminal code	Fine

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)

MS	Current partner	Previous partner
BE	23	52
BG	25	58
CZ	23	50
DK	35	56
DE	25	51
EE	32	54
IE	11	37
EL	21	30
ES	17	37
FR	25	56
HR	21	46
IT	25	46
CY	27	50
LV	41	63
LT	38	56
LU	23	55
HU	29	50
MT	22	59
NL	27	51
AT	24	36
PL	25	41
PT	21	47
RO	30	45
SI	20	46
SK	34	52
FI	27	55
SE	20	51
EU-28	**26**	**49**

NB: 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 stated that they had experienced a particular form of psychological violence at least sometimes during the relationship. In the case of previous partners, the survey asked if respondents had ever experienced each of the forms of psychological violence by any previous partner.
Source: FRA (2014).

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)

MS	Psychological abuse that involved controlling behaviour by a partner	Psychological abuse that involved economic violence by a partner	Psychological abuse that involved abusive behaviour by a partner	Psychological abuse that involved blackmail with / abuse of children
BE	35	14	35	10
BG	34	17	31	6
CZ	41	16	31	8
DK	47	14	45	10
DE	40	11	38	9
EE	38	14	41	10
IE	23	10	24	6
EL	24	9	25	4
ES	26	9	23	7
FR	39	11	34	10
HR	27	11	33	17
IT	31	13	28	7
CY	28	10	31	6
LV	51	15	44	9
LT	44	15	39	6
LU	43	13	32	8
HU	39	13	39	10
MT	30	11	25	6
NL	38	11	38	9
AT	28	11	27	8
PL	32	12	22	4
PT	28	8	25	7
RO	30	12	29	6
SI	26	9	26	5
SK	35	15	38	9
FI	41	14	42	10
SE	40	10	38	8
EU-28	**35**	**12**	**32**	**8**

NB: 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.
Source: FRA (2014).

Table A5.3. Proportion of women who reported experiencing any form of psychological partner violence, by education level (%, 2014)

MS	Primary education	Secondary education	Tertiary education
BE	47	43	46
BG	36	41	37
CZ	49	48	30
DK	58	62	59
DE	48	50	53
EE	50	48	55
IE	33	29	32
EL	29	35	34
ES	28	37	39
FR	43	50	50
HR	44	42	36
IT	38	38	34
CY	30	39	46
LV	64	62	52
LT	53	54	46
LU	46	53	47
HU	45	51	48
MT	25	40	42
NL	49	51	48
AT	48	37	30
PL	39	38	35
PT	38	31	34
RO	39	40	36
SI	32	35	34
SK	49	47	51
FI	54	55	48
SE	57	51	49
EU-28	**40**	**45**	**44**

NB: 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.
Source: FRA (2014).

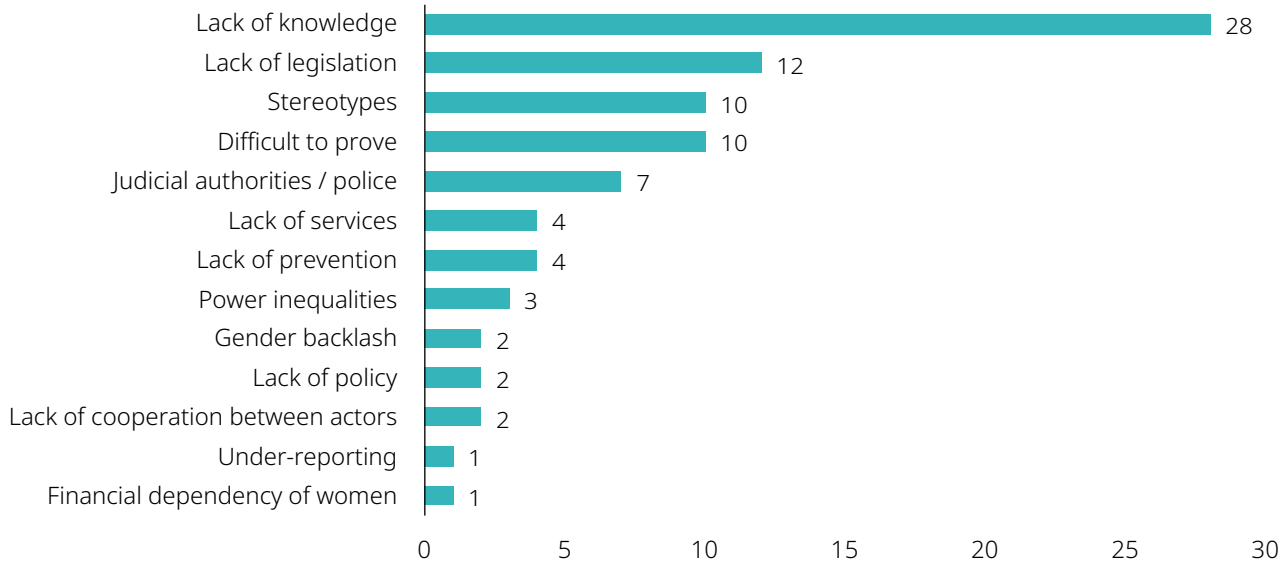
Table A5.4. Proportion of women who reported experiencing any form of psychological partner violence, by employment status (%, 2014)

MS	Employed	Homemaker	In education	Other	Retired	Unemployed
BE	42	30	52	58	32	66
BG	44	45	41	34	27	40
CZ	49	52	38	53	36	60
DK	60	69	70	63	48	63
DE	49	59	55	79	38	64
EE	53	59	40	49	36	59
IE	31	27	50	26	25	39
EL	37	26	41	46	24	39
ES	38	22	36	30	27	34
FR	47	44	75	61	36	54
HR	37	43	42	32	43	48
IT	41	26	38	52	38	46
CY	38	35	62	32	26	45
LV	61	54	58	78	45	78
LT	51	41	49	57	49	62
LU	51	41	61	53	39	53
HU	54	52	53	71	37	53
MT	46	27	50	47	29	38
NL	49	42	60	57	42	62
AT	36	47	35	50	36	58
PL	39	29	42	40	34	39
PT	31	34	35	30	38	51
RO	41	36	30	37	39	46
SI	35	21	38	50	31	42
SK	48	57	26	59	41	57
FI	52	58	61	75	49	59
SE	51	55	52	68	46	49
EU-28	**45**	**38**	**49**	**52**	**36**	**49**

NB: 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.
Source: FRA (2014).

Data from the survey

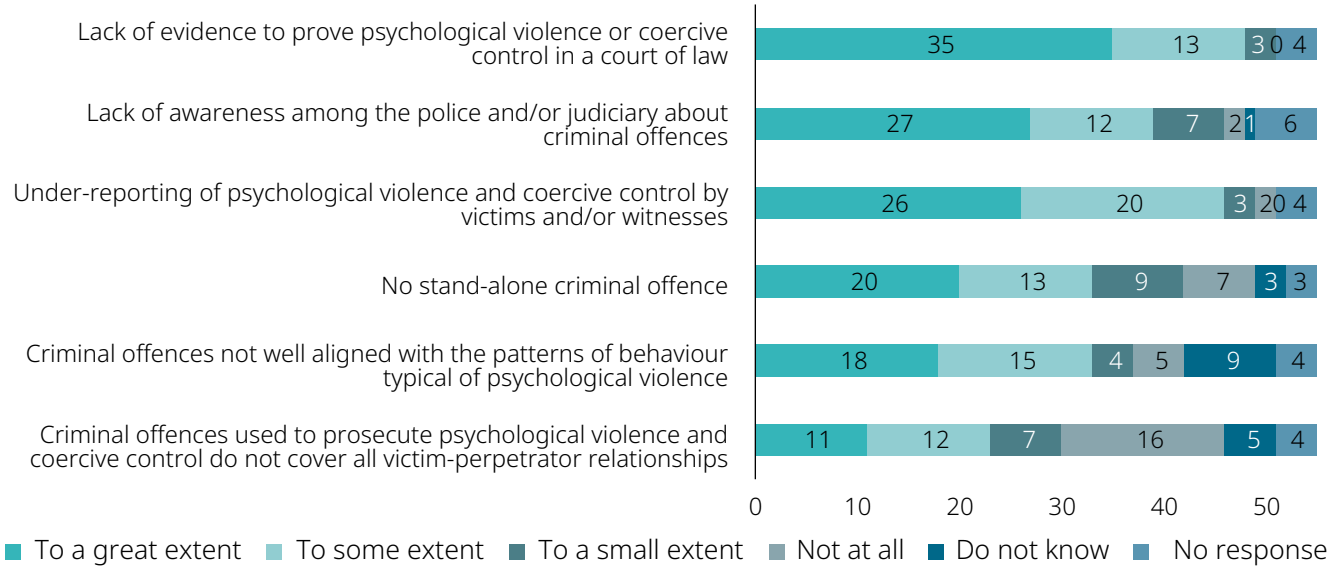
Figure A5.2. Most important barrier to preventing psychological violence against women (open question) (*n*)



Source: EIGE survey on practices and barriers relating to the prevention of psychological violence against women, 2021.

Question: In your opinion, what is the most significant barrier ([153]) 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 (*n*)



Source: EIGE survey on practices and barriers relating to the prevention of psychological violence against women, 2021.

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? ([154]).

([153]) Although the question asks about the most important barrier, some participants mentioned more than one factor.
([154]) Base size differs across barriers because some participants did not give an answer.

Figure A5.4. Extent to which structural barriers impede the prevention of psychological violence against women (*n*)

Source: EIGE survey on practices and barriers relating to the prevention of psychological violence against women, 2021.

Question: To what extent do the following structural barriers impede the prevention of psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country? ([155]).

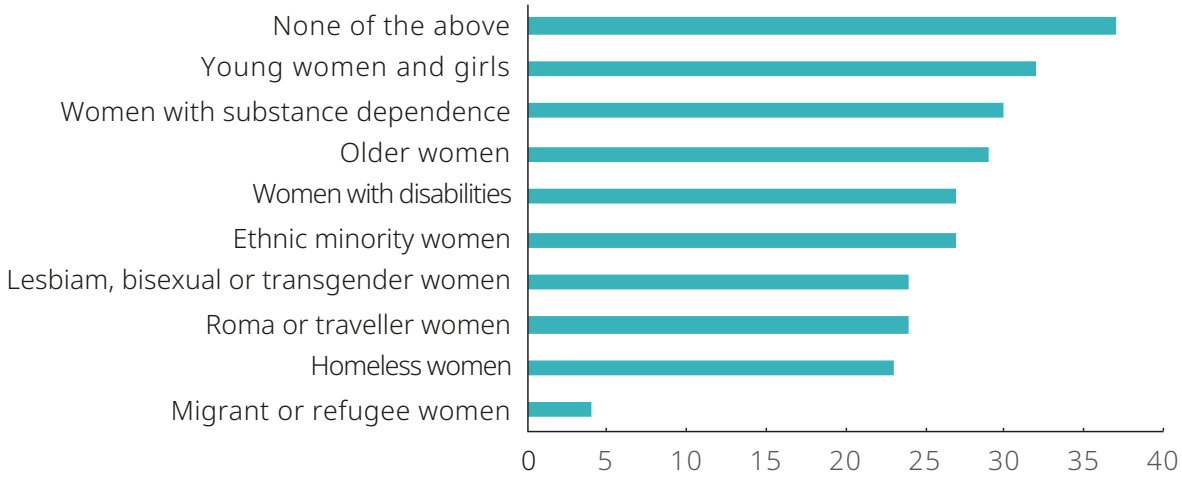
Figure A5.5. Extent to which cultural barriers impede the prevention of psychological violence against women (*n*)

Source: EIGE survey on practices and barriers relating to the prevention of psychological violence against women, 2021.

Question: To what extent do the following cultural barriers impede the prevention of psychological violence and coercive control against women in your country? ([156]).

([155]) Base size differs across barriers because some participants did not give an answer.
([156]) 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 (*n*)



Source: EIGE survey on practices and barriers relating to the prevention of psychological violence against women, 2021.

Question: For which of the following groups of women in your country (if any) are there particular barriers to preventing psychological violence? (*n* = 55) ([157]).

Additional material on barriers to effective prevention from OECD countries outside the EU

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 United Kingdom, respondents reported 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 and Aspinall, 2020).

A study conducted in the United Kingdom, which surveyed non-specialist police officers, students and members of the general public, revealed that **police officers frequently consider stalking cases in which the perpetrator is a victim's acquittance or ex-partner as less serious than those in which the stalker is a stranger** (Scott et al., 2013). The study claims that UK **police officers sometimes blame victims of stalking** for encouraging the perpetrator's behaviour. Evidence also suggests that cases occurring in the 'intimate' sphere are less frequently prosecuted by the Crown Prosecution Service than cases involving strangers (Scott et al., 2013).

According to another study published in the United Kingdom, 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

([157]) Participants could select more than one option.

the definitions and adequately use this offence (Lee et al., 2020). The UK Home Office also reports that some professionals still lack awareness of how to investigate and charge cases of coercive control (Home Office, 2021), with recent research identifying a failure to situate 'incidents' of domestic violence in a broader context and **excessive emphasis still being 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 identified 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 and Woodlock, 2019). Moreover, the study found that breaches of intervention or protection orders via digital means tended to be regarded by authorities as being a low-level risk (Harris and Woodlock, 2019). This study also highlighted the common expectation among police that **the onus is on the victim to change her behaviour regarding her use of technology**, and that no alternative solutions are offered if she is unable or unwilling to do so (Harris and Woodlock, 2019).

Box A5.2. Difficulties of providing evidence of coercive control

A study relating to new legislation in the United Kingdom around coercive control highlighted the **challenge of providing adequate levels of evidence to enable prosecution**, as this form of abuse both tends to 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 (e.g. it is normal for some young women to receive 50 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 and Woodlock, 2019).

Box A5.3. Barriers to reporting psychological violence and coercive control

In the United Kingdom, 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 United Kingdom, those surrounding the victim (friends and family members) may also normalise the victims' experience, failing to prevent future victimisation (Doyle, 2020). Similar observations around the normalisation of abusive behaviour for the victim have been noted specifically in relation to digital coercive control (Harris and Woodlock, 2019).

A qualitative study exploring victims' experience in the United Kingdom highlighted that **stalking victims seldom report incidents, namely because 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 chil-

dren; Walklate and Fitz-Gibbon, 2019). Another Australian study reported that local conservative values and patriarchal power relations could discourage reporting by limiting both the perception and the reality of support available for the victim (Harris and 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 men partners (Downes et al., 2019).

Box A5.4. Barriers to prevention for specific subgroups 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 reported that **LGBTQI+ people encountered distinct barriers when trying to access support services**. For example, the study suggested that partners could 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 stopping 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 subgroups, including **victims with disabilities and indigenous peoples**, may be more at risk of normalising these kinds of violence owing 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 and Woodlock, 2019).

Annex 6. Assessment of practices against criteria

Table A6.1. Overview of how the practices identified 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 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 the criteria for identifying 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 practice identifies 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					
The practice is fully targeted at or tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups	**7**	The practice has elements that are tailored to the needs of vulnerable groups	**12**	The practice is not targeted at 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 greater impact if they are long term and sustained (including financially) rather than short term and ad hoc (Heisecke, 2014; EIGE, 2015)				
The practice is 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 and 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 that 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 coordination and integration (e.g. range of actors)	**10**	To some extent there is/was coordination and integration (e.g. more than one actor/organisation)	**7**	The practice is/was not integrated or coordinated and involved only a single actor/organisation
Policy embedment. The embedding 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 a 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 stand-alone / 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), as 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 or 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 and effectiveness. Monitoring and evaluation are important components 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 under way	**13**	Some administrative data is being collected or some monitoring is under way	**1**	There is no data collection, monitoring or evaluation planned or under way
There is compelling evidence of the effectiveness of the practice	**11**	There is weak evidence of the effectiveness of the practice	**0**	There is evidence to suggest the practice is not effective

Table A6.2. Outcome of the assessment of each practice against the criteria: evidence, theory and conceptual clarity; scope and sustainability; and coordination and embeddedness

For each criterion, the practice would be classed as "red", "yellow" or "green" according to the scoring specifications associated with the criterion and the evidence available. Where evidence was insufficient to draw meaningful conclusions, the practice was classed as "grey".

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	Member State	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) ([158])	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 relationships (Gafarova, 2015) ([159])	BE								
#VERTEDERDVERNEDERD: a video, self-test, informative website and toolbox seeking to break the taboo around emotional abuse in relationships ([160])	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 (Institut pour l'egalite des femmes et des hommes, 2015)	BE								
#loverrors: an online campaign to challenge the romanticising of abuse in relationships ([161])	BG								

([158]) For more information on this Belgian campaign, see the Equal Brussels website (https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/).
([159]) More information on this Belgian campaign is available online (https://cjc.be/La-violence-psychologique-c-est-de.html and http://www.fredetmarie.be/).
([160]) More information on this Belgian campaign is available online (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 and http://vertederdvernederd.be/).
([161]) More information on this Bulgarian campaign is available online (https://loveerrors.bg/#errors-list/1).

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	Member State	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
Awareness-raising campaigns									
Zij lijkt het probleem te zijn: an educational film/documentary about recognising intimate partner violence and coercive control ([162])	NL								
Educational initiatives									
Dat-e Adolescence: a programme designed to prevent dating violence among adolescents (Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018; Muñoz-Fernández et al., 2019)	ES								
The DARSI programme: a programme seeking to prevent peer and adolescent dating violence by promoting values of tolerance, gender equality and healthy relationships (Carrascosa et al., 2019)	ES								
GEAR-II: a project aiming to contribute to the primary and secondary prevention of intimate partner / dating / sexual violence among adolescents ([163])	EL, ES, HR, CY, RO								
Non-criminal legislation									
Legal support for victims of stalking (including in the context of domestic violence): victims have the right to be represented by a lawyer as an auxiliary prosecutor in criminal proceedings, the cost of which is usually covered by legal aid (Hagemann-White, 2017)	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								

([162]) More information on this Dutch campaign is available online (https://professionals.verdwenenzelf.org/2020/premiere-educatieve-film/).
([163]) For more information, see the GEAR-II website (https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/summary).

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	Member State	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
Perpetrator programmes									
Dublin Safer Families Service: a whole-family intervention approach for secondary prevention of domestic violence (Spratt et al., 2021)	IE								
Court-referred psychological treatment programme for intimate partner batterer men with suspended sentences (Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015)	ES								
Risk assessment tools									
Specialised risk assessment questionnaire for identification of the risk of repeated violence in relationships, and risk assessment of serious violence (EIGE, 2019)	CZ								
Lähisuhtevägivalla infoleht: an intimate partner violence case information sheet used by police to assess the risk of reassault/reoffending and psychological abuse (EIGE, 2019)	EE								
TRAQUE-VFF protocol: to support health professionals in identifying women victims of violence (GHEF, 2018; Marc et al., 2018)	FR								
Screening Assessment for Stalking and Harassment (SASH): a tool used by police to assess situations of stalking (Hehemann et al., 2017; GREVIO, 2020d)	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								

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	Member State	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
Training for professionals									
Information for women's shelters on how to prevent digital tracking (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, 2019)	DK								
Training for police cadets in 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								
Police training on stalking: there is a special focus on stalking in the training that police receive in one federal state, and in the Berlin police offer in-service specialist courses on stalking in the context of domestic violence (Houtsonen, 2020)	DE								
Victim-centred domestic violence training for police: a course in one police secondary school emphasises the importance of empathy and support in situations of abuse (Houtsonen, 2020)	HU								
Training for police officers in 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 (EIGE, 2019)	DK								
The national unit against violence in intimate relations: the unit focuses on collecting and communicating to relevant professionals knowledge and promising practices in relation to different forms of violence (Stubberud et al., 2018)	DK								
Training about stalking for case workers (Stubberud et al., 2018)	DK								

Practice		Criteria							
Name/description	Member State	Evidence	Theoretical underpinning	Conceptual clarity	Gender equality	Intersectionality	Transferability	Tailoring to context	Sustainability
Training for professionals									
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 that 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								
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., 2021)	IE								
Roadmap for frontline professionals interacting with men perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse (ENGAGE, 2019)	EU								
Polish Family – Free from Violence: training 500 interdisciplinary teams at local government level to protect and support victims of domestic and gender-based violence (Logar and Marvanova Vargova, 2015)	PL								
International conference on psychological violence (Council of Europe, 2021)	EE								
SafetyNed: offers training and workshops to professionals about identifying and preventing digital violence, including intimate partner digital stalking and harassment ([164])	NL								
The Disappeared Self: training for professionals around coercive control	NL								

([164])) https://safetyned.org/over-safetyned/wat-doet-safetyned/

Table A6.3. Outcome of the assessment of each practice against the criteria: coordination and embeddedness, communication and evaluation

Practice		Criteria						
Name/description	Member State	Stakeholder engagement (I)	Stakeholder engagement (II)	Policy embeddedness	Language and messaging	Promotion	Monitoring and evaluation	Effectiveness
Awareness-raising campaigns								
#faisonslalumieresurlaviolence: posters and videos seeking to raise awareness among perpetrators of psychological violence (Chini, 2019) ([165])	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) ([166])	BE							
#VERTEDERDVERNEDERD: a video, self-test, informative website and toolbox seeking to break the taboo around emotional abuse in relationships ([167])	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 (Institut pour l'egalite des femmes et des hommes, 2015)	BE							
#loverrors: an online campaign to challenge the romanticising of abuse in relationships ([168])	BG							
Zij lijkt het probleem te zijn: an educational film/documentary about recognising intimate partner violence and coercive control ([169])	NL							

([165]) For more information on this Belgian campaign, see the Equal Brussels website (https://equal.brussels/fr/campagnes/violences-psychologiques/).
([166]) More information on this Belgian campaign is available online (https://cjc.be/La-violence-psychologique-c-est-de.html and http://www.fredetmarie.be/).
([167]) More information on this Belgian campaign is available online (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 and http://vertederdvernederd.be/).
([168]) More information on this Bulgarian campaign is available online (https://loveerrors.bg/#errors-list/1).
([169]) More information on this Dutch campaign is available online (https://professionals.verdwenenzelf.org/2020/premiere-educatieve-film/).

Practice		Criteria						
Name/description	Member State	Stakeholder engagement (I)	Stakeholder engagement (II)	Policy embeddedness	Language and messaging	Promotion	Monitoring and evaluation	Effectiveness
Educational initiatives								
Dat-e Adolescence: a programme designed to prevent dating violence among adolescents (Sanchez-Jimenez et al., 2018; Muñoz-Fernández et al., 2019)	ES							
The DARSI programme: a programme seeking to prevent peer and adolescent dating violence by promoting values of tolerance, gender equality and healthy relationships (Carrascosa et al., 2019)	ES							
GEAR-II: a project aiming to contribute to the primary and secondary prevention of intimate partner / dating / sexual violence among adolescents ([170])	EL, ES, HR, CY, RO							
Non-criminal legislation								
Legal support for victims of stalking (including in the context of domestic violence): 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 (Hagemann-White, 2017)	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: a whole-family intervention approach for secondary prevention of domestic violence (Spratt et al., 2021)	IE							
Court-referred psychological treatment programme for intimate partner batterer men with suspended sentences (Fernandez-Montalvo et al., 2015)	ES							

([170]) For more information, see the GEAR-II website (https://www.gear-ipv.eu/the-gear-against-ipv-ii-project/summary).

Practice		Criteria						
Name/description	Member State	Stakeholder engagement (I)	Stakeholder engagement (II)	Policy embeddedness	Language and messaging	Promotion	Monitoring and evaluation	Effectiveness
Risk assessment tools								
Specialised risk assessment questionnaire for identification of the risk of repeated violence in relationships, and risk assessment of serious violence (EIGE, 2019)	CZ							
Lähisuhtevägivalla infoleht: an intimate partner violence case information sheet used by police to assess the risk of reassault/reoffending and psychological abuse (EIGE, 2019)	EE							
TRAQUE-VFF protocol: to support health professionals in identifying women victims of violence (GHEF, 2018; Marc et al., 2018)	FR							
Screening Assessment for Stalking and Harassment (SASH): a tool used by police to assess situations of stalking (Hehemann et al., 2017; GREVIO, 2020d)	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 in 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							
Police training in stalking: there is a special focus on stalking in the training police receive in one federal state, and in the Berlin police offer in-service specialist courses on stalking in the context of domestic violence (Houtsonen, 2020)	DE							

Practice		Criteria						
Name/description	Member State	Stakeholder engagement (I)	Stakeholder engagement (II)	Policy embeddedness	Language and messaging	Promotion	Monitoring and evaluation	Effectiveness
Training for professionals								
Victim-centred domestic violence training for police: a course in one police secondary school emphasises the importance of empathy and support in situations of abuse (Houtsonen, 2020)	HU							
Training for police officers in 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 (EIGE, 2019)	DK							
The national unit against violence in intimate relations: the unit focuses on collecting and communicating to relevant professionals knowledge and promising practices in relation to different forms of violence (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 that 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							
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., 2021)	IE							
Roadmap for frontline professionals interacting with men perpetrators of domestic violence and abuse (ENGAGE, 2019)	EU							

Practice		Criteria						
Name/description	Member State	Stakeholder engagement (I)	Stakeholder engagement (II)	Policy embeddedness	Language and messaging	Promotion	Monitoring and evaluation	Effectiveness
Training for professionals								
Polish Family – Free from Violence: training 500 interdisciplinary teams at local government level to protect and support victims of domestic and gender-based violence (Logar & Marvanova Vargova, 2015)	PL							
International conference on psychological violence (Council of Europe, 2021)	EE							
SafetyNed: offers training and workshops to professionals about identifying and preventing digital violence, including intimate partner digital stalking and harassment ([171])	NL							
The Disappeared Self: training for professionals around coercive control	NL							

([171])) https://safetyned.org/over-safetyned/wat-doet-safetyned/

Annex 7. Recommendations for organisations that design and/or implement 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 elements of promising practice set out in Box A7.1.

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. the 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;
- be informed by **collaboration with key stakeholders**, including those who work directly with victims;
- be **integrated and coordinated**, involving government agencies, NGOs, and national, regional and local parliaments and authorities;
- be **embedded in a wider gender mainstreaming strategy** 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.

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE EU

IN PERSON
All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact

ON THE PHONE OR BY EMAIL
Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union.

You can contact this service:
– by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),
– at the following standard number: +32 22999696, or
– by email via: https://europa.eu/contact

FINDING INFORMATION ABOUT THE EU

ONLINE
Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: https://europa.eu

EU PUBLICATIONS
You can download or order free and priced EU publications from: https://publications.europa.eu/eubookshop. Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see https://europa.eu/contact).

EU LAW AND RELATED DOCUMENTS
For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1951 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: http://eur-lex.europa.eu

OPEN DATA FROM THE EU
The EU Open Data Portal (http://data.europa.eu/euodp) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes.

www.eige.europa.eu

Publications Office